



# Chill (Fair's Fair #3)

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**Category:** Horror

**Description:** One month. That's all it takes for everything to unravel.

For weeks, I try returning to normal, to forget the men who turned me into a killer against my will. At first, I convince myself I could be happy—at least I think I should be.

But I'm not. I can't be.

When I find them, I realize what they're doing. If I want them—if I want this—I have to accept what they truly are.

Monsters.

But what if they're not the only ones? Maybe I've been like this all along—or maybe they made me this way. Either way, even though they say I can leave, I wonder if it's already too late.

Maybe it's been too late since the moment I met them.

**Total Pages (Source):** 11

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“You could go home.” Erika’s words ring in my ears over the rumble of noise in the moderately busy diner, but I don’t look up at the girl I only knew as Doll Mask for the first few times I met her. My eyes drag up from my plate of fried eggs and toast, and I study her small, heart-shaped face set under blonde curls. In a way, she still looks like a doll. Even in a cardigan and long-sleeved tee over leggings and boots, there’s something delicate about her.

Not that she seemed very delicate when she was tying a bracelet of entrails around my wrist a month ago.

“Yeah, I tried that,” I mutter, eyes dropping back to my food. The orange in my hair is fading, and normally I would’ve replaced it by now. It irritates me every time I catch sight of it in the corner of my eye, and today is no different. Absently, I shove my hair back over my shoulder. That’s another problem for another day. Possibly another month. Hell, the new year is coming soon. Maybe I’ll worry about it then.

She doesn’t argue. But she’s not really eating, either. While I chop at my eggs lightly, she tears up the peels of oranges with her delicate fingers while her cup of black coffee steams at her elbow. “I don’t know how you drink that.” My casual remark is all I can really think to say, and I gesture with my fork at her coffee. My own iced coffee isn’t anywhere near black. Or brown. If I was being gracious, I’d call it beige.

If I’m honest, it’s more of an off-white color from all the cream and sweetened vanilla flavor in it.

“Because I don’t like to drink my sugar.” She grins at me, taking a sip of the black coffee, then another, before dropping an ice cube in it and setting it back down on the table. “Ever had bulletproof coffee?”

“Is that where you put butter in it, like some kind of psycho?”

“That’s how Sam drinks his. Pretty sure he picked it up from Kieran, actually.” At my bemused look, she adds, “Nero, I suppose, is still the only way you know him.”

“He named himself after an awful emperor,” I remark. “Goes along with his awful taste in coffee, I guess.”

“His best friend is a Roman History professor in Ohio,” Erika snorts. “I can assure you he did it on purpose.”

Part of me wants to ask if this best friend knows what Nero—Sam—does in his spare time. But it’s not my business, and I’m not sure I want to open myself up for that kind of distraction from the conversation at hand. After all, any interest I have in them as a group stems from the two people I haven’t seen in a month.

The two people I really should want to get away from.

“So...” I stab my eggs again, loudly enough for the tap tap tap of metal on porcelain to be audible between us. “Are you going to tell me where they are, or am I going to have to learn how to become some sort of bloodhound?”

Erika snorts at that and finally eats a grape from her bowl of fruit. “I want to tell you no. I want to hope you’ll just go back home and be normal. You’re not like us,” she points out. “You know, none of us thought our lives would end up this way. None of us expected to be traveling around like modern nomads setting up—” she breaks off, and a second later our tired-looking waitress reappears with another glass of

chocolate milk for me, and another cup of water for Erika. We both thank her, but she barely seems to hear as she follows her pre-mapped out route to another table a few feet away.

“Well, you know.” Erika shrugs, tugging her blonde curls behind her ear. “Your hair looks awful, by the way.”

“Rude. And I’d insult you back, but...” I look her over, head resting on my hand. “You look like you were expecting better company than me.” She’s dressed for a casual, if classy, date. I’m dressed like I fumbled around for my clothes in the dark.

Her smile is sweet and free of malice, making it hard to remember she’s a murderer, just like Kieran and Val. As kind and sweet as she is, and how easy she is to be around, I won’t let myself forget that she’s not afraid to kill to protect herself or them.

And I’m not quite sure if I’m part of the us right now. It makes me choose my words with care, trying to pull the worst of my sarcasm out of my words before speaking. She can’t be much older than me, if at all, yet she’s such an unknown factor that I refuse to let myself get too comfortable.

“I’ve been trying to let it go,” I go on, finally slumping back. “I thought they’d come back, and then I was glad they didn’t. Pretty sure you know what they did. What I did,” I correct, knowing I have to take some kind of responsibility if I want her to help me with what I’m asking. “I was so happy with every day that went by when they didn’t come back. For about a week, anyway.”

She doesn’t speak. Judging by the look in her big, doe-like brown eyes framed with long lashes, she’s waiting for me to go on.

And maybe I owe her that.

“But I kept trying, okay? I’ve been hanging out with my friends, working at the coffee shop...” I shrug my shoulders with a huff. “I don’t know. It’s not like I’m trying to find them to, you know, do something stupid.”

“Yeah you are,” she disagrees. “Because finding them at all is the stupid part. Especially when you could just pretend they never happened. Wipe that seventy-two hours out of your head and move on.” There’s something wistful in her voice. Something almost...regretful.

I wonder if she wishes she could do the same.

“They’re fine.” Erika surveys me as she says it, scrutinizing me for any reaction. But I don’t give her one, except to chew my lower lip thoughtfully.

“Is that you telling me they would rather I stay away?” It’s not the answer I’d expected or a possibility I’m prepared for. If they don’t want me there?—

But Erika snorts in spite of herself and offers me her first genuine smile of the morning. “Hardly. Before they left, Val was moaning and whining all over the place. Kieran had to drag him out by his shirt or he probably would’ve come to hide at your apartment. He likes your cats.” But there Erika stops and sits back. “If I don’t tell you, what will you do? If I do tell you, what then?”

The two part question catches me off guard. “If you tell me, I’m going to go find them,” I reply simply with a shrug. “If you don’t...” I trail off, because I don’t know what I’ll do.

Clearly, whatever it is I’m attempting to do now without them isn’t working out. So if she won’t tell me, then I guess I’ll have to suck it up and figure out something else.

It’d be too embarrassing to completely fall apart over two men who I met while they

intended to murder me, after all.

When she doesn't say anything, I hide my anxiety by once again mutilating my already destroyed eggs. As a last resort, I take a bite of the almost burnt toast, nose scrunching at the bitter taste even through the butter I layered on top that's not even a little melted. Erika watches me and finally snorts before she once more settles back on her side of the booth. "Give me your number." Her voice is quiet, almost resigned, and I don't let myself get my hopes up as I recite it to her.

Seconds later, there's an address popping up from an unknown number I save as her, and then a phone number after that.

"If you want my advice, don't call that number," she tells me. "I'd rather have the upper hand if I were you, for whatever you're planning. And don't try to, you know" She taps her knife, then her throat. "Because then you'd piss off the rest of us, and one of us would end up doing the same to you."

Shaking my head at that, I shove my phone into my pocket again, while trying to figure out just how far the drive from here to the town she'd sent me is. Frankly, I've never heard of it and I have no idea if it's an hours-long trek, or days.

I guess I'll find out once I'm back at my apartment if the cats are going on vacation to Auntie Sienna's house.

"Thank you," I tell Erika again. "I really appreciate this, since you didn't have to."

"If I didn't, it would've been for you," Erika replies honestly. "I think you deserve something normal. But I also think you deserve the choice. Just because the rest of us didn't really get one, doesn't mean you don't have the right to make your own." She taps her fingers on the table and I go back to my toast, suddenly not feeling quite so nervous or put out by the situation.

Our waitress comes back minutes later, as if magically summoned by the end of our conversation, and by the time I've taken care of the small bill for our meager breakfast, I'm itching to leave. To go home, change, and plan out this spontaneous road trip.

"Hey." Before I can even stand up, Erika reaches out to grip my wrist, her dark eyes on mine. "Noa..." She hesitates, trailing off, then sighs. "They won't change, you know? They can't change. Not even if they love you. Can you handle that?"

I open my mouth, then close it. I definitely hadn't been expecting the question, but Erika is proving she's good at coming up with things out of left field.

"That's what I want to find out," I admit as I get to my feet, causing her hand to slide off of my arm. "One way or the other, I want to know the answer to that question, too."

## Page 2

*Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 1:20 pm*

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It takes all of two hours into my nine-hour drive before I start questioning my life choices.

Specifically, this life choice.

Not that I haven't prepared to the best of my ability, I remind myself for the tenth time.

The cats are on vacation at Auntie Sienna's house, so I don't need to worry about them. I have a backpack full of clothes and whatever else I thought I'll need for at least three days without re-wearing anything. Though maybe a small duffel bag would've been the smarter answer, I think ruefully.

There's gas in my car.

My stomach is not too upset from the chicken nuggets still making my car smell like the inside of the fast food place I grabbed them from.

And the music is loud enough to blast out my eardrums and cause my smartwatch to worry pretty dramatically.

You're fine, I tell myself. You can turn around whenever you want and go home.

But that's a lie, and even the thought turns sour in my mind, causing my hands to tighten on the steering wheel of my small, dependable car.



Either way, I can't keep doing what I've been doing, I reason to myself as my mind drifts back to examine the last few weeks under a mental microscope.

For a month, I've been living my normal life, trying to go back to it.

For a month, I've been lying to Sienna and telling her that I'm completely fine, that there's nothing I want to talk to her about.

For a month, I've been lying to myself, and I just can't do it anymore.

A groan leaves me and I thump my head back against the headrest. I'm not tired, seeing as driving for hours and hours is my one pretty useless super power. Really, I missed my life's calling as a long-haul truck driver. With just a sniff of coffee, I can make it six hours without blinking. If I pour a cup of it down my throat, I'm pretty much unstoppable.

And unable to shut my eyes, even with a crowbar.

By hour eight, I'm wondering what the hell is so interesting about the southwestern corner of Arkansas, and I'm screaming along to my 2000s emo music so loudly and with so much dedication that I miss my turnoff.

Twice .

But it doesn't stop me from belting out some of my favorite, questionable songs that I now realize probably weren't so appropriate for a pre-teen back when I heard them the first time.

Especially the one that I'm now pretty sure is all about road head . To my surprise, that's the one I remember most of the words to, and I refuse to look into what kind of problem that is as I try not to let it influence the speed of my driving on the dark rural

highway.

My first thought as I pass signs for Stamps and Texarcana is that Arkansas really does have interesting naming conventions for their towns.

My second thought is that my poor car is going to get totaled by the deer trying to commit suicide as it jumps out of the woods to my right.

Thankfully, there are no other cars around to make this worse, so I slam my brakes and successfully swerve around the deer enough that it'll have to choose another way to leave this mortal coil. Patting myself on the back while also hyperventilating, I cruise to a stop in the parking lot of a 24 hour truck stop-slash-diner. The neon lights of the window garishly light up my car, and I take a moment to just sit .

Finally, I decide it's been too long since my last pee break, and since I'd prefer not to do long-term kidney damage with my overconsumption of caffeine today mixed with not enough bathroom breaks, I shove my way out of my car and into the truck stop itself.

Blinking, I can't help my surprise at how lively it is. More than half of the tables on the diner side are filled with couples and families, and there are a fair share of customers perusing the convenience store side that's filled with generic, overpriced travel pack meds and candy.

Post-bathroom break, I find myself with them as well. Like a zombie, I grab the first bottle of iced coffee out of the fridge that I can find, along with a few bags of chocolate-covered caramel that will keep me going for at least another few hours. After all, I doubt my night will end just because the GPS gods tell me I've found my destination.

The lady at the counter eyes me with what might be concern, and I only beam at her

with an expression I hope doesn't seem like a cry for help. "Lots of people here," I remark as she robotically rings up my choice of unhealthy offerings. "I would've thought since this isn't on a main road?—"

"They're from the campsites." The woman sighs, cutting me off like she's heard this narrative of a question a million times before. "Four of 'em around here. We get the failed fishers, the families needing a break from building fires, and whatever."

I blink a few times at her words, wondering if maybe I'm the one who's confused. "In...December?" I ask delicately. I don't want to upset this truck stop overlord. Especially while she's holding my precious, cheap as hell knockoff coffee in her manicured fingers.

"Not that cold here," the woman tells me, bagging up my purchase as I insert my card into the chip reader. "Lots of people like the idea of 'Christmas camping.' They set up little decorations and lights around their tents and RVs."

It seems like early December is too far from Christmas to theme a campsite around it, or for kids to be out of school, but what do I know? Instead, I just smile and nod, waiting for the ancient machine to take its damn time with processing my payment.

"Plus, there's a festival in town this weekend. Lots of families come for the lighting of the Christmas tree and their annual little market." She still sounds just as bored as she says it, and I wonder if that's a reflection of her personal opinion of the festival, or just her view on life in general around here.

"Thank you so much." My smile directed at her isn't returned, unsurprisingly, but I take my bag gently from the counter and walk out the door. There's no way Val and Kieran are here for a Christmas tree festival in some small town...right?

That doesn't seem like something they'd do, and I shiver in the crisp night air once

I'm outside again. It was definitely colder in Nashville, and I'm glad I'm trekking halfway across the southern side of the country, as opposed to into the northern side where I'd probably need a parka or a team of sled dogs.

Though maybe that's just me being dramatic after almost nine hours of driving mostly all at once, on a whim.

"You can do this." I sigh, once I'm back in my car and cracking open the glass bottle of cold coffee. A peek at my GPS says I'm only fifteen minutes from wherever it is I'm going, so I settle back in the driver's seat and tell myself at least three more times that I'm almost done before pulling back onto the deserted highway and following the directions of the helpful, if pushy, GPS system.

When I pull up to the deserted campground, I hesitate for a few moments. Am I really, really about to get out of the car, in the dark, at some place that looks like a horror film set?

The answer to that question really shouldn't surprise me. Especially since I'm already stuffing the last two caramels into my cheeks like a chipmunk and chasing them down with the last of my bottle of coffee. With my headlights on, I can see the old, dilapidated sign of Sunny Lake Campground, though with the u mostly missing, along with part of the y, it reads more like Sinn Lake Campground.

Which definitely feels ominous and appropriate to me right about now.

For a few moments, I sit in my cooling car, the night air quickly stealing away the warmth right out of my open door. I can't help hesitating. I can't help worrying, as the last rational part of me tries to make a stand.

Maybe this is a bad idea.

Maybe I should at the very least wait until morning. While I'm not actively afraid of the dark, I definitely have a healthy dose of uncertainty about a place like this.

"Let's do that," I mutter to myself, sitting back against the seat and almost wilting with relief. I'm not giving up. Not at all. I'm just?—

A shape cuts across the light of my headlights, causing me to bolt upright. While my eyes track the movement and search for where it's gone, another, slower figure cuts into the lights.

This one doesn't run.

The figure turns to look at me, and my headlights illuminate a black and white, skull-like mask and the sheen of a knife held in a glove-covered fist.

For so many long seconds I stare at that mask, the familiarity bringing back every memory I'd tried to pretend didn't matter in the last month. Time seems to stop, and I feel him staring at me. I feel the gaze behind the mask on me, and somehow, even if I didn't know this mask, I would know whose face lies behind it.

Ravage.

## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 1:20 pm*

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I don't know why it's his name I think of when I see him. Maybe it's the mask, or the knife in his hand, but it's truly the first thing that comes to mind.

“Wait,” I breathe, hands tight on my steering wheel as if some instinctual part of me is considering running him over. Which, admittedly, he might deserve.

“Wait,” I say again, scrambling out of the car with my phone. The night air is chilly, and I shiver through the thick, soft fabric of my hoodie almost reflexively, mouth already open to say...something.

But Val doesn't wait. He gives a soft, almost regretful sigh, reaching a hand out to me for a few seconds before holding his palm up, as if he's the one telling me to wait. Then he takes off, following the person who ran across the beam of my headlights only seconds ago.

For a second, not even, I hesitate. But then something in me clicks, and the hesitation fades away with my next small shiver in the cold air.

I've fucking waited long enough.

I'm not doing it anymore. I'm not giving him another chance to leave me behind then just not show back up. Not this time.

Refusing to consider the knife, the reason he's wearing a mask, or the person quite literally running from him, I follow him with a few thoughts of where Kieran might

be.

Somehow, I realize that calling out to him wouldn't be the right choice. Instead, I'm reduced to following the sound of crashing footsteps and the occasional sight of him through the trees in the moonlight. I work to keep myself at a run; at least, as fast as I'm comfortable running through the sparse trees of the old, abandoned campground. An occasional root or downed branch threatens to trip me up, but thankfully Val isn't exactly quiet.

Especially when he's terrorizing someone.

But I don't think about that part of this—that if he's chasing someone with a knife, it's probably not just for show. I doubt he's doing this as a demonstration. At least, not a demonstration his victim is likely to walk away from.

I should be more afraid of that reality. Of him . I shouldn't be running toward a man with a hunting knife clasped in one hand. Though I distantly think to myself, there are probably some knife safety lessons to be had when he's running in the dark over uneven terrain.

Seems to me like this could end with him falling and stabbing himself if he's not careful. Not that Val really seems to know what careful means.

In minutes, my breathing is coming in sharp, pained pants. My lungs protest the cold air, just as my thighs protest the cursed act of running. Especially when I'm not the one being chased. But finally, just when I'm pretty sure my legs are going to rebel and spontaneously break or I'm finally going to succumb to a patch of gravel on the ground and bite it, I can see Val slowing down.

When his laugh cracks through the air, high and jubilant, I can't help but give a small shiver at the sound. I've heard it before, directed at me, and the flash of the memory

makes me stumble to a stop with my phone clenched in my hand. Carefully, I double check that its light isn't on, and while I'm not sure if Val knows I'm here, I'd prefer if he didn't know I managed to follow him all this way.

Distantly, the sound of water lapping at the shore draws my attention, and part of me wishes I could see more of this place than just the trees and old campsites with their broken down camp grills covered in about forty years' worth of rust. If I breathe in hard enough, I think I can smell the old, long forgotten campfires contained by the holy metal rings on the gravel, but I'm sure that's just my imagination.

This place hasn't seen campers in a decade, I'm sure.

Still following his striding movements, I shift from the open path Val followed to the thicker trees separating the campsites. I duck behind a larger oak tree, hands on the rough bark as my fingers dig into it, leaning some of my weight against it as I try to breathe evenly and quiet my heart rate so I can hear his words instead of just the murmur of them.

"Poor thing. Poor you ." It's amazing how condescending Val sounds when he's like this. Part of me wonders if when he puts the mask on, he really is someone else.

If he really is Ravage instead of Valentin.

In the same vein, I wonder if Kieran is similar. If there's a completely different persona—the Harrow side of him—when he wears the ram mask with its upside down cross painted in red.

As if summoned by my thoughts, footsteps crunching on the gravel across the campsite herald the other masked killer, though he's not holding a blade like Val. Still, his mask seems eerie, almost otherworldly, in the glow from the moonlight as he circles the man crumpled to the ground like an exhausted rabbit.



Unlike the man they made me kill, this one isn't here because he's tied down. He's too exhausted to run, and I swear I can see the tremble of his muscles from here.

Run , the small, smart part of my brain whispers. Run away. You know what they're going to do. The thought has my thighs tensing, and my fingers clenching the bark harder as if I'm a rabbit preparing to spring away from the threat of a predator's teeth.

But I don't run.

If I run now, I can't face them.

If I run now, then there's no point for me to be here. They'll never change, I remind myself. Not for me, not for anyone.

If I can't handle what they do in the dark, then I can't face them in the light of day.

As Harrow prowls the perimeter of gravel in the old campsite, I crouch and lean against the tree, not wanting to be so visible that they can easily catch sight of me.

I'm glad of the foresight seconds later when Val turns, his mask tilting as he slowly scans the trees for what I'm sure is me.

"What are you looking for?" I'm close enough to hear Harrow's words as he obscures my view of Ravage, but when he keeps moving, I see Ravage's shoulders rise and fall in a shrug that accompanies his huff.

"You won't believe me when I tell you. Hell, I'm not sure I believe me. But..." He rounds on the man lying on the ground with his eyes on the two of them. As if he's waiting for a chance that definitely won't come. "Work first. Play after."

The fact he considers whatever is happening here just another day at the office,

judging by his tone, should bother me more than it does. But I don't move, and the rush of fear and unease in my chest goes away just as quickly as it had appeared.

They've really fucked me up.

But that's why I'm here.

Quietly, I shift until my knees are pressed to the ground, wincing at the stiffness in my legs and the press of gravel against my skin. My eyes are glued to Ravage, and the way he swoops in to grab the man's chin when he starts to threaten, and a snarl comes from his throat that does nothing but interest me more.

Embarrassingly, it sends a rush of heat between my thighs as the violence trickles down my spine.

Was I always like this? Deep down? With my mind half on them and half on my sudden existential crisis, I don't hear the exact words from the man on the ground. But I don't really care; I'm a little more interested in my new moral conundrum.

What if I've always been like this, and it just took the two of them to drag it out of me? I've watched true crime documentaries all my life, sure, but not because I get off on the murder or the violence. And certainly not the droning of 'experts' or investigators who puff out their chests or talk in voices that obviously weren't made for television.

So why now?

It also makes me wonder if I could've gone the rest of my life without discovering my little problem. If I'd just gone to the correct haunt that night, I might've been able to live a happy, normal, boring life. The kind I've been living for the last two decades and change.

The man screams as Ravage pounces. I hear the masked men laugh and my eyes jerk upward, gaze affixed on him as he cuts and tears and rips at the man with the blade flashing in his hand.

Or at least, it flashes until the knife is covered in dark, obscuring blood. Finally, I can't tell where his hand ends and the knife begins, and in some ways it seems like my lover is tearing at the man under him with his bare hands.

The thought is hotter than it should be.

But I've already decided I'm fucked up enough that no amount of therapy, meds, or a lobotomy will fix me.

Eventually, the man is still and silent on the ground, perfectly laid out in a band of moonlight that shines down on both him and Ravage crouched over him. The latter pants, shoulders heaving, and I belatedly wonder how much of his workout routine is geared toward ripping someone to shreds.

I'm too busy staring at him, however, to notice my own shift forward, or the way the moonlight reaches for me as if with insidious intent. Like it's playing a trick on me while I'm too distracted to notice. At the same time, Harrow turns, just enough, and I'm too slow to shrink back behind my hiding place.

For a few tense moments he looks in my direction while I remain still and the moonlight gradually fades behind a cloud once more. I expect him to say something. To do something. But he just turns back to Ravage and the corpse on the ground, his strides easy and long as he closes the distance between them to reach out and rake his hand through Ravage's hair.

"So much for restraint." I hear him chuckle. "One might think you were putting on a show." His voice is loud enough to carry, and I lean my weight against the tree, my

cheek following to press against the bark. It certainly isn't comfortable, but I'm tired enough from my aggressively long drive and run through the woods to not really care. As interested as I am, I would like to sleep sometime in the next few hours.

Maybe even before I confront the two of them, though that would require me getting out of here and away from the campground before they've seen me.

Ravage, at least, knows I'm here already. Meaning I can't get that far away without interruption, I'm sure.

"Maybe there's someone here worth putting on a show for." The soft purr comes from Ravage as he stands up, and in a surprisingly affectionate gesture, he nuzzles his mask against Harrow's throat like a cat. It feels strangely intimate, and I can't help but drop my eyes.

Maybe I shouldn't watch this, if it's going to become something...else. It feels rude, and definitely voyeuristic, especially as Ravage presses his body to Harrow's and lets out a needy, excited sound that Harrow meets with a soft growl from behind his mask.

They really are different people like this.

Ravage says something that I miss, though I blink up at them to see he's stepping back with the knife back in his hand.

"No." Harrow seems amused, but adamant, and before Ravage can step around him he reaches out to grip the front of his jacket. "You did most of it last time. I know you like the chase, but you've already had yours tonight."

"I won it fair and square," Ravage snaps in reply. "Besides, it was during my chase, so it's mine."

I have no idea what in the world they're talking about, but I feel uneasy all the same. I shift to the balls of my feet, completely off my heels, and notice the building ache in my back from being hunched over for so long.

"This is yours." Harrow shoves him back and gestures to the mess of body parts behind him. "So take responsibility. And hurry up. I won't wait for you."

God, I wish I had some context for this conversation.

"Don't go too far without me," Rav finally grumbles, shoulders slumping in defeat. "Don't do something you'll regret."

"Don't worry, darling boy." Harrow chuckles and turns just as the moonlight makes another appearance to illuminate him in the campsite. When I look up, his mask is pointed in my direction, and I feel his eyes on mine as the moonlight shines on me as well.

I'm busted.

I am so fucking busted, so I slowly straighten with a wince for my poor, abused knees.

"I want to have my fun for as long as I can." It dawns on me, finally, that I'm an idiot.

They've known I was here for at least five minutes.

My muscles tense, and my body screams at me to move, to escape, to do something other than stand here, and all of my resolve to confront them starts to waver in the face of actually doing what I came here for.

But I'm stuck completely still. I'm frozen to the spot and unable to speak while I hold my staring match with Harrow, like moving will break some kind of spell between us.

At least, until he moves, and my body acts on its own to bolt like the scared little prey they make me feel like.

I can't help it.

I run.

## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: July 22, 2025, 1:20 pm*

4

I don't know why I'm running.

Logically, I know this is what I came here for. I wanted to find the two of them, to tell them to their faces that they don't just get to leave me behind without a word.

Without a choice.

Yet seeing how they act when they're Harrow and Ravage makes something in me churn with a primal fear, and adrenaline courses through me to dull the ache of my sore legs. I run faster this time, tripping over roots and gravel and whatever else litters the campground. There's no point in being sneaky anymore. They know I'm here, and I'm not trying to eavesdrop.

But am I really trying to get away from him?

For a moment I consider slowing, and I finally do, only to hear the feral snarl of the masked man behind me. It sounds much more like an inhuman predator than one of the men I've been looking for. The sound makes me speed right back up until I'm panting with exertion and crashing through the undergrowth once more.

Within seconds, the cold air starts biting at my lungs, and I'm doing more tripping than actual running. From behind me I hear a sound of disapproval—a small growl almost—and just as I stumble over the remains of a camp grill, a hand snatches out to grab me by my hoodie and pull me back into a hard, lean chest.

“It’s no fun when I’m worried about you killing yourself in a fall,” Kieran huffs in my ear. “Now, are you going to fight me, or are you going to be good and tell me what the fuck you’re doing here, darling?”

My first urge is to fight him, and I go with it even as a loud, hysterical giggle bubbles from my lips. I kick out from him, scattering gravel, before slamming my foot back into his knee.

And it’s possible I pull my blow, in the same way he’s not holding me as tightly as he could. Kieran could take me down. Could force me to submit in a second if he really wanted to. Not to mention, I’m sure he has a weapon on him he could use against me, instead of letting me fight him like this.

But he merely huffs a chuckle, and one of his hands shifts from my waist to the front of my throat. “So we’re going to play this game?” he asks. The way his mask presses to the side of my face sends an unwanted shiver down my spine.

Fuck , being here just reinforces how messed up they’ve made me.

“I don’t think you deserve for me to settle down,” I tell him in a panting, breathy voice. My fingers hook around his wrists, but I’m not tugging. I’m not trying to pull him off of me. If anything, I’m trying to pull him closer, urging him to hold me more tightly.

Naturally, he notices.

I hear his soft laugh and he nuzzles my throat, though with the mask he can’t do much more than that. “You really want to play this game, don’t you?” His fingers tighten slowly around my throat, until he’s cutting off some of my air and reducing me to sharp, desperate pants to get the oxygen I need.



“Don’t—”

But he growls, cutting me off, and he certainly doesn’t lessen his grip. “No. You asked for it, little girl. You asked for this when you ran from me like you’re my prey.” God, the way he says it has me shuddering, and it takes a few moments for me to realize his hand on my hoodie is moving and taking mine along with it.

“Makes me wonder if the chase just makes you wetter. I won’t judge you if it did. After all...” Suddenly he splays his fingers on my stomach and yanks me back against him as he simultaneously rolls his hips forward and I feel his hardness pressed against my ass.

Fuck. My breath shouldn’t hitch the way it does, and I definitely shouldn’t be arching back into him like a needy, desperate thing.

“Chasing you might be one of my favorite activities. Want me to pin you down right here in the dirt and the gravel, darling? Want me to fuck you just like this, while you’re panting and begging me for air and the adrenaline still has you shaking?” The roughness of his voice has my head spinning, and I fight not to nod and beg for it.

I won’t.

Not tonight, at least.

“No,” I pant, a grin on my face that he can’t see. “Nah, you don’t get to, because I have questions and complaints.”

Something in him shifts. Something I barely notice in the feeling of his hands on me and the way his body is pressed to mine. “You have complaints?” he repeats, almost disbelieving. “You’re telling me you don’t want me to pin you down and fuck you like a bitch in heat right now?”

I can't help the shudder that goes through me, and from his soft murmur, I know he felt it too. His body shifts, rocking into mine, and I almost lose my composure right then.

"That is exactly what I'm telling you." It takes me a few moments to get the words out, and I tilt my head back against his shoulder to gaze up at the partially obscured moon above us. "Shall I start listing them, or should I wait until you have a pen and paper to?—"

His fingers slip under my jaw, pressing hard until I see stars and the burning ache becomes something half pleasure, half pain.

"What a little brat," Kieran remarks, finally loosening his fingers so I can take a gasp of air. "You've grown a spine since the last time I saw you shaking apart on your bed."

Whatever mortification, fear, or dismay might have once been set loose in my chest is long gone. After all, I've replayed those moments over and over in my mind since that morning, and I'm pretty much immune to it now.

"We can start there, actually," I go on sweetly, acutely aware of his hands on me and the way he's still subtly rocking against my body. "You left . I thought you were coming back. I thought that since?—"

His growl of irritation cuts me off, and Kieran spins me around, one hand on my throat as the other shakes free of me to rip off his mask. "Fine. I won't fuck you right here," he agrees ruefully, his dark eyes sharp. "But only because if I have to suffer through your complaints, so does Val. And I'm not going to hear it twice." He stands there, studying my gaze, until his brows knit together.

"Something's changed with you," he remarks at last, voice soft. "You're not the

same, are you? You're?—”

Frustrated as hell and secretly just as horny, I lunge forward onto the balls of my feet, hands curled tightly in his jacket to yank myself up to him and crush my lips to his. It's certainly bold of me, and a surprise even I hadn't seen coming from myself.

But judging from his sound of shock and the way he just stands there, Kieran hadn't expected it either.

Just as I'm sure I've fucked up, he seems to come alive. His mouth melds to mine, and he nips at my lower lip as his fingers shift to hold the back of my neck. His other hand goes to my lower back, and I feel his fingers gripping my hoodie tightly as he drags me in closer like he wants to devour me.

Which he does.

His lips are insistent, his teeth sharp against my tongue and bottom lip, and within seconds, I've lost control of what started as a kiss. Once he's tasted every inch of space between my lips, he moves to bite and nip at my lip, my jaw, and finally sinks his teeth into the side of my throat and bites.

A surprised cry leaves my lips and I roll up onto my toes, back arching at the sharp, stinging pain. Not that he cares. If anything, Kieran bites harder, sucking against my skin and not bothering to cover the loud, filthy sounds of him working over my throat.

If he wasn't holding me up, I'd probably embarrass myself by falling to the ground.

“Where did those complaints go?” Kieran taunts, letting go with one last, sharp nip to the place he's already made sore and tender. I yelp at the sting, dragging harder on his jacket as if I can pull him down to the ground with me.

“Oh, they’re still here,” I promise, head spinning and panting. “I have them in an itemized list, actually. A really well thought out, organized—” I’m being moved before I register anything other than my head spinning. Kieran yanks me off the ground, throwing me over his shoulder hard enough that his shoulder knocks the air out of my lungs and leaves me stunned.

His hand wraps around my thighs, and Kieran isn’t shy about groping my ass as he walks in long, measured strides.

“Where are we going?” I demand, fully considering kicking him in the chest just to see if I can make him feel it.

But as if he can read my mind, he slaps my thigh hard enough to pull a shocked, pained sound from my throat.

“If you kick me, I’ll drag you, little girl,” Kieran warns, prompting me to be sure he’s a mind reader. “So keep your legs right where they are, and you won’t end up with a bruised ass.” Fuck, that shouldn’t be so arousing. I shouldn’t have to press my thighs together, only for him to chuckle softly and shove his hand between them just to prove a point.

“You want to complain so bad? Like I said, Val gets to hear it too. He gets to be a part of your little game, since I’d just hate to have all the fun.” He strokes over my leggings, and I swear I can feel the searing heat of his touch through his gloves and the fabric covering my legs.

The cold suddenly finds me again and I shiver, realizing the adrenaline is finally draining out of my veins and leaving me feeling empty, and a little cold. Not that I’m going to complain about it. Especially to Kieran, when I want to keep some kind of brave front on to make him think I’m not as pathetic as I worry he does.

I want them to see me as an equal.

Not a liability to be left behind.

“You left me,” I say without really meaning to. I immediately regret the words, and dig an elbow into Kieran’s shoulder, as if to punish him for my admission instead of myself.

He doesn’t growl or threaten to drag me. Instead, his fingers stroke over my thighs, like he’s trying to comfort me. “You picked the coldest night of the week to come out here, you know,” he says by way of answer, his words full of reproach. “And you’re barely dressed for it. Is this all you own? Hoodies and leggings?”

“Yeah. And I’ve replaced the ones you ruined with blood. I have the bill with me, actually, so you can pay me back for that at your earliest convenience. Though I hope you understand that every day accrues new interest on your balance.” My words and quips are thankfully automatic and make him snort with amusement.

“I’ll get right on that, darling,” he assures me.

Footsteps on gravel that aren’t his cause me to look up, and I push my hands against his lower back to crank my spine in an unnatural direction to look around as much as I can.

Expectedly, we’re still at the campground. This site seems a bit less rundown than the others, and I’m surprised to see my small car parked at the front of it, on the other side of a still smoldering fire pit that sends the scent of smoke to my nose.

I wonder if they roast marshmallows over it, or just dead bodies.

“I thought you’d be gone longer.” Kieran drops me as the words find my ears, and I

turn once I have my balance to find Val leaning against the side of an RV, arms crossed and head tilted to the side. I can barely see his unmasked face in the moonlight, but I can feel his satisfied gaze on me. “You said you wanted to have fun this time, and her clothes aren’t ripped to shreds. Did you even fuck her?”

“No.” Kieran sighs, tossing his mask down into a camp chair. “I didn’t. Apparently, she has some complaints she wants to lodge with us, and I decided I didn’t want to hear them twice.”

“Complaints?” Val tilts his head, reminding me of a confused puppy when he does it. Curiously, I step closer to him, until the light from the RV is enough for me to really see his face.

God, they really are the most gorgeous men I’ve ever met.

“Yes.” I sigh dramatically, forcing myself to get a hold of myself. No matter how much I want to touch them, no matter how much I want to lick them, I can’t.

Not yet.

“Complaints. Starting with the most important one.” I take a breath and run my fingers through my black and faded-orange hair, standing straight and raising my chin defiantly.

“Why the fuck did you leave me without even a goodbye? Why the hell didn’t both of you come back ?”

Val is the first one to move, and it's to yank open the door of the RV that seems to stick a little bit. "It's cold. Do you want to...?" He gestures with his glove covered hand before walking inside himself, not waiting to see if I'll take the invitation.

"Do I have to pick you up again?" Kieran murmurs, leaning his chin on my shoulder. "I might hit your head on that tiny door if I have to carry you."

"I wasn't really trying to run away, you know," I mutter, some of the adrenaline still singing sweetly in my veins. My fingers flex against my leggings, and when I turn to glance at Kieran—even though I can barely see much more of him than his nose—I hear him give a soft, almost affectionate sigh.

"I know." His fingers brush my back, up and down my spine, before he gently pushes me toward the open door. "Come on, princess. He's about to fall apart with anticipation. After all, unlike me, he hasn't gotten to focus on you yet tonight."

I bite my tongue, figuring my arguments are better served for both of them, square my shoulders, and walk up the stairs into the RV. The inside makes me pause, and I'm surprised by how homy it feels. It's not some cheap murder bus with blood stains and canned food.

It's actually pretty nice, and part of me wonders if they have a permanent thing with traveling like this.

Not that right now is the right time to bring it up.

My toes curl in my sneakers as I step further into the RV, eyes skimming the sofa against one side. On the other side, a pop-out, I think it's called, with a television hangs over a little table sandwiched between two booths. In the back, I think I can see the foot of a bed, and there's a kitchenette a few steps away, so I suppose if they wanted to, they really could live here.

As I watch, Val carefully sets his mask on the table, followed by his gloves once he peels them off of his fingers. Next, he unbuckles his knife from his belt, and that goes onto the table as well in a small pile just inches from the edge.

My stomach twists and I take a breath. But now is as good a time as any, I suppose. "Okay, so, first complaint," I start as the auburn-haired man turns to look at me with his eyes framed by thick lashes. "I'm?—"

I don't get to finish.

Val surges toward me, hands out. His fingers curl in my hoodie so he can drag me forward over the laminate floor and slam his mouth to mine. "I'd apologize," he snarls against my lips, turning to shove me against the counter and pin me there with his body. "Fuck, I'll apologize if you want."

He licks at my lower lip until I open my mouth with a gasp, and then a growl leaves his throat as he surges forward to devour my mouth much like Kieran had.

But Val is so needy, so desperate. He's less in control than Kieran, but I love it just as much. I can't help the way I throw my arms over his shoulders to drag him closer, and when he shoves a knee between my thighs, I can't stop the soft sound that leaves me.

God, maybe I really am just desperate and easy for them.



“I have complaints,” I remind him, my fingers trembling in his jacket when he pulls away just enough that I can breathe. “I have so many— ” My words turn into a sharp yelp when he suddenly bites down on the side of my neck that Kieran hadn’t touched. He’s just as desperate, just as sloppy and enthusiastic as he bites once, then again, until finally he latches on and works to leave his mark on my skin as my head spins and my complaints start fading from my brain a little.

Especially with the way he’s moving his knee between my thighs. A whimper meets my ears that I realize is mine, and when I look around for something else to focus on, some kind of distraction, Kieran seems to sense my distress.

He comes in the door, closing it behind him. When I open my mouth to say something, though I’m not sure what, he growls softly and reaches out to grip my hair and drag my face up to his.

Kieran kisses me with the same level of need as Val, though they show it in two different ways. Trapped between them, I can’t be cold at all. Suddenly I want to peel off every layer I’m wearing and forget my complaints until the sun rises.

After all, shitty conversations are for daylight.

But my brain just won’t cooperate.

I force myself to pull back, force myself to let go of Val and press my hands to the counter behind me. “S-stop,” I demand, though I’m both relieved and disappointed when Val obliges with one last lick to my stinging throat. He steps away as I try to get my thoughts back in order, though I definitely don’t miss his self-satisfied smirk or the way he licks his lips like he can taste me on them. “Stop.” They have already, but the second one is mostly for myself.

“You left me,” I say, forcing myself to sound displeased. “You left me. Crying. After

you made me a murderer. You..." I close my eyes hard, and I find it's easier to do this when I can't see them. "You fucking left me crying on my fucking bed !" For good measure, I reach out and shove Val, who makes a noise of surprise.

"That was totally not my fault!" he squawks. "It was his idea to let you figure shit out. He said you might have a change of heart. And we wanted to give you a chance to be?—"

"Normal?" I demand, opening my eyes. "How the hell am I supposed to be normal, Val?" Though when he looks at Kieran for help, I decide to turn on him instead.

Which is...less of a good idea. He's not so easily intimidated by me, or at the very least, willing to play along like Val is. When I step toward him, Kieran's brows go up and he leans his elbow against the counter, clearly giving me an invitation I know I'll regret.

So I do the smart thing and turn back on Val. "Why didn't you tell me you weren't coming back?!"

He rolls his eyes, throwing Kieran an exasperated look that also seems like it might be a cry for help. The latter sighs, though he doesn't move, and I look between them for an answer.

"Because you deserved to make a choice. We sort of figured you wouldn't want this." Pointedly, he pulls the sheathe with its knife free from his belt and lays it on the counter.

"RV life?" I ask, pointedly obtuse. "You think my cats and I don't want RV life ? Haven't you been on Facebook, Kieran? RV life is?—"

"You're being facetious," he cuts me off smoothly. "You're being a brat. If you want

to make serious complaints and have a serious, grown up conversation, Noa, then don't act like you just want me to throw you on that bed back there and spank you until your thighs and ass are bruised."

It's hard not to let that sudden mental image sway me from my conviction. "Shut up," I mutter, and once again his brows shoot up, just as Val whistles from where he's leaning against the table.

"That's bold of you, Noa," Val chuckles, seemingly unbothered by my complaints. "Come on, look at me. Be mean to me. It's your safer option." He reaches out to grab my wrist, and tugs me forward to stand between the v of his legs where he leans on the table. "I'm so sorry, baby," he murmurs. "Princess, don't be mad at us. Can you really blame us for wanting to let you live a normal life? You know what we are. You know what we do. And Noa, as much as we love you"—he trails his fingers down my face—"we can't change what we are for you."

Wait .

Everything in me is sure I've misheard him, and my eyes narrow as I look at his face, while Kieran lets out an exasperated breath behind me.

"Di-did you say you love me?" I murmur, sure I've misheard him. "Like, actual, I-word, love me?" That can't be right, and I'm absolutely going to assume he meant it as a figure of speech.

An exaggeration.

Hell, a murderous colloquialism, even.

Val glances at Kieran, who snorts. "You said it, not me. I told you not to. I told you she'd run away," he points out dryly.

“She’s not running away,” I snap, just to be contrary. “I just...” With one hand on Val’s knee, I pin him with my gaze. “You can’t really mean that.”

“Why not?” I barely notice him leaning forward until his lips are inches from mine. “Why can’t I mean it for you, princess? You think we would’ve hesitated to kill you if we didn’t have a healthy amount of affection for you when we first met?”

Distantly, I feel the curl of his fingers around my wrists, and it registers in my brain that he’s very slowly trapping me here. At the realization of it, I move to jerk back slightly, but a small grin curls over his lips and he doesn’t let me go.

Kieran stepping into the space behind me seems to seal the deal of me being trapped. He lifts my hair off of my shoulder, twining it into one hand before he leans in to run his lips over the sensitive side of my throat that Val marked only a few minutes ago.

“I’m not done complaining,” I murmur. “I had a whole thing thought out here.”

“Uh huh.” Val grins, and he really looks like he knows he’s getting away with everything he shouldn’t. “We know you do. But can you really tell me you want to complain more than you want to be fucked, princess?”

A jolt of excitement goes through me, constricting my lungs and pooling between my thighs with needy, wanting heat. I curl my fingers against Val’s sleeves, biting my lip as I try to focus on something other than the look in his eyes and Kieran’s mouth on my throat.

“You left me,” I remind them, realizing I sound like a broken record.

“We would’ve come back for you after this was done,” Kieran growls in my ear. “To at least give you the option. I said maybe we shouldn’t, but...” he trails off and licks a line up my jaw that has me going up on my toes.

“But what?” I demand, keeping an eye on Val as he gets to his feet, standing close enough that he’s pressed against me, chest to chest. With Kieran tight against my back, I’ve never felt more trapped in my life.

“But fuck , there’s no way we could’ve just let you forget us so easily. God, Noa.” Kieran buries his face in my throat. “If anyone should have complaints, it’s me.”

“And why the hell is that?” I try to keep some bite in my voice, some indignation, but it’s so difficult when Val is looming closer, with his eyes focused on my mouth like he’s imagining everything he wants to do to me.

“Because you make it hard to focus on anything but marking you up and making you ours. Could you do me a favor, Val?” The question surprises both me and Val, and we glance up at Kieran when he straightens.

“Depends. Because you don’t get any more playtime with her without me,” Val replies carefully, eyes narrowed.

“I’m not asking for that.” Kieran moves just enough for me to see his shrewd expression while he looks down at me, head tilted to the side and thoughtful.

On Val, it’s a cute, adoring look.

On Kieran, it’s a bit terrifying.

“When I step back and go to lock up, could you drag darling Noa back to the bed so we can wreck her like she’s asking for?”

“Like I’m asking for ?” I repeat, my voice rising as the words drop from my lips. “Did you really just?—?”

Val's cackle cuts me off, and Kieran steps back so Val can grab me in the circle of his arms, crushing me to his chest. "Come on, princess," he growls, nipping at my lip. "Come remind me why you're our perfect, feral little thing."

"You called me that when I was fighting you," I breathe, my brain not quite working at full capacity with him this close.

"Yeah." His smile widens. "And that's exactly what I'm asking for now." He clicks his teeth together close to my face, and it sets something off inside of me that's been simmering away and tearing into me for a month. I lunge for him, but he takes my momentum and keeps us moving, dragging me by both hands down the center of the RV without needing to look behind him.

Unerringly, he turns at last, dragging me through the small doorway and into the bedroom, where a large, queen-size bed sits elevated against the windows snug at the rear of the RV. With no space between it and the walls on either side, it's easy for Val to launch me onto the bed with one quick movement from his strong arms. He doesn't follow, though, and when I sit up to protest, the words die on my lips.

Especially when he strips out of his jacket and shirt, leaving his upper body bare in the dim light of the RV. It's hard to say anything when I'm busy admiring him, and I can tell he notices when he takes a moment to just let me look.

Fuck, it really isn't unfair how hot these two murderers are.

"It's all yours to mark up, princess." Val chuckles, unbuttoning his jeans and shoving them and his underwear down his thighs. It doesn't surprise me that he's hard, just as it shouldn't have surprised me that Kieran was getting off on the chase.

In my distraction, Val is able to finish undressing before he slinks onto the bed like a giant cat, his muscles sleek and graceful under his skin as he moves toward me. I bite

my lip as I look at him, my eyes narrowed, and before I can do anything, he lunges for me.

It's all too easy for Val to pin me, even amidst my vocal and physical protests. I fight him, not because I'm afraid, but because I want to. Because being their feral little thing does something to me that I'm not ready to admit yet. I click my teeth together in front of his face, prompting a snarl to fall from his lips, and his hands yank on my hoodie, pulling it off without much effort and tossing it to the floor.

"I brought your backpack in from your car, by the way," he murmurs in my ear, using his body to pin me to the bed as his hands hook in the waist of my leggings. "And obviously I brought your car here. You really just left it on, keys in the ignition. What if some bad man—" He yanks my leggings down my hips, taking my underwear with them, and growls against my mouth when I let out a sound of surprise and protest.

"What if some bad man had come and found your car, huh?" He forces the leggings off my legs, along with my shoes, before coming back down to his hands and knees over me. "Can you imagine what he might've done?" His eyes glitter as he speaks, and my chest heaves under my t-shirt.

"Stolen it?" I breathe, trying and failing to fight him when he pins my hands over my head.

"Nah, that's thinking small. No, a really bad man would get in the back. It's dark, after all. And if you're willing to just leave the door open, I doubt you check your back seat." Slowly he lowers himself down over me, until he can brush his nose up my jaw. "A terrible man would wait for you to come back, wait until you've parked somewhere and you're so tired ." His voice is soft and cooing as I arch into him, though I'm not sure if I'm actually trying to get out from under him or get more contact.

“He’d take advantage of a pretty little princess like you.” God, the nickname makes something in me twist with excitement, though I jerk my head away from him before he can see my blush.

And right into Kieran’s hand. He grips my chin in his fingers as he leans over me, still dressed in a snug v-neck, jeans, and his gloves. “Two terrible men wouldn’t stop there,” he murmurs, holding my gaze. “They’d take you back to their RV. They’d make you theirs, darling. Worst of all?”

I watch as he kneels on the bed, leaning down to cradle my face. “Worst of all, they’d wreck you for anyone else in the world. Over and over again, until you’re just a sobbing, begging mess who needs their cocks and their touch.”

I wonder how someone gets so good at this that they can have me pressing my thighs together with just a few words. I’m wordless, completely speechless and unable to form a rational thought while I watch him unbuckle his belt and open the front of his jeans.

“Come on, darling,” he urges, prompting Val to let go of me just enough so I can sit up slightly. “I want those pretty lips wrapped around my cock just like they were in that warehouse closet. Remind me how much I love that sweet mouth of yours.”

“Remind me why I don’t bring up my complaints again?” I ask sweetly, feeling his grip turn stern on my chin as Kieran smiles right back at me.

“Because your mouth is gonna be way too busy, sweetheart,” he tells me just as sweetly. “And don’t think for a moment that if you bite me or be a brat about this that I won’t flip you over and spank your pretty ass and thighs until you’re a bruised and sobbing mess. You want to come tonight, don’t you, Noa?”

“Of course she does,” Val answers for me. “Suck his cock, princess. Show me how



you did it back at the warehouse.”

“She was so cute in that storage room.” Kieran guides my face further into his lap, until I can flick my lip against his tip and feel him stiffen. “Come on, gorgeous.” With a hand in my hair, he pulls me further into his lap, while Val is behind me, pushing me gently onto my knees so I can do this better.

Not that I’m complaining.

I certainly don’t complain when I stroke my tongue up the underside of Kieran’s cock, and the low groan he gives only serves to encourage me to do more.

“She’s bolder this time,” he tells Val, never letting go of my hair. “She was so scared in that closet. With my mask on, poor little Noa here was so sure she was going to die. And yet...” He tightens his fingers and yanks me forward until I make a noise of protest, my hands grabbed by Val before I can really use them.

“And yet, I bet she’s just as turned on as she was last time. Why don’t you check, Val?” A jolt goes through me, and I squirm when Val shoves my thighs apart.

“Oh princess, you’re just so fucking wet.” I hear him growl, but all I can focus on is breathing around Kieran’s cock. Especially when he combs his fingers through my hair and arches his hips up into my mouth, one knee on the bed to provide him leverage as he fucks my mouth. “Does her mouth feel as good as it looks like it does?” Val’s fingers skim along my folds, causing me to shudder.

A low whine leaves me, but thankfully I doubt either of them hear me. Especially when Kieran starts talking about my mouth, and giving Val a play-by-play of when he’d fucked my mouth in the supply closet.

God, it really shouldn’t be something that’s so hot to listen to. Especially since I was

there and all. But when Val shoves two fingers into me, I let out a yelp of surprise and jerk forward, nearly choking on Kieran's cock.

"So wet," he repeats with a low chuckle. "Babe, you just want this so bad, don't you? Don't worry, my feral little thing." He smooths both hands down my hips and shoves them wider apart. "I won't leave you waiting, don't worry." He fucks me open on two fingers for barely a minute before pulling back, and I feel him lean over me to ruck up my shirt and kiss my spine.

"I'm going to fuck you now, Noa," Val murmurs in my ear. "I'm going to fuck your pussy while Kieran fucks your mouth. We'll fuck all those complaints right out of you. Make sure you know you're ours."

His hands go to my hips, leaving mine free, but I don't have a chance to do anything before he slams into me, his cock buried so far in my pussy I want to sob from the perfect, painful ache.

God, he feels too good to be true. Both of them do, as they fuck my face and my pussy while talking between them once in a while.

And I just feel...there. Like I'm drifting between them.

It should feel awkward. I should feel like I don't matter, or like they're only using me. Instead, I feel anything but.

"Fuck," Kieran breathes finally, and he reaches up with his other hand to rake it through my hair as well. "Fuck, perfect girl. I'm going to come, and you're going to swallow every bit of it, aren't you?" He can't be expecting me to answer. I quite literally have no ability to do anything except take his cock.

Val laughs sharply, voice rough behind me. "Oh, I think you made her grip me even

tighter. She has such a greedy cunt. She's begging for you to come down her throat while I fill her up. Aren't you, princess?"

I whine, the sound desperate and needy and anything but complaining. Kieran laughs at it, at me, and adjusts his hands as he presses his knee harder onto the bed.

"Get her to come with us, Val," he murmurs. "She deserves it for being so good for both of us. Consider it my apology," he adds, tugging pointedly on my hair. "I'll look past how much of a brat you've been and let you come on Val's cock. I'll even let him play with your clit."

At his words, Val nips my shoulder and circles his arm under my hips to stroke his middle finger along my overly sensitive body. He strokes between my folds, up and down my slit until finally— finally— his finger rubs over my clit.

It doesn't take long before I'm crying out around Kieran's cock. It takes even less time for him to thrust once more while Val's pace speeds up. I'm sobbing, tears quite literally running down my cheeks as I come on Val's cock.

Kieran comes next, holding me tight with my nose to his hips and murmuring praise after praise for me alone. But Val isn't far behind. He slams into me, and his hands on my hips are sure to leave bruises. I lose track of most of what's going on, so I'm not sure exactly how long it takes him to finally bury his cock in my body and come with a snarl against my ear.

I'm too busy floating and being probably the happiest I've been in years once I start to come down from the high of my orgasm. Sensing it, Kieran pulls his cock free and cradles my face in his hands. "Good girl," he breathes. "You're always so good for us."

"I still have complaints," I murmur, feeling Val curl his arms around me and fall onto

his side to drag me with him, with his cock still in my cunt. “Remember those?”

“Yeah.” Kieran chuckles and gets to his feet, turning off the last light shining in the RV. He shucks off his shirt as I watch, then his jeans, before getting on the bed and stretching out alongside me, one of his legs thrown over mine and Val’s.

“And those complaints can wait until morning, feral darling. You’re tired, and so are we, so why don’t you be a good cockwarmer for Val and go to sleep, okay?” There’s sweetness in his filthy words, and I can’t help burying my face in his chest as he tucks my hair behind my ear.

“For now,” I finally promise, taking a breath against his chest and letting out. “But just while it’s dark, and I’m tired.”

Thunder rumbling outside the RV is what wakes me up, but it's only the first thing I notice and certainly the least important.

A hand is still curled on my thigh, fingers stroking along my skin sweetly and almost possessively. Finally, I realize Val and Kieran are talking, but I don't move. I don't open my eyes, wanting to listen to their conversation for as long as possible. Or at least until I can decide if it's relevant to me or not.

"She's not going to like that." Val chuckled, soft amusement and tiredness in his voice. Outside I hear another roll of thunder, and at any other time I'd be sitting up with my nose pressed to the glass to watch the impending storm. But this is more important. "So I won't help you. If you want her to go home, you can tell her."

I can't help it. I tense, and Val's fingers stop moving on my hip just as he lets out a soft chuckle. "And look who's awake. Just in time, aren't you, princess? However..." His fingers splay over my hip and he leans close to nuzzle my shoulder. "We have got to work on your eavesdropping skills. This is the second time in a row you're not as sneaky as you thought."

My eyes open and I look up, finding Kieran still in front of me, though he's sitting up and leaning back against the window. He's also wearing pants, which is a real disappointment, and gazing down at me with his typical shrewd gaze.

"I'm not going home," I tell him flatly, not responding to Val except to shiver under his light touch as it resumes. "I drove nine fucking hours to come and air out my

complaints?—”

“Which you did, for the most part,” he replies, cutting me off smoothly. “We get it. We shouldn’t have left for so long, and I admit things got a little...difficult. Sometimes Nero asks us to do stupid shit, and we do. Sometimes, we’re stuck cleaning up other people’s messes, because we know how to make it go away.” He reaches out to stroke his fingers through my hair affectionately, eyes dropping to his phone.

“But you’re going home, Noa. And we’ll come find you once we’re?—”

“I swear on my favorite hanukiah, that’s all cats holding up the candles, I will glue myself to Val if you tell me to go home one more fucking time.” My words are sharper than I intend, but I mean them.

Both men are silent, with Kieran side-eyeing me while Val processes my words with his hand going still on my thigh. “What uh, what exactly is a hanukiah?” he asks at last. “You know, so I can properly grasp the gravity of the situation at hand?”

“You know. The thing everyone calls a menorah. Candle holder with nine candles? Miracle of oil lasting eight days?” I wave my hand dismissively in the air. “It’s basically a family heirloom, and I light it every year for Hanukkah. My grandma got it for my mom, who gave it to me when I moved out.”

“Importance on a scale of one to ten?” he asks hopefully, prompting me to roll my eyes up at Kieran.

“Eight point five. Final answer.”

“Understood.” He rests his chin on my arm and looks up at Kieran, batting his eyes. “She makes a pretty convincing argument.”

“Only because you don’t want to end up glued to her and we both know it’s a serious threat,” the sterner man replies with a sigh. But he looks at me, giving me the glare of almost disdain and definite disapproval. “You don’t even know what we’re doing.”

“Murder?” I assume automatically.

Val’s the one to reply, and he groans before burying his face against my shoulder. “Why do you always go right to murder, Noa?” he complains. “We aren’t that simple.”

“You’re right. What was I thinking? I mean, last night, that clearly wasn’t murder.” My words are as dry as the Sahara as I turn to look at him as much as I can, my face expressionless and incredibly unimpressed. “It was dancing, right?”

“Okay, all right. Don’t be a bitch, princess.” He nips my shoulder blade, pulling a yelp from me that’s more from surprise than pain. “Yeah, that was murder. But today...” he trails off, looking up at Kieran for help.

But he only sighs and shakes his head. “No, she’s right. You are that simple. And yes, what we’re doing does involve more murder. Eventually. Probably.” Then he shrugs his shoulders, as if the possibility of it doesn’t really matter that much to him.

Maybe it doesn’t.

“I’m not going home.” I try to put conviction in the words as I sit up, shaking off Val, who groans in disgust and flops back down on the bed. He’s still just as naked as he was last night, and he’s the only one, since I somehow retained custody of my t-shirt. Not that I mind, since it’s one I’ve slept in multiple times, anyway.

Getting to my feet, I move to the main living space of the RV, peeking out the window to look at the wooded campground outside. There’s absolutely no one around

to see me pants-less, so I take my time going through my backpack to find the comfiest pair of sweatpants that I own and luckily washed before I left to come here.

Sliding them on provides me with comfort and warmth, and makes me feel better about going back to have the argument I put off by coming out to get dressed. I even find my shoes, though instead of putting them on, I carefully set them next to the two pairs of boots by the RV door.

They look so...normal compared to Ravage's combat boots that look a lot like the ones he'd made me kiss. Even Val's black boots, though less intimidating, look so strange against my sad, muddy sneakers, which have seen better days and are hanging on by a whisper of a prayer.

You can do this , I remind myself as I stare at my transparent reflection in one of the large windows.

You have to do this , I add in a soft, silent whisper while I walk back toward the bed that takes up most of the back end of the RV.

I don't sit back down, because that could get me into trouble real quick. By this point, I have to assume they know how to distract me better than any shiny object or catchy song ever could, so it's much safer for me to lean against the doorframe and just study the two of them.

They're so different, I think to myself as Val rolls around the bed with a few broken groans of frustration at having to get up. He's the loud, boisterous one. With golden, sun-kissed skin and permanently tousled hair. While Kieran is the calmer one. The nocturnal professional with an inner quiet that makes the world fade away whenever he grabs me and pins me under him.

They're both so perfect, so different, I think it's what adds to their appeal.



That, or I just have problematic taste for murderous men in masks and now I'm looking for any kind of justification to not seem so desperately pathetic.

"I don't want to go home." I keep the words level, hoping not to start a fight. Kieran is the difficult one, and definitely the one who's harder to convince, so I stare him down with what I hope isn't some creepy, too awkward glare.

Judging by Val giving me a subtle nod, I have to assume I'm doing the right thing.

At last, Kieran sighs and drags his gaze up to mine. His expression makes him impossible to read, and when he narrows his eyes at me with that shrewd, thoughtful look, it definitely doesn't help. "So you want to stay..." It isn't a question, but I suspect he's just revving up. "You want to stay with us in an RV while we take care of stupid shit that definitely involves murder. Or do you think the murder will stop because you're here?"

The question, and more importantly, the way he dives right to the heart of the issue, catches me off guard. I have to remind myself that it's his intention to throw me off balance, so I take my time before answering him, and I refuse to let him see more than the flicker of surprise I couldn't hide when he asked.

"I can't change you. I know that. And I certainly wouldn't have come all the way here if that was my intention." With a frown, I try to convey that I'm completely serious about this. "Last night, I told myself that if I couldn't follow Val, if I couldn't stand there and watch what the two of you did to that man, there was no point in me being here and I might as well go home." I suck in a breath, trying to find more ways to convince him I'm serious. "I told myself?—"

"So you've convinced yourself you can stand behind Val and be our cheerleader? That you can root for us when we wear our masks and hand out punishments to anyone we deem deserves it?" I remind myself he's doing this for a reason, so if I

show him a reaction other than calm rationality and poise during this conversation, he'll be winning the argument. "But what happens when that isn't all it is, huh? What happens when the guy gets away from us and runs toward you, begging you for help?"

He sets his phone down, grabbing Val before the latter can get up. Dragging him back down to the bed while ignoring his yelp of protest. "Tell me, Noa," Kieran prompts. "What happens when Val here says your name, your real name, and suddenly you have a guy telling you all the reasons you should spare him while he bleeds out on your shoes? What happens when?—"

"I don't know." I don't mean to cut him off, exactly. But his words make me nervous and uncertain. I bite my lip and link my hands behind my back, scuffing my foot on the faux wood laminate under me. "I can't answer that part, but you know that, or you wouldn't ask." My tone is sullen, and Kieran's mouth quirks into something like a smirk of almost approval.

"You're asking me hypotheticals about situations I've never been in. And you want me to say something stupid so you can jump on it," I work out, speaking into the open air to get my thoughts out there. It's a little easier this way. Especially since Val is great at giving me tiny visual cues, like a smile or a frown, to keep me on the right track.

I guess I can always be grateful that he, at least, is on my side.

"You think I'll promise you the moon when I can't even guarantee the stars. But I won't. I'm not that stupid," I say reprovably, still keeping my fingers clasped behind my back as I puzzle through my thoughts and words. "All I can say is that I want to try. I don't want to be left at home like the wife whose husband goes to the store for milk and may or may not return home. I don't want to only accept you when you can be who I'm comfortable with, rather than who you really are." My confidence leaves

me, and I gaze at both of them with more nervousness than I'd like to admit.

“Unless you don't want that.” I can't help admitting that part. “It's not like I force you to want that. I don't want to force you to do anything, actually. But if that's the case, I really need you to tell me now, before?—”

A heavy knock on the RV door cuts me off and sends me levitating almost to the ceiling. Val groans and buries his face in his pillow, but Kieran rolls to his feet like he's not surprised.

“Are you expecting someone?” I can't help but ask, a touch of nerves in my voice as he gives me a rueful smile.

“Yeah. I just thought he'd be a bit later.” As I watch, he pulls on the same t-shirt from last night, which is now creased and wrinkled, before he moves to stand in front of me and stares down at me with that look again. “You need to move for me, pretty girl.” Kieran chuckles quietly, then reaches out to tuck my hair behind my ear, which I realize really needs to be brushed, I'm sure. Not that he seems to mind. Especially judging by how he cups my cheek sweetly and trails his thumb over my lower lip.

“You are going to make today so complicated, aren't you?” he muses, not seeming very put out by it. Another knock sounds, and he rolls his eyes, only to forcibly but gently move me to the side. He moves past me easily, and in seconds his boots are on before he opens the door to greet whoever is there.

“Sam,” I hear him sigh, just as Val wraps his arms around me. “You're early.” Whatever else he says is lost when he closes the door with a look back in my direction, and when I'm spun around to face Val, my attention falters.

“Hi there, princess,” he murmurs, bumping his nose against mine. “Did you sleep well? It's surprisingly cozy in here, right?”

My fingers trail along his bare upper body, stopping at the hem of his jeans that are still unbuttoned. “Do you live in an RV?” I ask, more curious than judging. After all, who am I to judge? I think it’s pretty cool if they do.

“Sometimes,” Val admits after a few moments of thought. “It depends on where we’re going. We usually bring it to a new destination first, and we’ve used it to, uh...store things.” He skirts around what he really means, but I don’t exactly need him to elaborate. “But Kieran and I also have a place other than the one we brought you to. Not that it feels like we’re there much.”

Gently but with insistence, he pulls me back to the bed where he can sit. Then, surprising me, he drags me down onto his lap until I’m straddling his thighs and pressed against his warmth.

When he kisses me, his mouth sweet against mine, it dawns on me exactly what he’s doing. “I thought you were on my side,” I murmur accusingly against his mouth. “You acted like it this morning. Until now, anyway.”

He chuckles, and when he pulls back with a mischievous smile, I’m a bit relieved to realize he’s not going to lie to me or deny it. “Yeah,” Val agrees, his hands stroking up my back under my shirt. “Yeah, Noa. I’m distracting you while Kieran deals with Sam.”

“Why? Does he not like me?” something goes through me, like unease, but Val is quick to kiss me breathless until the feeling goes away again.

“Babe, I think you amuse the hell out of him. But Kieran wants you to stay out of it, remember? He wants to protect you, to not put you in a bad position.” He’s not really keeping me trapped by anything other than his words and his touch, but I feel almost riveted in place all the same.

God, I've never had someone—or two someones—able to make me react like this in my life. I lean into him with a sigh, nipping at Val's lower lip and reaching up to card my fingers through his messy hair. "Do you really love me?" I ask, unable to help myself.

"Just as much as I love tall, dark, and frustrating out there," Val replies easily. The idea of him loving Kieran is a momentary shock, though really I should've realized that. After all, it's pretty clear they're closer than just coworkers or murder buddies.

I've seen the way Val looks at Kieran with excitement and raw attraction.

And I've definitely noticed how Kieran glances at Val with warmth and affection. At least until Val looks back at him and the look fades to fond frustration or downright irritation at whatever is coming out of the brunette's mouth.

"So..." I kiss him again, forming a plan in my head. "I'm going out there." I need to prove that I can be a part of this. That I want to be a part of this and that I'm not satisfied with Val keeping me company.

I don't need to be entertained.

"I could stop you," Val points out. "You wouldn't even mind it, I swear. I could pin you down and eat you out. You'd come so hard with my fingers and tongue in that pretty pussy, Noa." His eyes dance as he promises me what I know he can deliver, and warmth pools in my lower body, prompting me to groan.

"Yeah, as tempting as that is, I'm still going out there. Are you going to stop me?" I lift my chin to look at him, trying not to look like a pleading little girl. "I mean, really stop me?"

For a few tense seconds Val holds my gaze, searching for something I'm not sure

he'll find. After all, I don't even know what he's looking for. "Nah, I won't stop you. I don't like being the bad guy for you." His fingers smooth up my thighs before he leans back on his hands, looking tempting and sinful as hell in just a pair of unbuttoned jeans.

As I move to get up, though, he reaches out to grip my wrist gently, pulling me to a stop. "He'll try to make you back down," Val tells me kindly. "He'll try to make you nervous. To make you second guess yourself. He thinks it'll protect you from the worst sides of us."

"So I shouldn't let him?" I ask, a wry grin on my lips.

But Val just shrugs his lean, muscled shoulders. "I guess that's up to you and how much you want to see of us." Then he drops his hand and flops back onto the bed with a groan. "Go out there and tell him you beat me up or something. I'll be out when I'm dressed."

With one last smile in his direction, I shove my feet into my sneakers and open the door, having to push a little more than I expect to when it sticks. The noise attracts the attention of both men, though they remain seated at the rusted picnic table a few feet away.

Sam looks just like he did a month ago, though it's not like I should be surprised. Still, to me, he'll always be Nero, and his smile when he sees me somehow reminds me of the regality of his demeanor back at the haunt.

"Good morning, Noa," he greets as another, closer roll of thunder sounds. "Kieran was just telling me you were here. Bit of a long drive to do in the cold, isn't it?"

"My super power is long distance driving. My true calling is being a trucker, actually," I admit, shivering in the chilly air and wishing I grabbed my hoodie off of

the floor.

“I thought Val was keeping you entertained.” Kieran’s words are cool and neutral, so I turn my bright grin on him and march right over to sit beside him on the picnic table, though it takes all of my mental fortitude to do so. Especially when he shifts against me, though it’s only to wrap an arm over my shoulders and pull me in against his warmth.

“This seemed more interesting, so I knocked him out and came out here,” I lie, trying to look and sound like neither of them intimidate me in the least. Which unfortunately for me, isn’t true at all.

“It’s not that interesting,” Sam informs me almost kindly. “It’s just work.”

“Well, I have nothing better to do,” I reply with faux cheerfulness and a conversational tone. I won’t be pushed into going back inside. At least, not that easily.

Sam stares at me, studying my features, until Kieran shifts beside me and gives a soft sound of displeasure in his throat. Though it only makes Sam’s grin widen and he sits back, hands raised in surrender. “Relax, Kier. I’m not about to steal your prize. She’s not my type. No offense, Noa,” he adds, glancing in my direction.

“What’s your type?” I’m only a little interested, but from the way Kieran stiffens beside me, I wonder if it’s something I shouldn’t have asked. Especially when he lets out an audible breath with his attention fixed firmly on Sam.

“I don’t think he wants me to tell you,” Sam chuckles, resting his head on his hand. His eyes go back to Kieran’s just as the RV door opens again, revealing Val dressed and my hoodie in his hand. Gratefully, I take it when he tosses it to me, and I sit up enough to pull it on before letting Kieran pull me against his side once more.

Instead of sitting like us, Val chooses instead to perch on the tabletop itself. He seems unruffled by Sam's presence and greets him with a quick clasp of his arm. "We're ahead of your schedule, and you'd better be taking that body with you." He chuckles, prompting me to look around until I see a large truck parked just behind my car. The tailgate is down, like he's ready to load something, but I have no idea where the body from last night is.

"I'll finish your cleanup," Sam agrees. "But do I need to ask Erika to, uh, come out here and give someone a ride home?" His eyes drift to me, and I wonder if he knows Erika is the one who told me where to go.

Well, either way, I'm not about to tell him. "I don't need a ride home," I tell him cheerfully instead. "I'm right where I want to be."

Sam doesn't answer, but his gaze goes to Kieran and he lifts his brows as if to ask, really ?

"You could really do me a favor and go back inside," Kieran murmurs against my jaw. "Why are you so interested in what you already know is a crime?"

"Because I'm being a supportive—" The word girlfriend almost leaves my lips, but I find I'm not confident enough to label myself as that. No matter that they've told me they love me.

"Cheerleader," I say instead. "And I need to know what I'm cheering for to do so effectively." My blithe tone is enough to make him narrow his eyes, and Kieran scoffs under his breath.

"Here." Sam pulls out his phone and seconds later, I feel the vibration of Kieran's cell against my hip where it's trapped in his pocket. "Address and photo. Just be careful. He already thinks he has some sort of story, and I'd rather you not scare him



into going to the police.” Sam grimaces and sits back, gazing up at the sky. “I’m not spending another fortune to bail us out of shit by buying off some redneck sheriff. Again .”

The idea of that seems...impossible. But I keep my mouth shut.

“We’ll take care of it. Just make sure he disappears after. We’re not dumping that one for you, either,” Kieran warns. Sam sighs and gets to his feet, though I wonder if this is a premature end to their little talk due to either the storm or me.

"You sure you don’t want me to call Erika?" he asks, hesitating and glancing at me once more. “No offense, Noa. But this isn’t something we can afford to have fucked up.” His smile is rueful and apologetic, prompting me to grin back at him.

“I’m not looking to fuck anything up,” I promise, remaining visibly casual. “I’m just here, existing.”

I’m not sure if it’s good enough for him, but the man dips his head in a nod, his blue eyes bright. With one last look at Kieran and a grin traded with Val, he heads for his truck with purpose.

“Go throw that body in there before he conveniently forgets, Val.” Kieran sighs, getting to his feet as well.

“You know he’d forget on purpose,” Val replies, though he jumps to his feet without protest and walks quickly over to Sam, stopping him with words I can’t hear as he points toward the other end of the campsite, on the fart side of the RV I haven’t seen in the daylight.

Not that I’ll get to anytime soon, judging by the way Kieran is suddenly blocking my path to keep me from joining them. “No. Not you.” He reaches out to grip the front of

my hoodie, his eyes narrowed and his fingers tight in the fabric under my throat.  
“You and I are going to have a chat. Though I doubt it’s the one you want.”

“Wait—” Fear bubbles to life in my chest as he drags me toward the RV, marching me there like a problematic child before he yanks open the door and shoves me inside for whatever chat I’m suddenly really not looking forward to.

But I made my bed.

And I’m ready to lie in it and face the consequences.

Back in the RV, my hoodie is quick to go right on the table by my backpack, and out of politeness, I kick off my shoes right after Kieran does the same. Before I can do anything else, however, he grabs my arm and tugs me close, eyes on mine. The door opens and closes, just as I can hear the truck engine outside revving.

“No,” he tells me, voice soft and even. “Do you hear me, Noa? You don’t want to go home? Fine. I could make you, but it feels like maybe I don’t have the support I’d need for that.” He casts a quick glance at Val, who’s come in to stick his head in the small fridge and is pointedly ignoring us.

“But if I let you stay, then you’re staying here. You’re?—”

“Do you like me?” I ask, cutting him off before my confidence fails. The question stops him, and his brows knit in bemusement at the question. “Do you?” I repeat, some of my bravado stripped away now that I have to repeat myself.

“Yes. I’d think that was abundantly clear by now,” Kieran murmurs, still looking like he’s not quite sure where this is going. “Why?”

“Okay, let me try again. Do you like me for more than just sex? More than just to chase through the woods? Do you like me in the ‘doing things together’ way? Stupid shit, fun shit, romantic shit?” God, I can’t believe I’m saying all this. Discussing feelings is so far outside of my comfort zone, I might as well be manning a solo trip to outer space. But I can’t back down, or he’ll use it to his advantage.

“I’m in love with you.” He says the words slowly, enunciating them, and they still make my stomach twist and a million doubts come to my head. “And I know you don’t believe that from the look on your face. But I’m not just in love with fucking you or chasing you, Noa.” Almost sweetly, he reaches up to tuck my hair behind my ear while his gaze holds mine. “So yes. I think it’s safe to say I like you enough to do stupid, romantic, or fun shit with you. Though I’m not sure how that applies to this moment.”

“Because if that’s the case, then you can’t just tuck me away in a closet when you don’t want me around. You can’t tell me I only get to deal with part of you instead of accepting all of you.” I take a breath, then let it out with a huff. “I know what you are, okay? In fact, I know what both of you are, and I was aware of it before I decided to ask Erika how to find you.”

Kieran’s eyebrows go up just as I realize I’ve fucked up. “Ah, wait, I didn’t mean—” I begin, but he cuts me off with a snort.

“I was wondering how you found us. Actually, I started thinking you somehow implanted a tracking device on Val when he wasn’t paying attention. Erika really told you where to find us?” He seems more amused than anything, which I’m hoping is a good sign.

“Can you pretend I didn’t say that? Please don’t be mad at her. Or tell anyone.” God, I really don’t want to get her in trouble.

Kieran rolls his shoulders in a shrug. “I have more interesting and pressing things to care about than Erika helping you find us. So go on,” he invites. “Tell me how I can’t push you into that closet over there and lock you in until I feel like letting you out.”

He’s teasing me now, and I hope that’s a good sign. With him, though, I can’t quite tell. “You can’t, because I’m trying to do this thing where I support all of you. Where

I'm a part of this, with both of you, even when it's something that terrifies me or makes me uncomfortable."

After taking a breath, I add, "Tell me you've never killed someone who didn't deserve it." I hate how pleading it sounds, but I need them to say it. I need to hear that they aren't just indiscriminate murderers.

"You know we don't." Val sounds almost hurt. "We're not just mindless serial killers. We're not monsters . Well..." He clucks his tongue. "Yeah, we're monsters. But not that kind. We've never hurt someone that didn't deserve it, and I don't know why we would."

I give him a grateful grin as he slides into the little booth with a bottle of cherry coke in his hand. He salutes me in return and ignores Kieran's soft scoff of disapproval.

"We don't do this for fun. Well..." He tilts his head back, then looks at me to give me an almost apologetic grin. "If I told you we don't enjoy it, I'd be lying. But you have to live with that. Knowing we don't enjoy it enough to take it further than taking care of people who deserve it. That I can promise you. And we never will."

"Then that's enough. If I'm going to stay, it has to be enough. You have to at least give me a chance to try ." I sound almost pleading, which irritates me since I want to sound like I'm the one in control right now.

"Do I?" A smile curves over his lips, lessening the gravity of the situation. Something in me relaxes, and I let out a soft sigh of relief that he isn't angry. "Do I have to , Noa?"

"Yeah." This time I'm the one to tangle my fingers in his shirt, and without letting myself second guess what I'm doing, I move us toward the bed at the back of the RV. "You have to. I won't always play your victim, you know." Even though it's a lot of

fun to be chased through the woods, pinned down, and fucked until I can't walk.

Now that I think about it, having them fuck me until I can't walk might end up on my bucket list.

I keep moving, until my knees hit the bed, my eyes holding his. Thunder rumbles, shaking the windows, and I take the moment to spin us around until it's Kieran's knees hitting the bed. He lets me shove him down, though he pulls me down on top of him. But he lets me push him down onto his back so I can straddle him and stare down into his gorgeous face and dark brown, nearly black gaze.

"Come on," he encourages, his hands finding my hips. "Make me, Noa." Rain starts to pelt the windows, and belatedly I notice Val has followed us back into the bedroom, though he moves to sit at the far end of the bed like he's content to just watch.

Part of me wants to know if he'd be willing to help me, if he'd hold Kieran's arms while I take my revenge for being called a brat and carried over his shoulder last night.

The other part of me really likes the feeling of his hands on my thighs and the strength in his grip. I lean over him, bracing myself on one hand while trailing my fingers down his jaw. Experimentally, I wrap my fingers around his throat, though when he raises a brow at me as if to question the motion, I wonder if tightening my grip would be a step too far.

But that's okay. Because I like the feeling of him holding my throat a lot more than I want to cut off his airway. I just want to feel him under me, and I do when he swallows, his breaths coming in a deep, even rhythm.

"I'm not afraid of you. Not so much anymore." I let my hand move to the hem of his

shirt, and he sits up on his elbows to let me tug it off of him. “So you can’t scare me into submission.”

“Can’t I?” he asks with a chuckle, just as I shove him back down. “Are you really telling me I couldn’t have you shaking apart and begging me with tears running down your face if I tried? Are you telling me I couldn’t have you writhing and fighting me as I drag you through this campground by your hair?”

“Okay, but that’s not making me afraid. And if I was crying, it wouldn’t be because I was afraid you were going to kill me,” I point out dryly. My nails slide down his collarbone, skimming along the contours of his chest, before I press lightly against his sternum and prompt him to lean his head back.

“I could pretend,” he offers with a chuckle. “I always love it when you’re shaking apart with my cock in your pussy or your mouth.”

“You’re a jerk.” I reach up to comb my fingers through his hair and he leans into it, clearly enjoying the touch. I do it again, then I tangle my fingers deep, nails scraping against his scalp before leaning down to lick a line up his throat to his jaw.

I don’t expect his shudder . Nor do I expect the way his breath hitches when I tentatively graze my teeth against his throat. Heat floods my body, going right to the space between my thighs where I’d really love for him to touch. But not yet. I don’t want to give up my control.

“A little bit lower,” Val comments from the other end of the bed. “You can make him whine for you if you’re lucky.”

“Shut up, Val—” Kieran’s words are cut off with a sharp gasp when I take Val’s advice, moving lower before digging my teeth in against the junction of his neck and shoulder. He arches up against me, his body finding mine where I’m still straddling

his thighs, and his hand comes up to grip the back of my neck when I bite down harder.

To my surprise, and probably his, I don't let go. A soft growl trickles from between my lips, and I tighten my hold on his throat, then lave my tongue over the skin between my teeth and draw it into my mouth hard enough to leave a mark.

I don't expect him to love it. But he surprises me when he starts to writhe and pant. Then, just as Val said, a soft noise leaves him that could charitably be called a whine and not just a needy moan. At least, I'm taking it for one.

"Take off your fucking pants, Noa," he pants when I finally let go to look down at his face.

"Why? Can't you be patient? What if I'm not done yet?" I ask, an arrogant grin on my face as I congratulate myself for turning him into the needy mess he's quickly becoming.

But when he opens his eyes to glare at me, I realize maybe my arrogance has gone a step too far and he's the sun that's about to melt my wax wings.

Sure enough, his hands on my thighs tighten, and just as I start to mentally rename myself Icarus, he flips us over until I'm the one underneath him on the bed. "You're next," he informs Val, glaring up at him. Not that the latter seems to really mind. He chuckles, flopping down onto his back with his eyes fixed on us. "So don't get comfortable up there."

"Oh, I'm going to get very comfortable," Val disagrees. "Poor Noa, though. Did we get a little cocky?"

"Shut up," I mumble, trying to get my feet under me to regain some kind of leverage



to flip the tables on Kieran. But he's way too strong, and he easily pins me with one hand on my throat, the other already ripping off my sweatpants. They're easier than my leggings, given that they're pretty loose, and within seconds he has me naked from the waist down and panting with a mixture of exertion and anticipation.

"You don't get to keep this on today. I want to see all of you," Kieran tells me, tugging my shirt and bra off over my arms. When I'm completely naked under him, he sits back, hands on my thighs to hold me in place. "Fuck, how I want to take my time with you," he sighs. "But we're on a schedule. Still..." He grips my thighs more tightly and forces them wider. His gaze makes me squirm, and I jump when Val's fingers card through my hair and he curls closer to me.

"You don't mind, right?" he murmurs, glancing up at Kieran with a lazy look. "You don't mind if I kiss her for a little while?"

"I suppose." He leans over, reaching out to run his fingers through Val's hair. Then he yanks him up off the bed, pulling a yelp from the man's throat before Kieran slams their lips together in a harsh, punishing kiss.

God, it's so hot watching them like this. It hits me that I've never really watched them do anything, and I find I want to change that as soon as possible, if it's an option.

"What, uh, what are the chances I get to watch you fuck him?" I ask, my voice quiet. I'm almost afraid to interrupt them, though I see the edges of Kieran's mouth curl up in a grin just before he shoves Val back down to the bed.

"We'll see how good you are for me." He grabs my thigh and pulls it over his shoulder, surprising a yelp from me. As I watch, he licks his fingers, making eye contact as he gets them wet, before unceremoniously pressing two of them into me and scissoring them wide.

“You don’t need this at all, do you? Val really fucked you good, darling girl. Your greedy pussy is just begging for me to get to the fun part.” God, the way he talks could probably get me off without any help from his actions. He takes only a few minutes to work me open on his fingers, no matter the fact that I’ve got my leg hooked over his back to try to urge him to hurry the fuck up.

“So impatient,” Val chuckles, turning so he’s all I can see. Especially when he brings my face to his and cradles my cheek in his palm. “Don’t worry, princess. Sweet girl—” My gasp cuts him off when Kieran brushes his thumb over my clit, and my hips arch off the bed.

God, I feel so needy with them.

But clearly Kieran isn’t that patient either. I can’t see him, thanks to Val’s lips brushing against mine and his teeth nipping insistently at my lips, begging for entrance. But I can hear him unzipping his jeans, just as I feel him shift a little closer and smooth his hands over my hips.

“So good for us,” he purrs, his cock sliding against my wetness. He teases me like that, barely dipping further while he just fucking moves against me. “And so needy, aren’t you?”

Val swallows my groan of frustration, taking my noises greedily. He growls sweetly, and that must be some kind of signal, because without warning or any kind of sign I can see, Kieran shoves into me until he’s buried in my cunt, his hips pressed against my body.

“Fuck ,” he sighs, as I whine into Val’s mouth. He moves to let me breathe, his eyes flicking downward, and I feel him reach with his free hand until his fingers find my stomach and stay splayed there.

“He’s not going to last long in you, princess.” Val chuckles. “So you better come quick if you want to see him fuck me.”

“Well then, tell him to move,” I pant, fidgeting on the bed and rolling my shoulders against the mattress. “Tell him?—”

Kieran growls a soft curse, pulling back as he does, and slams into me hard enough that I cry out as my hips come off the bed from the overwhelming feeling. Val chuckles as his hand slips lower; and whatever complaints or quips I might have uttered die on my lips when his fingers find my clit.

He’s not gentle.

Neither of them are.

They don’t start out soft or sweet. They don’t give me soft, romantic words or compliments. Kieran fucks me like he’s on a countdown, and Val sits up suddenly to kiss him hard. When he yanks Kieran’s head to the side, I realize he’s doing it to put on a show for me.

Bless him.

Literally, all I can think is, bless him . Especially when he adds a second finger to really work me over, his fingers making wet, lewd noises against my slit as he teases my body just over where Kieran is fucking me.

It occurs to me that I could go crazy like this. With both of them touching me, and with Kieran’s cock buried in my pussy. My eyes are glued to them, and Kieran finally lets go of one of my thighs to grip the back of Val’s throat. He forces his head back, eyes flicking to mine, before he bites down hard on his murder partner’s lower lip until Val moans a protest and tries to jerk away.

Only for Kieran to delay in actually letting him go. When he does, though, he shoves Val hard back to the bed with a growl. “Take off your fucking pants, Val. And you’d better not need me to open you up with everything I did to you yesterday. I’ll finish inside you once she comes for me.”

With that, his attention is back on me, and his hand replaces Val’s on my clit. I gasp when he gives me the same rough attention, though I’m certainly not complaining.

“Come for me, darling,” he purrs. “Come around my cock and you can watch me finish in Val. You want that, right? You want to see me pin him down and wreck his day?”

“Always,” I gasp, my breath coming in sharp, heavy pants. God, Kieran isn’t the only one who isn’t going to last long.

Especially when he growls and lunges forward to bury his teeth in my neck, right over the spot he marked last night. “Then come for me, Noa,” he growls, licking over the battered skin and making it tingle. “I know you want to, so come for me. Come on. Be a good girl, darling, and just let go.” It’s a combination of everything that has me hurtling over the edge of the proverbial cliff. I nearly scream with the force of my orgasm which he fucks me through, though even before I’ve caught my breath he pulls out and drops my leg back to the bed. “Can you sit up for me?” he asks, panting and reaching down to palm his cock.

“Sure, yeah. Let me just uncross my eyes,” I breathe, shuddering one last time as the last of my release finally fades. I sit up, moving to the head of the bed and leaning back against the cool glass of the window. I imagine I can almost feel the rain pelting down on my skin, and I tilt my head back with a sigh, my muscles happy for the break as my brain goes into full relaxation mode.

I could so go for a nap.

At least, until Val's yelp has my eyes opening instantly, and I look up to see Kieran shove him down on his hands and knees in front of me.

"Clean her up for me while I fuck you," he orders, barely waiting for Val to shift forward on the bed so he can grab my thighs with a hungry look before Kieran is kneeling on the bed behind him.

"You don't have to—" I begin, but Val snorts.

"I want to," he assures me, dragging me closer to him until my thighs are over his shoulders. "Such a pretty pussy," he croons, reaching up to drag my hand down. He presses it to his hair, shuddering as Kieran runs his fingers down his bare spine. "Let me clean you up while he fucks me, princess," he adds, but it's not a request.

Not considering the way he's looking at me.

Kieran barely gives him a few seconds to part my folds with his tongue before he's three fingers deep in Val's ass. The brunet whines against me, sounding just as needy as I did as his back arches off the bed and he rocks backward like he's asking for more.

Which Kieran is all too happy to give him. He makes good on his threat of not doing much to open him up, and soon enough I'm watching him slowly sink into Val with a groan and his head tilted back. "Bet she tastes so good," he sighs, thrusting in gently until Val moans.

The compliment sends a shiver down my spine, and my breath hitches when Val's tongue teases my oversensitive clit. My hips jerk, making him chuckle, and when Kieran pulls back to thrust into him again, it occurs to me that this is sort of what I looked like last night.

Though I doubt I look as gorgeous as Val does right now. With the way the muscles in his back are rippling and his soft hair gripped in my fingers, he's the perfect picture of carnal sin while he's getting fucked and eating me out like it's his special talent.

"Oh, fuck," I sigh, throwing my head back against the window with a thud. " Val ?—"

"He's so good at it, isn't he?" Kieran asks, fucking into Val harshly. "He was made for it, I've decided. When I fuck his face, he's just as dedicated, and I swear I'll never get tired of it." Val groans under the praise, and Kieran runs a hand down his spine again. "Good boy," he chuckles. "Look at you showing off for her."

That makes Val wiggle in a way I'm all too familiar with. He rocks his hips back into Kieran's, who curses under his breath and slams into him. His rhythm falters, and as he starts losing his steady pace, I get to watch him wrap an arm under Val's hips to grasp his cock.

I can tell Val likes it from the loud, needy moans he starts making, audible even with his head buried between my thighs. He becomes more insistent there too, his fingers joining his tongue and thrusting into my pussy.

"Val!" I gasp, my hips jerking in his grip. "Fuck, if you don't stop?—"

"I told you," Kieran growls, reaching out to grip Val's neck. "He's so good with his mouth. Besides, you deserve to come again. Just keep your hand in his hair. Drag him to you if you want. He doesn't mind the rough handling. But I want your eyes on me, baby girl."

His words are like a magnet. My gaze finds his and Kieran grins wolfishly before gripping Val's hips. As I watch, he speeds up, not bothering to maintain a steady pace

as he slams into Val hard enough that I'm half sure he's going to leave marks.

Between my thighs, Val whines and squirms, the sounds leaving him sounding a lot like begging. He sinks his fingers deeper into me, choosing to use his mouth to suck and lick at my clit.

I last just long enough to see Kieran come apart with his cock buried in Val's ass, but that's about it. My second orgasm hits me somehow harder than the first, and I let out a series of soft, breathy noises I'll definitely be embarrassed about later.

Finally Val arches, whining and moaning against me, until Kieran yanks him upright and my hand falls from his hair. Still buried in him, Kieran pulls him against his chest with one hand, while the other is gripped around his flushed, leaking cock, then bites down on his shoulder.

Val comes with his eyes on mine, and his mouth open in a loud, very not-subtle howl. His release spills over Kieran's hand as he continues to stroke him through his orgasm, until finally Val is a limp, writhing mess in his arms.

Not that Kieran seems to mind. He chuckles and kisses the brunet, and runs his nose up his jaw. "I hope neither of you expects a nap, or a repeat today," he says, finally letting Val melt back to the bed. "Because we need to go soon. And if you're so intent on going with us, that means you as well, Noa."

"Yeah, no, I'm uh." I sit up, pushing my sweaty hair back from my face. "I just need a shower and four shots of espresso and I'm ready to drive for about twenty hours straight. Probably." Not that I'm sure what today entails.

Or if I'm really ready to handle it.

My shower ends up being at the truck stop I stopped at last night, and thankfully, I can get four iced coffees and two packages of Pop-Tarts which fill the grey plastic bag I'm carrying back to their car.

Part of me expected us to just bulldoze down the road in the RV, but when I mentioned that, Kieran looked at me with shocked disdain and asked if I knew what filling up the tank would cost to do that drive both ways in the behemoth.

I did not.

Instead, I'm back in the car they kidnapped me in. Though I only remember the drive back to my apartment, not the drive to the cabin a month ago. Settling in the back seat with a sigh, I lean my head back against the seat as Kieran glances at me in the rearview mirror. His hair is damp, like mine, but he looks a little more awake than he had when we got here.

"Is that actually full of coffee, or is there water hiding in there somewhere?" he asks, cracking open the cap of his black iced coffee.

"No water. Water is for losers," I murmur, fishing out one of my iced coffees and peeling off the seal. It's light beige rather than black, and when I take a drink, I can barely detect even the hint of coffee.

Just how I like it.



Kieran shakes his head, his fingers tapping out a rhythm on the steering wheel as we wait for Val. Somehow I'm not surprised he's the last one, and it's another five minutes before he opens the door behind Kieran's seat, instead of the passenger door.

"Do you mind if I sit with you?" he asks, his own bag in his hands that he drops onto the passenger seat. "The novelty of riding up front with him has worn off. It wore off, like, a year ago, actually." He grins at Kieran in the mirror, ignoring his frown or the low sound he makes in his throat as he pushes the button to start the ignition.

"What did you get?" I ask, watching as he picks up my bundled hoodie I've been using as a pillow. He crooks a finger at me invitingly, and I absolutely can't help flopping over onto his lap, once more burying my face in my hoodie. But this time, I have Val's warmth, and the feeling of his fingers combing through my damn hair.

"To eat? I don't know, just?—"

"He probably cleaned out the hot food at the deli." Kieran sighs from up front, pulling the car around the parking lot and stopping at the small road leading back to the highway. I can't quite see what he's doing, but when I sit up just a little bit, I can see the screen over the console is showing a map of the area with a blue line showing where to go.

I just hope either of them will take the time to tell me exactly what it is we're doing and where we're heading.

"Yeah," Val snorts. "He's right. You're welcome to try anything in there if you want. Though I'm sure it'll stop tasting so good in like, the next forty-five minutes."

"You're going to eat a bag's worth of fried food in the next forty-five minutes before it gets cold and gross?" I confirm, rolling onto my back as my brows climb toward my bangs.

“Nah, but I don’t mind if it’s gross or cold.” He grins down at me, his arm settling over my shoulders in a way that’s comforting, not restrictive.

I could so fall asleep here. Instead, I force myself to sit up, figuring I should at least cram a pack of Pop-Tarts down my throat before passing out for what the GPS is saying will be a three and a half hour drive from where we are.

“Why stay so far away from where we’re going?” I can’t help asking, my mouth full of icing and artificially sweetened jam. “Why not stay closer?”

“Because we like to give the cops less of a reason to look for us however we can,” Kieran tells me. “In case I forget to say it later, you both eat like children. And if you get crumbs in my car, you’ll be grounded like children.”

Val squawks indignantly, glancing up from his phone. “I’m not the one eating Pop-Tarts!” he argues. “What the hell, Kier?”

“You’re an enabler. And you’re sitting in the back seat, so suck it up.” He looks pretty satisfied with himself and settles back against the driver’s seat.

Once I’m done eating too much too fast, I flop back down on Val, pretty sure I’m going to be asleep sometime in the next few minutes. Which is unacceptable, given I want to know what’s going on.

“We’re going to Texas,” Kieran tells me, obviously figuring out that’s what I’m wondering about. Not that I’m exactly subtle. “I’d rather you sleep than me have to give you some long monologue about why we’re going to Texas. Especially since you will not be helping.”

“No murder for Noa? How sad. You sure were keen to get me stabbin’ some guy a month ago.” I’ve mostly gotten over that, except for the times I wake up from a

nightmare where I'm the one getting stabbed instead of the man in the woods.

Those are the only times I wish I could be normal again, but that's also my secret to keep. "But yeah..." I sigh, not wanting to admit I'd like to fall asleep here on Val's lap with his fingers stroking through my hair and my face buried in my hoodie. "Yeah, I'll take the short version if you're offering."

"You might not like this one so much," Val admits quietly. "So if you want to skip it and just sleep, I really think that might be the best idea, princess."

While the idea is certainly enticing, and some part of me wants to just not know, I shake my head with a sigh. "No, I can't do that," I murmur. "If I'm going to be here, if I'm going to be with you, then I have to make myself know. I can't hide from the parts of you I'd rather not see."

When I glance up, I find Kieran's gaze in the mirror and I'm surprised to see something like approval in his eyes.

"He saw Harley dump a body a few months ago. That's the girl with the clown mask from the haunt," Kieran explains quietly. "He followed her, trying to use it against her. Said she was too pretty for him to go to the cops right away. She tried to give him what he wanted, but it went too far. Unfortunately, he found her again. Then, even though Samuel gave him quite a big sum of money to keep quiet, that seems to not be working for him anymore."

"So he took the money and still wants to go to the cops?" I snort. "That's certainly bold. Why not just take your payday and shut the hell up?"

"Exactly," Val agrees with a sigh. "I don't get it either, pretty girl."

"We've tried everything to avoid this," Kieran goes on. "Not that I'm going to be

particularly upset to end his life. He's started making demands and threats. Said he'll only talk to Harley now." I can almost hear him rolling his eyes, and I'm certainly not imagining the disdain in his voice.

"So you're going to kill him?"

My words are met with silence, though Val keeps combing his fingers through my hair and neither of them seems tense or upset by my question.

Finally, it's Kieran who answers, and he lets out a long, low breath as he does. "Yeah, Noa," he tells me evenly. "We're going to Texas so we can kill him before he can hurt any of us or start something we can't keep under control."

I'm not sure when I fall asleep, though when I'm being very gently shaken awake, I realize I've definitely been out for a while. My second bottle of half-finished iced coffee is still clasped in my hand and I'm hugging it to my chest, though by now it's body temperature instead of cold.

"There you are." Val chuckles, running his thumb over my lower lip. "Did you know you snore when you're on your back?"

I blink once, then twice, and my eyes narrow at him. "Do not," I retort, sitting up and looking out at the surprisingly flat, sunny landscape. "God, it looks warm. I'm sort of feeling cold and stormy, not warm and grossly sunny." I sigh dejectedly. "It makes me feel like I should be doing something productive."

"Because being our murder cheerleader isn't productive?" Val stretches now that I'm off of him, and I slide the bottle of coffee back into the plastic bag from the truck stop. "I was thinking about getting pom-poms for next time. Wouldn't that be cute? And you absolutely do snore, by the way. Kieran?—"

“Is not taking sides.” His drowsy voice comes from the front seat, prompting me to glance up at him. He’s leaning back against the seat, his hair tousled like he’s been running his fingers through it and he looks a little worn out. “Remember what I said, by the way?” He opens his eyes, pinning my gaze when he turns in his seat. “You will not be helping.”

“I’m probably not a very good accomplice, anyway. I cried when you made me murder that guy in the woods,” I remind them airily. “So you don’t have any complaints from me on that front.”

Kieran just looks at me like he might not believe me. “Anyway...” Without another word, he gets out, standing up to close the door behind him. I do the same, scrambling out the passenger side of the back seat and looking at where we are.

I don’t know what I’m expecting. Maybe a rundown house or park or graveyard. Maybe an Old West ghost town, because that seems like a good place to kill someone in Texas.

What I don’t expect is an ancient, dilapidated motel on a street with more of the same style of buildings, all of them in a blocky, concrete style that screams industrial . This place and every other one looks abandoned, especially under the hot Texas sun, which beats down mercilessly to soak into my black roots. It’s not an Old West town, but it sure is abandoned.

“You guys really have a thing for industrial districts, don’t you?” I murmur, walking closer to the old building. The letters have mostly worn off by now, and I link my hands behind my back, staring up at the memory of the word MOTEL on the concrete. With the busted windows and broken off door, I can’t imagine why someone would come here willingly.

I certainly wouldn’t, if I wasn’t here with them.

“Yeah,” Val chuckles, walking toward me with a backpack and a duffel bag on his shoulders. Wordlessly I take the backpack, and he murmurs his thanks as I slip it over my shoulders while checking to make sure my phone is in my pocket. “I guess we sort of do. But everyone has a style, right?” With that, he takes off at a brisk walk, moving through the broken off door and into the dark interior. Kieran follows, casting me a glance, without saying a word as I just stand there.

“Yeah...” I sigh finally, turning to look once more at the lone street running between the many ugly, blocky buildings. A breeze picks up, and I can almost feel the moisture being leached from my skin in the dry Texas air. “Everyone certainly has...something.”

When they're ready to go, their masks are on and they're back to being Harrow and Ravage. Not that I'm complaining, since I seem to have a bit of a thing for them when they're like this. Though, if I don't swear on my cats I'll stay put, Kieran threatens to handcuff me to the desk in the corner of the most intact motel room we could find.

I also kindly remind them I have no desire to watch them actually kill someone, which seems to be enough. They leave with their masks, their personas, and their knives. Harrow takes a gun as well, but Val doesn't bother.

I'm left with the duffel bag, the backpack, and my phone for company. The room is decrepit enough that I'm certainly not about to flop down onto the stained, bare mattress for a nap. I barely feel comfortable perching on the old, raggedy desk chair that wobbles if I don't stay perfectly balanced.

A few minutes later, I hear the sound of a car approaching. The engine cuts somewhere nearby, and I can't help the way my heart rate picks up, as if I'm the one in danger. As if I have to do anything other than sit here.

They'd told me it wouldn't take long. To just not move or open the door, even though there was no way the guy would ever get this far.

Val even told me he'd be dead in the first five minutes while stroking the hilt of his blade. And I believe him. After all, I've seen what they do to people in their 'haunted houses.' I know he won't have any issue with taking this man's life.

But it's hard. Especially when the minutes tick by and I don't hear anything else after the distant slam of the front door. No footsteps. No screams. Not even the sound of a loud conversation.

Surely I'll hear something , right? That's both my expectation and my fear. The closer I am to this, the harder it is for me to handle. The more trepidation I feel about keeping my word and living up to my bravado about being able to accept every part of them.

Especially this one.

Taking a few deep breaths helps me calm down, and I remind myself that while I have to accept it, I don't have to be a part of what they do. All I have to do is sit here and wait, and tell them I'm fine with it when they get back. No matter how covered in blood they are, or how they come back.

As long as they come back.

They're the ones with the weapons, after all. Plus, they showed me the chain Val would be using to lock the front and back doors, just in case he got away from them. Though they'd both assured me that was very unlikely.

No one ever gets away from them, after all.

I'm a pretty great testament to that.

Finally, I pull out my phone, playing a game of Sudoku to distract myself. It barely works, and I'm so not into it, so I lose pretty quickly by going over my limit for mistakes.

Do you want to try again ?



The little option screen pops up, glaringly bright in the dim room with the musty, moldy curtains drawn. It's so quiet that I'm starting to worry, even though I know the motel is a bit on the larger side, and more than one floor. Being on the second floor, I shouldn't expect to hear anything. Not really.

That's what I tell myself, anyway.

Hitting no, I get to my feet and pace to the window, dipping down to see if I can spot anything between the curtains. But all I see is the empty parking lot that's entirely bereft of cars and activity.

I promised not to leave.

That was the deal, and I remind myself of that as I pace to the door, then back to the window once again.

I promised to stay right here .

So I pace back again.

And again.

But on the fourth circuit of the room, my hand inches out to find the door handle. I'm not locked in, not that the locks on these doors even work so well anymore, and I can't help the way my fingers curl around the cold metal handle.

I won't go far. I just want to hear something . Something that can assuage my bubbling, stinging curiosity.

With my phone shoved in the pocket of my leggings and my hoodie on the desk, I step out into the hallway and let the door close softly behind me.

It's obvious there hasn't been electricity in this place for a long time, so the hallway is dark as hell. Especially without Val's flashlight. My steps make almost no noise on the torn up carpet as I prowl down the hallway, head cocked as I listen for any kind of sound at all.

But all I can hear is the sound of my breathing.

God, I know for a fact if Val and Kieran find me out of the room, they're going to be pissed. That should be enough to send me scurrying back to the room. But instead, I make it to the end of the hallway, back to where the staircase is that we came up about an hour ago.

But this is where my confidence and my curiosity falter. I stop at the top of the stairs, toes curled in my sneakers as I rub my arms under my t-shirt. It's chillier in here than I'd expected it to be, and I bite my lip while staring down the abandoned stairwell as if something is just going to magically appear.

Nothing does, of course. No boyfriends, no victim, and no ghosts. God, I'd be pretty upset if I were to find out this place is haunted. While I've secretly always thought ghosts might exist, finding that out here today would not be my idea of a good time.

I'm too nervous to go downstairs. That's too close to everything for me, even though I still can't hear anything, no matter how quietly I breathe or how hard I listen. They didn't bring their phones with them, so it's not like I can just shoot them a text to check on them or call for a little chat.

"You so aren't going down there." I sigh, knowing I don't have the guts to skip down the stairs looking for my murderers and their victim. By now, I assume he's definitely a corpse, and they're probably just cleaning up. Maybe it got a bit messier than they expected, and they're having to call in an extra cleanup crew instead of just chucking him in the trunk of Kieran's car.

I really have no idea how the process of murder and body disposal works, so I take a step back and remind myself this is not their first rodeo. I just need to go back to the room and wait. Maybe attempt to take a nap, or at the very least listen to some music, lose more Sudoku puzzles, and panic less.

Forcing myself to move, I turn away from the stairwell and head back down the hallway, though my steps are slow and deliberate as I still try to listen for any noise. It's not until I'm halfway down the hallway that I do hear something, and my heart thumps in my chest as I spin around to face the stairwell, mouth open to greet whichever of my murderers is finally back, while probably delivering some unhelpful quip about them taking their time.

In fact, I walk back toward the stairs as the footsteps get louder, the tightness in my chest fading with every step. Thank God I don't have to worry anymore. I can finally stop fretting, panicking, and?—

Unfortunately, the person who staggers out of the stairwell is neither Ravage nor Harrow. The man stumbles out onto the carpet, head turning rapidly until his eyes find mine.

I don't know him.

But he certainly looks like he's been having a hard time.

“You...you're...” He's panting, his shoulders heaving, and there's a cut on his face that's bleeding sluggishly. “I need your help.”

Fuck .

My mouth is still open, but I have no idea what to say. I step back once, then again, the uncertainty clear on my face as my hands clench and unclench at my sides. I don't

know what to do. Hell, I'm definitely not prepared for this situation, and all I can do is stare at him with surprise and trepidation.

If he's here, where are they ?

They can't be dead...right?

"What...happened?" I finally murmur, feeling myself about to shake into pieces. The fear mixes with confusion, leaving me feeling like a deer in headlights.

"These two men in masks they...fuck, they were going to kill me. And then I found out the doors are fucking chained shut, so I can't get out." He snarls out a laugh, running his hand through his messy blond hair. He looks to be in his thirties, if I had to guess, with muddy brown eyes and a pale complexion that isn't helped at all by the lack of light in the hall.

"Oh." That's all I can say, because I'm too afraid to ask about them.

"I just need to find a way out. I need..." he trails off, looking at me with a sudden clarity. "Wait. You can't have just wandered in here. Not with the doors locked. No, you've been here, haven't you?"

Fuck. I really would prefer it if he was as confused as I am, instead of apparently puzzling this out faster than he should.

"You're with them, aren't you?"

Double fuck .

I don't know what to say or how to respond. I don't know how to deny it when there's nothing plausible about what I would say.

So I run.

I make it about six steps down the hallway before he grabs my arm, surprising a shriek out of me. The man's grip is like iron, and he drags me to the nearest door, kicks it open, and quite literally throws me inside the room.

Unluckily for me, the floor is covered with the remains of the desk and whatever else was in here. My hands scrape along splintered wood and nails, and I can feel hot blood beading on my palms as I scramble to my feet in the room.

He slams the remains of the door, his chest heaving and eyes wide. "I don't want to hurt you. I swear, I just want to get out of here." The man holds up his hands, as if to placate me, but there's no way I'm going to fall for that. I stagger back from him until my shoulders hit the wall by the window.

"I can't help you," I breathe. "Literally, I can't. I don't have the key or anything. And I don't have a weapon." Maybe that shouldn't have come out of my mouth, but I'm trying to make myself seem like I'm not part of the problem.

God, I really wish I had a fucking weapon right about now. I could've just grabbed the knife Val left in his backpack. The one he dubbed as backup, since he tends to misplace the one he actually brought with him downstairs.

But all I have is my phone.

My hand itches to grab it, but I realize that's something I should not draw attention to. Even here, I probably have a bar of service, and that's more than enough for this man to call the cops.

Unfortunately, he notices the shape of it in my pocket. I see it in his eyes as he steps closer, along with the grim set of desperation in his features. "Give me your phone,"

the man insists calmly, reaching out a hand to me.

“Give me your phone, please. I don’t want to hurt you. I’ll tell the police they caught you here, too. That they were going to kill both of us.” He sounds so reasonable, so fucking friendly, that I almost believe him.

“No,” I finally whisper. “I can’t. I really, really can’t.”

“And you think I’ll just, what, let you go? Accept that answer and go on my way?” The man barks out a laugh as he steps closer. “Don’t make me hurt you. Please.”

Terror goes through me, but I shake my head again. I can’t. My hands are so cold, so clammy from the blood oozing from the scrapes, but I press them to my leggings, one of them over my phone protectively.

“I’m not making you do anything,” I say finally, my voice shaking. “It’s not my fault you’re here. You did this to yourself.”

That’s maybe the absolute wrong thing to say. The man’s gaze hardens with frustration and determination, and a second later, he lunges for me. I try to slip around him, attempting to bolt toward the door that won’t lock so I can run down the stairs and look for Kieran and Val. If I can just find them, or if I can get back to the room with their things?—

He catches me by the arm, pulling a cry from my throat, and uses the momentum to slam me into the wall as hard as he can. My face cracks against the peeling plaster, but I still work to shake him off, managing to stumble back a few steps and try again for the door.

I don’t expect it when he punches me. His fist hits my cheek hard enough to throw my head back, and I can’t keep my balance when I’m thrown back from the impact.

My knees buckle, sending me to the floor with the pieces of wood and rubble. I can feel blood on my face amidst the pain, and when I try to get up, the man is right there, shoving me back down.

“Just give me your phone!” he demands, grabbing my hair to drag me to my knees. “You think I want to do this?” He punches me again, and when I hit the floor on my back, my head spins. I swear the ceiling does too, but maybe that’s just the nausea from the pain in my face and head.

Distantly, in a strange and detached part of my brain, I wonder if he’ll kill me.

“No,” I pant, grasping around me for anything I can find. When he steps closer and pulls me back to my knees, I take a piece of splintered off wood I’ve found and jam it into his leg, right above his knee.

He yells, sounding a bit like a very pissed off bull, and drags me to my feet to slam me into the wall as hard as he can.

And then he does it again, before dropping me back to the floor and gripping the piece of wood now sticking out of his leg. With a snarl, he rips it free, but all I can do is watch as I try to focus on him and staying conscious.

“I don’t want to do this,” he snarls, panting and still holding the piece of wood. “You think I want to hurt you? Fuck , you stupid girl. Why can’t you just give me your goddamn phone?! If you’re afraid of them?—”

“I’m not afraid of them,” I interrupt, my voice barely audible and sounding a little choked off from the blood in my mouth and nose. I’d hate to see what I look like right now, but luckily for me, the mirrors in the room are long gone. “And from where I’m sitting, they aren’t the monsters here.”

“That’s only because it isn’t you they’re trying to kill.” He takes a breath to steady himself, gulping air as he clutches the wood in his hand. “You’re really making me do this, aren’t you?” he asks, a rueful laugh in his words. When he steps forward, it’s almost reluctant, and it hits me that he’s going to really hurt me.

Or worse. Especially with the already bloody and sharp piece of wood in his hand that I pretty much gave him.

I should’ve stayed in the room.

But it’s too late for regrets now.

Slowly, I struggle to my feet, having to use the wall behind me for support. If he’s going to stab me, I want to be standing for it. I don’t want to stay on my knees for this man, even though my head would really like us to just call it and tap out.

“Then maybe you should’ve made better choices,” I snarl, spitting blood in his face from the plethora of it in my mouth. He flinches, his face contorting, and I see the muscles in his body tense as he mentally prepares himself for what I suspect is going to hurt way more than anything else so far has.

My body tenses, preparing, and I know this is it. I can’t move. I can’t get away from him when he’s in a lot better shape than me. He’s?—

A shape hurtles into the room, having slammed the door open and causing it to splinter. A snarl meets my ears, and in what seems like an instant, the man is on the ground, the wood spinning away to clatter against the wall.

It takes my brain a few seconds to realize that it’s Ravage who’s on the man, knife flashing in his hand as he rips into him. Blood spatters around the room, and the man’s screams meet my ears just as I slide down the wall to sit on the floor.



I can't look away.

There's no horror in me. No regret or sorrow for the man who'd been about to kill me. The only thing I feel is relief, especially when Harrow walks in with a gun in his hand and shoves Ravage off of the man who's somehow still breathing.

"We could've made this easy," Harrow tells him from behind the ram mask. "You could've walked away from this a long time ago." When Ravage tries to dive for him again, Kieran grabs him and shoves him toward me. The man lifts a hand, wheezing something under his breath, and the gun goes off.

My ears ring loud enough to obscure the man's pained howls, and it takes a moment for me to register Harrow hadn't fired a shot that would kill him. Instead, the man clutches his stomach where blood wells from the new gunshot wound, though he's definitely missing a couple fingers on that hand.

"I really hope that hurts," I whisper, unable to tear my gaze away. Harrow glances at me from behind his mask, and fires the gun again. This time the man screams and curls around the new bullet wound in his shoulder, sobs wracking through his body.

"Let me finish him," Ravage snarls, shaking from his spot just in front of me. He glances down at me, and I swear I can feel the hatred, the menace, and the crazed fury behind the skull-like mask he wears. "Please . Let me hurt him."

Harrow hesitates before stepping back with a nod. "Fine," he agrees, his voice frigid. "Do what you want."

Ravage takes the invitation and runs with it. He launches himself forward, stabbing his blade into the man's leg to drag him across the floor. He screams, but the sound lasts only a few seconds before Ravage buries the blade just under his sternum and rips it downward, opening him up so his insides spill out like they need somewhere to

go.

His screams go on for longer than I expect as Ravage sits back on his heels, obviously content to let him suffer. Finally, once the yelling starts to die down, when he can no longer try to gather up his insides with mutilated hands like he can stuff them back into his body and the man is just letting out soft, agonized sounds, Harrow steps up to him again, the gun in his hand.

“You deserve worse,” he informs the man, and fires off one last shot.

The silence is instant and deafening. I struggle to my feet once more, unsure when I’d ended up on the ground, and I have to use the wall as a brace the whole way. Everything hurts, and anything I try to say feels like it takes too much effort.

But Ravage is there before I can fall, his arms shaking as he holds me up and shoves his knee between my thighs to brace me. “I’ve got you, Noa,” he murmurs, leaning close. “I’ve got you, okay?”

“I’m sorry,” I finally gasp, reaching up to grip his wrists. “I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I—” My breaths shutter out of me and I look over his shoulder at Harrow. “Guess I really should’ve stayed put, huh?”

Harrow shifts, head tilted like he’s going to answer, but my body decides this is it for me. At least for the moment. My knees buckle and I fall into Ravage; thankfully, the blackness comes up to save me from the pain coursing through my body and the fear and desperation still making me want to vomit.

The dull ache in my head is unfortunately the first thing I notice when I wake up. Though it's less horrific than I expected, and other than that and some pain in just about every part of my body, I feel pretty okay.

At least I'm not dead .

"Hey princess." Val's voice is soft, and I feel him shift behind me so my body can rest more comfortably against his and I'm mostly sitting up. "Can you wake up for me? You've been asleep for a while now." His voice is husky and rough, and it makes me wonder when the last time he slept was.

"Fuck." I sigh, tilting my head back against his shoulder. "Are you sure I have to? Like, super sure?"

He chuckles. "Well, given the way Kier is glaring you down from across the room, I actually wouldn't blame you for choosing to go back to sleep instead," he admits. "But I'd like to check you out. I'm pretty convinced you aren't concussed, and you didn't need stitches, but I still worry."

"Did you go to online medical school while I was asleep?" I ask, forcing my eyes open. My head hurts a little more as I stare at the ceiling, and it clicks that we're definitely no longer in the creepy, dilapidated motel from before.

"In a past life, I was an EMT. Lucky for you," Val informs me. "There we go. Sit up, Noa. Just a little for me." I do what he says, letting him shift me until I'm sitting

mostly vertical on my own with only my shoulders braced against his chest and his thighs on either side of me.

The first thing I see, however, when I tilt my head down, is Kieran. He is, in fact, glaring at me from the desk chair across the room, though my eyes leave his to go to the curtained off balcony in the room. “This is nice,” I admit. “Much nicer than?”

“What the hell were you thinking?” Kieran cuts me off, his voice dangerously soft. I curl my legs to my chest as much as I can, wincing at the ache still bone-deep in my body. “We told you to stay . I told you?—”

“You were gone for a long time,” I retort finally. “All I did was walk down the hallway, Kieran.” I love the way his name sounds on my tongue, but right now, all I can feel is a wave of defensiveness. “I didn’t do anything wrong.”

Well, I did. But for the sake of my pride, I’m refusing to admit it.

He’s up in an instant, and I flinch as he strides to the bed and crawls onto it. Val is no help, and only rests his chin gently on my shoulder while he watches with interest. “Don’t open any of her injuries,” he orders with a sigh. “I don’t want to go through another bag of medical supplies.”

Kieran rolls his eyes but stops when he’s right in front of me, settling back to sit cross-legged on the bed. He looks...tired. There are dark circles under his eyes, and I can read the stress in the set of his mouth. I want to reach out, to comb my fingers through his hair and soak in his warmth, but right now all I can really do is give him a half glaring, half nervous look.

“Before you yell at me or banish me or whatever—” Though my tone is light, fear jolts to life in my chest. What if he really does tell me to get lost? What if he decides he can’t trust me? That I’m a liability. What if?—?

He reaches out to cup my chin, thumb stroking over my lip. “Stop that,” Kieran admonishes. “No one’s getting rid of you, darling girl. Don’t go nuclear on me. I’m just...” He takes a breath, then lets it out slowly. “You scared me.”

“Oh.” That’s not what I expected. Not at all. I lean into his hand, fidgeting a little to see how much movement I can get away with. “Can I ask what happened? How did he get up to the second floor?”

Val shifts behind me, tension in his body that he tries to hide. “Here.” He reaches away from me and comes back with a small bottle of water that he cracks open in front of me. “Pretty sure you’re a little dehydrated, princess. If you want story time, you’re going to drink during it.”

I take the bottle from him and roll my eyes, wishing he could see. The water is cold against my lips, and I realize I’m a lot thirstier than I realized. In about thirty seconds, I’ve drained the small plastic water, only for Val to take it and give me another full one.

“He saw Val and realized exactly what was going on,” Kieran admits flatly. “We didn’t expect him to catch on so fast. We had him locked into the motel, obviously, but he managed to block the door to the room we were waiting for him in. Stupid of us,” he adds, obviously frustrated with his own actions. “After that we heard him trying to get out, and then he ended up going up the stairs. Guess that’s where he found you, yeah?” Kieran’s gaze finds mine, and I bristle, shoulders rising defensively.

“All I did was walk down the hall,” I tell them quickly. “I was listening for you guys. I heard someone coming up the stairs and thought it was you. He demanded my phone, and I wouldn’t give it to him. Obviously, since he was going to call the cops. So he got...mad,” I trail off, reaching up to brush my fingers over my aching cheekbone. When I do, I get a good look at the bandages covering my palms where I

scraped them, and I can't help wondering how many splinters Val plucked out of my skin while I was out of it.

"You shouldn't have left the room. Didn't I tell you?—"

"Yeah, Kieran, you told me," I agree. "I was wrong, you're right. I fucked up, and I suffered the consequences. You think I don't hurt enough?" I glare at him, feeling a bit bratty with the headache I have going.

His eyes narrow, and they seem to darken. "You're mouthy," he informs me. "A mouthy little brat."

"What are you going to do? Punish me? I feel like I'm already suffering enough."

"Well, he could make you suffer more. In a very pretty way." Val chuckles, face pressed to my shoulder as he peeks up at Kieran. "Still, you need to be gentle with her. No throwing her around. No unnecessary roughness. Or necessary roughness. I bet she has a killer headache, and you can see those bruises too, Kier." There's a bit of a warning in his tone that has Kieran sighing and sitting back on his hands.

"I'm not going to punish her. Not right now, anyway. I don't need to feel like a bully when she already looks like a victim. But fuck, Noa." He shakes his head. "You really need to learn to listen better. You could've died if Val hadn't become a human battering ram to break the door down."

That makes a smile curl over my lips, though I wince when it reopens the cut there. Kieran sighs, leaning forward to grip my chin once more. "Look at you," he murmurs. "You're a mess."

Before I can reply with something sneaky or sly or at the very least, witty, he gently seals his lips to mine. His tongue laps at my lower lip, licking up the blood as he gets

closer to both of us on the bed.

“You’ve been out for a while,” Val is quick to pick up the explanation, nosing the side of my face while Kieran kisses me. “I checked you over at the motel and we called Sam to get his ass out there and help clean up. Kieran flashed his fancy credit card at the front desk here, which got us a very nice room, and we got some medical supplies to clean you up. You’re lucky your favorite boyfriend was an EMT,” he teases.

Kieran makes a sound of disagreement at that, and his hands move to smooth down my arms. “She’s lucky that I’m too relieved to be as mad as I want to be,” he mutters, pulling away.

“So I’m fine, though?” I ask. “Like, no broken bones. No permanent maiming wounds or whatever?” I don’t feel like there’s any permanent damage done to me, but I’m also pretty sure Val managed to get pain meds into me since I should probably be hurting more than I do.

“Well, let’s check.” Kieran pulls away, sitting up just to reach out and pull my legs away from my chest. “You’re moving okay,” he says, a teasing glint in his eye that has my stomach twisting in anticipation. “You can bend your legs.” His hands move up and he easily tugs down the waistband of my leggings, pulling them and my underwear off of my body.

Apart from my bruised knees, I look pretty okay. “Still perfect,” he tells me slyly. “Still our princess.” He runs his hands up my calves, encircling them with his fingers before moving back down to grip my ankles.

“I’ll help you check.” Val’s voice is wicked as he murmurs the words against my ear, and just as I register what he’s saying, he’s tugging my t-shirt off over my head. My bra follows, and Val moves to cup my breasts in his hands while I’m still leaning

against him. “Just a few bruises and cuts. I bet you have a nasty headache, though, don’t you?”

“Yeah,” I agree, my voice a soft whisper. “You should, uh, load me up on the Tylenol. I’ll eat it like candy if you give me the chance.”

“I think I have a better idea.” As I watch, Kieran leans forward, settling between my thighs on the bed. He gazes up at me as Val gently teases me, his fingers kneading my breasts and brushing over my nipples so softly I worry he thinks I’m made of glass.

But I’m not complaining about this new, gentle side of them.

“Don’t get used to this,” Kieran warns. “Being sweet when I’m pissed isn’t usually in my nature. But I’m not done checking you over, and I want to get rid of that headache.” He grins, kissing up the inside of my thigh as I try to remember to breathe.

“Maybe you won’t remember to be mad at me later,” I murmur.

“Oh, don’t worry, princess”—Val chuckles, leaning in to nip at the side of my throat—“I’ll remind him.”

I want to reply. I want to argue, to tell them I definitely don’t deserve that. But then Kieran’s tongue finds my slit and I gasp, head tilting back to rest against Val’s shoulder. My hand gently finds Kieran’s hair, and I tangle my fingers in the strands softly, not pulling or pushing. Just...holding.

His teasing quickly becomes more. His tongue delves into me, tasting as much of me as he can before his fingers join his mouth. Then Val kisses my throat, and as heat rushes up my spine, I find myself arching my hips into Kieran’s mouth and hoping



for more.

“I’m sorry I left the room,” I find myself saying, my other arm moving back to grip Val’s hair and dragging his face to mine. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to worry you?—”

He kisses me harder than Kieran had, licking over the seam of my lips before his tongue dips into my mouth. It’s too easy to relax into him, to just completely give myself over to the feeling of their mouths and hands.

God, I could so get used to this once in a while. I love their roughness, their desperation. I love the games we play that end with fingerprint shaped bruises and my ass stinging from their ‘punishments.’

But there’s something so amazing about this, too. Something that has me drowning in them .

“It’s okay, darling girl,” Kieran promises me, sitting up and adding another finger inside me. “You’re okay, and that’s what matters. For tonight.” His eyes glint slyly, and when Val looks up at him, he captures the brunet’s mouth in a kiss.

Val moans in surprised delight, and I see him licking at every inch of Kieran’s mouth like he’s desperate for the taste of him.

For the taste of both of us , I realize, gasping as Kieran crooks his fingers into me. One of Val’s hands leaves my chest, and his fingers skim down my body until he can reach Kieran’s hand.

I expect him to play with my clit. To compliment Kieran the way he normally does as they work to push me over the edge. Instead, he presses two fingers into me, until he’s finger-fucking me in tandem with Kieran and I’m gasping, rocking against them and unable to keep my eyes open.

“Fuck,” I whine, starting to pant at the stimulation, at the absolute pleasure I’m feeling from both of them touching me like this. “Fuck, you two don’t play fair at all, you know?”

Kieran laughs darkly, turning to graze his teeth along my ear. “We’ve never said we do. And we’re just trying to make you feel good.”

“Just trying to remind you that no matter what you do, or how often you don’t listen to us, you’ll always be ours,” Val adds softly, his tongue lapping at my throat and prompting me to tilt my head back to expose my neck to them.

Whatever else I want to say is lost in the way I’m drowning. In the way their fingers move inside me, against me, and the way they both tease every soft part of me they can find to evoke any gasp, any soft moan they can get from me.

It’s not fair.

It’s perfect.

“Not fair,” I repeat. “Because it shouldn’t be this easy for you guys to—” I gasp when Val crooks his fingers inside of me, stroking over the spot that makes me more desperate than I was a few minutes ago.

“For us to what? Make you come?” Kieran asks. “For us to make you want to beg? I won’t make you beg, Noa. Not this time.”

“Next time’s a different story, though.” Val chuckles softly. “So you should enjoy this while it lasts. I’ll help him. Next time, you’ll have to beg to get an ounce of pleasure from us.” He bites down gently on my shoulder, like I’m made of porcelain and he’s afraid I’ll break.

And maybe I will if they keep this up.

“Fuck...” I sigh, unable to keep still. My hands fall to the bed, gripping the sheets while they finger me, and when they kiss each other again, it feels a lot like a private show tailored directly to me.

God, they’re so fucking attractive together.

And they’re mine .

“Please,” I whine, finding I have absolutely no pride left. Kieran breaks away, grinning down at me with a dark look.

“Please what?” he asks, as if he doesn’t know. “Please what, darling girl?”

“Please make me come? Fuck , I really want to come.” God, I’m so close. I barely need anything at all. I just?—

“Come for us, princess,” Val purrs in my ear. He twists his hand so he can rub his thumb over my clit finally . “Come on our fingers, like the good girl you are.”

That’s all it takes. Just that touch and I’m completely falling apart between them while they watch. While they lick and touch and murmur the softest, filthiest things against my skin.

“I like you guys a lot,” I murmur, already feeling myself zoning out again. “But I might not if you punish me for just walking down the hallway.” God, I’m so relaxed. So ready to just go back to sleep. My headache is secondary, just like most of the other aches and pains in my body.

I’m too enamored with them, and how good I feel.

“We’ll see about that,” Kieran chuckles. He leans forward, and both of them push me down onto the bed, still completely naked, before Val slips into place behind me and pulls me back against him. Kieran remains seated in front of me, stroking my hair as he gazes at me.

“Go to sleep, darling girl,” he murmurs with a sigh. “We have a lot of cleanup to do in the morning.”

“And none of it will be enjoyable,” Val adds in a murmur against the back of my neck.

### EPILOGUE

The creak of the RV door opening pulls me from my nap, and I open my eyes just enough to see Kieran striding up the stairs with Bagheera in his arms. Out of all three cats, he's the one who apparently was built for RV life. Or semi RV life, since we're not always here.

A harness is fixed around his body, and he doesn't even squirm as Kieran closes the door behind him before setting the black cat down and unsnapping the harness. Surprisingly, none of the cats ever try to bolt out the door.

But then again, none of them appreciate the great outdoors very much. They're too spoiled, and they like using Val as a bed too much, I've decided.

Bagheera purrs and slinks down the hallway, undoubtedly toward the bed where I know Val is still asleep.

Kieran looks at me, one brow raised as if expecting me to remark on it, but I only bury my face back into the pillow on the sofa and sigh. "How long until we're there?" I ask finally, moving my legs to curl them up and give Kieran space to sit.

He does so, only to drag my legs back into his lap and rest his arm across them. "A few more hours," Kieran tells me. "Are you doing okay?"

"I could so drive. And I'm fine. I told you, I'm built for long drives." I chuckle sleepily. Seconds later, I hear the television turn on, and I open my eyes to see Kieran hunting for something to watch. "I vote for one of the ER shows. You know, the

super cheesy ones, not the medical drama type.”

He snorts at my suggestion, but seconds later, dramatic music is playing, and the warning about this being a re-enactment and not to follow any medical advice from this show pops up on the screen. It’s enough to make me sit up, and I lean into Kieran to bury my face in his shoulder.

“What if I said it?” I ask, more curious than anything. I don’t really expect him to have any idea what I’m talking about, and judging by the way he reaches over to stroke his fingers through my hair, he doesn’t.

“Said what?” Val thumps down on the sofa next to me, sounding incredibly tired after his three hour driving shift this morning. Unlike Kieran and me, he really is not made for long drives. He’s made for sleep, for naps, and for cuddling, I’ve learned in the last month.

“The L-word. The one you guys like to throw around when you want something,” I tease, sitting up between them and curling my legs under myself. “I guess it’s not a big deal to you guys. I’ve just never said it to someone other than, like, my mom. So, it’s sort of a big deal.”

A really big deal, but I’d prefer to play it off as not that major.

“Sorry. I’m being dumb,” I add, letting my head flop onto Val’s shoulder. “Also, we’ve seen this episode. It’s the licorice one, where the guy flips out and the woman eats like ten pounds of licorice before their wedding, so?—”

Unexpectedly, Kieran drags me down onto his lap, face up, so I have to meet his gaze. I wiggle, trying not to break my spine, and helpfully Val pulls my legs onto his lap before running his fingers up and down my exposed calves.

“I love you,” Kieran tells me, his gaze even.

“And I love you,” Val agrees. “Even though you almost beat me to death with your hanukiah last night. For barely stepping on Finn’s tail.”

A smile twitches at my lips as I gaze at Kieran, though I look up a second later to give Val the look. “You deserved it. He’s delicate,” I inform him just as Kieran drags me back down.

“You don’t have to say it,” Kieran tells me. “You can if you want to, or you can wait until you feel more comfortable with it. You?—”

“I love you.” The words come out quickly, a bit jumbled, so I take a breath to try again. “I love you both. You’re sort of awful since, you know...murder, kidnapping, torture. All of that.” Sitting up again, I reach out to card my fingers through Val’s hair. “But I love you. For better or worse, which definitely makes me probably really fucked up and in need of a lot of therapy.”

Kieran turns to rest his head on my shoulder from behind, and I pull Val a little bit closer so I’m once again trapped between their warmth and at their mercy.

It’s exactly where I want to be.

Where I always want to be.

“We’ll be home for Valentine’s Day. We’ll do something very couple-ish,” Val promises me. “Well, thruple-ish. You know.”

“Home like Nashville, home like the creepy mountain cabin, or home like some weird warehouse place? Since that seems like your aesthetic?” I can’t help but ask in a dry voice.

“Home like Nashville,” Kieran promises. “If that’s what you want.” His arms come up to circle my waist, and I sigh before leaning back into him while dragging Val

along with me.

“I love you,” I say again. “I just want to be around both of you. Besides, the cats are really loving RV life, and I can work from anywhere thanks to the magic of the internet. So home can be wherever you want it to be.” I take a breath, knowing this next part is going to sound cheesy as hell. “Home can just be with you guys.”

Neither of them speaks. But Val is quick to kiss me, and Kieran follows suit by burying his face against my throat. Before long, I know we won’t be leaving on time, and yet again, Kieran is going to have to call Sam and make up some excuse for us being a few more hours later.

Not that he’ll complain.

Especially if he’s fucking my mouth when he makes that call.

The building is much less ‘industrial nightmare’ and more ‘gothic hellscape’ than I expected. Turning to look at Erika, I see her shrug and give me the same flat glance in return. “I don’t know,” she says with a sigh, tucking her hair behind her ear. “I don’t get to pick. That’s a Kieran and Samuel thing, since they have the money.”

Kieran being a rich trust fund kid hadn’t been on my bucket list for the New Year, but I suppose neither was ‘date two murderers and tell them you love them.’ So what do I know?

“I think I prefer warehouses,” I admit with my hands shoved in my pockets. I’m still shivering in my hoodie and sweatpants, thanks to Indiana’s current shitty winter phase that feels more like Alaska than the lower forty-eight. “Is that weird? Do you have a preference?”

“Warehouses,” Erika tells me after a moment. She bites her lip, and from the corner of my eye, I can see her looking unsure. Like she’s hunting for words that she can’t



quite come up with. “Sometimes I regret telling you,” she admits at last, surprising me into looking straight at her.

“Why?” I ask. “You mean telling me where they were, right? Why regret that?” But I can read the answer in her face before I finish my question. “Because you think I’d be better off trying to be normal still...”

She nods, looking away. “Sorry. I don’t hate you or dislike you. And it’s not that I don’t want you here. I actually think we could be friends.”

“You’re only saying that because you like my cats,” I point out with a wry smile. “But that’s fine. I totally agree that they’re charming as hell.”

Erika snorts, rolling her eyes in a move I can only call delicate . Though, everything about her really is exactly that. She’s the most delicate, feminine creature I’ve ever seen. Especially when she dons her doll mask and murders people.

“The novelty wears off quick,” she informs me. “It becomes more like a job. Something you have to do. But you don’t have to do it.” She takes a step closer to me, shivering under her pretty cardigan. “Fuck, it’s cold. I thought Indiana would be a little warmer than the Arctic Circle.”

“Indiana doesn’t know where it is, or what the appropriate seasonal temperature is ever supposed to be,” I mutter, tilting my head to the side as I hear footsteps crunching on the gravel behind us. Erika takes it as her cue to leave, and within seconds, Val’s arms are draped over my shoulders as he pulls me back into his warmth.

“You okay?” he asks softly, nuzzling the side of my face. “Was she telling you to go home?”

“Something like that,” I admit, adjusting his arms around me. A flicker of unease

goes through me, and I lean into him. “You don’t want that, right?” I ask, eyeing the dilapidated old house as Kieran approaches to stand beside us.

“No,” the taller, darker-haired man tells me instantly. “We don’t want that.” He reaches out to run his fingers through his hair. “We want you with us, Noa. Always.”

“Literally always,” Val agrees. “Even when we’re covered in blood.”

The words feel heavy. Like a commitment.

Like a promise I shouldn’t want to keep.

But it hasn’t happened yet, nothing about them is enough to chase me away. So I settle back against Val with the knowledge that no matter how bad or how brutal they may be, they’re a permanent part of my life.

I need them, just like they need me. And if they’re willing to put up with my questions, cats, and terrible sleep schedule, then I’m willing to put up with the murder .

After all, fair’s fair .