



# Dark Therapy

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**Category:** Suspense Thriller

**Description:** In the heart of her thriving psychology practice, Amelia Harper believes she can help anyone heal—until Damien Blackwell, a notorious hitman with a chilling past, walks through her door seeking therapy for his obsessive nature. As their sessions unfold, Amelia's carefully constructed world begins to crumble, triggering haunting flashbacks of her own traumatic past.

Vivid dreams of disturbing therapy sessions blur the lines between reality and nightmare, leaving Amelia unsettled yet inexplicably drawn to Damien. As her emotional attachment deepens, she battles her growing feelings for a man whose darkness threatens to consume her.

Caught between the professional and the personal, Amelia learns that love can be as dangerous as obsession, and the line between healer and victim is perilously thin. This dark psychological thriller explores the complexities of love, trauma, and the perilous dance between sanity and madness.

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# Page 1

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The rain was coming down in sheets, drumming against my office window in a steady, relentless rhythm. The gray skies outside matched the weight in my chest, though I couldn't quite place why. Everything felt... different . A small chill crept along my spine as I flipped through the day's appointments, my eyes lingering on one name that felt like it didn't belong here— Damien Blackwell .

New clients often come with their own mysteries, each one bringing a story that unwinds slowly in this quiet, safe space I'd created. But something about his file felt different. The name alone left a strange taste in my mouth, as if I'd swallowed a memory I couldn't place. I tried to shake it off, telling myself it was just another case, just another person who needed help. But the sense of unease persisted, deepening the quiet shadows in the room.

When he finally arrived, it was as if the temperature dropped. Dark hair, whiskey eyes that seemed to drill right through me, and a presence that held the room in a tight grip. I've met all kinds, seen all shades of darkness in the eyes of those who sit across from me, but never like this . In that moment, every nerve in my body seemed to vibrate with something foreign—a mixture of curiosity, intrigue, and something that felt far too close to fear.

I forced myself to hold his gaze, refusing to flinch, wondering if he could sense that I was already losing my footing. If he did, he said nothing—just offered a small, almost mocking smile.

And that was how it began. A stranger in the rain, a patient I should have turned

away, and the first step into a darkness that would strip away every layer of who I thought I was.

## Page 2

*Source Creation Date: August 7, 2025, 3:15 am*

Amelia

The sound of rain tapping gently against the window replaced the usual morning sunlight, filling the room with a soft, steady rhythm. The dim light from the overcast sky filtered through the blinds, casting a cool, muted glow across my bedroom. I sat on the edge of my bed, brushing out the long waves of my hair, lost in thought as I listened to the rain's steady beat. The motion of the brush through my hair felt grounding, a small moment of calm before the unpredictable chaos of the day ahead.

I looked up, catching my reflection in the mirror. My eyes seemed to be searching for something, a trace of assurance, perhaps, that today would be like any other. But something had felt different lately—an unease that I couldn't quite place, like a shadow lingering at the edge of my thoughts .

I pulled on a simple, fitted blouse and skirt, smoothing down the fabric with a practiced hand. Professional, polished—armor of sorts for the work I do. I had learned that appearance mattered in my field. A calm, composed exterior had the power to soothe even the most agitated patients, and it helped me, too, in maintaining a sense of control.

Downstairs, I made a cup of tea, letting its warmth seep into my hands as I took a sip. As I waited for it to steep, I mentally ran through my schedule, recalling the patients I'd be seeing that day. Each one with their own struggles, fears, and histories. I had my usuals—clients I'd come to know well over the years, whose stories I carried with me. But today, there was someone new.

Damien Blackwell . The name alone made me pause. Lily had called me the day

before to mention that someone had insisted on booking an appointment as soon as possible. “He wouldn’t take no for an answer,” she’d said, her tone laced with a bit of frustration and...maybe intrigue. She’d quickly added, “But he sounded polite enough.”

I took another sip, trying to focus. I had met many clients with turbulent pasts, individuals grappling with dark, twisted secrets they hid from the world. But something about Damien’s urgency, his insistence, had been at the back of my mind since the call.

I grabbed my bag, slipping my keys, phone, and notebook inside—my usual essentials. The leather strap rested against my shoulder as I made my way to my car. With a quick click, I unlocked the door and settled into the driver’s seat. The soft hum of the engine was comforting as I turned the key, feeling the car come to life beneath me.

Driving to the office had always been part of my morning ritual, a time when I mentally prepared myself for the day, letting the familiar route soothe my mind. The streets were beginning to fill with people heading to work, their routines woven together in quiet harmony. I weaved through the city, my gaze flickering over familiar landmarks: the bustling café on the corner, the park where I sometimes went to clear my head after a difficult session, the quiet bookstore with its dusty charm.

As I pulled up to a red light, my mind drifted back to Damien Blackwell. I knew nothing about him beyond his name and his urgent need for the appointment. But something about the way he had insisted on seeing me—on seeing me, specifically—unsettled me. Most new clients came through referrals or word-of-mouth, but Lily said he had come on his own, finding my office and calling himself.

My fingers tightened on the steering wheel as I tried to shake off the apprehension that had settled in my chest. This wasn’t the first time I’d felt wary before meeting a

patient, especially one with an unknown background. But I couldn't ignore the lingering tension, a feeling almost like anticipation.

The light changed, and I pressed on the gas, forcing my thoughts back to the present. Soon, I pulled into the small lot beside my office, parking in my usual spot. I took a moment, hands resting on the wheel, eyes closed as I took a deep breath. Focus. Today was just another day, another chance to make a difference, to help someone find peace with whatever demons they carried.

With that thought, I grabbed my bag, stepped out of the car, and headed toward the entrance. The weight of my day began as soon as I unlocked the door .

Inside, the quiet of the office greeted me, a stillness broken only by the faint ticking of the clock on the wall. The space was warmly lit and inviting, a conscious effort on my part to create a calming environment for both myself and my clients. Soft chairs, framed art, and shelves lined with books added a warmth that I hoped would ease anyone who walked in.

As I was arranging a few files on my desk, Lily arrived, offering her usual cheerful smile, "Good morning, Dr. Harper!" Her upbeat presence had a way of grounding me in the here and now, reminding me that I wasn't alone in this.

"Morning, Lily," I responded, smiling back at her. "Any updates for today?"

She handed me a neatly typed schedule, a clipboard tucked under her arm. "Mostly routine sessions, but don't forget you've got a new intake at ten," she said, leaning in with a conspiratorial whisper. "The one with the intense voice on the phone."

"Damien Blackwell," I murmured, my fingers brushing the name on my schedule. I couldn't quite shake the unease I'd felt when I first saw it .

“Yes, that one,” Lily said, raising an eyebrow, as if sensing my thoughts. “He was... persistent. I double-checked his references, but there wasn’t much to go on.”

“Thanks for looking into it,” I replied, trying to sound nonchalant. I didn’t want her to pick up on my reservations.

I checked my watch. I still had a few minutes before my first session, so I took a moment to walk over to the window. Outside, people passed by, oblivious to the complexity behind these walls, the lives and stories I encountered every day. I reminded myself why I was here, of the lives I had managed to impact and the lives I hoped to reach.

Soon enough, it was time to begin.

I eased into the chair across from my first patient of the day, Mr. Thompson. He was an elderly man with a familiar smile, someone I had come to know well over the past year. That day, he was proudly talking about his grandson’s graduation, a milestone he never thought he would witness.

“It’s incredible, Dr. Harper,” he said, his eyes bright. “I never imagined I’d be here for this. ”

“That’s wonderful, Mr. Thompson,” I replied with a smile. “You should be proud of yourself and all the progress you’ve made.”

Our session flowed easily, with his anxieties steadily easing as we talked. Moments like these reminded me of why I did this work—the small victories, the quiet shifts. By the time Mr. Thompson left, he was standing a little taller, and I felt a familiar sense of fulfillment settle over me.

I glanced at the clock. Ten.

The sound of Lily's voice in the reception area filtered through my office door, followed by the deep tone of my next patient responding. Mr. Blackwell. My new client. A man I knew little about—though, truthfully, that was often where the intrigue lay.

Moments later, Lily opened the door, her expression neutral but curious. “Dr. Harper, Mr. Blackwell is here to see you.”

“Thank you, Lily,” I said, nodding. “Send him in. ”

He entered, tall and composed, with dark hair framing his sharp features and light, whiskey-colored eyes that seemed to survey everything in the room. As those eyes landed on mine, a charged silence filled the space between us, heavy and unsettling, as if he were peeling away layers I didn't know I had. His gaze held mine—steady, unyielding—before flicking over the rest of the room with a quiet authority, as though he were marking it, claiming the space in his mind.

There was a calculated ease in the way he moved, each step deliberate, like someone acutely aware of every inch of his surroundings. The tattoos on his fingers drew my attention next, intricate markings that stood out against his skin, adding an edge to his appearance. I realized I was holding my breath, and as I let it go, I sensed that he had noticed, his eyes flicking back to me with a faint, knowing spark.

I cleared my throat, breaking the silence that had settled too comfortably between us. “Mr. Blackwell, please have a seat.”

A faint, almost imperceptible smile touched his lips as he moved toward the chair across from me, lowering himself with a relaxed confidence that bordered on arrogance. I felt his gaze lingering, scrutinizing, as if he were dissecting every detail of my posture, my expression, my reaction to him.



I maintained my professional tone, leaning into the familiar structure of the session. “I understand you’re here of your own volition. Is there a particular reason you decided to seek therapy?”

For a moment, he said nothing, only watched me with those sharp eyes. Then he leaned back, his fingers tapping idly against the arm of the chair, the tattoos shifting with each movement. “You’re the expert,” he finally said, his voice low, roughened at the edges. “Why don’t you tell me?”

His words were a challenge, laced with a confidence that felt deliberate, provoking. I steadied myself, meeting his gaze without flinching. “That’s not how this works. For therapy to be effective, you have to be willing to let me in.”

As I spoke, I studied him carefully, dissecting the nuances of his posture, the slight tension in his shoulders, the glint in his eyes that hinted at something simmering just beneath his calm surface. He was deliberately challenging me, testing boundaries, seeing how far he could push before I reacted. There was an intentionality in everything he did, as though he was crafting each moment, shaping each word to keep control over this interaction.

Men like him were rare—self-assured, intelligent, but guarded, each layer carefully concealed. His confidence wasn’t fragile; it was honed, grounded in something darker and more resolute. I had seen arrogance before, but this was different. He wasn’t simply trying to impress me; he was asserting his presence, weaving himself into the room’s atmosphere, making himself impossible to ignore.

This wasn’t standard resistance. There was no trace of insecurity or uncertainty. Instead, there was something almost... calculated, as if he were playing a game where only he knew the rules.

A part of me wondered what he had expected to find here, if he believed this setting

might offer him something he couldn't find elsewhere.

But I couldn't lose focus, couldn't allow his tactics to affect my objectivity. If he had been there to test me, I'd have to be sharper, to meet his provocations without stepping into whatever trap he had been setting. I straightened, grounding myself in my training, in the techniques that had always worked with difficult clients. This was just another session, another person seeking help—even if his motives remained unclear.

He raised an eyebrow, a smirk playing at the corners of his mouth, but I didn't flinch. I was well-acquainted with the subtle games people played in therapy. "Okay. Before we dive into the reason that brought you here," I continued, keeping my voice steady, "I'd like to ask for a brief introduction. Just little about yourself. It helps establish a foundation for our work together."

He leaned back slightly, considering my request, as if weighing its significance. I could feel the tension in the air thickening, a palpable challenge hanging between us. It was a small ask, but I knew it was a crucial one; it set the tone for the dynamic we would establish.

"Why should I?" he replied, his voice smooth and laced with defiance. "You're the one supposed to help me, not the other way around."

"True," I replied, unfazed. "But therapy is a two-way street. If we're going to make progress, I need to understand who I'm working with. A simple introduction will make it easier for both of us."

He narrowed his eyes, studying me, and for a moment, the air grew thick with unspoken challenges. I held my ground, maintaining eye contact, refusing to back down. This was my space, my practice, and I wouldn't let him dictate the terms.

Finally, he exhaled slowly, the faintest hint of amusement dancing in his eyes. “Fine. Damien Blackwell. Thirty-three. Hitman.”

The words hung in the air, heavy with implications. I blinked, momentarily caught off guard, but quickly composed myself. He had a way of turning even the simplest interactions into something more complex.

“Thank you, Damien,” I said, choosing to emphasize his name, to reclaim the power in this exchange.

As I absorbed his introduction, a flurry of thoughts rushed through my mind. A hitman. The word reverberated in my head, painting a vivid picture of the life he led—one filled with violence and manipulation. I couldn’t help but wonder about the stories hidden behind those whiskey-colored eyes. What had led him to this path? What kind of experiences had shaped a man capable of such darkness?

I took a steadying breath, forcing my expression to remain neutral. This was just another session, I reminded myself, a professional exchange where I was the guide. I couldn’t let the weight of his profession cloud my judgment or influence my reactions. He was here for help, whether he admitted it or not, and I was trained to navigate the complexities of even the most challenging clients.

Yet, a small voice in the back of my mind whispered caution. The inherent danger in Damien’s profession seeped into the room, like a fog creeping in unnoticed. I could feel it tugging at my instincts, urging me to be wary, to keep my guard up. I reminded myself that I wasn’t just a psychologist; I was a professional who had dealt with trauma and crisis before. I’d faced difficult patients who were mentally and emotionally complex. This was no different.

“Damien,” I began, keeping my voice even, “it takes a certain mindset to do what you do. I imagine there’s a lot you keep to yourself, a lot you don’t share with others.”

I watched him closely for any sign of vulnerability, any crack in his facade. But his expression remained inscrutable, a mask of confidence and control. I had to push past that, find a way to break through the walls he'd built around himself.

"It's important to recognize how your profession impacts you, both positively and negatively," I continued, determined to steer the conversation toward a more introspective place. "Understanding that is key to finding a way forward."

He tilted his head slightly, intrigued but still guarded. "You think you can help me understand that?"

I smiled, a blend of reassurance and professionalism. "That's the goal. But you have to be willing to engage in this process. Are you ready for that?"

For a moment, I wondered if I was in over my head. But the thrill of the challenge ignited something inside me. I was here to help him untangle the knots of his psyche, and I wouldn't let fear dictate my approach .

Damien leaned back slightly, a smirk playing at the corners of his mouth, and I could feel the shift in the air. The atmosphere thickened, charged with tension as he contemplated my question. "Engage in this process?" he repeated, his tone dripping with amusement. "That sounds like a two-way street, Millie. But tell me, what happens when I decide to play by my own rules?"

His gaze held mine with a piercing intensity, and I couldn't help but feel as though he was dissecting me just as I was attempting to dissect him. I noticed the nickname he used for me but chose to brush it off. The confident bravado in his posture suggested he was more than comfortable in this dynamic, as if he was relishing the game we were about to play.

I steadied my breath, refusing to let his amusement shake my composure. "Then I

suppose we'll see where that leads us. Therapy is about exploration—about understanding your choices and the consequences that come with them.”

He let out a low laugh, one that sent a chill down my spine. “Consequences? You think you’re qualified to talk about consequences? You’re sitting across from a hitman, and yet here you are, playing therapist like everything’s normal.”

The jab landed harder than I’d liked to admit, but I refused to show it. I knew the risks of treating someone like him—every session came with its own set of dangers—but I couldn’t let him rattle me. I took a steadying breath, my grip on the situation firm, grounding myself in the professional distance I’d worked so hard to maintain.

“Your line of work might raise eyebrows, Damien,” I responded, keeping my voice steady. “But that doesn’t change the fact that we’re here to explore the choices that led you here. I’m not here to judge you; I’m here to help you understand how those choices have shaped your life.”

He raised an eyebrow, clearly intrigued. “You think you could peel back the layers of my life and find something worth saving? Or are you just curious about what makes a monster tick?”

I could feel my pulse quicken at his provocative words, but I didn’t let it show. Instead, I leaned forward slightly, mirroring his intensity. “It’s not about saving anyone, Damien. It’s about understanding. And if you’re willing to be honest with yourself, we might uncover something valuable together.”

His expression shifted, the amusement flickering in his eyes replaced by something deeper—curiosity mingled with caution. For a moment, the room felt charged with a kind of unspoken agreement, a fragile bridge being built between us, however precarious.

“Honesty,” he mused, almost as if savoring the word. “That’s a tall order for someone like me, don’t you think?”

“Maybe,” I conceded. “But we can start small. What brought you here today?”

He tilted his head, considering my question. The challenge lingered in the air, and I couldn’t shake the feeling that he was about to turn the tables once more. The game was afoot, and I couldn’t help but wonder how far down the rabbit hole we might go.

Damien shifted in his seat, his expression morphing into one of contemplation as he leaned forward slightly. “You’re eager to dig deep, Millie. But let’s be real for a moment—this isn’t just about understanding. You want to know what makes me tick. The truth is, I have my fair share of demons. You could say I have a penchant for obsession.”

His words hung in the air, thick with implication. There was a dark allure to what he was saying, and I couldn’t help but feel drawn into his narrative. “Obsession can manifest in many forms,” he continued, his voice low and deliberate. “For some, it’s about power; for others, it’s about control. But for me? It’s about the chase —the thrill of wanting something so badly it consumes you.”

I swallowed hard, trying to keep my expression neutral, but I could feel the weight of his gaze on me, assessing my reaction. “What do you obsess over, Damien?” I asked, determined to steer the conversation back to a more constructive path.

He smirked, a flicker of something dangerous flashing in his whiskey-colored eyes. “Oh, I think you know. It’s the thrill of the hunt, the game itself. And sometimes, it’s about the one person who manages to catch my attention—the one who makes me want to chase them.”

His words sent a shiver down my spine, and I forced myself to maintain eye contact,

despite the unsettling implications. “And what does that look like for you? This obsession?” I pushed, my voice steady, but internally, I could feel a knot forming in my stomach.

He leaned back again, his posture relaxed, but there was a predatory glint in his eyes. “It’s a feeling that gnaws at me. A need to know everything, to unravel the layers of a person until there’s nothing left to hide. When I find someone intriguing—like you—it’s not just a passing interest; it becomes an all-consuming focus. And you, Millie, have certainly piqued my curiosity.”

The intensity of his words lingered between us, creating a charged atmosphere that was impossible to ignore. “You speak of it as if it’s a game,” I replied, trying to remain detached. “But obsession can lead to dangerous paths. It’s not something to take lightly.”

He tilted his head, a smile curling at his lips. “Dangerous? That’s part of the allure, isn’t it? There’s something exhilarating about crossing those lines—about pushing boundaries and seeing just how far one can go before they break. ”

I felt my pulse quicken, an uninvited thrill coursing through me. “And what do you hope to achieve through this obsession?” I asked, my curiosity piqued despite the risks.

Damien’s gaze narrowed slightly, and for a moment, the playful banter faded into something deeper, darker. “To understand,” he replied softly, almost contemplatively. “To possess—to unravel the complexities of another person until they become an extension of me. But in your case, I have to wonder: how far are you willing to let me in?”

His question hung in the air, heavy with implication, and I realized that this was no ordinary therapy session. It was a dance on the edge of a precipice, and I was unsure

how much longer I could maintain my balance.



## Page 3

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Damien

The moment I stepped into her office, a fucking wave of tension slammed into me, a familiar rush that I both craved and feared. Amelia Harper . The name echoed in my skull, but it was her presence that hit me like a goddamn punch to the gut. She was sitting behind her desk, bathed in soft light that seemed to halo her, making her look like some kind of fucking angel. Long, wavy brown hair spilled over her shoulders, framing a face that was striking, but still approachable. Those light honey eyes? God , they were fucking beautiful! They cut through her professional mask, holding an intelligence that lured me in while warning me to stay the hell out.

As I crossed the threshold, I felt an irresistible pull toward her. It wasn't just physical attraction; it was something deeper, a magnetic force that promised obsession and control. Her beauty was undeniable, but it was the way she carried herself that completely fucking captivated me. There was this quiet strength in her posture, a dangerous mix of confidence and vulnerability that made me want to tear her apart, piece by piece. I could almost see the layers underneath her composed exterior—each one a challenge, begging to be unraveled.

I caught myself studying her—how her brows furrowed slightly when she focused, how she straightened her back to project some semblance of authority, but there was an underlying tension in her movements, like she was just one wrong word away from running the hell out of here. I couldn't help but admire it—how she tried so fucking hard to mask her emotions, acting like I wasn't slowly crawling under her skin, like she wasn't shaken by my presence. But I could see it in the way her breath caught when our eyes locked, the subtle shift in her body language that betrayed her calm facade.

I could feel it then, the obsession igniting—like wildfire, wrapping its filthy tendrils around my mind, dragging me deeper into her little world. Every beat of my heart was a reminder that I was now in her territory, and I liked it . I wanted to break her—see how far I could push, how many buttons I could press before she cracked. The hunt always got my blood pumping, but with Millie? This felt different—raw, twisted, personal . I needed to know everything about her. Every goddamn secret. Peel back the layers until there was nothing left but the raw, exposed core of her soul.

She took a steadying breath, but I could see her composure crack just a bit. I let my words hang in the air, thick with the weight of them. “To understand,” I said softly, almost contemplatively. “To possess —to unravel the complexities of another person until they become an extension of me. But in your case, I have to wonder: how far are you willing to let me in?”

The moment hung heavy with implication, and I could see the unease flickering in her eyes. Fuck . I wanted to see how far I could go before she lost her balance, before she couldn’t hide that crack in her perfect little facade.

“What you’re describing sounds more like possession than understanding,” she replied, her voice steady, but I could taste the adrenaline on her. It made me want to push harder, to watch her squirm just a little more. “Therapy isn’t about controlling another person; it’s about collaboration and trust. ”

I couldn’t help but smile at her fierce response. The fire in her words was fucking captivating, but I saw right through her attempt to regain control. I leaned back, letting the amusement take hold of me. “Collaboration,” I repeated, dragging the word out like it was a joke. “Interesting choice. You make it sound so noble. But in reality, everyone wants something, don’t they? Isn’t that why you’re sitting here with me, pretending you’re in control? I could see it in the way you’re holding yourself together. You’re just as drawn to this as I am.”

Her breath caught, and I reveled in that moment of vulnerability. She was trying so damn hard to maintain her facade, but I could see the cracks starting to form. “The only thing I’m drawn to is helping you, Damien. If you’re willing to be honest and work through whatever’s brought you here.”

I tilted my head, my expression shifting to something darker, more serious. “Honesty is a slippery concept, doctor. It’s rarely as clear-cut as you want it to be.” I leaned in just enough, lowering my voice to a conspiratorial whisper. “What if I told you that part of me enjoys this little back-and-forth? That I thrive on the chaos of it? What would that say about me? ”

Her throat worked as she swallowed, and I watched the tension ripple through her body. The pull of my obsession tightened around her, and I was damn close to reeling her in further. But she was tougher than I expected. She cleared her throat, focused herself, and locked her eyes onto mine with a fierce determination.

“Every interaction in this room is a choice,” she stated, each word carefully crafted. “You’re here because you want to change. So let’s start with why you think you want to possess someone, rather than connect with them.”

For a brief moment, I was taken aback by her strength. She was pushing back, and I couldn’t help but admire that. There was a flicker of something deeper in her gaze, an acknowledgment of the chaos swirling between us. But I wasn’t about to let her take control for long.

“Touché, Amelia,” I said, my voice low and smooth, a teasing lilt creeping in. “But let’s not pretend you’re not just as fascinated by this dynamic as I am. You’re drawn to it, and I can’t help but wonder how long you’ll keep that detachment. ”

I watched as she stood her ground, her expression defiant. “I’m here to help you, Damien, not to play games. If you want this to work, you’ll need to meet me

halfway.”

I leaned back slightly, gauging her response with a mix of curiosity and amusement. “You know, I could sense something in you, Amelia. You’ve seen darkness, haven’t you? The kind that lurks beneath the surface, waiting for the right moment to emerge. It’s that same darkness that makes us... similar in ways that might surprise you.”

I let my words linger, watching as her expression shifted, just for a fraction of a second. There was a fleeting glimpse of recognition that I found deliciously enticing. “I can see it in the way you carry yourself, the way you navigate this space. You understand what it means to confront the shadows, to grapple with the parts of yourself that are not so easily accepted.”

Her eyes narrowed, but I could tell I’d struck a nerve. “You have no idea what you’re talking about,” she replied, her voice firm but laced with an undertone of uncertainty.

“Oh, but I do,” I countered, leaning in closer, my voice dropping to a low, conspiratorial whisper. “You’ve danced with the darkness. You might think you’re here to help me, but in reality, we’re both just trying to make sense of our pasts. Maybe your past isn’t so different from mine.”

She stiffened, her resolve apparent as she shook her head. “You’re mistaken if you think you know me. My past is my own, and it doesn’t make me like you. You’re here because you need help, and that’s the focus of this session. Nothing more.”

“Is it really?” I challenged, a smirk creeping onto my lips. “Tell me, doctor, how do you separate your past from the present? What happens when the ghosts of yesterday come knocking at your door? Do you simply shut them out, or do you invite them in for a cup of tea?”

The tension in the room thickened, electric and palpable. I could see her grappling

with my words, her mind racing as she tried to keep control over the conversation. “That’s not how therapy works,” she insisted, her voice steady. “This isn’t about me ; it’s about you and the challenges you’re facing.”

“But isn’t that the beauty of it?” I replied, my tone playful yet probing, the madness simmering just beneath the surface. “You think you’re in control, but the truth is, you’re just as susceptible to this game as I am. We both have our demons, Amelia. The difference is, I embrace mine, while you—well, you seem hell-bent on hiding yours.”

“I’m not hiding anything,” she shot back, her frustration bubbling just below the surface. “And I won’t let you distract me with your psychological games. My job is to guide you through your struggles, not to delve into my personal life.”

“But what if the guide is lost?” I pressed, leaning in, my eyes locking onto hers, the challenge hanging in the air like smoke. “What if you ’re the one who needs to confront your own darkness? It’s not just about me, Millie. It’s about the complexity of our lives, woven together by all the experiences we try to outrun. I see you fighting against it, and that... that only makes me want to dig deeper.”

She breathed in sharply, steadying herself against my provocations. “I’m here to help you, Damien. But if you think for one second that you can manipulate this situation, you’re sorely mistaken. I’m a psychologist, and I know how to navigate these conversations without getting caught in the web you’re trying to spin. ”

“Maybe so,” I conceded, the thrill of the challenge licking at my veins. “But I also know that beneath your cool exterior lies a tumult of emotions and memories that you haven’t fully processed. You might think you’re unaffected by what I say, but I can see the flickers of doubt and curiosity. That’s where the true connection lies.”

She shook her head, frustration warring in her expression. “You’re trying to redirect

this conversation, and I won't allow it. If you want help, you need to engage honestly, not play mind games."

"Why not both?" I challenged, a dark smile tugging at my lips. "Why can't this be a journey of discovery for both of us? You might find that letting go of control can lead to some unexpected revelations."

Her resolve hardened, and for a moment, I saw the psychologist she was—fiercely protective of her boundaries. "I'm not here to lose control, Damien. I'm here to guide you toward understanding yourself, not to join you in the depths of whatever darkness you think we share."

Fuck, the thrill of our back-and-forth only made me want more. It was like a drug, that tension between us. The way her defiance sparked something dark in me. It wasn't enough—no, not nearly enough. Her resistance only made me crave pushing harder. After all, this was just the fucking beginning. A game I was going to win, no matter how deep I had to drag her into it.

I leaned in closer, savoring the thrill of the chase, the way her composure held firm against my taunts. "You say you want to help me, Amelia, but let's get real for a second. What do you really know about reality and illusion? 'Cause I can feel it—those lines are blurry for you, too. You're sitting there, playing the psychologist, but deep down, you're questioning what's real and what's just in your head."

Her eyes narrowed, but she didn't flinch. "Your attempts to confuse me with useless philosophical talk won't work."

"Useless philosophical talk?" I chuckled, feigning offense. "That's rich coming from a woman who spends her life trying to untangle the mess of the human psyche. Reality's a slippery thing, don't you think? What if I told you that your reality might just be an illusion? What if everything you thought you understood about yourself,

about me, was just a facade? ”

I saw the way her jaw tightened, the way she fought to keep her cool. “You’re trying to provoke me,” she replied, her voice steady, even though I could see the tension running through her shoulders. “I won’t let you manipulate the narrative. I’m here to help you untangle your thoughts, not to play mind games.”

“Mind games are part of the package, sweetheart,” I shot back, leaning forward, letting the intensity of the moment settle in the air between us like a live wire. “You think I’m the only one who can play with perceptions? You’re as skilled as I am at dancing around truths. You know how to read between the lines, how to dissect what’s presented to you. But I can see through that calm little act, Millie. I can see the flicker of uncertainty in your eyes.”

She took a breath, a deliberate attempt to remain unfazed. “You might be good at manipulating people, but I’m not here to be your puppet. This session is about you, and if you want to find clarity, you need to drop the games.”

I couldn’t help but smirk. “Clarity? Is that what you think I’m after? Maybe I am more interested in the chaos. You talk about darkness like it’s some kind of burden, but what if it’s a playground? You’ve experienced things that shaped you, just like I have. Don’t you want to dig into those shadows? Explore the twisted corners of your mind?”

“I’m not here to explore my shadows,” she responded, her tone unwavering. “I’m here to help you confront yours. So, if you want to continue this session, you need to focus on yourself, not me.”

“Ah, but there’s the rub, Millie,” I said, my voice dripping with amusement. “You can’t separate us that easily. We’re intertwined in this little dance, and I’m just getting started. You might think you have control, but I can smell the doubt, the

curiosity lurking beneath your surface. You're just as drawn to this darkness as I am. How long until you can't resist the temptation to dive deeper?"

She locked her gaze with mine, and for a moment, the air was thick with tension, suffocating, as if it were about to crack under the weight of it. "I'm not diving anywhere, Damien. I'm standing firm on solid ground, and I refuse to let your games distract me from the goal of this session."

"Solid ground? Really?" I chuckled, the amusement creeping into my voice like poison. "That's cute. But the truth is, you're balancing on the edge of a cliff, and I can feel the wind pulling you closer to the abyss. Just admit it, Millie—you're intrigued by the chaos I bring."

"I'm intrigued by the human condition," she replied, her voice calm, but there was the faintest crack—just a whisper of exasperation creeping through. "And that includes understanding people like you. But that doesn't mean I'll let you steer the conversation."

"Steer the conversation? Oh, darling, I'm not steering anything. I'm just throwing out bait, and I'm curious to see what you'll bite on," I shot back, watching her struggle to hold her ground. "You're good at this game, but I can see the hesitation. Just imagine the possibilities if you let your guard down. We could uncover so much more."

She shook her head, unwavering. "You're not going to break me. If anything, your attempts to manipulate are only reinforcing my resolve to help you."

"Break you?" I echoed, feigning innocence, though a dark laugh tugged at the edge of my words. "That's not my intention at all. I simply wanted to see how far we could push each other. "

I watched her, her voice steady, her gaze unflinching, and I realized with a twisted



amusement that coming here was never about ridding myself of this obsession. Maybe, on some level, I'd hoped for that—a chance to untangle whatever sick fixation had taken root, to peel back the edges and examine it from a safe distance. But sitting here, facing her fire, her determination... every part of me knew I was in deeper than ever.

She was supposed to be a way out. A fucking break. Maybe even a release. But all I felt now was that I'd walked straight into the fire, and there was no coming back. Every word she spoke, every glance she cast in my direction, it just fed the obsession like gasoline to a flame. I wasn't giving her up.

So, I leaned back, letting the smirk play across my lips, letting her think she'd won this round. But I knew better. This wasn't a cure; it was an addiction—one I wasn't sure I'd ever want to break.

## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: August 7, 2025, 3:15 am*

Amelia

The scent of freshly brewed coffee enveloped me as I stirred my drink, glancing across the small table at Emily. She sat with her hair pulled back in a loose bun, a few errant strands framing her face, her expression one of curious attentiveness. The bustling coffee shop was a comforting backdrop, a stark contrast to the unsettling encounter I had two days prior.

“Emily,” I began, hesitating as I tried to find the right words. “I need to talk to you about my last session with Damien.”

Her brows furrowed slightly, and she leaned in closer. “The hitman?” she asked, a mix of skepticism and concern threading through her voice. “What about it?”

I took a sip of my coffee, feeling the warmth seep into my hands, trying to ground myself. “It was... different. He has this way of drawing me in, you know? Like he’s testing the boundaries of the therapeutic space.” I paused, searching for clarity amid the chaotic swirl of thoughts. “I’ve seen difficult patients before, but this is something else. He challenges my perceptions in ways I’m not entirely prepared for.”

Emily regarded me with an intensity that made me feel exposed. “What do you mean by ‘challenging’?” she pressed. “Is he manipulating you? Or is it just a part of his personality?”

I chewed my lip, recalling Damien’s piercing gaze, the way his words lingered like a dark shadow. “It’s hard to explain. He questions my abilities, and talks almost as if he could sense my own past darkness.”

Emily's expression shifted as she absorbed my words. "It sounds like he's trying to exploit vulnerabilities, Amelia. It's not uncommon for patients with intense backgrounds to do that, but you need to keep your guard up. This isn't just about his issues; it's about yours too."

"I know," I admitted, feeling a weight settle in my chest. "But there's something about him that's... compelling. I found myself questioning my own instincts during our sessions, and it's disconcerting."

"Compelling or dangerous?" Emily interjected, her tone sharper now. "You have to be careful, Amelia. These kinds of dynamics can spiral quickly, especially when you're dealing with someone who thrives on manipulation. You need to maintain your boundaries."

I nodded, her concern echoing in my mind. "I'm trying. But every session feels like a dance on the edge of something I can't fully grasp." I took a deep breath, trying to steady myself. "He seems to know just how to provoke me, and it's like he enjoys it. I've never felt so... vulnerable in a professional setting before."

Emily leaned back slightly, crossing her arms as she considered my words. "What specifically did he say that made you feel that way?"

I searched for the right moment to describe it. "He mentioned the difference between reality and illusion, almost taunting me. He has this way of making me feel like I'm the one who needs to prove myself, like he's flipping the script. I was supposed to be the one in control, and yet..." I trailed off, frustration creeping into my voice.

"That's unsettling," Emily said thoughtfully. "It sounds like he's playing with your mind. Have you ever dealt with someone like that before?"

"Not to this extent. He had this unsettling charisma, and he was so confident in

himself. It was like he knew exactly what buttons to push,” I replied, feeling a pang of irritation at my own vulnerability. “And what’s worse is that I couldn’t shake the feeling that he was hiding something much darker.”

Emily studied me, her brow furrowing. “What do you think that is?”

I hesitated, knowing my instincts could lead me astray. “I don’t know... but it felt like he was drawing me closer, almost like he wanted me to unravel his mysteries. I felt this compulsion to understand him, to get to the root of his behavior. ”

“You have to keep in mind that you’re not here to fix him. You’re here to help him, but that doesn’t mean you have to engage with every aspect of his life or let him in too deeply,” Emily advised, her voice firm but compassionate. “You’re not just a psychologist; you’re a person with your own history. It can be hard to separate the two.”

“I know,” I admitted, feeling a familiar weight on my chest. “But it’s frustrating because I know how to navigate these waters. Yet with him, I find myself questioning everything I believe about my abilities. It’s like he’s holding up a mirror, and I don’t like what I see.”

Emily’s eyes softened with understanding. “It’s okay to feel vulnerable. It’s a part of being human, especially in our line of work. But you need to be careful that you don’t lose yourself in this.”

I sighed, feeling the pressure of her concern wrapping around me. “I won’t let it go that far. But I need to understand him to be able to help him. ”

“Just be cautious, Amelia,” Emily warned, her voice steady. “Sometimes, the darker the pull, the more dangerous it can be. You can’t let him disrupt your focus.”

As I sat back, reflecting on her advice, I felt a flicker of resolve. I couldn't afford to lose myself in this mess. "You're right," I said, nodding slowly. "I'll keep my guard up. But I have to admit, there's a part of me that's intrigued. I want to see if I can break through that wall he's built around himself."

Emily gave me a pointed look. "Curiosity can be a double-edged sword. You might end up getting cut if you're not careful."

I smiled weakly, knowing she had a point. "Thanks, Em. I needed to hear that. It's just... it's hard to ignore the connection, even if it feels dangerous."

"Focus on your work, Amelia. You're talented, and you're here to help people heal. Just don't lose sight of who you are in the process," she replied, her gaze steady and reassuring.

As I took a deep breath, trying to process everything swirling in my mind, I knew that this was more than just a professional challenge. It was a test of my own strength, my ability to navigate the complexities of the human psyche, including my own. With Damien at the center of it all, I had to stay sharp, stay grounded.

As I stepped into my house later that night, the familiar scent of sandalwood and lavender wafted through the air, offering a soothing reminder of the small comforts I had cultivated. The warm glow of the table lamp in the entryway cast gentle shadows on the walls, illuminating the soft hues of cream and taupe that enveloped the space. It was a sanctuary I had created, a blend of minimalism and warmth, with clean lines and carefully curated décor.

My shoes clicked softly against the polished hardwood floor as I made my way down the hallway, adorned with framed prints of abstract art and a few cherished photographs—moments frozen in time that reminded me of happier days. A deep breath filled my lungs as I took in the calming atmosphere, an antidote to the chaos

that had accompanied my day.

To the right, the living room awaited—spacious and inviting. A plush, cream-colored sofa faced a sleek coffee table, its surface scattered with art books and a half-read novel. A delicate throw draped over one arm reminded me of the cozy evenings spent reading by the fireplace.

The kitchen extended my aesthetic—bright and functional, with stainless steel appliances gleaming under soft lighting. The countertops were neatly organized, a few potted herbs nestled in the windowsill, thriving in the light. I loved cooking; it was a ritual that grounded me after long days, a way to create order amid the unpredictability of my professional life.

As I moved further into the house, a sudden wave of exhaustion washed over me, and I felt the weight of the day pressing down. I set my bag down on the counter, glancing at the wall clock ticking steadily, its rhythmic sound a reminder of the passing time.

I made my way to my bedroom, where the atmosphere was a little darker, filled with soft textures and muted colors—a refuge that invited rest. The bed was made with crisp white sheets and a gray knitted blanket, and the walls were painted a soothing shade of blue that felt like a gentle embrace. I paused for a moment, allowing myself to sink into the calm .

But even in this serene space, thoughts of Damien crept back into my mind, like an uninvited guest. I remembered his gaze, the way it seemed to pierce through the carefully constructed barriers I had built around my emotions. It was unsettling, yet there was also a strange allure, a fascination I couldn't shake off.

I took a deep breath, reminding myself of Emily's advice. This was my sanctuary, a place where I could process my thoughts without the weight of outside influences.

As I flicked on the bedside lamp, casting a warm glow around the room, I tried to push thoughts of him away, focusing instead on the comforting routine of preparing for bed. I changed into a soft cami top and matching pajama pants, the fabric a welcome relief against my skin, and settled into my nightly rituals.

Yet, even as I climbed into bed, the shadows of the day lingered, swirling in the corners of my mind.

As I finally settled under the soft weight of the blanket, I let my mind drift, hoping for the quiet surrender of sleep. My eyelids grew heavy, and the rhythmic hum of the city outside faded into the distance, becoming a faint lullaby against the silence of my room.

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A dull ache pulsed through my temples as I blinked into nothingness, realizing my eyes were covered. My breaths came fast and shallow, sharp against the oppressive silence that surrounded me. Darkness stretched endlessly, thick and consuming, pressing against me like a weight I couldn't shake. I tried to lift my hands to peel away whatever was covering my eyes, but I couldn't move them. They were bound tightly, along with my legs, which felt immobilized and trapped against the cold metal of a chair.

My head throbbed, and a nauseating dizziness washed over me, clouding any sense of clarity. Each pulse echoed louder, mingling with the faintest creak of the chair as I struggled—an eerie reminder of my confinement .

I took a slow, trembling breath, trying to steady myself and gather my thoughts. Think, Amelia . Assess . Analyze . But the usual calm of logic felt just beyond reach, slipping through my mind like sand.

In the distance, I heard the faintest sound— a drip , steady and slow, the only indication that there was a world beyond this dark void. Panic clawed at the edges of my mind, but I forced it down, swallowing hard as I tried to focus. The air felt damp, and a subtle metallic scent lingered in it, sharp and cold, sending a chill through me.

I had no idea where I was or how I had gotten here. There was nothing to anchor me, nothing to grasp onto except the overwhelming sensation of entrapment . Had I been drugged? The haziness, the disorientation—it felt too vivid, too unsettlingly real to be just a dream.

A sharp, metallic sound pierced the silence—a slow, deliberate scrape against the walls. The sound cut through the darkness, sending a shiver down my spine. I stilled, holding my breath, my senses sharpening in the dark .

Footsteps followed, slow and measured, circling me with unnerving precision. The person—whoever they were—was close. I could hear the deliberate rhythm of their steps, the echo of shoes against the floor, heavy and unhurried. My heart pounded in my chest, frantic against the silence, matching the maddening scrape of metal.

I strained against my bindings, but they held firm. The footsteps continued, coming closer, then moving away, weaving around me in a taunting dance, drawing out my fear like a predator savoring its prey. I wanted to shout, to demand answers, but something kept me quiet. It felt like a game—one I didn't understand but instinctively knew I couldn't win on my own terms.

A few breaths passed, and the sound stopped. The silence that followed was even more unsettling, thick and heavy in the air. I swallowed, every sense heightened, waiting, bracing. The footsteps picked up again, slow, deliberate, closer this time, the sound of metal dragging along the wall echoing like a twisted serenade .

The sounds halted, plunging everything into an eerie stillness. I held my breath, my



pulse hammering in the silence. Every nerve was taut, on edge, bracing for something— anything .

Then, cold metal pressed against my cheek, tracing a slow, unhurried path along my skin. I flinched, a sharp intake of breath the only sound in the darkness. The object—whatever it was—slid down, grazing my jaw, then my neck, moving with a precision that was both chilling and deliberate. My body tensed, every instinct screaming to pull away, but I was bound, powerless to escape the icy touch.

“Who are you?” I forced out, my voice barely a whisper but strained with urgency. “What... what do you want?”

No response. Only silence, thick and oppressive.

The metal continued its journey, gliding over my collarbone, pressing down just enough for me to feel its weight. My heart raced, pounding against the confines of my chest. I swallowed hard, trying to steady myself, to regain some semblance of control .

“What is this? Why are you doing this?” My questions tumbled out, each one meeting the same unyielding silence.

The metal slipped down to my arm, tracing lines across my skin with slow, torturous intent. It wasn't meant to hurt— not yet —but it was enough to make me feel completely at the mercy of whoever wielded it.

The silence dragged on, each second drawing my nerves tighter, endless and suffocating. I couldn't see anything beyond the blackness surrounding me, couldn't hear anything but my own shallow breaths. But I could feel it—the constant, unsettling pressure of the metal tracing lines along my arm, over my chest, lingering as if savoring the touch.

I swallowed, forcing the words out again, though my voice wavered. “What... what do you want from me? If this is supposed to scare me, congratulations. You’ve done it.”

Nothing. Not even a breath from the figure hidden in the darkness.

The metal shifted to my shoulder, gliding downward, moving slowly, almost lazily, as if they had all the time in the world to make their point. I clenched my jaw, fighting the instinct to recoil, every muscle coiled in resistance.

Desperation crept into my tone as I tried again. “This... this game, whatever you’re playing—it won’t work. I’ve... I’ve been through worse.”

But even as the words left my mouth, I wasn’t sure if I believed them. Whoever was holding me here, whoever was in control, knew exactly how to unnerve me. And they enjoyed it.

Then, just as suddenly, the metal lifted, leaving a prickling coldness where it had lingered. A faint rustle, the slightest shift of air, and I knew they were moving—close, but maddeningly out of reach.

In the silence, I felt exposed, stripped down to the rawest parts of myself, with nothing to shield me from whatever was to come.

I flexed my wrists, raw from the restraints, but even the movement felt surreal, heavy. Every sense sharpened, heightened to a near painful clarity as I listened, my heart thudding against my ribs. I still couldn’t see, couldn’t move without feeling the echo of that presence lingering, as if it had seeped into my skin.

And then, close to my ear—a whisper, barely more than a breath.

“Are you afraid, Dr. Harper?”

The voice slithered into my thoughts, threading through the darkness with a disturbing intimacy, like it belonged there, knew me in ways it shouldn't. My heart pounded, each beat amplifying the creeping dread that had taken hold of me. I swallowed, struggling to steady myself.

“Who...who are you?” My voice shook despite myself, the words barely audible.

Another whisper. Soft. Cruel. “Names aren't important...yet. ”

The chill deepened, the shadows feeling somehow darker, thicker around me, like they were closing in, smothering what little resolve I had left.

“You think you're safe,” the voice continued, a snake-like hiss that twisted its way around my spine, “behind all those credentials, all that confidence... But fear makes you real , doesn't it?”

Something cold traced the side of my neck, sending an icy shiver down my body. It lingered, pressing just enough to make my breath catch, a reminder of how vulnerable I was, how easily he could reach me. I clenched my fists, every fiber of me demanding that I stay calm, that I don't give him the satisfaction of seeing me crumble.

“Why...are you doing this?” I managed, fighting to keep my tone steady.

The whisper drifted close, nearly brushing against my skin. “Why? Because watching you unravel...is fascinating . ”

I forced down the panic clawing up my throat, but his laugh—a soft, mocking sound—echoed in the darkness, as though he could sense every beat of fear pulsing

through me.

Then, I heard the footsteps recede, slowly, as if he were drawing out every step, savoring the fear he'd left behind. But just as I thought he was gone, the whisper returned, inches from my ear.

“Remember, Dr. Harper...this is only the beginning.”

And in a flash, I was alone. The silence swallowed the room, but its grip on me lingered, haunting, filling the air with the promise that this was far from over.

The room began to spin, the edges of reality blurring as I fought to stay grounded, but my mind was slipping, inch by inch. The cold pressing against my neck, the darkness, the voice—all of it started to fade, melting into one hazy, indistinct feeling of dread. My heartbeat slowed, the sound growing faint and distant, like it was coming from somewhere outside myself.

I blinked, or tried to, but my eyes felt so heavy. Breathing was like wading through thick, smothering fog, each breath harder than the last. I felt my body sagging against the restraints, the last remnants of resistance slipping away, along with my sense of time, of place, of anything real.

My thoughts became a scattered hum, only fragments of fear and questions looping through my mind as everything drifted out of reach. I felt the pull of darkness tightening, drawing me under, swallowing everything—until there was nothing left but silence.

## Page 5

*Source Creation Date: August 7, 2025, 3:15 am*

Amelia

I woke with a start, heart racing and breath caught in my throat. The morning light filtered through the curtains, casting soft shadows across my bedroom. For a moment, I lay still, the remnants of the nightmare clinging to me like cobwebs. I blinked into the brightness, disoriented, the feeling of fear still thrumming in my veins.

It took a few moments to gather my thoughts, to shake off the vividness of the nightmare that had left me gasping. I glanced around, my gaze darting across the familiar room. My bedside table, cluttered with books and a half-drunk glass of water, my well-worn armchair in the corner. I was safe here . But the remnants of my subconscious were hard to shake .

I pushed myself up into a sitting position, swinging my legs over the edge of the bed. My head throbbed, a dull ache that seemed to pulse in time with my heartbeat. The memories of the nightmare washed over me: the darkness, the whispering voice, the cold metal brushing against my skin. It all felt so real , so threatening. I could still feel the grip of fear tightening around my chest.

Taking a deep breath, I reminded myself that it was just a dream. A product of an overactive mind, perhaps, fed by stress and the intensity of my recent sessions. Still, the unease lingered, a shadow in the corner of my mind. I swung my legs down to the floor, wincing as they touched the cool surface.

I took a moment to collect myself, to breathe deeply and steady my racing heart. The sun poured in, warming the room, and I focused on that warmth, letting it seep into my bones.

As I pushed myself off the bed and padded to the kitchen, I couldn't shake the feeling that something was off. The air felt heavy, as if the remnants of my nightmare lingered just beyond the threshold of my consciousness. I forced myself to focus on the mundane: I needed coffee, something to kickstart my day and chase away the lingering shadows of my dreams .

I switched on the coffee machine, the comforting sounds of brewing beans filling the kitchen. As I stood there, waiting for the familiar aroma to envelop me, I couldn't help but replay the nightmare in my mind. What did it mean? I prided myself on my ability to analyze and interpret the subconscious, but this was different. The fear felt too raw, too visceral.

The coffee dripped slowly, and I leaned against the counter, my fingers gripping the edge. Perhaps I should consider talking to Emily about it later. She always had a way of helping me make sense of the chaos in my mind.

The machine finally let out a cheerful beep, signaling that my coffee was ready. I poured a steaming cup, the rich, dark liquid swirling into the mug, and took a moment to inhale the warm, inviting aroma. With each sip, I hoped to reclaim a sense of normalcy, to banish the remnants of the night and the unsettling thoughts that threatened to bubble to the surface.

But as I drank, I couldn't ignore the flicker of unease in the back of my mind, a whisper that reminded me of the darkness I had glimpsed in my dreams. I had to stay grounded today, especially with Damien's session looming ahead. I needed to be sharp, to maintain my professional composure.

I finished my coffee, the warmth spreading through me, and prepared to face the day, reminding myself that I was stronger than my fears.

I set down my empty mug, feeling a little more awake and ready to face the day. As I

glanced at the clock, I realized I had plenty of time before my first appointment. An idea sparked in my mind. I hadn't visited the library in a while, and the thought of being surrounded by books and the comforting silence felt appealing.

Grabbing my bag, I made my way to the door. The library had always been a place where I could escape into the worlds of others, find solace in the pages of a novel, or lose myself in the wealth of knowledge stored in every corner. It was the perfect antidote to the heaviness that clung to me.

The drive to the library was pleasant, the sun shining brightly overhead. I rolled down the windows, letting the fresh air wash over me. The breeze felt invigorating, chasing away the remnants of anxiety from the morning.

Pulling into the library's parking lot, I felt a sense of calm wash over me. The building stood tall and inviting, its grand facade an echo of the past. As I stepped inside, the familiar scent of old books and polished wood enveloped me. I took a moment to appreciate the stillness, the gentle rustling of pages and the soft footsteps of fellow patrons creating a comforting background noise.

I wandered through the aisles, letting my fingers glide along the spines of the books, each one holding a promise of escape and adventure. I loved the tactile sensation of the bindings, the weight of the stories contained within. It was as if I could feel the lives of the characters pulsing beneath my fingertips.

As I ventured deeper into the library, I found myself in the psychology section. My professional curiosity pulled me in, and I scanned the titles, considering which one might offer me insights or inspiration. I picked up a few books, flipping through the pages, their wisdom beckoning to me .

But as I began to immerse myself in a particularly intriguing chapter, an overwhelming sensation washed over me—an all-too-familiar wave of dread that I

thought I had long buried. Suddenly, the words on the page blurred, and I felt an unsettling shift in the atmosphere. The library around me faded, and I was thrust into a scene from my past, a vivid memory that clawed its way back into my consciousness.

The books slipped from my hands, crashing to the floor as I stumbled backward, my heart pounding against my ribcage. I pressed my back against the cool, wooden shelf, desperately seeking stability as the world spun around me. It was like being trapped in a distorted reflection of reality, one where the air grew thick with a suffocating weight, and my surroundings became shrouded in shadows.

In this fragmented memory, I found myself standing in a dimly lit room, the walls peeling and worn, their color faded to an unsettling shade of gray. The distant sound of muffled voices echoed around me, but I couldn't make out the words. Panic surged through me, a reminder of a fear I thought I had conquered long ago .

A flicker of movement caught my eye, and I turned my head instinctively. The shadows seemed to dance at the edges of my vision, teasing me with glimpses of something lurking just beyond my reach. I felt trapped , caught in a moment where time stood still, and I was helpless to escape.

I squeezed my eyes shut, willing the memory to vanish, but instead, vivid images assaulted me: a door creaking open, the scent of something acrid in the air, a sensation of cold metal pressing against my skin. Each detail sent a fresh wave of panic coursing through my veins, reminding me that I was still haunted .

Tears pricked at my eyes, blurring my vision as I struggled to breathe through the tightness in my chest. "No," I whispered, forcing the word out, as if saying it aloud would banish the memory back to the dark corners of my mind. "Not again."

With every ounce of willpower I could muster, I opened my eyes, willing myself to



return to the present. The library shelves came back into focus, the reality of my surroundings grounding me. I was not that scared child anymore; I was an adult, a psychologist, a survivor . But the tremors of fear still clawed at my insides, reminding me that healing was not linear .

I knelt down, hurriedly collecting the fallen books, my hands shaking as I placed them back on the shelf. The familiar scent of paper and ink provided a fleeting comfort, yet I couldn't shake the lingering chill that enveloped me. I had thought I was free from those memories, that I had moved past the trauma. But as the flashback faded, I realized that some scars ran deeper than I had ever acknowledged.

Shaken, I took a steadying breath, forcing myself to focus on the here and now. I wouldn't let the shadows consume me. Not today .

The early morning light streamed through the large windows of my office, illuminating the space and casting soft shadows across the room. I had always loved how the light transformed the sterile walls into something warm and inviting, but today it felt like a stark contrast to the turmoil still swirling inside me.

I locked the door behind me, the click echoing louder than usual. My heart raced as I made my way to my desk. I could still feel the chill of that dark room, the oppressive weight of fear pressing down on me. I had convinced myself that I was past that, that I had dealt with my trauma, but the flashback had ripped open old wounds, reminding me that healing was a far more complex journey than I'd thought.

I set my bag down with a shaky breath, the leather cool against my palm. Taking a moment to collect myself, I closed my eyes and focused on the sounds around me—the quiet hum of the heating system, the distant chirping of birds outside, and the soft rustle of leaves from the trees lining the street. I needed to ground myself, to find my center before my first client arrived.

I poured a cup of coffee, its rich aroma filling the air and providing a welcome distraction. The warmth seeped into my hands as I cradled the mug, inhaling deeply. I had always relied on coffee as my morning ritual, but today, it felt more like a lifeline.

I leaned against the counter, allowing the steam to fog my glasses for a moment, hiding behind the veil as I tried to push away the remnants of my nightmare. I couldn't afford to be shaken when my clients arrived. They needed me to be strong, focused, and present. But how could I offer that when I was still wrestling with my own demons ?

Glancing at the clock, I realized I had some time before my first appointment. I took a deep breath, forcing myself to let go of the anxiety that tightened my chest. I opened my laptop, determined to dive into the paperwork that had been piling up. Maybe immersing myself in my work would help clear my mind.

The door creaked open, breaking me from my reverie. Lily entered, her cheerful energy filling the room like a burst of sunlight. "Good morning, Amelia! You're here early," she said, her bright smile instantly lifting my spirits.

"Morning, Lily," I replied, forcing a smile in return. "Just trying to catch up on some things."

She glanced at me, her brow furrowing slightly. "Are you okay? You look a bit... off."

I shook my head, not wanting to burden her with my thoughts. "I'm fine. Just had a rough night, that's all."

Lily nodded, her eyes still searching mine. "Well, if you need anything or just want to talk, I'm here. "

“Thanks, I appreciate that,” I said, grateful for her kindness.

As she settled into her desk, I took a moment to collect myself. I couldn't let my worries overshadow the work I was meant to do today. I was Amelia Harper, a psychologist dedicated to helping others heal. But deep down, the echoes of my past lingered, reminding me that sometimes the healer needed healing too.

As I settled back into my chair, I glanced at the clock. It was nearly time for my next appointment. Just as I was gathering my thoughts, the door opened, and Vicky Davis, a bright young woman in her late twenties, stepped into the office. She had a warm smile that instantly lightened the atmosphere, a contrast to the heaviness I had felt earlier.

“Good morning, Dr. Harper! Hope you're having a good day,” she said cheerfully as she took a seat.

“Hi, Vicky! I am, thank you. How about you?” I asked, genuinely interested in her well-being .

“Busy, but good!” She laughed lightly, brushing her short, blond hair behind her ear. “Work has been hectic, but I managed to squeeze in some time for a hike this weekend. It was so refreshing to get out into nature.”

“That sounds wonderful,” I said, leaning in. “Where did you go?”

“Just a local trail,” she replied, her eyes sparkling with enthusiasm. “But it was beautiful. I love how peaceful it gets out there. I was able to just breathe and forget about everything for a while. I even saw some deer!”

I smiled, enjoying her infectious energy. “That sounds like a perfect escape. Getting outside can really help clear your mind, especially when you're feeling

overwhelmed.”

“Definitely!” Vicky nodded, her excitement palpable. “I’ve been trying to make more time for myself, you know? Between work and everything else, it’s easy to lose sight of what really makes me happy. So, I thought, why not explore a bit? It’s crazy how just being in nature can help me recharge. ”

“Absolutely,” I replied, nodding thoughtfully. “It’s so easy to get caught up in the demands of daily life and forget to prioritize our own needs. Nature has a way of reminding us of what’s truly important. It offers a space to breathe, to reflect, and to simply be.”

I paused, allowing the words to linger in the air. It struck me how often I, too, had neglected my own well-being in favor of others. The flashbacks, the nightmares—these were constant reminders of the battles I still fought within myself. I wondered if I was as good at prioritizing my own needs as I advised my patients to be.

“Finding those moments of joy and connection, whether through nature, art, or something else, is vital to our mental health,” I continued, shifting my focus back to Vicky. “It helps us stay grounded and connected to ourselves. I want you to remember that as we move forward. Make it a goal to carve out that time for yourself, no matter how busy life gets.”

“Thank you, Amelia,” Vicky said, her expression brightening. “I really appreciate your guidance. I feel like I’m starting to see things differently, and it’s helping me a lot. ”

I smiled, feeling a warmth in my chest. “I’m glad to hear that, Vicky. Remember, it’s all about progress, not perfection. You’re doing great.”

With that, I wrapped up the session, making a note of our discussion in her file.

As she walked out, I took a deep breath, allowing the energy of the session to settle around me. I felt lighter .

As the door opened and Damien entered, the atmosphere in the room shifted. He was dressed in a black leather jacket, the kind that spoke of danger and allure, accentuating the sharp lines of his physique. He carried himself with an unsettling confidence that made my heart race.

“Amelia,” he said, his voice smooth and low as he settled into the chair across from me. His whiskey eyes studied me intently, and I felt an unsettling mix of anticipation and dread. “You look tired.”

I forced a smile, doing my best to maintain my professional composure. “It’s been a long week,” I replied, meeting his gaze with unwavering steadiness. “But I’m here for you. How have you been since our last session?”

He leaned back, the leather creaking slightly as he did, an amused smirk playing on his lips. “You know, I’ve seen people in worse states than you. This whole ‘keeping it together ’ act—very convincing, but I can tell something’s eating at you.”

I took a moment to gather myself. “Let’s focus on you today,” I said, redirecting the conversation. “What’s been on your mind?”

“Ah, but I find you far more interesting,” he replied, tilting his head slightly. “Tell me, do you often feel like your life is slipping through your fingers while you play the role of the composed psychologist? It must be exhausting.”

I could feel the familiar tension creeping in, his words wrapping around my thoughts like a vice. “I appreciate your concern, but I assure you, my well-being is not the

focus here. What matters is your journey. What brings you back today? ”

He shrugged casually, but there was a glint in his eyes that told me he was enjoying this. “Maybe I’m just curious. Or maybe I want to see how far I can push you.”

I steadied my breath, reminding myself that I was in control of this session, no matter how much he tried to provoke me. “Pushing boundaries can be a valuable part of therapy, Damien. But remember, it works best when it’s mutual.”

He chuckled, a dark sound that sent shivers down my spine. “Oh, I’m all for mutual exploration. Just keep in mind that I’m not your typical patient.”

“No one is,” I replied, matching his intensity. “So, let’s explore what that means for you. What do you want to discuss today?”

## Page 6

*Source Creation Date: August 7, 2025, 3:15 am*

Damien

Stepping into Amelia's office, I was hit with that sweet scent of lavender and vanilla—like some perfume made to mask the rot underneath. It was all too clean , too perfect , like she was pretending to be something she wasn't. I didn't care. I zeroed in on her immediately. Seated behind that polished desk, she was an angel in a cage, and that obsessive hunger flared inside me again.

She looked stunning— obviously —but today, something was different. There was this crack in her perfection, this edge to her that made my gut twist with delight. Her face was still flawless, but she had shadows beneath her eyes. She thought she hid them well, but I could see it all—her exhaustion. It made me smile. It turned me on .

“Morning, Amelia,” I drawled, my voice smooth like velvet, like I wasn't standing in her office with the fucking urge to ruin her in every way possible. I saw her freeze, like she could feel the weight of my presence seeping into the room. The tension crackled, thick and choking, and I couldn't get enough of it. “You look tired.”

She glanced up at me, those honey eyes meeting mine. For just a heartbeat, I saw it—fear? Defiance?—before she shoved it down like she always did, slapping that perfect mask back into place. “Just a long week,” she said, her smile a little too sharp, but not quite reaching her eyes.

That smile. God , it made my skin crawl, a pretty little fucking lie she used to hide the mess of emotions beneath. I leaned against her desk, close enough to invade her space. I wanted to see her squirm. “You shouldn't overwork yourself, Millie,” I said, my voice low, casual, but it fucking drilled right into her. “It's easy to lose track of

what's important."

Her pulse, I could almost feel it. Watching her unravel, piece by piece, was the kind of power that made my blood burn .

"Damien?" Her voice snapped me back, but it didn't stop the thrill crawling through my veins. She shifted in her seat, trying to take control, but I could see right through it. "We're supposed to discuss your progress today, remember?"

I grinned. Progress? Fuck that. This wasn't about progress. This was about breaking her down until I was the only thing left she could think of.

I leaned in, close enough to feel the heat of her breath. "Oh, I remember," I murmured, my voice low, dragging the words like they were something I was savoring. "But progress can be subjective. What if I told you I feel more alive now than I ever have? What if I told you that my mind can't stop racing, thinking about... certain things?"

Her gaze flickered for a moment, like she was trying to hold herself together, but I saw it—her uncertainty, her mind struggling to make sense of the mess I was laying out. "What things?" she asked, her voice a little too steady.

I feigned innocence, my lips curling into a smirk. "The shadows," I whispered, letting the words slither from my lips. "The darkness that wraps around us when we stop pretending. When we let our guards down. You've seen it, haven't you?"

She frowned, brow furrowing like she was trying to put together a puzzle with missing pieces. "This isn't a game, Damien."

"Isn't it?" I leaned even closer, feeling the heat radiating off her. I fucking loved that look in her eyes. She didn't know whether to run or stay. "What if I told you some



games are meant to be played in the dark? That the real exploration doesn't begin until the lights go out?"

For just a second, I felt it—her fear, and fuck, it hit me like a drug. Amelia, this brilliant psychologist who thought she had it all figured out, was unraveling in front of me. My words were knives, cutting through the layers of control she so desperately clung to. "I want to help you," she said, that professional tone of hers smooth as silk, but I could hear it—the tension, coiling like a snake, ready to strike.

I leaned in, my voice low, dark, a little too sweet. "And I want to help you too, Millie," I said, my words dragging like a whisper in her ear, laced with all the fucked-up things I knew she didn't want to admit. "But you gotta let me in. You have to stop hiding behind that perfect little mask. You have to face the truth of what's crawling around inside you—those feelings you don't wanna acknowledge, not just the facade you present to the world."

She stiffened, and I could practically feel the panic creeping into her veins. That gave me a rush, a fucking high I couldn't ignore. "I'm not afraid of the truth," she snapped back, but the tremble in her voice told me everything I needed to know. She wasn't just afraid of the truth—she was terrified of me exposing it.

I chuckled low, the sound thick with something dark, something dangerous. "Are you sure? Because I think you are. I think you're terrified of what's really hiding under that polished exterior of yours. You have no idea how tangled our worlds are, do you? You think you're standing on the safe side, but you and I? We're both walking the same razor-thin line between light and darkness."

Her eyes narrowed, and I could almost hear her mind working, trying to process the poison I was feeding her. "This is therapy, Damien. I'm here to help you, not engage in some twisted philosophical debate."

I leaned closer, my voice dropping into a dangerous whisper, just enough for her to feel the heat of it. “But what if the therapy itself is the debate?” I pressed, my words dragging like a slow burn. “What if every session pulls you deeper into the dark? The very place you think you’ve been running from. The very place you’re so desperate to avoid?”

I leaned back, letting my eyes trace every inch of her—her flushed neck, her breath hitching, the way her body tightened under the weight of this conversation. The air between us was thick, and I savored every goddamn second of it, knowing I had her on the edge, her mind hanging by a thread.

“Let’s explore that darkness together, shall we?” I drawled, noticing the way her eyes flickered, a flash of fear that made my blood sing. “Because, Millie, I think you’re starting to understand the power of what’s buried under the surface.”

The tension in the room was electric, and I watched her expression shift—something like defiance sparking in her eyes. She wasn’t going to back down. No, she was gonna play my game, step into the shadows, and it made me fucking dizzy. The idea of her, of this woman who thought she had control, willingly walking deeper into my hell... It was intoxicating.

She shifted in her seat, her posture snapping to attention, her eyes locking with mine without a flinch. “Alright, Damien,” she said, her voice low but steady. “Let’s start where all games begin—with understanding. You told me once that power comes from unraveling someone’s layers. But who unraveled yours?”

The shift caught me off guard. For a split second, I felt my grip slip, the control I so carefully maintained slipping through my fingers. I felt my jaw tighten, and I forced myself to stay still, hiding the reflexive response that surged through me.

She held my gaze—she fucking knew. The tension was thick, suffocating, and I

could see the way she was feeding off it. “Childhood is where we first learn about power—who’s got it and who doesn’t. Who taught you that lesson, Damien?”

I fought the urge to look away. The thrill I’d felt moments earlier dulled as she pressed on, delving into territory I had long since buried .

“Seems you’ve done your homework, Dr. Harper,” I sneered, masking the tightness in my chest with a smirk. But even I could hear the sharpness in my voice.

“It’s not about homework. It’s about understanding what made you who you are,” she countered, her voice soft yet unrelenting. “What shaped the man sitting across from me?”

Her question cut through my defenses like a fucking razor, and for a split second, I felt something I wasn’t used to— vulnerability . It hit like a gut punch, raw and fucking unwanted. I was the one who made people squirm, the one who pushed them until they bled, but now she was digging into memories I’d buried so deep they barely had time to rot. Memories of when I was weak , of when I couldn’t control shit, and that made me want to fucking break something.

“Some things don’t need understanding,” I muttered, my tone sharp. “Not everything is worth dissecting, Amelia.”

Her eyes were all calm, too calm, like she was studying me. And that was more unnerving than any question. “Maybe not,” she said, her voice smooth like she was daring me to do something about it. “But it’s the things we avoid that usually need the most attention. And if you think about it, Damien, isn’t that why you’re here?”

I felt the familiar rage simmer beneath the surface. She was chipping away at the very foundation I’d built. This was supposed to be my game— my rules. But here she was, turning the tables.

I leaned back, forcing a smirk I didn't quite feel. "Careful, Millie," I warned, voice low. "Curiosity can lead you down dangerous paths."

But she only offered a slight smile in return, unshaken. "I think we both know I'm not easily frightened."

I settled back, watching her. The way she pushed, like she really thought she could break through. There was almost something endearing about it. She wanted answers? Fine. I'd give her what she asked for, but not in the way she expected.

I let the corner of my mouth curve into a smirk, my gaze steady on hers. "You want to know about my childhood, Doc? Alright," I drawled, each word slow, calculated. "Picture this: a cramped house, four walls that felt like they were closing in, and a man who decided he was God in that little kingdom. Everything was his to control. Especially us."

Her face softened, just a flicker, and I almost laughed. Perfect. The moment she showed a trace of sympathy, I knew I'd hit exactly where I wanted.

"He liked to remind us of that every night," I continued, my voice staying smooth, detached. "Sometimes, it was a slap, a shove. Other times..." I paused, watching her reaction, leaning in just slightly. "He got more creative. You get used to pain when it's served in portions every day."

I shrugged, acting as if it were nothing more than a mildly annoying memory. "People say trauma makes you who you are. That it's something to heal from." I let out a soft laugh. "But it's not about healing, not really. You take it, use it, and mold it into something useful."

She didn't look away. Her face remained calm, but I could see the small changes, the flickers of something I couldn't quite place. Sympathy, maybe, or a desire to

understand. But it was too late for that .

“I learned one thing,” I continued, voice dropping to a murmur, just loud enough for her to catch. “There’s power in suffering—if you’re willing to turn it around.”

I leaned back, letting the silence stretch, daring her to break it, to say something. To her credit, she didn’t immediately. She just sat there, processing. I saw the war in her eyes—the urge to dig deeper , to see if she could reach whatever I kept hidden. But she wouldn’t get that close. No one did .

Finally, she cleared her throat, her professional mask sliding back into place. “Thank you for sharing that, Damien,” she said, carefully measured. “You’re right; trauma can mold us. But turning it around doesn’t mean losing yourself to it.”

Her words were steady, calm, and I could see she was trying to draw me back into her rhythm. But this was my story, my control.

I leaned forward, lowering my voice to a murmur. “Oh, don’t get me wrong, Amelia. I didn’t lose myself.” I smiled, a dark edge slipping into my tone. “I found exactly who I was meant to be. ”

Her question lingered in the air, pressing in, a little too close for comfort. “And your mother?” she asked, voice soft but probing, threading through the air with a gentleness that felt like an intrusion.

I kept my expression steady, allowing only the faintest hint of a smirk to touch my lips. She was good —better than I’d expected. But I wouldn’t let her see that she’d hit a nerve. Instead, I leaned back, casually crossing my arms, a mask of detachment settling over me like a second skin.

“My mother,” I drawled, keeping my tone light, almost conversational. “She was...

unfortunate .”

Amelia’s face remained neutral, but I saw the way her fingers tightened around her pen, a subtle shift that gave away her interest. She was invested, waiting for me to slip , to reveal something raw.

I let my eyes drift off, like I was lost in some distant fucking memory, something blurry and half-finished. “She got fed up and tried to leave once. Thought she could just walk the away from him. From it all.” I let out a soft laugh, cold and empty. “Guess he had other plans. ”

Her eyes flickered, and there it was— sympathy . That pathetic, fucking sympathy. It irked the hell out of me, but I couldn’t help but feel this twisted intrigue at the same time. She thought she could understand. Thought she could untangle the mess of it all. But it was too far gone for her, way beyond her reach.

“He didn’t take too kindly to her little act of defiance,” I said, my voice smooth, like I was telling a story. “One night, he decided to make it clear. Showed me exactly what happens when someone dares to defy him.” I let the smile creep onto my lips. “And he did. Right in front of me.”

I took a moment to glance at her, watching the way her jaw tensed, the slight softening of her eyes like she was trying to shield herself from what I was saying. She was absorbing it all—every fucking detail, her brain trying to process the horror I’d just painted.

“He made sure I saw everything,” I continued, voice a low murmur. “Every last second of it. He thought it’d teach me something. Thought it’d show me what happens when someone forgets their place. ”

Amelia didn’t look away, and for a split second, I felt something simmering beneath

the surface, an old, buried rage . But I forced it down, clamping down on it as I always did.

After a moment, she spoke, her voice steady. “That must have been... incredibly painful.”

I laughed, the sound harsh. “ Painful ?” I echoed, arching an eyebrow. “Maybe for her. For me, it was... enlightening.” I let the word hang there, twisting her pity into something darker.

But her gaze remained unshaken, determined. “Damien,” she said, her tone softer, “no one should have to witness something like that.”

I shrugged, unaffected. “I didn’t have a choice. And I learned early that choices don’t matter as much as people think.” I leaned in, dropping my voice to a whisper. “People like to pretend they’re in control, that they can steer their own lives. But we’re all just following paths that were laid out for us, aren’t we?”

She didn’t flinch, didn’t try to change the subject. Her silence told me she was listening, really listening. And even though she’d hit that nerve, even though the memory felt like acid beneath my skin, I wouldn’t let her see a single crack. Not now, not ever .

I stepped out of Amelia’s office, and the air around me felt thick, like her presence was still clinging to my skin. Her voice, those questions, the way she looked at me like she thought she could get inside my head— fuck , it made my blood boil, and I wanted more. I needed more.

I got into my car, the cold leather seat familiar beneath me, grounding me, pulling me back from the fucking edge. But I wasn’t done. Not by a long shot.

Barely a second passed before my phone buzzed. I glanced at the screen—Claire.

Perfect timing.

“What?” I answered, the edge in my voice unmistakable .

Claire didn’t waste a second. “We’ve got a new job. Client wants it done today. You’re the only one who can handle it with... the level of finesse they’re asking for.”

I leaned back in the seat, a twisted smirk curling on my lips. “Details?”

She gave a soft, low chuckle. “Let’s just say, it’s someone who’s in a place of comfort. Someone untouchable, in theory. But our client wants to send a very clear message.”

Ah, I got it. This wasn’t just a job—it was an art . They didn’t want clean. They wanted something that’d fucking linger.

“Location?” I asked, tapping my fingers against the wheel, already running through possible plans in my mind.

“I’ll send you the coordinates. Tonight would be ideal. And Damien?” Her voice dropped, a tone of caution seeping through. “Make sure this one doesn’t come back to bite us.”

I let out a low, amused laugh. “When have I ever let that happen? ”

“Touché,” she shot back, her voice smooth but strained. “Good luck. And remember... discretion.”

The line clicked dead, and I sat in the silence, my fingers still against the wheel,



feeling the familiar thrill rise within me. Today's job would be a challenge—a reminder of the control I wielded, of the power I held over life and death.

But Millie's face lingered in my mind, an uninvited guest that hadn't left since our session. Her questions, the way she'd looked at me with that quiet determination, as if she thought she understood something about me.

The thrill of tonight's job tugged me back, but so did the memory of her— my sweet obsession .

As night settled over the city, I prepped for the job. All black, head to toe—a uniform of shadows. I pulled on a leather jacket, gloves, boots that could silence my steps. My reflection in the mirror stared back, the man who lived in the spaces most people avoided: the dark, the ruthless, the unspoken .

Tonight's job was more intricate than most. Claire had sent over details, a file that I'd memorized down to the smallest nuance. A powerful figure in his world, wrapped in the comfort of his wealth and security, too arrogant to think he could ever be touched. That kind of arrogance needed a fucking lesson. And I was more than happy to deliver it.

I grabbed my helmet and headed to the garage, where my bike waited. Sleek, black, built for speed and silence. As I swung a leg over and started the engine, I felt the hum of it beneath me, a steady, low growl that promised power with every twist of the throttle. This was the part that I liked best—the anticipation, the control .

The city lights blurred as I maneuvered through the streets, weaving between cars, taking shortcuts only I knew. I was a ghost, a shadow that no one noticed, invisible until it was too late. With each block, the thrill grew, that edge of adrenaline and focus sharp as a knife.

I parked a block away from the mark's building, slipping off the bike and scanning the scene. Security was tight, but not airtight. I'd studied the rotations, knew when they were at their weakest. All it would take was timing and patience. Two things I excelled at.

Moving through the shadows, I slipped past cameras, each step calculated, methodical. The window I needed was up ahead, slightly ajar. He probably thought no one would dare come this close. But in this city, there was always someone willing to push boundaries, to test limits.

Once inside, I navigated the darkened hallways like they were made for me, until I reached his study. He was there, reading, completely oblivious to the presence now lingering just a breath away.

I stepped forward, the floor creaking just enough for him to notice. His eyes widened, fear taking root as he finally saw me. And in that moment, he knew.

"Who—" he stammered, voice barely a whisper.

I stepped closer, watching him. "A message," I murmured, almost conversational. I watched the shift in his expression as he registered that his control, his power, meant nothing in this moment .

He tried to back away, stumbling over his chair as he pressed himself against the wall. I took my time, savoring the fear that twisted his features, that silent plea in his eyes. It was always the same—when they realized they'd lost control, that their power was just an illusion. They all looked the same .

I knelt down beside him, my movements slow and deliberate, letting the weight of the moment sink in. "You thought you were untouchable," I whispered, leaning close enough that he could feel my breath against his ear. "But even kings have their

reckoning.”

He flinched, choking on words he couldn't force out. I drew my knife—a simple tool, but it held a language of its own. I pressed the flat of the blade against his cheek, feeling his pulse hammer through the metal as his breath came in sharp, shallow gasps. His hands trembled as they hovered in the air, unsure whether to push me away or plead.

“Please...” he whispered, finally managing to find his voice. But it wasn't the voice of the powerful man I'd seen in the file. This was the voice of someone stripped bare, someone with nothing left .

I leaned back, giving him a moment to think he might have a chance. He tried to compose himself, to muster a shred of dignity, but I could see it slipping through his fingers.

“You're going to make this easy,” I said softly, drawing the blade just enough to scratch the skin, leaving a thin, barely noticeable line. He jolted, the shock of it snapping him back into silence. “You're going to remember this. You're going to remember what fear tastes like.”

With a single, swift motion, I let the blade graze his neck, just enough to draw a line of crimson— enough to mark him. Enough for him to remember. I stood, slipping the knife back into my pocket as he crumpled to the floor, clutching his neck, his eyes wide with terror.

“Deliver the message,” I said coldly, my voice slicing through the silence.

Without another word, I turned and walked away, leaving him with his dignity shattered, his power broken. The fear would stay with him, haunt him long after I was gone. And that, I thought with a dark satisfaction, was the real punishment.

## Page 7

*Source Creation Date: August 7, 2025, 3:15 am*

Amelia

The first sensation that registered was the cold. The floor beneath me was damp, almost slick, chilling me to the bone as I tried to focus. I blinked, slowly piecing together shapes in the darkness, though it was impossible to make sense of my surroundings. A thick haze clung to my mind, muddling my thoughts and making my head throb with a slow, pulsing ache.

I tried to move, but something held my wrists and feet firmly in place. I tugged instinctively, feeling the bite of tape against my skin as I pulled, the rough texture grating against my wrists, each movement sharp and unforgiving. My breathing quickened as I tried to push away the dizzying panic creeping up my spine.

Where am I ?

The silence pressed down, heavy and suffocating, broken only by the faint, echoing drip of water somewhere nearby. Each drop felt like a reminder of how real this was—or at least how real it felt. I shuddered, closing my eyes tightly, willing myself to wake up.

Just a nightmare. It has to be.

But as I opened my eyes again, nothing had changed. The damp, stale air clung to my lungs, thick and suffocating. I shifted my weight, feeling the cold seeping through my clothes, making my limbs tremble involuntarily. This was different—more vivid than any nightmare I'd ever had. It was as if my senses were amplifying the horror, forcing me to feel every nerve-ending, every pulse of fear coursing through me.

I bit down hard, grounding myself, forcing myself to breathe steadily. I'd been trained to handle fear, to confront it head-on— but this ? This felt foreign, as if my mind and body had betrayed me, trapping me in this relentless fog of panic .

A faint scuff of footsteps reached my ears, drawing nearer, each step deliberate and measured. My heart hammered as I tried to make out the figure approaching in the shadows .

The footsteps grew louder, echoing against the walls, each step sending a jolt through my nerves. I strained to see through the darkness, my vision disoriented and blurred. My body tensed as I caught a faint silhouette—broad shoulders, an effortless gait. But it was the energy in the room that was unmistakable, a presence that seeped into the air like an icy mist.

“Millie...”

The word cut through the darkness, low and smooth, almost affectionate . My blood ran cold. I didn't need to see his face to recognize that voice.

Damien .

The realization struck me like a wave of nausea. My instincts screamed for me to move, to run, but I was bound, helpless. I bit back a gasp as he took a step closer, the faint glint of something metallic catching the sparse light—a knife , perhaps, or maybe just a tool to make me squirm. Whatever it was, it was deliberate, chosen for effect, to remind me how out of control I was at this moment .

“Funny how dreams work, isn't it?” he murmured, as if we were sharing a quiet conversation over coffee. His tone held a disturbing calm, laced with a twisted amusement that made my skin crawl. “One moment, you're safe in your bed. The next, you're... here .”

I pressed my lips together, refusing to let him see the fear rising in my throat. But he seemed to sense it anyway, his laugh low and dark. The sound wrapped around me, thick as smoke, making it hard to breathe. He moved closer, and though I couldn't see his face, I could feel his breath just inches from mine, lingering in the space between us.

“What’s wrong, Amelia? You look... rattled.” His words dripped with satisfaction, savoring every bit of my discomfort. “And here I thought a psychologist like you would understand the power of the mind. How easily it blurs reality and illusion. How... fragile it all is.”

A sharp chill spread through me as he spoke, each word crawling beneath my skin. He was right. This nightmare was too vivid, too tangible, and my senses felt heightened, each flicker of darkness alive with dread. I tugged against the tape around my wrists, feeling it bite into my skin. I was trapped, completely at his mercy.

Damien’s hand brushed against my cheek, feather-light, and I flinched, the warmth of his touch cutting through the cold. I hated the way he seemed to linger there, as if savoring the shiver that ran through me. “I’m not here to hurt you,” he whispered, the softness of his voice somehow more menacing than anything else. “Not yet .”

I clenched my jaw, forcing my voice to steady, “What do you want, Damien?” The question came out sharper than I intended, but I didn’t care. My heartbeat pounded in my ears as I waited for his response.

He chuckled, a slow, calculated sound that reverberated through the silence. “To understand you, Amelia. Completely.” His fingers traced down to my collarbone, a ghostly touch that seemed to linger long after he’d pulled away. “You fascinate me. More than you know.”

A gasp caught in my throat as two strong arms wrapped around me from behind,

pulling me to my feet. The grip was tight, firm, inescapable. I felt his chest pressed against my back, his steady heartbeat a chilling contrast to the chaos racing through my own veins. His breath was hot against my ear, too close, each exhale crawling across my skin and sending chills down my spine.

“Millie...” His voice was low, dark, like velvet brushing against steel. “Why do you shudder when I get close? What are you afraid of?”

I clenched my fists, feeling the tape still biting into my wrists, the reminder that I was trapped, at his mercy. I tried to twist away, but his grip tightened, fingers digging into my arms with a possessive force, holding me in place. The scent of leather and something sharper, more dangerous, filled my senses, overwhelming me, making it impossible to think clearly.

He leaned down, his lips brushing against my ear in a way that made my stomach lurch with fear, and something else. “Tell me about your past, Millie,” he whispered, his voice soft but laced with a cruel curiosity. “What was it like? That precious, broken childhood you keep buried so deep.”

My heart pounded, each beat a frantic plea to wake up, to escape, but I was rooted there, paralyzed, his words slicing into me with surgical precision. He knew—he knew about the scars I’d hidden, the memories I never wanted to revisit. I swallowed hard, forcing myself to stay silent, to deny him the satisfaction.

But he didn’t stop. His fingers trailed up my arm, slow and deliberate, and I felt his mouth curve into a smile against my ear. “Did it hurt, Millie? Did it haunt you?”

His words slithered into my mind, scraping at the walls I’d so carefully built over the years. I felt the memories flicker, like ghosts, just at the edge of my vision, the flash of cold rooms, blurred faces, harsh voices—all the things I’d tried to bury. And he was pulling them out, one by one, exposing them, turning them over like toys to play

with.

“What did you do to survive?” he murmured, his voice almost gentle, as if he cared, as if he understood. But I knew better. There was a dark thrill beneath his words, a hunger that fed off my silence, my helplessness.

“Shut up,” I managed to whisper, though my voice trembled, barely audible .

He chuckled, his hold tightening even further, making it clear that he had no intention of letting go. “Oh, Millie. It’s far too late to stop now.” His lips brushed against my neck, a feather-light touch that was somehow colder than the floor beneath me, colder than any nightmare I’d ever known.

The cold bite of metal brushed against my skin, sending an icy shiver up my spine as his knife traced down my arm, slow, deliberate. I could feel the edge of the blade, grazing along the length of my wrist, trailing down to the tape binding me. With a precise flick, the tape snapped, freeing my arms. My wrists burned, blood finally rushing back, but I dared not move. Every instinct screamed to stay still.

Then his hands moved down, brushing over my legs with an unsettling familiarity as he cut the tape around my ankles. I felt the rough fabric of my shirt graze my thighs, realizing with a sickening awareness that I was exposed, vulnerable. My heart pounded in my chest, each beat a hammering echo in the silence.

His hands glided back up, his fingers brushing against my bare skin, and then he was there—right at my ear again, his breath hot and jagged. He lingered, letting the silence grow thick, feeding off my fear like it was the only thing keeping him alive.

“Run,” he whispered, his voice slithering into my mind. “Run like you did back then. You remember, don’t you? Running, desperate, with nowhere to go.”



I felt the words seep into me, dragging memories to the surface I'd tried so hard to bury. My legs trembled, frozen with fear, but I knew what he was asking. He wanted me to relive it, to play the game he'd crafted in his twisted mind.

"If I catch you..." His voice trailed off, leaving a chilling promise lingering in the air. "Well, we both know there will be consequences."

My breath caught as the room seemed to close in around me. His presence loomed, dark and overpowering, filling every inch of space, leaving no room for escape. I forced myself to swallow, my mind racing as I took a shaky step forward, feeling the cold floor beneath my bare feet. The urge to flee surged through me, primal, instinctive.

But I knew he was waiting, watching, feeding off every second of my hesitation. The darkness seemed alive, thick and suffocating, and somewhere behind me, I could almost feel his gaze piercing into my back.

I stumbled forward, my bare feet slapping against the wet, icy floor, the sound echoing in the darkness. The room seemed endless, stretching into blackness that swallowed me whole. My head was spinning, and each step felt heavier, as though the weight of the nightmare was pressing down, making it harder to breathe, to think, to run. My legs were shaking, muscles aching as I pushed forward, desperate to escape, yet barely able to keep myself upright.

A few steps in, my foot slipped on the slick floor, and I went down, my knees crashing into the concrete. A shudder ran through me as I realized he was still there—still watching, still waiting.

Behind me, I could hear him. His footsteps were slow, calculated, a haunting rhythm that echoed in the silence. He didn't hurry; he knew I was his to find, whenever he chose. The deliberate pace, each step punctuated by a pause, filled the air with a

sickening dread that twisted in my chest. He wanted me to feel the inevitability of his approach.

I scrambled to my feet, every nerve screaming as I forced myself forward, slipping again, barely able to keep my balance. My vision was blurry, my pulse thundering in my ears. I didn't dare look back, but I could feel his presence growing, each of his measured steps a reminder that he was closing in, slowly tightening the noose.

I tripped again, my body crashing to the ground, my hands scraping against the rough concrete. I stifled a cry, biting my lip so hard I tasted blood. I forced myself to look up, my gaze frantically searching for any sign of a door, a way out, a sliver of light—anything . But all I saw was darkness, the silence closing in around me, broken only by his footsteps growing closer, louder, unrelenting.

He was toying with me, enjoying the chase. My breath came in shallow, ragged gasps, my chest heaving as I struggled to push down the rising panic. I tried to push myself up, but my legs buckled under me, and I collapsed again, feeling utterly trapped .

Then I heard his voice, soft but terrifyingly close. “Tired already, Millie?”

The words twisted in the dark, mocking, dripping with satisfaction. I felt a sob rising in my throat as I forced myself to move, crawling now, desperately trying to put any distance between us. But I knew, deep down, that he was right behind me, every step a reminder that he was closing in, that escape was nothing more than a cruel illusion.

My head spun as I clawed at the ground, my hands slipping across the damp concrete. Each pulse of pain through my body blurred the line between nightmare and reality, and my vision wavered, every detail twisting in the darkness. I knew he was still behind me. I could feel his presence, like a weight pressing down on my chest, stealing the air from my lungs.

“Tell me, Millie,” his voice slithered through the silence, low and chillingly soft. “What happened back then?”

The words curled around me, taunting, pulling at the edges of memories I’d buried, memories I never wanted to resurface. I swallowed back a sob, forcing myself forward, inch by inch, too weak to stand, too desperate to stop. The floor was slick and cold beneath me, numbing my skin as I crawled.

“What was it like, running back then?” he murmured, his footsteps slow and deliberate, echoing through the dark. “Did you feel this same panic? Did you think you could escape?”

My heart raced as I choked down the terror building in my chest, the past clawing its way up, threatening to consume me. His voice was too close, so close I could almost feel the chill of his breath as he closed in. I pushed myself harder, my fingers digging into the cold concrete.

“Did you scream ?” His voice was a whisper now, a sinister caress that sent chills down my spine. “Did you beg for them to stop?”

Tears burned in my eyes as I crawled faster, each word twisting the knife deeper.

“Come on, Millie,” he coaxed, his tone almost gentle, mocking. “Tell me what happened. Let me hear it. ”

My breaths came in ragged gasps, each one more shallow than the last. His words were relentless, digging into old wounds, ripping them open one by one. And as he continued his haunting questions, that slow, torturous chase through the dark, the walls began to close in.

Damien’s footsteps stayed steady behind me, unhurried. He wasn’t trying to catch me

— not yet. He wanted me to keep going, wanted me to feel the desperation tightening in my chest with every inch I managed to put between us.

I swallowed hard, willing myself not to break, but his words sank deeper, poking at the fractures inside me.

“Tell me, Amelia.” His voice was low, chillingly calm. “Did you try to fight back then? Or did you just... accept it?”

I bit back a scream, pressing my lips together so tightly it hurt. I wanted to scream, to push his voice out of my head. But I knew it wouldn't stop him. He was relentless, merciless, as he took apart each wall I had spent years building. I pushed myself harder, my fingers slipping against the wet concrete as I struggled to gain ground, even if it was just an inch. Just something to keep me moving forward, away from him .

He was close enough now that I could feel the air shift as he bent down, his presence suffocating. His hand reached out, tracing along my shoulder, his fingers cold against my skin.

“Come on, Millie,” he whispered, leaning close to my ear. “I saw it in your eyes — you remember . Every bit of it, don't you?”

My body went rigid, my heart racing, the memories flaring up with painful clarity. I pressed my hands against my temples, as if I could force them away, as if I could make myself forget. But his words burrowed deeper, forcing every image, every sound, every scream back to the surface.

“Keep going,” he urged, his voice sharp, as though he was feeding off my fear, pulling strength from my pain. “Run, Amelia. Like you did back then.”

I forced myself forward, my limbs heavy, the darkness pressing down on me. My pulse thudded in my ears, drowning out every other sound but his relentless footsteps. Every part of me wanted to collapse, but I didn't dare stop .

And as I dragged myself forward, his voice lingered, taunting, unraveling the truth I'd tried so hard to bury.

“Run, Amelia. Run .”

With every ounce of willpower, I pushed myself off the ground, my legs shaking as I fought to stand upright. I couldn't let him see me weak. Not now. I had to run. I had to escape .

As I staggered forward, I forced my feet to move faster, my heart pounding wildly in my chest. The darkness swallowed me, but I couldn't focus on the fear clawing at my throat. I had to break free. Just a little further, and maybe I would find a way out of this nightmare.

But then, the footsteps behind me fell silent. An unsettling stillness enveloped the space, wrapping around me like a thick fog. I glanced over my shoulder, but the shadows offered no answers, only deeper darkness. The absence of sound was more terrifying than his pursuit.

I quickened my pace, the adrenaline surging through me, urging me onward. But it was a false sense of security, and I knew it. My heart raced faster than my feet could carry me .

Before I could react, I slipped, tumbling forward, and the hard floor met me with a jarring thud. My breath escaped in a harsh gasp as I landed at his feet, the wetness soaking through my shirt. Panic surged through me, every instinct screaming to scramble away, to get up and run. But I was trapped, immobilized by the sheer shock

of my fall.

I lay there for a moment, my mind racing, the dread clawing at my insides. I could feel his presence looming over me, the air thick with tension.

“Well, well, Millie,” he said, his voice smooth and mocking. “You really thought you could get away?”

I struggled to push myself up, but the weight of my fear pressed down on me. I could hear his breathing, slow and measured, like a predator savoring the moment before the final strike.

“Did you think you’d escape the past?” he continued, leaning closer, his shadow swallowing me whole. “You can run, but you can’t hide from what you are. ”

Before I could muster the strength to crawl away, I felt his arms wrap around my waist. Panic surged through me as he hoisted me off the ground and tossed me effortlessly over his shoulder. I gasped, the shock of being lifted like a rag doll sending a jolt of panic through my body.

“Damien, no!” I cried, struggling against him, my fists pounding against his back, but it was futile. He was as solid as stone, his grip unyielding. As he carried me deeper into the darkness, he began to hum a haunting melody, the sound echoing off the damp walls and reverberating in my mind. The tune was unsettlingly cheerful, a cruel juxtaposition to the horror of my situation.

“ Shh, shh ,” he murmured, his voice low and soothing, like a twisted lullaby meant to calm a frightened child. “You should have run faster, Millie. You know what I said. If I caught you, there would be consequences.”

I felt the dampness of the floor seep into my shirt as we moved through the darkness.

Every step he took felt deliberate, each one bringing me deeper into his twisted world. I closed my eyes, fighting the urge to succumb to despair, focusing instead on the faint sounds around me—drips of water, distant echoes, and his steady heartbeat against my skin.

He hummed a melody. A haunting tune that seemed to wrap around me like a noose.

As he set me down onto a cold, hard chair, I felt the chilling metal bite into my skin. My heart raced, the sound of my pulse pounding in my ears drowning out the echoes of the empty space around us.

Before I could react, I felt his hands grip the hem of my shirt. “What are you doing?” I gasped, my voice trembling. The darkness loomed around us, wrapping us in its suffocating embrace. I couldn’t see his face, but I could sense the predatory glee in his movements.

“Just making you more comfortable, Amelia,” he replied smoothly, the low timbre of his voice sending chills down my spine. I don’t know why but, I didn’t resist.. I felt the fabric pull over my head, leaving me vulnerable, the cool air brushing against my skin.

The belt he fastened around my waist and arms was thick and unyielding, a leather strap that secured me firmly to the chair. The pressure was tight, making it hard to breathe.

“Now, isn’t that better?” he murmured, stepping back as I squirmed against the chair, testing the restraints, but it was futile. The more I moved, the more I felt the leather dig into my skin. “We can’t have you running away again, can we? You and I have so much to talk about.”

I strained my eyes, hoping to catch a glimpse of his silhouette, but he remained a

shadow, just out of reach. I could hear his breathing, steady and calm, a stark contrast to the storm raging within me.

He stepped closer, the shadows swallowing him as he leaned in, his presence looming over me. I could feel the heat radiating from his body, and I instinctively recoiled, pressing my back against the chair. The sense of helplessness crashed over me like a tidal wave, and I realized I was completely at his mercy.

As I sat there, bound to the chair, a chaotic mix of fear and something unsettlingly twisted churned within me. The cold leather dug into my skin, a constant reminder of my vulnerability, yet somewhere deep in my mind, a dark curiosity flared. It was an unwanted reaction, something I couldn't comprehend—an instinct that screamed to fight back, but another part of me... craved this danger.

I could hear Damien's breath, steady and deliberate. "You're scared," he whispered, his voice smooth as silk yet laced with a dark thrill. "But there's something else beneath that fear, isn't there? A little spark that flickers with excitement?"

I swallowed hard, my throat dry as I tried to muster an answer. I felt the heat rising in my cheeks, a shameful warmth that betrayed me. How could I be reacting this way? I hated myself for even considering the thrill of the chase he represented, for the way my heart raced not just from terror but from an inexplicable allure.

I clenched my fists trying to push the conflicting feelings away, but the more I struggled, the more I felt that twisted pull towards him. It was as if a part of me recognized this dark dance we were engaged in.

"I see you, Millie. I see how your body responds, how your breath quickens. You think you can hide it from me, but I'm not just any man. I know the depths of darkness, and I can sense the thrill of the unknown dancing in you."



My breath hitched as I felt him inch closer, the heat radiating from him like a fire.

“Look at you,” he whispered, leaning down until his face was just inches from mine. “You like the danger, the unpredictability. You’re drawn to it.”

I felt the truth of his words lodged deep in my gut, like a festering wound I couldn’t quite address .

“Don’t deny it. Embrace it,” he said, his voice dropping to a conspiratorial whisper. “This is where you truly belong. The thrill of the hunt, the game of power—it’s exhilarating, isn’t it?”

In the suffocating darkness, I was torn. His words wrapped around me like a web, pulling me deeper into this twisted fantasy he had created. I fought against the feelings that clawed at my mind, but every moment he lingered there, every low word he uttered, deepened the fear and the unsettling heat building between my legs.

His fingers brushed against my shoulder, a light touch that sent a jolt through me, igniting that dark curiosity further. I hated the way I reacted, how my body betrayed me, and how I found myself trapped between the urge to flee and the terrifying allure of what he represented.

As his fingers grazed my skin, a shiver of anticipation and dread coursed through me. I was utterly bound, both by the leather strap holding me to the chair and by the intoxicating pull he had over me. My heart raced, caught in a chaotic dance of fear and excitement as his hand continued to explore .

“Tell me, Millie,” he murmured, his voice low and dangerous, “what do you feel right now?”

I tried to focus, to wrestle control over the emotions swirling within me. “I feel...

trapped,” I managed to say, though my voice wavered, betraying my inner turmoil.

“Trapped?” He chuckled softly, as if savoring the word. “Or liberated ? There’s freedom in surrendering to fear, you know. It opens up a world of possibilities.”

His fingers caressed my nipples, trailing along my exposed chest, teasing my skin with a mix of warmth and cold that made my breath hitch. I hated how my body responded to him, how the fear intertwined with a thrill that sent conflicting signals through my mind.

I felt his hand glide up my side, fingers brushing against my skin, igniting every nerve ending. The sensation was a dangerous mix of pleasure and pain, and I fought against the urge to lean into his touch, to give in to the sickening thrill that wrapped around me.

“Just feel . Let go of the noise in your head. Embrace this moment. You’re safe with me. ”

Safe ? The word echoed mockingly in the dark abyss we inhabited. I was anything but safe, yet somehow, that was part of the thrill. My mind spun as his fingers continued to explore, drawing me into an abyss of confusion where fear and desire tangled together.

With every word, every caress, I felt the tension within me unravel and intertwine.

“Will you fight me?” he whispered, his breath warm against my skin. “Or will you let me show you what it means to surrender?”

In that moment, I was suspended between reality and a haunting fantasy, caught in a web of fear and excitement that left me breathless, and as his hands roamed, I struggled to comprehend the storm of emotions battling within me.

Damien sank to his knees between my legs, and every nerve in my body screamed at once.

I clenched my teeth, forcing myself to breathe. To think . But it was impossible with the weight of his presence, the sick electricity of him so close. I couldn't see his face in the dark, but I could feel his eyes—hungry, predatory, drilling into me.

“ Please ,” I choked out, barely a whisper. I hated the sound of it, the broken plea that slipped out before I could stop it.

Damien laughed, a manic, sharp burst of sound that bounced off the walls and sank straight into my chest. “Oh, fuck , that’s good. Say it again, Millie. Beg me. I live for that shit. ”

He leaned in closer, his breath hot against my thigh. My whole body stiffened as his fingers brushed against my ankle, light and deliberate, as if testing how far he could push before I shattered. My skin prickled where he touched me, an involuntary shiver racing down my spine that I hated myself for.

“Tell me about your childhood,” he said suddenly, his tone sharp, commanding. The shift in his voice made my stomach drop.

“What the hell are you talking about?” I snapped, shaking my head.

“Don’t play dumb,” he snarled, his fingers trailing upward, brushing over my knee. “The shit that fucked you up. The shit you bury so deep it keeps you up at night. Spill it .”

I froze, the weight of his words pinning me down more effectively than the straps ever could. Images flickered in my mind— ghosts of a past I’d spent years trying to forget. “I’m not telling you anything,” I hissed through gritted teeth.

Damien chuckled darkly, the sound vibrating through the air like a low growl. “You will,” he said, his voice a razor dragging across my nerves. “Because you need to. And because deep down, you know I’m the only one who can handle the real you.”

He leaned in close, his lips brushing my ear, his breath sending chills racing down my spine. “But don’t forget,” he murmured, each word a knife in the dark. “You’ll break eventually, Millie. And when you do? You’ll thank me for it.”

I held my breath as his fingers lingered, a cruel tease against my skin, drawing closer to the vulnerability I was trying so hard to shield. The mix of fear and something darker twisted in my gut, a constant reminder of the battle waging within me. I could feel the cold metal of the chair against my back, the leather belt binding me tight—each detail of my captivity grounding me in the present, even as my mind flitted between fear and an unbidden thrill.

“Do you remember what it felt like?” he asked, his breath warm and taunting. “That helplessness ? The way it consumed you?” His voice was barely above a whisper, wrapping around me like a shroud.

His fingers danced along my thigh, tracing invisible patterns as I felt the heat radiate from him. I shivered involuntarily, every nerve ending alive, a sickening thrill that twisted in my stomach. I felt his thumb ghosted over the thin fabric of my underwear, so goddamn slow it was maddening . The heat of his touch burned through the barrier, sending a jolt straight to my core. I clenched my thighs instinctively, but he didn’t stop. If anything, the resistance only fueled his sick amusement.

“Do you feel that?” he asked, his voice dripping with mockery. “That charge in the air? It’s like a fucking live wire between us. Palpable , isn’t it?” His thumb pressed harder, a maddening tease that sent shockwaves through me.

His cold fingers curled around the edge of my panties. The anticipation was killing

me as he slowly tugged them down, baring me to the cold air.

I gasped as his finger dragged along my clit, the touch so deliberate, so cruel , that my body betrayed me with a shudder. He noticed. Of course, he noticed.

“You’re trembling,” he whispered, his tone sickly sweet, laced with venom. “Your body’s already made its decision, hasn’t it?”

I shook my head, my voice cracking under the weight of his words. “No. You’re wrong—”

“Oh, I’m wrong?” His laugh sliced through the air, sharp and mocking. He forced my legs apart, his strength unyielding, his dominance absolute. “Then tell me why you’re fucking soaked , Millie. Why are you here, shaking like you’ve never been touched like this before.”

The air around me seemed to collapse, thick and suffocating, as his lips replaced his fingers. The warmth of his mouth against my clit sent a shockwave through my entire body, my back arching against my will. He was slow , deliberate, savoring every second of my unraveling as though he was burning the moment into his mind.

I bit down hard on my lip, desperate to suppress the sounds clawing their way out of me, but it was useless. A soft moan slipped free, barely audible, but his chuckle vibrated against my skin. He heard it .

“There it is,” he murmured, his voice a velvet growl. “You can’t hide from me, Millie. Your body’s already telling me everything I need to know. You’re mine—every inch of you.”

I trembled beneath him, every nerve ending on fire as his hands gripped my thighs, pulling me closer, trapping me in his orbit. “Eventually,” he said, pausing to kiss the

soft skin of my inner thigh, “you’ll stop fighting it. You’ll understand that the darkness isn’t just in me, it’s in you too. And it’s hungry as fuck.”

The sudden absence of his touch was jarring, the cold air biting at my exposed skin as he pulled away. His movements were slow, calculated, like a predator leaving its mark and savoring the aftermath. His footsteps echoed in the silence, each one heavier than the last, and then he was gone, leaving me alone in the pitch-black void he’d created.

I strained to see, my eyes futilely searching through the darkness, desperate for something familiar, something that could anchor me. But all I found was the cold emptiness left in his wake. The walls seemed to close in, pressing down on me, each second amplifying the tightness in my chest. My breath came shallow and uneven, the remnants of his touch still prickling my skin, reminding me he had been real, that this nightmare wasn’t just a figment of my mind.

The room began to blur. I felt a wave of dizziness, heavier and more consuming than before, as if the darkness was seeping into my very bones. I tried to shift, to shake myself free from the fog closing in on me, but my limbs felt heavy, unresponsive. My mind reeled, each thought slower than the last, slipping away like sand through my fingers.

I fought to keep my eyes open, my vision slipping in and out of focus. The cold metal of the chair pressed against my skin, grounding me in the only tangible reality left, but even that anchor was slipping away. The edges of my consciousness frayed, and I felt myself sinking, deeper and deeper, into the inescapable dark.

The last thing I remembered was the faint hum of his voice in my mind, twisted and haunting, and then... nothing.

## Page 8

*Source Creation Date: August 7, 2025, 3:15 am*

Amelia

I jolted awake, gasping for air as if I'd been held underwater. My chest rose and fell in rapid bursts, and my hands instinctively flew to my arms, to my legs, as if to reassure myself I was whole, untouched . The familiar dim light of my bedroom filtered through the curtains, casting soft shadows, but it did little to soothe the pounding in my chest.

I took a slow, steadying breath and glanced down. I was still in the same long T-shirt I'd fallen asleep in, its fabric soft against my skin. Unlike in the nightmare, though, it was dry, untouched by the cold dampness that had clung to me in that twisted darkness. My hair, too, was dry and smooth, not tangled or matted .

But the vividness of it all—the wet floor beneath me, Damien's voice, the sensation of his hands—felt too real , as if his presence still lingered in the room. I swallowed hard, the echo of his words reverberating through my mind, the fear and strange thrill he'd ignited inside me still clinging to my senses like smoke. I tried to shake it off, to remind myself it was only a dream. But it felt like a hollow reassurance, a feeble attempt to calm the unease brewing within me.

Rubbing my temples, I forced myself to sit up and push my hair back, fingers trembling slightly. I looked around my room, grounding myself in the reality of my surroundings—the stack of books on the bedside table, the light sweater draped over the chair in the corner. Everything was as it should be, exactly where I'd left it.

But why did I feel like he'd been here, like his presence had seeped into the air around me?

With a sigh, I slipped out of bed, my bare feet pressing against the cool floor as I made my way to the bathroom.

I shook my head, trying to dispel the lingering tension, and stepped into the shower. Warm water cascaded over me, soothing the remnants of my nerves. I squeezed a handful of soap into my hands, lathering it across my arms and shoulders, letting the scent envelop me in a sense of normalcy.

As I worked my way down, my fingers brushed over my legs, and I froze . There, just above my knee, were faint marks—bruises, purpling slightly at the edges, tender to the touch. My breath caught as my mind reeled. This couldn't be possible. I'd fallen in the nightmare, I remembered hitting the floor...but that had only been a dream. Hadn't it?

Panic surged through me, and I nearly slipped as I scrambled out of the shower, grabbing a towel and wrapping it around me. I rushed over to the mirror on the bathroom wall, water dripping onto the tile as I frantically searched my reflection. My fingers traced over the marks on my legs, then over to my arms, where faint, almost imperceptible red lines traced the spots where I'd felt bindings in my dream.

My pulse hammered as I stared at my reflection, my mind racing in desperate denial. These weren't real. They couldn't be. But the bruises ached beneath my touch, stubborn proof that defied logic. My gaze drifted to my face, to the haunted look in my eyes, the disbelief mingling with a spark of fear .

“How...?” I whispered, feeling the ground beneath me shift. This wasn't just a nightmare anymore.

I took a shaky breath, willing myself to calm down, trying to muster some sense into the chaos. This had to be psychological. The mind was more powerful than people realized; I, of all people, should know that. In cases of severe trauma or stress, the



body sometimes manifests physical symptoms. It wasn't unusual—it was a phenomenon I'd studied extensively. The mind could 'convert' intense emotional experiences into tangible sensations, and sometimes even marks on the skin.

Psychosomatic responses were common in people dealing with unresolved trauma, I reminded myself. I'd counseled patients who swore they'd felt real pain from memories, convinced their scars were more than emotional. It was all part of the intricate dance between the brain and the body. Perhaps my nightmare had been so vivid, so terrifyingly real, that my body responded this way, my skin conjuring up faint bruises as some twisted echo of what I'd felt in my mind.

But as much as I wanted to believe that, an uneasy voice lingered in the back of my mind, whispering doubt. I'd never experienced anything quite like this before—nothing that left physical traces. And the intensity of the sensations...the feel of his hands, his voice, the damp chill in the air—it had all been so...real.

I shook my head, forcing myself to let it go. This was just a fluke. The mind could blur lines, especially with someone like Damien on my mind. After all, I'd been through hell and come out the other side once. There was no reason to think this was anything more than my mind's cruel trickery. Right?

I finished rinsing the soap off and stood under the warm spray for a few extra seconds, grounding myself in the simplicity of the moment. The water was steady, predictable—a stark contrast to the confusion clouding my mind. I dried off and slipped into some comfortable clothes, focusing on the softness of the fabric against my skin, as if this simple, mundane routine could tether me back to reality.

In the kitchen, I set up the coffee maker, the familiar hum filling the silence around me. As the aroma wafted through the air, I wrapped my hands around the warm mug and tried to shake off the lingering unease. I'd faced the darkest parts of myself before and survived. So why did this feel different? Why did I feel as though an

unseen weight was pressing down on me, pulling me back into shadows I'd long tried to escape?

I took a slow sip, letting the warmth ease my nerves. Maybe it really was just exhaustion, my subconscious picking up threads of worry and weaving them into something insidious. But even as I tried to convince myself, I couldn't shake the image of those faint bruises and the vivid sensations from the nightmare.

With a sigh, I picked up my phone and dialed Lily's number. It only rang twice before she answered.

"Amelia! Good morning!" she greeted cheerfully.

"Morning, Lily," I said, trying to keep my voice steady. "Listen, I'm not feeling well, so I won't be able to come in today. Could you please call the patients and reschedule their sessions?"

"Oh, of course! I hope you feel better," she replied, her concern evident. "Is there anything else you need?"

"No, that's all. Just...thank you, Lily." I ended the call, feeling a pang of guilt for letting the day slip away, for abandoning my patients just because of a nightmare. But I knew I couldn't face anyone else right now. Not until I understood what was happening to me.

I sat with my coffee, the steam swirling up in faint wisps as if mirroring the fragments of last night's dream—or whatever it was—still tangled in my mind. I took another sip, but it did little to steady me. My skin felt hypersensitive, like the softest breeze could leave a mark. Every shadow around me seemed sharper, and my reflection in the darkened kitchen window looked back at me with haunted eyes.

I tried to distract myself, scrolling through a few emails and half heartedly reading the news, but it all felt distant. My mind kept circling back, unearthing fragments of that disturbing memory: the cold dampness of the floor, the weight of the silence, Damien's voice whispering things I couldn't fully remember. I placed the mug down with a shaky hand, pressing my fingers to my temples as if I could somehow massage the memories back into their rightful place in my mind .

Had I somehow let my boundaries slip in my sessions with Damien? I'd always known he was... dangerous, capable of stirring things within me that were best left undisturbed. But I'd thought I could maintain control. That was my strength, wasn't it? Control . I'd spent years building it, brick by brick, after everything that happened.

I inhaled deeply, determined to get a grip on my mind. The idea that a patient could unravel me like this was unsettling. But as I thought about Damien's last visit—the intensity in his gaze, his unspoken words that seemed to linger long after he'd left—it made me wonder if I'd underestimated just how far he could reach.

The rational side of me pushed back. This was psychological transference, that's all . I was exhausted, my brain creating vivid scenarios as a stress response. I forced myself to my feet, pushing away from the counter, willing my legs to steady.

But deep down, I couldn't escape the feeling that something was slipping beyond my control. I could only hope, for my own sake, that it was all just a figment of my imagination .

As dusk gave way to night, I laced up my sneakers and pulled on a hoodie, deciding that maybe a run would help clear my head. The park nearby was usually empty on weeknights, and something about the quiet paths and towering trees always brought a measure of calm.

When I arrived, the lampposts cast a soft amber glow, illuminating winding trails that

disappeared into the dense greenery. Branches overhead arched like a protective canopy, casting shadows that shifted with every faint breeze. The air was crisp, scented faintly of damp earth and pine, and the silence was almost surreal— too peaceful , as if the park itself held its breath.

I jogged along the familiar path, letting my feet fall into a steady rhythm, each step grounding me, each breath a reminder of the present. But as I moved deeper into the shadows, an unease settled over me. I brushed it off as residual nerves from the day, from the fragmented nightmare that wouldn't quite fade from my mind.

Then, just as I rounded a bend in the path, I felt it—a prickle at the back of my neck, that undeniable feeling of being watched . My pace slowed, heart pounding, and I stole a glance over my shoulder.

Nothing. Just empty paths and still trees.

I exhaled slowly, chiding myself for being paranoid, but I couldn't shake the feeling. With every few strides, I found myself glancing back, almost expecting to see a figure lurking in the shadows. The park's tranquility now felt stifling, the silence oppressive, as if something—or someone —was just out of sight, keeping pace with me.

I quickened my step, forcing my gaze forward. But the feeling persisted, creeping up my spine with every step. And though I tried to keep my head clear, I could almost imagine his presence—dark, watchful, just beyond the trees, waiting .

I broke into a sprint, my pulse racing with each stride as if I could outrun the dread gnawing at me. Every shadow felt alive, every whisper of wind a warning. I risked one last glance behind me, convinced I'd finally see someone there.

But the moment I turned back around, my body collided with something solid,

unforgiving. The impact knocked the breath from my lungs, and I stumbled backward, falling hard to the ground. My heart stopped as I looked up, and the world seemed to shrink, narrowing to the figure standing above me.

Damien .

My nightmare played on repeat in my mind, the memory of falling to his feet, the darkness, his voice taunting me. And now, here he was, his face shadowed but unmistakably him, looking down at me with that same piercing gaze. I froze, rooted to the ground as fear took hold, but before I could react, he extended a hand, effortlessly pulling me to my feet.

“Amelia,” he murmured, his voice calm yet edged with something I couldn’t place. “Are you alright?”

The world felt surreal, and I tried to compose myself, to keep the tremor out of my voice. “Were... were you following me?”

His expression remained unreadable, his head tilting ever so slightly. “No,” he said smoothly. “Just a coincidence.”

The words didn’t settle right. His eyes lingered on me for a beat too long, like he knew exactly what had been running through my mind, like he could see the terror etched in my face. My pulse hammered in my ears as I forced myself to break the silence.

“Then why are you here?” I managed, searching his gaze for any hint of the truth.

He shrugged, a faint smirk tugging at the corners of his mouth. “I like a good evening walk, same as you.”

Damien knelt down in front of me, and my breath hitched. His hands moved with deliberate ease, brushing against my legs as he dusted off the dirt from my fall. I forced myself to remain still, but every gentle touch sent a shiver coursing through me, each brush of his fingers igniting a clash of fear and something darker that twisted in my stomach.

“Look at you,” he said, a hint of mockery lacing his tone. “You’re like a little girl, running around without a care in the world.”

I swallowed hard, my heart pounding in my chest as he lifted my foot, resting it on his knee. The intimacy of the moment sent chills down my spine, and I felt the need to pull away, to escape. But my body betrayed me, frozen in place as he reached for the lace of my shoe, his fingers deftly tying the knot.

“You should pay more attention to your surroundings, Millie,” he continued, his voice low and smooth, almost teasing. “Especially at night. There are all sorts of dangers lurking out there.”

I could hardly meet his gaze, a mixture of dread and something unnameable thrumming through me. His touch was light, almost gentle, yet it was impossible to ignore the weight of his presence—the predator hidden behind that charming facade. I fought to focus on anything but the way my heart raced under his scrutiny.

“Are you always this careless?” he asked, his eyes narrowing slightly as he finished with the laces, glancing up at me with a smirk. “It could get you into trouble.”

With every word, he held me captive in a way that sent my mind spiraling. I forced my voice to remain steady, challenging the fear coursing through me. “I’m fine,” I managed, but the tremor in my tone betrayed me.

His smile widened, an unsettling mix of amusement and something darker. “I’m sure

you are,” he said, standing up smoothly, towering over me once again. “But just remember, trouble can come from anywhere. Even the shadows .”

My heart raced as he stepped back, and I was left grappling with the weight of his words and the lingering warmth of his touch, the memory of his hands on my skin dancing dangerously close to the surface of my mind. The park around us felt suddenly more menacing, the trees closing in, shadows stretching out as if they were alive.

“Mind if I join you?” he asked, a casual smile on his lips.

“I, um—” I hesitated, my instincts screaming at me to refuse, but I forced myself to push the fear aside. “I was actually just about to finish and head home.”

“Really? I don’t see the harm in a little company,” he insisted, the way he leaned closer making it feel like he was cornering me even in the open air. His confidence wrapped around me, tightening like a noose, and I couldn’t shake the unsettling reminder of my nightmare .

“I really don’t think that’s a good idea, Damien,” I said, my voice firmer than I felt. The thought of him walking alongside me, shadows lurking just out of sight, made my skin crawl.

But his smile never wavered. “Come on, Amelia. It’s dark out here. I’d feel much better knowing you’re not alone.”

I could see the challenge in his gaze, a taunting edge that made my stomach twist. Every fiber of my being wanted to refuse him, to make a break for it and run. But the reality was I didn’t want to be alone either—not after last night’s horrors replaying behind my eyelids, leaving me gasping for air when I woke.

“Fine,” I relented, unable to muster the will to fight him. “But I’m not jogging anymore.”

“Perfect. A nice, leisurely walk then.” He fell into step beside me, and I forced myself not to flinch as the darkness closed in around us.

The atmosphere felt charged, as if the air crackled with electricity, and I struggled to ignore the lingering dread. Each step felt heavier, every shadow seemed to loom larger. I tried to keep my gaze forward, focused on the path illuminated by the faint streetlights, but I could feel his presence beside me, a constant reminder of the nightmare that had bled into my reality.

“What a lovely night, huh?” he said, his tone casual, almost playful. “Just you, me, and the night.”

“Yeah, lovely,” I murmured, the sarcasm of my own words biting at my throat. The trees swayed gently in the breeze, casting elongated shadows that danced in my peripheral vision, and every time I glanced sideways, I found him watching me.

“You seem tense,” he noted, a smirk playing at the corners of his mouth. “Is something wrong?”

“Just... tired,” I replied, forcing a smile that didn’t quite reach my eyes.

As we continued walking, I tried to ignore the uneasy feeling in my stomach, but it only intensified when he casually asked, “So, why didn’t you go to work today?”

I tensed at the question, my heart racing as I shot him a sideways glance. “How do you know I didn’t go? ”

A smirk crept onto his face, and I could see the glint in his eyes, a mix of amusement



and something darker. “Oh, I have my ways,” he said, his tone teasing yet laced with an unsettling undercurrent. “We had a session scheduled today, remember? That got rescheduled.”

“Right.” I swallowed hard, feeling exposed under his gaze. “It was just a long week. I needed a break.”

He took a step closer, his voice dropping to a conspiratorial whisper. “Or maybe you were just too scared to face me again.”

My breath caught in my throat, and I had to remind myself to breathe. “No, that’s not it,” I shot back, my voice trembling despite my efforts to sound firm. “I’m just... trying to take care of myself.”

“Self-care is important,” he replied smoothly, the playful edge in his voice making my skin crawl. “But you should know, avoiding what scares you only makes it stronger.”

I didn’t respond, my mind racing as I tried to decipher the underlying meaning in his words. Every moment spent in his presence felt like a game, and I was the unwilling pawn. The shadows of the trees seemed to stretch toward me as if they were part of his machinations, and I felt the weight of his gaze burning into the side of my face again.

As we reached my house, the familiar brick facade loomed before me, a beacon of safety that suddenly felt inadequate. I hesitated for a moment, glancing back at Damien, who stood with his hands casually tucked into his pockets, an amused smirk playing on his lips. The night air felt charged, and I could sense the tension building between us.

“Thanks for walking me home,” I said, my voice sounding oddly strained. “You can

go now.”

“Not just yet,” he replied, tilting his head slightly as if assessing me. “You seem... on edge. Are you sure you’re okay?”

I opened my mouth to respond, but before I could, a voice cut through the stillness of the night. “Amelia!”

I turned around to see Jake Turner striding towards me, his friendly smile lighting up the dim street. Relief washed over me at the sight of my friend. “Jake!” I exclaimed, rushing toward him as he enveloped me in a warm hug.

“Wow, it’s good to see you!” he said, pulling back to look at me. “You look... well, a bit worn out, actually. Everything okay?”

“Yeah, just a rough week,” I said, trying to brush it off. My heart raced as I glanced back at Damien, who had taken a step back, his expression darkening as he watched us closely.

Jake turned to Damien, his eyebrows raised in surprise. “And who’s this?”

“Damien Blackwell,” he replied smoothly, extending a hand that Jake shook cautiously.

“Jake Turner. Nice to meet you,” Jake said, but I could sense the tension in his stance. He was perceptive, and I could only imagine what he must be feeling in the presence of someone like Damien.

I forced a smile, trying to ease the discomfort. “Jake just got back to town. He was my colleague at the hospital. ”

“Oh really?” Damien replied, his voice laced with sarcasm. “That must have been a fun time.”

The way he said it sent an involuntary shiver down my spine, and I could sense the weight of his gaze like a heavy cloak draped over my shoulders.

Jake shifted slightly, his body language defensive, and I could feel the tension crackling in the air between the three of us. “Yeah, we had our moments,” Jake said cautiously, his eyes flicking between me and Damien.

“Moments can be... illuminating,” Damien said, his smirk widening. “But they can also haunt you if you’re not careful.”

“Right,” Jake replied, the unease evident in his tone. “Well, Amelia and I should probably catch up. It’s been a while.”

“Sure, why don’t you two enjoy your chat?” Damien stepped back slightly, but not without a lingering glance at me, a predator sizing up its prey .

With that, he turned and walked away, his silhouette slowly fading into the night, leaving behind a heavy silence that wrapped around us like a fog.

## Page 9

*Source Creation Date: August 7, 2025, 3:15 am*

Damien

The night air was cool, still, carrying only the faintest sound of her footsteps over the damp path. I trailed behind her, close enough to feel the tension rolling off her in waves, savoring each shiver that passed through her.

She didn't know I was there, not at first. But soon, the unmistakable thrill of fear began to stir in her, tightening her shoulders, quickening her pace, a subtle panic radiating from her with each step. She had sensed me — that shadow in the dark, just out of reach. It was beautiful, watching her instincts kick in, like a doe suddenly aware of the hunter in the woods.

I slowed down, just a touch, letting her anticipation build, letting the suspense coil around her like a vice. And then, when she least expected it, I stepped into her path .

The moment her gaze lifted to mine, recognition flaring in her eyes, I saw her mask crack — just for an instant. She looked as though she'd fallen straight into her nightmare.

As I stood there, brushing the dust from her clothes, I felt it again — that pull , that undeniable magnetism that kept me coming back. Fuck . There was something about her that struck a chord deep within me, something twisted and dark, buried beneath all those layers of professional detachment.

She was different. So many people wore their lives like an open book, ready to be dissected with a glance. But Amelia? She was a fucking maze , a series of locked doors, each one leading to something even more intriguing than the last. Beneath that

calm exterior was a woman both fierce and fragile, bound by past traumas that lingered just out of sight, waiting for someone willing to unravel them.

And guess who that someone would be?

The thrill of it, the sheer thrill of her — it fucking gnawed at me, consuming every corner of my mind. She had no idea, of course, how much space she occupied in my head, how much of her I saw beyond the walls of that office. She was intoxicating, and the more I studied her, the more I could feel the pieces clicking into place. She was the perfect fit for me. Her cracks and scars mirrored my own in a way that felt almost poetic .

When I watched her falter, trying to hide her fear, I felt my pulse quicken. That push and pull, her hesitation mixed with that dark, unspoken curiosity — it was a game neither of us could walk away from. Not now. Not ever.

She was my obsession, my carefully chosen prey, the one who stirred up something primal in me that no one else could.

Every time she bit her lip, her teeth pressing into that soft skin with anxious tension, it took every ounce of control I had to stay still. She had no damn idea how tightly wound my restraint was, how every small, nervous movement she made pulled at something deep and raw within me. That subtle, almost imperceptible tremor she tried to hide when my hand brushed against her — it was fucking maddening ..

The tiniest details, those were what drove me wild. The way her pulse quickened ever so slightly if I leaned just a bit too close. Or the way her breath hitched when she knew I was watching her, eyes lingering just a moment longer than necessary. Those moments were mine , secret fragments of her that she didn't even realize she was giving away. And I savored them, tucked each one away like a hunter cataloging every weakness, every vulnerability in his prey.

I had to keep my hands at my sides, had to remind myself not to cross the boundary just yet. Because if I let myself go, if I allowed myself to close that final distance, I wasn't sure I'd be able to stop. It was a delicate balance — feeding her curiosity, indulging that flicker of fear, without scaring her off completely.

But I couldn't help it. Every glance, every tremble, every time she shuddered beneath my touch... she was mine, even if she didn't know it yet.

As I was savoring those last moments with her, that delicious hint of fear still glinting in her eyes, someone interrupted, calling her name from down the street.

Jake fucking Turner.

He came barreling over like a big, eager Saint Bernard, all broad shoulders and a goofy grin, bounding up to her side like he'd been waiting his whole fucking life for this exact moment.

From the second he looked at her, I knew. His gaze lingered a fraction too long, his smile a touch too wide — it was painfully obvious. He wanted her. Maybe he'd been sniffing around for years, playing the 'good friend,' standing guard like some loyal mutt. But I could see the way the fucker looked at her, his eyes tracing over her like she was something fragile and precious. She was, but definitely not to him.

Watching him act as if he had some claim on her was fucking laughable. I kept my face neutral, leaning back a bit, letting the sarcasm color my voice just enough to slip under his skin. "Oh, really? That must have been a fun time." I flashed a thin smile that probably looked more like baring teeth.

That son of a bitch was looking at something that belonged to me. That much was clear, and he'd be wise to figure it out soon. Because this wasn't a competition he was going to win, not by a long shot. I wasn't about to let anyone get in my way —

least of all, the friendly neighborhood Saint Bernard.

I turned away, letting them have their little reunion, and strolled back to where my car was parked, each step deliberate, my pulse thrumming with all the things I'd like to do to her — and him, if he dared cross me again. Sliding into the driver's seat, I took a moment, gripping the steering wheel, imagining her face, that blend of defiance and vulnerability that I'd carved out in her. She was still blissfully unaware of how deep she'd already fallen, but I'd make sure she felt it soon enough.

Millie. Or should I say Dr. Harper? So controlled, so careful, all buttoned-up and professional in the daylight. But she had no idea what was coming, what I had planned. I'd seen her walls crumble in those late hours, watched her falter and stutter under my gaze. She'd start to unravel soon, piece by piece. I wanted her every shudder, every glance over her shoulder, every bit of that fear she tried so hard to hide.

And as I sped through the night, my mind wandered to those moments yet to come. She'd be mine, every thought and every breath. The more she tried to resist, the tighter I'd pull her in, until she had nowhere else to turn.

This wasn't a game she'd win, but watching her try was going to be half the fun.

I pulled into the driveway, stepping out of the car with a slight smirk still lingering on my face. The night was cool, shadows stretching across the ground as I locked up and headed inside. Millie's old friend Jake Turner, with his too-casual smile and familiar touch. He didn't fool me. Men like him were easy to read, and something about his presence had already grated against me. He wasn't the innocent type, not by a long shot. And I had a feeling his past would confirm that suspicion.

Sitting down at my desk, I pulled out my laptop and began to dig, methodical and precise. The traces of the bastard's life unfolded in bits and pieces—his resume, his

professional history, and the gaps he probably thought no one would notice. But when you're looking for dirt, you know exactly where to dig. It wasn't long before I found it.

Turner had been involved in some serious dealings during his time at the hospital. Shady connections with wealthy clients, money exchanged under the table for treatments that didn't show up on any official record. Medical favors, private sessions off the books, bending the rules for patients with the right price tag. The deeper I went, the darker it got. He had a knack for keeping things clean on the surface, but that didn't mean he hadn't left behind loose threads.

So he wasn't just the good-natured, harmless guy he pretended to be. No, Jake Turner had secrets, and the kind of past that could be exploited. I leaned back, smiling to myself. This was going to be easier than I thought.

I closed the laptop with a satisfying click, feeling the pulse of anticipation beneath the surface. My gaze shifted to the other screen on my desk, the one that gave me a direct line to Millie's world. Setting up those cameras had been almost too easy; she never even noticed. Quiet, hidden, positioned in places she wouldn't suspect. Each angle allowed me to see her every movement, every expression, every small vulnerability that she thought no one else could see.

As the feed came to life, the screen flickered before settling into a crystal-clear view of her living room. There she was, moving through her home, oblivious to the eyes on her. She was pacing, her brow furrowed, clearly agitated. Probably still shaken from our little encounter in the park. I leaned forward, watching her in that oversized sweater and bare feet, biting her lip as she ran a hand through her hair—small habits I had learned to recognize and savor.

A part of me almost wanted her to sense it, to feel the chill of being watched, but she didn't. She simply moved through her space, unguarded, vulnerable, and mine to



observe . I could see every emotion play across her face—the lingering confusion, the frustration, the hints of fear she tried to suppress. It was intoxicating to know that, even if she didn't realize it yet, I was everywhere around her.

She finally settled on the couch, her fingers tracing aimless patterns on her knee as she stared blankly ahead, lost in thought. I could practically see the gears turning in her mind, her attempts to piece together what was happening. But she had no damn idea, did she?

The corner of my mouth lifted as I watched. There was a twisted satisfaction in knowing I was creating this constant, creeping presence in her life. She was beginning to unravel, thread by thread, and she didn't even know who was pulling the strings.

Then her phone buzzed. She picked it up, a flicker of something crossing her face. Her brother, probably, or Jake . My fingers tightened slightly as I thought of him, lingering in her life, thinking he had some claim to her.

But he was nothing . Just a distraction, a remnant from her past. I had done my research, unearthed his connections and weaknesses. He had his own skeletons—things he likely thought he'd hidden well. I'd be more than happy to help him remember exactly who he was dealing with.

Millie shifted on the couch, rubbing her temples, looking exhausted. My fingers brushed over the trackpad, zooming in slightly. Every line of stress etched on her face, every weary sigh—I drank it all in.

As she finally leaned back, letting her head fall against the cushion, her eyes slowly drifting closed, I found myself leaning in, feeling that familiar rush of power. This was my design, my world, and soon enough, she'd understand that there was no escape.

The night was deep and still, cloaking the world in a velvet darkness that matched the creeping thrill inside me. I parked my car a few blocks away, shrouded in the shadows of the trees, and made my way to Millie's house. The path was well-trodden now, each step a dark promise of what was to come.

Her two-story home stood quietly, the lights dimmed, a soft glow emanating from the living room windows. I lingered just out of sight, savoring the moment. The familiar thrill of anticipation prickled at my skin as I imagined her sprawled on that couch, the remnants of her day etched into her features. The place felt more like mine with each visit, like a sinister inheritance I was destined to claim.

I slipped around to the back, the slight creak of the fence barely registering over the thrum of my heart. With practiced ease, I pushed open the sliding glass door, its familiar resistance yielding to my will. The scent of her home enveloped me—comforting, yet tinged with something raw and electric that was uniquely hers.

As I entered, the soft sound of her breathing drew me in. She was there, just beyond the wall, draped across the couch like a delicate doll, her hair cascading over the armrest. A blanket half-covered her, a few stray tendrils of hair dancing across her face. I paused for a moment, taking her in, allowing the sight to wash over me.

There she was— my Millie. Vulnerable, unguarded, blissfully unaware of the darkness hovering just outside her dreams. I moved closer, each step quiet, deliberate, as if I were approaching something sacred. My eyes drank in every detail: the gentle rise and fall of her chest, the way her lips parted slightly as she slept.

I positioned myself just out of her line of sight, watching the serenity of her face. A small, twisted part of me reveled in the idea that she would not know I was here, that she was at my mercy. The thrill of it all sent shivers down my spine.

I fought the urge to reach out, to stroke her hair or trace the curve of her jaw. But no,

patience was key.

As the minutes stretched on, I allowed myself to indulge in the darker fantasies swirling in my mind. I envisioned what it would be like to wake her gently, to pull her from her slumber into a world crafted by my hands. I wanted to hear her voice, feel the confusion and fear ripple through her as she realized she wasn't alone, that I was here— always here .

Time slipped away as I stood there, watching her sleep, plotting my next move. In this moment, I was the puppet master, and she was the unwitting marionette, and I could not wait to see how she would dance .

The thrill coiled tightly within me, a live wire buzzing with potential as I stood there in the dim light. It was a rush unlike any other, a heady mix of power and desire that coursed through my veins like adrenaline. Watching Millie, the way her chest rose and fell softly, I felt the edges of my control tighten, my focus sharpening on her every delicate feature.

This was what I craved —the intoxicating blend of fear and fascination that radiated from her. Each breath she took was a reminder of how close I was, how easily I could step into her world and reshape it to my liking. The idea of her waking up to find me there, looming in the shadows, sent an electric thrill surging through me. What would her eyes betray? Fear? Confusion? Or maybe, excitement ? I relished the thought.

Every inch of her was a canvas, and I was the fucking artist, ready to paint her with my intentions. I could imagine the way she would shudder if I brushed my fingers against her skin, how her body would react to my presence. The thrill wasn't just in the act of watching; it was in the possibility of what was to come—the plans I'd crafted, the moments I could orchestrate that would leave her breathless and aching for more .

With each passing second, the desire to break through that thin veneer of peace she clung to intensified. But the thrill lay in the challenge: to see how far I could push her, how deeply I could etch myself into her psyche.

I envisioned a world where she belonged to me— completely and utterly . A world where I could touch her, mold her, and make her understand the depths of my obsession. The thrill of the hunt was delicious, and I savored it like a fine wine, allowing it to linger on my palate.

Tonight, the thrill was everything. I was a predator in the dark, and she was my prey. The world outside faded away, leaving only the two of us suspended in this charged silence, waiting for the moment to break. I leaned closer, inhaling the scent of her hair, a mixture of shampoo and something uniquely hers, and smiled to myself. Soon, she would know exactly who was in control.

Amelia

I sat at the small round table in the corner of the bustling café, a warm cup of herbal tea cradled in my hands. The faint buzz of laughter and chatter surrounded us. Emily leaned in closer, her brows furrowed with concern, yet a small smile danced on her lips.

“It’s been a whole week, Amelia! You should be celebrating, not just trying to convince yourself it was all a dream. No more nightmares? That’s amazing!” she exclaimed, her enthusiasm infectious.

“Yeah, amazing,” I replied, attempting to match her excitement. But beneath my smile, unease twisted in my gut. I couldn’t shake the lingering fear that the nightmares would return, that Damien would somehow seep back into my mind. “But you know me—after everything, I need proof . So I had a company come in to install cameras around the house.”

Emily’s expression shifted, a mix of disbelief and worry crossing her face. “Cameras? You really think that’ll help? What are you expecting to find?”

I took a sip of my tea, the warmth spreading through me, momentarily grounding my swirling thoughts. “I just... I need to know that I’m safe. I have to convince myself that it was just my imagination, that he wasn’t really there.”

“Amelia, you can’t keep living like this,” Emily said softly, her voice laced with concern. “You can’t let him control you, even in your mind.”

As I looked into her earnest eyes, I felt the weight of her words. “I know. But it’s hard. Some days I can almost feel him there, watching . Even now, it’s like I’m waiting for him to jump out from behind a tree or something.”

Emily rolled her eyes playfully, but her concern didn’t waver. “Okay, let’s focus on something else. We’re here to celebrate, remember? How’s Anna handling her crazy party planning? ”

I laughed, grateful for the distraction. Anna’s birthday party had taken over our lives for weeks, and Emily had been the mastermind behind the decorations. The thought of the colorful balloons and fairy lights brightened my mood. “I’m surprised she hasn’t turned into a bridezilla! She keeps adding new themes every day. It’s like she thinks we’re planning a royal wedding instead of a birthday party.”

Just then, Anna approached our table, her bright smile cutting through the café’s atmosphere like a beacon. “Hey, you two! Are you ready for the best birthday bash of the year?”

“More like the most chaotic!” Emily teased, and Anna laughed, her eyes sparkling with excitement.

As we exchanged stories and laughter, I tried to push away the unsettling feeling that had lingered since my nightmares ceased. My gaze drifted around the café, catching glimpses of shadows shifting in the corners, and for a moment, I thought I saw a familiar figure lurking just outside. My heart raced, but I quickly blinked the image away.

“Amelia?” Anna’s voice pulled me back. “Are you even listening? ”

“Sorry, I just... zoned out for a second,” I admitted, forcing a smile.

Emily shot me a knowing glance, but thankfully didn't press further. We talked about lighter things—the menu, Anna's birthday plans, and the absurdity of life.

Later, as we left the café and stepped into the cool evening air, I took a deep breath, hoping the laughter would chase away the doubts creeping back in. But as we walked toward Anna's house, I couldn't shake the feeling of being watched. The hairs on the back of my neck prickled, and I found myself glancing over my shoulder, half-expecting to see Damien lurking behind a tree or a lamppost.

"Everything okay?" Emily asked, her voice laced with concern.

"Yeah, I'm fine," I said quickly, forcing my heart rate to steady. "Just a little paranoid, I guess."

"Let's just focus on having a good time tonight. No more nightmares, right? Just birthday cake and fun," Emily encouraged, trying to lift my spirits .

I nodded, grateful for her unwavering support. As we approached the house, I allowed myself to get swept up in the festivities, letting laughter and music fill the void of uncertainty.

As the music pulsed through Anna's apartment, the air was filled with laughter and the tantalizing aroma of cake. It felt like the perfect escape. I was chatting with Emily when I spotted Jake across the room. He looked handsome as ever, with that charming smile that always made my heart flutter.

"Hey, Amelia!" he called out, making his way toward me, his eyes sparkling with warmth. "You made it! How've you been?"

"I've been good," I replied, trying to keep my tone light. "Just taking things one day at a time."

He held out a drink, a vibrant cocktail that glimmered under the soft lighting. “Here, thought you might need this to celebrate. It’s Anna’s special recipe.”

I accepted the drink, the cool glass sending a pleasant shiver up my arm. “Thanks! I could definitely use something festive. ”

As I took a sip, I felt the tension in my shoulders start to melt away. The flavors were a delightful blend of sweet and tangy, and I couldn’t help but smile at Jake. “You always know how to pick the best drinks.”

He chuckled, his eyes narrowing slightly as he leaned in. “It’s all about the right ingredients. Just like life, right?”

Before I could respond, he extended his hand toward me. “Want to dance?”

My heart raced at the invitation. I hesitated for just a moment, glancing around the room. But the music was upbeat and lively, and the energy was infectious. I placed my hand in his, and he led me to the dance floor where a few other guests were already swaying to the rhythm.

As we moved to the music, I lost myself in the moment. Jake’s movements were fluid and confident, and I found myself mirroring his rhythm, laughing as we twirled and spun. He was easy to be around, and the carefree atmosphere made it easy to forget the worries that had been weighing on me .

With each passing second, my laughter grew, and I felt lighter than I had in weeks. Jake leaned closer, his breath warm against my ear as he shouted over the music, “See? This is what life’s all about!”

“Yeah! You’re right!” I shouted back, feeling the beat of the music reverberate in my chest.



Our bodies moved together effortlessly, and I couldn't help but admire how his gaze held a hint of admiration. For a moment, it felt like we were the only two people in the room, lost in our own world. As I spun under his arm, I caught sight of Emily smiling from the sidelines, giving me an enthusiastic thumbs-up.

Jake's hands settled on my waist, and I felt a rush of warmth spread through me as we swayed together. "I'm really glad you're here tonight,"

His words wrapped around me like a comforting embrace, and I couldn't help but feel a spark of something more between us. Just then, the music shifted to a slower melody, and Jake leaned in closer, his forehead almost touching mine .

"May I?" he asked, gently brushing a strand of hair behind my ear.

"Of course," I whispered, my breath hitching slightly.

As he pulled me closer, I felt a thrill run through me. The worries of the past week, the haunting memories, all faded into the background as I lost myself in this moment with him. I felt safe , cherished even, and for the first time in a while, I allowed myself to let go.

Jake's arms tightened around me as we moved slowly, the world around us becoming a blur. In that moment, I felt a wave of joy wash over me, filling the void that had been left by my nightmares. I laughed softly, resting my head against his shoulder as he hummed along with the music.

Just as the atmosphere felt perfect, a fleeting thought crossed my mind— was this too good to be true ? But as Jake's warmth enveloped me, I pushed the thought aside, savoring the happiness that pulsed between us.

Jake gently guided me to a plush couch nestled in the corner of Anna's living room,

the ambient light casting a warm glow around us. I sank into the cushions, feeling relaxed and content, the music a distant hum in the background. Jake settled beside me, close enough that I could feel the heat radiating from his body.

“You know,” he began, his voice soft and sincere, “I’ve really missed having you around. It’s been too long since we’ve had a chance to catch up like this.”

I smiled, tucking a loose strand of hair behind my ear. “Yeah, it has. I’ve missed our talks. You always know how to make me feel better.”

He turned toward me, his gaze intent and searching. “You deserve to feel good, Amelia. You should have moments like this—moments where you can just be happy.”

His words wrapped around me like a warm blanket, and I felt my heart swell. “Thank you, Jake. It means a lot to hear you say that.”

He shifted slightly closer, his arm brushing against mine. “You’re stronger than you think. I admire that about you.”

A blush crept onto my cheeks, and I lowered my gaze, feeling a mix of shyness and warmth from his compliment. “I’m just trying to get through it all, you know?”

Jake nodded, his expression softening. “I understand. Just remember, you’re not alone. You have me.”

I looked up at him, our eyes locking, and the air between us crackled with unspoken tension. I could see the sincerity in his gaze, a kindness that made me feel safe. In that moment, it was as if the noise of the party faded away, leaving just the two of us in our own little world.

“Amelia...” he murmured, leaning in closer. My breath caught in my throat as his intent became clear. He hesitated for just a moment, searching my eyes for permission.

“Jake...” I breathed, my heart racing as the space between us shrank.

And then he kissed me—soft and tentative at first, testing the waters. The moment his lips met mine, warmth flooded through me. I kissed him back, my heart pounding as his hand cupped my cheek, deepening the kiss. It felt like coming home, like finding something I didn’t even know I was missing.

I leaned into him, craving more of this connection. Jake pulled away slightly, his forehead resting against mine as we both caught our breath.

“Wow,” he said, a smile tugging at his lips. “I’ve wanted to do that for a long time.”

“Really?” I asked, a mixture of surprise and elation coursing through me.

“Yeah,” he admitted, his voice low. “I didn’t want to rush anything, but I couldn’t help it anymore.”

My heart soared at his honesty. “I’m glad you did.”

He grinned, the corners of his eyes crinkling with genuine happiness. “Me too.”

Just as I began to revel in the moment, the party around us came roaring back to life. Laughter echoed, and I could hear Anna calling out for more music. The atmosphere felt electric, but here on the couch, with Jake beside me, it was like we existed in our own little bubble.

Suddenly, I felt a gentle tug on my arm, and before I knew it, Emily was dragging me

away from Jake, her eyes sparkling with excitement. “Come on, Amelia! We need your help in the kitchen!”

“What? The kitchen?” I stammered, looking back at Jake, who wore a bemused expression.

“Just for a minute!” Emily insisted, practically bouncing on her feet. “We’re trying to figure out the cake situation, and I could really use your skills.”

I glanced at Jake, who smiled knowingly, and I couldn’t help but feel a mixture of annoyance and amusement at being pulled away so suddenly. “Alright, alright,” I relented, letting Emily lead me away.

Once we were in the bustling kitchen, the aroma of baked goods and party snacks enveloped us. Anna was rummaging through cabinets, while a couple of other friends were icing cupcakes and preparing drinks.

“Oh my God, did you see the way he looked at you?” Emily exclaimed as soon as we stepped away from the main party area. Her excitement was palpable, and I couldn’t help but smile.

“I mean, it was just a kiss,” I replied, trying to play it cool despite the flutter of excitement in my stomach. “We were just having a moment.”

“Just a moment?” she scoffed, her eyes wide. “You two were practically glowing! You need to tell me everything!”

I rolled my eyes playfully but couldn’t suppress the grin spreading across my face. “It was nice, okay? We’re just... figuring things out.”

“Figuring things out?” Emily echoed, her voice rising in disbelief. “You kissed him,

Amelia! That's a big deal. Are you actually going to date him?"

"Maybe," I said, feeling a rush of vulnerability at the prospect. I had been so focused on my past and the shadows lingering around me that it felt surreal to entertain the idea of moving forward with someone like Jake.

Emily clasped her hands together, her excitement only growing. "You deserve this! You deserve to be happy after everything you've been through. Plus, Jake's a great guy. He's sweet, he cares about you, and he's not a creep!"

I laughed, appreciating her enthusiasm. "You make it sound like I'm looking for a prince or something."

"Maybe you are!" she shot back, her grin infectious. "And honestly, I think you've found one. I mean, just look at you two! The chemistry is off the charts!"

Just as I was about to respond, someone burst into the kitchen, a look of urgency on their face. "Amelia! There's a delivery guy outside with a package for you!"

"What?" I exchanged a puzzled glance with Emily. "I'm not expecting anything. "

"Come on, let's check it out," Emily said, grabbing my arm and leading me toward the door. We pushed our way through the lively partygoers and stepped outside into the cool evening air.

The delivery guy stood by the entrance, holding a medium-sized box, a curious expression on his face. "Amelia Harper?"

"That's me," I said, my curiosity piqued as I took the package from him.

He nodded, handing it over with a smile. "Sign here, please."

I scribbled my name, and as he handed back the clipboard, I couldn't shake the feeling of anticipation. What could it be? I turned back to Emily, who was peering at the box with intrigue.

We walked back inside, maneuvering through the crowd until we found an empty room—one that had been left undisturbed amidst the party chaos.

Once we were inside, I set the box down on a small table. "Okay, let's open it!"

With a surge of excitement mixed with anxiety, I carefully sliced through the packing tape and peeled away the flaps of the box. Inside, nestled amongst layers of bubble wrap, was a small black box tied with a delicate ribbon. My heart raced as I lifted it out, feeling the coolness of the box against my palms.

"What's in there?" Emily leaned closer, her curiosity evident.

"I'm not sure. Let's find out." I hesitated, glancing at the ribbon. I untied the bow, the soft sound of the ribbon loosening felt deafening in the quiet moment. As I opened the lid, a sense of foreboding settled over me.

Inside the box lay a large, dried moth, its wings outstretched like a macabre piece of art. The delicate patterns on its wings were hauntingly beautiful, but it felt wrong—too wrong. I gasped and stumbled back, the box slipping from my fingers and falling to the floor with a soft thud.

"Amelia?" Emily's voice broke through my shock, my heart pounding in my chest.

Terror gripped me as a flood of memories surged to the forefront of my mind—dark, suffocating memories. I was back in that wretched cage, surrounded by the fluttering of wings, their eerie dance haunting my every waking moment. The smell of dampness and decay filled my nostrils, and I could hear the faint whispering of the

moths as they circled around me, taunting me.

“No, no, no!” I whispered, shaking my head as if I could will the memories away. But they crashed over me like waves, pulling me under, drowning me in the darkness of my past.

I remembered the cold metal bars, the way they felt against my skin, a painful reminder of my captivity. I was a child then, caged and vulnerable, with moths trapped in the same enclosure. I could hear their wings brushing against the bars, their soft, fluttering cries echoing in my ears. It was a never-ending nightmare, and I was their prisoner.

Suddenly, the laughter and chatter of the party faded into a distant hum, replaced by the cacophony of my memories. The weight of the past crushed me, and I stumbled to the floor, taking my head between my hands. I felt the world spinning, dark shadows closing in on me as I fought against the tidal wave of panic threatening to pull me under .

“Amelia!” Emily’s voice broke through the fog, but it felt far away, like she was calling from the other side of a vast chasm. “Amelia, look at me! You’re okay. You’re safe.”

I squeezed my eyes shut, trying to block out the images flashing through my mind—the flickering lights of moth wings, the suffocating darkness, the feeling of being trapped. I took a deep breath, but it felt too heavy, too thick, suffocating me further.

“Amelia, please!” Emily urged, her tone firm yet gentle. I felt a presence beside me as she knelt down, her hand resting on my shoulder. “Focus on my voice. You’re in a party, surrounded by friends. You’re not there anymore. You’re here with me.”

From my position on the floor, I heard a rustling sound.

“Oh my God,” she whispered. “Amelia, I didn’t know it was... this .”

I took a shuddering breath, but the panic still swirled inside me. “I can’t... I can’t breathe,” I gasped, my heart racing, my chest tightening .

“Then let’s breathe together,” Emily said, guiding me to take deep, measured breaths. “In through your nose, out through your mouth. Focus on me. Let the past go, just for now.”

I struggled to focus on her words, but the fear clawed at me. “It was him , Emily. I’m sure of it. He found me again.” The memory of his face flickered in my mind, unsettling and vivid.

Emily’s expression shifted, a mix of concern and resolve settling in. “Amelia, I know this is terrifying, but you have to remember that since Ben left jail, he traveled to another state. He hasn’t returned; we’ll look into it.”

“But what if he did come back?” I pressed, my voice shaking. “What if he’s just waiting for the right moment?”

“Listen,” Emily said firmly, holding my gaze. “We’re going to report this to the police. They’ll investigate and see if he’s the one who sent it. But you have to stay calm for now.”

I took a deep breath, willing myself to steady my racing heart. “I can’t let him control me again. I can’t go back to that place. ”

“You won’t,” she assured me, her grip tightening as if to anchor me to reality. “We’ll make sure he can’t get to you.”



The weight of her words settled in the air, both comforting and daunting. “But what if he knows? What if he’s watching me right now?” The thought sent a chill down my spine, tightening the grip of dread around my heart.

“He’s not a ghost, Amelia. He can’t just appear whenever he wants. We’ll take this one step at a time. We’ll figure out how to protect you, and I promise you’re not alone in this.”

I nodded slowly, her reassurance giving me a moment of clarity amid the chaos in my mind. “Okay,” I said, my voice a little steadier. “Let’s report it. I don’t want to feel like a victim anymore.”

Emily nodded, determination etching her features. “That’s the spirit. We’ll tackle this together.”

I glanced at the box with the dried moth, my heart heavy with memories I couldn’t shake. It was a reminder of my dark past, and I refused to let it define me any longer .

“Let’s get back to the party,” I said, forcing a smile through the haze of anxiety. “I want to enjoy this night with my friends.”

Emily smiled back, a spark of pride in her eyes as she took my hand. “That’s what I like to hear. You deserve to celebrate, Amelia.”

As we walked back toward the laughter and warmth of the party, I could feel the embers of fear still flickering, but I was determined not to let them extinguish my spirit. I had people who cared about me, and I was ready to embrace the moment, to fight against the shadows of my past.

## Page 11

*Source Creation Date: August 7, 2025, 3:15 am*

Amelia

The night was heavy with silence, each creak of the floorboards echoing in the stillness of my house. I'd spent the day in a daze, a whirlwind of emotions swirling in my chest. After I'd gathered enough courage to report the incident to the police, I returned home, feeling a mixture of relief and anxiety. Emily had offered to stay with me, but I insisted I was fine, brushing off her concern. I didn't want to make a big deal out of this. Even though I knew deep down it was a monumental deal.

The clock on the wall ticked steadily, a reminder of time moving forward, while I felt stuck in a loop of fear and flashbacks.

I wrapped my arms around myself, feeling the chill of the evening seep into my bones. Every noise outside made my heart race. I moved to the living room and switched on the lights, the bright glow momentarily pushing back the darkness, yet it did little to alleviate my unease.

With shaky hands, I poured myself a glass of water, the cool liquid refreshing against my dry throat. I needed to calm down, to remind myself that I was safe here. I took a sip, focusing on the taste, grounding myself in the present. But no matter how much I tried to convince myself, the remnants of panic lingered.

My phone buzzed on the counter, startling me. I picked it up to find a text from Emily: Just checking in. Are you okay?

I quickly typed back: I'm fine. Just trying to unwind. Thanks for being here today.

The three dots appeared, indicating she was typing a response. I set the phone down, pacing the room, glancing out the window as if expecting someone to emerge from the shadows. When my phone chimed again, I picked it up.

Emily: I'm coming over. I can't just leave you alone like this .

I sighed, feeling a mix of annoyance and gratitude. Part of me wanted to insist she stay away, to give me space to deal with my thoughts. But another part of me craved her company, knowing it might provide some comfort against the ghosts that haunted me. I told her not to come.

Before Emily could respond, my phone buzzed again, this time with an incoming call. I glanced at the screen and felt a rush of relief mixed with anxiety—it was David, my older brother.

I answered, “Hey, David.”

“Amelia!” he exclaimed, his voice tense with worry. “I just saw the police report. Why didn't you tell me about this?”

I winced, guilt washing over me. “I didn't want to bother you with it. I thought I could handle it myself.”

“Handle it?” He sounded incredulous. “You're talking about a threat to your safety! This is serious. You can't just brush it off. ”

I could hear the concern in his tone, and it made my heart ache. “I know, I know. But I didn't want to make a big deal out of it. I thought it was just a stupid prank.”

“Stupid prank?” He huffed, his voice rising in frustration. “You think a dead moth in a box is a prank? Someone clearly has it out for you. I sent a police officer to survey

your house for the night, just until we can get in contact with Ben.”

The name sent a jolt of ice through my veins, the darkness of my past creeping closer.

“David, you don’t need to do that. I’ll be fine—”

“Stop,” he interrupted firmly. “I’m not going to let you downplay this. You need to take this seriously. Just stay inside, and keep the doors locked.”

“Okay,” I said softly, the weight of his concern wrapping around me like a protective blanket. “Thank you. I just... I thought I could deal with it on my own.”

“I get that, but you don’t have to,” he said gently. “You’re not alone in this. I’m here, and I’ll always be here. ”

After I hung up with David, the house felt eerily quiet , the stillness amplifying the thumping of my heart. I tried to focus on the living room, grounding myself in the familiar surroundings, but the shadows seemed to stretch and curl like fingers, reaching for me.

I lit a few candles, their flickering flames casting dancing shadows on the walls. I settled onto the couch, wrapped in a thick blanket, but despite my efforts to distract myself, my mind drifted back to that box and what it contained.

I pulled out my phone, scrolling aimlessly through social media, hoping for a distraction, but the images blurred together, each one reminding me of the life I wanted to escape. I wanted to believe that everything was going to be alright, that I was safe now, but the gnawing feeling in my gut told me otherwise. The memories of my past were too fresh, too vivid , and the threat of Ben loomed over me like a dark cloud.

I glanced at the time; it was past midnight. I tried to keep my eyes open, sipping from

a mug of tea, but I was exhausted. Each time I closed my eyes, I was met with images of moths fluttering against cold metal bars, the suffocating darkness surrounding me. I fought against sleep, knowing that I couldn't afford to let my guard down, but it was a losing battle. The weight of the day settled heavily on me, and the moment I succumbed to sleep, I was pulled into a world where nightmares awaited.

?????????

I opened my eyes to a suffocating darkness, the dim light barely illuminating the contours of the room around me. A heavy silence settled in, the kind that envelops you and makes you acutely aware of your own breath. As I blinked to clear the haze from my vision, panic clawed at my throat.

I was in an empty room, the walls painted a cold gray, and the air felt stale, almost as if it had been trapped here for years. I stood up and tried to move, but a sudden jolt of fear coursed through me as I realized my wrists were taped behind a sturdy pole that reached high to the ceiling, rendering me immobile. The rough adhesive dug into my skin, and I tugged instinctively, but it only tightened its grip .

The dim light flickered above me, casting erratic shadows that danced across the walls, and the cold metal of the pole sent a shiver down my spine. My heart raced, pounding against my ribs like a caged animal desperate to escape. I took a shaky breath, fighting against the rising tide of fear that threatened to drown me.

As my eyes adjusted to the light, the details of the room began to sharpen. The floor was bare concrete, cold beneath my feet, and the only furniture was a solitary chair pushed against the far wall.

The heavy door creaked open, and my heart stopped. The dim light behind it silhouetted a figure, a shadowy outline that slowly stepped into the room. My breath caught in my throat as the figure came closer, revealing a familiar face that sent chills

down my spine.

Damien .

He walked in with a terrifying calm, the kind of stillness that promised destruction. A large box dangled in his hands, incongruously mundane in the suffocating tension of the room. His black hair fell messily over his forehead, and those piercing whiskey eyes burned with a manic energy that turned my blood cold. The door clicked shut behind him, the sound reverberating like the final nail in my coffin.

He set the box down with a deliberate thud, his movements slow, calculated, predatory. “Look what I brought you,” he said, his voice dripping with a mockery that made my stomach twist.

I pressed myself against the pole behind me, its cold, unyielding surface a cruel reminder of my helplessness. “What do you want?” My voice cracked, betraying me as fear clawed its way up my throat.

His grin was sharp, wolfish, the kind of smile that only promised pain. “What do I want?” he echoed, his tone a mockery of my own. He took a slow step closer, his presence swallowing the air between us. “No, Millie. The question is, what the fuck were you thinking?”

“What are you talking about?” I whispered, my pulse thundering in my ears .

He tilted his head, studying me. “You’ve been bad, Millie. Real fucking bad .” His voice darkened, low and dangerous. “And you know what happens to bad girls, don’t you?”

He moved closer, his breath ghosting over my skin as I turned my face away, my chest heaving with shallow, panicked breaths.

“I don’t want anything from you,” I said, my voice trembling. It was a weak lie, and we both knew it.

“Oh, Millie.” He chuckled darkly, the sound more menacing than any scream. “You think this is about what you want? No. This is about what you owe me.”

His thumb brushed over my lips, rough and unrelenting, the contact sharp enough to make me flinch. His touch wasn’t just invasive—it was branding , staking a claim. “These lips,” he murmured, his voice low and venomous. “They’re tainted now. Dirty .”

I jerked my head back, my mind reeling at his words. “Tainted? What are you talking about? ”

His eyes darkened, gleaming with an unholy mix of rage and deranged amusement. “That kiss ,” he spat, the word dripping with venom. “With him .” His voice turned icy, every syllable laced with fury. “You think I wouldn’t find out? You think I’d let that shit slide ?”

Realization slammed into me like a physical blow. My lips parted in shock, my mind racing to connect the dots. Jake .

“You’re here because of that?” I stammered, my voice rising in disbelief. “Because I—”

“Because you betrayed me,” he snapped, his voice a low snarl that filled the room. He leaned in, his breath scorching against my ear. “You thought you could kiss him and erase me? That you could share something so fucking intimate with someone else?” His tone twisted, his words sharp enough to draw blood. “You belong to me .”

“I don’t belong to you!” I spat, the words ripping from my throat before I could stop

them .

The room fell into a suffocating silence, his grin fading into something darker, deadlier . His head tilted, his eyes narrowing as he studied me like I'd just thrown down a challenge.

“Oh, Millie,” he whispered, his voice soft but filled with quiet menace. “You really shouldn’t have said that.”

The air seemed heavier, suffocating. His words wrapped around me like a vice, and I felt the room shrinking with every syllable. “You’re a monster ,” I choked out, the words scraping against my throat.

His smirk widened into something grotesque, something wicked. “Maybe,” he mused, his tone light, mocking. “But I’m your monster. And that’s the part you don’t seem to get.” He glanced around the dim room, his eyes flicking over the walls as if planning his next move. “You think you want to escape me? To run back to your safe, boring little life? Nah.” He leaned forward, his voice lowering to a conspiratorial whisper. “Deep down, you fucking need me. The thrill. The danger. Admit it—you crave it like a drug. ”

“No!” I spat, panic flaring in my chest. “I want out of this madness! I want nothing to do with you!” My voice cracked, but the defiance burned like acid on my tongue.

“ Liarr ,” Damien hissed, his voice slicing through the room. “You can say whatever you want, but I see you, Millie. Every twitch, every shiver. You feel me in your blood, the way I feel you in mine .” His words were both intimate and venomous, a chilling combination that left me paralyzed. “Face it, sweetheart. You and I? We’re tied together in ways you’re too scared to fucking understand.”

I flinched as he reached out, his hand snapping forward like a viper, his fingers



gripping my cheeks. His touch was soft, his palm hot against my skin, a violent contrast to the cold dread pooling in my stomach.

“Look at me,” he growled, his voice low and commanding.

Before I could react, he lunged forward, his lips crashing against mine in a brutal, possessive kiss. It wasn't affection—it was a fucking conquest . His mouth was demanding, overwhelming in a way that left no room for escape. The air was thick with his scent, his heat, his raw, unrelenting presence .

A low hum of satisfaction rumbled from his throat, vibrating through me like a sinister melody.

And then, as suddenly as it began, it ended. He pulled away, leaving me breathless, my mind spinning, my lips tingling with the phantom burn of his kiss. I stumbled back, the cold steel pole digging into my spine, grounding me in the suffocating reality of the moment.

Damien stepped away, his movements unhurried, his unsettling smirk firmly in place. He strolled to the chair, his fingers brushing over the large box he'd carried in like it was a prize. “Now,” he said, his tone casual, almost amused. “Let's see what surprises I've got for you. ”

As Damien pried the lid off the box, the room seemed to inhale, the quiet thick with anticipation. Then, chaos erupted. A violent storm of wings burst forth, a living nightmare spilling into the air. The sound hit me first—a deafening, frenzied buzz that clawed at my ears and drowned out my breath.

Moths . Massive, grotesque creatures, their bloated bodies dark and alien, their erratic flight painting wild shadows on the concrete walls. They filled the room, diving and swirling with manic purpose, their wings beating the air into a suffocating frenzy.

“No, no, no!” I gasped, instinctively pressing myself against the pole, desperately trying to escape the onslaught of flapping bodies. The sound was deafening, a relentless buzzing that drowned out all rational thought. I could feel the air thickening around me as the moths circled, their movement chaotic yet purposeful, as if they were drawn to me.

Damien stood there, reveling in the spectacle. “Beautiful, aren’t they?” he said, his voice laced with a sickening delight. The moths danced in the dim light, casting eerie shadows on the concrete walls. I could feel their presence, a swarm of dark memories flooding back, clawing at my mind .

The words twisted in my brain, but they barely registered over the onslaught. The fluttering wings blurred my vision, and I felt their heavy, furry bodies graze my skin, leaving behind invisible trails of revulsion. My stomach churned as a tidal wave of memories slammed into me—dim light, metal bars, the flutter of trapped wings as I sat huddled in the corner, terrified and broken .

“ No ,” I whispered, the word shaking loose from my throat as the walls of my mind began to crumble. “No! Get them away!” My voice cracked into a scream, raw and panicked, but Damien only leaned closer, his voice a knife slicing through the chaos.

“Feel that, Doctor?” His eyes glinted, wild and shining with sadistic glee. “That’s your past clawing its way back. All the things you’ve tried to forget, buried so deep you thought you were safe. But guess what, sweetheart? You’re not . You never fucking were.”

Tears spilled down my cheeks as I struggled to breathe, each gasp like dragging razor blades into my lungs. I shook my head, batting the moths away, but they came at me in waves, relentless and inescapable. “Stop it! Please !” I screamed, my voice shredded, my body trembling against the unyielding pole.

Damien stepped closer, close enough that I could feel his heat, his presence suffocating. The moths seemed to orbit him, drawn to the darkness that radiated from him like a vortex. “Don’t you see?” he hissed, his voice dipping into something low and venomous. “This is freedom . This is fucking truth . They’re here to remind you—of the cages, the shadows, the shit you keep locked away. And now? Now they’re free. Just like you should be.”

I sobbed, shaking my head violently, my hair sticking to the sweat on my face. “I don’t want to remember! I don’t want any of this!”

“But you don’t get a fucking choice!” Damien roared, his voice cutting through my cries like a whip. His face twisted into something feral, his grin gone, replaced by a seething intensity that made the air feel electric. “You think you can just bury the past? Pretend it didn’t happen? No, Millie. You’re gonna face it. You’re gonna feel it. Because you can’t run from who you are. ”

The moths seemed to respond to his words, their frenzied movements growing wilder, their dark bodies brushing against my arms, my face. Each touch sent a fresh wave of horror through me, until I was shaking, breaking, unraveling under the weight of it all.

“Damien,” I whimpered, my voice barely a whisper. “Please... you’re hurting me.”

He stepped back, tilting his head like he was studying a piece of art. His grin returned, slow and sinister, curling across his lips like smoke. “ Hurt you?” he said, his tone mockingly soft. “Millie, this isn’t hurt. You’ve gotta walk through the fucking dark to get to the light. And trust me—” he gestured to the swarm still circling like a living nightmare—“the dark isn’t going anywhere. So, stop running. ”

He reached out, his hand steady, deliberate. His fingers brushed my cheek, and I flinched at the contact, but the jolt that coursed through me was worse than fear. It

was something darker. Something I hated. Something I wanted .

“Let go of the past,” Damien said, his voice dripping with an unnatural calm, a sharp contrast to the manic energy crackling in the air around us. His thumb dragged over my skin, a slow, possessive caress. “Only then can you be free. You want to be free, don’t you, Millie?”

A shiver raced down my spine, and I cursed myself for the betrayal of my own body. “Yes,” I choked out, my voice weak, useless against the storm of his presence.

His lips hovered a breath away from mine, and I turned my head sharply, desperate to deny him. But Damien wasn’t a man who took no for an answer. His grip tightened, dragging my face back to meet his gaze.

“You’re so fucking beautiful when you’re afraid,” he hissed, his eyes narrowing as he studied. “But it’s not fear , is it? Not really. It’s that tiny little part of you—that dark part—that likes this. That likes me .”

I opened my mouth to protest, to scream, to do anything, but the words died on my tongue as his lips crashed into mine. The kiss was savage , consuming , a collision of pain and heat and suffocating need. It wasn’t a kiss; it was a war , and I was losing.

He pulled back just enough to speak, his lips still brushing mine. “ Feel that?” he growled, his voice hoarse and wild. “That’s the truth. That’s what it’s like when you stop pretending, Millie. That’s what freedom fucking tastes like.”

The moths swarmed closer, their wings brushing against my skin like whispers of ghosts, amplifying the electric chaos in the room. I was trapped between them and Damien, between terror and desire , between who I was and what he was trying to make me become.

The air crackled with tension, thick and suffocating, as his fingers skimmed down the column of my neck, tracing a line to my collarbone with deliberate, maddening precision. My body was a traitor, igniting under his touch, heat pooling low in my stomach in ways that I loathed—and craved.

“Amelia,” Damien breathed, his voice like a growl, raw and unhinged. His eyes burned into mine with an intensity that made my pulse stutter. “You feel it, don’t you? That little ember inside you. The one you’ve been choking out for years. Let it fucking burn.” He leaned in closer, the warmth of his breath brushing against my lips, and my heart thundered in response. “Let go of the past. Fuck your rules. Fuck your guilt. Feel.”

Before I could muster a response, he crushed his lips to mine, and the world shattered. The kiss wasn’t gentle or tender—it was a brutal claim, a storm that devoured me whole. His teeth grazed my lower lip, and I gasped, granting him entrance. The moment his tongue invaded, I felt like I was drowning in him—his taste, his scent, his heat. I fought at first, but he didn’t budge. His hands found my waist, gripping with bruising force, pulling me flush against him.

My knees buckled, my breaths came short, and an unbearable warmth spread through me as his hands roamed. One hand slipped under the hem of my cami, his palm rough against my skin as it trailed upward, deliberate and torturous. My mind raced with every reason this was wrong, but my body melted under the searing intensity of his touch.

My breaths came in sharp, shallow gasps as his hand moved higher, cupping my breast through the thin fabric of my bra. His thumb rolled over my nipple, and I bit my lip to keep from crying out. The conflict inside me was unbearable—fear, shame, and something darkly thrilling that I couldn’t shake.

“Feel that?” he murmured, his lips brushing against my neck as he spoke. “That’s

your body telling the truth. Not that sanctimonious little head of yours. Your body knows exactly what it wants.”

Before I could answer, his lips crushed mine again, harder this time, all-consuming. I gasped into his mouth as his hand slid lower, slipping beneath the waistband of my shorts. Every nerve in my body lit up as his fingers found my most vulnerable place, stroking with an unrelenting rhythm that left me gasping.

His fingers worked with agonizing precision, and my breath hitched, my knees threatening to give out entirely. “That’s it, baby,” he purred, his voice low and sinful. “Let go. Stop fighting what you want. Stop pretending you’re not just like me.”

I hated him. I hated him for what he was making me feel. But more than that, I hated myself—for the way my body betrayed me, for the way I clung to him as the world spun out of control.

The darkness he promised wasn’t just his. It was mine too. And it was swallowing me whole.

The world blurred into nothing but Damien —his touch, his voice, his madness consuming every corner of my mind. His lips left mine, leaving a trail of heat that burned down to the pit of my stomach. His whiskey eyes locked onto mine, alight with something feral. The kind of intensity that didn’t just look at you—it stripped you, flaying every wall, every defense, until all that remained was raw, trembling vulnerability.

“I want you to feel everything ,” he growled, his voice low and fractured, like a storm barely contained. “Every. Fucking. Moment.” His lips curled into a dark grin, one that promised ruin. “Let go of those chains, Millie. Let me show you how much sweeter it is to fall.”

Before I could even breathe , his hand slid lower, fingers parting me with cruel precision. The first thrust of his finger into me tore a gasp from my lips, my back arching violently against him. He watched me, his head tilting slightly, like he was studying the exact moment I broke.

“ Fuck ,” he rasped, his voice dripping with lust. “You’re so fucking tight . Makes me wonder...” He leaned in, his breath hot against my ear. “Think this little pussy can take my cock? Or will you fucking shatter under me?”

My mouth opened, but no sound came out, just ragged breaths as his finger slid deeper, curling in ways that unraveled me. My body betrayed me, hips bucking against his hand, even as my mind screamed for control. Another finger joined the first, and I let out a moan I couldn’t stifle .

“There it is,” Damien hissed, his lips curling back in a wicked grin. “That sound . That’s the truth, Millie. That’s you surrendering, whether you want to admit it or not.” His free hand moved to my throat, fingers curling around it in a grip that wasn’t quite tight enough to cut off air, but enough to claim me, to remind me that I wasn’t in control.

His gaze bore into mine, and for a moment, the world narrowed to nothing but those eyes —wild and consuming, their depths promising both destruction and salvation. His palm began slapping against my clit with every thrust, the sharp sting mixing with the unbearable heat pooling in my core. Each movement was precise, relentless, a calculated assault designed to unravel me piece by piece.

“You feel that?” he growled, his lips brushing against mine as he spoke. “That’s me, fucking the truth into you. You’ve been running from this—running from me —but it ends here, Millie. You can’t fucking escape it anymore.”

“ P-please ,” I managed to gasp, the word barely audible over the pounding in my

chest. His grip on my throat tightened slightly, cutting off any follow-up plea. His expression darkened, a glint of twisted satisfaction sparking in his eyes .

“Please?” he echoed mockingly, his voice dripping with condescension. “That’s all you’ve got? Fucking pathetic . If you want something, you beg for it.”

I bit my lip, my pride warring with the molten desire he’d stoked to unbearable heights. My body trembled, caught between resistance and surrender, but his hand slowed, torturously dragging out every movement until it was maddening.

“ Say it,” Damien demanded, his voice a dangerous growl. “Fucking say it, Amelia, or I’ll stop right now and leave you drowning in this need.”

“Please!” I cried out, my voice breaking. “Please, Damien. Make me—make me come .”

His grin widened, and the low, satisfied groan he let out was animalistic, primal . “That’s my fucking girl,” he hissed. His fingers plunged deeper, harder, and a third joined the others, stretching me in a way that made me see stars. “Now give it to me. Come for me, Millie. Make a goddamn mess all over my hand. ”

The fire inside me exploded, a violent, uncontrollable release that tore a scream from my throat. My back arched, my vision blurred, and all I could hear was his voice, low and commanding, grounding me in the chaos.

“That’s it, baby,” Damien growled, his breath hot against my ear as I shuddered against him. “You’re mine now. Every fucking piece of you.”

As the last waves of pleasure coursed through me, I collapsed against him, trembling, knowing he’d just claimed a part of me I’d never get back.



Damien

I leaned back in the chair, smirking as Amelia's steady, professional voice droned on about boundaries, self-control, and all the other bullshit she clearly thought I gave a damn about. She sat there, so fucking composed, her honey eyes locked on me like I was some goddamn puzzle she thought she could solve . It was almost funny.

That professionalism, those carefully measured words, the calm mask she wore so damn tightly—it was all so fucking fake . I could see it, though. One crack, one shift in her expression, and I knew. I knew . She wasn't as composed as she wanted me to believe. She was unraveling, whether she admitted it or not. And I? I was the one pulling the strings, savoring every second of it .

“Are you even listening, Damien?” Her voice snapped through my thoughts, sharp and insistent. She cocked an eyebrow, her composure wavering just enough to amuse me.

I let the silence drag, let her stew in it, watching the way her fingers tightened around her pen. When I finally spoke, my voice was a blade wrapped in silk. “Oh, I'm listening, doctor,” I murmured, the corners of my mouth curling into a slow, deliberate smile. “Every. Single. Word.”

She didn't believe me—of course she didn't—but that flicker of doubt in her eyes? That was mine . A fragile little thread I could pull until the whole goddamn thing unraveled. I leaned forward, closing the space between us just enough to make her feel it, to force her to notice how close I was.

Her composure cracked further as she broke my gaze, her eyes dropping to the safety of her notes. “Good,” she managed, her voice steady, though not nearly as strong as she wanted it to be. “Because I think it’s important we explore these issues more deeply.”

Oh, the cracks were spreading. I could hear the tremor hiding in her tone, taste the tension lacing every word. The brilliant, controlled Dr. Harper wasn’t quite as bulletproof as she thought.

I almost fucking laughed— God , it was right there, crawling up my throat—but I swallowed it down, keeping my face a blank slate of calm. “Oh, I agree, Millie,” I said, my voice a low, taunting drawl. “There’s so much for us to dig into. So much depth to uncover.”

Her body tensed, just a flicker, but I caught it. She shifted in her seat, her eyes narrowing as if she could sense the layers beneath my words but couldn’t quite grab hold of them. That was the best part—the goddamn game. I made the rules; she didn’t even know we were playing.

She had no fucking clue how much control I had, how every goddamn breath in this room belonged to me. I could tear down her defenses, piece by piece, and she wouldn’t realize it until she was fucking hollow. And it was already happening. I could see it in the cracks spiderwebbing across that polished, professional exterior, feel it in the taut silence stretching between us .

I studied her—every twitch, every involuntary movement, every goddamn thing she thought she was hiding. She was good at it, I’ll give her that. Better than most. But not better than me. I saw the slight quiver in her hand when she reached for her pen, the way her eyes darted away from mine like she didn’t want me to see what was simmering beneath the surface.

There was something primal in the way her body reacted, a small, almost imperceptible shudder when I dropped certain words. Words that were harmless to anyone else but sharp as a fucking knife in this room. Surrender . Freedom . I watched her choke on those words, saw the way her breath hitched for just a second too long.

“And surrender , Millie...” I leaned forward, my voice dropping to a low rumble. “That’s where it all begins, isn’t it? Letting go. Giving in. That’s what real freedom feels like.”

Her composure cracked, just a little. Just enough for me to see the storm brewing behind her eyes. And fuck , it was beautiful.

Her fingers curled around the notepad, so slight you’d miss it if you weren’t watching her like a hawk. But I was watching. Every twitch, every hesitation, every goddamn moment where she thought she had her shit together but didn’t. Her gaze faltered for a fraction of a second—just long enough for me to catch it before she tightened the leash on her composure.

She thought she was safe. That she could keep those lines between us neat, professional. That her memories were locked away, hers alone. But her body didn’t lie. Not to me. The tremor in her hand, the shift in her breathing, the way her lips pressed just a little too hard together whenever I leaned in close —all of it screamed the truth she was too scared to admit. I owned her now. Mind, body, every fucking piece of her, and she didn’t even know it yet.

She thought daylight and her sterile little office could protect her. That the space between us meant something. But I saw those tiny fucking fissures where I’d planted myself, deep and festering. Proof that she couldn’t escape me, no matter how many boundaries she scribbled into her little notepad.

It was funny how she still clung to this fragile delusion of control. She thought she was the one leading the session, the one holding the power in this room. It was fucking laughable. Everything about her—her anxiety, her sanity—was mine. I'd taken it, twisted it, and left her clutching at straws.

She cleared her throat, her voice calm but with that tiny edge of unease she couldn't hide from me. "Today," she said, her pen poised, her eyes meeting mine with forced steadiness, "we're going to explore your emotions. Or perhaps..." She hesitated, just a beat. "Your relationship with them. You seem to experience them differently than others, don't you?"

I let the silence stretch, leaning back and giving her my slow, crooked grin. "You have no idea,"

Her voice almost masked the shiver creeping through her words. Almost. But I fucking saw it. Felt it. Like a crack spidering through glass, the kind you can't stop no matter how hard you press to hold it together. Control? Fragile. A goddamn fantasy. She had none.

She glanced down at her notes, a safety net that didn't fucking exist, then forced her gaze back to me. Brave little Millie. "From our conversations," she started, her tone trying for steady, "you strike me as... obsessive. An intense fixation, almost like an attachment that doesn't quite resemble love, fear, or anger in the way most people understand them." She leaned in slightly, her eyes sharp but not sharp enough. "I'd like you to explain it to me, Damien. What is it that drives you?"

Oh, she wanted to know. That curiosity burning in her gaze, the way her words tried to cut through me. Fascinating. She thought she was fearless, thought she could dissect me like one of her tidy little case studies. But I knew better. Knew the shadows that clung to her, the ones she shoved into the darkest corners of her mind because she couldn't face them. Not yet.

I tilted my head, watching her. Silence stretched between us, thick and suffocating, and I reveled in the way her breathing hitched, just barely, but enough for me to catch it. Finally, I let my voice cut through, low and razor-sharp, laced with venom and something darker. “You think I experience emotions differently, Amelia?”

She nodded, slow and deliberate, her hand tightening around that goddamn notepad like it might save her.

“Maybe,” I said, leaning forward just enough to make her pulse quicken, “it’s not that I don’t feel emotions. Maybe I feel them too much. Obsession. Fixation. It’s not an absence, Millie. It’s a goddamn flood. A need so deep, so consuming, it drowns every other thing. Burns it away until there’s nothing left.”

Her hand twitched. A flicker of fear, or maybe curiosity, though I didn’t give a shit which. She was listening, caught in the web I’d spun around her, her breaths coming just a little too fast now.

“It’s fire,” I continued, my voice a low, dangerous murmur. “When I’m fixated on something... someone ... it’s all I see . All I want . There’s no boundary I wouldn’t cross, no line I wouldn’t obliterate. It’s consuming. Absolute.”

Her gaze faltered, just for a heartbeat, before she caught herself and leaned in, her pen poised. Goddamn relentless. “Can you give me an example of a time you experienced this obsession?” she asked, her voice steady but strung tight. “What was it like? How did you feel?”

A smirk twisted across my lips, sharp and wicked, as the game unfolded exactly the way I wanted. This was almost too fucking easy . “Oh, Millie,” I drawled, my voice low and venomous, letting my eyes drag over her, pinning her in place. “You’re the perfect example. ”

Her breath hitched, barely audible, but enough to light that fire in me. The faint flush coloring her cheeks? Goddamn addictive . “What do you mean?” she asked, her voice tight, brittle, as the first cracks spidered through her composure.

I leaned forward, just enough to invade her space, my voice dropping into a dark, intimate whisper. “The very first moment I saw you, I knew . It wasn’t a choice—it was a goddamn gravitational pull , dragging me straight into your orbit. You, with your quiet strength, your razor-sharp mind, your vulnerability you’re so desperate to hide. Every single piece of you is intoxicating .”

Her fingers tightened around that pathetic notepad again, her body betraying her more with every fidget. I smiled—feral, unrelenting—as I continued. “This isn’t about wanting you, Millie. It’s so much worse. It’s hunger . A goddamn need . Like an addiction I have no intention of kicking. Possessing you isn’t a goal—it’s a necessity . Every fear, every secret, every filthy little thought you bury in the dark corners of your mind—I need it. I need you .”

I leaned closer, my voice dropping to a menacing growl, watching her shift in her seat, trying and failing to break away from my gaze. “The thought of anyone else touching you? Breathing the same air as you? It makes me want to burn the whole fucking world to ash. I’ve seen the edge of sanity, sweetheart. I’ve danced on it. And I know exactly how far I’ll go to make sure you stay untouched. Unscarred.”

Her breathing stuttered, her lips parting slightly before she caught herself. That flicker of fear in her eyes? Fucking perfect . She fought to steady herself, her voice sharpening just enough to be impressive. “Damien,” she started, her tone a careful, calculated weapon, “this obsession you describe... it’s concerning. Can you help me understand where it comes from?”

I barked out a laugh, low and jagged, leaning back in my chair. “You think this is something you can dissect ? File away into one of your neat little categories?” My

smirk widened, feral and mocking. “You can try, but let me make something clear: My obsession with you, doctor, isn’t born from one single thing. It’s a symphony of chaos—my past, my scars, my need to own, to control, to consume .”

Her brow furrowed, that analytical mind of hers clawing for something solid to hold onto. She leaned forward slightly, pushing against the weight of my presence. “So, this fixation,” she pressed, her voice steady but her eyes betraying her unease, “it’s rooted in your experiences? A product of your history?”

“Smart girl,” I sneered, letting the words hang between us like a challenge. “You’re good at this, aren’t you? Piecing together the fragments, trying to make sense of the monster sitting in front of you. But don’t fool yourself, Millie. Don’t think for a second that you can comprehend the depths of me. My mind is darker, more twisted, than you’ll ever be ready to admit.”

Her breath caught again, but she pushed forward, her desperation to maintain control almost impressive. Almost. “Then help me,” she said, her voice sharp with a mix of professionalism and something raw. “Help me understand. What is it about me that drives you to this point? What exactly do you desire?”

I leaned in, so close I could hear her pulse racing, feel the fear she was barely holding back. My voice dropped into a dark, mocking whisper, dripping with venom. “What do I desire, Millie?” I let the words hang, watching the tension in her every move. “Simple. I want to peel you apart, piece by fucking piece. Expose everything you’re so desperate to hide. I want to rip away every last shred of control you think you have. To own your fears, your thoughts, your soul .”

She sucked in a sharp breath, the tension in the room climbing like a storm ready to break. Her knuckles tightened around the arms of her chair as she tried to cling to composure. “Control over me?” she echoed, her voice laced with a defiant edge as her gaze searched mine, hunting for weakness that didn’t fucking exist. “You realize

how unhealthy that is, don't you?"

I laughed—a low, guttural sound that filled the silence like smoke. “Unhealthy? Sweetheart, I don’t give a damn about healthy. Healthy is for people who are afraid to touch the fire. Me? I am the goddamn fire. I thrive in chaos, Millie. I was born in it, shaped by it. You think I care about fitting into your neat little box of acceptable behavior? No. I wield the darkness, and I love it.”

Her eyes narrowed, her defiance flashing like a flare in the dark. “And what happens,” she asked, her voice biting but shaky at the edges, “if I refuse to let you control me? If I push back against your... obsession? ”

I leaned forward, slow and deliberate, like a predator closing in. My voice dropped to a low, venomous whisper that curled around her like a noose. “You can push all you want, Amelia, but let me tell you something—it won’t change a goddamn thing. I always get what I want. Always. That’s not arrogance; it’s reality. I will tear down every wall you put up, brick by brick, until there’s nothing left. No resistance. No barriers. Just you and me. I’ll twist your reality so hard you’ll forget what normal ever felt like, until you understand that fighting me only makes it hurt more .”

Her body betrayed her, stiffening, but not before I caught it—that quickened breath, the way her pupils widened just enough to give her away. She was afraid. But she was something else, too. Excited , maybe. Drawn . She could fight it all she wanted; I knew the truth. “You talk about inevitability,” she said, her voice tight but wavering, “like it’s supposed to be comforting.”

I tilted my head, letting my smirk twist into something darker, more sinister. “Comfort? Comfort is a lie people tell themselves when they’re too weak to face reality. The world doesn’t run on comfort, Millie—it runs on power . And right now? I’ve got all of it. You can fight, you can scream, you can do whatever you want. But in the end, you’ll see. You’ll feel . And you’ll realize there’s no point in resisting.”



Her eyes hardened, flashing with that stubborn streak I loved breaking down. But beneath it, I saw the crack. The flicker of curiosity. Of something darker. She was drawn to this, to me , even if she hated herself for it. “And what are you offering, Damien?” she asked, her voice softening, slipping into something almost vulnerable. “What is it you think I need from you?”

I leaned back, letting the heavy silence stretch until it was suffocating, until every fucking second felt like a battle she was losing. When I spoke, my voice was sharp, deliberate, like a blade slicing through the air. “Freedom, Millie. Freedom from your past, from all that shit you’ve buried so deep it’s rotting you from the inside. I’ll break every chain that’s wrapped around you, one by one, until you have nothing left to cling to but me . And then, only then, you’ll understand how intoxicating it is to surrender. To let go. To be mine .”

The tension in the room turned electric, every breath, every glance, a goddamn war between us. She didn’t answer, but she didn’t have to. I could see it in her face—the conflict , the pull , the tiny part of her that wanted to step closer to the edge.

I’d drag her over it eventually. Willingly, or not.

Amelia

I sat in my office, the soft hum of the lights overhead providing a stark contrast to the tumultuous thoughts swirling in my mind. The familiar surroundings—my neatly organized desk, the framed degrees on the wall, and the inviting armchair in the corner—felt like a sanctuary, yet they could do little to quiet the storm within me.

Damien was long gone, but the weight of his presence lingered like a shadow. His words echoed in my thoughts, weaving in and out of my consciousness. I could almost feel the warmth of his breath against my ear, the way he had leaned in, whispering dark promises that sent chills down my spine. It was infuriating how his intense gaze could make me feel so exposed yet exhilarated at the same time.

As I attempted to focus on the stack of papers in front of me, my mind betrayed me, dragging me back to last night's vivid dream. It had started as a nightmare, the terrifying memories of my past flooding back in vivid clarity—the cold metal bars, the suffocating darkness, the fluttering of moths . But then, in a surreal twist, it morphed into something entirely different. I could still feel the electric thrill coursing through my body as I surrendered to the sensations he had stirred within me. The way his lips had claimed mine, the heat of his body against me, it all felt so real , so intoxicating .

I shook my head, trying to dispel the images of him, of that moment where fear had given way to an overwhelming rush of pleasure. How could I allow myself to feel anything other than terror in relation to him? He was dangerous , a man who thrived on obsession, yet I couldn't deny the pull he had on me. The line between dread and desire had blurred in a way that left me questioning my own sanity.

Leaning back in my chair, I closed my eyes, replaying every detail of our encounter in my mind. The way he had looked at me with that unsettling mixture of hunger and satisfaction. It was as if he had stripped away my defenses, leaving me raw and exposed. I knew I should be repulsed, should want to put distance between us, yet I found myself grappling with the unsettling truth: I was drawn to him, to the dark allure he represented.

I opened my eyes, my gaze drifting to the window where the sun spilled golden light into the room. It felt almost serene, a stark contrast to the chaos inside me. I needed to regain control, to remind myself of who I was and why I had chosen this path. I was a psychologist, dedicated to helping others navigate their traumas, not someone who succumbed to the very darkness I sought to understand.

But the memory of his words lingered, a siren call that beckoned me closer. I couldn't ignore what he had said—how his obsession consumed him, how he would go to unimaginable lengths to protect what he claimed as his. Was I just another conquest for him, or.. or what Amelia? I think I'm losing my mind.

I leaned forward, resting my elbows on the desk, my fingers tangled in my hair as I struggled to ground myself in reality. I needed to focus on my patients, to push thoughts of Damien aside. But as I glanced at the notes in front of me, the words danced mockingly on the page, reminding me of the emotional turmoil he had stirred.

As I stared at the page before me, my thoughts spiraled back to Damien, and I couldn't shake the nagging doubt that had taken root in my mind. Could I really help him? The very notion felt absurd. He was a man consumed by obsession, a darkness that clung to him like a second skin. And yet, in the midst of that chaos, I found myself inexplicably affected by him, ensnared by the tension that crackled between us.

It was as if the universe had conspired to create a perfect storm—his obsession with

me, my own unwitting attraction to him. It felt wrong, a betrayal of everything I stood for as a psychologist. I had spent years dedicated to understanding trauma, to guiding others through their pain, and yet here I was, grappling with the idea that I might be more drawn to his darkness than I cared to admit.

I pushed the papers aside, frustration bubbling to the surface. I had to find a way to separate my personal feelings from my professional responsibilities. But the more I tried to compartmentalize, the more those boundaries blurred. Damien was no ordinary patient; he was a walking enigma, and every encounter with him unraveled the carefully woven tapestry of my life.

In our sessions, I had seen glimpses of the vulnerability that lay beneath his surface, but those moments were fleeting, overshadowed by his possessive nature. He wasn't just seeking help—he was claiming me, entwining our fates in a way that felt predatory and thrilling all at once. How could I be the one to guide him through his torment when I was struggling with my own emotions?

The realization struck me like a cold wave: this wasn't going to work. I could try to maintain my composure, to wield my knowledge and expertise like a shield, but the truth was undeniable. Damien's obsession with me complicated everything. Each session left me questioning my own stability, my ability to remain impartial. How could I possibly help him confront his demons when I was barely holding onto my own?

A deep sigh escaped my lips as I leaned back in my chair, feeling the weight of my thoughts pressing down on me. I closed my eyes again, attempting to find clarity in the chaos, but all I could see were flashes of his intense gaze, the way he watched me as if I were the only thing that mattered in the world. The depth of his fixation terrified me, and yet a part of me was drawn to the power it seemed to hold.

Could I turn him away? Would I be able to stand firm in the face of his darkness and

insist that he seek help elsewhere? The thought made my heart race. What if that only fueled his obsession further? The very idea of pushing him away sent a shiver down my spine. He was dangerous, and I knew all too well the lengths he would go to protect what he believed was his.

But as I sat in my office, surrounded by reminders of my purpose, I had to remind myself of the reality I faced. This wasn't just about me or my discomfort. It was about a man who needed help—help I wasn't sure I was equipped to provide.

I pushed myself up from the chair and made my way to the door, my mind made up. I needed clarity, and there was only one person who could provide it—the one person I trusted to guide me through this tumultuous storm.

I grabbed my bag and stepped into the hallway, feeling the cool air wash over me as I walked toward the exit. Each step felt heavier than the last, a reminder of the emotional weight I carried. I couldn't ignore the unease that had settled deep within me, the way Damien's presence lingered like an echo in my mind. I had to confront it, to untangle the web of feelings he had spun around me.

The bustling streets of the city awaited me outside, but my destination was clear. Professor Sarah Mitchell had always been a steadying force in my life, a beacon of wisdom amidst the chaos. I could already imagine her thoughtful gaze, the way she would listen intently before offering her insights. She had seen me through the darkest moments of my journey, and I needed her guidance more than ever.

I arrived at the university campus, my heart racing as I made my way to her office. The familiar building stood tall and imposing, filled with memories of late-night study sessions and heated discussions about psychology and ethics. I climbed the stairs, each step echoing my growing resolve.

When I reached her office door, I hesitated for a moment, anxiety swirling in my

stomach. But I couldn't back down now. I knocked, the sound echoing in the quiet hallway. Moments later, I heard a soft voice call out, "Come in. "

I opened the door to find her seated at her desk, surrounded by books and papers, her brow furrowed in concentration. She looked up, her expression shifting from surprise to warmth as she gestured for me to enter.

"Amelia! It's good to see you!" Her voice was soothing, an anchor in the tumult of my emotions. "What brings you here?"

"Thank you for seeing me, Professor," I said, trying to steady my voice. "I really need your advice."

As I settled into the chair opposite her, I noticed the way her eyes lingered on my face. "You look tired," she said, her tone shifting to one of concern. "Have you been getting enough rest?"

I hesitated, the weight of my restless nights hanging heavily in the air. "I've been having a hard time since I started seeing one of my patients," I admitted. "His case is... complicated. It's like I can't turn off my mind, and the nightmares keep coming."

Sarah's expression shifted to one of understanding. "Nightmares can be a powerful reflection of our subconscious. What kind of dreams are you having? "

I took a deep breath, gathering my thoughts. "They started off as horrifying, filled with memories I'd rather forget. Flashbacks of my past that I thought I'd buried. But they've shifted into something else—there are moments of pleasure intertwined with the fear, and it's confusing . It feels like I'm trapped in a cycle."

Sarah nodded, her brow furrowing slightly. "That sounds distressing. Your

connection with him is triggering these memories.”

I nodded, the realization striking me harder than I anticipated. “There’s an intensity to our sessions that I didn’t expect. He’s obsessed with me, and... I can’t deny how affected I feel by him. It scares me.”

“Obsession can be a potent force,” Sarah said thoughtfully. “It can create a sense of safety and danger simultaneously. You need to navigate this carefully. How do you feel when you’re with him?”

“Part of me is fascinated by him,” I confessed, my voice barely above a whisper. “He challenges me, makes me question everything I know about myself. But there’s also a part of me that feels trapped, overwhelmed by his intensity. It’s like I’m walking a tightrope, and one misstep could send me tumbling into chaos.”

Sarah leaned forward, her expression serious. “Amelia, it’s essential to maintain your professional distance, even if you feel drawn to him. You need to protect yourself emotionally and psychologically. Allowing those feelings to blur the lines could lead to complications.”

“I know,” I said, rubbing my temples as frustration washed over me. “But how can I help him if I keep my distance? I want to support him, but his obsession with me complicates everything.”

“Helping someone doesn’t mean you have to sacrifice yourself,” Sarah reiterated gently. “You have to remember that you are not just a vessel for others’ healing. Your well-being is just as important, and right now, it sounds like the situation with him is too entangled for you to manage effectively.”

I swallowed hard, feeling the weight of her words settle over me. “Are you saying I should stop seeing him? ”

Sarah nodded slowly, her expression grave. “Yes. I know it’s difficult to accept, but I truly believe the best option in this case is to assign him to another psychologist. He needs someone who can help him without the complications of personal feelings clouding the process. This isn’t just about his healing; it’s about protecting yourself, too.”

My heart sank at the thought of letting him go, but deep down, I knew she was right. “I just don’t want to abandon him. I can’t shake the feeling that he genuinely needs help.”

“He does need help,” Sarah replied firmly. “But you have to ask yourself—can you provide that help without losing yourself in the process? You’re already struggling with the impact he has on you. This could jeopardize both your mental health and his progress.”

I let her words wash over me, the truth stinging but undeniably clear. “I’ve been so caught up in trying to save him that I’ve lost sight of what I need.”

“Exactly,” she said, her eyes filled with understanding. “As a psychologist, you must recognize when a situation exceeds your capacity to help. It takes strength to acknowledge that you can’t help everyone. Sometimes the best thing you can do is step back and allow someone else to take the lead.”

A sense of calmness began to settle in my chest, battling against the tumult of my emotions. “I know it’s the right thing to do,” I whispered, half in disbelief and half in relief. “But I’m scared of what that will mean for him. I don’t want him to feel abandoned.”

“Feelings of abandonment are hard, but they’re also part of the healing process,” Sarah assured me. “You’re not abandoning him; you’re recognizing your limits. He needs a fresh perspective, someone who can approach him without the emotional ties



you both share. It's a chance for him to start anew, to confront his demons with a clear mind."

I took a deep breath, my mind racing through the implications of this decision. "I'll have to talk to him about it."

As I stood to leave, the path ahead seemed clearer, though still daunting. "Thank you for your time, professor. I really appreciate your guidance. "

"Anytime, Amelia. You're a strong psychologist, and you'll make the right choice for both you and Damien. Just remember to take care of yourself along the way."

I walked out of her office knowing that I was about to make one of the hardest decisions of my career. But deep down, I felt a flicker of hope—that maybe, just maybe , this was the first step toward reclaiming my own sense of peace amidst the chaos.

As I drove through the familiar streets of the city, the weight of my conversation with Sarah settled heavily in my mind. I was still grappling with the decision to distance myself from Damien when my phone buzzed in the cup holder. Glancing down, I saw it was David calling. I answered, hoping for a distraction from my turbulent thoughts.

"Hey, Amelia. I've got some news," he said, his voice laced with urgency.

"What is it?" I asked, feeling a tightening in my chest.

"Ben was reported missing by his family eight days ago. His wife and kids are really worried about him. "

I felt a cold shiver run down my spine at the mention of Ben's name. The thought of that monster having a family turned my stomach. I scoffed internally, struggling to

reconcile the image of a loving husband and father with the man I knew—the man who had terrorized me and others like me.

“Have they found any leads?” I asked, trying to keep my voice steady.

David hesitated for a moment. “They tracked the delivery company that delivered the box, but they said the sender didn’t reveal his identity. No one has any idea who sent it or where it came from.”

“That’s unsettling,” I murmured, gripping the wheel tighter. My mind spun with thoughts of Ben’s disappearance, the faceless sender, and the mystery that seemed to be spiraling out of control. “Do you think it could be connected to the people he was involved with?”

“Possibly,” David replied. “It’s hard to tell without more information, but given his background... it’s likely. ”

A shiver ran down my spine. The idea of Ben’s dangerous associations resurfacing in such a cryptic way was enough to unsettle anyone, but for me, it was something darker—something personal .

“Just... keep me posted, okay?” I asked, trying to mask the worry in my voice.

“Will do,” David assured me. “But don’t let this get to you. I know it brings up old memories, but I don’t want you getting drawn into anything dangerous again. Focus on yourself, alright?”

“Yeah, I will,” I said softly, though I wasn’t sure I believed my own words.

“Good,” he replied, his voice softening with concern. “Just take care of yourself, Amelia. And remember, I’m only a call away.”

With that, he hung up, leaving me with nothing but the hum of the engine and the weight of his words. I stared out the windshield, feeling the edges of my world closing in .

Ben's family, worried about him? The thought of his family, his wife, and kids, longing for his return made my stomach twist. The man who had caused so much pain in others' lives now had people searching for him? hoping he was safe ? The irony was bitter .

After a long drive home, I stepped through the door, the familiar silence wrapping around me. I slipped off my shoes, swapped my clothes for something more comfortable, and settled on the couch, still haunted by the day's conversations and that lingering sense of unease.

Picking up my laptop, I decided to rewatch last night's camera footage. I fast-forwarded through the hours, watching as the night crept on.

I saw myself tucked in bed, peacefully asleep, my breathing slow and undisturbed. The video played on without a single odd moment or shift in the scene. I hadn't stirred or left my bed; there were no shadows moving in the dark, no signs of anything unusual.

A shaky breath escaped me as I leaned back, a mixture of relief and confusion filling me. So, it really was just a nightmare. My rational mind clung to that answer, insisting that the fear gripping me each morning was nothing more than fragments of my subconscious. But there was a part of me—a small, stubborn part—that couldn't let go of the unsettling feeling that there was more to it.

But I couldn't let myself spiral into paranoia. Not with everything else going on. I closed the laptop, telling myself I needed to let it go and focus on what I could control. Still, as I prepared for bed, that feeling of being watched, of being caught

between dream and reality, lingered in the back of my mind.

*Source Creation Date: August 7, 2025, 3:15 am*

Amelia

I glanced at the clock, realizing how late it had become. The office was quiet, and Lily had left hours ago, leaving me in the solitude of paperwork and lingering thoughts. Just as I stretched, preparing to pack up and head home, a knock sounded at the door. I smiled, thinking it was probably Lily who'd forgotten something.

But when I opened the door, my breath caught. Damien stood there, hands casually tucked into the pockets of his leather jacket, his intense gaze fixed on me with a sharpness that sent a chill down my spine.

"Damien," I said, my voice carefully measured. "It's after hours. "

He didn't answer immediately. Instead, he looked past me, his eyes scanning the room before they settled back on mine. "I needed to talk," he said, his voice low and smooth, as though we were picking up a conversation from minutes ago, not days.

I hesitated, every rational part of me screaming that this was inappropriate , that I should tell him to leave and reschedule. But the gleam in his eyes held a challenge, a silent dare to let him in, to break my own boundaries. Against my better judgment, I stepped back and opened the door wider.

He moved past me, his presence overwhelming in the small space, filling the room with an almost tangible energy. "You work late," he remarked, his voice casual as he took a seat across from my desk, crossing one ankle over his knee.

I closed the door, feeling the lock click under my fingers as if it could somehow

fortify my resolve. “Yes,” I replied, moving to sit across from him, keeping the desk between us. “But it doesn’t mean I take clients at this hour.”

He leaned forward, his gaze never leaving mine. “Oh, I’m not here as a client. ”

His words sent a pulse through me, a warning mixed with something I didn’t want to admit to myself. “Then why are you here, Damien?” I managed to keep my voice steady, but my fingers tapped anxiously against the desk.

He smiled—an expression that held no warmth, only intensity. “You already know the answer to that.”

The room seemed to close in, the silence amplifying the tension between us. “This isn’t a good idea,” I said, my voice softer now, as if speaking too loudly would crack the fragile control I had over this situation.

“Why not?” he countered, his tone almost teasing. “Afraid you’ll start to see me differently?”

My heart raced, and I hated that he could sense it, that he could read the effect he had on me. “I see you clearly, Damien. That’s why I know we need boundaries.”

His eyes darkened slightly, and he tilted his head. “Boundaries,” he repeated, as if tasting the word. “Is that what you think keeps you safe from me? Or from yourself ?  
”

The question caught me off guard, and I couldn’t hide the way my expression faltered. “This isn’t about me,” I said quickly, perhaps too quickly. “This is about you —about the help you need.”

He smirked, leaning back in his chair, his gaze burning through every defense I tried

to raise. “Tell me, Dr. Harper,” he said, his voice barely above a murmur, “do you really think I came here tonight for help?”

A shiver ran through me as I fought to maintain control. He knew exactly what he was doing, twisting words and intentions until I could barely remember why I’d let him in at all.

Damien’s gaze intensified, a wicked glint in his eyes as he leaned forward, resting his elbows on his knees. “You look tense, Amelia,” he said, his voice low, almost a purr. “I wonder if that’s because you’re afraid of what you feel. Or maybe it’s just me.” His lips curled into a smirk, and he studied my reaction with an unblinking focus that felt more like a predator sizing up its prey.

I held his gaze, refusing to let him see the cracks in my resolve, even as my pulse quickened. “This isn’t appropriate, Damien,” I said firmly. “You came to me as a patient, and there are boundaries that need to be maintained.” I willed myself to sound unwavering, but I could see by the flicker of amusement in his eyes that he sensed the tension underneath.

“Boundaries, again,” he echoed. “I think we both know that those don’t apply here. Not really.” His tone was laced with challenge, daring me to deny it.

I took a steadying breath, forcing myself to sit straighter. “As your psychologist, I have to act in your best interest. I’ll be assigning you to a different therapist—someone highly qualified who can help you.”

The words hung in the air between us, but his expression didn’t falter. Instead, his smirk deepened, and he gave a low chuckle, shaking his head as if he found the whole idea funny.

“Oh, Millie,” he drawled, leaning back in his chair. “Do you really think you can

just... hand me off ? That some other therapist is going to fix what's broken in me?" He tilted his head, his eyes narrowing. "You're the one I want. I think you know that."

My pulse raced, but I fought to keep my face composed. "I'm sorry, Damien. This is the only option that will ensure you get the help you need."

His gaze darkened, his smirk fading as a more intense expression took its place. "What if I don't want 'help'? What if I'm exactly where I want to be, sitting in your office, getting inside your head as much as you think you're getting inside mine?"

He rose from his chair, slowly, deliberately, closing the distance between us. I stood as well, refusing to let him crowd me, but his presence was overwhelming, his eyes fixed on me with a sharpness that felt like it cut through every pretense.

"I'm not going anywhere, Millie," he said softly, his voice almost a whisper but thick with determination. "Assign me to someone else all you like. But you and I both know I'll find a way back to you."

He was enjoying this—pushing me to my limits, breaking down my resolve piece by piece. And despite every rational thought in my mind, I couldn't deny the pull, the strange and twisted fascination that kept me rooted in place .

"You don't get to make this decision," I said, my voice steadier than I felt inside. "I do. And I'm telling you—this ends here."

He looked at me, his eyes glittering with amusement and something far darker. "Then go ahead," he murmured, his tone daring. "Cut me loose, Millie. Let's see how far you get before you realize you're in deeper than you think."

I swallowed hard, his words sinking in like a stone in water. But I didn't flinch,



holding his gaze. He thought he could break me, that he could force me to lose control. But I was determined to prove him wrong —no matter how much my own resolve felt like it was slipping away under his unyielding stare.

In an instant, Damien closed the space between us, his proximity overwhelming. Before I could react, he leaned in, his face so close that I felt his breath against my skin. He tilted his head slightly and inhaled deeply, as though savoring every detail, taking in the scent of my hair, the tension in the air. The audacity, the sheer boldness, made my pulse race, but I stood my ground, refusing to give him the satisfaction of seeing me waver .

He lingered there, his presence suffocating, his eyes half-closed as he took in that final breath. And then, he pulled back just enough to look at me, his eyes gleaming with a dark amusement. A small, satisfied smile played on his lips, a silent acknowledgment of the power he held over this twisted dynamic between us.

“You smell... exactly like I remembered,” he murmured, his voice low, almost intimate, as if he were sharing a secret meant only for us.

My spine stiffened, and I forced myself to keep my face impassive, showing him nothing, giving him no reaction. But the truth was, his words, his intensity —it all seeped beneath my skin, lingering in ways I didn’t want to admit.

He studied me for a beat longer, his eyes scanning my face as if committing every detail to memory. Then, with a final smirk, he took a step back, the distance feeling both a relief and a strange loss. He turned, his back to me now, his movements unhurried as he walked toward the door. Just before he reached it, he paused, glancing over his shoulder with a smile that sent a shiver down my spine .

“Goodnight, Dr. Harper,” he said smoothly, almost as if this had been nothing more than a casual meeting. Then, without another word, he disappeared through the door,

leaving me alone in the quiet of my office, his presence still lingering like an unsettling shadow.

As the door clicked shut, I exhaled, releasing the breath I hadn't realized I'd been holding. The silence that followed felt heavier than ever, thick with unspoken words and undeniable tension. And despite everything I'd told myself, I knew one thing with a certainty that terrified me.

This was far from over.

?????????

As I stood in front of the mirror, adjusting the necklace around my neck, my phone sat on the counter, Emily's voice filling the room over speaker .

"So, how are you feeling about tonight?" she asked, her tone teasing but warm. "I still can't believe you said yes to Jake. He's been waiting forever."

I smiled, brushing a strand of hair behind my ear. "Yeah, I know... I think it'll be nice. He's been so patient, and—"

"Patient? That man's practically a saint ," Emily interrupted, chuckling. "Seriously, he's one of the good ones, Amelia."

I exhaled, nodding slightly, though she couldn't see me. "You're right. I think I need this. Something... normal ." As the words left my mouth, I realized just how much they resonated.

"Are you nervous?" she asked, picking up on the slight hesitation in my voice.

"A little," I admitted. "It's been a while since I've let myself... I don't know, get

close to anyone.”

“You deserve it, Amelia. You’ve been through so much,” Emily said gently. “And Jake’s kind, caring—everything you need. Just enjoy yourself tonight.”

I smiled, a small warmth settling in my chest. “Thanks, Em. I’ll try.”

“Good! And don’t overthink it. Just have fun.” Emily’s voice was bright, encouraging.

I took a final look in the mirror, smoothing down my dress and taking a deep breath. “Alright, I think I’m ready.”

“Perfect,” she said, her tone playful. “Now go make Jake’s night. He’s been waiting long enough.”

I laughed, shaking my head. “I’ll talk to you tomorrow?”

“Absolutely. Have fun, Amelia,” she said, and with that, the call ended.

As I slipped on my shoes and grabbed my purse, I felt a mix of anticipation and a strange underlying anxiety. Tonight was supposed to be a break from everything—the tension, the nightmares, the increasingly complicated sessions with Damien. Tonight, I was going to allow myself to be with someone who genuinely cared about me .

A soft knock on my door pulled me from my thoughts, and when I opened it, there stood Jake, looking effortlessly handsome in a tailored blazer, his warm smile instantly putting me at ease.

“You look beautiful, Amelia,” he said, his eyes taking me in with quiet admiration. There was something comforting in his gaze, a steadiness that felt like a balm to the

chaos I'd been navigating lately.

"Thank you, Jake," I replied, feeling a hint of blush rise to my cheeks. "You clean up pretty well yourself."

He chuckled, extending his arm for me to take. "Shall we?"

As we made our way to the car, I found myself relaxing, his easy conversation and gentle humor helping me let go, even if just a little, of the unease that had become almost second nature these past few weeks. Tonight, with Jake, I could step into a sense of normalcy, however fleeting.

He drove us to a beautiful restaurant nestled downtown, the soft glow of candlelight and a refined ambiance welcoming us as we walked inside. Jake had clearly gone out of his way to plan the evening, and as we were seated by the window, overlooking the city lights, I felt a flicker of excitement—a reminder that I could still feel this way, that maybe happiness was still within reach.

"I thought you'd like this place," Jake said, smiling as he watched me take in the cozy, elegant surroundings.

"It's perfect," I replied, genuinely touched by his thoughtfulness.

As the night unfolded, our conversation flowed easily. We talked about everything from old memories of working together to our dreams for the future. With Jake, the heaviness I'd felt lately seemed to dissipate. His laughter was contagious, his stories endearing, and I found myself laughing in a way I hadn't in so long.

As dessert arrived, Jake looked at me with a softness in his eyes that made my heart skip. "I'm really glad we're here tonight, Amelia," he said, his voice warm. "I've always admired you—for everything you are, and everything you've overcome. I

know we've been friends for a while, but I've wanted this for so long."

His sincerity caught me off guard, and I felt a strange mix of warmth and guilt. Here was someone offering me stability, kindness, and understanding—qualities I knew I needed but struggled to accept. And yet, in the back of my mind, there lingered a shadow of someone else. Someone I shouldn't be thinking about.

"I'm glad too," I whispered, meeting his gaze with a small smile. I wanted to let him in, to allow myself the possibility of something real and good.

Just as Jake reached across the table, placing his hand gently over mine, a shiver ran down my spine—a feeling of being watched, an eerie familiarity that left my skin prickling. I glanced toward the window, but all I saw was our reflection against the dark night.

"Are you okay?" Jake asked, concern etching his brow as he studied me.

I forced a smile, nodding. "Yeah, just... a weird feeling. Probably just nerves."

He squeezed my hand gently. "You're safe with me, Amelia."

And as I looked back into Jake's eyes, trying to ground myself in the warmth he offered, I couldn't shake the feeling that someone, somewhere, was watching—and waiting.

The evening had been everything I'd hoped for—a brief escape into something soft and real, a chance to remember what it felt like to be just Amelia, with no hidden fears. Jake had this way of making me laugh, of easing my guard down piece by piece, and I found myself enjoying his company more than I had in a long time.

As we drove back, the city lights blurred outside the window, the hum of the car a

comforting backdrop to the gentle conversation still flowing between us. He pulled up to my apartment building, and as he put the car in park, a warm silence settled over us.

“Thank you for tonight,” I said, turning to him, my voice barely above a whisper.

“The pleasure’s all mine,” he replied, his gaze lingering on me. In that moment, the space between us felt like it was charged with something both tender and electric. Slowly, he leaned forward, his hand moving to cup my cheek, and I met him halfway, our lips finally meeting in a kiss that was as gentle as it was full of promise.

The kiss deepened, a spark igniting as I allowed myself to get lost in it. For a moment, I let go of every heavy thought, every lingering worry. It was just him and me, warmth and calm, a reminder of what life could be if I let myself have it.

When we finally pulled back, he looked at me, his thumb brushing softly along my cheekbone. “Amelia—” he started, his voice filled with both warmth and hesitation.

Before he could say anything more, I found myself speaking up, surprised at the words tumbling out of my mouth. “Do you want to come in?”

A smile spread across his face, his eyes lighting up in a way that made my heart skip. “I’d love to.”

We made our way to my house, my hand clasped in his, and when we stepped inside, I felt a strange sense of ease, like I was allowing myself something I’d been denying for too long .

As we settled onto the couch, the world outside faded away, leaving just the two of us in our bubble of warmth and laughter. I leaned into Jake, the softness of the cushions cradling us as our lips met once more, our kisses growing deeper and more urgent.

Then, with a slight pull back, Jake broke the moment, his cheeks tinged with a hint of pink. “Uh, I need to use the bathroom,” he said, his smile sheepish.

I laughed, finding his embarrassment endearing. “It’s right down the hall. Just to the left.”

“Thanks,” he replied, stealing one more quick kiss before getting up. I watched him walk away, the sight of him filling me with a mix of affection and excitement.

As I settled back against the couch, I let out a soft sigh, savoring the moment. Just as I was beginning to lose myself in thoughts of how the evening had turned out, my phone buzzed on the coffee table, breaking the tranquility. I glanced at the screen and saw an unknown number flashing in bold letters .

Curiosity piqued, I hesitated for just a moment before picking it up. The ringing echoed in the quiet room, and I hit the answer button, bringing the phone to my ear. “Hello?”

“Millie,”

The voice sent a jolt through me, cold and familiar. My heart dropped as I recognized it instantly— Damien . My stomach twisted, dread creeping in.

“Damien?” I managed to say, trying to keep my voice steady despite the panic swirling inside me. “What do you want?”

“Listen carefully,” he said, his tone low and menacing. “If that son of a bitch doesn’t leave your house within the next five minutes, I’m going to kill him.”

Panic surged through me, and I felt the color drain from my face. “What do you mean? You can’t just—” then the realization hit me, “Hold on a second... are you

watching me?” My heart raced as disbelief flooded my senses.

I stood up abruptly and jolted to the window, my pulse quickening with every step. I pulled back the curtain, squinting into the darkness outside, searching for any sign of him. The street was empty, shadows dancing under the dim streetlights, and a chill crept up my spine. The stillness of the night felt suffocating, and I strained my eyes, hoping to catch a glimpse of his familiar figure lurking somewhere in the shadows.

“You have five minutes. I won’t repeat myself,” Damien’s voice came through the phone, dark and eerily calm. It was a tone I had never heard before. It made my stomach churn.

“Damien, you don’t mean that,” I said, trying to maintain some semblance of control in my voice. But the certainty in his tone sent a jolt of fear through me. My mind raced as I thought of Jake, unaware of the impending danger lurking just outside my door.

“I mean exactly what I said.” he replied, the calmness of his voice contrasting starkly with the menace behind it.

“If you think you can intimidate me into pushing Jake away, you’re wrong. I’ll call the police!”

A low chuckle escaped him, but it was devoid of any humor. “Go on. Call them. But let me remind you: if you do, it won’t just be you who suffers the consequences. Your brother is a good man, Millie. I’d hate for him to get involved with someone like me.”

The implications behind his words wrapped around my throat like a vice, choking off any further protest. “You wouldn’t... you can’t,” I stammered, feeling my resolve start to waver. “David has nothing to do with this.”



“ Exactly . He has nothing to do with this,” Damien said smoothly. “But that won’t stop me from making sure he remembers the night you decided to call the cops on me. Are you really willing to gamble your brother’s safety on this?”

Panic coursed through my veins, and I could feel the walls closing in on me. The last thing I wanted was for David to become embroiled in Damien’s twisted world. “You’re sick , Damien. This is wrong on every level.”

“Maybe,” he admitted, his tone unchanging, “but you know I’m not lying. ”

“Damien, please,” I begged, desperate to find a sliver of humanity in him. “This isn’t the answer. You can’t control everything like this. It won’t work!”

His voice dropped lower, darker, sending a chill racing down my spine. “Listen to me carefully, Amelia. If he lays even a finger on your body tonight, I will cut his motherfucking dick off, and bleed the life out of him on that pretty carpet you just got. Do you understand?”

The threat hung heavy in the air, suffocating me. The intensity of his words echoed in my mind, each syllable slicing through my attempts at rational thought.

Before I could respond, he abruptly hung up, leaving me staring at the phone in disbelief. The sudden silence in my apartment felt deafening, the weight of his words still hanging in the air like a thick fog. My heart raced as I fought to gather my thoughts, grappling with the chilling reality of the situation

Just then, the bathroom door creaked open, and Jake emerged with a relaxed smile, clearly blissfully unaware of the turmoil swirling inside me. He looked handsome in the soft light, and for a moment, I felt a wave of affection wash over me, momentarily easing my fear.

“Hey,” he said, stepping closer, his eyes brightening as he took in my expression. But his smile faltered when he noticed the pallor of my face. “You okay? You look a little pale.”

I forced a smile, but it felt brittle and shaky, a mask that did little to conceal the panic that threatened to consume me. “I suddenly feel a bit sick,” I said, my voice barely above a whisper. “I think I need some time alone.”

Jake’s brow furrowed with concern, and he hesitated for a moment, clearly not wanting to push me. “Are you sure? We were having such a good time.”

“I know, and I’m really sorry,” I replied, my heart aching with regret. I could see the disappointment in his eyes, and I hated that I was putting him through this. “But I really think it’s best if you go home. I just need to rest.”

He took a step back, his expression softening as he searched my eyes for answers. “Alright. I don’t want to pressure you,” he said, his voice gentle. “I can call you tomorrow? ”

“Yeah, definitely,” I said, grateful for his understanding.

As he leaned in, I instinctively flinched, a reflex I couldn’t control. The memory of Damien’s chilling threat surged through me, drowning out any remnants of calm I had clung to. Jake hesitated, his smile faltering as he processed my reaction, and I saw the hurt flash across his face.

Instead of the kiss I had imagined, he wrapped his arms around me in a warm hug, his body radiating comfort and concern. I leaned into him, grateful for the support but still feeling the weight of the storm lurking outside my door.

“Take care of yourself, Amelia,” he said softly, pulling back to look me in the eye.

“I’ll be just a call away if you need anything.”

“Thank you,” I murmured, my heart heavy with unspoken words as he turned to leave.

The door clicked shut behind him, and I let out a shaky breath, my heart racing once more. I pressed my back against the door, feeling the cool wood against my skin, desperately trying to steady my racing thoughts .

The moment of peace that had come with Jake’s presence quickly dissipated, leaving me alone with the haunting knowledge of Damien’s threat. I glanced at the phone still clutched in my hand, the screen dark and silent, but I knew that the danger wasn’t over.

*Source Creation Date: August 7, 2025, 3:15 am*

Damien

The night clung to me like a second skin, thick and suffocating, as I leaned against the rough bark of a tree outside her house. The faint, warm glow spilling through her living room window made my stomach churn. She was there—with him . Every muscle in my body coiled tight enough to snap. He was too close, his hand touching her like he had any damn right to.

My knife was a comforting weight in my hand, the blade gleaming faintly as I let it drag across my palm, just enough to feel the bite. It whispered promises to me—sharp, delicious promises. The sliver of moonlight caught its edge, a mocking reminder of how easy it would be. One clean swipe. One .

I pulled out my phone, the live feed from her house filling the screen like some sick reality show. Cameras I'd installed without her ever knowing—they gave me her every move, her every breath, even when she thought she was safe. Safe . The word was a joke. No one was safe, least of all her.

She tilted her head toward him, her lips curling into a laugh that made my ears buzz with static. He leaned in, his hand sliding to her waist like it fucking belonged there. My fucking waist. My fucking laugh. My Millie.

And then—then the bastard dared . His hand slid up her neck, his mouth grazing hers, and I felt it—my pulse spiking in my chest like a bomb. My grip on the knife tightened, the blade trembling against my skin. The thought of splitting his throat open, feeling the hot spray of his blood on my hands, sent a twisted thrill through me. I wanted to watch his face drain of life, his stupid fucking smile replaced with fear as

he realized he'd fucked up touching what was mine .

It would be easy—too easy. Slip through the door, carve him open in a heartbeat, and let him die choking on his goddamn arrogance. I could almost hear the wet, gurgling sound he'd make, the way his body would collapse at her feet. She'd cry, scream maybe, but she'd learn . She'd fucking understand.

I held myself back, the fire roaring in my chest, threatening to consume me whole. But no. Not yet . I forced it down, every sharp, violent impulse clawing to be let loose. She didn't know I was here, didn't know how fucking close she was to crossing a line she'd never come back from. This game— my game —was just getting started. I felt a manic grin tug at my lips, the thrill surging up my spine. Patience, Damien. Patience .

The knife in my hand was a lifeline, its cold, unyielding weight grounding me, reminding me who was in control. Her? Him? The world outside that window? They didn't fucking matter. They were oblivious, blind to the storm sitting just beyond their reach. The anger thrummed under my skin, sharp and hot, but I'd learned to wear it like a second skin. Waiting was an art. I had perfected it.

Through the screen, I watched her let that bastard touch her, his hand on her waist like he thought he had a claim. My stomach twisted, my pulse hammering in my ears. I wanted to rip that hand off— every fucking finger —and shove them down his goddamn throat. But where was the fun in that? Where was the satisfaction in simply taking what was mine without giving her a choice?

No, no. I wasn't some impulsive animal. I was methodical, deliberate, righteous . I wouldn't kill her little plaything without first giving her the chance to save him. After all, what would be the point if she didn't know what it meant to hold his fate in her hands? To realize that with a single word, she could bring him back from the edge—or let him fall .

It was so much more delicious this way, watching her struggle with it, watching her wrestle with the choice, knowing that she'd see the monster within me and, despite her best instincts, still be drawn to it. It was inevitable, really. She was already too far gone, whether she knew it yet or not. This was just a reminder. A lesson in power.

I'd make her understand that she couldn't outrun this. She could play house, laugh with her little friends, pretend she was safe, but we both knew the truth. She belonged to me . Her choices, her fears, her desires—all of it was mine to twist and shape .

So yes, I would give her the choice.

With my gaze locked on the screen, I watched as she laughed, the soft light illuminating her face as she leaned into him. I could feel the anger simmering, like a low, dangerous hum vibrating beneath my skin. The little pet excused himself, disappearing down the hall, leaving her alone for a moment.

Perfect timing .

I dialed her number slowly, each press of the button deliberate, savoring the anticipation of hearing her voice. The phone rang only once before she picked up. I could practically feel her hesitation through the line.

“Hello?” Her voice was soft, cautious, as if she already sensed something was wrong.

I let a beat of silence linger, enjoying the tension, the way the fear crept in when she wasn't sure who was on the other end. Then I spoke, my voice low and venomous.

“Millie.” I let her name drip from my lips, a twisted mockery of affection .

She inhaled sharply, a sound that made my pulse quicken with satisfaction. “Damien...” Her voice shook, barely above a whisper.

I closed my eyes, letting her trembling voice echo in my mind, wrapping around me like a noose I was more than happy to tighten. Fuck . The way she said my name—soft, broken, dripping with fear—sent a jolt straight to my cock. It wasn't just a name. It was surrender. It was power. It was a goddamn symphony , and I was the conductor, savoring every shaky, desperate note.

“Damien.” Just that. One word. One fucking word, but it was enough to unravel me, to stoke the fire that already burned too hot. Her voice was laced with fear, maybe even hate, but fuck, that just made it better. Made her mine in ways she didn't even realize. Every little tremor, every goddamn breath, was a gift she didn't know she was giving me.

I licked my lips, the blade in my hand pressing hard enough against my palm to sting, grounding me in the chaos she stirred. The thought of her whispering my name like that again, but louder, rougher, needier , made my blood fucking sing. She could fight it all she wanted, hate me, curse me, scream at me—but she'd still come apart for me. She'd still whisper my name with those perfect, trembling lips while I made her fucking forget every other word she knew.

Goddamn, she didn't know what she did to me. She had no idea how deep this ran, how much of her was already mine—her fear, her anger, her goddamn defiance. They all belonged to me, tangled up in that one broken whisper. Fuck . It was enough to make me want to kick her door down and take her right then and there, make her scream my name until it was the only fucking thing left in her vocabulary.

She thought she had a choice. She thought she could run, hide, resist . She didn't fucking understand yet. But she would. Oh, she would . Because I wouldn't stop. I couldn't . Not until every breath, every thought, every goddamn piece of her was mine .

And when she finally got it, when she looked at me and realized there was no escape,

no salvation—only me —I'd hear her say my name again. But this time, it wouldn't just be fear. It would be surrender. Complete. Fucking. Surrender . And it would be the most beautiful thing I'd ever fucking hear .

Millie threatened to call the cops, as if dialing three goddamn numbers would somehow save her from me. Pathetic . Like a fucking phone call could undo what's already been done—what's still coming. I almost laughed. Almost. Because it was kind of cute, really, her clinging to this flimsy little idea of safety, like it was something real. But cute doesn't cut it, not with me. And hope? Hope is a fucking lie . One I'm more than happy to rip out of her hands.

So I leaned in, let my words slice through her like the cold edge of a blade. Her brother. The detective . The one she thinks is untouchable, her knight in shining armor. I dropped his name, let it hang in the air like a loaded fucking gun, because she needs to understand : there are no limits with me. No fucking lines I won't cross.

Her face— God , the way her eyes widened, the way her breath hitched. She knew I wasn't bluffing. Could fucking feel it. That's the beauty of it, isn't it? The moment they realize you're not playing by the same rules as the rest of the world. Her brother? I'd put him in the fucking ground if it meant keeping her where she belongs. Loved ones, family, innocent fucking bystanders—none of it means shit when it comes to her .

She doesn't get it yet, not fully. Not what I'm capable of, not what I'd do to keep her. But she will. Oh, she fucking will . Because here's the truth, the one she's too scared to admit to herself: I'm not just her shadow, her obsession, her inevitable. I'm her fucking world now. And in my world, no one—not her brother, not the goddamn police, not anyone —gets to take her from me.

So let her scream, let her fight, let her cling to whatever scraps of resistance she's got left. It won't fucking matter. I'll tear it all apart. Every connection, every illusion of



safety, every single thing she thinks can protect her—I'll crush it. Because Millie's mine . And the sooner she figures that out, the better it'll be for everyone.

I ended the call and leaned back, letting the silence settle around me, thick and charged. I could already taste it—the panic crawling under her skin, the fear sinking its claws into her chest. She thought she was clever, thought she could keep me at arm's length, but all it took was my voice, just a few well-placed words, to crack her fragile little world wide open.

I could see her now, that perfect flinch rippling through her body. Jake, the oblivious bastard , wouldn't even notice. But her? Oh, she'd feel it. That itch she couldn't scratch, the cold sweat on her skin, the way my words wrapped around her throat like a vice. She was mine in that moment, whether she wanted to admit it or not. My good girl, already learning the rules.

I grinned to myself, thinking of all the ways I could reward her. Maybe I'd send her a little something—a sweet, innocent token to remind her who she belongs to. A note with her favorite cookie, maybe, something so normal it'd feel obscene . The thought alone sent a thrill through me. Because every fucking move she made now, every thought, was about me. I'd carved myself into her mind, and no locked door or smiling idiot like Jake was going to save her from that.

Then she ran. Like a scared little rabbit, locking doors, closing windows, her eyes darting around like the walls themselves might betray her. Fuck , it was beautiful. It did things to me. Watching her scramble, as if she could actually shut me out. As if a deadbolt or some cheap camera could stop me from being in every shadow she turned her back on.

Each frantic step she took was like a goddamn symphony, every panicked glance feeding the hunger roaring inside me. She was unraveling, piece by piece, and I was there, savoring every fucking second of it. She didn't get it yet, not fully . That no

matter what she did, no matter how fast she ran, I was always going to be there. In her head. In her fucking veins .

It took her too long to settle, her little dance of desperation dragging out like a masterpiece I couldn't stop watching. Pacing, checking, locking, unlocking—she was like an animal caught in its own trap, thrashing and panicked, not realizing she'd already lost. And then, finally, exhaustion claimed her, her body surrendering where her mind never could.

And me? I waited , a predator in the dark, watching, savoring, knowing that the fear wasn't gone. It never would be. Not as long as I was in her world. And I wasn't going anywhere.

When her breathing slowed, steady and soft like a lullaby for the damned, I knew she was mine—completely fucking mine. I moved then, quiet as death itself, slipping around to the back door, where her so-called security faltered. She'd been careful, sure, but not careful enough . The cracks were there, waiting for me, practically begging me to step through and claim what was already mine. Her little fortress of safety was nothing but a joke, and I was the punchline .

Inside, the scent of her hit me like a goddamn drug . Sweet, soft, and laced with something that made my blood fucking boil . I inhaled deeply, letting it settle in my lungs, feeding the twisted obsession burning under my skin. Fuck , it was everywhere, clinging to the air, the furniture, the walls, like she was leaving pieces of herself behind just for me to find.

My fingers brushed against her things as I moved, each touch a reverent claim. A book she'd dog-eared, the sweater she'd left on the arm of the couch, even the fucking coffee cup in the sink—it was all hers , and now it was mine . She didn't know it yet, but she'd built this life for me to step into, a world where every corner whispered her name and begged me to stay.

And then I found her.

The bedroom was dark, but the faint glow of the moon cast her in soft light, painting her like a goddamn masterpiece just for me. She was so serene, lying there in her little bubble of oblivion, completely defenseless . Her hair spilled across the pillow like a dark halo, her lips parted slightly as if whispering secrets to the night. Fuck. She was perfection , and she didn't even know it .

I stood there for a moment, letting the sight of her wash over me. She was at my mercy now. The darkness inside me roared, urging me forward, telling me to take, to claim , to leave a mark so deep she'd never forget. My hands twitched with the urge to touch, to press, to own .

And I did. Slowly, I climbed onto the bed, careful not to wake her. My knees sank into the mattress on either side of her, framing her body like a predator closing in on its prey. I hovered above her, close enough to feel the heat radiating off her skin, close enough to hear the soft whisper of her breaths. Her chest rose and fell in a hypnotic rhythm, and I matched my own breathing to hers, letting her pull me into her world without even knowing it.

Fuck.

The urge to press closer, to leave an imprint so deep she'd feel me even in her dreams, clawed at me. My cock throbbed, my fingers ached, every nerve in my body screamed for release. But no. Not yet .

Patience . This was a moment to savor. A slow, perfect descent into madness, where I ruled her world and she didn't even fucking know it. Yet .

I leaned in, close enough to feel the warmth radiating from her skin, my gaze tracing every detail of her face. The way her eyelashes kissed her cheeks, the slight twitch of

her lids—she was dreaming. Maybe somewhere, deep in that unconscious little world of hers, she knew something wasn't right. Maybe she could feel the weight of me in her room, the storm brewing just inches from her perfect, defenseless form. Vulnerability clung to her like a second skin, and fuck, it was intoxicating .

She didn't know I was here. That made it all the better. A lamb in her own den, wrapped in the false comfort of her little sanctuary. The locks, the cameras, the rituals to keep herself safe—it was all bullshit. I was inside. I was always inside. And this moment? It was mine. Stolen, secret, sacred . She belonged to me, even if she didn't know it yet. Hell, especially because she didn't know it yet.

I stayed still, patient, letting the quiet thrum of her breathing match the wild rhythm of my pulse. Every second dragged sweetly into the next, anticipation twisting itself into something dark and electric. I could already see it—how her face would become when she woke. The moment those beautiful, honeyed eyes opened, when terror began to seep into her sleepy gaze. That fear would be mine. Crafted for me, shaped by me , etched onto her face like a goddamn work of art.

I let the possibilities unfold in my head, savoring them like a fine whiskey. What would I do? How far could I push her, twist her, break her? I didn't need to touch her, not yet. The tension in the air, the control I held over this moment, was a sharper thrill than any physical act. My hands stayed at my sides, fists clenched with restraint, even as I burned to leave my mark.

She stirred, her body shifting beneath me, soft and unsuspecting. Fuck . My breath caught as her lashes fluttered, teasing me with the promise of what was to come. She was so close now, teetering on the edge of wakefulness, her chest rising and falling in steady rhythm. My whole body tensed, the anticipation building to something sharp and unbearable. I wanted to see it—the exact moment her peace shattered, when she realized the nightmare wasn't something she could just wake from.

And then it happened. Her eyes opened .

For a heartbeat, there was calm. Confusion flickered in her gaze, soft and unfocused, like she was still clinging to the last shreds of a dream. But reality has a way of cutting through soft things, doesn't it? Slowly, like ink spreading through water, understanding dawned. Her pupils blew wide, her breathing hitched, and fuck, the terror bloomed. It was raw, unfiltered, painted across her face like the most exquisite canvas I'd ever seen.

She froze, her body trembling under me, every muscle tense with panic she couldn't suppress. The silence between us was thick, electric, as her mind scrambled to catch up with her reality. Her lips parted, but no sound came, her fear so complete it stole her voice before it could find her throat.

And me? I drank it in. Every trembling breath, every flicker of terror in her wide, pleading eyes. It was fucking beautiful . That fear, that raw, primal thing—it was mine. My mark on her, proof that she could never escape me.

Slowly, I leaned in closer, letting my breath ghost over her skin, hot and deliberate, sinking her deeper into the abyss of her own helplessness. My shadow swallowed her whole, dragging her into the dark where I ruled, where she didn't stand a fucking chance. The silence between us stretched tight, suffocating, broken only by the faint tremor of her breaths. I could almost feel her pulse slamming against the air—erratic, frantic, a song composed just for me.

I drank it in—the wild panic in her eyes, the way she froze under the weight of my presence—and it was pure ecstasy . A brutal, twisted rush surged through me as her gaze locked on mine, terror widening those honey eyes until there was nothing else. Fucking perfection .

She gasped, her hands shooting up to push me away, a desperate, useless little

attempt that only made me smile. Her strength was nothing, and she knew it. I seized her wrists in one swift, brutal motion, slamming them above her head and holding them there like a fucking trophy . The hitch in her breath, the flutter of her pulse beneath my grip—it was intoxicating . She was trembling now, wild and fragile.

My other hand slid free, the cold gleam of the blade catching the dim light as I brought it to her lips. I didn't press hard— not yet —but just enough for her to feel it, to understand that every inch of control was mine. The steel whispered against her skin, sharp and unyielding, a silent promise of what I could do if I wanted to. And I fucking wanted to.

“ Shh ,” I murmured, my voice a low, poisonous drawl, the edge of it brushing her fear like a knife through silk. “You don't want to scream, do you, Millie? Not unless you're begging me for something you can't take back.”

Her lips parted, trembling against the blade, her breath stuttering in shallow, panicked bursts. A single tear welled in the corner of her eye, sliding down her cheek like a slow admission of defeat. I could see her mind fracturing, the terror warring with some ember of defiance that refused to burn out. But she wouldn't fucking win. Not here. Not against me .

“Good girl,” I whispered, and the words curled out of me like smoke, dark and possessive. I tilted the knife just enough to catch her gaze, forcing her to focus on the razor-sharp glint of metal and the promise it carried. Her eyes were wide, desperate, screaming in silence as her body betrayed her, frozen beneath me like a bird trapped beneath a cat's claws.

Finally, she found her voice, weak and shaking but there. “What do you want from me?” she choked out, every syllable laced with raw fear, her words barely audible over the pounding of her heart.

I laughed then, low and dark, the sound rumbling through the air like thunder before a storm. “What do I want ? Oh, Millie,” I said, leaning in so close my lips almost brushed her ear, my voice a vicious whisper that twisted the knife already embedded in her psyche. “I want to drag you into another one of those sweet fucking nightmares .”

Her body jerked beneath me, a futile attempt at escape, but the words had already started working their way into her mind. Confusion flickered across her face, and I could practically hear the gears grinding as she tried to piece it together. “What... what are you talking about?” she stammered, her voice cracking like glass, her gaze darting between mine in frantic disbelief.

“Think harder , sweetheart,” I urged, pressing the knife a fraction deeper against her lips, watching her flinch under the touch of cold steel. “Those dreams you’ve been having? The ones that make your heart race, your skin crawl, your head fucking spin ? They’re not dreams.” My voice dropped, venom dripping from every word. “They’re all very real. ”

Her breath hitched, her eyes widening with the weight of my revelation. “No,” she whispered, her voice barely audible, the word trembling on her lips like a lifeline she couldn’t bear to lose. “No... that’s not possible. I... I would know.”

I leaned back just enough to let her see the truth in my eyes, the manic, unrelenting hunger that burned there. “Would you?” I hissed. “Because, Millie, every night, you’ve been mine. And every time you wake up thinking it’s over, I’m still there. Right here .” I tapped the knife lightly against her temple, watching as her face twisted in horror. “In your head. In your fucking dreams. In every shadow you’re too scared to look at.”

Her world was crumbling now, her mind shattering under the weight of my words. And I relished every second of it.

I leaned in, so close I could feel her shallow breaths, my voice low and jagged with menace. “You didn’t realize it, did you? Every scream, every fucking whimper you thought was locked in your head—I was there, Millie. Whispering in the dark. Guiding you. Claiming you. Those nightmares? Those were my gifts. Sweet, twisted little presents. Now tell me, Doctor , how do you separate reality illusion? ”

Her eyes widened, that perfect flash of disbelief I’d been waiting for. There it was—the spark of realization, the sharp sting of horror lighting up her gaze. She shook her head, trembling, her lips parting on a shaky, breathless denial. “You’re lying...” The words came out so weak, so goddamn fragile, I almost laughed. Almost

.

A smile curved my lips, sharp as a blade. “Am I?” I let the question hang there, my tone dripping with venomous amusement. “Look at you. So lost .” I brought the knife to her jawline, the cold steel kissing her skin as she flinched—a gorgeous, involuntary dance of fear . I could feel her pulse beneath the blade, a frantic little drumbeat begging for mercy.

“Let me spell it out for you,” I murmured, my voice dipping into something feral, something raw. “Every night, I was there. Taking you. Molding you. Twisting your dreams into a fucking symphony of terror. And now, Millie—now we bring that symphony into your waking hours. Let’s make your nightmares real , sweetheart.”

Her lips trembled, a soft gasp escaping her, and I watched her crumble under the weight of the truth. “You’re insane...” she whispered, voice trembling, barely audible

.

I barked out a laugh, sharp and cruel. “Really, Doctor? That’s your diagnosis ? Fucking lazy for someone with a fancy degree, isn’t it?”

From my pocket, I pulled the mask , sleek and black, its surface glinting under the



dim light. Attached to it was the little bottle, dark as my intentions, its contents shifting with the slightest movement. Her reaction was fucking perfect —her eyes widened, her pupils blown with panic. She was shaking her head before I even said a word, as if that could undo the inevitable.

“What... what is that?” she stammered, her voice breaking. Oh, the fear in her voice—it was like music, a delicious harmony that sent a thrill straight through me.

I leaned closer, the mask dangling between us like a promise. “This, my dear, sweet Millie,” I murmured, my tone dark and mocking, “is your one-way ticket to hell. And I’m the devil holding the fucking reins.”

She tried to recoil, her body pressing back against the headboard, her limbs scrambling in vain. Pathetic. Fucking adorable, but pathetic. I caught her easily, my grip steel against her fragile wrists. In one swift motion, I pinned her down, my knees framing her hips, locking her in place. The mask hovered above her face, a weapon of my own making.

“Breathe,” I whispered, my voice smooth and cruel. “Come on, sweetheart. Breathe for me.”

Her body thrashed beneath me, all wild limbs and panicked desperation, but I was stronger. So much stronger. Her fists slammed against my chest, her muffled screams breaking through the mask, but it didn’t matter. It only made it better. She was fighting, and fuck , I loved it when she fought.

“ Shhh ,” I cooed, the mockery dripping from my tone. “It’s useless, Millie. Just let go. Let me in. Let me own you.”

Her struggles began to falter as the drug took hold. Each gasp she managed pulled her deeper into my grip, her body betraying her as her strength melted away. Her eyes, so

wide with terror, started to glaze over, the fire dimming as the poison worked its magic.

I pressed closer, watching her, drinking in every second of her unraveling. Her body sagged beneath me, her final, weak attempts to fight nothing more than a ghost of resistance. She hit me one last time, a pitiful slap that only made my grin widen.

“Good girl,” I murmured, voice low and thick with satisfaction. “That’s it. Give in.”

When her eyes fluttered closed, when her body finally went limp, I let the mask drop. The silence that followed was intoxicating, a void filled only with the sound of my own breathing and the slow, steady rhythm of hers. I lingered above her, savoring the stillness, the victory, the fucking power of having her completely at my mercy.

This was only the beginning.

Amelia

I jolted awake, the rough ground pressing into my back, a wave of confusion washing over me. As I blinked against the darkness, the chill seeped into my bones, stealing the warmth from my skin. My breath quickened, heart pounding against my ribcage as I struggled to gather my bearings. The air was heavy with the scent of damp earth and decay, the kind that sent a shiver down my spine.

As I slowly pushed myself upright, a chilling realization settled over me: I was surrounded by tombstones . They loomed like silent sentinels in the gloom, their inscriptions worn and faded, some almost illegible. This wasn't just any graveyard—it was a forgotten one, overrun by nature, with weeds choking the stones and shadows stretching long in the moonlight .

Panic clawed at my throat as I took in my surroundings. I was wearing only a thin nightdress, the fabric clinging to my skin and offering little protection against the biting cold. The night wrapped around me like a suffocating blanket, isolating me in this desolate place. I could feel the weight of the darkness pressing in, and every instinct screamed at me to get up and run.

I rose unsteadily, my legs trembling beneath me as I scanned the area for any sign of life—or any way out. The grave markers stood eerily still, their jagged edges casting twisted shadows in the pale moonlight. A cold wind rustled through the leaves, carrying with it a faint whisper, almost like a warning.

“ Where am I? ” I whispered into the silence, my voice sounding small and fragile. No answer came, only the echo of my words dissipating into the night. As I stumbled

forward, the soft crunch of dried herbs beneath my bare feet sent a fresh wave of terror through me. Each step felt like an intrusion upon the resting souls around me.

Suddenly, a memory flickered to the surface of my mind—a distorted image of Damien's face, twisted in that unsettling grin, the last thing I remembered before slipping into unconsciousness. The thought of him sent a shudder coursing through me, and I could almost hear his voice whispering my name, taunting me from the shadows.

I clutched my arms around myself, attempting to stave off the cold that seeped deeper with every passing moment. Fear pooled in my stomach, a growing dread that I was not alone. The darkness seemed to pulse around me, a living entity that thrived on my terror. Every rustle, every creak of the branches above sent my heart racing.

Just then, a flicker of movement caught my eye. I spun around, breath hitching in my throat. Was it just my imagination, or had something shifted among the tombstones? The air grew thick with tension, and I strained my ears to catch any sound, any hint of another presence.

I gasped as another rustle echoed through the graveyard, the sound pulling me in every direction. My heart raced, each beat pounding in my ears like a drum. I turned sharply, convinced I had seen a shadow slip between the tombstones, but the darkness played tricks on me. Laughter drifted on the wind, taunting and echoing around me, and every time I heard it, I flinched, my pulse quickening.

“Damien?” I called out, my voice barely rising above a whisper. My breath came in short gasps, and I felt the night air wrap around me, cold and suffocating. I was trapped in this forgotten place, and he was somewhere close, lurking, watching.

The laughter morphed into something sinister, reverberating through the chilling air like a cruel melody. Each chuckle echoed through the darkness, and I spun around

again. With every creak of the aged wood or shuffle of leaves, my heart leaped, and I took another step back, anxiety tightening in my chest.

Then, out of the shadows, he emerged—a figure clad in black, his hoodie drawn up, casting a shadow over his face. My breath caught in my throat as I saw the metallic skull mask he wore, glimmering faintly in the moonlight, with metal stitching crisscrossing over one eye. It was a grotesque sight, a haunting reminder of the twisted depths of his psyche. The mask twisted his features into something monstrous, making him seem even more terrifying .

“Hello, Dr.Harper,” he said, his voice a low, chilling rasp that sent shivers down my spine. The distortion of his voice sent a rush of adrenaline through my body, and instinctively, I stepped back, my heart racing faster with each passing second.

“What do you want from me?” I shouted, the tremor in my voice betraying my fear.

He stepped closer, gliding with an unsettling grace among the gravestones. “What do you think I want?” His laughter rang out, cruel and mocking, echoing off the ancient stones that surrounded us, as if the very graves held their breath in anticipation of what would come next.

The fear settled deeper into my bones as I took another step back, but there was nowhere to go. The ground was uneven beneath my feet, and I stumbled, regaining my balance just as he reached out a gloved hand, his fingers curling in a beckoning motion.

“Come here,” he urged, the command laced with a twisted sense of intimacy, as if we were sharing a secret that only the two of us understood. “I just want to play .”

I sprinted forward, adrenaline flooding my veins, each breath burning in my throat. But the graveyard felt alive, the darkness wrapping around me, and no matter how

fast I ran, he was always just a heartbeat away, his laughter echoing in the night, weaving a chilling symphony of terror that pulled me deeper into his twisted game.

Yet, beneath the terror, I could feel it—a sickening excitement, coiling deep within me, rising with every step. It was wrong, twisted, like I was willingly surrendering a part of myself to this nightmare he'd crafted. My stomach churned with disgust, hating myself for even feeling it. What was wrong with me? I should have been consumed only by terror, by the desperate need to escape. And yet... there it was, the thrill, an electric shiver that wound through my limbs as his laughter echoed behind me, pulling me deeper into his dark, sadistic fantasy.

The world around me was a blur of gravestones and twisted shadows, my vision clouded by fear and the relentless pounding in my head. I stumbled, nearly falling, my knees scraping the cold, hard ground, and a sob escaped my lips as I forced myself up again, pushing forward. But with each step, the thrill grew, a sick part of me responding to the chase, to his relentless presence behind me, a part of me that felt alive in ways I could barely understand, even as it terrified me.

The night air felt heavy, pressing against my skin like a suffocating shroud, and I realized I was trapped in his game, wrapped up in the twisted web he'd spun around me. My breaths came in ragged gasps, my mind torn between the primal urge to escape and the dark pull that he seemed to have over me, as if he'd awakened something inside me that I hadn't known existed—or maybe something I'd buried long ago, something I never wanted to see.

He was close, his footsteps echoing, steady and patient, a predator with no need to rush. I glanced over my shoulder, catching a glimpse of his figure moving through the darkness, relentless, his silhouette merging with the night. "Come now, Millie," he taunted. "Don't you see? You're exactly where you belong."

A chill ran down my spine, and my pulse quickened, fear and something far darker

mixing in a way that made me feel like I was losing myself, slipping further into his twisted reality. I hated it—I hated him . And yet, as much as I wanted to fight it, the throbbing between my legs made it clear how helpless I was. I was captivated by the very thing that would destroy me.

My legs burned, but I couldn't stop. I wouldn't. With each passing moment, I felt myself weakening, my defenses crumbling, his words seeping into my mind, filling me with a dread I couldn't shake. And I realized, with a shiver of horror, that it wasn't just my body he was after. He was tearing down every wall, every layer I'd built around myself, drawing me into his nightmare until I couldn't tell where his darkness ended and mine began.

I had no idea how, but I'd managed to slip from his sight, weaving frantically between the twisted trees and crumbling gravestones. My legs buckled, and I dropped to my knees behind a massive, weathered tombstone, pressing myself into the cold earth. The weight of the grave felt oppressive beneath me, a chilling reminder of how close I was to becoming another lost soul in this cursed place.

My chest heaved as I struggled to quiet my breathing, desperate to muffle any sound that might betray me. I leaned ever so slightly, peeking around the stone, searching the dark expanse for any sign of him, but there was nothing—only shadows shifting under the pale moonlight. For a split second, I allowed myself to hope, my heart racing, each frantic beat echoing in my ears. Maybe, just maybe , I'd—

A hand appeared from behind me and closed around my throat, cutting off my breath, silencing every last scream lodged in my chest. Cold fingers tightened around my neck, their grip relentless, unyielding.

“Thought you could hide from me, Millie?” he murmured, his voice a sinister caress that sent a sickening shiver down my spine. “You're right where I want you. Sitting on the dead... it suits you.”

I gasped, clawing at his hand, but his grip only tightened, a twisted chuckle rumbling from his chest as he held me in place. “Did you think you could slip away that easily?” His words dripped with amusement. “ Poor little thing , lost in the dark, hiding among the corpses. Fitting, don’t you think?”

His voice slithered through the darkness, soft yet laced with malice. “You know,” he whispered, his fingers pressing just a little harder against my throat, “it would be so easy—so fucking easy —to snap your neck right here. Just a little twist, and you’d be nothing more than a beautiful memory.”

The sharp edge of his words, the threat woven into each syllable, ignited a desire so deep it almost paralyzed me.

He chuckled—a low, dark sound that sent a shiver down my spine. Suddenly, his hand shifted from my throat to the back of my neck, his fingers tangling in my hair with brutal force. In one swift, unyielding movement, he yanked me down, forcing my face into the cold, damp earth.

“There,” he murmured, voice thick with a twisted satisfaction. “Feel that, Millie? The earth beneath you, swallowing you up like it knows you belong here. And this ?” He pushed his hips against me, making me gasp as I felt how hard his cock felt on my ass. “It wants that tight pussy of yours. So, so fucking bad.”

I bit my lower lip, the dirt stuck between my teeth, as I felt how wet I was getting. This is wrong , on so many levels! But I couldn’t control how my body was reacting to him.

I felt his free hand slowly sliding beneath my white nightdress, pulling it upward with it and revealing my perky ass to him, the little lace thong I was wearing didn’t do much to cover my wet pussy.



The pressure of his hand on my neck eased just slightly, and I seized the chance, twisting my head as far as I could just to see him. He noticed, of course, his dark eyes glinting with twisted amusement as he slowly lifted his mask, revealing only his mouth—those lips that curved into a dangerous smirk as he leaned closer .

Without warning, his teeth sank into my ass, sharp and unyielding. The pain lanced through me, raw and electric, but beneath it, something else stirred—a forbidden thrill that pulsed in time with my racing heart. My breath hitched, caught between pain and something far darker. Just as quickly, he released his bite, his hand sliding down to slap the same spot, sending a fiery jolt towards my pussy, a mix of sting and warmth that left my head spinning.

A smug satisfaction crossed his lips as he leaned in closer, his breath warm against my skin, soaking in the way my body betrayed me. “Look at you,” he murmured, voice low and thick with something sinister. “You like this, don’t you? The fear , the thrill ... it’s exactly where you’re meant to be.” The words wrapped around me, inescapable, darkly intoxicating, until I could hardly remember where the terror ended and the twisted pull of his presence began.

With a slow, deliberate movement, he lowered his mask back into place, and the cold glint in his eyes sent a shiver through me. I barely had time to catch my breath before the unmistakable metallic clack of his belt echoed in the stillness. The sound cut through the night like a promise, dark and dangerously intimate .

He took his time, savoring the tension that thickened the air, each movement slow, controlled, letting me anticipate every dark intention he had.

With a rough grip, he yanked me up, forcing me to my knees before him. The night around us was pitch black, shadows twisting under the moonlight, casting his figure in a haunting silhouette. He towered over me, silent and commanding, a dark presence that seemed to consume the very air around us. His jeans hung open, the

fabric loose, a provocative taunt that held me captive.

I swallowed hard, feeling the night chill against my skin yet burning under his gaze. He didn't say a word, letting the silence stretch between us, feeding off the way my breaths grew shallow, my pulse pounding in my ears. There was a twisted satisfaction in his eyes, like he knew the struggle inside me—the fear mixed with something darker, a thrill I couldn't deny.

He tilted his head, eyes gleaming darkly beneath the mask, and I understood what he wanted.

He slipped his hand into his underwear and pulled out his cock. An oversized cock glistening with pre-cum was inches away from my trembling lips, and I had to stop myself not to reach out and lick it. “Now,” he ordered, his eyes never leaving mine. “Open that pretty mouth and put it to work.”

The demand lingered between us, daring me, twisting something inside me. Reluctantly, my gaze met his, heart racing as I parted my lips, knowing there was no escape from this dark game he played.

Hesitatingly, I took his cock in my mouth. But the size was overwhelming . I couldn't fit it all, feeling my mouth stretch around it as I tried to adjust. Before I had a chance to steady myself, he moved closer, his grip firm as he placed a hand behind my head.

“Come on, you can take more than that,” he murmured, voice low and taunting, laced with dark amusement. His fingers tangled deeper in my hair, guiding me forward with an unyielding intensity that left no room for resistance. He pushed it further, the force sudden, making me gasp as the soft flesh pressed against the back of my throat, a startled sound escaping as I struggled around it.

“That's it,” he breathed, his voice laced with twisted satisfaction as he watched me, a

glint of thrill in his eyes. “You’re doing just fine.” His hand held steady as he thrust into my mouth, growling and savoring the control, his gaze fixed on me as I struggled to keep up.

The way he watched—commanding, taunting—dared me to give in, to let myself be completely at his mercy. I tasted more of his pre-cum on my tongue, the saltiness mingling with the dark thrill in the air.

I let my teeth graze over his cock, slow and deliberate. I could feel his grip tighten in my hair, tugging me closer, his fingers digging into my scalp as if claiming me in a way I couldn’t deny. His breath hitched, and there was something almost primal in the way he watched me, a raw intensity that made my pulse quicken despite every warning in my mind .

I hated the way my body betrayed me, leaning into his control. I was burning , heart racing, my skin alive under his dark gaze as if I were his possession, as if he’d somehow taken me, unraveled me, without even trying. And the pleasure I felt—it was maddening .

I wanted to pull away, to break free from the grip he had on me, both physical and psychological, but the shame of the spark I felt only seemed to fuel his amusement. The smirk showing from the cracks of his mask growing wider as he sensed my struggle. It was like he could read every thought in my head, savoring every conflicted beat of my heart.

With a swift tug, he pulled his dick from my mouth, leaving a sharp sting on my lips as it pulled away with a soft, echoing pop. He cursed under his breath at the chill, but his eyes never left mine, a dark spark flickering in them, something twisted and wicked that made my stomach tighten.

He leaned in closer, his gaze devouring me, as if the coldness of the air on his wet

cock only heightened the intensity radiating between us. His hand lingered near my face, taunting me, and I felt the tension coil, his quiet, almost dangerous amusement filling the air around us .

Damien smirked, his eyes never leaving me as he prowled around me like a predator circling its prey. Every step he took was calculated, deliberate, sending a chill down my spine. The sound of his boots on the ground was the only noise in the otherwise still night, and I could feel the weight of his gaze following every move I made.

When he stopped behind me, the silence stretched between us, thick and suffocating . My breath hitched, my heart pounding so loud in my chest I thought he could hear it. Fear mingled with anticipation, a sickening , twisted cocktail that left me frozen, unable to move, desperate for whatever he would do next.

I gasped as Damien yanked my hair, , he brought my face closer to him, his breath warm against my ear, before forcefully pushing my head down towards the cold, unyielding graveyard soil again. The roughness of the ground scraped against my skin, a stark contrast to the intoxicating thrill of his control .

He pulled at my thong, ripping it with one hand.

That fucker ! It was one of my favorites!

The sudden movement sent a shiver of anticipation through my body. The fabric fell away, leaving my skin exposed and tingling with the thrill of vulnerability.

“Do you feel that?” he whispered, his voice low and seductive, as he leaned closer, his breath brushing against my cheek. “That’s the taste of freedom , Millie.”

I swallowed hard, my heart racing as I felt the heat of his presence envelop me.

He chuckled darkly as he pushed himself inside me.

I dug my nails deeply into the soil as I bit my lip hard, suppressing a moan.

“ Fuck .” Damien cursed under his breath as my pussy struggled to swallow his thick, delicious cock. He could probably feel the undeniable hunger radiating from my body. The heat of my desire wrapped around us like a suffocating fog, thick and intoxicating.

“Look at you,” he breathed, voice dark with lust, “so desperate for me. It drives me wild .” Each word dripped with a twisted pleasure that sent shivers down my spine, igniting a fire I couldn’t extinguish.

I hated how much I craved him, how my body responded to his every movement as if it had a mind of its own.

I moaned as he slammed himself harder into me. The realization that we were practically sprawled atop a grave sent a jolt of dark exhilaration through me, amplifying the pleasure coursing through my veins. It was a twisted irony that heightened every sensation, making the air around us feel charged and electric. I could feel the rough, cold earth beneath us, a stark reminder of our surroundings that only intensified my body’s response to him.

The weight of our depravity hung heavy in the air, and with every thrust, I felt as if I were teetering on the edge of sanity. My breath came in ragged bursts, each inhale mingling with the earthy scent of damp soil, a reminder of the life and death entwined in this moment. It felt wrong, thrillingly wrong , and the thrill of danger ignited a fire deep within me, burning away any remnants of fear.

If ghosts really exist and hang out in graveyards, I’m sorry! Please don’t haunt me!

As he pressed closer, I could feel his heat radiating against me, a stark contrast to the cold, unforgiving ground. My heart raced, pounding in rhythm with the chaos around us, a wild symphony that matched the intensity of the sound of his body slamming against mine. “Can you feel it, Doctor?” he whispered, his breath hot against my ear. “The thrill of what we’re doing? It’s intoxicating, isn’t it?”

I nodded before I could stop myself, breathless, the truth of his words wrapping around me like a shroud. The mix of pleasure and pain coursed through my body. I wanted to scream, to cry out, to surrender fully to the madness that enveloped us.

“Let me hear you, Millie.” He ordered, his voice hoarse with lust .

I bit at my lips even harder, refusing to give him that satisfaction.

“I said, let me hear you.” He pulled my head away from the ground, making my back arch in the process.

My eyes rolled to the back of my head as he slammed even harder into me. His throbbing cock filling me in a way I’ve never felt before. The inside walls of my pussy clenched harder around him as I felt myself getting closer to my release, and I couldn’t contain the sounds spilling out of my mouth anymore. I guess at some point I even moaned his name!

I dug my nails into the damp soil as I came, twisting and struggling to free myself from his cock. But his hold on me was strong, keeping me glued to him as he slammed into me relentlessly chasing his own release. I screamed as I felt his cum filling me, and when he was done, he stood up, watching me as I turned to lay on my back, feeling his cum spilling out of my sensitive hole. He didn’t say anything as he turned around and started walking away from me.

I just lay there, my body frozen and drained of all strength, watching him walk away

with half-hooded eyes. His silhouette melted into the darkness, his presence lingering in the air like a suffocating fog. Every step he took seemed deliberate, like he was savoring the power he held over me.

My mind felt hazy, the adrenaline that had once fueled my body draining away as quickly as it had come. I tried to move, to sit up, to push myself to act in some way—anything—but my body betrayed me. I was nothing but a fragile shell, my limbs too heavy, my thoughts too scattered, my heart too numb to comprehend anything beyond the darkness that surrounded me.

The cold soil beneath me pressed against my skin, grounding me in a way that only reminded me of how insignificant I had become, how small in comparison to the chaos he had brought into my world. I could feel the weight of the bodies buried in the earth around me, their silent presence somehow echoing my own despair. I wondered if they had felt as hopeless as I did now—trapped in a nightmare they couldn't escape.

I closed my eyes then, unable to keep them open any longer. The darkness behind my eyelids swallowed me whole, offering no reprieve, no sanctuary. It felt like I was becoming one with the ground beneath me, like the world around me had ceased to exist, like I was as dead as the bodies that lay buried in the soil.

Amelia

The aroma of freshly brewed coffee wafted through the air, mingling with the faint chatter of patrons and the soft clinking of cups. I sat in the corner of the coffee shop, my hands wrapped around a steaming mug, the warmth barely reaching the icy core of my thoughts. Emily's voice was a distant hum, her words washing over me like a soft tide I couldn't quite catch. I nodded absentmindedly, a reflex more than a response, as she recounted some amusing anecdote about her latest therapy session.

But I was far removed from that reality, lost in a labyrinth of my own making—a twisted reflection of a life I no longer recognized. I was supposed to be strong, a guiding light for others. Yet here I was, a captive in my own mind, trapped in Damien's sinister grasp. I was his possession now, a plaything he could summon at will. The thought sent a shiver down my spine, and I tightened my grip around the mug as if it could anchor me to sanity.

With each passing day, my life spiraled further from my control, like a marionette with tangled strings. I could still remember the person I used to be—confident, driven, passionate about helping others heal. But that woman felt like a ghost now, a whisper drowned out by the fear and obsession that had become my new reality. How had I let it come to this? How had I allowed Damien to seep into my life, into my very soul, to turn me into this hollow shell?

I glanced up at Emily, who was now animatedly talking about her weekend plans. The way she laughed, the ease of her movements, the light in her eyes—it was a stark contrast to the darkness that enveloped me. I wanted to be present, but my mind flickered back to Damien, his haunting laughter echoing in my ears. He had a way of



slipping into my thoughts, uninvited and relentless, like a shadow that refused to fade.

The moments I spent with him were burned into my memory, and no amount of coffee could wash away the taste of fear that lingered on my tongue. I was constantly on edge, waiting for his next move, for the next twisted fantasy he would draw me into. I could feel his presence even when he wasn't there, a suffocating weight pressing down on me, reminding me of my powerlessness .

“Amelia? Are you okay?” Emily’s voice cut through the fog of my thoughts, and I forced a smile, a fleeting attempt to mask the turmoil within. I was supposed to be the strong one, the one who had it all together, yet here I was, drowning in despair.

“Yeah, just... lost in thought,” I replied, my voice trembling slightly. I could see the concern etched on her face, but I couldn’t bring myself to explain. How could I possibly convey the depths of my entrapment? I couldn’t get her involved in this mess.

Emily continued, oblivious to the storm raging inside me, but I was no longer truly listening. Instead, I was adrift, contemplating the stark reality of my existence. I was Damien’s prisoner, his puppet . Each day felt like a twisted game, and I was uncertain of how long I could keep playing before I lost myself completely.

With a sigh, I turned my gaze out the window, watching the world pass by—people laughing, living, free. A pang of longing hit me hard in the chest. I wanted that life, the normalcy I had taken for granted. But now, I was ensnared in Damien’s web, and it was becoming increasingly clear that there was no escape. The thought tightened around my throat, stifling any hope I might have clung to.

As I sat there, staring out into the bustling street, a chilling realization slithered through my mind. Damien was always watching. I could almost feel his eyes on me, lurking in the shadows, scrutinizing my every move. No matter where I was, no

matter how far I tried to distance myself from him, his presence loomed like a dark cloud, casting an ominous shadow over my life.

It was more than just a feeling; it was a tangible dread that clawed at the edges of my sanity . I could picture him, lurking just beyond the periphery, tracking my actions, documenting every mundane detail. Even now, as I sat in this coffee shop, supposedly safe with my friend, I felt exposed . He had eyes everywhere. I could see him reviewing the footage from the cameras he had planted in my home, chuckling at my futile attempts to maintain some semblance of normalcy .

The thought of him having access to my phone made my skin crawl. I had tried to be careful, but how could I be sure ? He was clever, far too clever. I could imagine him sitting in his darkened lair, a devilish grin playing on his lips as he scrolled through my messages, invading my privacy with that sickening delight he took in knowing every aspect of my life. Conversations with Emily, my fleeting thoughts—all of it laid bare for him to feast on.

The implications sent a fresh wave of nausea rolling through me. I had to keep my guard up, to be strategic in how I interacted with everyone around me. I could no longer afford to be spontaneous or careless. Each word I spoke, each laugh I shared, could be twisted and manipulated into something he could use against me. He thrived on control, and the more he surveilled me, the more I felt like a marionette, dangling on strings he pulled at will.

As Emily continued to speak, her voice a soothing balm against the chaos in my mind, suddenly an idea crossed my mind. I cut her off mid-sentence, my heart racing. “Emily, I need a favor,” I said, my voice low and serious. The playful banter we had been sharing felt dangerously frivolous in the moment .

Emily paused, her eyebrows knitting together in confusion. “Sure, what do you need? You know I’m here for you.”

The atmosphere around us felt stifling, the laughter and chatter of the coffee shop fading into a dull roar. I turned off my phone, my pulse pounding in my ears. I couldn't risk him somehow listening in on our conversation. The thought made my stomach twist with anxiety.

I took a deep breath, scanning the café as if expecting Damien to materialize out of thin air. I leaned closer, lowering my voice. "I don't want you to ask any questions. Just trust me, okay?"

Her face transformed from concern to a slight apprehension. "Okay... I can do that. Just tell me what you need."

"I need you to buy me a teddy bear," I said, my throat tightening as I spoke the words. "But it needs to have a hidden camera in it."

Emily blinked at me, clearly taken aback. "A teddy bear ? With a hidden camera ? Amelia, what are you talking about? Why do you need that?"

"Please ," I urged, trying to maintain my composure. "I can't tell you why I need it, but I really do."

Emily's expression softened, concern etching her features. "Okay, I'll get the bear," she said slowly, still trying to process the odd request. "But are you sure you're okay? You sound really... anxious."

"I'll be fine," I insisted, the words coming out more strained than I intended. "Just get it, please!"

Her eyes searched mine for a moment, as if looking for some hint of the truth, some reassurance that this was all just a strange joke. But I was far from joking.

“Okay,” she finally relented, her voice barely above a whisper. “I’ll get it. Just promise me you’ll talk to me about this when you can.”

“I promise,” I said, though I knew deep down that I couldn’t make any assurances about when or if I’d ever be able to explain everything .

I needed to find a way to get evidence, to have something— anything —that could prove what Damien was doing to me. I had no idea just how deep his manipulation ran, or how far he was willing to go to keep me under his control. But I knew, in the pit of my stomach, that if I didn’t start gathering something—some piece of truth—I would lose myself entirely.

I thought about all the times I’d felt his presence looming over me, even when he wasn’t physically near. He was always watching, always lurking in the shadows, waiting for me to make a misstep. I had to be careful. I couldn’t let him know what I was doing, couldn’t let him figure out that I was trying to take control back from him.

If I ordered the teddy bear myself, if I used my own account, my own name, he would be able to track it. He had access to everything: my phone, my computer, my life . He could trace the order, see the delivery address, and he would know exactly what I was up to. It would be too risky. It would be too obvious. And once he knew I was trying to gather evidence, he would stop at nothing to destroy it—and me .

That’s why I had to be strategic, calculated. If Emily bought the teddy bear for me, it would seem like a simple, innocent gesture—something a friend would do. Damien wouldn’t suspect anything. She could get it without arousing suspicion.

I couldn’t let him know that I was trying to outsmart him, to expose the reality of what he’d been doing to me. He was too dangerous, too unpredictable. And I couldn’t risk him retaliating in ways I couldn’t even begin to imagine.

?????????

The low glow of the television cast shifting shadows across my living room as I tried to lose myself in the movie, hoping for a sliver of normalcy. But it was futile. My mind was too crowded, my nerves too frayed. Every creak of the house, every whisper of the wind outside reminded me that he was never far, that his eyes were always watching.

And then, as if on cue, my phone rang .

Unknown caller .

I didn't need to guess who it was. A shiver ran down my spine as I picked it up, the tension in the air thickening, tightening around me. My fingers hovered over the screen for a heartbeat longer than they should have, before I swiped to answer.

I pressed the phone to my ear, holding my breath, and the silence on the other end was as heavy as it was intentional. I could feel him, as if his presence had seeped through the line and wrapped around me, invisible and unbreakable.

“Miss me, Amelia?” His voice was low, dark, every word laced with a desire that felt so possessive and dangerous.

I swallowed, trying to steady myself. “What do you want?”

“ Everything ,” he replied, his voice dropping to a whisper that felt as if it was brushing against my skin. “Your fear , your surrender ... every last piece of you. I want to know that I'm the last thought on your mind when you go to sleep, and the first when you wake up. ”

His words twisted inside me, like a snake coiling around my senses. It was terrifying ,

and yet, there was something about his tone, the darkness of his desire, that made my pulse race.

“You can’t control me,” I tried to sound defiant, but my voice wavered, betraying the truth.

His laughter was soft and sinister, as if he already knew just how deep his hooks had sunk into me. “Oh, but I can, Millie. I already do.” There was a pause, a dangerous silence that buzzed with anticipation. “Tell me, how many times have you thought of me tonight? How many times have you imagined me there with you, taking what’s mine?”

My cheeks burned with a mixture of anger and something darker, something I didn’t want to admit even to myself. “You’re insane,” I managed to say, the words a barely audible whisper.

“Yes, but look at you,” he countered smoothly. “Hanging onto every word like you crave me as much as I crave you.”

A shiver ran through me, my heart pounding, betraying me. Because a part of me knew he was right. No matter how desperately I tried to ignore it, there was something twisted and undeniable about the pull he had over me.

“I hate you,” I forced out, clinging to those words as if they could anchor me.

“Good,” he breathed, his voice laced with satisfaction. “Hate me all you want. But know that you’re mine. Every night, every thought, every inch of you.”

His words slithered through me, dark and unyielding, wrapping around my mind, as if branding each corner of my thoughts. I gripped the phone tighter, feeling the weight of his possessiveness sink into my skin, as if his voice alone had a tangible hold on

me.

“You can fight it, try to deny it,” he continued, his tone softening into something almost gentle, yet unmistakably twisted. “But we both know the truth, don’t we? Even when you close your eyes, when you lie there pretending to escape me, I’m there, lingering in every corner of your mind. You’re haunted , Amelia. Haunted by me. ”

A shudder rolled through me, both from the anger and something deeper, something that made my pulse quicken in ways I didn’t want to admit.

His voice dipped lower, darkening with every word, like an enchantment meant to pull me deeper into his web. “Tell me, Amelia,” he whispered. “When you touch your lips, when your hand drifts between your legs and into that little pussy of yours, do you feel it? The memory of me? Do you feel my fingers tracing paths only I have the right to make?”

My throat tightened, the defiance flickering within me, but it was weak, fragile, breaking under the weight of his command. I wanted to fight back, to scream that I was free, that he didn’t control me. But the words wouldn’t come. Instead, silence filled the space, my breath hitching as he waited, reveling in the hold he knew he had over me.

“Good girl,” he murmured, the satisfaction in his voice almost unbearable. “Now, I want you to pull down your shorts, and slide your fingers inside your sweet hole.”

His words struck like a spark to dry tinder, igniting something I didn’t want to acknowledge. I scoffed, masking my unease with a brittle laugh, though my pulse betrayed me, pounding wildly in my veins. The audacity of him, the nerve to assume he could command me even from the other side of a phone line. “And why the hell would I do that?” I shot back, trying to lace my voice with defiance, but it came out

weaker than I intended, tinged with an edge of hesitation I couldn't hide.

There was a pause, just a heartbeat of silence, and then his laughter, low and dark, filled the line, the sound crawling over my skin like a caress. "Oh, Millie," he murmured, his voice rich with that twisted amusement, as if I were nothing more than a game he was unraveling piece by piece. "I think you know exactly why. Don't pretend to be so naive." He let the words linger, his tone dripping with confidence, with the arrogant assurance that I would bend, that my resistance was only temporary.

"I don't want anything to do with you," I spat, clinging to the last shreds of my defiance. But even as I spoke, I felt the weight of his influence, the pull he had over me that I couldn't shake, like an intoxicating shadow that had seeped too deeply into my soul .

"Lie to me all you want, sweetheart," he whispered, his voice soft but dangerously sure, "but we both know the truth. You're curious ... so deliciously curious about what it would feel like to play with your little pussy while I watch you from afar. To give in, to come while I whisper in your ear all the dirty words you so desperately want to hear."

He's right. I was curious. And the throbbing between my legs was a constant reminder of the effect his words, his voice, his whole being had on me. Each word seemed to wrap around me, twisting tighter, his voice somehow crawling into every corner of my mind.

"And if you don't," he continued, his tone darkening to a sinister velvet, "then I'll come there myself. I'll step through that door, and I'll fuck you so hard until you pass out." He paused, and I could almost feel his smirk through the line, that unshakable confidence that he held me in his grip.

His words left me breathless, an unsteady gasp escaping before I could catch it,



betraying the way they wrapped around me, dark and unrelenting. I could feel the warmth creeping up my neck, a slow, burning heat that spread to my cheeks, then seeped down, curling itself around me like a possessive hand. It was maddening , the way he could pull this reaction from me without even being here, without laying a finger on me. Just his voice, rich and taunting, had slipped past my defenses and set my pulse pounding, igniting a flame that I couldn't extinguish.

I pressed my hand against my chest, as if that could somehow still the wild beating of my heart, but it only served to remind me how utterly out of control I felt. It was as though he was there, his presence woven into the air, the darkness whispering his name back to me. Each word of his still echoed, simmering, pressing deeper into me, into that secret, hidden place I wished I could ignore. But he knew, somehow he always knew exactly what his words did to me, exactly how they twisted around my senses and left me teetering on the edge of something dangerous , something I didn't want to name.

My breaths came quicker, shallow, as though the very air was thickened with him, as though he'd filled the room with his presence, haunting and relentless. The warmth that had begun in my cheeks spread, curling around my spine, my body betraying me as desire warred with defiance, both of them twisted and tangled together in a way I couldn't pull apart.

“ Damien ,” I whispered, barely recognizing my own voice, soft and breathy, as if I was summoning a demon I knew I couldn't control. But maybe that was exactly what he wanted. And maybe, in some dark, forbidden part of me... it was what I wanted too.

## Page 18

*Source Creation Date: August 7, 2025, 3:15 am*

Damien

Fucking Damien .

Every time her lips shape my name, it's like a goddamn hymn written just for me—a siren's call, soft and unassuming, dripping with a sweetness she doesn't fucking realize she's handing over on a silver platter. She has no idea what that sound does to me, how it tears me apart and stitches me back together into something darker. Something monstrous .

It's almost laughable, really. She says it like she's safe from the storm brewing inside me. That soft whisper, that innocent murmur, fuels every filthy thought in my head, pushing them deeper into places even I don't want to tread. It ignites a fire, a raw, gnawing hunger , twisting and expanding until it's all I can think about. I could fucking kneel before her, build an altar and lay her down as if she's something holy—something I need to worship and desecrate all at once.

Because that's what she does to me. That's what her voice, her name, her existence fucking does. It drives me to want to claim her, break her, reshape her into something new. To take her again and again , until there's no innocence left to cling to, until every single part of her is drenched in me. Body. Mind. Soul.

And now, as I watch her sprawled on that fucking couch, bathed in the blue flicker of her TV, I can see everything. Legs wide open, her hand between her thighs, her pussy slick with her own need. Fuck . The glow from the screen catches the sheen of her skin, illuminating her in a way that feels obscene , like a private goddamn performance made just for me.

“Do it,” I growl, my voice low and guttural, the words catching in my throat as my grip tightens around my cock. The screen mounted on my wall burns with her image—crystal clear, in fucking high definition. Because I made sure it would be. Bought the best there was. Set the perfect angles. I wanted to see her in every fucking detail. Every flick of her wrist. Every shudder of her body. Every goddamn moment she thought she was alone.

The screen isn't just a window into her life—it's my fucking throne . My domain. I've studied her long enough to know when she's teetering on the edge of control, when her mind fights against the pull she doesn't even realize I've wrapped around her. I can see it now, the way her breath hitches, the slight tremor in her hand as she dips her fingers lower, as she fights her own hesitation.

“Fucking do it, Millie,” I command again, louder this time, my voice like a whip cutting through the silence of my darkened room.

And that was the fucking thrill , wasn't it? Knowing she was performing for me , stripping herself bare in ways she wouldn't dare even in front of her own reflection. Every twitch of her lips, every hesitation, every fucking second she let herself unravel—it was mine. All mine . Her innocence and depravity, tangled together in a way that made me want to tear her apart just to put her back together again .

She had no idea, not really, how deeply I lived in her. Every flick of her wrist, every bite of her lip, every goddamn moan —it all fed this dark, insatiable beast clawing inside me. I sat there, eyes glued to the screen, cock in hand, stroking to the rhythm she set with her trembling fingers. My chest tightened as I watched her slide one inside her dripping cunt, her head falling back, her lips parting like a prayer on the verge of being spoken.

And fuck me , when she moaned—soft, breathy, just loud enough to send my pulse into a goddamn frenzy—it was like a fucking trigger . My vision tunneled, the world

outside her image dissolving into static. There was only her , caught in this beautiful, obscene dance.

The way she bit down on her bottom lip, the subtle arch of her back as she slid a second finger inside— God . It made me want to break her. To mark her. To own every inch of her until she was nothing but a ruined masterpiece with my name etched into every trembling breath she took. My fist tightened around my cock, matching her rhythm as the thought consumed me, as the hunger ripped through me like a fucking wildfire .

And then her voice—breathless, hesitant, perfect . “A... are you touching yourself too?” she asked, her words shaky, lips trembling as she surrendered to the need consuming her.

I almost laughed, a low, guttural sound that sent chills through my own spine. My cock answered her before I could, throbbing in my grip, slick with the evidence of how fucking far gone I was. “ Yes ,” I murmured into the phone, my voice rough, dripping with a darkness she couldn’t begin to understand.

She didn’t fucking know, did she? How much power she had over me in that moment. She didn’t realize that every sound she made, every flicker of pleasure on her face, was dragging me deeper into this abyss where nothing else mattered but her . It wasn’t just lust; it was madness . A hunger so raw, so twisted, it left no room for anything else.

Her lips parted again, her moans filling my ears, wrapping around me like a noose. Watching her fuck herself with trembling fingers, knowing she was getting off at the thought of me , knowing she could feel my eyes in her—it was almost too much.

My innocent whore .

“Add a third one, sweetheart,” I growled into the phone, my voice thick, hoarse with desire. “Fuck yourself the way you’d want me to fuck you. Hard . Deep . Like I’m tearing you apart.”

She gasped, her body arching slightly, her fingers hesitating for just a moment before slipping back inside her. And fuck , when she obeyed—when she moaned my name like it was a plea, a confession, a goddamn surrender—I almost lost it. My cock throbbed painfully in my hand, every nerve in my body alight with the knowledge that she was mine, that she was breaking herself open for me , just as I’d fucking commanded.

This wasn’t just obsession anymore. This was possession. And I’d carve that truth into her flesh , into her soul , until the whole goddamn world knew she belonged to me.

I watched, every nerve snapping like live wires, as her trembling fingers plunged into herself. She was shaking, raw, fucking beautiful—her face contorted with a pleasure so pure it was obscene. It wasn’t just pleasure; it was a goddamn reckoning , something feral, something that clawed at the edges of sanity and left me gasping for air .

The sound of her slick fingers pounding into that dripping cunt? Fuck , it was like gasoline dumped straight into the fire burning in my veins. I felt like I might fucking explode , right there, like some pathetic, desperate bastard who couldn’t even keep it together long enough to watch her finish.

“Shit, Millie. You’re fucking drenched. Do you hear it? That sound? That’s mine. All fucking mine ,” I growled, my voice a raw snarl that barely scraped past my teeth. Her moans—loud, wild, uncontrolled—drove me insane . I wanted to ruin her, to bury myself in every inch of her, to fuck her until the only thing she knew was me. To mark her, scar her soul with the kind of pleasure that leaves her shattered and

begging for more .

I watched the way her hips bucked, her thighs trembling as she came, her lip caught between her teeth, already bruised from trying to muffle herself. “Don’t you fucking dare hold back,” I spat, voice shaking with the effort to keep from breaking. “I want to hear it. Scream for me, Amelia. Let me fucking drown in it.”

The way her body arched, her fingers trembling as they slipped out of her, was enough to snap whatever flimsy leash I had left. And then— fuck me —she slid those wet fingers into her mouth, her tongue swirling over them like they were candy made just for her.

“ Fuck ,” I hissed, my breath ragged and broken. My cock jerked in my hand, my grip so tight I thought I might fucking crush it. She moaned, eyes half-lidded and devilish, and I was done— ruined , obliterated, ripped apart by her madness.

“ Damien ,” she whimpered, my name spilling from her lips like a prayer wrapped in sin . It wasn’t just a sound; it was a fucking bullet to the chest, a brand seared into my fucking soul .

And when I came—fuck, when I came —it wasn’t just release; it was destruction . Every twisted thought, every sick hunger she awoke in me surged through my veins like poison, sweet and fatal. She wasn’t just a girl; she was a fucking plague , a ruinous force that I’d let devour me whole.

I’ll let her ruin me. I’ll fucking thank her for it.

???????? ?

The hunt wasn’t just a distraction tonight—it was a goddamn lifeline , a blood-rushing, teeth-grinding release from the chaos clawing inside me. The anticipation

wasn't just pulsing—it was screaming , dragging me forward like a tether around my neck. Claire was already waiting outside, leaning against the wall like she didn't give a shit, but I knew better. That calm? That readiness? It was the same cold-blooded edge I saw every time I looked in the mirror.

“You ready?” she asked, her tone all business, but those sharp eyes of hers glinted with something darker.

I smirked, shaking off the electric buzz crawling under my skin. “Let's fucking do this.”

We slipped into the night, the quiet wrapping around us. It should've been comforting—the calm that always settled before the chaos—but my head was already splitting apart, thoughts tearing at me like razor wire. Amelia . Her name wasn't a whisper; it was a scream that ripped through me, brutal and unrelenting. That face. That goddamn fire in her eyes. I'd spent years perfecting control—every kill clean, every hit smooth—but her ? She wasn't clean. She wasn't smooth. She was a goddamn wildfire ripping through the walls I'd spent my whole life building.

“Damien,” Claire hissed, her voice snapping like a whip. “Focus .”

I shot her a glare, biting back the growl rising in my throat. She knew . Of course she knew. She always fucking knew. But she kept her mouth shut, that irritating little smirk playing on her lips as we moved in sync, two shadows bleeding into the dark.

The target was just a job, another nameless, faceless asshole with a price on their head. But Amelia... she was in my fucking bloodstream , and I couldn't bleed her out no matter how deep I cut. She was the complication, the itch I couldn't scratch, the addiction I didn't want to kick. Once this was done, I'd go back to her. Back to that chaos, to that fucked-up thrill of owning her, breaking her, pulling her strings while she set me on fire.

Claire and I reached the house—quiet, isolated, and practically begging to be torn apart. The wind howled through the trees, the kind of sound that made the hair on the back of your neck stand up. Perfect .

“Stay back,” I muttered, my voice low, guttural. “I’ll handle this. If it goes sideways... don’t fucking hesitate.”

Her expression hardened, but she gave a tight nod. “Got it.”

She didn’t ask questions. She didn’t need to. She knew I wasn’t in the mood for bullshit. The storm inside me was already raging, and the only thing keeping me grounded was the promise of blood and the shadow of her waiting in the aftermath.

I moved through the darkness like a predator, every nerve on fire, every sense tuned to the hunt . The air was thick—cloying with that sick, electric tension that prickled my skin and made my teeth itch. I could feel it, the storm building in my chest, ready to rip this whole night apart. The target was inside, oblivious, living his last quiet moments. I could already see it in my head—his face, the panic, the blood. Clean, efficient, beautiful .

But then she hit me. Like a fist to the gut, Amelia’s face burned into my mind, uninvited, unwanted, yet fucking irresistible . Those eyes—too soft, too knowing—cut through me like a blade, and it pissed me off. My fists clenched at the thought of her, the way she got under my skin, twisted me up inside. I didn’t want to need her, but fuck if I didn’t. I wanted to break her. Own her. Make her mine in ways that would ruin us both.

I bit down hard, forcing her out of my head. Not now. Not fucking now . This wasn’t the time for weakness. This was the time for focus—for blood . Claire was depending on me, and I didn’t have the luxury of distraction.



Claire . Necessary, dangerous Claire. She'd pulled me out of the wreckage I'd been spiraling into, but not for any noble reason. She saw the monster in me, the chaos and rage, and instead of trying to fix me, she sharpened it into something lethal. A weapon . I owed her for that. Not trust—not that shit—but loyalty . We shared an understanding, a bond built on darkness and survival. That was enough.

The house loomed ahead, quiet and still, its windows shut tight like it could keep us out. As if . Under the pale, anemic light of the half-moon, it looked fragile, like a secret waiting to be ripped open .

Claire's eyes gleamed, a manic excitement flickering there that mirrored my own. She lived for this, just like me—the raw, unholy thrill of the hunt. I gave her a sharp nod, and we moved as one, slipping through the gate and around to the back, silent and lethal. Her hands worked the lock with cold precision, and the faint click of the door releasing felt like the trigger on a loaded gun.

Inside, the air was stale, suffocating. The silence pressed in, daring us to shatter it. Claire moved left, her knife glinting like a fang in the dark, while I stayed to the shadows, my ears straining for the faintest sound.

There it was. A creak from upstairs.

The anticipation burned through me, dark and twisted , as I climbed the stairs, each step a countdown to chaos. At the top of the landing, he was there—halfway down the hall, confusion blooming into fear as he saw me. That look? Fucking priceless .

He moved, wild and clumsy, a man running on panic instead of sense. I closed the distance before he could think, catching his wrist mid-swing and twisting until I felt the pop. He screamed, the sound smothered by the weight of my palm over his mouth. His other hand flailed, weak and desperate, clawing at me like a trapped animal.

“Not tonight,” I hissed through clenched teeth, my grin stretching wide as I drove him to the floor. The terror in his eyes? Pure goddamn fuel . He squirmed, scratched, fought like it mattered. It didn’t.

Claire appeared behind him, her blade gleaming under the faint moonlight spilling through the window. She pressed it to his throat, her expression detached, ice-cold. She didn’t say a word—just nodded, giving me the green light.

I leaned down, close enough to feel his rapid, shuddering breaths on my face. “Got something to say?” I growled, my voice low and sharp. “Come on. Let’s hear it.”

He choked on his own fear, stammering something incoherent, pathetic . I laughed, low and cruel, before driving my knee harder into his chest. His breath hitched, his struggles weakening.

This was it. The high. The rush. The beast inside me clawing its way free .

And in the back of my mind, just beneath the chaos, Amelia’s face lingered. Her voice, her fucking pull , wrapping around my throat. Even here , even now , she wouldn’t let me go.

Without hesitation, I swung my fist, driving it into his jaw with a sickening crack. Once. Twice. Three times. Each blow came harder than the last, bones crunching beneath my knuckles, his face collapsing into a swollen, bloody ruin. The bastard didn’t even scream by the end—he just sagged, limp and useless, like a broken marionette. And fuck, the rush hit me like a freight train. That deep, snarling satisfaction tore through me, hot and raw, lighting up every nerve in my body.

Claire stood back, silent, her face unreadable but her eyes sharp. She didn’t flinch when I delivered the final blow—a wet, hollow thud that echoed in the stillness. When it was done, I wiped my hands on his shirt, leaving him sprawled on the floor,

lifeless and pitiful. The silence wrapped around us again, thick and suffocating, but I didn't mind. I liked it. It felt... right .

Maybe he was innocent. Hell, maybe he had a family or some shitty sob story. I don't fucking know. I don't fucking care . Remorse ? Regret ? People always talk about that weight, that crushing guilt that keeps them up at night. Me? I sleep like a fucking baby. There's no burden, no invisible chain dragging me down. Just the high—the sharp, electric thrill of watching life slip out of someone's eyes, of knowing they're mine in that final moment.

When I was thirteen, they tried to pin labels on me. 'Antisocial personality disorder,' 'sociopathy,' all those clinical buzzwords that made them feel smart. Like I was a goddamn puzzle they could solve. But it wasn't complicated. It wasn't some deep mystery. I did what felt right. Natural .

The first time was a classmate. Some smug little shit with a slurp that grated on my nerves like sandpaper. Every obnoxious scrape of his spoon across his teeth was a countdown. By the time he started sucking air through his soup, my patience snapped like a frayed wire. I didn't think. I just moved.

I was behind him before I knew it, grabbing a fistful of his hair, slamming his face into the table with a force that sent a shiver down my spine. The first hit was loud—wood meeting bone. The second sent a spray of blood from his nose. The third? That was the one that made him stop squirming, left him slumped and glassy-eyed in a pool of his own mess.

It took three teachers to drag me off him, screaming like they'd seen the fucking devil . Maybe they had. They looked at me like I wasn't human, and maybe they were right. That's when the therapy started. Weeks of bullshit questions from tight-lipped shrinks who thought they could fix me. They prodded at my past, my parents, my life, like they were searching for some buried trauma that could explain why I was so...

wrong .

But there was nothing to find. Just me. This . I tried to explain it once, but they didn't want to hear it. I wasn't broken. I wasn't sick. I was free . I didn't have the chains that weighed everyone else down. No guilt, no hesitation. Just clarity . People weren't people to me. They were pieces on a board, things to be manipulated, removed, destroyed.

That first time, with the slurping idiot? That was when I felt it—the high . That rush of power, pure and unfiltered, like a drug burning through my veins. Every time after that, it got easier, smoother, better . Like sharpening a blade with each cut.

Tonight was no different. As Claire and I stepped out into the cool night, the blood still drying on my knuckles, I caught her glance. She knew . She always knew. She didn't need to say anything; the thrill was mutual, a language we both understood. But even as the buzz coursed through me, I knew where I was headed next.

Millie. Sweet, fucked-up Millie. The real thrill, the ultimate obsession . No matter how many faces I broke or lives I took, she was the fire I couldn't put out. My chaos, my weakness, my addiction. And fuck if I didn't love it.

Amelia

I stood in front of Emily's mirror, adjusting the laces on the corset of my costume. It was Halloween, a night when masks became the norm, and everyone embraced their hidden selves. This year, I'd chosen something that felt strangely fitting, a dark twist on a classic look.

The outfit was inspired by a Victorian ghost—part haunted, part alluring. The corset was a masterpiece of black lace, cinching my waist like a whispered secret, its intricate patterns weaving a tale of seduction and shadow over my skin. From my hips, black tulle spilled like dark smoke, billowing in ghostly waves. The edges were torn and frayed, as though the dress had been dragged through the depths of some forsaken graveyard. The floor-length hem trailed behind me with an air of haunting elegance, but a bold, jagged slit sliced up the side, revealing just enough skin to hint at danger—a siren's call in the darkness.

My makeup was as dramatic as the outfit—pale foundation that made my skin look almost porcelain, with dark eyeshadow that framed my eyes in shadows, giving them an intense, hollow look. A smear of deep red lipstick completed the look, making me appear as though I'd just sipped from a glass of forbidden wine, or something darker.

To complete the costume, I wore a lace choker around my neck, adorned with a tiny silver pendant that rested against my skin like a cold reminder. I'd pulled my hair back, pinning it loosely so tendrils escaped, framing my face in wisps that added to the haunted allure. The overall effect was... intoxicating. Looking at myself, I almost didn't recognize the woman staring back.

Emily, who was fixing her own costume behind me, let out a low whistle. “You look incredible, Amelia. Like someone straight out of a gothic novel. Mysterious, dark... and a little dangerous.” She winked at me through the mirror .

I forced a smile, but my mind was somewhere else. As I traced my fingers over the lace and caught the faint glimmer of candlelight on my pale skin, I felt that familiar unease coil in my stomach. This wasn’t just a costume; it felt like a mask for something deeper, something I’d been carrying around for longer than I cared to admit.

Emily and I stepped out into the cool night air, my heels clicking softly on the pavement as we waited for our ride. The Uber pulled up a few minutes later, and we slid into the back seat, greeted by the faint hum of music and the soft glow from the streetlights outside.

Emily leaned over, nudging me playfully. “Tonight, we’re letting go,” she declared with a grin. “No thinking about work, no stressing over anything. Just drinks, dancing, and forgetting the world even exists.”

The driver glanced back, briefly taking in our costumes. “Big plans tonight?” he asked, his voice polite.

Emily giggled, flashing him a mischievous smile. “Oh, you know, just the usual Halloween madness. Probably won’t even remember half the night.” She shot me a look, raising her eyebrows as if to say, Isn’t that right?

I forced a smile, nodding. The truth was, I felt more tense than ever, like something dark was lurking just at the edge of my vision. I couldn’t shake the feeling of being watched. But I pushed the thought aside. Tonight was about escape, about forgetting .

As the city lights blurred past, Emily was already talking about our plans, about the

costume contest she was determined to win and all the terrible, sugary cocktails we'd try. I leaned my head against the seat, closing my eyes for a moment, letting her voice fade into a hum. I was determined to drown my anxieties in laughter and drinks tonight, to feel free, if only for a few hours. I deserved that, didn't I?

When we finally arrived, the venue was alive with music and laughter, decorations casting strange shadows over everyone. Emily grabbed my hand, pulling me toward the entrance. "Come on, Amelia! Let's make this night unforgettable," she shouted over the music, her voice filled with excitement .

Emily and I weaved through the crowd, making our way to the bar, where flashing neon lights glinted off bottles of every color. The energy of the place was contagious, a feverish mix of laughter, music, and dark, theatrical costumes. Emily ordered us two shots, a wicked grin spreading across her face as she handed me mine.

"To tonight!" she shouted, raising her glass. "To losing ourselves and forgetting everything else."

I clinked my glass to hers, feeling the burn as the shot slid down my throat. The warmth spread through me, loosening something tense in my chest. We ordered another, laughing as we tossed it back, and then a third, our nerves melting into something reckless.

Before long, Emily pulled me onto the dance floor, the beat of the music vibrating through my bones. I let myself go, closing my eyes and moving to the rhythm, swaying in time with the crowd around us. For the first time in what felt like forever, I wasn't looking over my shoulder. I wasn't thinking about Damien, or the control he seemed to hold over my life. Here, I was just Amelia, blending into the chaos, free to get lost in the music .

We danced, laughing and cheering when a favorite song came on, our movements

getting bolder, looser with every passing minute. The music pulsed around us, a hypnotic thrum that felt like it was rewriting my heartbeat.

Eventually, Emily tugged me back toward the bar, her cheeks flushed, eyes bright with a mischievous glow. “One more round?” she asked, though it was more of a declaration than a question.

I laughed, nodding. “Absolutely.”

We ordered another set of drinks, then another, toasting to every silly thing we could think of: to bad decisions, to reckless nights, to losing ourselves and finding new versions. With each sip, the world felt a little lighter, the dark edges blurring into something thrilling, almost magical .

We returned to the dance floor, our movements growing wilder as we let the night pull us deeper into its grasp. For once, the weight of everything seemed far away, tucked out of sight.

The beat of the music echoed through the air as I swayed, letting the rhythm guide me, when I suddenly felt the unmistakable pressure of a body pressing against mine. For a moment, I froze, caught off guard, not sure if it was just a stranger lost in the crowd. But then I felt the warmth, the presence, and the familiar weight of someone who knew me.

I turned around, my breath catching in my throat as my eyes met his. Jake .

It had been over a month since I’d last seen him. That night—our date —lingered in the back of my mind, the only moment when I had truly felt a flicker of something that wasn’t darkness, something real and warm. But after that night? Nothing. No messages. No calls. I’d tried to brush it off, telling myself it was nothing, that he was just busy, or that he had lost interest.



He smiled, that familiar, charming grin that had always put me at ease. His eyes locked onto mine with a mixture of surprise and something more, something unreadable.

“Amelia,” he said, his voice warm but with an underlying tension I couldn’t place. “You look... incredible .”

My heart skipped a beat, but I quickly masked the wave of emotions crashing over me. I hadn’t expected to see him here, certainly not like this. I had tried to move past him, to bury any thoughts of what could have been. But now, seeing him again, that flicker of something—longing, confusion—surfaced.

“Jake,” I said, my voice steady, though I could feel the rush of heat flooding my cheeks. “I didn’t think I’d see you here.”

His smile faltered for just a second, but then it returned, a little too quickly. “I figured I’d come by. I wanted to see you again.”

The words sounded simple enough, but there was something hidden beneath them. My mind raced, but I couldn’t decipher his intentions. He hadn’t tried to reach out after that night—why now?

Before I could ask, he took a step closer, the music pulsing between us, the space closing in. He leaned in slightly, lowering his voice just enough so only I could hear. “I’ve missed you, Amelia,” he murmured, his breath hot against my ear .

The words stirred something inside me. A mix of confusion, desire, and unease. I hadn’t expected this, not in the middle of the chaos and noise, not after everything that had happened. And yet, there was something magnetic about him, something that pulled at me, even as I knew I should resist.

“Jake,” I started, my voice a little too shaky, “why didn’t you—?”

He cut me off before I could finish, a hand lightly brushing my arm. “Shh, don’t think about it,” he whispered. “Just dance with me, Amelia. Just for tonight.”

I couldn’t help it. Something in his voice, that edge of urgency and desire , was impossible to ignore. Against my better judgment, I let him take my hand, pulling me closer to him as the music vibrated through my body.

We moved together, the pulse of the bass matching the rhythm of my heart. The lights flickered above us, casting wild shadows that danced in time with our bodies. For a moment, I forgot everything. The chaos, the dark thoughts, Damien’s haunting presence—it all blurred as I allowed myself to be swept away in the rhythm of the night .

Jake’s hands were steady on my hips, guiding me, his touch firm and possessive, but not harsh. He moved with a confidence that seemed to pull something out of me, something I had buried. The liquor in my veins made everything hazy, the alcohol loosening the tight grip I had on my emotions.

I didn’t want to think anymore. I didn’t want to feel the weight of everything pressing on me. The tension I had carried for so long started to slip away, replaced by a heady warmth that pooled in my chest. My body moved with his, our steps flowing, the rhythm undeniable.

I could feel his breath on the back of my neck, the heat of his body pressing closer as he drew me in. The scent of his cologne, familiar and intoxicating, mixed with the smoke and alcohol in the air. His touch sent a spark through me, igniting something I thought I had extinguished. The thought of Damien, of my tangled emotions and twisted past, flickered briefly, but it was drowned out by the pulse of the music and the way Jake’s body felt against mine.

I wasn't thinking about anything. I didn't want to. I wanted to lose myself in this moment, to give in to the heat between us. His hands slid to my waist, pulling me even closer, our bodies pressed tight as the music swelled around us.

"You feel good," he murmured into my ear, his lips brushing my skin. The sound of his voice, low and husky, sent a shiver down my spine. I couldn't deny the way his words made me feel, the pull in my stomach that only intensified as he kept moving with me.

I let out a soft laugh, the sound breathless and almost foreign to my own ears. "I don't even know what I'm doing right now," I admitted, my words slurring slightly, the liquor making everything blur in the best possible way.

Jake grinned, a slow, confident smile. "You're doing just fine," he said, his voice a little too smooth, too knowing. "Just let go, Amelia. Let go of everything."

For a moment, I almost did. The world, the mess of it all, faded into the background. All that existed was the heat of his body against mine, the rhythm of our movements, and the way his hands seemed to burn through the thin fabric of my dress. His lips brushed against my neck, sending waves of shivers through me .

But beneath it all, a small part of me—the part I couldn't ignore—knew this was dangerous . This moment, this intoxicated escape, couldn't last. But I pushed the thought away, too caught up in the music, in the feeling of his body moving with mine, in the feeling of being wanted , even if it was just for tonight.

I didn't want to stop.

I didn't stop.

Jake's hand was suddenly on my arm, pulling me away from the dance floor with a

firm but gentle urgency. I barely registered the music around us, the heat of the crowd, as his fingers dug into my skin, guiding me through the sea of bodies. His grip was possessive, but not unpleasant, a silent command I couldn't ignore.

"Come with me," he murmured, his voice low and purposeful, as though he had been planning this the entire time. I didn't question it. I didn't want to. His touch, the way he led me away from the chaos, felt oddly reassuring, like I was being drawn into something safe, something familiar, even though I knew it wasn't .

I glanced back at the bar, where Emily was still chatting with some guy, laughing flirtatiously, her attention fully absorbed in the conversation. I didn't want to pull her away. She was fine. She was doing her thing.

The world blurred, the pounding bass of the club fading into the background as Jake dragged me toward the shadowed corner near the back door. My heels clicked unevenly against the floor, the alcohol in my veins turning everything into a hazy dream. The lights above flickered like broken stars, casting fleeting shadows over Jake's determined face. His grip on my wrist was firm, almost bruising, and it sent a jolt of heat through my body, igniting something reckless in me.

"Jake..." My voice faltered, barely audible over the chaos of my own pulse. But I didn't stop him. I didn't want to.

He spun me around, pinning me against the gritty wall. The cold surface bit through the thin fabric of my dress, but the sharp sensation only heightened the fire spreading through me. Jake's body pressed into mine, his heat overwhelming, his breath brushing against my ear as he whispered, "You're not running away from this, Amelia. Not tonight. "

His words weren't a plea—they were a command. And God help me, I didn't want to resist.

His lips crushed against mine, demanding and consuming. The kiss was wild, all teeth and tongue, the taste of alcohol on his breath blending with the bitterness of my own. His hands roamed down my sides, wanting and hungry. My body arched instinctively, pressing into him, needing more, craving everything.

“Fuck, Amelia,” he growled against my lips, his voice thick with desperation. “You feel so goddamn good.”

I gasped as his hands slid beneath my dress, the cool air brushing against my thighs. He hooked his fingers into the thin fabric of my panties, tugging them aside with a roughness that sent a shiver down my spine. His cock was hard, pressing against me, the friction of it grazing my clit making me moan softly, my head falling back against the wall.

“ Jake ,” I breathed, my voice shaky, caught somewhere between fear and pure, unfiltered desire.

“ Shhh ,” he murmured, his lips trailing down my neck, his teeth scraping against my skin. “Just let me have you.”

The head of his cock slid against me, teasing, slick with both our arousal. I gasped at the sensation, the ache between my legs growing unbearable. He rubbed himself against my clit, slow and deliberate, his eyes locked onto mine, burning with lust.

When he finally pushed inside me, I let out a choked moan, my nails digging into his shoulders as he filled me completely. The stretch was overwhelming, a mix of pleasure and pain that left me breathless. Jake’s hands gripped my hips, pulling me tighter against him as he began to move, his thrusts hard and unrelenting. Each one sent a wave of ecstasy crashing through me, drowning out every rational thought.

“ Fuck ,” he groaned, his voice hoarse as he buried himself deeper, his movements

growing messier, more desperate. “You feel so perfect. Like you were made for this.”

I couldn't speak, couldn't think. All I could do was cling to him, my body trembling as the pleasure built to an unbearable peak. The heat between us was consuming, a fire that threatened to burn us alive. My moans mixed with his growls, the sound of our bodies colliding filling the dark corner of the club.

“ Jake ,” I whimpered, my voice breaking as I felt the tension in my core snap. My orgasm hit me like a freight train, my body convulsing around him as I cried out, lost in the haze of sensation.

“Yes. That's it.” Jake rasped, his thrusts becoming erratic as he chased his own release. His grip on my hips tightened, and with one final, shuddering thrust, he groaned loudly, his body shaking against mine as he came undone.

We stayed there for a moment, tangled together, our breaths ragged and uneven. The weight of what just happened began to creep in, but I pushed it aside, letting myself linger in the intoxicating aftermath of pleasure.

*Source Creation Date: August 7, 2025, 3:15 am*

Amelia

When I stumbled through my front door, the world spun in lazy, drunken circles, the remnants of the night clinging to me like a lingering haze. I couldn't even recall how I'd gotten home. I could barely make it across the room without tripping over my own feet. The air felt thick and heavy, my body leaden with exhaustion and alcohol.

I kicked off my heels, feeling the cool floor beneath my bare feet, a small relief that grounded me momentarily. My bed seemed miles away, but somehow, I found my way there, collapsing onto the mattress without even bothering to change. The room swayed gently around me, and I let myself sink into the softness, too worn out to care about anything else .

As I lay there, my thoughts blurred, drifting between fragments of the night—the heat of Jake's lips, the way we'd laughed and moved together, the freedom I'd felt in those fleeting moments. A drowsy smile tugged at my lips, but it faded as the memory of Damien's words clawed its way back, piercing through the fog in my mind.

But I was too tired, too lost in the haze, to dwell on it. I closed my eyes, letting the darkness swallow me whole, drifting off as if nothing else mattered, as if sleep might wash away every worry, every consequence, even if just for a little while.

A gentle touch brushed against my hair, fingertips trailing down to my cheek. I murmured in sleepy satisfaction, leaning into the warmth. It felt comforting, almost tender, and my lips curled into a slight smile. But as my eyes slowly fluttered open, that warmth turned cold.

Damien was lying beside me, his face just inches from mine. He was on his side, propped up on one elbow, watching me in the dim, shadowy light that filtered through the window. The faint glow from outside barely lit his face, but it was enough to catch the dangerous glint in his eyes, fixed intently on me .

I sucked in a sharp breath, instinctively shrinking back, but my head throbbed in protest. The alcohol still lingered, fogging my mind, making it hard to grasp the reality of him being here. My pulse quickened, shock mingling with confusion.

“Damien...?” My voice came out weak, barely more than a whisper.

His hand didn’t move from my face; his thumb traced the line of my cheekbone, the touch deceptively gentle. “Didn’t expect me?” he murmured, his tone low, with that familiar, unsettling edge. His gaze flickered over me, taking in my disheveled state, the remnants of the night written all over me.

My mind raced, piecing together fragments of memory—the party, the dancing, Jake . A wave of unease washed over me. I tried to sit up, but his hand was suddenly at my shoulder, pressing me back down, firm yet maddeningly soft.

“Had fun tonight?” he asked, his voice laced with something dangerous, something that made the hair on my arms stand on end .

I opened my mouth to respond, but a muffled sound made me stop. My eyes narrowed in confusion, and I frowned, glancing toward the source. In the dark corner of my room, where the shadows pooled thick and heavy, a figure was kneeling on the floor.

Jake .

My heart dropped. He was bound with rope, wrists tied tightly behind his back, his



mouth covered with a strip of tape. His eyes were wide, wild with fear, silently pleading. I scrambled upright, a horrified gasp tearing from my throat as I took in the scene, my mind barely able to process it.

“What... Damien, what have you done?” I choked out, voice trembling.

Damien didn't look at me. He was watching Jake, a cruel smirk twisting his lips. He leaned back leisurely, as though this was all a sick game meant purely for his amusement. “Didn't I tell you to stay silent ?” he said, his tone dangerously low, almost mocking .

Jake flinched, visibly struggling against his bonds, his muffled protests barely audible under the tape. I felt my stomach twist, a sickening cocktail of fear and guilt roiling inside me. I reached for Damien's hand, desperate, pleading.

“ Please , let him go,” I whispered, voice raw with panic.

Damien's eyes locked on me, dark and electric, his lips curling into a savage, mocking smile. “Let him go?” he repeated, as if I'd told the funniest joke in the world. His grip on my chin tightened, his fingers digging into my skin hard enough to leave marks. He dragged my face closer, his whiskey eyes boring into mine with unhinged intensity. “You think I'd just let that slide , Millie? That I'd let some bastard put his fucking hands on what's mine ?”

I twisted in his hold, panic clawing at me, but his grip was unrelenting. “Damien, please! He didn't know! He didn't—he's innocent . This is my fault. Let him go. I'm begging you.”

He released me suddenly, and I stumbled back, my heart pounding so hard it drowned out the world. Then, he slowly rose from the bed, his gaze fixed on Jake with a terrifying calmness. Each step he took toward him was deliberate, almost calculated,

as if savoring the moment. His shadow loomed over Jake, who was visibly shaking, helpless against the ropes binding him.

“I warned you, Amelia,” Damien said, his voice a low, dangerous murmur that echoed in the silence of the room. “I told you what would happen if you let him touch you. But you didn’t listen.”

My heart hammered in my chest, the weight of his words sinking in. Then, a glint of light caught my eye—a silver gleaming in Damien’s hand. I blinked, dread pooling in my stomach as I realized what it was: a knife, sharp and cold, reflecting the dim light that seeped through the window.

“Damien,” I whispered, my voice shaking as dread coursed through me. “What are you doing?”

He didn’t answer for a while, his focus now entirely on Jake, who was slumped against the corner, bound and gagged, his eyes wide with terror. Damien stepped toward him with an agonizing slowness, each step deliberate, calculated, like a lion circling its prey. He twirled the knife lazily between his fingers, the movement almost casual, like it was a toy instead of a weapon.

He turned slightly, just enough to look back at me, an unreadable expression on his face. “What I have to,” he said, voice dripping with a twisted calm that chilled me to the bone. “I can’t give empty promises. You understand that, don’t you?”

I shook my head, too stunned to move, but my voice finally broke through, trembling. “Please, don’t... Damien, please. This isn’t what you want.”

Jake’s muffled whimpers filled the room as Damien crouched down in front of him, his grin widening as he grabbed a fistful of Jake’s hair. He yanked his head back, forcing their gazes to meet. “And you?” Damien hissed, his voice low and venomous,

leaning closer until his face was inches from Jake's. He tilted his head, feigning curiosity. "I told you to stay away from her, didn't I?" His grip tightened as he gave a cruel tug on Jake's hair, making him wince.

A sick realization dawned on me: Damien must have warned Jake to stay away from me. That was why Jake hadn't reached out since our date, why he'd vanished without explanation. The pieces clicked together, leaving a bitter taste in my mouth .

Jake's eyes darted to me, a mixture of regret and apology flashing through them. But Damien yanked his head back, forcing him to focus solely on him. "Do you think you could ignore me?" Damien taunted, his voice as sharp as the blade he held. He pressed the flat of the knife against Jake's cheek, a cold threat that was just a heartbeat away from violence. "I told you what the price would be, didn't I?"

I stepped forward, desperate, voice trembling. "Damien, please—this is insane . Just let him go. This isn't who you are—"

Damien's gaze flickered toward me, a dangerous gleam in his eyes as he stood behind Jake, his grip tightening on his hair, pulling his head back with ruthless control. Jake's face contorted with fear, his muffled pleas barely audible under the tape. Damien pressed the blade against Jake's neck, his movements slow and deliberate, like he was savoring each moment.

"Oh, Millie," he murmured, his voice almost affectionate, but laced with something twisted and unhinged. "You still don't understand, do you?" He tilted his head slightly, his gaze locked on mine, the cold amusement in his eyes sending a shiver down my spine. "There's no limit to what I'll do for you."

My legs felt rooted to the floor as I watched, horror gripping me, my heart pounding so loudly it drowned out everything else. "Damien, please ... this isn't... he's not... you don't have to do this," I stammered, desperation clear in every word. But he only

smirked, his eyes flicking between me and the knife in his hand, as if my fear was merely fuel to him.

And then, with a swift, vicious motion, Damien's blade sliced through Jake's neck . The sound wasn't loud—a wet, almost muted whisper of metal against flesh—but it echoed in my skull like a scream .

He killed him.

He killed Jake .

He killed him because of me .

Jake's body jerked violently, his breath hitching in a strangled gurgle as his hands clawed instinctively at his throat. Blood , dark and thick, spilled between his fingers, cascading in angry torrents down his chest and pooling at his knees. It soaked into the soft carpet beneath him—a vivid, horrifying reminder of Damien's promise, now fulfilled .

I stood frozen, eyes wide as life drained from Jake right in front of me. The carpet, that same soft carpet Damien had taunted me about, was now smeared in blood, dark and spreading like a grotesque stain that wouldn't just be on the floor—it would be etched into my mind forever . My mind screamed at me to do something, anything, but my body was paralyzed, bound by fear and disbelief.

Finally, the shock broke, and my body jolted to life. I staggered forward, rushing to Jake's side as my knees hit the blood-soaked carpet. My hands trembled as I reached out, fingers pressing against his shoulders, shaking him desperately. “Jake,” I choked out, my voice barely a whisper, almost a prayer. “ Please , wake up.”

But he was gone . His skin, once warm, was already chilling beneath my touch, and

his eyes stared blankly past me, seeing nothing. I shook him harder, the denial clawing through me as his blood spread across my hands, warm and thick, covering me as if it were my own guilt pouring from his veins. The coppery scent filled my nostrils, almost suffocating, mixing with the tears that spilled down my face .

I couldn't breathe. The weight of it all crashed over me, drowning me in horror and regret. I cradled his head in my hands, whispering his name, begging , as if somehow my voice alone could call him back.

“Now,” Damien growled, his hand clamping around my jaw with a force that made my bones ache. The bloodied knife hovered mere inches from my face, its metallic edge catching the faint light, a sinister gleam that made my stomach twist. He dragged me up by my jaw, fingers digging in, leaving bruises that would stay long after he'd gone.

“It's your turn to learn, Millie,” he whispered, his voice a dark promise that chilled me to the core. My breath caught as a wild panic flared through me, every nerve screaming that this was it , that he was about to end me right here, next to the lifeless body on my floor. My eyes widened, a frantic beat hammering in my chest, but he only smirked, feeding off my fear.

His hand shifted to my throat, fingers curling around it with bruising force, like a vice tightening just enough to remind me who held the power. He stepped forward, his strides relentless and calculated, backing me up with every step. I couldn't do anything but stumble, his grip controlling my every movement. The pressure against my neck wasn't enough to cut off my breath completely—but it was a threat , sharp and palpable, a silent promise of what he could do if he chose to.

My legs hit the edge of the bed, and before I could steady myself, he shoved me down, his strength unyielding. The mattress creaked beneath me as I scrambled back on instinct, desperate to put space between us. But there was nowhere to go—no

escape from him , no escaping this .

But even now, I didn't know if I really wanted to escape him.

His hand shot out, clamping around my ankle as he dragged me back toward him. The world tilted, the air shifting as he climbed onto the bed, settling between my legs.

His eyes were wild, whiskey flames burning with madness , flickering between hunger and fury. He grinned—a dark, twisted grin that sent a bolt of fear and excitement straight through me.

“Look at you,” Damien growled, his voice rough and manic, like he was barely holding himself together. “Fucking perfect , even now. Even after letting that piece of shit touch you. ”

I barely had time to react before his hands moved to the delicate fabric of my dress. A flash of silver caught my eye—the knife glinting in his hand, dripping with Jake's blood. My breath hitched as he slid the blade along the black tulle, tearing it apart with savage precision. The soft rip of fabric filled the room, each shred falling away, leaving me in my corset and lace underwear, exposed beneath his consuming gaze.

I flinched as the knife moved again, the tip grazing my lips with unnerving gentleness. My stomach twisted, bile rising as I realized what coated the blade. Jake's blood . His death lingered on the cold steel, and now it brushed against me like some sick reminder of Damien's dominance.

He chuckled, low and dark, his eyes locked on mine as the blade trailed downward. It kissed the column of my throat, sending a shiver through me, then slid slowly over the curve of my chest. The pressure was light, teasing.

“I have to fix you,” he murmured, his voice dripping with a twisted kind of reverence.

“Cleanse you from him. Wipe away every fucking trace he left on what’s mine .”

His words hung heavy in the air, laced with venom and obsession. The knife pressed against the corset now, vibrating faintly with the beat of my heart, as though it could feel the chaos raging inside me.

And that chaos... It was wrong . My body betrayed me, heat pooling low in my stomach even as fear clawed at my throat. My pulse quickened, not just from fear but from something far darker, something I couldn’t explain.

Jake’s blood was on my lips , and somehow, that thought set me on fire .

The realization hit like a freight train, sick and twisted , but undeniable. My breathing hitched as the sensation built, shame and panic tangling with that inexplicable heat.

Damien saw it. Of course, he did. His smirk deepened, his voice dropping to a venomous whisper.

“You feel it, don’t you?” he said, dragging the knife lower, savoring every shudder that wracked my body. “You feel how fucking ruined you are. Don’t lie to me, Millie. Not now.”

I shook my head, the denial spilling out in a broken gasp. But even I didn’t believe it. Damien’s gaze burned into me, as if daring me to deny the truth—to deny him .

As I felt him pushing the knife handle deeper inside me, I felt the heat rising, a betrayal that seeped into every inch of my skin, my pulse quickening against my will.

My body defied me, reacting with an intensity that made me weak . I squeezed my eyes shut, hoping to keep myself composed, but then he twisted the knife, forcing a moan out of my mouth.

I knew that was wrong , but I couldn't help myself.

“ Ah ,” he breathed, voice dripping with satisfaction. “Your body knows who it belongs to, even if you refuse to admit it. ”

He gripped the blade with a fierce determination, the metal biting into his skin as he pressed the handle deeper into me, pushing and pulling in a slow, relentless rhythm. Blood began to seep from his palm, the crimson streaks staining my pussy, winding lines that spread with each motion, as if he were marking me, branding me.

Another moan escaped my lips, one I couldn't hold back, as his grip tightened around my throat. The sound seemed to provoke something primal in him, a dark satisfaction flaring in his eyes as he watched me struggle beneath him. Before I could protest, he leaned down, his breath hot against my skin, and his teeth grazed the curve of my neck, almost teasing.

And then he sank his teeth into my flesh, a possessive bite that sent a sharp pulse of heat through my body. I felt his low, guttural growl reverberate against my skin, dark and dangerous, as he held me in place, fucking me relentlessly with the knife-handle. My heart pounded wildly, pleasure flooding my head. His fingers were keeping me pinned as his bite softened but lingered, his mouth tracing a path of raw, bruising possession along my neck.

He paused for a moment, glancing at the crimson-streaked mess beneath his hand, a strange satisfaction curling at the edges of his mouth as he observed his handiwork.

With a low, almost inaudible growl, he resumed, each movement a twisted display of control, as though he were pouring every dark impulse into the act. The blood continued to flow, mingling with my own juices, staining it further as he lost himself in the rhythm—an act of possession , of claiming .



My skin tingled, painfully aware of the pleasure building at the pit of my stomach, of how close I was, of the control he wielded over me in that moment. I hissed as I felt his lips press against the mark he left on my neck, a twisted, dark kiss meant not for comfort, but for dominance. He whispered against my skin, his voice dark and full of desire, “Every part of you is mine.” then, he pushed the handle deep inside of me, leaving it there.

With a swift, merciless tug, he pulled me out of bed, forcing me down, the impact resonating through me as my knees hit the blood-soaked floor. I bit my bottom lip as the tip of the blade between my legs met the hard floor, making the handle move inside me.

He kept his grip firm, tilting my head back just enough to meet his gaze, his eyes alight with a twisted satisfaction. His free hand traced down the side of my face, almost gently. The light brush of his fingers was deceptive, mocking the power he held, his thumb grazing over my lips, pressing just enough to force them open slightly.

“You look perfect like this,” he murmured darkly, his voice a low, possessive growl that sent a shiver down my spine. “On your knees, exactly where you should be.”

“Now,” Damien pulled down his pants and underwear in one swift move, revealing his thick, hard cock. I gulped as he started stroking himself with his bloodied hand, smearing the crimson liquid all over himself, the sight turning me on even more. “why don’t you open that little mouth for me, hmm?”

He pulled my head closer to him, the hint of satisfaction in his eyes was unmistakable as he brushed his bloody cock against my face; he reveled in my helplessness, fed off it, savoring the tension in every inch of my body. And I liked it.

The intensity in his eyes was almost unbearable—dark, consuming, as if he could see

right through me, right down to the part of me that didn't want him to stop.

He pressed the tip of his cock against my lips, firm and insistent , leaving no choice but to open my mouth and take it in. He pushed it past my lips with a force that bordered on cruel, his thickness filling my mouth so completely, leaving me struggling for air.

His thumb was brushing over my cheek with a dark amusement, watching my every reaction with a twisted satisfaction as my lips struggled to wrap around his length, “Struggling already? You’re going to have to do better than that.”

His hand pressed firmly on my jaw, holding me in place as he pushed his cock into my mouth, each movement slow, deliberate, yet unrelenting. In and out, the hard cock filled every inch of space, and I felt the pressure against my lips as he forced it deeper , as if testing my limits, his fingers curling possessively under my chin to keep me steady. My mind went hazy, every coherent thought scattering under the weight of his control, as if he were deliberately trying to erase them, leaving me with only the sensation, only his presence consuming me completely.

My breath hitched each time he withdrew, only to push it back in with a twisted satisfaction, watching me with that intense, predatory gaze that sent shivers down my spine. It was maddening —the way he seemed to enjoy toying with my restraint, stretching the boundaries of my compliance, forcing me to surrender inch by inch.

I moaned around his cock as the tip of the knife-handle I had inside me made contact with the floor. And I repeated the same movement again , and again , feeling it twist inside me and driving me crazy .

The room seemed to fade around us, the only thing I could focus on was his relentless rhythm, making it harder and harder to catch my breath, harder still to resist the pull he had over me.

His smirk deepened as he grabbed me from the throat, pulling me up slightly, his voice low and taunting. “Did I give you permission to pleasure yourself?” he murmured, his eyes glinting with dark satisfaction. I struggled against his hold as his hand tightened around my neck. “You can come only when I allow you to. Do you understand?”

A slap to my face made it clear that he was waiting for an answer. I struggled to nod. “Good girl.”

He continued thrusting into my mouth, in and out, making me choke on my own saliva while struggling to breathe. I felt powerless , used , humiliated , yet my pussy was clenching around the handle as the heat kept rising.

With a loud thud, my knees came into contact with the floor as he released my neck from his hold. Damien didn’t give me any time to breathe properly as he pushed himself on top of me, he twisted the handle one last time, his dark eyes fixated on my face, before pulling it out of me, replacing it with his hard cock instead.

My eyes rolled to the back of my head as he rolled his hips into mine. When I looked back into his eyes, they were as dark as the night itself, a bottomless abyss that seemed to pull me in deeper with every passing second. His gaze was intense , sharp , like it could cut through me if he wanted. But there was something else there too, something I hadn’t noticed before. A flicker of, sadness ? It was buried beneath the coldness, hidden so deep that it seemed like it wasn’t meant to be seen. It was fleeting, like a shadow slipping across a surface, but it was there—just enough to make my heart stop for a beat.

I wanted to look away, to ignore it, but the pull was too strong. There was a dark allure in those eyes, something magnetic that made it impossible to escape. He looked human for once, and that terrified me. It made the distance between us feel even more unreachable.

Without thinking, without any ounce of hesitation, my hands moved on their own. I buried them deep into his dark, unruly hair, fingers tangling in the strands as I yanked him closer. There was no space left between us, no distance, as if every inch of my body was screaming for him, urging me to close the gap, to fill that emptiness I didn't know existed until now .

His breath hitched, and I could feel the tension in his body, the way he fought against the need rising between us. But I was desperate for him in a way I couldn't explain. With every inch he tried to pull back, I pressed harder, digging my fingers into his skin, holding him captive to the chaos we were creating.

His resolve shattered, crumbling under the pressure of my touch, my need . And with a low growl that sent a shiver down my spine, he surrendered to the kiss. I felt his cock twitch inside me as his lips crashed into mine, hungry , as if he, too, had been holding back for far too long. The intensity of it was suffocating , consuming —like a fire that had finally found its fuel. There was no room for caution, no room for hesitation. Only the desperate, primal pull that dragged us deeper into this madness.

I bit down on his bottom lip as I came hard, feeling the pleasure explode in every nerve of my body in a way I never experienced before.

Damien hissed at the sharp pain from the bite, the sensation of my teeth sinking into his skin igniting something dark and primal within him. But he didn't pull away—no, he leaned into it, craving more , as if the pain was a reminder of the twisted connection that thrummed between us. His breath came in shallow, uneven gasps as my teeth punctured deeper, the sweet, metallic taste of his blood flooding my mouth. The moment was intoxicating , both violent and tender in its rawness, like the calm before the storm. He gripped my throat again, his fingers digging into my flesh as though he needed to hold onto something to keep himself grounded, even though every part of him was spiraling into something darker .

There was something about that darkness—something intoxicating, something that made my pulse race with a perverse excitement. I let go, surrendering to the pull, letting the pressure build until my body could no longer resist.

His grip on me tightened, fingers digging into my skin like he wanted to consume me, to claim every inch of me, and I let him. I was drowning, but I didn't care. The fog in my head thickened, every thought slipping further away as the world around me twisted and warped into something unrecognizable. The darkness was all-encompassing, seductive in its cruelty, and I let it take me, let it swallow me whole .

I didn't need to breathe. I didn't need anything. All that mattered was him . His presence consumed me, his touch branded me, marking me as his in ways no one else ever could. I wasn't me anymore. I was just a vessel, a part of him now. My body burned with the desire, the ache , and the undeniable pull of him.

And as the last sliver of awareness flickered in my mind, the last thing I heard was his voice, rough and possessive as he came inside me. 'Mine. '

It was a declaration. A promise. And as the darkness claimed me fully, I let it—let him—take me in, knowing that when I woke, I would be his.

*Source Creation Date: August 7, 2025, 3:15 am*

Damien

I sat at the edge of her bed, my fingers twitching against my thigh as I watched her. Amelia . Soft. Still. Completely fucking oblivious. Her breathing was steady, rhythmic, like nothing in her fragile little world had just imploded . She had no idea I was here, no clue how close she was to the darkness sitting inches away, claws itching to rip through the calm she wore like a fucking shield.

I should have felt triumphant. Jake was dealt with—his body a grotesque smear of meat and memory, buried somewhere no one would ever find. The scene was clean, tied up in a neat, bloody bow like I always did. But that victory? Hollow . Meaningless . Because even with that bastard gone, the storm inside me wouldn't settle. All I could see was her. This perfect, breakable thing, lying there so peacefully while I burned .

My jaw tightened as I ran a hand through my hair, still sticky from Jake's blood. I should've washed it off. Should've left. But I couldn't . Something about her anchored me here, like a damn leash I hadn't agreed to wear. She didn't just worm her way under my skin; she fucking dug in . I looked at her and felt that raw, unrelenting itch to destroy —to leave my mark so deeply that no one could ever remove it. Not even her.

The worst part? She had seen me. Earlier, when her eyes locked on mine, it wasn't just fear staring back at me. No. It was something else. Something... alive . She didn't just see a monster. She saw the truth . And instead of breaking, she held onto it. That pissed me off even more.

My fingers curled into fists. I wanted to punish her for it, for making me feel this—this thing I couldn't name. Rage? Lust? Fuck , maybe both. It clawed at me, begged to be unleashed, but something stopped me. That look in her eyes. That flicker of something deeper. She wasn't afraid in the way she should've been. She didn't crumble. She saw me, and instead of recoiling, she dared to reach into the abyss.

I leaned forward, close enough to feel the warmth of her breath against my skin. Her scent flooded my senses—soft, tempting , a perfect contradiction to the chaos she had unleashed in me. She smelled like peace, like safety, and I hated it. Hated her . Wanted to break her until all that softness shattered beneath my hands.

But then that flicker came back, haunting me. I could almost hear her voice, the unspoken challenge in the way she had looked at me. She wasn't just a pawn. She was something else, something dangerous . Not because she was a threat, but because she made me feel human . And that was the most dangerous thing of all.

I reached for the knife lying at the edge of the bed, its blade still smeared with blood. It felt familiar, grounding. The weight of it reminded me who I was— what I was. A killer . A fucking god in the realm of destruction. But as my fingers brushed the cold steel, my gaze drifted back to her. So peaceful. So unaware.

What the fuck are you doing to me, Millie?

The thought came unbidden, clawing at my mind. My grip on the knife tightened as I wrestled with the urge to finish this—to cut her out of my head the only way I knew how. But I didn't. I just sat there, watching her, my mind a twisted battlefield of rage, desire, and something I couldn't name.

She was the one thing I couldn't predict. The one variable I couldn't control. And that made her fucking terrifying ,

I leaned back, gripping the knife like it was the only thing keeping me tethered to reality. The cool steel bit into my palm, the dried blood cracking on my skin, but I couldn't stop the trembling in my hand. Trembling . What the fuck was that? I didn't tremble. I didn't break. Not ever.

She was breaking me.

I glanced down at the jagged slashes on my palm, the ones I'd carved there in a desperate attempt to drown out the chaos in my head. The sting was sharp, but it didn't even scratch the surface of the mess inside me. Pain used to be my anchor—simple, controllable. Something I understood. But now? Now it was just noise. Useless fucking noise that couldn't silence the screaming in my chest.

What the fuck was she doing to me ?

I traced the edge of the knife, watching the blood smear against the blade, dark and clotted. It should've grounded me. The weight of it, the precision. But every thought, every flicker of clarity, was consumed by her . Her eyes , wide and unyielding. Her lips , trembling with defiance. The way she gasped when I got too close, like she was trying so fucking hard not to show fear but couldn't quite hide it.

God, I wanted to break her.

I wanted to shatter every last piece of her resistance, to pull her apart until there was nothing left but the raw, exposed truth of her—because only then would she be mine. Fully , completely mine. But the way she looked at me... it wasn't fear. It wasn't submission. It was something else entirely, something that twisted me up inside and made me feel like I was the one who was unraveling.

I slammed the knife into the mattress, the blade sinking deep into the fabric with a dull thud. My chest heaved, my breath ragged, the firestorm inside me refusing to die



down. She was in my fucking head , crawling under my skin like a parasite I couldn't rip out .

And I hated her for it.

No. That wasn't true.

I hated myself for wanting her the way I did—for craving her in a way that wasn't just about control or power, but something darker. Something I couldn't even put a name to. She wasn't just a game. She wasn't just another body to mold, to shape, to destroy .

She was dangerous .

Not because she could see through me—but because she made me want things I wasn't supposed to want. Because she made me weak in ways I couldn't afford to be. Every time I closed my eyes, I saw her. Not bleeding, not screaming, but smiling . Trusting. Like she could fix me. Like she could see something worth saving.

I didn't want to be saved.

I wanted to fucking destroy her .

But I couldn't. Not yet . Maybe not ever. Because the truth was, the more I tried to break her, the more I was breaking myself .

And I couldn't stop.

I wouldn't stop.

I knew her game. She thought she could fix me, patch me up like I was some cracked

vase waiting for her soft little hands to glue me back together. But she didn't fucking get it. She didn't see the jagged edges or the venom that seeped from the cracks. She didn't understand what I was, what I was capable of.

And it didn't matter. Even if she did—especially if she did—I wasn't letting her go. She was mine. Mine to ruin, mine to keep, mine to destroy .

Her tear-streaked face flickered in my mind, the way her lips trembled as I pressed too far, too hard. That delicious little shiver when the edge of my blade danced across her skin, carving promises I hadn't even begun to fulfill. It wasn't fear in her eyes; it was something far worse. And it made me fucking furious .

She thought I could be saved . She thought I wanted saving.

I didn't.

Breaking her wasn't the goal. Not really. Breaking her would be too easy. I didn't want her shattered on the floor, discarded and lifeless . No, I wanted her in pieces, sure—but pieces I could rebuild . Pieces I could twist into something unrecognizable , something only I could hold together.

I clenched my fists, nails biting into my palms, the pain sharp enough to ground me for a second. Just a second. Then the pull hit again, like gravity with its claws sunk deep into my chest. The urge to take her in my hands and ruin her all over again, was almost too much .

But not yet.

I needed to figure out this sickness in me first, this gnawing, rotting thing that made my heart beat too fast whenever I looked at her. That made my chest feel tight , like it was going to explode from the weight of wanting her.

It wasn't love. I can't feel love. And I didn't want to .

She stirred in her sleep, peaceful, innocent, her breathing soft in the quiet. That face ... it made the things I'd done feel wrong . But it also made me want to ruin her again. To tear her apart piece by piece and make her mine.

Because that's what this was really about. Control . Obsession . I didn't just want her body—I wanted her fucking soul . I wanted to own her in a way no one else ever had.

And she'd hate me for it. She'd fight me. But that was fine. That was how I knew she was worth it.

Because no one else ever mattered. No one ever got close.

Until her .

I forced myself to stand, every step dragging me further into the nightmare I'd built for us. I paused at the door, glancing back one last time.

She was mine.

And one day, she'd fucking understand that. Even if I had to burn us both to ashes to make her see it.

???????? ?

The day had started like any other. I'd gotten dressed in my a dark, tailored suit, the one that made people take me seriously, made them understand that I was a force to be reckoned with. Claire had reached out earlier, her voice calm, but there was an undercurrent of urgency. Another job. Another contract to fulfill. Simple. Precise. A clean hit .

But as I adjusted the tie around my neck, the doorbell rang, interrupting the quiet.

I knew who it was before I even reached the door.

I glanced at the camera feed. A group of officers stood on the other side. Detective Mark Lawson—no surprise there. That damn cop had been sniffing around my business for too long, but this was different. I could almost hear the wheels turning in his head. The suspicion, the assumption that Amelia had given him a lead. I smirked at the thought.

She wasn't done with me. Not by a long shot. She was scared. But she was also confused—unsure of how deep this all went, of what I was truly capable of. She was fighting to hold onto whatever version of herself she thought she had left.

I could feel the edge of something sharp digging at the back of my mind. An urge to reach out, to twist her even more. But that wasn't necessary right now.

I'd made sure to clean every trace of my presence, every trace of what had happened. The blood, the mess... all of it had been wiped away. No evidence. No nothing. I had even been thorough with the cameras. The ones in her place? Gone. I replaced them all with new ones that wouldn't be traced back to me. The police had no idea. Millie had no idea how far I'd gone to make sure I remained untouchable.

I adjusted my cufflinks, the metallic glint of the silver shining under the soft light of my foyer. Taking a slow, measured breath, I walked toward the door.

The doorbell rang again. Impatient little bastards. They had no idea what they were walking into.

I slid my hand over the handle, feeling the weight of it for a moment before turning it. I opened the door, standing in the doorway with the kind of calm composure I'd

perfected over years of walking through the shadows.

Detective Lawson looked at me first, his eyes narrowing as if trying to gauge me, trying to size up a man he still couldn't figure out. The other officers stood behind him, uncertain, ready for whatever they thought they might find. They had no idea.

"Mr. Blackwell," Lawson said, his voice tight but authoritative. "We need to talk."

Detective Lawson's gaze was piercing, scanning me for any sign of guilt, any twitch, any crack in the cool facade I'd built. I'd been in this game too long to let a man like him get under my skin.

"Talk?" I repeated, raising an eyebrow. "What exactly is it you think we need to talk about, Detective?"

Lawson's eyes flicked to the other officers, then back to me. He wasn't as confident as he liked to pretend. He was treading carefully, just like the rest of them. I could smell the fear in the air, thick and unspoken.

"You're under arrest, Mr. Blackwell," Lawson said, his voice steady but laced with a false sense of finality.

I leaned against the doorframe, crossing my arms, letting the weight of his words sink in. I watched him carefully. I wanted to see if he would falter, if there was any moment of weakness in his declaration.

"Under arrest?" I repeated slowly, tasting the words as if they were a joke. "For what exactly, Detective? Do you have an arrest warrant?"

Lawson's eyes tightened. He wasn't prepared for this. His jaw tightened, and I saw the smallest flicker of annoyance. His voice was clipped now, almost forced.

“We’ve got a warrant, Mr. Blackwell,” he said, his hand reaching inside his jacket, pulling out a small envelope and presenting it with the kind of satisfaction that only a man who thinks he’s winning could have .

I glanced at the envelope, then back at him. I didn’t move. Not even a flinch. I already knew what was coming.

“So, this is it then,” I said, a hint of dark amusement in my voice. “You think you’ve got enough to take me down? You think a piece of paper with your precious signatures is going to change the fact that you have nothing ?”

Lawson’s eyes narrowed, but his grip on the envelope tightened. I could see he was trying to mask his growing irritation. He expected me to be rattled, to crumble under the pressure. But that wasn’t who I was. That would never be me.

“That’s exactly why we need to talk, Mr. Blackwell. It’s not just a warrant,” Lawson said, his voice taking on a dangerous edge. “It’s for the murder of Jake Turner.”

I felt something stir inside me at the mention of Jake’s name. A sharp, cold satisfaction bubbled to the surface, threatening to break through my calm exterior. Jake had been a problem. A loose end. But now? Now it didn’t matter .

I studied Lawson’s face, allowing a brief, cold smirk to curl at the corners of my lips. His satisfaction was premature, as I was far from worried.

“You must think I’m stupid,” I said, my voice low, laced with venom. “You don’t have a body. You don’t have a motive. And you sure as hell don’t have any proof .”

Lawson’s eyes darkened, his jaw tightening as he stepped forward. The smugness that had once colored his voice was now gone, replaced by something colder, more calculated.

“You’re wrong, Blackwell,” he said, his voice steady but edged with a dangerous certainty . “We have proof.”

I paused, the words hitting me harder than I expected. Proof?

“Do you?” I asked, my voice now sharper, more controlled, though the muscles in my jaw tightened involuntarily. “What kind of proof? The kind you think you’ve pieced together from your little investigation? ”

Lawson’s eyes flickered, a hint of satisfaction in his expression, but he didn’t elaborate. Instead, he stepped forward, his voice cold and commanding.

“You’ll see soon enough,” he said, his tone a mix of quiet triumph and veiled threat. “For now, you’re coming with us.”

I didn’t flinch. They could think they had me, but I knew the game better than anyone . I’d played this game for years —anticipating every move, calculating every risk.

Lawson’s eyes narrowed, and a cold smile spread across his face. “You’re under arrest for the murder of Jake Turner and for your involvement in other criminal activities we’re still investigating. Don’t make this harder than it has to be, Blackwell.”

I allowed a thin smile to curl on my lips as I met his gaze, unwavering. “I’m sure you have all the evidence you need to make your case. I’ll be happy to speak with my lawyer.”

The officers behind him began to move toward me, but I didn’t let them touch me—not yet. I stepped back, carefully, just enough to maintain a sense of control, letting them think I was about to comply. And when they moved, I went willingly. I knew their eyes were on me, but the truth was, I’d already calculated the entire

situation.

They didn't know what they were walking into.

As I passed through the door, the weight of their hands on my arms was almost laughable . They thought they had me. They thought this was the end. They had no idea how easily I could slip out of their grasp.

I walked to the car with a measured pace, my thoughts already calculating how I would turn the tables. They had no body. No witnesses. No real proof of anything I'd done. And even if they had something—some thread they thought they could pull on—I'd tear it apart in the blink of an eye.

They threw me in the back of the police car, and I leaned back against the seat, my mind a thousand miles away, already plotting my next move. The city passed by in a blur, but I was calm. As always.

Lawson sat in the front, his voice steady, but I could hear the faintest edge of excitement in his tone. He thought he had me cornered, but it was nothing more than a small victory in a much larger game.

I would find my way out. I always did.

?????????

In the stark, fluorescent light of the interrogation room, I sat across from Lawson, calm and composed, hands cuffed and resting on the cold metal table. The detective positioned himself opposite me, pressing play on a screen between us with a look of barely concealed satisfaction. I raised a brow, curiosity flaring as the video began to play.



The footage was grainy, the angle slightly askew, but the scene was unmistakable. It was me—in Amelia’s room, Jake’s lifeless body on the floor, blood staining her carpet in dark, visceral streaks.

A fucking teddy bear ?

My Millie , my clever, clever girl. She had caught me in the act. She had been playing her own game all along, more cunning than I had given her credit for.

An amused smirk tugged at my lips. “ Clever ,” I murmured, not even bothering to mask the spark of excitement coursing through me. A part of me wanted to laugh—she had set this trap so fucking perfectly, had hidden this little eye in her sanctuary where I never thought to look.

Lawson’s eyes narrowed, clearly disturbed by my reaction. “Something funny to you, Blackwell?” he growled, his voice barely masking the hatred he harbored.

“Funny? No, Detective,” I said, allowing the smirk to spread fully now. “Fascinating? Absolutely .” My voice was low, tinged with genuine admiration.

The detective looked thrown, confusion flickering in his gaze, as if he couldn’t fucking understand why I’d be impressed by my own incrimination. But he didn’t understand Millie—not like I did. She wasn’t just my obsession; she was my equal , a worthy adversary in a game only the two of us understood .

He leaned forward, the hard edge of his voice returning. “Doesn’t matter how you feel about it, Blackwell. What matters is that we have you—on tape, committing murder. There’s no talking your way out of this.”

But as he spoke, all I could think of was her face, her eyes when she looked at me that last night—a mixture of fear, defiance, and something that bordered on

understanding. She had seen me for what I was, had anticipated my every move. And she had left this trap waiting, knowing I'd walk right into it.

The cuffs around my wrists felt tight, grounding me in the moment, but my mind was elsewhere. I was already planning, scheming, envisioning how I would get out of this—and how I'd see her again.

“Detective,” I said, leaning back, relaxing as if we were two old friends sharing drinks, “you’re playing a part in a game you don’t understand. You’re nothing more than a pawn.”

Lawson’s face hardened, his frustration palpable. But his anger was nothing more than white noise, a distraction from the thrill coursing through me .

She wanted me to see this. She wanted me to feel this—to know I wasn’t as in control as I’d thought. I would find her. When this was all over, I’d return to her, and she’d see what a masterpiece she’d created by pushing me to the edge.

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Amelia

As I sat alone in my house, the silence wrapped around me, heavy and suffocating. Today had been... surreal . I had stood in that courtroom, looking at him from across the room, and though every inch of me wanted to turn away, I couldn't. His eyes had stayed locked on me, unwavering and intense, as if I was the only person in that packed room, the only one that mattered .

When I testified, I kept my voice steady, gave the answers they needed. I recounted the events with careful precision, sticking to the details from the video. The murder. Just the murder. I showed them only what they needed to see, the evidence that would lock him away, at least for now.

But I hadn't shown them everything .

The secrets I carried, the horrors he'd inflicted on me beyond what that one moment in the video could capture... those were buried. Hidden under the weight of memories that I didn't dare expose to strangers. Maybe it was fear that held me back, a fear of what they'd think , what they'd see in me if they knew everything. Or maybe... maybe a part of me couldn't let go of the twisted bond we shared, a bond that even now, after everything, still had a grip on my mind.

I exhaled, hands trembling as I traced my fingers over my wrist, remembering the bruises that had faded but never left me. No, I hadn't told them everything, hadn't given them the whole truth. And he knew that. In the way he looked at me, there was no accusation, no anger—only that maddening certainty . Like he knew I hadn't truly betrayed him, not fully.

And that realization was almost as terrifying as everything else.

They had sent him to a psychiatric facility instead of a prison. His lawyer, ever calculating and tenacious, had dug up records, evaluations, documents that painted Damien as someone who was mentally unstable, teetering on the edge of madness. They argued that he needed treatment, not confinement. And then the judge looked at me, as if I held some key to understanding him, to justifying this fate.

The judge's request echoed in my mind: 'As his therapist, could you explain Mr. Blackwell's mental state?' It was a question that, in any other case, I could have answered with clinical detachment. But with Damien ? It was different. I'd been pulled into his world, forced to dance to the twisted rhythm he set. And somehow, through that chaos, I'd glimpsed something raw , something I couldn't quite define.

I remembered how I spoke in that courtroom, how the words left my mouth in a controlled, steady tone that I barely recognized as my own. 'Mr. Blackwell's actions... are complex. He exhibits signs of severe trauma, likely from his early childhood, though he remains guarded about the specifics. His behavior suggests deep-rooted psychological disturbances that have influenced his actions. He's... disturbed, your Honor. And in many ways, he's a man trapped within his own darkness. I believe he could benefit from intensive psychiatric treatment.'

I had chosen my words carefully, yet every syllable felt heavy, as if each one was a thread tying me further to him. Perhaps it was fear, or perhaps something I couldn't understand, but those words tipped the scales. The judge had nodded slowly, weighing my statement with the cold finality of authority, and with one stroke of his gavel, Damien's fate was sealed—not to a cell, but to the sterile halls of a psychiatric facility.

And I... I was left with an ache that went beyond my own understanding, a mixture of guilt and regret , something sharp and hollow lodged in my chest. Damien was my

patient. My responsibility. Somewhere along the way, he'd become more than just another name in my files. He was a complex, broken man I thought I could help, someone who carried a rage and pain that I recognized, even if I couldn't admit it.

But I'd failed him.

I was supposed to be his therapist, the one to break through that darkness, to guide him toward something— anything —that resembled healing. Yet here I was, empty-handed and haunted. He was the first patient I couldn't save, the first case where I felt my own sense of control slip away.

And the worst part? There were moments, flashes in our sessions and that terrible night, when I saw a flicker of something real in his eyes. A brief glimmer of vulnerability, a humanity he tried so hard to hide beneath layers of cruelty and indifference. It was fleeting, buried under the weight of his own twisted desires, but it was there. And it left me wondering, questioning every word, every choice I made in that courtroom.

Was it weakness ? Compassion ? Or was it simply my own naïveté, my belief that I could reach him, that I could tame the beast within him? I'd seen countless patients over the years, individuals grappling with trauma, with pain. I was trained to handle it, to guide them toward healing, but Damien... Damien was different . He wasn't just troubled; he was a storm, raging and wild, a force that could not be restrained. And I had foolishly thought I could withstand it.

I closed my eyes, remembering his face, the intensity in his gaze that seemed to pierce through every wall I'd built around myself. He looked at me like he could see every fracture, every flaw. And in those eyes, I saw something I still couldn't name. Was it a plea for help? A challenge? Or something darker, an acknowledgment that he'd bound me to him in ways I couldn't escape ?

But nothing, nothing , haunted me like Jake's mother—her voice breaking, her eyes hollow with grief.

‘How could you?’ she whispered, though her words felt like a scream. ‘How could you do that to him? To Jake ? He trusted you, loved you, and you—‘ her breath hitched—‘you stood there and defended the man who murdered my son !’

I wanted to tell her she was wrong, that it wasn't what it looked like, but the truth clung to me like chains. This was all my fault . Her sobs filled the silence, a sound that tore through me, deeper than guilt, deeper than shame.

‘You chose him ,’ she said finally, her voice breaking apart, ‘over Jake. Over us .’

People would call Damien a monster, a sociopath, and perhaps they were right. But beneath that mask, there was something more—a brokenness , a shadowed soul calling out, even as he pushed everyone away. And I... I'd fallen into that darkness, convinced I could pull him back .

But now, he was beyond my reach, trapped in a world of padded rooms and iron bars. And the knowledge that I was the reason he ended up there.

I thought I would feel relief, that maybe this was closure, a way to sever the twisted bond he'd forced upon me. But instead, I felt an emptiness , a gnawing sense of failure that wouldn't let go.

The silence in my apartment grew heavy, suffocating . No matter how many deep breaths I took, I couldn't shake the feeling of his eyes on me, as though they had followed me out of that courtroom, through the doors, and into my mind. Every time I closed my eyes, I saw them—those cold, piercing eyes, watching me with a mixture of contempt and something else... something closer to recognition .

It was as if, in his own twisted way, Damien had seen through me, stripped away the professionalism, the composed exterior I clung to, and reached into a part of me I kept hidden even from myself. And what disturbed me most was the possibility that he understood me better than I understood him .

I should feel victorious, shouldn't I? I'd escaped, finally . I'd severed the connection that he had bound so tightly around us both. He was gone now, locked away, his darkness contained behind the high walls of an institution. But instead of victory, there was this cold, hollow ache in the pit of my stomach.

That final look in his eyes—how it lingered . There was no rage, no fury. Only certainty. He looked at me like he understood that a part of me had protected him even as I condemned him. And the worst part? He was right .

I could have exposed everything. I could have told the judge, the officers, the lawyers what he had done to me, the terror and cruelty , the bruises he'd left, the nights that haunted me still. But instead, I only showed them the bare minimum, the evidence that proved him a killer, a man capable of taking another life with calculated precision. Nothing more. I hadn't revealed the rest of it—the twisted things he'd done, the way he'd infiltrated my mind, consumed my dreams, drawn me into a labyrinth of fear and fascination.

Why hadn't I told them? It was a question I couldn't answer, no matter how hard I tried to rationalize it. Maybe it was self-preservation, the desire to keep the darkest parts of this ordeal locked away, hidden even from myself. Or maybe... maybe there was a part of me that couldn't bear the thought of truly condemning him.

Damien Blackwell was a murderer, a man marked by violence and cruelty. But I'd seen the shadowed edges of his humanity, brief, fleeting, but undeniable. In those rare moments, I felt like I'd glimpsed something raw, something vulnerable. And in the twisted depths of my mind, I found myself clinging to that, as if it offered some

explanation for the chaos he'd unleashed in my life.

In the courtroom, he'd looked at me as though the whole trial was just another game. There was no fear in his eyes, no regret, only that maddening certainty . And the twisted truth was that part of me believed him. I felt as though, even locked away, he still had his grip on me, invisible but unbreakable, a tie that wouldn't sever no matter how hard I pulled.

I'd convinced everyone in that courtroom of his madness, his need for treatment over punishment. But now, alone with the remnants of my thoughts, I wondered if I was the one who needed help. Because the flicker of humanity I'd seen in him—that rare, fleeting softness—it haunted me. It made me question everything, made me wonder if he was really beyond saving, or if, somewhere beneath all the cruelty, there was something... real .

And what disturbed me most wasn't the thought of him locked away in that sterile facility, far from me. It was the quiet, insidious fear that he was right. That in some twisted, dark part of my soul, he'd marked me in a way I could never erase.



Damien

The walls were too fucking white, the air so sterile it felt like it was eating into my skin. Every goddamn thing about this place was designed to suffocate—to bleach the color out of you, strip you down to nothing. But they didn't know me. They didn't know the black rot in my soul, the fire burning just under my skin. Two years in this pit of shit, and they thought they'd tamed me. Thought I'd bowed my head, licked their boots, swallowed their pills. Fools . Every second I spent in here only sharpened my edges.

The hum of the lights was a taunt. The antiseptic smell was a reminder of how long I'd been buried alive, but it didn't break me—it fueled me. Every rule I followed, every 'yes, doctor' I muttered, was a calculated move. A fucking chess game, and they were all pawns too stupid to realize they were already dead .

Two years. Two long years playing the role of their broken doll, pretending I gave a shit about "treatment plans" and "progress reports." Waiting for my opening. The ones who were supposed to free me? Useless. Slow. Cowards who thought they could leash me, that I wouldn't notice their hesitation. Their betrayal .

But I don't fucking wait on others. I never have. When the world tries to crush you, you don't beg for mercy—you tear its goddamn throat out.

And now? Now, it was time to settle the score.

The asshole standing in front of me—he was the first . Smug little bastard with his clipboard and his glasses, looking down at me like I was an experiment he couldn't

quite figure out. He thought he held the power, thought I was just some rabid dog waiting for a cage. He had no fucking clue he was already dead.

“You look proud of yourself,” I sneered, leaning back in the chair, wrists chained, but my grin feral. “All that talk about fixing me, making me better. You really believe your own bullshit, huh? ”

He didn’t respond—he just scribbled in his little notebook. A flick of his pen, like my words didn’t matter. Like I didn’t matter. And that’s when I knew . He had no fucking idea I held all the cards.

I leaned forward. “You think this is over? You think you won? That’s cute. But let me tell you something, doc. Power isn’t in your degrees or your syringes or those fucking pills you shove down my throat. Power’s in the person willing to burn the whole goddamn gameboard to ash.”

He didn’t flinch. He should have. Because I’d already started playing. The guards outside? They wouldn’t be there much longer. The cameras? Blind spots everywhere, thanks to a little improvisation with some loose wires. And this smug son of a bitch? He wouldn’t make it out of this room.

Two years of waiting, of playing the long con. And now, they’d see. I wasn’t broken. I wasn’t tamed.

I was the fucking storm they never saw coming.

I smirked, looking at the man in front of me— he was the second one, the one who had promised me freedom but had only delivered me to this cold, miserable room for another year of hell . He didn’t realize how badly he’d fucked up. His mistake? He thought I was just some broken monster, a ticking time bomb that would eventually go off. He didn’t realize I was the one who held the fuse.

The blood pooled beneath him, dark and sticky, soaking into the cracks of the floor. I stared down at the body, my chest rising and falling, but not from exhaustion. No, it was something far better—something electric . The rush of control , the taste of power , sharp and sweet, surged through me like a drug. This wasn't just satisfaction—it was ecstasy .

I wiped a hand across my face, smearing blood along my jaw, and laughed. Not a quiet chuckle—a full, manic cackle that echoed off the walls. “ Traitor ,” I spat, kicking the lifeless heap at my feet. “You thought you could fucking outsmart me? Thought I wouldn't see it coming? Pathetic .”

The smirk stretched across my face, a predator's grin, as I stepped over the body, the soles of my boots leaving crimson prints in my wake. They'd all pay . Every goddamn one of them who thought they could cage me, control me, betray me .

Now, it was her turn.

Amelia .

She probably thought she was safe . Thought her quiet little life had gone on, untouched, as if I was nothing but a bad dream she'd woken up from. Poor, stupid Millie. She had no fucking clue.

I hadn't forgotten. Not for a single second in those two years of sterile walls and fluorescent lights. She was in my veins, under my skin, clawing at my mind like a beautiful, venomous ghost. She thought she was free of me, thought she'd escaped. But freedom was an illusion .

She didn't just see me— she made me . The spark that lit the fuse, the reason I'd become everything I am. Amelia didn't realize it then, but when she looked into my eyes, she made a promise. A silent, unspoken vow. And I never forget a promise .

The first betrayal had been hers, and I can't let it slide.

I could already picture it—her wide eyes when she sees me again, the way her breath will hitch, her heart will race. She'll feel it then, the inevitability of it all. She'll know that no matter how far she ran, no matter how hard she tried to forget, she was always mine .

I licked the corner of my mouth, tasting the salt of someone else's blood, and grinned wider. "Oh, Millie," I whispered to the silence. "You're gonna feel everything I did. And then some."

Because this time, I wasn't coming to play.

I was coming to destroy her. To remind her that monsters don't just disappear. They wait . They grow sharper, hungrier . And now? Now I was free .

I shoved the door open, the hinges screaming under my force, the kind of sound that cuts through silence like a blade. The air outside hit me like a drug—heavy, raw, electric. My lungs burned as I dragged it in, but it wasn't enough. It was never enough.

The world had changed while they had me locked away, but one thing stayed the same. Her . The only thing that ever mattered. The one thing I couldn't rip out of my head, no matter how deep I clawed. She was inevitable, a fucking gravity I couldn't escape.

And now? Now she was going to feel it. All of it . Every twisted, aching part of me I'd kept bottled up for years.

I leaned against the brick wall, swallowed by shadows, my eyes fixed on her. She was right there, standing in that café, her back turned to the window. The world around

her was chaos—coffee machines whirring, people laughing, chatting, oblivious. But to me? She was the only goddamn thing that existed.

She didn't know I was there, didn't feel my gaze cutting through the glass, didn't sense the tension pulling tight like a noose around her perfect little bubble. I watched how she moved, the way her head tilted when she laughed, that same laugh that used to echo in my ears long after she was gone. It hadn't changed. None of her had .

She was still so fucking unaware , wasn't she? Still living in that cozy little world where monsters like me were just stories to scare children, not shadows that stalked your every step .

Her perfume was the same. God, I could smell it from here. Sweet, sharp, invasive—it clung to my memory like blood on my hands. I could taste it, feel it thick on my tongue, just like before.

Her smile was the same, too. That curve of her lips, soft and sweet, like she had no clue how close she was to everything unraveling. I wanted to ruin it. Wanted to see it twisted into something darker, something raw.

Tonight, she wouldn't be oblivious anymore.

Tonight, Millie, I'm close enough to fucking taste you again.

She didn't see me. Not yet. She wouldn't, not until I wanted her to. I was too careful for that, too precise. But I saw her. I always saw her. Every movement, every breath. I knew her better than anyone ever could. And soon, she'd feel it— feel me . That pull . The invisible thread tying us together, choking us both in a way only I could control.

Her eyes skimmed the café, restless and searching, landing on faces that didn't

matter. She didn't know what she was looking for—not consciously. But I did. She was looking for me . She always had been. She just didn't realize it yet. Everything—her choices, her life, every fucking step she'd taken—it all led to this. To me .

I could almost hear her heartbeat from across the room, the quick, uneven rhythm like a song written just for me. The tension in her shoulders, the way her fingers trembled when she reached for her coffee cup— fuck , it was beautiful. A silent symphony of fear and anticipation. She felt it, even if she couldn't name it. That electric hum under her skin. The same pull that burned in me.

I smirked, leaning back into the shadows, my gaze locked on her like a predator savoring the moment before the kill. She wouldn't notice me— not yet —but I saw the flicker in her eyes, that slight hitch in her breath. Maybe she thought it was nothing. A ghost of a memory. But it was me. I was there, just out of reach, wrapping myself around her mind like smoke.

Her body betrayed her, shivering as if some part of her already knew. And I fucking smiled .

She had no idea, but she was already mine again .

I let the moment stretch, drinking in her tension, the quiet chaos swirling in her eyes. It was suffocating in the best way, thick and heady. I could almost taste it—the sharp flavor of her unease. I wanted to be closer , to hear the sharp intake of her breath when I finally said her name. To see the panic bloom in her eyes when she realized there was no escape .

But not yet. Not now. Timing was everything, and patience was my sharpest blade.

Because when you wait long enough, when you build the tension just right, the

moment you strike is fucking exquisite .

She couldn't feel me lurking in the shadows, but I could feel every inch of her—every fucking detail etched into my mind like scripture. I had been waiting, watching, orchestrating this moment with the kind of care she'd never understand.

She would never escape me again.

The game had begun, and the tension wasn't just a noose tightening around her neck—it was my hand pulling it, one agonizing inch at a time. Millie moved through the streets like a lamb oblivious to the wolf stalking her, her slender frame swallowed in that coat, her eyes darting around with the same fragile wariness I'd carved into her years ago.

She didn't know. She had no fucking idea that I was here , breathing the same air, shadowing her every step. For hours, I'd followed her, letting her thread herself deeper into my web, and the anticipation burned in my chest like fire .

Not yet. Not fucking yet.

There was an art to this kind of torment, a beauty in the unraveling. I kept just close enough to drink in every detail but far enough that she couldn't feel the heat of my presence. Not until I wanted her to. Her little gestures told me everything—the twitch of her fingers against her phone, the habitual glance at her watch, the way she avoided every pair of eyes that turned her way. Innocent to anyone else, but not to me.

Those movements screamed louder than any words: Take control. Take me. She didn't even know she was asking for it. But I did. I always knew.

I melted into the crowd, just another shadow in a city full of strangers. No one

noticed me. They never do. That's what makes this fun. But Millie? Oh, Millie felt it. She just didn't realize it yet. Her hand trembled when she walked into a random store. She glanced over her shoulder—quick, fleeting, unthinking.

Inside the shop, she tried to bury herself in the illusion of normalcy, flicking through racks of clothes she didn't care about. I watched from outside, a ghost in the window's reflection, grinning as she toyed with the hem of her sleeve, her jaw tightening when someone brushed past her.

She's starting to feel it.

The pull . The weight of me.

My fingers twitched. The hunger gnawed at me now, a beast clawing at my insides. It wasn't enough to watch. I wanted to step inside, to feel her body freeze when she saw me, to see the exact moment her fear turned to recognition. To let her realize that she was never safe, not really.

But no. Not yet .

She left the store eventually, her movements rigid, almost mechanical. I stayed in the background, my shadow slipping through hers, always just out of sight. Close enough to feel her, but far enough that she wouldn't catch on. Not yet .

I could feel the unease creeping up her spine, the faint itch at the edge of her awareness. Her confusion was palpable, delicious . That subtle tightening of her shoulders, the way her head tilted just slightly as if listening for something she couldn't hear. She was starting to question. Starting to doubt.

That was my favorite part. Watching the realization bloom, slow and inevitable, like blood spreading through water. The way her mind turned over itself, grasping for an



explanation, but never quite landing on me. Not until it was too late .

She took a wrong turn.

I stayed still, leaning into the moment, savoring it. Would she notice? Would she turn back? No. She didn't. She walked deeper into the alley, her steps faltering just slightly as the streetlights faded behind her. The corners of my mouth tugged upward, a grin that felt almost involuntary. She was making this too easy .

The shadows thickened around her, the dim glow of the city barely reaching this far. I moved now, slow and deliberate, each step silent but intentional. The faint sound of her breathing filled the space, quickening with each step she took. She was trying to shake it off, trying to rationalize it away. But she couldn't.

Her footsteps echoed against the brick walls, loud and frantic, and I matched them, falling into rhythm with her fear . My pulse wasn't racing; no, my heart was steady, controlled. This wasn't adrenaline. This was art .

Amelia stopped abruptly, her body stiffening as the weight of the air shifted. I stopped too, close enough now that I could feel the heat radiating off her skin, the static crackle of her rising panic. She didn't dare turn around—she didn't need to. She knew .

I let my breath fill the silence, deep and slow, a predator's rhythm syncing perfectly with her dread. Her pulse was a drumbeat, erratic and loud, and I imagined I could hear it over the muffled hum of the city beyond the alley.

And then, she turned .

The moment her eyes locked on mine, I saw it—the spark, the fracture, the unraveling. Recognition slammed into her like a freight train, followed by fear so raw

it practically screamed from her skin. Her face drained of color, her lips parted as if she might say something—beg, plead, pray—but nothing came. Not yet. She was caught in the headlights, her body frozen, her mind spinning, trying to deny the nightmare standing inches from her.

It was beautiful.

I watched her panic build, her breaths turning shallow as she pieced it together. Step by agonizing step. The way her pupils dilated. The way her pulse hammered in her throat. She thought she was safe. She thought I was just a ghost.

“Surprise,” I muttered, taking a step closer.

Her back hit the wall with a soft thud, and I grinned. The flicker of fear in her eyes widened, swallowing her whole, and it sent a thrill racing through me. This was better than blood. Better than fucking air .

“You feel it, don’t you, Millie?” My voice was a razor’s edge, soft and slicing. I leaned in, letting my words crawl into her head, letting them stick. “That twist in your gut. That shiver crawling up your spine. You thought I was gone. You thought I’d let you go.”

Her breath hitched, and I saw it—the moment she realized she wasn’t getting out of this. Not tonight. Not ever .

“I’ve been watching you,” I murmured, my words dripping like venom, slow and deliberate. “Every move. All this time, you’ve been living like you’re free. But here’s the thing, Millie: you’ve always belonged to me. And you know it.”

Her legs trembled, her chest rising and falling too fast. I leaned in until her scent flooded my senses—fear, confusion, and just the faintest trace of something deeper .

Something darker . She tried to inch sideways, her body brushing against the brick as if the wall would magically open and swallow her whole.

“Nowhere to run, sweetheart,” I said, my voice dropping to a growl. I slammed my hand against the wall beside her head, and she flinched, her breath hitching like a broken note. “The world’s too small for you to hide. And me?” I leaned in, so close I could feel her exhale. “I don’t fucking lose what’s mine .”

Her eyes darted around, desperate, calculating. But there was nowhere to go. Nowhere but into me . I felt her breaking, piece by piece, her fight crumbling under the weight of it all. And still, beneath the panic, there it was—something she couldn’t kill, couldn’t ignore. A spark of something she didn’t want to name.

“You’ve missed me,” I whispered, my words brushing against her ear like a knife gliding over silk.

She shivered, her eyes burning with denial, but I could see the truth, raw and screaming beneath her skin. She hated me. She wanted me. And she knew there was no escape.

I leaned in, pressing my chest to hers, feeling the frantic rhythm of her pulse hammering just beneath her skin. Her fear wasn’t just palpable—it was intoxicating. I could taste it, sharp and electric, coursing through her every breath. It coiled through me like a shot of adrenaline, stoking the fire in my veins.

I dragged my breath along her ear, my voice a low, venomous whisper. “Soon, Millie... you’ll fucking remember. You’ll remember what it felt like to be mine . To have me buried so deep inside your soul that there’s no digging me out. You’ll understand why you’ll never escape. Why you don’t even want to.”

The words slithered through the cracks in her mind, wrapping tight around her like

barbed wire. I could see it in her eyes—that flicker of denial, the last scraps of fight crumbling into something darker. Something inevitable. She didn't just hear the truth; she felt it, bone-deep and irreversible.

I brushed my lips against her skin, not kissing her, just grazing her with a deliberate cruelty that made her shudder. She couldn't run. Not from this. Not from me . I'd carved myself into her a long time ago, and no amount of distance or time would ever change that.

“You think you're free?” I asked, my voice thick with a dark amusement. “You think you're standing here, breathing, living your little life, like you can just leave me behind?” I laughed then, low and guttural, the sound vibrating between us. “Nah, Millie. That's not how this works. You don't get to walk away from me. Not ever .”

She trembled , and I relished it, the way her body betrayed her, the way her lips quivered like she was choking on every scream she wanted to let loose. Her silence was louder than any cry. It told me everything . She wasn't just scared—she was breaking. And fuck , it was beautiful.

“You betrayed me,” I hissed, my grin twisting into something cruel, jagged. “You locked me up, threw me into a cage and thought that'd be the end of it. That you could wipe your hands clean, pretend I was a bad dream. But guess what, doctor? I've got teeth. And I've got all the time in the fucking world.”

Her eyes widened, a sheen of terror glistening in them. I stepped even closer, letting the heat of my breath linger on her neck as my fingers brushed her arm. Her pulse leapt under my touch, and I let out a dark chuckle. “Oh, you feel that, don't you? You're trembling like you hate it, but your body knows better. You belong to me, and it fucking knows it.”

Her lips parted like she wanted to speak, but no words came. Just silence, thick and

suffocating. I tilted my head, studying her, letting my gaze crawl over every inch of her face. The shame , the fear , the flickering ember of recognition —I saw it all .

“You’ve been running, Millie. Running from me. From us . From the things you can’t bring yourself to admit,” I whispered, my voice dripping with mockery and venom. “But running’s over now.”

I stepped back just enough to let my eyes devour her trembling frame. A smile twisted across my lips—sharp, predatory, full of the promises she didn’t want to hear. “You’ll make up for it. Every. Last. Fucking. Thing.”

Her chest rose and fell with every breath, each one more frantic than the last. She was trapped in her own guilt, her own fear. I was just the reminder—the hand that would pull her back to the only truth she could never escape.

Her sin was my gift.

Her words hit me like a blade, but not the kind that cuts—it was dull, blunt, a taunt meant to bruise . “You killed an innocent man, Damien,” she whispered, her voice trembling, eyes full of fear she was trying so fucking hard to hide. “You don’t belong in a mental facility. You belong in prison . ”

Prison? Prison . The word twisted in my gut, hot and raw, scraping against every nerve. I laughed—sharp, wild, unhinged—because what else could I do? She thought she understood. Thought she was the moral compass in a world that’s just rot and chaos. Innocent man . She was so na?ve it almost made me sick .

I tilted my head, studying her, the way her chest heaved with every shaky breath. There was something delicious about that flicker of hope in her eyes, so fragile it could shatter with a whisper. “You don’t get it, do you?” I said, my voice low, crawling with something darker. I stepped closer, invading her space, watching her

shrink back like a cornered animal.

“ Shush, Millie ,” I whispered, pressing a finger to her trembling lips. “ Shush .” My voice dipped, sweet and venomous, like poison wrapped in silk. “That man wasn’t innocent. He tried to take what was mine. Mine , Millie. And when someone does that, they don’t get to walk away.” My grin stretched wider, teeth bared like a predator ready to pounce. “They pay. With everything .”

Her breath hitched, and I could feel the fear radiating off her, crackling in the air like static. It fed something primal in me. My blood pounded in my ears, hot and fast, and I leaned closer, my words laced with manic fervor. “Do you know what it’s like to have someone try to rip away what’s yours? To feel their hands on something they’ve got no fucking right to touch? Do you, Millie?”

I didn’t wait for her answer. There was no point. She didn’t know. She couldn’t . “That innocent man you’re crying over? He wasn’t some victim. He was a thief. A goddamn parasite . And parasites deserve to be crushed .”

I straightened, taking a step back, my hands trembling, the rage inside me boiling just beneath the surface. I clenched my fists, nails biting into my palms, a tether barely holding me together. “Do you understand now? Do you see it?” My voice dropped, low and guttural, like the growl of a beast ready to devour. “He had to die, Millie. It wasn’t a choice—it was inevitable. He tried to take what didn’t belong to him. And in my world, there’s only one punishment for that.”

I fixed her with a stare, dark and unrelenting, my voice a razor’s edge. “You don’t get to decide who lives and who dies. I do . And you better fucking remember that. ”

Her panic was a fucking symphony. Every ragged gasp, every desperate thrash, sang to the chaos roaring in my head. She thought she could escape me—thought she could fight. Adorable .

“Look at me!” I snarled, my voice shredding the silence as my hand slammed the wall beside her head. She froze, her wide eyes locked onto mine, trembling, goddamn perfect .

“You’re trying to make sense of this, aren’t you? Trying to rationalize it. But here’s the kicker, doctor—there is no sense to this. It’s just me , and it’s you , and it’s this fucked-up story that was always going to end here.” I leaned closer, my breath hot and sharp against her ear. “You don’t run from fate, Millie. You fucking kneel for it.”

My fingers brushed her cheek, almost tender, if not for the tremor of violence behind the touch. Her skin was cold, but I could feel the heat of her pulse beneath it, frantic and alive —alive because I let her be.

“You feel that? That little drumbeat inside you?” I hissed, dragging my hand down her throat, just enough pressure to remind her who owned it. “It’s mine. Every breath, every fucking heartbeat—it’s all mine.”

Her lips parted, but no sound came. Not a scream, not a plea—just the helpless quiver of a trapped animal. God I could almost taste her fear, metallic and electric, fueling the storm inside me.

Reaching into my pocket, I pulled the bottle free, its dark glass gleaming like a secret under the dim light. Her eyes darted to it, her body flinching before she even knew what it meant. Recognition flared, though—oh, she knew. She fucking knew .

“Remember this?” I purred, holding it between us, the weight of it like a loaded gun. “Yeah, you do. You thought you could leave it all behind, leave me behind. But you don’t walk away from this, Millie. You don’t walk away from me .”

She thrashed then, wild and furious, her body twisting against mine as if she thought she could break free. I let her struggle, let her fight until her strength ebbed into

trembling desperation. It made pinning her back against the wall that much sweeter .

I slammed her into it hard enough to rattle her bones, my hands digging into her waist, holding her there like she was some fragile, breakable thing I could shatter on a whim. Her breath hitched, her chest heaving, and I pressed closer, drowning in the chaos of her fear and fury.

She looked up at me, eyes wide, wild with terror. She was scared. So scared. And it thrilled me. Her desperation was beautiful, almost poetic .

I let my lips curl into a smile, one that was far too dark, far too knowing. “It’s not playtime yet, Millie,” I whispered, my voice low and filled with something almost sweet in its darkness.

Her eyes darted to the side, as if searching for a way out, some escape she could take, but there was no way out. Not anymore . I could see the realization hitting her slowly, like a tightening noose around her neck.

“I’ve given you plenty of time to play your little games,” I continued, my voice dark, slow, dripping with malice. “But you don’t get to run away from me. Not now. Not ever. ”

Her breath hitched. Her pulse raced. Good. I liked seeing her like this—so close, yet so far from escaping. The air between us thickened, saturated with tension, fear, and something far more intimate . Her eyes locked onto the bottle, her pupils dilating as she understood the weight of what was coming.

I twisted the cap off slowly, savoring the moment. I could see her trying to gather her strength, trying to resist. It was adorable, really—her attempt to hold on to something, anything . But this was always inevitable. The moment would come, as it always did, and she would slip away into the dark dreamscape I’d made for her. The place where



only I existed.

I brought the bottle closer, the rubber mask attached to it hovering just above her trembling lips. “You should’ve known, Amelia,” I whispered, my voice low and thick with excitement. “You should’ve known I would come for you. That I’d find a way back.”

Her eyes went wide, her body tensed, the fight beginning to drain from her. She knew—she knew what was about to happen. And yet, there was nothing she could do

.

I pressed the mask against her face, feeling her struggle beneath it, her breath coming in quick, shallow gasps. Her body bucked, trying to pull away, but I held it firm, the pressure gentle yet unyielding.

“Shhh, baby... it’s okay,” I murmured, almost lovingly, as her frantic eyes flickered with panic. “Just let it happen. Let me take you back. You’re so tired, so worn out. This... this is what you need .”

I smiled as her resistance began to fade, her breath growing heavier as the drug began to seep into her veins, drowning out the world around her. “Sweet dreams, Millie,” I whispered softly, my voice a twisted lullaby, sending a thrill through me. “Sweet, sweet dreams.”

Her eyes fluttered shut, the panic slipping from her face as she lost consciousness, her body slumping against me. The mask remained in place, my fingers gently holding it there as I felt her breath grow steady and slow.

Her soul was mine again.

And this time, there would be no waking up.

Amelia

A dull, throbbing ache pulsed through my head as I forced my eyes open, squinting against the dim, flickering light. Everything was blurry at first, edges smudged like a nightmare struggling to come into focus. I blinked, fighting off the haze clouding my mind, and slowly, my surroundings sharpened, revealing the chilling reality of where I was.

The room was cold, damp, and reeked of mold and decay. Yellowed paint peeled in jagged strips off the cracked walls, exposing dark patches of rot beneath. Rusted metal bars stretched across the lone, shattered window, thick and unyielding, making escape impossible. The floor was littered with debris—crumbling plaster, scattered shards of broken glass, and what looked like water stains mixed with something darker, something that made my stomach churn .

I tried to move, but a sharp chill ran through me as I realized I was wearing nothing but a thin, scratchy robe—one of those faded, washed-out gray hospital gowns that clung to my skin like a shroud. I felt exposed, vulnerable, a shiver rippling through me that had nothing to do with the cold.

I pushed myself up slowly, my fingers pressing into the stained mattress beneath me. It was lumpy, sagging in the middle, the fabric fraying and mottled with dark stains. A strange, metallic scent lingered in the air, like rust mixed with something sharp and unsettling. I couldn't tell if it was real or just my fear twisting my senses.

There was a single, bare lightbulb hanging from the ceiling, casting a weak, sputtering glow that threw twisted shadows across the walls. It swung slightly, as if

disturbed by some unseen breeze, making the shadows shift and dance. Every flicker felt like the room was closing in, the darkness pressing at the edges, hungry and waiting.

My pulse quickened as I scanned the room, every nerve on high alert. Across from me, the door was heavy, old, made of some metal that had corroded with time. The paint was chipped, exposing flecks of rust beneath, and there were deep scratches on it, as though someone—or something—had tried desperately to claw their way out.

The walls were littered with scrawled, faded words, the handwriting shaky and desperate, like the ramblings of someone who had lost themselves here long ago. ‘Help me,’ one message read, barely visible beneath layers of grime. Another said, ‘No escape.’ The words felt like whispers from the past, ghosts trapped in this place, and I could feel their fear lingering in the air, thick and suffocating .

A chill skittered down my spine as I noticed something in the corner—a rusted metal chair with leather straps hanging limply from the armrests, crusted with something dark and unidentifiable. Beside it, there was an ancient medical tray, the tools on it dulled and tarnished but unmistakable in their sinister purpose. Scalpels, syringes, twisted forceps... tools meant for things I didn’t want to imagine.

I swallowed hard, my heart pounding against my ribs, echoing in my ears. Every instinct in me screamed to run, to escape, but I was trapped here, alone and vulnerable, surrounded by remnants of forgotten horrors .

And then it hit me—a memory of his voice, his dark, low whisper. ‘Just let it happen. Let me take you back. You’re so tired, so worn out. This... this is what you need.’

My throat tightened, and I felt a surge of fear mingled with something darker, something twisted .

He had brought me here.

I forced myself to stand, steadying the tremor in my legs, and moved cautiously toward the door. My hand hovered over the rusted metal handle, expecting it to be locked, trapping me in this nightmare. But as I pressed down, the handle gave with a rusty creak, and the door swung open.

I stepped out into the hallway, instantly enveloped by a thick, musty darkness. The air was colder here, sharper, biting at my exposed skin. I shivered, clutching the thin robe around myself, feeling more exposed with each step. A weak strip of light bled in from some unknown source, casting long, grotesque shadows along the walls, twisting and flickering like things alive, like they were waiting.

The hallway stretched in both directions, an endless corridor of bleak, forgotten rooms identical to the one I'd just left. Each door was old and battered, paint peeling in grimy flakes, and most had small, rectangular windows smeared with filth, too obscured to see through. They reminded me of cages, empty cells for the broken souls who once roamed here.

I took a tentative step forward, my bare feet cold against the damp floor, which felt sticky in places, as if the very ground itself remembered things I wanted to forget. The silence was thick, pressing down on me, but beneath it, I could swear I heard faint echoes—a whisper, a shuffle, the soft scrape of something dragging along the floor. I couldn't tell if it was my mind playing tricks on me or if something truly lingered in the shadows, unseen.

To my right, one of the doors hung ajar, creaking softly as if caught in an invisible draft. The room beyond was cloaked in shadows, but I could make out a sliver of something dark on the floor—a puddle, dried and thick, like blood left to rot in the air. I shuddered, stepping back, unable to tear my gaze from that spot, as if it were a black hole drawing me in.

As I continued down the corridor, I glanced inside other rooms through the windows, each one a haunting reflection of the last: rusted bed frames, sagging mattresses, leather straps, and once-white sheets now stained with unrecognizable blotches. In some of the rooms, broken mirrors hung on the walls, cracked and distorted, giving glimpses of shadows that seemed to move just out of sight, fragments of faces twisted in silent agony . It was as if these rooms still held pieces of the people who had been kept here, their pain etched into the walls, marking the air.

I pressed forward, hugging the walls, listening, hyper-aware of every sound—the faint drip of water from some unseen leak, the scurry of something small and quick in the darkness. The smell of rot and rust filled my lungs, thickening with each step. I felt as though the asylum itself was alive , breathing in sync with my fear, its walls watching, waiting for me to make a mistake.

A sharp creak echoed down the hall behind me. I spun around, my bare feet scraping against the rough floor, my breath catching as I stared into the shadows.

“Hello?” My voice was barely above a whisper, trembling and uncertain. The silence answered, deafening and oppressive .

And then, in the distance, the faintest sound of footsteps . Slow, deliberate. Approaching.

The creak was followed by a slow, deliberate scrape of metal against stone. The sound was jagged and unrelenting, reverberating down the hallway like a knife slicing through the air. My stomach twisted, the hairs on the back of my neck standing on end. I pressed my back against the wall, every muscle locked in place as the sound continued—a steady, menacing rhythm that seemed to mock the frantic beat of my heart.

Scrraaape. Scrraaape.

“Did you miss me, Millie?”

His voice was low, almost a whisper, yet it carried through the silence like a storm. I froze , my mouth dry, my eyes darting into the abyss of the hallway. I couldn't see him, but he was there . Somewhere in the dark. Watching .

“Two years,” he drawled, the scrape of metal punctuating his words. “ Two years without you. Do you know what that does to a man?”

Scrraaape. Scrraaape.

The sound crawled under my skin, scraping against my sanity as much as the walls. My heart pounded so hard I could feel it in my throat, each beat screaming at me to move, to run . But I was rooted in place, paralyzed by the voice dripping with malice.

“You don't, do you?” Damien hissed, his voice oozing through the shadows like venom. “Of course, you don't. Always so controlled, so perfect . While I—” His voice turned into a sharp, guttural sound that made my blood run cold. “I've been rotting , doctor. Piece by piece. Every day without you tore something out of me.”

There was a loud bang, and I flinched, my body jerking violently as if the sound had struck me. The clang of metal against the floor echoed down the hallway, and my eyes snapped toward it.

“Do you want to know what I thought about every night?” His voice was closer now, impossibly close. I spun around, but the darkness swallowed everything. My pulse raced, my hands trembling at my sides .

“I thought about you , Millie. About the way your voice shakes when you're scared. About the way your eyes widen when you realize you're out of your depth.” A harsh laugh cut through the air, jagged and broken, devoid of humor. “But most of all... I

thought about the way you moaned my name when I fucked you.”

A shiver ran through my spine, and I didn’t know if it was because of his words, or the metallic scrape that suddenly erupted from behind me.

I whirled around, a scream lodged in my throat. Nothing. Just the endless dark, watching, breathing .

“Tell me, Millie,” he whispered, his voice now soft, almost tender, sending chills racing through my body. “Did you think about me? At night? In your dreams? Did you wake up wondering if I’m still out there, waiting for you?”

The scrape turned into a violent screech, like claws against steel, and I clamped my hands over my ears, my knees threatening to buckle. His voice rose over the sound, maniacal and raw, his words cutting like knives .

“RUN!” he bellowed, the force of the word reverberating off the walls. “Run like your life depends on it. Because the things I have in mind for you are... deliciously terrifying !”

And then silence. Deafening, crushing silence.

I stood there, trembling, every muscle in my body screaming for me to move. But I couldn’t. Not until I heard it—the faintest sound of footsteps, slow and deliberate, coming toward me.

“ Tick-tock, ” Damien murmured, his voice laced with a sickening glee. “You’re running out of time.”

The footsteps stopped. The scraping resumed. And in the shadows ahead, I finally saw it—a glint of metal, the faint outline of a figure moving closer. My breath

hitched, and something inside me snapped . I bolted.

Bare feet pounding against the cold, rough floor, I tore down the hallway, the icy air biting at my skin. The walls around me seemed to stretch and twist, a labyrinth of shadows and echoes. My heartbeat roared in my ears, drowning out everything—everything except him .

“That’s it!” Damien’s voice chased after me, wild and elated, ricocheting off the walls like gunfire. “Feel it! Feel the fear ! It’s fucking alive , isn’t it? Pulsing, burning, consuming you! That’s what I’ve been waiting for!”

The metallic scrape followed, relentless, almost playful now, like he was savoring the chase. Every few steps, it would pause, replaced by the heavy thud of his boots. He wasn’t running. He didn’t have to.

I turned a corner too sharply, my shoulder slamming into the wall. Pain jolted through me, but I didn’t stop. The hallway seemed endless, each turn identical to the last, as if the asylum itself was conspiring to keep me trapped.

“Do you know why I told you to run, Millie?” His voice came from somewhere ahead now, impossibly close, as if the shadows themselves carried his words. “Because I love seeing you like this. Helpless. Desperate. Alive .”

I tripped, my knees scraping against the unforgiving floor. A choked cry escaped my lips as I scrambled back to my feet, my breaths coming in ragged gasps. But even through the terror, a sickening truth clawed its way to the surface: I missed this . The chaos, the thrill , the way my blood surged through my veins like fire. No one could unravel me like Damien. No one could make me feel so utterly alive while dragging me to the brink of madness .

“That little smile,” he taunted, his voice closer now, dripping with cruel amusement.



“Oh, Millie, I see it. You can lie to yourself all you want, but I know the truth. You love this , don’t you? You’ve always loved playing with fire. And me? I’m the flames that will burn you alive.”

I veered into another hallway, the shadows darker here, thicker, suffocating. My lungs burned, my body screaming for rest, but I couldn’t stop. Not yet . Not when I could hear him closing in.

The metallic scrape grew louder, faster. A high-pitched laugh followed—a sound so raw and unhinged it made my stomach churn.

“Run, Millie! Run faster!” he shouted, his voice echoing like a twisted symphony of madness. “You can’t outrun me. You never could. But isn’t it fun to try? ”

I rounded another corner, only to skid to a halt. A dead end. My heart plummeted as I turned, my back pressed against the cold wall. The shadows in the hallway shifted, and there he was .

Damien stepped into view, his silhouette monstrous in the dim light. The sharp edge of the metal he’d been dragging glinted menacingly in his hand. His whiskey-colored eyes burned with something feral, something that sent a shiver down my spine.

“You’ve always known how this ends,” he said, his voice a low, almost tender growl. “You running. Me catching you. And the moment where I decide just how much I’ll let you break .”

And yet, as terror gripped me, a dark, forbidden part of me whispered the truth I refused to admit. I wanted him to catch me. I craved the chaos he brought. I... I think I’ve lost my mind .

He took a step closer, the scrape of metal against the floor sending sparks of dread

and anticipation through me.

“Go on,” he whispered, tilting his head, his smile sharp and predatory. “Run again. Make me work for it, Millie. I like when you make me work for it. It makes my cock twitch with anticipation.”

I darted to the right, my hand grasping the cold handle of a metallic door. I yanked it open, threw myself inside, and slammed it shut behind me. The heavy clang reverberated through the small room, and I fumbled with the lock, my trembling fingers barely able to twist it into place.

My breath came in short, shallow gasps as I pressed my back against the door, my eyes scanning the room—and then I froze.

The air inside was stale, suffused with the acrid scent of disinfectant and something fouler—decay. A rusted psychiatric chair sat in the center of the room, its leather straps worn and cracked, yet still terrifyingly strong. Thick, metal restraints dangled from the armrests, and the seat was stained with dark, unidentifiable blotches that looked far too much like dried blood.

All around the room, macabre instruments were laid out on steel trays, their sharp edges gleaming under the dim, flickering light overhead. Scalpel-like tools, jagged saws, and twisted clamps, their purposes too horrific to imagine, sat waiting as if they’d been used recently. A crumbling shelf held jars of murky liquid, with shadowy, preserved things floating inside. I couldn’t tell what they were—human or otherwise—and I didn’t want to know.

The walls were lined with cracked mirrors, their surfaces smeared and streaked, distorting my reflection into something monstrous. A faint buzzing sound filled the room, like the distant hum of electricity, and I couldn’t shake the feeling that I was being watched.

Then came the first bang.

I jumped, my body slamming back against the door as Damien struck it from the other side.

“Millie!” he roared, his voice dripping with fury and exhilaration . “You think this door can stop me?” Another bang , louder this time, the metal groaning under the impact.

I scrambled away from the door, my eyes darting to the horrific chair in the center of the room. My legs felt like lead, but I couldn’t stand still, not with the door rattling behind me, not with him out there .

Bang!

“You’ve trapped yourself, darling,” Damien growled, his voice muffled yet still cutting through the thick metal. “Do you even know where you are? Hmm? A room like this has history. Can you feel it? The screams, the pain, the madness —it’s soaked into the walls. It’s been waiting for you , doctor.”

I backed away, nearly stumbling over one of the trays of tools. A scalpel clattered to the ground, its sharp edge glinting as it spun to a stop. My heart pounded harder, a mix of terror and something darker, something that made me hate myself.

“Do you want to know the best part about this room?” Damien’s voice was almost conversational now, his tone a grotesque parody of calm. “It doesn’t matter how strong the door is. Because eventually...” Another bang shook the door, making the lock groan. “Eventually, I always get in.”

I turned, frantically scanning the room for another way out. There was nothing —no windows, no vents, just the twisted remnants of nightmares past. I was trapped.

CRASH !

The metallic door buckled slightly, a dent forming where Damien's weapon had struck. He laughed—a sound so unhinged, so full of raw, primal glee, that it sent shivers racing down my spine.

“I'll make you a deal,” he said, his voice soft now, teasing. “Open the door, and I'll be gentle. Keep it locked, and...” He let out a low, guttural chuckle. “Let's keep it a secret for now.”

Another strike. Another dent.

My breathing hitched as I stared at the rusted restraints, the cracked leather, the bloodstains. I wanted to scream, to cry, but I also couldn't ignore the heat between my legs, the way my pulse raced not just with fear but with the twisted thrill of his pursuit.

Bang!

The door wouldn't hold much longer. And deep down, I wasn't sure I wanted it to.

The next crash against the door sent me stumbling backward, the metallic clang vibrating through my chest. My gaze darted to the blood-streaked chair in the center of the room, and suddenly, it wasn't this room I was seeing anymore.

It was that room.

The air thickened, the shadows around me twisting and morphing until I was no longer in the asylum. I was back in the dimly lit basement, my wrists raw from the ropes that cut into my skin, the stink of sweat and fear choking me. I could hear their voices again—low, gruff, and filled with malice.

“She’s a fighter, this one,” Ben had sneered, his shadow looming over me. “But they all break eventually.”

I’d been so small, too small to fight back, yet I had. Kicking, screaming, clawing—until they’d laughed and thrown me into that cold, damp room. My heart raced now, just as it had then, every beat a frantic plea for escape.

Bang!

The sound of Damien battering the door pulled me partway back, but the flashbacks wouldn’t let go .

I saw the chair where they’d made me sit, bound and helpless, their hands cold and unyielding as they strapped me down. I could hear the metallic scrape of their tools, the cruel anticipation in their laughter as they whispered about the things they would do. The dim light above me had flickered just like the one here, casting distorted shadows across their faces.

“Do you know how easily skin tears?” one of them had asked, his tone almost clinical. The sound of a blade being sharpened had followed, slow and deliberate, much like Damien’s earlier scraping.

I pressed my palms against my temples, trying to ground myself, but the memories surged forward again, stronger this time.

The dark room. The screams . My own voice, hoarse and broken, pleading for someone to come, anyone . The feel of hands gripping my arms, holding me down as I thrashed. I could still smell the rust, the blood, the despair.

“You’ll learn your place,” one of them had hissed, his breath hot against my ear. “They all do. ”

The world spun, and for a moment, I couldn't tell if I was still in the asylum or back in that basement. My knees buckled, and I sank to the floor, clutching my chest as sobs threatened to escape.

CRASH!

The lock gave way with a deafening shriek, the door flying open to slam against the wall. Cold air rushed in, pulling me back into the now, but the past still clung to my skin like oil, thick and suffocating.

Damien stood framed in the doorway, his silhouette a jagged shadow against the dim light behind him. The metal rod in his hand dragged along the floor as he stepped inside, his eyes alight with something wild and unhinged.

“Did you think you could hide from me?” he snarled, his lips curling into a twisted grin. “Oh no, Millie. You and I—we’re bound by this. By the screams, the scars, the darkness. You’re mine, and you’ve always been mine.”

He stalked toward me, his presence swallowing the room whole. The tools on the trays rattled as he brushed past them, the air crackling with his intensity.

“Look at you,” he whispered, his voice both a caress and a knife. “Trembling, broken, but still so alive. Tell me, Amelia—was it fear that brought you to your knees just now? Or was it the thrill?”

I couldn't answer. My voice was lost, tangled in the abyss of his gaze and the storm of my memories. And as he knelt before me, his face inches from mine, I couldn't tell if I wanted to scream—or let him pull me under.

Damien knelt before me, his hand reaching out to gently brush against my cheek. His touch was deceptively soft, a cruel contradiction to the storm swirling in his eyes. My

breath hitched as his thumb traced the curve of my jaw, his grin widening as he watched me shiver beneath his fingers.

“Such fragile strength,” he murmured, almost tenderly. “But even glass can shatter beautifully. ”

From his pocket, he pulled out a syringe, the sharp glint of the needle catching the flickering light. My stomach dropped as he held it up, tilting it slightly, the liquid inside gliding like poison.

“It’s time,” he said, his voice a velvet razor. “Time to leave this place. Time to go somewhere... special .”

He brought the syringe closer, the needle hovering inches from my neck. My heart slammed against my ribs, panic rising like a tidal wave.

“I’ll go!” I gasped, my voice trembling. “I’ll go with you. Willingly.”

His grin froze for a moment, then stretched wider, his eyes lighting up with a sick satisfaction. “ Willingly? ” he echoed, his tone dripping with mockery. “Oh, Millie. You make it too easy.”

With a flick of his wrist, the syringe disappeared back into his pocket. He leaned closer, his breath warm against my ear.

“Good girl,” he whispered, his voice low and wicked. “Let’s see how long that lasts. ,”

Damien stood, his dark presence looming over me as he reached to pull me up. My legs were shaky, the floor beneath me unsteady, but as his grip tightened around my arm, something shifted. Something deeper than fear or anger stirred inside me.

Without thinking, I reached out, my fingers brushing his, and then— gripped his hand .

For a moment, neither of us moved. His gaze locked onto mine, his eyes a storm of surprise and twisted amusement. The weight of the gesture hung between us, too intimate for the horrors we had already shared.

His lips curled into a slow, calculating smile, and I could see the slight tremor in his eyes, almost imperceptible—something darker in that small, fleeting moment.

“Careful,” he whispered, his voice a low rasp as he squeezed my hand tighter. “I might start to think you actually enjoy this.”

I didn’t answer. We both knew what the silence meant.

Together, we walked into the shadows, each step a dark promise, the walls closing in tighter around us as whatever awaited me pulled us forward. And then, I felt it—a sickening thrill that clung to me like the sweat on my skin .

## CHAINED TO THE PAST

Amelia

The air thickened as we descended into the basement, each step echoing in the hollow silence that enveloped us. The walls here were raw, exposed brick, stained with the grime of years—decades, perhaps—of neglect. It smelled like rot, like something old and forgotten, clinging to every surface. My heart pounded in my chest, and yet, in some sick, twisted way, I found myself drawn forward, as if the darkness below had always been waiting for me.

Damien’s grip tightened around my hand, his fingers cold and steady. His presence



was suffocating, and for a moment, I wasn't sure if it was him or the place itself that made the air feel so thick, so oppressive.

We reached the bottom, and my eyes slowly adjusted to the dim, flickering light above. It hung from a single wire in the center of the room, casting long, twisted shadows that danced along the cracked concrete floor.

The room was small, the walls barely visible in the half-light. There were no windows, no escape. The only things that stood out in the darkness were the three chains hanging from the ceiling, each one anchored in place like some grotesque invitation. The chains swayed slightly, as though something—or someone—had recently been bound there, suspended in time, awaiting something more.

In the corner, there was a small wooden box, the kind you'd find in an attic, covered in dust and cobwebs. It sat there, insignificant at first glance, yet somehow it screamed with the promise of something far worse, far more dangerous than any of the walls could contain.

Damien let go of my hand and walked toward the chains, his eyes scanning the room as though it were an old friend. His smile never faltered. "Welcome to my playground, Millie, "

I felt my pulse race, every instinct in me screaming to run, to escape, but my feet stayed glued to the floor.

I didn't move. Couldn't move.

Damien turned to face me, his eyes gleaming with that same hunger, that same twisted delight. "It's time, Millie," he said, his voice low, maddening. "Time to see what you're really capable of."

And as the shadows pressed in closer, I realized something sickening: he wasn't just here to break me. He was here to reshape me. And I was too far gone to stop it now.

Damien's eyes never left me as he stepped closer, the weight of his gaze pressing against my skin like fire. "Take this off," he said, his voice a velvet command, smooth and relentless. The words hung between us, thick with anticipation. "Let me see what's underneath."

I hesitated, a small part of me screaming to stop, to turn away. But the rest of me—that part—was far too gone. The gown clung to me, too thin, too fragile against the crushing weight of his stare. I could feel the heat of his eyes tracing every inch of my exposed skin as I slowly tugged at the fabric, letting it fall to the floor in a heap.

His lips curled into a twisted grin as I stood before him, bare and exposed. He circled me like a predator, his steps slow, deliberate, savoring every moment. "Just like I remember," he murmured, his voice a low, rasping whisper that made my skin crawl in a way I couldn't deny.

I could feel the heat rise in my chest, my heart pounding harder than ever, a mix of terror and excitement. His eyes darkened, almost hungry, as he took a step closer, and I realized, with a sick, thrilling rush, that I was no longer just terrified. I was wanting it. Wanting whatever he had planned.

Damien's grin stretched wider as he picked up the wooden box, placing it carefully beneath the chains, the sound of it scraping against the concrete sharp in the silence. His eyes flicked to me, full of twisted expectation.

"Step on it," he commanded, his voice cold as ice.

I obeyed, stepping forward with trembling legs, but I didn't dare look away from him. His gaze never wavered, his eyes following my every movement.

He reached for the straps hanging from the chains, his fingers deft as he fastened them around my wrists, securing me in place. I could feel the cold metal digging into my skin, the pressure a constant reminder of where I was—and who I was with.

“Stay still,” he ordered softly, his voice like a venomous whisper.

I didn’t have the strength to resist as he moved behind me, fingers brushing through my hair with unsettling tenderness. He pulled it tight, lifting it with a practiced ease before securing it to the third chain above my head.

“Perfect ,” he murmured, his voice dark with satisfaction.

Damien smirked, his eyes gleaming with dark amusement as he slowly knelt before me, his fingers grazing the edge of the wooden box. With a fluid motion, he pulled it from beneath my feet, and I gasped—my body jerking as the chains yanked hard at my scalp, the raw pull forcing me onto my tiptoes.

“Steady yourself, Amelia,” Damien purred, watching me with twisted delight. “Use the chains.”

I shuddered, rolling my hands around the chains, the raw metal biting into my skin as I shifted my weight from one foot to the other, desperate to keep myself from collapsing. The chains held me in place—each one a tether to the nightmare he was weaving. Every move was calculated, every struggle futile.

“Good girl,” he whispered. “Let the chains teach you control.”

Damien’s smirk never wavered as he opened the wooden box, the creak of the hinges sounding like a death knell in the silence. His fingers slid inside, pulling out a collar—black, cold, and gleaming under the dim light. It was adorned with long metal thorns, each one sharp and cruel.

He stepped behind me, the collar heavy in his hands, and I could feel the pressure of his presence like a vice around my chest. Without a word, he slid it around my neck, the cold metal biting into my skin.

Damien's voice was low, dark, almost reverent. "Perfect fit,"

Damien stood before me, his grin wide, eyes gleaming with sickening satisfaction as he clicked something on the collar. The sound echoed in the empty room, a hollow click that sent a chill through my spine.

I frowned, the sharp, chemical smell of gas suddenly filling the air, rising from the thorns around my neck. My heart pounded as my breath quickened, my eyes widening.

"What... what do you want to do?" I gasped, my voice trembling as I saw him pull a lighter from his pocket, the flame flickering dangerously between his fingers.

His grin only grew darker as he flicked the lighter open, the flame dancing in his hand like a promise of something far worse.

He brought the flame to one of the thorns, and I froze. The moment the fire touched it, all the thorns ignited, flames crawling up the metal like living serpents, licking dangerously close to my face. I could feel the heat radiating off them, every flicker threatening to burn my skin, my body trembling as I fought to keep still.

I should've felt scared. But I felt... excited ?

"Perfect," he murmured, his eyes tracing the flames with dark delight. "You look like a ballerina, Millie. So graceful, so delicate . "

Damien's laughter cracked through the suffocating air, jagged and unhinged, echoing

off the walls like a twisted hymn. His fingers pinched my nipple hard, a cruel, deliberate twist that sent a shock of pain and pleasure lancing through me. “Trembling already?” he sneered, his lips curling into a wicked grin. “You’re so fucking easy . I barely have to try.”

The fire licked at the air, its warm heat brushing against my skin. Damien held his free hand dangerously close to the flames, the orange light dancing in his wide, manic eyes. “It’s beautiful, isn’t it?” he murmured, almost to himself. “ Fire ... it doesn’t give a fuck. It takes what it wants. Just like me.”

“What does it feel like, huh?” he whispered, his voice dripping with venom. “To know you’re trapped ? To know every move you make is mine to control? Don’t tell me you don’t feel it—the helplessness crawling under your skin, eating you alive.”

I didn’t answer. I couldn’t. My body frozen between the fire’s threat and Damien’s cruel gaze.

He stepped back just a fraction, his smirk widening. “Oh, don’t worry, sweetheart,” he said, his tone syrupy and mocking. “I’m not gonna let the fire take you.” His fingers trailed down my chest, leaving a trail of goosebumps in their wake. “No, I want to watch you squirm . I want to feel you fall apart .”

And then he dropped to his knees, the movement slow and deliberate, his presence looming larger than ever despite his lowered stance. The flames cast his shadow across the room, twisting it into something monstrous. He didn’t look up at me, not at first, his eyes fixed on my stomach, his breath ghosting over my skin. “ God , Millie,” he muttered, his voice soft and dangerous. “You’re so fucking beautiful.”

I couldn’t move, couldn’t even flinch as he shifted closer, his hands sliding down to grip my thighs, his fingers digging in hard enough to bruise. He tilted his head back, finally meeting my eyes. They were wild, feral, burning with something darker than

the fire itself. “I can hear it in your silence, Millie. You love this. The fear, the helplessness, the fact that no matter what you do—you’re mine. All mine.”

Damien slowly and deliberately pushed my legs apart, making me lose my balance. I struggled to keep myself steady on my tiptoes. I couldn’t move my head to see him, couldn’t escape the overwhelming sensation of being completely exposed, vulnerable—his plaything.

His breath was hot against my skin, a chaotic mix of fury and hunger that made my pulse hammer in my throat.

“You fucking love this, don’t you?” he hissed, his voice dark and manic, dripping with venom and desire. “The way I take you, the way I fucking own you.”

I barely had time to gasp before his lips ghosted over me, feather-light at first, teasing, taunting. His hands slid from my chest to grip my ass with bruising force, pulling me closer to his mouth like he couldn’t stand the distance. My breath hitched, shallow and ragged, as his tongue flicked out, tasting me with a ferocity that sent sparks shooting down my spine.

He growled against me, the vibration rippling through my body and making my thighs tremble. “So fucking sweet,” he muttered, his voice muffled as his tongue delved deeper. The sound was obscene, and it made my entire body burn with a mix of pleasure.

I bit down on my lip hard enough to draw blood, desperate to silence the whimper that threatened to escape as he pulled back just enough to look up at me. His lips were slick, his expression unhinged, a dark smirk curling at the edges.

“Don’t fucking hold back, Millie,” he demanded, his tone sharp and commanding. “I want to hear every damn sound. Every gasp, every whine—all of it.”

Before I could even process his words, he buried his face between my legs again, licking and sucking with a hunger that bordered on savage. His teeth grazed my clit, and I cried out.

“ Damien ,” I gasped, his name spilling from my lips like a prayer—or maybe a curse.

He groaned in response, his grip tightening on my hips as he held me in place, refusing to let me escape the relentless onslaught of his mouth. Each flick of his tongue, each scrape of his teeth, sent shockwaves through me.

“ Fuck ,” he growled, pulling back just enough to catch his breath, his lips curling into a wicked grin. “You taste like sin. And I’m never letting you go.”

The room felt suffocating, charged with a dark, electric energy that only Damien could create. He wasn’t just devouring me—he was claiming me, piece by piece, until there was nothing left but him.

All I wanted in that moment was him . To meet his gaze, those wild eyes that burned with a madness only Damien could carry. I ached to bury my fingers in his hair, to yank him closer, to feel his breath mingling with mine as he consumed me whole. But I couldn’t. The chains kept me pinned, trapped like some sacrificial offering on display. I couldn’t move. Couldn’t fight. All I could do was feel .

And that’s exactly what he wanted.

“Look at you,” Damien sneered, his voice dark, raw, twisted with a dangerous glee that made my stomach twist and my pulse race. “So fucking perfect, so fucking mine .”

The chains rattled as I struggled against them, not to escape, but because the fire

inside me was too much. Every fiber of my being screamed to touch him, to claim him the way he was claiming me. But he didn't just deny me—he reveled in it. His smirk was unhinged, knowing full well that I was completely at his mercy.

And God help me, the helplessness thrilled me.

The way he prowled over me, his shadow dark and all-encompassing, sent a sick shiver of excitement through me. I hated how much I craved this, how much I craved him . I hated the way the vulnerability made me burn hotter, how the loss of control made my breath hitch. But there it was, undeniable and feral, an ache so deep it threatened to swallow me whole.

He crouched between my legs, his hands rough and unrelenting as they gripped my thighs, spreading me wider, forcing me to bare everything to him. “You think you can hide from me?” he growled, his lips brushing the sensitive skin of my inner thigh, the heat of his breath making me shudder.

“ Damien —” His name escaped me in a desperate gasp, but he cut me off with a dark laugh.

“Shut the fuck up,” he snarled, his teeth grazing my skin, sending a pulse of sharp pleasure-pain through me. “I'll tell you when to speak. I'll tell you when to fucking breathe. You don't get a say in this, Millie. Not tonight. Not fucking ever .”

Two fingers plunged into me without warning, rough and unyielding, tearing a strangled moan from my lips as my back arched. His pace was merciless, his fingers curling just right , skimming every nerve like he'd mapped out my body in his mind a thousand times before .

“You feel that?” Damien rasped, his breath hot against my pussy. “That's me owning you. Fucking you. You don't get to run, you don't get to fucking hide. You belong to



me, every goddamn inch of you. Say it.”

My body betrayed me, a low whimper spilling from my lips as my head swam with heat, pleasure, and the sheer insanity of his words. His manic laughter filled the air as he thrust harder, dragging me further into the abyss.

“You can’t even fucking talk,” he hissed, biting down on my thigh hard enough to leave a mark. “Pathetic. I could do this all night. Break you apart, piece by piece, until there’s nothing left but my name on your lips.”

And the terrifying part? I didn’t want him to stop.

Yes, I missed this. I missed him. The chaos he unleashed, the way he turned my world upside down with a single look, a single touch. No one else could make me feel this alive, this raw. He dragged me into his storm, and instead of running, I craved it—every wild, twisted second. Fear and desire were no longer opposites; they bled into each other, wrapping tight around my chest until I couldn’t breathe.

Damien’s voice slashed through the air, low and dangerous, vibrating with that unhinged edge that made my pulse stutter. “Admit it, Millie,” he growled, pulling back just enough for his breath to ghost over my trembling core. “Who else could fuck with your head like this? Who else could fucking own you like I do?”

My throat tightened, my mind clawing for some semblance of control, but his gaze pinned me in place—sharp, feral, unstoppable. My lips parted, the truth slipping free before I could stop it. “No one,” I whispered, my voice shaking with the weight of surrender. “No one but you.”

A manic grin split his face, dark and predatory, the kind of grin that promised destruction and dared you to beg for it. His whiskey eyes burned with wicked satisfaction, a madness that matched the chaos he’d ignited in me. “That’s my girl,”

he purred, each word a dark caress that seared into my skin. “Say it again.”

I swallowed hard, my pulse roaring in my ears. “Yours,” I breathed. “Only yours. ”

“Fucking perfect ,” he hissed, his hands gripping my thighs like he might crush them, grounding me to him. And then his lips descended, his tongue dragging slow, deliberate lines that set every nerve in my body on fire.

His fingers slid inside me again without warning, rough and relentless, pumping with a rhythm that made my legs quake. My breath hitched, my body jerking against the chains that tethered me, the metal biting into my wrists. “ Damien ,” I gasped, the tension in my legs unbearable as I tried to stay standing. “I—I can’t —”

A low, humorless chuckle rumbled from him, dark and sharp as a blade. He pulled back, his grin brushing against my skin as he whispered, “You can’t what , Millie? Can’t take it? Can’t handle me? You’re fucking mine, and you’ll take whatever the hell I decide to give you.”

Without waiting for a response, his hands slid under my thighs, lifting me with an effortless strength that made my breath catch. The chains above rattled as he hoisted me onto his shoulders, his face buried between my legs, his hot breath sending a shiver down my spine .

“There,” he murmured, his voice low, full of twisted satisfaction. “You won’t fall, baby. Not unless I let you.”

And then his tongue was inside me, swirling, probing, devouring me like I was his last meal. My head fell back, a strangled moan ripping from my throat as the world dissolved into nothing but him —his mouth, his hands, his madness consuming me whole.

“ Fuck ,” he groaned against me, his voice vibrating through every inch of my body. “You taste like you were fucking made for this.”

My body arched, my legs trembling violently as I teetered on the edge of oblivion. “ Damien ,” I whimpered, my voice breaking, but he only laughed—a sound so dark , so manic , it made my blood sing with equal parts fear and need.

“You’re not going anywhere,” he growled, sinking deeper, harder. “Not until I ruin you.”

The sharp twist of jealousy that clawed through my chest was suffocating, venomous, and impossible to ignore. The thought came unbidden, dark and maddening: How many others had he brought here before me? How many women had stood exactly where I was, trembling, broken open by him, laid bare under the weight of his control?

The idea of anyone else feeling this— his insanity , this sickening blend of fear and desire—made something feral and possessive flare inside me. Had they cried out for him like I did? Had they begged for him, fallen apart under his cruel, relentless hands? My mind conjured the image of his lips on someone else, his voice dripping with the same dark promises he now whispered to me, and it burned .

It was irrational, I knew that. I shouldn’t care. I shouldn’t want to believe this moment was mine, that I was something special in his twisted world. But the jealousy scorched through me, mingling with the electric thrill of knowing that right now, I was the one in his grip. No one else . Not a single ghost of his past.

“Stop thinking ,” Damien’s voice snapped, low and raw with manic frustration. His teeth grazed the inside of my thigh as his hand gripped my hip hard enough to bruise. “Whatever shit is in your head, Millie, kill it. You’re here. Right fucking now. ”

I gasped sharply as his fingers, rough and merciless, drove into me, the sudden invasion leaving no room for thought. Then, without warning, one finger thrust inside my ass, hard and unforgiving. My entire body jolted, a cry ripping from my lips.

“Yeah, that’s it,” he growled, his breath hot against my skin. “ Take it . Fucking take all of me.”

I clutched the chains harder, the cold bite of metal digging into my palms as I tried to steady myself. But he wasn’t going to let me. He wasn’t going to give me anything except chaos. His mouth latched onto me again, his tongue dragging and twisting in ways that made me buck against him, riding his face like I had no control left.

Damien groaned into me, the vibrations shooting straight through me. “You’re getting close.” His voice was muffled, almost teasing. “ Go on. Come on my fucking tongue. Don’t stop until I say you can breathe again.”

The climax hit me like a brutal wave, shaking me to my core. My screams tore through the room, raw and breathless.

The sharp ringing of his phone echoed somewhere in the room, but he ignored it completely, driving another finger into my ass. The sensation shifted from sharp pleasure to raw, jagged pain , my body arching against the overwhelming intensity.

And I liked it. God, I hated myself, but I liked it —because he was enjoying it, and there was nothing more intoxicating than the sound of Damien losing control, the growl of his pleasure twisting with my pain.

With one final, bite to my inner thigh, he pulled away, his teeth grazing my skin like a warning. His fingers slid out of me, slick and slow, as though savoring the moment. And then, without hesitation, he shoved me off his shoulders.

The world tilted violently, my feet slamming against the cold floor with a jarring thud. I stumbled forward, my body lurching dangerously close to the flames. A sharp scream tore from my throat as the chains yanked at my hair, sending a lightning bolt of searing pain through my scalp.

In front of me, Damien watched in silence, his head tilted slightly, his eyes gleaming with satisfaction. He didn't move, didn't speak, just stood there as if drinking in the sight of my struggle. When I finally steadied myself, gasping and trembling, his lips curved into a slow, wicked grin.

"Beautiful," he murmured, his voice like velvet laced with malice.

Then, with a deliberate flick, he extinguished the flames, plunging the room into a chilling silence broken only by my ragged breaths. He stepped forward, removing the collar from my neck with a deliberate slowness that felt more intimate than it should have.

My head dropped forward, the fight draining out of me, exhaustion pooling in every limb. My hair hung limp and sore. I heard him chuckle softly, low and satisfied.

Damien's fingers clamped around my chin, forcing my head up with a sharp, almost punishing grip. His eyes bore into me, wild and consuming, as if he could devour every inch of my soul with just a look. Before I could draw breath, he crashed his lips onto mine, a bruising, ravenous kiss that stole what little air I had left. It wasn't soft; it wasn't kind. It was raw, overwhelming, a collision of power and possession that left me trembling beneath his grasp.

My wrists ached in the restraints, my scalp still burning from the pull of the chains, but none of it mattered in that moment. His teeth grazed my lip, a deliberate bite, as if he wanted to mark me even here. When he finally tore his mouth away, his breath was hot against my skin, his grin feral.

“You belong to me,” he whispered darkly, a vow, a threat, and a promise all at once .

With a flick of his hands, the chains released, and I collapsed like a puppet whose strings had been cut. My body hit the floor in a heap, my legs too weak to hold me, my hair falling in wild tangles around my face. The coldness of the floor seeped into my skin, a stark contrast to the heat that lingered where his touch had been.

Above me, Damien loomed, his shadow swallowing me whole as he laughed softly, the sound dark and triumphant. “Get used to the ground, doctor,” he said, his voice dripping with malice. “It suits you.”

My body betrayed me, every ounce of strength drained as I lay crumpled on the cold, unforgiving floor. The room spun in slow, sickening waves, my mind clouded and heavy. Each breath felt like a struggle, the weight of exhaustion pressing down on my chest. Somewhere above, Damien’s presence loomed, but his voice became a distant echo, swallowed by the storm in my head.

And then, like a crack in reality, another memory hit me.

I was lying on a filthy, stained floor. The stench of mold and sweat clung to the air, choking me as my frail body curled in on itself. The sharp edge of a boot pressed against the floor, and cruel laughter filled the room, its cadence chilling. I tried to move, to fight, but I was so weak. A hand —large, rough, and unyielding—grabbed my arm, yanking me up like a rag doll before throwing me back down.

“You’re nothing ,” a voice spat, low and venomous, like a poison seeping into my mind. “Stay where you belong.”

I remembered the terror , the helplessness , the searing pain in my side as I struggled to breathe. My fingers clawed weakly at the ground, searching for an escape that didn’t exist. And then I was back, trapped in an endless nightmare, tears streaking my

face as I whispered prayers to be saved.

The memory blurred, fading into black as my present reality merged with the past. My eyelids fluttered, too heavy to keep open. Damien's voice was the last thing I heard, deep and menacing, a dark lullaby pulling me under.

And then, silence . My eyes shut completely, and I was gone.

*Source Creation Date: August 7, 2025, 3:15 am*

Damien

I slammed the car door shut, the engine roaring to life as I pulled out of the parking lot, one hand gripping the steering wheel tight enough to leave marks. I'd been looking forward to the quiet, the time to just... be with her. But no, fucking Claire had to call me now.

My phone buzzed in my pocket, and I could already feel the irritation building in my chest. I knew it was her, but I didn't care. I needed the fucking silence. I wasn't in the mood for any more of her shit today. I grabbed the phone and answered, slamming it against my ear.

“What?” I growled, my voice laced with pure venom .

“Damien,” Claire's voice came through, too calm, too steady. “We've got a situation. I need you to handle it.”

“Right now?” I hissed, already pissed off. I could feel my blood simmering beneath the surface, but there was no backing down now. “You couldn't have waited? I'm in the middle of something.”

“Something?” She chuckled, but I could hear the tension in her voice. “I'm sure it's important , but this job's gotta come first. You know how it works.”

I clenched my jaw, fingers digging into the wheel until my knuckles turned white. She knew damn well how I worked, how I didn't like being interrupted when I had my hands on something... precious .



“Yeah, I get it. It’s always my fucking problem to fix, huh?” I shot back, slamming my foot down on the gas. “What the hell do you want me to do? I’m busy.”

“Just... take care of it. I’ll explain more when it’s done. ”

“Don’t tell me what the fuck to do,” I snarled, speeding through the streets. “I’ll take care of it. But you’re gonna pay for this little interruption. You know that, right?”

Claire didn’t respond, and I could almost picture the cool, collected look on her face. She was used to me being angry—hell, she expected it. But I wasn’t going to let her get away with pulling me away from what I was about to do.

The idea of her ... her waiting for me, helpless, was consuming me.

I hung up, throwing the phone onto the passenger seat. My fingers itched, a sick excitement crawling up my spine. I still had work to do.

The thought of Amelia—her wide, terrified eyes, her soft, trembling breath—was more than enough to get my blood pumping into my cock again. I had her locked down, where she couldn’t escape. She wouldn’t be able to move until I was back. I made sure of that.

I could feel the pulse of anticipation in my veins .

She’d be waiting. She always was.

And when I returned, she’d remember who controlled her world.

But first, I had a fucking job to finish. I had to deal with whatever the hell Claire’s mess was. Then I’d return.

I parked the car in the alley, the engine still humming as I killed the ignition. The penthouse loomed ahead, all glass and steel, a fucking trophy for some rich bastard who had nothing better to do than piss off people with more power than he could ever imagine. I could already feel the tension tightening in my muscles, the anticipation of what I was about to do. This wasn't some clean job—it never was, but today? Today was going to be fucking personal . Why, you ask? Because I had to leave my Millie alone and rush here with a fucking hard dick to kill the bastard.

I slipped out of the car, my boots hitting the pavement with quiet thuds. The city was buzzing around me, the noise a dull hum in the background, but in my head, it was nothing but silence. The kind of silence that came right before you turned someone's world into fucking chaos .

I moved quickly, staying low and blending into the shadows, my hand resting lightly on the gun at my hip. I didn't need it for this. Not yet. But I liked having it on me. It was a reminder of who I was—who I always was.

The target, a smug lawyer with more money than sense, was already fucked. He just didn't know it yet. His mistake was getting on the wrong side of some seriously rich assholes. I could only assume it had something to do with a shady deal gone wrong. The kind of shit where people get erased without a trace.

The elevator was a breeze, and I took it up to the penthouse floor without a sound. I didn't need to waste time stalking the guy. He was a goddamn lawyer. Arrogant, self-important, and too fucking stupid to realize that he had a target on his back.

I reached the door to his penthouse, and I could hear the sound of water running in the bathroom. Perfect . He was probably too busy taking a goddamn shower to think about who was coming for him .

I slipped through the door, not making a sound. The penthouse was sleek, all polished

marble and glass, everything shiny and expensive. I didn't give a shit about the décor, though. I didn't care about the picture-perfect life this prick had built. All I cared about was finishing the fucking job .

I stalked down the hallway, my every step deliberate, quiet, until I reached the bathroom door.

I stood there, waiting, listening to him humming softly to himself in the shower, oblivious to his impending fate.

I grabbed the towel from the hook on the bathroom door and stepped inside, the smell of soap and shampoo hitting me first. He was standing under the showerhead, his back to me, completely unaware.

Fucker .

I moved fast—too fast. One moment, I was standing behind him, the next I was yanking his head back by his hair, pressing a cold blade to his throat. His body tensed, but it was too late. The blade was already there, and I could feel the pulse in his neck thrumming against the steel .

“Who are you?” he asked, his voice trembling. “What do you want?”

I grinned, the darkness in me stretching wide as I pressed the blade harder, just enough to draw blood.

“Your fucking death ,” I muttered, low and dark. “You made a mistake, and now you're gonna pay for it.”

I shoved the towel over his head, letting the fabric soak up the blood that dripped from his neck. He was still trying to process what the hell was happening, but there

was no time for his confusion. I pulled out my gun and pointed it straight at his face.

“Follow me,” I growled, my patience wearing thin. “Make a sound, and I’ll blow your brains out right here.”

His eyes flicked between the gun and my face, but he didn’t move fast enough for my liking. I jabbed him with the barrel, guiding him out of the bathroom and down the hallway.

I threw open the door to the closest room—his office—and pushed him inside.

“Sit ,” I barked, pointing to the chair across from the desk. He hesitated, but I didn’t give him a second to think. A slap of my hand on the back of his head had him sinking into the seat.

I took a deep breath, the tension in the room thick as hell. I let it roll over me, savoring the silence for just a second before I leaned forward, my eyes locking onto his.

“Because of you , I had to leave something real fucking important behind,” I said, my voice low and dark, dripping with anger. “Something I’ve been waiting for, something I’ve been savoring . And now I’m here, wasting my fucking time with you, because you couldn’t keep your goddamn mouth shut.”

I forced a deep breath through my nose, trying to calm down. I needed to focus. Needed to finish this, and yet...

I stood up abruptly, shaking off the tension, and reached for the pack of cigarettes sitting on the desk. I grabbed one, lit it, and inhaled deeply, letting the smoke curl into the air like it could somehow burn the anger out of me. But it didn’t.

I stared at the guy, my eyes narrowing, but my mind... it wasn't there. It was somewhere else .

Amelia .

I took a long, slow drag from the cigarette, letting the smoke curl into the air as I paced around the room. The anger was still there, simmering under the surface, but it was something else that was clawing at me. Something darker , gnawing away at my insides, and it had nothing to do with the fucker sitting in front of me.

I exhaled the smoke and chuckled to myself. “You ever have one of those fucking moments where you just can't breathe ? Like something's eating you alive from the inside out, and you can't do shit about it?” I ran my fingers through my hair, my mind racing. “Yeah, that's how I feel. Every goddamn day now. And it's all because of her .” I spat the words out like they burned my tongue.

I stopped pacing and turned back to him, locking eyes. The room felt suffocating, like it was closing in on me. “I don't know what the fuck is happening, but she's in my head. She's all I fucking think about. All the time! And the worst part? I want her there. It drives me insane, makes me lose my goddamn mind. You know what it's like to lose control? ”

I paced again, the cigarette burning in my hand, the ash falling like I didn't even notice. “I used to have everything under fucking control. Everything . My life, my work, the shit I did. But now? She's slipping through my fingers like sand, and I can't fucking hold on. It's like... like I want to break her. But then I fucking need her. I don't even know what the hell I'm doing anymore. She makes me feel like I'm losing it.”

I laughed, but it wasn't a laugh. It was a snarl. “And I fucking hate it.” I slammed the cigarette into the ashtray, my pulse racing. “I should just let her go, right? Let her

fade into the background like everyone else. But I can't. I can't stop thinking about how she looks at me. How her skin feels against mine. How she trembles when I touch her. It's... suffocating .”

I wiped my hand down my face, frustrated, and looked back at the man, who was still trembling in his chair. “You ever feel that way? Like someone is just... too much ? And you don't know whether you want to fuck them or kill them? Because that's what she does to me. And it's fucking killing me.”

I threw the chair across the room, my mind a mess of rage and desire. The control I used to have was slipping away, piece by piece. And I couldn't stop it .

The man's voice trembled, shaking like a leaf in a storm. “Look... I don't know who you think I am, but I—”

“Shut the fuck up,” I snapped, my patience running out faster than I could manage. “I'm not here for your shitty advice.”

But he kept talking, eyes wide with terror. “I... I don't know what you're dealing with, but if you... If you really care about her, you need to back off, man. This... this isn't how it works—”

I cut him off with a feral laugh, the dark chuckle slipping out like a jagged knife. “Care about her?” I repeated the words, letting them hang in the air, tasting them like poison. “Yeah, maybe I fucking care. You think I don't see it? She's all I think about. Every second of every day, she's in my fucking head! ”

I took a deep breath, my fists clenched so tight my nails dug into my palms. The memory of her was like a fucking fire, too hot to touch but too impossible to escape. “You have no idea what it was like when she held my hand. When she touched me like that, it sent a goddamn shock straight through my fucking soul . She doesn't

know what the hell she did to me. ”

My voice dropped to a dangerous whisper, but the manic edge was still there, buzzing through me. “When her fingers brushed against mine, it was like a switch flipped. Like something inside me snapped . For a second, I felt like I was holding her, protecting her, keeping her safe from everything... everyone. And then the next second? All I wanted to do was destroy her. Tear her apart. Break her. Make her feel every fucking inch of me in ways she’ll never forget.”

I stepped closer, my breath heavy with rage, my eyes narrowing. “She’s fragile. She doesn’t even realize it, but she’s so fucking fragile , and it makes me want to put her back together. But it also makes me want to rip her to pieces. I can’t stand it. I can’t stand the thought of anyone else touching her. Not a single fucking soul.”

I ran my fingers through my hair, my chest tightening. “I want to protect her. But goddamn it , I want to ruin her just as much. I want her to need me. I want her to break and beg for me. It’s all I think about. Every time she looks at me, it’s like I lose a little more of myself. ”

I let out a long, shuddering breath, taking a step back. “I can’t stop it, though. I can’t stop what I’m gonna do to her. It’s too fucking late . She’s already under my skin.”

The words lingered between us, thick with a twisted sort of promise. I could see the fear flickering in his eyes, but my own—my own was something darker, something that only seemed to grow stronger with every passing second. The tension in the room crackled like an electrical storm, and as I stared at him, I couldn’t help but feel the pull of it all.

It was only a matter of time.

?????????

I stepped out of the car, the cool night air biting at my skin. My eyes narrowed as I lit up a cigarette, letting the smoke curl into the darkness, twisting with my thoughts. I pulled out my phone, staring at the screen.

There she was. Amelia .

She was in the solitary confinement room, just like I left her—hands bound in a straightjacket, her hospital gown barely clinging to her body. She looked fucking perfect, a mix of confusion and panic crossing her face as she started waking up.

I watched her struggle, her body jerking as she tried to move, but the restraints held her tight. My lips curled into a smirk. Good girl, try all you want. You're not going anywhere .

I could almost feel the desperation radiating off her. It was like she knew what was coming, knew the madness I'd unleashed on her, but still—still, she fought.

I zoomed in on the camera feed, watching her thrash on the floor, the desperation in her eyes fueling something inside me.

God, I missed this.

She was beautiful when she was like this. Frantic. Helpless. And it fucking thrilled me.

My grip tightened on the cigarette. She wasn't going anywhere. Not until I decided .

I walked inside, the sound of my boots echoing in the cold, empty hall. The air in the asylum was thick, thick with something twisted, something I could taste. I walked down the hallway, not in any rush.



When I reached the solitary confinement room, I opened the door slowly, savoring the moment. She froze, her breath catching when she saw me. That's it, Millie . I'm here. You know what the fuck that means.

She looked so goddamn beautiful, her chest heaving as she fought against the straightjacket, eyes wide with panic. It made the dark thrill inside me grow.

I stepped closer, crouching in front of her, my fingers brushing a stray lock of hair from her face. The contact was gentle, almost tender , but there was nothing soft about what I was doing. I saw the way she stiffened, her eyes flashing with a mix of fear and defiance.

“ Shh ,” I murmured, my fingers still lingering on her cheek, my voice a low growl. “I'm the one who's supposed to be in control, Millie. Not you. Don't forget that. ”

Her lips trembled, her body tensing as she spoke, desperation thick in her voice. “Let me go, Damien.”

The burn of desire surged inside me, uncontrollable, hungry. “You don't get it, do you?” I muttered, my breath hot against her ear. “I fucking want you. I've wanted you from the moment I laid eyes on you. You're everything I've been craving, Amelia.”

I reached down, my fingers grazing the collar of her gown, just enough to make her skin prickle. “You're mine now,” I whispered. “And the sooner you accept that, the better for you.”

I could feel her resistance, but I knew better. She wouldn't be able to hold out for long.

I suddenly spun her around, slamming her face into the floor.

Her body trembled beneath me, and I could feel her desperation and need . I loved it. Every second of it.

I unbuckled my pants, pulling out my impossibly hard cock, my hands trembled, not from excitement, but from the fucking chaos inside me. I was so fucking confused, so goddamn angry . Every inch of me was screaming, but I didn't know what the hell I was screaming for. Was it her ? Was it the fucking mess I'd made of everything?

I slid my hands from her thighs all the way to her back, exposing her perfect ass. I gave it a few kisses, cursing beneath my breath at how soft her skin was. "I'm so fucking lost ," I muttered, my voice low and vicious. "I don't even know what I'm feeling anymore, doctor. I want to rip you apart and protect you all at once. This fucking thing inside me—this... need , I can't shake it. I don't know what the hell you've done to me, but I can't get rid of it."

I gave my cock a few light strokes, smearing my pre-cum all over it, breathing hard as I positioned myself between her legs, trying to swallow down the fucking monster that was clawing at my chest.

"I need a way to forget about it all," I snarled, my voice cracking with a mix of rage and something darker . "Forget about you . Forget about this goddamn mess I've made... or maybe it'll kill me."

And without a warning, I pushed myself inside her ass.

She was so tight and sweet. Fuck . I wanted to shatter her.

"You make me lose control, Millie," I hissed, voice thick with desire. "You make me forget everything I've ever known. I'm used to this— my control . But you? You twist everything. You make me want to break and protect you at the same time."

I slammed my hips against her, her skin reddening under the pressure. The sound of it combined with her loud noises was so satisfying , but not enough to drown out the fucking storm in my head.

“I don’t know what to do with you anymore,” I rolled my hips and she moaned with pleasure beneath me, so I kept doing it again, and again . “I should just finish this and be done with it.” I twisted her hair around my palm and pulled at it, growling at how helpless she was. “But instead... instead, I can’t even think straight. I fucking need you, but I hate that I do.”

She was different. She made it hard to breathe.

“You have no idea what you do to me,” I muttered breathlessly, as I sank my dick into her hole over and over again, feeling my release getting closer. “I tried to forget you, tried to bury you under all this other shit. But you just— fuck . You make me lose my mind. I can’t let you go. Can’t get rid of you. And it pisses me off. ”

I leaned closer, burying my cock even deeper inside her ass, watching her, hearing her loud moans. She was beautiful, even like this— especially like this.

“I don’t know if I want to break you or make you better,” I admitted, my thrusts getting rougher, faster. “Maybe both. Maybe I just want to burn every fucking inch of you so you know you’re mine.”

God —the rawness of it made something in me itch, a hunger that I couldn’t quite scratch. I needed— Fuck .

I growled as an angry wave of pleasure hit my body, igniting every dormant nerve in it. I pulled my dick out of her hole, pushing it inside my pants, seeing as my seed started leaking out of her. It was an intoxicating sight.

The room was dead silent, except for our ragged breathing. I stared at her bound form, every muscle in her body tense. My fingers started working the straps loose, the restraints came off, one by one, and the second she was free, she rolled away, collapsing onto the cold floor. Her breaths were shaky, her chest rising and falling, and when I caught a glimpse of her face, there it was—wet streaks on her cheeks .

Tears.

Fuck.

I stayed there for a moment, on my knees, staring, trying to make sense of the ache crawling up my throat. It was wrong. This was wrong. I was wrong . But even that thought pissed me off. I wasn't supposed to feel this—this suffocating mess of guilt mixed with rage.

I lay down beside her, close enough that our faces were just inches apart, our breaths mingling in the cold, stale air of the room. Her honey-colored eyes were glassy, unfocused, red at the edges. She looked at me like she didn't know if she should hate me or beg me to stop.

“You look broken, doctor,” I muttered, my voice low, almost hoarse. “And I should be fucking happy about that. Isn't that the point? To tear you apart until there's nothing left? That's what I wanted , right?”

Her lips trembled, but she didn't speak. Didn't fucking have to. Her silence screamed louder than any words .

I hated her for making me feel this way—hated her for the fucking tears, the fragility, the way she lay there like she'd given up, and most of all, I hated myself for wanting to put her back together.

I clenched my fists against the urge to touch her face, to wipe those tears away. Instead, I just stayed there, my eyes locked on hers, the twisted mess inside me building and building.

“Why the fuck do you have to be like this?” I growled, my voice cracking. “Why the fuck do I care ? Why the fuck can’t I just leave you alone?”

Her breath hitched, and I wanted to scream , to tear the whole fucking room apart, to do something to stop this feeling—this fucking weakness eating me alive.

I leaned in closer, my voice dropping into something darker, meaner, trying to reclaim whatever shred of control I had left.

“I could destroy you, Amelia,” I whispered. “I could ruin you, leave you here in pieces, and walk away without a second thought. ”

But I didn’t move. I couldn’t . And the part of me that hated seeing her like this? That part was winning.

I turned onto my back, the cold floor pressing against me, my chest heaving like I’d just run a fucking marathon. The ceiling stared back at me, cracked and peeling, as if it could split open and swallow me whole. I wished it would.

I could feel her eyes on me. I didn’t look, didn’t need to. I could feel the weight of her stare like a chain around my neck, pulling me under. The silence between us was fucking deafening .

And then it started. Words spilling out of me before I could stop them, before I even knew what the hell I was saying.

“You think I was always like this ?” I muttered, my voice rough, raw. “You think I

woke up one day and decided to be this fucked-up excuse for a person?”

I laughed—bitter, sharp, and hollow. It echoed in the room like a goddamn death rattle .

“My old man... he made sure of it. That bastard . He didn’t just beat the shit out of me when I was a kid. No. That would’ve been too fucking easy.”

My jaw clenched, the memories clawing their way out, refusing to stay buried.

“He used to take me to these places. Dirty, dark fucking places, with people screaming , begging for their lives. And he’d look at me, like it was a goddamn father-son bonding moment, and he’d say, ‘Come on, Damien. Be a man. Help your old man out.’ ”

I closed my eyes, but it didn’t help. The images were burned there, permanent, like scars on the inside of my skull.

“He made me hold them down, Millie. I was just a fucking kid . I didn’t even know what I was doing half the time. But he’d laugh—this fucking sick , twisted laugh—when I did it right. When I made them scream .”

My throat tightened, my voice cracking .

“He made me... Fuck . He made me hurt them. Made me use knives, bats, whatever the fuck he handed me. Told me it was how you survive in this world. Told me to shut the fuck up and stop crying like a little bitch.”

I dragged a hand over my face, trying to scrape off the shame, the rage, the fucking memories .

“And you know what’s worse?” I spat, my voice dropping into something cold, venomous. “I got good at it. Real fucking good. So good, he started calling me his little partner. Like I was his goddamn apprentice.”

The room was dead silent, except for the sound of my breathing—heavy, uneven, like I was choking on the words.

“I didn’t stand a fucking chance,” I whispered, my voice barely audible now. “He turned me into this. This monster . And the worst part? I don’t even know if I hate him for it... or if I hate myself more for not stopping him.”

I let out a bitter laugh, one that tasted like ash in my throat .

“But you know what broke me?” I muttered, still staring at the ceiling like it held the answers to this fucked-up mess. “The day I finally figured out what I was dealing with. The day I saw who he really was.”

My chest rose and fell like a fucking sledgehammer, the memories slamming into me full force.

“I was twelve. Twelve fucking years old, Millie,” I said, my voice trembling with something I couldn’t quite name—rage, grief, maybe both. “And he came home, reeking of booze and blood. That wasn’t unusual, you know? That was just another Tuesday. But my mom—she finally had enough. She finally fought back.”

The words were spilling out now, unstoppable, each one cutting deeper than the last.

“She screamed at him, called him every name in the book. Told him he was a monster, told him she’d take me and leave. And you know what he did?” My laugh turned sharp, bitter. “He smiled. That sick, twisted fucking smile. Like it was all some goddamn joke. ”

I paused, swallowing hard, the memory choking me.

“And then he took her, right there in the kitchen, and he... he slit her throat. ” My voice cracked, but I kept going, the floodgate wide open now. “Like it was nothing . Like she was nothing. Just one quick swipe, and she was gone . Blood everywhere. All over me. All over the walls. And he looked at me, Millie—he fucking looked at me—and said, ‘That’s how you deal with problems, son. That’s how you survive.’ ”

My hands were shaking now, the rage and the pain boiling over, spilling out of me in jagged, broken pieces.

“I don’t even remember thinking,” I said, my voice low and rough. “I just remember grabbing the knife off the counter. The same knife he’d used. The same fucking knife. And I stabbed him. Right in the gut.”

I could feel my chest heaving, the weight of the memory crushing me, drowning me.

“He didn’t even fight back,” I muttered. “Just looked at me with this... this look , like he was proud. Like I’d finally become what he wanted. And that... that was the worst fucking part. ”

I closed my eyes, the image of his face burned into my mind like a brand.

“I ran,” I whispered. “Ran out of that house, covered in their blood, and I didn’t look back. Not once. Didn’t even know where the fuck I was going. I just... I couldn’t stay there.”

The silence settled over us again, heavy and suffocating. My hands clenched into fists, the nails biting into my palms, grounding me in the present.

“That’s the day I learned,” I said, my voice hard, cold. “There’s no escape from this



shit. No redemption. You just survive . You become what they made you, or you fucking die.”

I felt her gaze burn into me, but I couldn’t look at her. Not after that. Not after laying it all out there, raw and ugly and fucking unfixable .

Her voice was so soft, barely a whisper, yet it cut through the thick air between us like a blade.

“ Damien .”

I froze. My jaw clenched so hard I thought my teeth might crack. Then I felt her move closer, her hand reaching out—toward me. I jerked back before her fingers could graze my face.

“Don’t,” I snapped, my voice sharper than I intended, venom dripping from the word. My body was tense, like a coiled spring ready to snap, and I forced myself to sit up, turning my back to her. “Just don’t .”

I could feel her eyes on me, piercing through my defenses like she was trying to see the parts of me I’d buried so goddamn deep. I hated it. Hated her for making me feel so raw, so exposed .

“Leave it,” I growled, my voice low and dangerous. “Just fucking leave it, Amelia.”

But she didn’t. Of course, she didn’t. I heard the rustle of fabric as she moved, sitting up and shifting until she was in front of me again, straddling me, her eyes locking onto mine. Her stubbornness made me want to shake her, to yell, to push her away. Instead, I stared her down, letting the darkness rise to the surface .

“You think you’re strong enough for this?” I spat, leaning forward, my voice a cruel

whisper. “You think you can handle the shit I’ve seen , the shit I’ve done ? You think you can fix me?” I let out a bitter laugh. “I’ll fucking destroy you first, Millie. That’s all I know how to do. Tear things apart. Break them. Ruin them.”

But she didn’t flinch. Not even a little. Her steady gaze only made me angrier, made the storm inside me churn harder.

“You shouldn’t have gone through that,” she said softly, her voice cracking just enough to betray the emotion behind her words.

Something in me shattered. I felt it , like a wall crumbling, bricks hitting the ground one by one.

Her hand hovered near mine, not touching but close enough to feel the warmth radiating from her skin.

“I know it wasn’t your fault,” she said, her voice trembling but firm. “And I know that you didn’t deserve it. ”

I let out a sharp, bitter laugh, shaking my head. “ Deserve it? You think that shit matters ? Life doesn’t give a fuck what we deserve, Amelia. It just chews you up and spits you out. And if you’re lucky, you survive. That’s it.”

Her eyes softened, and for a moment, I wanted to grab her, shake her, yell at her to stop looking at me like that. Like I was still worth something . Like I wasn’t already damned .

“You survived,” she said, her voice barely a whisper, but the weight of it hit me like a goddamn freight train.

Her hand rose slowly, hesitantly, like she knew she was crossing a line neither of us

could uncross. And when her fingers finally touched my cheek, I flinched. But I didn't pull away.

Instead, I leaned into it. Fuck . The warmth of her palm, the gentleness of her touch—it was something I didn't deserve. Something I never thought I'd feel again. My eyes closed against my will, shutting out everything but the sensation of her hand against my skin. For a second, just a second , I forgot who I was. What I'd done .

“What are you doing to me?” The words came out low, almost a growl, as I opened my eyes and looked straight into hers. I felt raw, stripped bare, like she'd reached in and ripped out the parts of me I tried so fucking hard to bury.

She didn't say anything, just kept her hand there, steady, like she thought she could keep me from falling apart.

“You make me feel shit I shouldn't fucking feel,” I spat, the anger in my voice directed more at myself than her. “Do you get that? You're messing with something you can't fucking fix , doctor. You're in over your goddamn head.”

Her thumb brushed against my cheek, soft as hell, and it sent a jolt through me, like lightning under my skin.

“I don't deserve this,” I muttered, my voice breaking. “I don't deserve you .”

She tilted her head slightly, her eyes searching mine, like she was trying to find some sliver of humanity buried under the mess of who I was .

“You're making me weak ,” I hissed, my breath ragged. “I can't fucking think straight when you're around. Can't even be who I'm supposed to be.”

“You're human,” she whispered, her voice steady but soft.

“No,” I snapped, my teeth grinding together. “I’m not . I’m a fucking monster. I hurt . I destroy . That’s what I am. That’s all I’ve ever been.”

But even as the words left my mouth, her hand stayed on my cheek, unwavering, like she refused to let me push her away.

“Why are you doing this to me?” My voice cracked, low and rough, the anger bleeding into something else—something I didn’t have a name for. “Why are you still here?”

“Why the fuck are you still here , Amelia?” I asked again, my voice breaking like glass against a wall. My eyes burned into hers, daring her to answer, to say something that would make sense of the madness swirling inside me .

She shifted, her hand starting to pull away, but I caught her wrist before she could. No . She wasn’t leaving. Not now . Not when I needed... fuck , I didn’t even know what I needed.

Her breath hitched, and for a second, her eyes darted away. “Damien...” she started, her voice trembling, unsure. She looked like she wanted to run , like she was on the edge of bolting, but I tightened my grip, pulling her closer, forcing her to look at me.

“Say it,” I growled. My chest heaved, the frustration, the fucking need tearing through me like fire. “Tell me why . Tell me why the fuck you’re still here when you should’ve run miles by now. Why, Amelia?”

Her lips parted, her breath shaky as hell, and for a second, she looked so confused, so vulnerable , I almost let her go. But then she swallowed, her eyes locking onto mine, and what she said next hit me like a goddamn freight train.

“Because you make me feel alive ,” she whispered, her voice barely audible, like it

was meant for me and no one else .

I froze. Every muscle in my body locked up as her words sank in, each one heavier than the last.

“You terrify me,” she continued, her eyes glistening. “You make me want to run , to hide , to scream ... but you also make me feel like I’m breathing for the first time in years.”

My chest fucking ached , a sharp, sudden pang that I wasn’t prepared for. I stared at her, the chaos in my head suddenly too much, too loud.

“Do you know how insane that sounds?” I said, my voice low and rough, but there wasn’t any bite behind it. I couldn’t muster it. Not when my heart was hammering like this, not when her words were crawling under my skin.

“I know,” she said, her lips trembling. “But it’s the truth.”

I let go of her wrist, but I didn’t move back. My hand found her face instead, my thumb brushing against her cheek, her skin warm beneath my touch. “You’re fucking insane ,” I muttered, shaking my head, but my voice cracked halfway through .

“And you’re not?” she shot back softly, a faint, shaky smile on her lips.

I felt my throat tighten, my chest burning like I’d been sucker-punched. She was right. I wasn’t sane. I wasn’t normal. And the worst fucking part? She wasn’t wrong about me making her feel alive.

Because she was doing the same thing to me.

## Page 26

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I sit in the quiet of the room, surrounded by old photographs—smiles frozen in time, moments that once felt like they could last forever. But now, they're just relics of the person I used to be. The woman I was before him .

I can't seem to find her in these pictures. The girl who wanted to save the world, who believed in kindness, in healing. I can barely remember her. She's lost in the wreckage, buried beneath layers of bruises and broken things. Her innocence is a shadow I can almost touch, but it slips through my fingers every time I try to hold on to it.

Damien . His name is the only thing that still makes sense.

I trace the edges of one of the photos—my family, my past, so far away from where I am now. Everything is different now. Nothing is simple anymore. I should be disgusted by how tangled up I've become in his darkness, in his chaos, in the twisted little world we've built for ourselves. But I'm not. Not anymore .

I turn the page of my journal, the one where I write about him—about us . The words pour out of me like blood from a wound. I'm not sure if I'm writing to understand or to hold on. I write about the violence, the mess, the danger, the kind of love we have—if you can even call it love. It's a mess of power and control, of twisted affection and hatred, of obsession and fear. But it's ours . And that... that's the only truth I know anymore.

I don't know where this ends. I don't know if there's a breaking point for us, a line we can't cross, or if we'll keep going, faster and faster, until we burn out in a blaze of destruction. I wonder sometimes if it's inevitable—that we're like two halves of a

broken mirror, destined to shatter each other.

I think about the way he touches me, the way his fingers leave marks on my skin, both tender and bruising. I think about the way he looks at me, like I'm the only thing that matters , and at the same time, like I'm just another piece of his wreckage. And I wonder if, when this is all over, when it all falls apart, I'll have anything left of myself to pick up. Or if he'll have taken it all.

It doesn't matter. Not really. I've already given him everything. My sanity. My peace. My soul. And in exchange, he's given me a kind of clarity I didn't know I needed. It's strange, this feeling , this pull between us that's impossible to escape. It's magnetic. It's suffocating. And it's the only thing that feels real .

I close my journal and set it aside, my fingers trembling as I look at the walls around me—everything that holds the ghosts of who I was, and everything that holds the weight of who I've become.

The doorbell rings, breaking the silence like a sharp crack in the stillness.

I freeze, my breath caught in my chest. Who could it be at this hour? My skin prickles with a cold tension as I stand, every nerve on high alert. My feet move before I even think about it, drawing me toward the door, and when I open it, I find an envelope lying there, ominously plain. No return address. No markings of any kind. Just a thick, unmarked envelope with my name scrawled on the front in hurried, messy handwriting.

I bend down, hesitant but curious, and pick it up. My fingers are unsteady as I tear it open, a sense of dread crawling up my spine. Inside is a single photograph.

I look at it, and my blood runs cold.

It's him. Ben . My captor. The man who haunted my every step, the one whose hands

destroyed my past. The photo slips from my hand, dropping to the floor with a soft thud, but I can't tear my eyes away.

Then my gaze shifts, and something else catches my attention.

A boy. A young boy, standing next to Ben. A familiar feeling gnaws at my gut.

I bend down, my heart racing in my chest as I pick the photo up again .

I flip the photo over, and as my fingers tremble, the words on the back sear themselves into my brain.

Ben and his son, Damien.