



Designation Prey

(Designation #3)

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Category: LGBT+

Description: Daniel Burrows is a submissive. When he'd signed up for the military's Designation program that would turn him into a soldier with enhanced abilities, he'd been reassured the odds were good that he'd come out a Dominant. In fact, his odds of becoming a Dominant were 10 to 1.

Much to Daniel and his father's dismay, that isn't what happened.

And he isn't just submissive— his designation is Prey.

Daniel has no idea what that will mean when it comes to finally being with a Dominant.

He's about to find out.

This is a 54,000 word story with a guaranteed HEA, featuring two super strong, hot men and lots of biologically kinky hanky-panky. Incinerate at your own risk....

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PROLOGUE

Private Daniel Burrows knows the advantages of getting a designation. His ranking in the military would be higher, and he'd get promoted faster. He'd get a large enough signing bonus that he could put a down payment on a house.

If he had any interest in buying a house, that would be more alluring.

He could get engaged and prepare to start a family... if there was someone he had any interest in being engaged to.

Daniel's pretty sure he can't have a family. After. Though he isn't sure. How in the hell would that work? That's the sort of thing he doesn't want to think too much about. Would he want to marry a man?

Anyway.

There are benefits to being a lab rat aside from the financial aspects—the benefits his father and brother focus on.

He'll be stronger, smarter, and faster. He'll build muscle more quickly than a normal man. He might never catch a cold again. He'll heal faster, have increased longevity (so long as he doesn't have to be put down or frozen), and his hearing and vision will be perfect. There are definitely benefits.

And if he became a Dominant then his father would be proud of him.

The man would have no choice in the matter. For once in Daniel's life he might hear the magic words: "Good job, son. I'm proud of you."

Failing that, he might get a shoulder squeeze of approval. Or maybe a grunt of acknowledgement. The bar of what Daniel would take as "praise" is embedded in the floor.

The problem is that becoming a Dominant isn't a certainty. The military has gotten better about predicting who will be submissive and who will be Dominant, but it isn't exact. And Daniel hasn't quite decided what's an acceptable level of risk. What if there's a five percent chance of becoming submissive? That's five out of every hundred men. Those are pretty good odds, but they're still not great.

Maybe one in five thousand would be good enough odds. Definitely ten thousand.

Daniel's father is about to tell him the likelihood of him becoming a submissive. Surely if it's too high then his father won't want him to do it, right?

"Eight percent," Daniel's father says, looking at him sternly across his large mahogany desk. Daniel hates this desk. He's been whipped with a branch over this fucking desk more times than he can count.

That's terrible, he thinks about saying. It isn't worth the risk. I don't want to do it.

His father turns his gaze to Daniel's brother Logan. "Twelve percent."

Ah, hell.

Daniel can see Logan grip the chair tightly, knuckles white against the carved wood. "What do you think I should do, Sir?" Logan asks, leaving it up to their father.

Daniel wants to punch him.

“Our family has been in the military for five generations. We have always fought with integrity and bravery. We do not run from our duty. No boys of mine would turn down this opportunity to become the best of the best, no matter the odds. Your grandfather’s odds on D-Day certainly weren’t above fifty percent chance of survival. That’s how heroes are made. Real men take the risk.”

Logan nods in agreement. “Yes, Sir.”

Daniel wants to howl in protest. He wants to get up and run from the room, but how can he when he only has an eight percent chance of becoming a submissive while Logan is at twelve percent?

“That is the right decision,” their father says. And then he turns to Daniel.

“I want to make you proud,” Daniel tells him, voice wavering. He has to clear his throat—it’s so terrifying to argue with his father. But he’s an adult. He needs to do better than this.

“This is a good start,” their father says, and stands up.

“But I can’t do it,” Daniel forces himself to say. “I’m sorry. I don’t want to risk it.” Bile fills his mouth. He might throw up all over his father’s desk.

“It’s a matter of will, Daniel. If you are steadfast in who you are, if you have no moral failings, then you have nothing to worry about. Do you have the will to become a Dominant?”

Daniel is almost positive “will” doesn’t have anything to do with it. “I do believe in myself, but it’s a... risk. All sorts of good men come out wrong, I mean

submissive?—”

“Not my sons,” his father retorts, voice a low hiss of rage.

He can feel Logan looking at him, shocked at his display of disobedience.

“Your brother Aaron will be the head of this family. You two are meant for the military. I will not be shamed by you, Daniel. If you don’t have the courage to do your duty?—”

“He does. Of course he does,” Logan cuts in, getting to his feet.

“First thing tomorrow, then,” their father says before he strides from the room. Their time is up. His father is a busy man, probably has to talk to someone from the Department of Defense or Homeland Security. Someone more important than his two sons.

Daniel stays seated, stunned at Logan’s betrayal, the destiny that is yawning open in front of him.

“You’ve fucked me. Do you understand? I don’t want to do it. You shouldn’t want to do it! It isn’t going to go well. I can feel it. This is a mistake. And do you know what we will get for this sacrifice? Nothing. He won’t love us more. He won’t give us approval. I can’t believe you,” he whispers. His brother’s betrayal is the worst part. His father has always been an asshole. Of course he doesn’t give a shit what Daniel wants. However, Logan is not just blood but his best friend in all the world.

He hadn’t expected this from his brother.

“Daniel. You’ve heard the odds. What can we do? Do you want to be disowned? Disinherited? You know he’ll turn his back on us for dishonoring the family name if

we say no.”

I’ll walk away if you will. That’s what Daniel wants to say. Because Logan is his twin. If they walk away together, then Daniel can survive anything. But what if Logan says no? He can’t stand the possibility of such a rejection.

For all his life, he’s had one person on his side. What if Logan doesn’t choose him?

“We’re still his sons. He couldn’t stand to have submissive sons. He says the odds are good and I believe him,” Logan continues. “We’ll have the best doctors. He’ll make sure of it. He’ll use his connections and we’ll be fine.”

“That man has never given us special treatment. Why the hell would he start now?”

“Because he doesn’t want to have submissive sons. His pride won’t allow it.”

Daniel wants to howl and throw something. Run away. What if he just walked out and never came back? Got a job at a fast-food place or bussing tables? Anything. He looks at his twin and the look of determination on his face. Seeing the mask covering up the fear on Logan’s face that he also feels is enough for Daniel to make his decision. How could he let his brother undergo such a thing on his own?

He sighs heavily. “Shit. I guess there’s no other choice,” Daniel says, voice rough. “You’ve both decided.”

Logan sighs as well and sits back down in the chair. “If you want to leave, I’ll support you.”

“But you won’t go with me?”

“I can’t,” he admits, wincing. “And hell, my odds are worse than yours.” Logan

manages an insincere chuckle at the end.

Daniel leans forward, waiting until Logan is looking him in the eyes. “Aren’t you worried that we won’t be ourselves anymore? How can they change so much of us and say we’re the same? Do you want to suck dick, or get fucked? Because I don’t. But apparently, we’re going to be okay with it when this is all over. I’ll have the urge to fight or get on my knees, I’ll be drawn to men and need things that....” His breath stalls in his chest. It’s impossible to say. To even think. “How could we want those things? What if we don’t even want them, but do them anyway? I don’t understand why we’re letting it happen. Are you really not afraid? Not fucking terrified?”

The problem is they’re brothers. They’ve been best friends their entire lives. Daniel knows Logan better than he knows himself, and if Logan is going to go through with this, then somehow, Daniel is too.

“No, I’m not worried. And you shouldn’t be either,” Logan says, and Daniel knows he’s fucking lying.

For some damn reason that makes it easy. Everyone is scared and they do it anyway. Surely his great-grandfather who fought in World War One was terrified to leave the trenches and go over the top, but he did it anyway. His grandfather was on Normandy Beach and raced out of the water while his brothers were gunned down around him. The seas were red with blood and those men still got out of their boats and did what they had to do.

This is easy by comparison. All Daniel has to do is walk through a door and lie down. When he wakes up it will be over, and he will be a hero. The odds are he’ll be Dominant. If he has urges to be with men, if he “needs” that, then so be it. There will be benefits which outweigh that possible side effect.

All he has to do is have faith. And maybe his father will finally be proud of him.

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Three Years Later

Daniel wakes up nauseous in the middle of the night and barely makes it to the bathroom to throw up nothing but bile. He forgot to eat. Again. He calls medical like he's been ordered to and gets patched through to Dr. Chang, the doctor who's been put in charge of his case. He's probably sick of hearing from Daniel. Lord knows Daniel's damn sick of calling him.

"Daniel, what's wrong?" he asks, trying to sound awake.

"I'm sorry to bother you. I think I'm dropping again." That's an understatement. He feels terrible. He's shaky and his ears are ringing. He shivers. Oh good, he also has the chills. Which means he probably has a fever, too. It just doesn't seem fair to feel like he's freezing to death while burning up from the inside out.

"Okay. Can you get to medical or should we send transport?"

He thinks about getting off the floor. "I'll make it," he says, because of course he can. It's in the building, for crying out loud. He just needs to stumble there. How hard can it be? How pathetic is he if he can't make it a few dozen feet?

Okay, it's farther than that, but he's a soldier, an elite warrior, and he can practically hear his father telling him to get up and be a man. So, he will do that.

Until he can't. Until the day comes when he drops so hard and so far that he just

doesn't wake up again. That's the future that's coming for him. Everyone knows it, but they're all just pretending he's somehow going to live a semi-normal life one of these days and be able to serve his country.

"Okay. I'll meet you there in fifteen minutes and I'll make sure they're expecting you."

"Thank you. I'm sorry," he whispers.

"It's fine, Daniel. Don't fixate on it," he says, voice firm.

Not fixate. Ha! That's easier said than done.

He manages to shove to his knees and then uses the porcelain throne for support to stand, but the room spins so much Daniel has to lean against the counter for long moments before he can walk to the bedroom. Pants. Shirt. Shoes. Medical.

Pants. Shirt. Shoes. Medical.

Easy.

He makes it to his bedroom and gets a pair of sweats on. He's overcome with dizziness in the living room and tries to collapse onto his couch. He hears the glass of the coffee table shattering, feels it all along his side and his face as glass gouges into him. Hot and sharp, then wetness as he bleeds.

I forgot a shirt, he thinks. Because the pain hasn't quite set in yet.

Get up.

Daniel can't stay on the ground. He needs to get to medical. He can't move. He

whimpers. His side is on fire where the glass is cutting him to ribbons, and there's blood under his hand and his side.

It's spreading. Daniel can see it creeping along the floor in an ever-widening circle. How odd. Maybe his body wants to die. Maybe this isn't actually about him at all. Maybe it's just the end of this terrible experiment and his body has decided that death is the only way out.

Okay.

Okay, he thinks, and no other emotion rises up within him. No fear, no anger. Nothing.

He watches the blood spread along the ground. Someone will have to clean that up. It won't be him. What a relief. To have this whole nightmare of an existence just be over.

And he doesn't hurt all that much. There are definitely worse ways to go. Like Everest. Or drowning. Being held captive and getting tortured. At least he's in his apartment.

At least it's finally fucking over.

His brother Logan had managed to come out null—a unique designation that somehow meant he didn't need to submit or dominate. Daniel came out not only submissive but so damn low on the submissive scale he's heard a few people call him “prey.” They mutter it or speak in whispers. The doctors and his father don't speak about it but it's a disaster. If he were anyone else, he might have gone straight into a deep freeze or given to some Dominants as a chew toy at some far-flung base.

But he's the son of an important man and so he has options other soldiers don't. He

can be experimented upon and improved while others can't.

The last few years of his life have been one awful experiment after another. Can't experiment on a dead submissive.

The pool of blood reaches his travel bag, soaking into the bottom. He's been so sick he hasn't even unpacked.

He closes his eyes and waits for the end.

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Liam is awake when the call comes in to report to medical. It's just after three a.m.

"Do I have time to take a shower?" he asks, voice rough from lack of sleep. He's much too good at tossing and turning.

"Yes. But don't use a neutralizing bodywash. It's a submissive in crisis."

"Got it, I'm on my way," he says, and gets out of bed, takes a shower, brushes his teeth, and then puts on the most comfortable sweats and softest t-shirt he owns. A submissive in crisis will be very sensitive to everything—including touch—and something like wool or denim would be too rough. The same with zippers or buttons.

Liam's in medical ten minutes later. They've been waiting for him, a nurse hovering around the intake desk, and an extra guard in the corner of the room. He doesn't know the night nurse on duty, but she must know him because she buzzes him back and tells him to go to room three.

The medical ward is fairly quiet. Most of the patients are seen during the day, and anyone seriously hurt will be transferred off base to a better equipped medical facility. A light flickers overhead as he walks down the hall and passes an empty nurses' station with the computers all turned off.

The door to room three is open and he peers inside. There's no one in there. Room three stinks of blood and misery and hasn't been cleaned yet. There's bloody gauze on a tray, and a pile of used stitch kits.

“Commander Stone,” Dr. Chang declares, sounding relieved. “Good. We’re over here. A clean room with a bit more privacy.” He looks tired. Is it the patient that’s exhausted him, or the fact that it’s the middle of the night? Probably both.

“Patient is a submissive who is designationally off the charts and very difficult. Well, the circumstances surrounding him are difficult; I don’t think he actually is.” He shrugs and puts his hand in his pocket then realizes there’s blood all over his jacket. “Sorry, it’s late. I’m not speaking clearly. I’m at my wit’s end with this one. Well, with the whole damned situation, if I’m being honest. But you didn’t hear me say that.”

“Okay,” he says, curiosity already piqued. He’s become friendly with Dr. Chang over the last couple of years and has found him to be calm and competent. Finding him frazzled and annoyed about a patient is a new one. “What can you tell me about the patient?”

He sighs and closes his eyes for a moment as he gathers his thoughts. His gaze flicks around the empty hallway to make sure no one is listening. “He’s got a complicated presentation. Probably one of the most unusual I’ve ever seen.”

Liam doesn’t bother to hide his surprise. Chang is an expert on submissive health. Soldiers are flown from all over the country to see him, and he thought the doctor would have seen it all. “Wow. Okay.”

“You’ll see what I mean when you meet him. He’s just about as submissive as you can get. Which is rare nowadays but not impossible.”

“I’ve handled very submissive soldiers.”

“I know. That’s where he started. Since he became submissive, he’s had an incredible amount of experimental treatment performed upon him, all of it attempting to correct

his submission. From surgeries to brainwashing, conversion therapies, and drugs. Any agency that had a treatment lying around they wanted to try out, this poor boy was an available guinea pig. Frankly, if you told me his father hated him and did this to torture him, I'd believe it. Everything they did just made him worse."

His curiosity intensifies. The submissive designation isn't new. And it isn't reversible. God knows the military has tried to fix the problem over the years and it always ends badly. Policy nowadays is to leave the soldiers alone whenever possible.

"Unless there's some radical new treatment I don't know about, what's done is done. You can't unbake a cake and get it back to separate ingredients, and you can't unmake a submissive. I thought the science was pretty settled."

"I haven't heard the cake analogy in a while. I try not to use metaphors because they are imprecise, but this poor boy...."

Liam is pretty sure he knows where the doctor is going with this, but raises an eyebrow in interest anyway, wanting to hear his take on the submissive he's about to meet. "Go on?"

Dr. Chang sighs. "Sure. Why not? I find this example trivializing and unscientific, but I understand the appeal. And I actually tried telling this to his father. I was so desperate to get my point across—not that it made any difference," he says, and then takes a deep breath. "Before the designation process, a soldier is basically clay. He goes through the designation process and he emerges as a durable plate. Microwave safe, dishwasher safe, can withstand various temperatures, shatterproof, etc. Further modifications to get a better plate weaken the creation. You get chips, cracks, and if the plate breaks, then a very good glue can be used to piece it back together, but it will never be as strong as it was in the first iteration. Just like you can see where the plate is broken, we can see where further attempts are made upon the body and the DNA to alter the soldier, and the improvements aren't there. It isn't possible. Once

you get the plate, you have to accept the plate and move on.

“This poor boy has the unfortunate honor of being the son of a very high-ranking military official who does not like the word no. It’s clear no one has told him no in a long time. He also appears to hate plates and wishes his son had been a cup. So he has smashed him to pieces and glued him into something and it’s not worked. At all. And the plate might believe he is a cup or could be a cup.” Dr. Chang glares at him. “Do you perhaps see why I dislike using metaphors for people? He is a person and deserves respect and to be accepted for who he is. He isn’t a disposable piece of crockery.” He shakes his head, running out of words.

“Who is his father?”

“General Burrows.”

Liam whistles. “That’s unfortunate. I met him once. I think he’s a psychopath. And I mean that he literally meets the diagnostic criteria for psychopathy.”

“Right. You know a majority of political leaders, CEOs, and those in charge of the military are typically psychopaths. And this poor boy did what his father wanted by joining the military and becoming enhanced. He was turned into a submissive, which was unacceptable to his father. Every time he undergoes a new treatment, he’s worse. It isn’t just physical issues that we’re dealing with now but mental. You’ll see his file and the things they did to him, and I can tell you that every time you see a glowing report about the potential and progress, that it was a lie. If anything worked at all it was temporary. I think it’s abuse. He could probably sue. Drugs, surgeries, psychological interventions—you name it, he’s endured it. Everything that has been attempted on this young man didn’t do a thing beyond making him incredibly unstable.”

“So what has changed that has resulted in us having this conversation right now?”

“His father has had a stroke and is in the hospital in a medically induced coma. His son’s care defaults to me until the general is able to make decisions again.”

“The son can’t make them?” he asks, even though he knows the answer.

“Too submissive. His father arranged for me to be his conservator.”

Liam grunts in annoyance. If a soldier is too submissive to manage their own life, then they shouldn’t be allowed to serve. “I hate that. Either a submissive is mentally competent or he isn’t, but a conservator and active service shouldn’t both be allowed.”

“Exactly. And in my expert opinion,” Dr. Chang says, voice shaking with anger, “what Private Burrows needs is to be left alone and allowed to be himself. He needs time to heal.”

“Right. So I’m here because Daddy Warbucks can’t say no to you calling me in?”

“Yup. And the moment he’s back I have no idea what will happen, but my hope is that Daniel will be evened out and happy enough that his father’s heart will grow two sizes larger and he’ll just let him exist. Get him out of the military and settled with his owner.”

“Owner?” Liam asks, surprised at the word choice.

“He’s top of the scale. The poor boy isn’t meant to submit but to surrender hard. The dynamic he will be happiest in is quite extreme. He’s the closest thing to prey I’ve ever seen.”

Liam frowns. “So why am I here?” he asks flatly. “I’m not enough of a sadist for a man like that. Prey isn’t something I’ve ever dealt with. Frankly, I thought it was

hypothetical.”

“Prey isn’t common and there’s no standard guidelines because soldiers with needs that extreme don’t do well. I hear there’s almost a thousand of them on ice in Montana, but that’s a rumor. With his scores, it’s a medical miracle that he’s functioning as well as he is.”

Liam shifts on his feet, unsure he’s the right Dominant for the job.

“He needs consensual nonconsent, he needs to be owned and controlled, and you can do that. But, most importantly, someone with his scores and trauma needs someone who isn’t an abuser. If I put him with a Dominant he is directly compatible with, it won’t end well. And that’s assuming I could find one, which I can’t. An equivalent Dominant would be put down immediately. Daniel wouldn’t survive a Dominant with similar needs. Also, he’s been denied and shamed for so long that my biggest concern is that he can’t handle what he needs. And he’s been through so much correction and trauma that I don’t think it will be easy to get the balance right. He needs a Dominant with incredible control, which you have. You can deliberately choose to give him more or less. Meeting his needs has to be done strategically. Plus, you’re probably going to have to give a full report to his father when he’s better, and you present well. Your reputation can take it.”

“Ah, so I’m here to be hung out to dry?”

“I didn’t say that. I hope not.” He winces. “Will you meet him and then decide? Please?”

“Shit. I like my career.” But Liam isn’t going to say no. How could he? Yes, he likes his career, but that isn’t as important as his designation. He’s a Dominant who needs to take care of submissives. That’s baked into his DNA. Tell him there is a tragic submissive that no one can help and who is struggling and of course he is going to

say yes.

“He has to have someone. It’s medically necessary,” the doctor says firmly. “At this point I’d be worried about putting him with a Dominant who was eager for the chance to have him. The fact that you’re not eager is a good sign. It means you’ll do right by him. Or at least try.”

“Flatterer,” he mutters, waving the praise away. “You know I can’t say no.”

Dr. Chang nods, refusing to meet his gaze. Does he feel guilty about introducing them?

“He needs help and I like to help. I’ve been without a submissive for three days and I think I’ve slept for a total of three hours,” he says so the doctor won’t feel bad. Plus, it’s true.

“Another success story,” he comments with a sad smile.

“That’s right. His name is Enrico and he is a lovely boy who has now found the Dominant of his dreams and they are happily settled outside of Austin. My work there is done.”

“I think it would be difficult to give them all up,” he says.

It’s a kind thing to say. Most people think he has a great job: spend a few days or weeks with a submissive, get them evened out and then settled with the right partner, and move on to the next.

Lots of Dominants think he has the best job possible. An endless supply of new boys to play with. It isn’t that easy. There are times when he wishes he had a boy of his own, one who would stay and that he wouldn’t have to give up, but it hasn’t been

right. He hopes he knows when the right one shows up. He isn't even sure anymore.

Being with submissives now is like dancing—a dance he knows by heart and has practiced endlessly. He still likes dancing but there isn't a thrill. Not when he knows the boys will leave him for another and do the deep work of submission with someone else. It's like he teaches them all how to box step and then passes them off to a new partner.

But he's never worked with a submissive with a prey designation before. And that is intriguing.

"He's prey but he's never gotten to be prey," he says, thinking aloud. Liam knows the doctor is right. Throwing a submissive like that into the deep end with a Dominant that he matches perfectly with would just lead to him being hurt. The flesh might be willing, but the mind is fragile. Just because he needs consensual nonconsent to thrive doesn't mean it can be with just anyone. "With a designation like that... yeah, you have to be careful. Okay, what else? I know there's more."

Dr. Chang makes a humph sound as they walk down the hall. Which isn't a denial.

"His status is further complicated by prior trauma. He does not get easily aroused nor does he make use of toys for soothing purposes, though he should. His prior experience with Dominants is minimal and highly negative. But he's enhanced enough that the drugs are simply not possible. His metabolism is too high, and he's had surgeries he shouldn't, which means his own hormone production isn't normal. We're trying to supplement him and even him out, but he's burning through everything we give him and I don't know whether he's so shut down, he isn't producing the right hormones, or whether it's because of what they did to him. A lot of what was done to him is classified. And because it all failed and was experimental, I'll never get my hands on the files. No one will."

“I assume the general was trying to make him Dominant? Isn’t that what every experimental submissive surgery is meant to do?”

“He has a twin brother who was treated at the same time. He came out null.”

“I’ve never met a null,” Liam says, voice flat. It’s bullshit as far as he can tell. A submissive doing self-harm to pass as not submissive. But they’re certainly not Dominant. He’s only met a few, and rumor is they become submissive eventually.

“The general is convinced. He wants that for Daniel.”

“Sure. And I want a pony.” Liam scrubs his hands over his face. “Okay. How has he been getting by? And how old is he?”

“He’s not been getting by very well. He tries to endure the drops. He masks well, uses lots of denial. God only knows what his coping mechanisms are, but they can’t be good. He’s twenty-four. Come see him. He’s sleeping at the moment. You’ll need to be calm. He’ll sense a Dominant’s distress and it’s triggering for him.”

“Wait. So he’s purely submissive, he has trauma, and he can’t even out with drugs. But he will have a negative reaction if he’s around an unsettled Dominant? He should seek out an unsettled Dominant like a moth to a flame.”

“As mentioned, a complicated case.”

“What about his fetishes?” It sounds like a nightmare. The poor bastard.

“Ah. That’s another problem. We don’t even know if he has any. We did a brainwave test to check for his arousal response to various stimuli and it remained flat. He was in such a panicked state that nothing registered. There were a few things that registered as highly negative, but that’s all. It’s in his file. I’ve been seeing him off

and on for a few months now. We've put him through three diagnostic videos with scenes of male Dominants in just about every fetish and sexual play one can imagine, and the only one he could get through was a Daddy/boy dynamic. He watched it. He didn't become aroused, but he updated his needs to indicate an interest in aftercare. That was three weeks ago. His father determined he was well enough to return to duty and he was sent back out on training missions."

Training missions are not real. They're for Dominants and submissives who are trying to reintegrate back into active duty. "Pseudo or not, how is that not a disaster? A submissive this unstable shouldn't be out on missions. And no one took advantage of him?"

"Submissive only. He was at Camp Poquette."

Camp Poquette is a base filled with submissives. It isn't a prison but Liam thinks it sounds like one. The submissives there are so unstable they can't be allowed near Dominants.

Correctly interpreting the disgust on Liam's face, Dr. Chang says, "I agree with you. That's off the table now. They just shipped him over to me two weeks ago because he collapsed. I thought I had him evened out but I didn't. However, I've received word that his father is in an induced coma, which means Daniel is currently under my complete jurisdiction, so I want to act on it while I can."

"How long would I have with him?"

He shrugs. "I don't know. A week? Two? It depends upon how long it takes General Burrows to recover enough to yank Daniel from us."

"What about his cycle? Does he have one?" Liam is just close enough to his that he'll have to take suppressants if they're drawn to each other. "Mine's due in a week."

“You’ll need to check him. I’ve been doing blood tests only, and there’s enough hormonal change that it’s hard to tell. We’ve never been able to get the ultrasound inside him.”

“Why the hell not?”

“I’m under orders that didn’t allow it. No penetration of any kind.”

“That is insane. This is like those countries that don’t allow vaginal examinations because they think it takes away one’s virginity or something,” Liam argues. It’s sad. And enraging.

Submissives need penetration to settle. Hormones released during mating allow a submissive to get rid of stress toxins, leaving them emotionally stable and happy.

“He has only responded to Daddy/boy? Isn’t that too gentle? Perhaps if it was supplemented with humiliation or maybe denial it would be okay. There was a lot of blood in that exam room. Is he self-harming?”

Dr. Chang takes a moment to think about it. “No. Well, I don’t think so. It wouldn’t be intentional. But he is worse every time he comes in—more injured when he gets to us and he waits longer to call. I honestly think that without serious intervention he won’t last another month. But that’s not something anyone wants to hear.”

“Okay. Let’s go see him,” he says, and wonders what exactly he’s getting himself into.

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The submissive is on his side, facing away from Liam, just a shock of light brown hair and his giant body in a twin-size hospital bed. Well, giant shoulders. Liam has to give it to the government on that one, soldiers come out with the broadest shoulders after being genetically altered. Liam had to go up a shirt size as soon as his transformation was complete.

Liam goes around the bed, wanting to see his face. The scent of blood and misery makes his eyes water as he gets close. There are bandages all along his side and his arm. His skin is pale and smooth, body packed with muscle as all enhanced soldiers are.

“He was in his quarters and he fell on a glass coffee table. He was on his way to medical. I should have sent a team to get him. He told me he could make it, but I should have known better. He pushes himself and is not an accurate self-reporter.”

Who is?

The man is breathing evenly and his eyes are closed, but Liam is almost certain he isn't asleep. Pretending. Perhaps because he doesn't feel well, perhaps because he wants to ignore the reality of his situation. Or maybe because he just doesn't want to have to meet someone at four in the morning.

Liam's body is already responding to the younger man in the bed. It isn't a reaction he can help. As a high-level Dominant, he is always going to be aware of a submissive. But when a submissive is clearly in distress and needing, it's like his

body comes alive.

Is Daniel really frightened of Dominants? He'd expect Daniel to open his eyes and look at him if he were afraid.

Daniel is unconscious and pale, almost waxy looking.

"I can't check him at all?" Liam asks, voice soft. His hand hovers over the submissive's sheet-covered hip, wanting to touch and comfort him. But he has to remember that Daniel is apparently frightened.

"Well, I was waiting for you to get here before I did anything. One of us will do it. Ideally, he'd wake up and tell us what he'd prefer. Daniel does know me," Dr. Chang says.

"That's true," Liam concedes.

But this is a submissive who should be craving a Dominant's touch, not preferring a normal human man. This is what Liam's trained in, what he's good at. He helps submissives. Comforts them. Trauma is something he's dealt with frequently. Submissives respond to him. And he's very careful not to let his personal preferences get in the way of doing his job.

Liam puts the back of his hand near Daniel's nose so he can breathe in Liam's scent more easily. There's no guarantee of a response, but he's so Dominant that there should be.

Daniel's brow furrows. His nostrils flare. His head tilts on the pillow and Liam thinks he might be trying to shift away, to get away from Liam's scent, so he takes his hand back. Daniel frowns, licks his lips, and his cheeks go pink.

Huh. Those are indications he might want more.

Liam puts his hand back, watching him closely. “This is a lot of bandages,” he says, keeping his voice quiet. There’s so much unpleasantness here, so much negativity in Daniel’s past that he can practically feel it radiating from the poor boy.

“Yes.”

“And he’s in a drop.”

“Yes.”

“So he needs to be taken care of. He deserves to be taken care of by someone who wants what is best for him.”

“Yes,” he agrees, and surely, they’re all aware that although he’s talking to Dr. Chang, he’s actually talking to Daniel. “He heals so quickly we had to open up some of the wounds to get the glass out, and he needed stitches.”

“Poor boy,” Liam murmurs. “How soon will the bandages come off?”

“Probably in the afternoon. If he wasn’t in a drop, he’d heal faster. But his cortisone production is off the charts.”

“Is he swollen?” Liam asks. “His neck is warm.” His hand hovers over the submissive’s neck. He can feel the heat from an inch away.

“Again, we’ve only done a visual inspection.”

He laughs. “What does that tell you?” He knows the answer is absolutely nothing. Unfortunately, there comes a point when a person’s wishes have to be ignored for

their own good. Daniel is in the military; surely, he's used to that by now.

And because Daniel is this unbalanced and sick, he needs more than a visual inspection. "He needs proper care. He needs to be touched and examined. It can be done carefully and compassionately, but that's where we are now," Liam says firmly.

"If things go wrong with his care, there will be an investigation. There might be one anyway. The general is very involved in his son's care, and he'll want a full report when he's recovered."

"Sure," Liam says, even though it's absolutely bizarre. Daniel is a submissive with high needs and it sounds like the general's goal has been to force his son to survive without having them met. And look where it's got him.

"I'll need to note down what I've done for him, and I wouldn't be surprised if there are lots of questions when this is over. His file says he can only have a visual examination unless he consents to a physical one. And if he consents to a physical exam then his father will find out."

"And what?" Liam snaps. "What the hell is he going to do to this poor boy that is worse than what he's currently going through?"

"I don't know," Dr. Chang says, voice calm. "But it's scared him enough that Daniel won't say yes."

Is that why he's pretending to be asleep? So he doesn't have to deal with consenting to an exam? Doesn't have to have his responses sent to his father?

"He's injured. He clearly needs to be examined."

"I agree with you. It's not sensible. It isn't in his best interest. But it is legal. And this

is the sort of thing you'll need to be cognizant of if you work with him," he says, sounding tired.

Liam resists touching the submissive, hand tingling with the desire to touch the young man's face and neck, to comfort him because this is all so very wrong. He makes a fist, takes a deep breath, and forces himself to give Dr. Chang his attention. He's warning him. This is for his own professional safety.

"I understand. And I'll do what I can to abide by all of that, but... none of this corresponds with a high-needs submissive whose designation requires he be owned and have a relationship that has a lot of nonconsent. He needs an ultrasound and then he needs to get fucked, and if you give him to me then that's what's going to happen. I'll deal with the fallout later."

There's the faintest whimper from the bed. They both turn to look at Daniel, but his eyes are still closed. His scent has changed. There's the faintest hint of arousal in it now, and it's enough to convince Liam that he's on the right path.

"What if he's placed on a 6150?" Liam asks. A 6150 is an involuntary hold for Dominants or submissives who need to be taken as a ward of the military for their own protection. For a Dominant, a 6150 is usually a death sentence. For a submissive, it can mean being given to a Dominant, put in a facility, or even put on ice for the possibility of future defrosting and reintegration into the military. In this case, Liam is trying to find a way to give this submissive what he needs and get around all the red tape.

"I think you might wind up with a shitstorm on your hands when his father gets out of the hospital... but it's my medical opinion that he'll die without a Dominant. And I'll say that in court if it comes to it. Liam, I know I called you and asked you to do this, but you can still say no. The blowback might be career ending."

“Funnily enough, I’ve heard that speech before. A few times. So far, it’s been fine. Besides, it’s too late. I’m a Dominant and he’s a submissive who desperately needs help. That’s what I do,” he says, fully aware that Daniel is listening to their conversation. “And he’s gorgeous. A bit of cock, some hand feeding, a spanking when he’s feeling better, and I bet he’ll be just fine,” Liam continues, wanting to see the submissive’s reaction. A blush goes up the boy’s chest and settles into his cheeks. His scent changes. Definitely arousal.

Liam turns to look at Dr. Chang. “We’d go off site. He needs to be in my space.”

“Agreed.”

“Could you give me a few minutes alone with him? I’m going to examine him and then he’ll hopefully wake up and we can get confirmation that this is the best course of action to take.” Liam wants to help him. He can barely resist touching Daniel as it is. His cock is hard already, a sign his body is identifying Daniel as a submissive in need of settling.

Liam has worked with enough struggling submissives that he’s got a good handle on controlling his own needs and desires, but Daniel is very alluring. He’s attractive, and even though he needs a bath, he still smells good. There’s a biological pull towards the submissive.

“I’ll go start the paperwork,” the doctor says.

“Who was he assigned to before this?” he asks, double-checking.

“No one. You know where gloves and lube are,” he says. “Thermometer is on the tray. If something is really out of whack, let me know? I’ll be back in a bit.”

“Got it,” Liam says, and Dr. Chang leaves, closing the door behind him.

From this point on, Daniel is his.

Liam takes out his phone so he can make an audio recording of their session. Daniel hasn't moved. He's still in the bed, breathing even, limbs loose. Dried blood is everywhere. It doesn't hide the fact that Daniel is beautiful. Must have been handsome, maybe even delicate, before he was altered.

Liam puts his hand on the man's cheek, needing to see how he'll react to being touched. "Hey, sweetheart. I'm Commander Liam Stone, and I'm a Dominant. I'm here to take care of you. And it looks like you need a bit of caretaking."

There's still no response from the submissive in the bed. Hell, considering all he's been through, maybe passive consent is as good as it gets.

"I need to check you, sweetheart. I'm going to feel your neck glands first. I'll be gentle. Soft, okay? With my fingers. Very light, just like I'm touching your cheek now. That gentle. We need to get a sense of your cycle and where you are hormonally. Nothing I do should hurt, okay? At least... not yet," he adds, because this is a high-level submissive who is going to need a certain amount of pain to submit and get his needs met. For a submissive as high needs as Daniel, saying "not yet" is akin to flirting.

But he isn't going to do anything to the boy until he's talked to him. His reactions are odd, and Liam can't be too careful with this one. He touches two fingers to Daniel's neck and Daniel whimpers, pulling in tighter to himself, brow furrowed. He doesn't open his eyes, though.

“I know. It’s weird when you’re not used to someone touching you. I won’t hurt you. You’re doing so well. I’m almost done,” he says, finding the edges of Daniel’s gland with a gentle touch.

The gland is warm and enlarged, but not swollen and hot. Swollen and hot would be better. That’s fixable. That indicates he’s about to go into heat and his body is working overtime to get him ready. That’s normal.

Warm but large implies a chronic condition. The gland should be soft, and touching Daniel’s neck should make the submissive slump in relief. But his body is tense and his brow is furrowed in worry.

“I won’t hurt you,” he repeats. “I think you’ve had a tough time with all of this, haven’t you?” Then he rattles off a note for his own file. “Neck gland is large, relatively solid, and the condition seems chronic. Temperature is elevated but not feverish. No sign of redness or infection.”

Liam lifts his hand away from Daniel’s neck and Daniel relaxes, his breath sighing out of him. “Possible aversion to touch, possible... abuse. Atypical response to Dominant touch.”

Daniel swallows. The “awake but pretending to be asleep” is also an unusual response.

“We can talk about it when you wake up, honey,” he says gently. “I’m going to touch your hair now,” he murmurs, soft and close, radiating calm and gentleness. “I won’t hurt you.” Liam puts the back of his hand near Daniel’s nose again so the submissive can pick up his scent. Daniel is going to need to get used to it.

Liam isn’t going to leave here without him.

It's decided. His own arousal is distracting, his knot wanting to fill, a primitive part of him just wanting to mount the submissive. But that's not how things are done. That's not the appropriate reaction when there's this much trauma, and he's a little disturbed by the intensity of his inappropriate response. Liam doesn't let his instincts dictate his behavior. He never has, and he won't start now.

"I'll touch your hair now. Soft, baby," he whispers, and Daniel goes tight and tense, hands fisted in what might be panic.

Liam rests his hand carefully on Daniel's head, brushing his hair back just a little. "This is all I want from you, sweetheart. Right now, this is it. And look how good you're doing. You're perfect. What a good boy. Look how soft you are, submitting for me," he says, waiting for a reaction. There isn't one.

Which is odd.

Submissives love praise, love doing a good job. He'd expected Daniel to blush, maybe to smile. Maybe even open his eyes so he could see Liam's approval for himself.

Instead, a tear courses down Daniel's cheek. Liam wants to kill whoever got Daniel to this point. This is an atypical reaction. "I know, it's gotta be a lot, baby," he says, watching Daniel's face. "But I'm happy with you. You're doing well. This is all I want from you, and you're giving it to me."

Daniel should be very interested in Liam. He should be trying to move closer, entice the Dominant, and want to please.

His biological response to a powerful Dominant should be to mate—to be bred. He should want all of the Dominant hormones inside him that he can get. He should be moving in close, undoing his clothes, getting Liam's pants open, presenting, and

appealing to Liam's nature to breed. He ought to want to see Liam's balls; see just how much cream he could get from him.

He'd likely want to worship Liam's balls for a while, inhale his scent, get drunk off his pheromones, become swollen and receptive, and encourage a big load from the Dominant. And a submissive like this should want to get bred hard and long then want a secure plug to keep all that goodness inside. Daniel should be smug and content after the experience.

The combination of those things, the fact that Liam is the answer to both of those biological urges, should drive Daniel wild. Instead he's scared, pretending to be asleep.

There are tears.

It just doesn't make any sense. And the fact that he's only responded to a Daddy/boy dynamic also doesn't make a lot of sense.

A Daddy/boy dynamic is gentle, and if Daniel were anyone else then maybe he could just have that. But he's high needs. If Liam treats him softly, as gently as Daniel wants, Daniel will spiral. Liam has seen how badly that can turn out when designations are not compatible.

But maybe the poor fit is something to worry about later. Right now, it's a place to start.

"Beautiful boy. I'd be a very lucky Daddy if I got to have a boy like you. I'm going to put the thermometer on your neck in a bit. It stays there for five seconds and it not only takes your temperature but will tell us how much stress you're under and how bad your drop is. It doesn't hurt at all. I'm sure you've had it done before," he says, and doesn't stop touching Daniel's hair. He thinks about that statement. "Well,

maybe you haven't had it done before. When you wake up you can tell me. Okay, here we go." He touches it to Daniel's neck.

Daniel makes a sound and shivers. It's pretty close to a moan.

Interesting.

"Good. Almost done." The thermometer beeps and Liam takes it away, watching the monitor for the information to come up. He's still touching Daniel's hair. Best to get him used to Liam's touch as he's going to experience a lot of it pretty soon.

"Let's see. What can we tell from this?" Liam asks, like he's talking to himself. He keeps his voice soothing. "You're in distress and there are still spiked levels of hormones showing you were hurt. The submissive side of you is pretty touch starved. Hopefully, we can take care of that with some affection. We're gonna go slow and make sure you feel good. We can talk about it when you're ready. However you've been feeling, we can do better than that."

There is no way Daniel has been feeling good. "It's gotta be a real struggle for you, Daniel. A beautiful boy like you needs a Daddy to take care of him and get this problem fixed. That's what I'm going to do, sweetheart. I'm here to give you what you need."

He looks at Daniel's face. Despite the way he's trying so hard not to give away that he's awake, his scent is already changing from having his hair touched and having Liam nearby. The bitter scent of fear is slipping away. Liam doesn't smell slick yet, though.

Liam moves, lifting his hand away from Daniel's face but Daniel turns, lips sliding against Liam's wrist, over his scent gland, wanting the taste of Liam's skin and hormones in his mouth.

There he is, Liam thinks, arousal coursing through him as the submissive starts to respond.

Daniel's features even out with the slightest hint of relief. And, of course, he's still wanting to keep up the bizarre pretense of being asleep.

Liam gets more firmly on the bed, pressing his hip against Daniel's middle. Daniel curls closer almost instantly. With Daniel being so very submissive, it's possible he enjoys this passive surrender and helplessness. It would be unusual if he didn't.

Somnophilia is definitely something they'll talk about. Later.

"Beautiful boy. How sweet you are. God, you're making my knot tingle and I haven't even touched you yet, honey."

Daniel's breath draws in and holds. Liam tries to gauge his reaction. He isn't sure. Liam's aching already, his own biology wanting him to mate the submissive and give him what he needs. Usually he'd think it was mutual, his desire ratcheting up in response to Daniel's lust, but he doesn't want to make assumptions when Daniel has had so many unusual reactions.

Most submissives with a designation as high as Daniel's would be turning over to present already. They hear that a Dominant's knot is tingling, would swell up just for them, and they can't resist. Especially considering how out of whack Daniel's hormones are.

A submissive like Daniel should be a knot slut. And getting a knot out of a Dominant doesn't happen all the time. It's a special gift. Not all Dominants have them. "I've got a really big knot, sweetheart. I'd just love to give that to you."

Daniel's cheeks go pink. He curls a little closer but still pretends to be asleep.

“We’ll make sure you want it, honey. I might even let you earn my knot. Would you like that? Or are you one of those boys who just wants to take it? Get his Dominant all riled up, and then be a sweet princess who gets fucked again and again? The truth is, I’ve got a knot big enough to leave any submissive feeling a little tender after. Pretty boy like you, I think you’re gonna be sore by the time I’m through with you. Beg Daddy to stop. How does that sound?” Liam’s voice has a bit of a growl, and he’s still looking for clues about what the submissive responds to.

Another tear slips down Daniel’s cheek. What the hell does that mean? What trauma has this poor boy been through?

“Poor boy. I want to check your mounting glands, but you’ve only allowed visual inspections on exposed skin. I don’t need you to wake up for me to check—I think we can find a workaround so you can stay asleep and pretty for me. But it’s important to get you checked out. I’ll be your Dominant for a while, so it’s my responsibility to take care of you. That’s all I want to do. It’ll be so nice when you wake up. We can talk about it and work out a plan.”

Daniel is anxious again, his brow furrowing.

“If you don’t want me to check, if you need more time, or you’re not okay with me lifting the sheet and touching you between your legs to check your mounting glands and then your submissive glands, then you need to wake up now. Otherwise, I’m going to check. You can just keep sleeping and let me check.”

Daniel relaxes, mimicking sleep. Giving permission.

“Good boy,” Liam says, wanting to kiss him on the forehead. However, they’re not at the kissing stage yet. Daniel will need to wake up for that.

Liam lifts his hand away from Daniel’s hair, wanting two hands for the examination,

but Daniel grabs him with a pained whimper. His hand is heavy over Liam's wrist.

"Alright. Let's do this one-handed."

Once again Daniel blushes all up his chest and throat.

Liam has to stand up and stay bent over to keep his palm pressed against Daniel's cheek. It's awkward but not impossible.

He drags the bedding down, letting the sheet bunch near Daniel's waist, allowing him to have a sliver of modesty for the moment.

"You're okay. You're a very good boy for me, Daniel." He presses his fingers to Daniel's thigh, gentle but with enough firmness that Daniel won't be surprised. Goose bumps break out on Daniel's skin, and his scent becomes thick with arousal. His grip on Liam's hand tightens.

"It's alright. You're okay, honey."

Daniel's reaction doesn't seem like aversion. If Liam didn't know better, he'd think the submissive was about to come.

Wouldn't that be something? Anxiety seeps into Daniel's scent.

And then the front of the sheet is abruptly wet. Release. Not urine, not an orgasm, but his body's way of getting rid of toxins. Should he give Daniel approval or ignore it? Why is there so much anxiety?

He's so submissive and so far down into a drop that his body is probably desperate to get toxins out. Desire ramped up now that some part of Daniel has decided he likes Liam.

He can't think of anything else it could be.

Liam wouldn't be surprised if Daniel had some fucked-up notions of what he's allowed to want.

"You need to release, sweetheart. It's not bad. It's good," he reassures, and Daniel finally opens his eyes. There are tears on his cheeks and his breathing hitches. His eyes are hazel and the eye contact feels like a punch in the gut. As if this is the person he's been waiting for all his life.

"There you are," Liam says, voice rough. Daniel's pupils are blown with arousal, glassy with need. He's so beautiful. "I'm Liam. I'm here to take care of you. What's wrong, honey?"

"The... release," Daniel gasps, quick and apologetic. "You said it was okay, but I wanted to make sure, because...." He lets go of Liam's arm, buries his face in the pillow, and sobs.

"Hey, sweetheart. Hold on to me. Can I scent mark you a little?"

"Oh," he whispers, sounding ashamed. He mouths the word please but can't give it sound. And doesn't that just tell Liam everything he needs to know about Daniel?

Liam leans closer, presses his forehead to Daniel's cheek, then rubs his nose and his lips on Daniel's face. Against his jaw.

"Is this real?" Daniel whispers.

"Yes. Yes, it's real."

"My dad had a stroke?"

“I’m afraid so,” he says, grimacing at having to be the one to tell Daniel.

Daniel doesn’t meet his gaze. “He won’t die, though?”

“I believe he’s expected to recover.”

A long moment passes. “That’s good.”

It’s so halfhearted Liam doesn’t bother to agree.

“How long will I have you?” Daniel asks, another whisper, as if he’s expecting this to be a trap.

“At least a week. As long as I can keep you.”

His breath hitches. His grip on Liam tightens. “You’re a Dominant. You’re going to treat me like I’m a submissive? Is that true?” Daniel meets his gaze again. The intensity of their connection is electric. A shiver goes down Liam’s back and his knot throbs.

“Yes. That’s true. Have you had a Dominant before?”

Daniel flinches, looking away from him. “No. Never. My father wouldn’t allow it. And I.... They’re trying to turn me into a Dominant.”

“How do you feel about that?”

He shrugs. “My father knows what’s best,” he says hollowly. “I used to want to be a Dominant. Now I just want... I thought I was going to die.”

“You’re not going to die. And you won’t ever be a Dominant. You’re perfect as you

are, Daniel.”

Daniel shakes his head sharply, just once. As if it was the start of a vigorous denial.

“I want to take you home and give you my knot. You’re a high-needs submissive and if you agree, I’ll use you hard. It will help. Hopefully your father will leave you alone if we can get you feeling better.”

Daniel doesn’t answer but his head turns back, another shock of electricity going through Liam as their gazes lock, and then Daniel is offering his mouth for a kiss, panting as he shifts on the bed, legs opening in invitation. Frantic, needy, as if he’s terrified it’s all going to be taken away in the next sixty seconds and he’s going to get what he can while he can.

“Good boy, that’s so good. Surrender to Daddy. There you go,” Liam growls, unable to help it. He’s concerned Daniel will find it upsetting, how aggressive he sounds, but he doesn’t seem to notice.

And then Daniel offers his neck, tilting his head, which is rather shocking. Highly submissive. A response to the growl. Daniel noticed, after all.

Noticed and liked it.

It takes a moment for Liam to look away. His mouth is watering. This sweet boy just offered Liam his neck. Incredible. “Christ. I’ll have to put you in a collar so I don’t mate you.”

“Wouldn’t I be yours then?” Daniel asks. “For good?” The question is quick, is one the boy must have thought about before. Maybe a lot. A submissive who is meant to be prey. Who doesn’t want to consent but wants to be taken. And he’s asking the first Dominant he’s alone with if he might be permanently claimed.

Christ.

Liam forces himself to pull back, to try to think and resist the alluring submissive beneath him. The kid just offered himself to the first Dominant who showed up because he's in a desperate situation and wants out. His father has controlled his life and now he's willing to throw his lot in with anyone. Hell, he might like it if he got stuck with a bad, bad man.

"You should have choices," Liam says.

Daniel drops his hands to the bed, turning his face away. Is he taking it as rejection?

Liam stands up, goes to the sink to wash his hands, and splashes some water on his face. He needs a moment to get himself together, too. His jaw hurts because he didn't bite the submissive.

It's an excessive reaction. Hopefully, it's his designation's response to just how uneven Daniel is, and will settle down once the boy has had a few orgasms and is past the worst of his drop.

Otherwise, Liam will have to go on suppressants.

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“Can I check your glands?” Liam asks, after taking a long moment to get himself together.

Daniel nods once, staring down his own body with wide eyes. As if he’s afraid of himself. Liam steps closer and takes the sheet down. His cock is hard and large, oddly so for a submissive. There’s even a little bulge at the base, as if there should have been a knot. He doesn’t wax or shave but is natural like a Dominant would be.

That will change as soon as they get home.

His balls are exposed next, fat and dark in color, which is also a little unusual. It’s not impossible to have a submissive with such large sexual organs, but it’s quite frequent that a submissive is average or below average below the belt. Just another bizarre quirk of the experiments. Daniel’s stomach is all muscle—more than a six pack. He’s thinner than he should be, needs more padding on his large frame. He probably isn’t eating enough.

“Beautiful boy.”

Liam’s gaze returns to the boy’s cock, past the shaft, to the dripping head of his cock that’s still sluggishly leaking onto his stomach. It’s almost like a very weak orgasm or a prostate milking, how it seeps out of him with no contractions to give it distance. There’s a small puddle of come on his stomach.

“I’m sorry.”

“It’s alright. This is good. Your body wants to get rid of the toxic buildup.”

The boy huffs, a small, ragged sound.

“Can you orgasm? Are you close?” Liam asks out of curiosity. He isn’t really expecting the answer to be yes, but there is something about Daniel’s behavior that makes him wonder.

“I’m... almost there,” he says, sounding ashamed.

Well. He tries not to let the surprise show on his face. “Good boy. I’m gonna touch your thigh, and then your glands. It’s okay if you need to come, and if you get too sensitive, we can take a break.”

“I’ll be good. I won’t stop you,” Daniel says, and Liam can’t make sense of his tone.

“Are you saying you won’t stop me, even if you don’t like it?”

He frowns. “No. I just... won’t... stop you.”

“Because you like it?”

“I—what about my father?”

“This is just us.”

Daniel’s gaze flicks over to his phone, to where he’s recording their meeting.

“That’s for my notes. Do you want me to turn it off?”

“I didn’t say that,” he responds and looks away.

Liam wants to turn it off, but the truth is that Daniel is General Burrows' son and he can make Liam's life a nightmare if he wants to. And if this goes south then maybe he needs a record for his own protection. It's a little too soon to put that much faith in Daniel.

"Alright." Liam touches Daniel's thigh, pale and muscular, and that one small touch has Daniel grinding his ass back into the bed, opening his legs for more. "Diamond?" Liam asks, and Daniel stares at him blankly.

"Put the soles of your feet together, legs open. It makes a diamond shape. Don't do it if it isn't comfortable."

Daniel does it, free hand lifting to rest on his pec, squeezing it absently as he waits.

"Sensitive nipples?" Liam asks.

Daniel flinches, yanking his hand away from himself. The flush of shame is mottled, a harsh contrast to the pretty blush Liam got before. "No! That was an accident! I had an itch," he says, then looks away, blinking rapidly.

He won't call Daniel out on the lie, not yet. But it's interesting and arousing to think that the boy might be so starved for pleasure that he'll touch himself without realizing.

"Do you like positions, sweetheart?"

"I don't think so," he breathes.

Liam touches the inside of his thigh, where his mounting gland is. It's hot and hard. Small. Abnormally small. "How slick do you get? If you're making yourself feel good, do you get really wet?"

“No,” he says, no inflection either way. Careful. Once again, his gaze cuts to Liam’s phone. “I don’t do that, at all.”

Hell.

“Is it good or bad if you get wet?”

“I don’t get wet,” Daniel hisses, sounding angry.

“Alright. We can return to that later.” Liam touches the little gland with just a brush of his thumb. There’s no reaction. He certainly doesn’t come. The gland should be an erogenous zone.

“How does that feel?”

“It doesn’t feel like much.” Daniel’s calm when he says it, which makes Liam think he’s sincere.

“Okay. Let’s do the thermometer,” Liam says easily, and holds it up. “You’ve seen one of these before?”

“Of course.”

“I’ll tell you what it does, anyway, because you’re awake now. It takes your temperature, measures the blood in your oxygen, measures inflammation, and can pick up the traces of hormones that your body secretes through its skin. It’s a good way to tell if a submissive or Dominant is struggling.”

Daniel frowns.

Liam puts it over the gland, holding it until it beeps. He looks at the monitor for a

moment, hand steady on Daniel's thigh, reassuring him as the information scrolls by. Liam moves to his other gland and touches it. There's a flinch. He meets Daniel's gaze. "Is that good or bad?"

"I don't know."

"I want to touch you there again. Can I?"

"Yes, Sir."

"What do you prefer? A little pressure? A rub?"

"I don't know," he says.

"Can I try both?"

Daniel nods.

Liam smiles reassuringly. "You're lovely. Doing a good job for me." He presses gently at the side of the gland and Daniel's cock oozes fluid. This side is definitely bigger and hotter. He rubs gently around the gland with big circles. Daniel's head goes back on the pillow as he holds his breath. His neck muscles stand out in hard relief and the arousal in his scent spikes hard.

And just like that, his cock twitches and he releases onto his stomach, another puddle of fluid, and Daniel grinds his ass down into the bed.

"There we go. Good, Daniel."

Liam glances down between the submissive's legs and can see him squeezing, the faint ripple along his taint, ass clenching, his body wanting to get sensation on the

glands tucked inside his passage.

When it's over, Daniel whimpers and hauls in a deep breath. It's a surprisingly weak release, considering how much grinding and panting he was doing.

"Good job. Lovely."

Daniel gasps, covering his face with his arm. Liam watches him calm down. Then the boy puts a hand down to the mess and lifts his fingers to his mouth.

"Sweetheart, don't clean that up. You've got too many bad toxins at the moment."

Daniel looks mortified. "I can clean up my mess," he whispers. His tone is odd.

"Do you like cleaning it up or do you just clean it up because you should?"

"The least I can do is be tidy," he says softly.

"Who told you that?"

He takes too long to answer. "I don't know."

"Okay. Well, you're too uneven to engage in come play unless it's mine. And you'll probably get a lot of mine while we sort you out. We can talk about it again when you're settled. Okay?"

"What's going to happen to it?" Daniel asks, which seems like an utterly bizarre question. Liam smiles and reaches for a Kleenex or three. He wipes Daniel up and throws it into the trash. "Problem solved."

"They'll want it, won't they? We can't tell them," Daniel says, sounding worried.

It's startling, the reminder that this is a submissive whose body hasn't been his own for a long time. He's used to his bodily fluids belonging to others. "You're mine right now. It's just us. I don't need that and neither do you."

Daniel still looks concerned.

"It can be our secret, if you want."

"Okay. Uh, thank you," Daniel says. He chews on his bottom lip and glances at Liam, up and down his body and then away. His eyes close for a long moment. And then his hips lift, he grinds into the bed once more, and his cock leaks again.

"You'll do a lot better when you have something inside to squeeze against."

Daniel's eyes widen in horror. "I didn't do anything."

Sure, Liam thinks, but leaves it alone.

"Do you want to show me how you express your glands?"

Daniel shuts down, turning away from him. "I don't do that. That isn't something I like, I promise."

Which is a total lie. Daniel does like it because all submissives like it. Besides, Liam could see him clenching, trying to milk them, which is practically impossible without something inside his anus. They're tucked right inside and get massaged by a Dominant's cock. Most submissives come from the rubbing and pressure.

And if there's a knot involved then the orgasm can become overwhelming if they're fucked for too long. Submissives are almost guaranteed to go into subspace from the discomfort and extended painful pleasure of a knot lodged against their squeezing

gland.

“Why not?” Liam asks, not wanting to assume anything.

“I don’t touch myself. I’ve learned not to.”

“Sweetheart, you’re a submissive. You need certain things to be healthy. Saying nothing will make me happier than lying. Understand?”

“What do you think I’m lying about?” Daniel asks, looking innocent.

“You touch yourself. To say that you’ve learned not to is ridiculous.”

“What are you going to do?” he asks, expression blank. “You’ll lock me up? Isolate me? Come up with some chemical to solve the problem? Maybe a surgery? How about you tell me now what you’ll do to me, sweetheart , so we can stop this bullshit where you pretend to be nice to me,” Daniel says, so much venom in his tone he’s practically spitting.

“If you don’t like ‘sweetheart,’ I won’t say it,” Liam responds easily enough. He leans over and stops the recording, deciding Daniel’s trust has now become the priority. For a submissive with this high of a designation to be so hostile towards a Dominant he sexually responds to, to shut down his instincts at every opportunity, to lie—well, the only conclusion is that Daniel has been very badly handled indeed.

“I’ll deal with you the same way I’d deal with any misbehaving boy: let you know that I’m unhappy and spank the hell out of you. You’d be touching yourself then, princess.”

The boy blushes. He blinks repeatedly, as if he’s shocked. “Princess. No.” He seems to run out of words. Another long blink. “I don’t touch myself. I’ve learned not to.

I'm not—I don't want to make you mad, Sir."

"I'm sure you don't. A submissive with your designation would hate to make their Dominant mad."

Once Daniel is secure in their relationship of submissive and Dominant then hopefully the situation will resolve itself naturally because Daniel will trust him. But if it doesn't, then Liam will take steps to make sure Daniel understands that lying to the Dominant who's responsible for his care isn't acceptable.

But it shouldn't come to that.

"You're submissive, so you need a Dominant to take care of you—a very high-level one who can get you into subspace so you don't have a hormonally induced drop. You've got both physical and mental needs, and it's even more important for someone special like you to have a partner you match up with."

"And that's you?" Daniel asks.

"Honestly, I'm not sure. I hope so. But you're a little out of my league, if we're being honest. The problem is that you're so high needs that we can't even find a Dominant who would be a good match for you. Your equivalent is probably... well, not sane."

"Killed."

Liam doesn't have a response. He clears his throat. "I think the trick will be making sure I can give you enough to keep you content. Lying, for example. What might a Dominant who is equal to you do if you lied?" he asks and tries to meet Daniel's gaze, but Daniel turns his attention to the wall, a flush of shame climbing up his cheeks.

He doesn't answer.

"Daniel?"

"I don't know," he whispers.

"Guess."

"Do you think my father will die?" he asks.

"I don't know."

"Do you think.... Could you ask me again after you find out?"

"Yes, Daniel. I can do that."

Liam can't help but hope the old man drops dead immediately.

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Source Creation Date: July 16, 2025, 7:06 am

6

A nurse comes in wanting Liam to sign a few forms, and it's as good a time as any to ask more about Daniel's father and his chances of recovery. She reiterates that she thinks he's going to recover but says she'll let them know if she hears anything to the contrary.

It's terrible. How awful must a father be for a child to be looking forward to their death? Knowing that's their only chance at happiness?

The reality is that Liam isn't going to get an honest answer out of Daniel because he is more afraid of his father than Liam. His father is the most controlling influence in his life.

Liam needs to start at the beginning if he's gonna have any chance at all of understanding this complicated submissive.

He comes back into the room and gives Daniel the lack of news. "If anything changes, she'll let us know."

Daniel once again chews on his bottom lip. It makes him look very young, very innocent. "I'm sorry I said I didn't want to be called sweetheart. And said the other stuff."

"That's alright. You've a right to be defensive." He tries not to smile, noting that Daniel's biggest apology was about an endearment. Underneath the fear and snark is undoubtedly a sweet boy who lives for praise. And to be chased down and mauled

like prey.

But one step at a time. Liam also notices that the sheet is artfully arranged so as to reveal a fair amount of his body. He'd hidden himself when the nurse came in but apparently decided to expose himself for when Liam came back.

Good boy.

Liam approaches the bed, looking his fill at the young man who will soon be his. There's a fine line in the crease of Daniel's thigh, just above where his oddly small and nonreactive mounting gland is.

Liam wants to gently brush his fingers over the area, pull the skin taut so he can get a better look. "Is that a scar?"

Daniel's hand slides down, stopping at his stomach. He wonders how many times Daniel has been told not to touch, has started sliding his hand down his body to touch himself and been ordered not to.

"I got too... there's a discharge that happens to me," Daniel confesses, sounding ashamed.

"Yes, you self-lubricate. It happens to some submissive men. When they're very high on the scale and require a lot of rough sex to drop thoroughly."

"What?" Daniel asks.

"I don't understand the question," Liam says.

"Are you saying I'm not the only one that does this?"

“No, I’d guess there are about thirty percent of submissive men who self-lubricate. And there are a lot of Dominants who spill a lot of pre-come when they’re aroused, and most likely that’s to help mate with a submissive. To make a quick, rough mounting easier.”

“Quick, rough mounting,” he mumbles, sounding shocked.

“You should have that a lot, Daniel. It’ll be good for you.”

“That isn’t my decision.” He glances down at Liam’s groin. The question is unspoken but there.

“Yes, I do leak, Daniel.”

Daniel takes a deep breath in and then lets it out slowly. “You stopped recording?”

“I did.”

“Are there other recording devices in this room?”

“No, sweetheart. There are not.”

He nods. “They took one gland to stop me getting so wet and aroused. I couldn’t have functioned in the field.”

Liam looks back down at the scar. “Did they discuss taking your submissive glands?” Much like a lobotomy in the early twentieth century, it wasn’t a good fucking idea, but when has that ever stopped anyone?

“They were still trying to get approval. There was concern for my ability to fight. They wanted to take out the submissive glands and put in Dominant glands and that

was much too experimental, it kept getting pushed back. My father couldn't find a surgeon willing to do it. And they didn't know if my body would reject the glands. When my father gets better, he'll keep trying. People don't say no to General Burrows for long," Daniel says, unwilling to look at him.

It's evil, that's what it is.

"What else did they do to try to make you into a Dominant?" Liam asks, even though he doesn't want to think about it. This poor boy. "Can I touch you? I really want to touch you, but I don't want to do anything you don't want me to." The question bursts out of Liam.

Daniel looks so lost, what's been done to him is so wrong, and Liam just wants him to feel good, and safe, and like he doesn't have to apologize and be ashamed. He's the furthest thing from a disappointment.

"If you want," Daniel whispers, looking down. It's either a very submissive invitation—which is how Liam's body interprets it, his cock leaking fluid, wanting to ease the way so he can mount the submissive in front of him—or it could be because Daniel thinks he can't say no.

"Daniel, you can say no to me."

Daniel chews his lower lip, brow furrowed for a long moment. "You think that's what I want?" he asks, sounding hurt.

"I hope not. I'm just trying to make sure. You haven't had as many choices as you should have." And his responses are not typical of a submissive who desires a Dominant. He's more reserved than the men Liam is used to. It's throwing him off.

Daniel chuckles. "I suppose that's true. I don't want to say no," he whispers, face

going bright red. “Not to you.” The scent of aroused submissive rises around him.

Liam growls and Daniel’s hand strays towards his cock again.

Daniel stops himself and turns his head away, anxiety rising again. “It all feels like a trap. Another one. How do I know what’s real?”

He glances at Liam’s groin, but Liam’s got Dominant briefs on so he can get hard and it shouldn’t be too visible unless his pants are really tight. Daniel looks disappointed.

“Were you looking for the shape of me? Wanting to see evidence that I want you?” Submissives do like to know they’re wanted. They like to see proof.

“There’s no reason you would,” he mutters. “I know what I look like, and there’s no reason you’d want me. You don’t have to pretend.”

“I’ve got special underwear on, Daniel. It’s designed to support my knot if it starts to swell, like it is now because you smell so good, and contain all the pre-come I’m leaking because I want to fuck you. It’s not very professional to walk around with my dick hard and wet. That’s why you can’t tell.”

“That’s fine,” Daniel whispers morosely.

Liam grips himself through his pants, letting Daniel see the outline.

Once again, he’s wide-eyed and curious.

“See? That’s for you, honey.”

“Now?” Daniel’s hips roll upwards in invitation.

“No, not now. We have to get out of here and then you’ll get it.” Liam grins at him, pleased Daniel is so excited.

Liam moves into his space, keeping eye contact so Daniel can feel the helplessness of his position. Just a submissive lying down on a bed, weak and naked, an aroused Dominant looming over him.

Daniel whimpers, mouth opening as he licks his lips. Liam is planning on pressing his lips to Daniel’s forehead, but Daniel tilts his head, crashing their lips together. Daniel makes a high-pitched little sound, mewling, inviting, then tries to shift, automatically going to present for mounting.

Liam chuckles, holding him still, and kisses him quickly on the mouth. “That’s lovely. Good and eager, I like that. But not here, baby. I want to get you out of here before I mount you. I know I’ll knot you and mine take a long time to go down.”

“I’ve never been knotted before. Never... had anything inside me before,” Daniel confesses. “They didn’t like that, at all.”

“Well, that was wrong. Pretty submissive like you needs to be filled up all the time,” he says, voice low and gruff. The idea of teaching Daniel his own body, watching him make himself feel good and come, is unbearably arousing. “You must have played with yourself a little,” Liam continues, voice rough at the very idea. “Tucked your fingers into that tight little hole of yours before you went to sleep at night?”

“No.”

“Not ever?”

He can see Daniel deciding whether he should be honest or not.

“I’m on your side, sweetheart. I’m here for you, not your father. Not the military.”

“I was... tempted. I tried once, but they were waiting for it. For me to... give in. I was locked up at night with handcuffs so that didn’t happen again.”

Liam knows he hasn’t misheard but it’s fucking unbelievable. This young man was handcuffed so he didn’t touch himself?

“That’s really... how do you feel about that?” Liam asks, catching his judgment just in time. Liam knows it’s awful, but he’s not sure Daniel does.

“Masturbation is not acceptable.”

“Well, I’m personally going to hell, then. And I’m pretty sure everyone else is, too.”

Daniel frowns, a flush crawling up his chest. It mottles his skin and maybe Liam shouldn’t find it appealing, but he’s pretty sure he’s just going to like everything about Daniel. “Okay. Let’s get this over with so we can get you out of here. Is that a good idea?”

“Yes.”

“Now then, we have to figure out how close your heat is. Which means an ultrasound. It’s gotta go inside you.”

Daniel blushes and his scent changes, a mixture of anxiety and lust.

“How about I help get you ready for that? We’ll open you up on my fingers, give you a release or two, and then check. Does that sound okay?”

“That... that needs to be done?” Daniel asks shyly.

“Yeah, it does. I’ll be gentle as can be. It’s a very small wand.” He picks it up, showing it to Daniel. It’s no thicker than a small dildo.

Daniel’s arousal spikes at the sight of it, his hips lifting and lowering in a tilt as he stares at it hungrily. Liam feels like an idiot. Daniel is a submissive and he does want to be fucked, he just hasn’t been. And he’s so submissive he probably doesn’t care how gentle Liam is.

“This is a medical procedure, Daniel. It has to be done.”

Daniel whimpers in relief, very faint and soft.

Liam decides to test him a little more. “I need this from you now, Daniel,” he says. “You be good and let me.”

“I can’t say no?” he whispers, then breaks out into goose bumps. His hand strays down again. He clenches his hand into a fist, stopping himself from touching his weeping cock. Two perfect drops spill onto his stomach.

“No, you don’t get to say no to me. Because I’m your Dominant. I know what’s best for you and what you need. Only me.” He’s supposed to be saying this to check Daniel’s responses to dominance, but as Liam is saying it, his own cock is hardening, eager to claim the submissive.

“I’ll be so good for you, Sir,” he begs, pretty and vulnerable.

“You’re just the best boy in the world, Daniel, aren’t you? Why do I think you wouldn’t say no to me? You’d let me do anything, wouldn’t you, sweetheart? So fucking good and obedient.”

“If—if you want me. Please, want me... I won’t say no,” he says, and closes his eyes.

Tears glimmer on his lashes and he takes a deep shaky breath. He's so goddamned beautiful and he doesn't even know it. As if Liam wouldn't want to just live with his dick buried inside him. He's never met a submissive he's wanted to have cry on his knot more. Daniel should be confident and needy, not afraid and uncertain.

"Look at me. I want you. You smell like a ripe submissive and you're gonna make me pop my knot here pretty soon, you've got me so worked up."

"I'm not doing anything." It's hesitant. Daniel licks his lips. Liam's surprised Daniel doesn't ask to see his cock, he seems so curious and needy, gaze drawn back down between Liam's legs.

"You are. You're submissive and sweet and getting all wet for me. I love good, slutty boys, honey. You're so perfect, it won't take much to get a reaction out of me. You're gonna live on my knot for as long as I have you. How do you feel about that?"

"Good, Sir." Daniel grinds down against the bed in need.

"That's it, good boy. I'm going to touch you now," Liam murmurs. He drags the sheet completely off of Daniel, exposing him to the room. Daniel sighs, probably happy to be put on display. "Get those legs open for me. Hold them back, show Daddy everything, baby."

Daniel obeys, his pretty pink hole on display. "That's the position I want you in," Liam says. Daniel's hole is clenching, but he's not dripping slick like he should be. His submissive glands must be blocked up. Liam puts a glob of cool slick on his fingers, rubbing until it's warm. Daniel is watching him eagerly.

"A boy like you should start with two." He rubs them over Daniel's hole then presses his fingers inside. Daniel whimpers, arching back, mouth opening in pleasure. Liam has to stop almost immediately and adjust, crooking his fingers downwards to

accommodate the gland. Daniel's gland is so large it interferes with just sinking into him.

Daniel yelps at the contact and tears fill his eyes. For just a moment Liam contemplates taking his fingers out, just giving the boy one, but Daniel is no ordinary submissive. He needs pain.

"Oh, sweetheart, this must be so painful," he says, staying still.

His submissive glands are clearly working overtime. And there could be a few reasons for that. He might be close to heat. It might be whatever they did to try to turn him into a Dominant. It might be the imbalance of his mounting glands, and so his submissive glands are trying to compensate. It might just be that he doesn't get them expressed or get something inside to keep them soft and healthy.

"No, I—no," Daniel whimpers, and his passage ripples against Liam's fingers, wanting to suck him in deeper.

"Sorry, sweetheart. It will get better. You're really sore, poor thing." He slowly works his fingers in and out, grazing the gland carefully. Daniel's breathing hitches, his neck and face getting flushed, and he rocks gently against his fingers.

Liam pulls out.

"Oh," Daniel says, sounding devastated.

"We're not done. You're opening easily, and it should feel pretty good, I think." Liam uses a bit more lube and slowly presses two in, watching Daniel's hole open right up. He's careful of Daniel's massive gland while he goes deep, letting him feel full for a moment. "We'll go slow as you need."

Daniel nods and whimpers. His gaze stays locked on Liam like a good submissive.

“Are you watching me for approval or to see if it’s making me hard?”

“Yes. I mean both,” Daniel says, after another sharp inhale. “Want you to like it. Like me.”

“I do. Very much. How about you move a little? Rock against my fingers. I think you can come, sweetheart.”

Daniel blinks at him, eyes shining with tears. “And it’s... okay? To do it from this?”

Which makes Liam want to kill everyone who’s even so much as looked at Daniel Burrows. “More than okay. Necessary. This is how you’re meant to come.”

Daniel’s passage clenches around his fingers, then his cock twitches and a fat spill of come slips out of him. His hand strays towards his cock.

“Hand at your side, honey. This is what we’re doing right now,” Liam orders. “Now, go on, Daniel. I’m waiting. I want this for you. Make me happy, boy.”

“Oh, D—hmm,” he says, catching himself. His hips rock while he grinds against Liam’s fingers, almost instantly stiffening, cock jerking as he comes, flooding messily all over his stomach. Daniel doesn’t stop, working Liam’s fingers before he’s even done pulsing. He rocks and rocks and then comes again with a startled cry, pressing hard into Liam’s fingers, a filthy grind against the gland. The gland softens and shrinks; he can feel it as Daniel pants and gets his breath back.

“Good boy. That’s just wonderful, Daniel.”

Daniel looks to him for approval, tentative and sweet. “I did it right?”

It's an awful question. "Yes, Daniel. You were perfect."

Daniel covers his face with his hands and sobs. "I haven't done anything right in—" He doesn't finish the sentence. He doesn't need to.

It's going to be difficult to let the pretty submissive go.

7

Daniel slumps back onto the bed, exhausted and content in a way he hasn't felt since the experiment changed him into a submissive. The constant lust he's felt since his change is finally quiet. What a burden it was to be so needy but pretend he wasn't. To suppress it all and constantly fear that he'd give himself away, disappoint his father and his brother—everyone who was working so hard to turn him into the Dominant they all wanted him to be.

This is the first moment of peace he's had in years.

How long will it last? Will surrendering always be so pleasurable? Now that he has a Dominant of his own, will he get to feel good and sated all the time? Liam's words echo in his ears and Daniel blushes at the praise.

Just perfect, Daniel.

"Thank you," he whispers.

Liam's fingers are still inside of him, waiting for the last shocks of pleasure to subside.

"You are very welcome," he says with a grin that makes Daniel blush and want. Liam's fingers slip out and Daniel gasps at how empty he now feels. His hand tries to go down between his legs, to take the Dominant's place, but he stops himself, sliding his hand up and under the pillow so he doesn't forget.

Oh no.

The desire and need he feels is still there, after all. Having Liam's fingers in him kept it at bay. But it's fine. He's survived worse.

Liam rises, going to the sink to wash his hands, and Daniel lets himself really look at the man who is going to be his Dominant. He didn't believe it before, that he'd be able to go home with him, get pleasure and a knot. Maybe even be called "boy" and "sweetheart."

But now he does. Now it feels real. His Dominant is tall and broad shouldered, his hair straight and to his jaw. He needs a shave. Daniel had felt that on his lips when he'd briefly gotten to taste his mouth.

Kiss him.

Liam turns back to him, his gaze roaming over Daniel hungrily, and Daniel can feel that lust directed at him. This Dominant wants Daniel in return, and it makes him want to be bent over on his hands and knees so badly. He wants the Dominant's fingers plunging in and out of him, slamming deep inside. And then his cock.

His Dominant.

Something he didn't ever think he'd get. Getting fucked by a Dominant is supposed to make the ache go away, fill up a submissive and make them feel content in a way they only get from a Dominant's come, sometimes a knot if the submissive is very lucky. Daniel is going to be mounted and bred and all the things he's never gotten to have.

All the things they told him were wrong. All the things he himself was terrified of when he worried about becoming submissive and what that might entail.

Daniel wants it. He didn't need to be afraid of getting it, he needed to be afraid of not getting it. He can't and won't tell this Dominant no. Ever. Which makes it acceptable to follow and want, makes Daniel's own instincts almost overwhelming. He can go quiet and soft and wanting and this Dominant will get exactly what he wants from Daniel. "No" isn't the right answer anymore.

The Dominant is older. He's been in the sun a lot and probably spends a lot of time outdoors. Probably not older than forty. He has a straight nose with the faintest bump on the right side, probably from being broken once upon a time. And to think he'd once been terrified of wanting a Dominant, wanting to submit, worried that it would be awful. Wanting this man is as easy and natural as breathing.

"Let's try the ultrasound. Do you want to present for it?" Liam asks.

Daniel wants it so badly he freezes. It's training. Giving in to his instincts might not be so easy after all.

"What is it?"

"It just feels like presenting is wrong. What if you don't like it? What if I do it wrong?" Is it a trick? He couldn't stand that. It would destroy him if he obeyed and became accepting, and then it turned out to be a trap. Or what if he doesn't do it right, or it's just gross and pathetic? Maybe he shouldn't do it, after all. Maybe there was comfort in saying no.

He isn't vulnerable when he says no.

Liam's nostrils flare, able to smell Daniel's anxiety. He grabs Daniel by the chin. "I need this from you now. Be good," Liam orders, even more beautiful standing over Daniel, command radiating from him.

Daniel gets to his knees on the bed, swaying in close to his Dominant without really meaning to. Daniel is just so drawn to him. He tries to scent him, his lungs warm, suddenly a little lightheaded. He touches Liam's shoulder and he sways again. Liam looks at his neck. Should Daniel offer?

And suddenly he can hear his father's voice in his head, echoes of him telling Daniel not to be a needy slut. Daniel straightens, hurrying into position. Who does he think he is, wanting a bite and a fuck like a whore, ungrateful for the gift and power he's been given?

His father never would have let Daniel do this if he'd known Daniel would be so weak. Too weak to be a Dominant, to realize the change's full potential.

He needs to fight his instincts. Make some effort, his father would yell, voice sharp and angry. That was when he'd look to his handlers, to the doctors, silently pleading for someone to step in.

They'd started shocking him when he'd offer his throat, get slick, try to present, or cry. It seemed like whatever his instincts were, everyone hated them. They did their best to get him trained into behaving like the Dominant he was meant to be, trying to salvage something from the disaster.

And that's all Daniel really knows. He's learned those lessons thoroughly through fear and pain. They're drummed deep into his skull, carved into his bones. His submissive responses are wrong.

Which makes it hard to trust this. He should go back to hiding.

"What's wrong, sweetheart? Why are you anxious?" Liam asks, petting his hair, his voice a rumble.

“This is bad. They’ll hurt me.” Even before he finishes saying it, he realizes where he is. The circumstances have changed, even if it’s just for a while. His father is sick. This isn’t his father making this decision, but a doctor who wants him to be treated like a submissive. He tries to chuckle. It doesn’t sound right. “Sorry, I got confused.”

“You thought you were somewhere else? Does that happen a lot?” Liam asks.

Daniel knows he’s trying to keep his voice even and calm. But it isn’t normal or healthy to make that sort of mistake. This isn’t his first experience with doctors. He knows the tone of voice they get when they’re surprised or disappointed with him.

“It’s fine. I know where I am. I’m sorry.”

“I don’t need you to be fine, and I don’t need you to be sorry. I need you to answer the question honestly.” His warm hand squeezes the back of Daniel’s neck. “You always answer me, Daniel. You always tell me the truth.”

He risks a glance. “What makes you the exception?”

“You’re mine now. My submissive.” And then his hand is on Daniel’s bare bottom, sliding between his cheeks, rubbing over his hole. He gives him a gentle spank, right on his hole, and that explodes through Daniel in a burst of pleasure. He gasps and shudders. It takes him a moment to remember what they were discussing.

This man owns him.

“It happens sometimes. No more than once a day... usually.” Which is a lie. His dreams are vivid nightmares of past treatments. And those memories are close, always creeping in at the edges of his vision, wanting to overwhelm him and drag him down. It’s so hard to pay attention to the world around him. A moment’s inattention and he’s lost in his own memories of pain. The wrong sound and he thinks

it's a metal instrument being set down on a tray; someone walking too loudly and he's sure it's a doctor coming in to torture him. It usually is.

Was.

“And you freeze why?”

The question confuses Daniel. “What do you mean?”

“Is it instinct or intentional? Are you escaping into your mind, or do you not have the choice?”

“I don't have a choice.” He'd have thought that was obvious. Are there people who choose to live in their nightmares? “Do you want me to promise not to do it again?” Daniel asks, eyes filling with tears because it's impossible. How can he stop it? But the doctors like it when he tries. So he should offer it to this man even if he can't keep his promise.

Liam growls low in his throat. He leans close, rubs his face against Daniel's, and squeezes the back of Daniel's neck with a strong hand. “Don't you make me any promises you can't keep. That's just about the same as a lie. I don't have expectations of you. It's hard, I know you've been taught differently. But what I want from you is your natural response. Not what you think I want. Not responses based in fear and self-protection. You just let yourself be and I'll be happy with you.”

Oh. That's not something Daniel has ever done. “They punish me for behaving like a submissive. Wanting to be one. Doing things they do.”

“You are a submissive,” he says firmly.

“Am I?” Daniel asks, because he isn't sure of the answer. He's been living a lie for so

long he has no idea what he really is.

“Do you want me to prove it to you?”

“Yes,” he responds before he can think about it too much.

Liam’s brow rises. Maybe the question was rhetorical.

“Alright, I’ll prove it to you.” Liam takes off his t-shirt, baring his chest, and hands it to Daniel. Daniel takes the shirt and raises it to his face, inhaling his scent, the Dominant’s warmth still in the fabric.

“I feel dizzy,” he confesses.

“Good.”

His Dominant is perfect.

“Get your face in my shirt and breathe in my scent so you don’t forget who you’re pleasing.”

“Yes, Sir,” he says gratefully. His face is hot. Liam’s shirt smells like him—so safe and masculine that Daniel moans as he buries his face in it.

“That’s perfect, Daniel. Do I smell good?”

“Like home,” he mumbles into the shirt.

Liam chuckles, pleased. He gets the ultrasound wand ready and puts his thumb on Daniel’s hole, rubbing gently.

Daniel trembles and shifts his legs wider apart. He's not used to being touched there and now the Dominant is touching him again and it's just too much.

"Don't. It feels good," he mumbles, confused about where he is and what's going on, lost in the floaty aroused feeling the shirt and this man make him feel.

"Oh, honey," Liam says but doesn't stop. "It should feel good. You're going to be getting a lot of good things while we're together. We don't stop when things feel good, Daniel. That isn't a reason to tell me no."

Daniel whimpers.

"Now let's get the wand in you. It goes deep." Daniel doesn't look as Liam gets the wand ready. He can hear the slathering of lubricant and his hips tilt even more, an instinctive response. The plastic wand isn't all that cold but the lubricant Liam slathers on his hole is. And then he's breached. The wand eases inside him, a stretch as his hole opens.

"Relax. Let it in. It's not very big, honey. Just let it in," Liam says.

"Oh god." He's going to come. This is too much. "Stop. Out. Take it out."

"Why?" Liam asks. He goes still, using his free hand to rub soothing circles on Daniel's back.

Daniel can't say. They'll hurt him if he's honest.

"You're clenching and releasing all over this wand, honey. And your cock is dripping. Do you need to come, Daniel? You can, baby."

He whimpers. "Can I? Please?" Daniel begs, half expecting to get punished for

begging but risking it because the need to come is too intense.

“Of course. Yes. What pretty manners you have, sweetheart.”

Daniel moans and comes, shifting a little so the head of the wand squeezes his glands. He knows he should be quiet but he can't help it. There's something inside him, finally, and his Dominant is here and the scent of him is in Daniel's lungs. It's perfect.

“Oh, oh. Th-thank you! Thank you,” he gasps, and then sobs into the shirt.

“You needed that, didn't you?” Liam asks roughly. He strokes his hand up and down Daniel's back and then he's reaching between Daniel's legs, stripping Daniel's cock in quick, long strokes. Daniel flinches at the touch, conditioned to pain and denial.

“Shh, it's alright to feel good, Daniel. I'm glad you came.”

The words don't even make sense. They're just not believable. No one has ever told him his pleasure was a good thing.

There's a sob stuck in his throat. He sniffles, knowing he's soaking the shirt with his tears. “I'm sorry I'm crying.”

“Did they tell you not to cry, too?” Liam sighs. “Of course they did. That's wrong, Daniel. It's good and right that you're crying. High-level submissives need to cry. You have too many hormones to get out. You can't come enough, baby. It's another form of release and you need it. Let it happen. You'll cry a lot with me, Daniel. And I love it. I love the tears, and I love to make you cry and get you feeling better. That's just how you're built, that's the submissive designation. And that's how I want you, too. You cry and then you curl up next to me and let Daddy fix it.”

Daddy. Is that who Liam will be to him? Daniel sobs harder. He couldn't stop the tears even if he wanted to. Which he doesn't. It's as if everything was a lie. How is it that this stranger is the kindest person he's met since the change happened? How does he know all the right things to say and do?

Maybe because this isn't real, either. It's Liam's job. This is what Daniel gets because his father isn't around to control who has access to him. Because his current doctor wants him to be treated like a submissive. If he'd just been a random soldier, would his life have been better?

Hasn't he known the answer to that for years?

And now Liam has called himself Daddy. Might Daniel get to call him that, too? Can he get this Dominant to be his Daddy and take care of him? At least for a little while? The sobbing takes all of his attention and he barely notices the wand inside him as Liam finishes the exam. Then it slides out and Daniel moans at the loss.

"I know, you need something inside you. We'll get you filled up, Daniel. On your side," Liam says, and Daniel obeys, lying down on his side. Gentle touches encourage him to pull his knees up, getting him into a fetal position because he's still crying and that feels right. "How about you tuck your fingers into your hole for me? Self-soothe, sweetheart. Can you do that?"

He's not supposed to. He's never been allowed. There was always somebody with him to make sure he didn't succumb to any of his submissive impulses. They didn't even let him shower alone. He had to leave the door unlocked and ajar for the bathroom.

Now Liam is telling him to do the things he fantasizes about. How many times did he ache and feel half crazed because he couldn't have something in his ass, stretching him open and full when he needed it?

Ever since the change he's felt empty. He looks at everyday objects and imagines them inside him. It's horrible and disgusting how fixated on it he's always been.

A horrible, shameful thing that they knew to watch out for.

But he didn't ask to be like this. He can trust no one. Everyone is always waiting for him to fail. And he does. And then it's back in for tests and corrective measures. More experiments.

Daniel shakes his head, scared of obeying the suggestion. It has to be a trap. He's going to panic. He looks wildly at his Dominant, needing to see the lie on his handsome face.

"What is it, sweetheart?"

"I can't! I'm not supposed to. It's bad. What do I do?"

"You obey me. Now. Fingers in your hole! Soothe yourself." His voice is like the crack of a whip, keeping Daniel's past experiences from closing in.

Daniel freezes with indecision.

"You're fine," Liam says, and urges Daniel's hand between his legs, fingers to his hole. "There you go. Good boy. Deep, baby."

He whimpers and presses two fingers inside, shivering at the calm that instantly descends on him.

Daniel makes a soft sound when he exhales, letting his eyes close, desperate to believe that he's safe for the moment.

“There you go. Doesn’t that feel good? You just obey your Daddy.”

“A-are you?” Daniel whispers, forcing his eyes open to look at Liam’s face. To see the lie, if he can. “My... Daddy?”

“I am,” he says, like a vow. “I promise... Daniel, I swear you can trust me. For as long as you’re with me, I’ll be your Daddy.”

“You’re... you’re with them.”

Liam sighs heavily. “Let me go see about getting you out of here. One step at a time, okay?”

“Sir?” he asks before the Dominant moves away. “You’re still... it’s still better than anything else I’ve ever had. I’m grateful. Maybe just... if you could... don’t make promises you can’t keep, either. Please?”

Liam’s lips go into a hard line, his eyes very blue as he stares at Daniel for a long moment. Then he gives a forced smile. “I understand. I’m going to go talk to the doctor for a minute. And then I think we should be able to go. I’ll help you get dressed and get out of here. Can you just lie there until I get back?”

“Yes.” That might be all he can do.

“Good.”

Daniel clutches Liam’s shirt to his face.

Liam leaves the room and all is quiet. His hole feels so good and warm. His balls aren’t nearly as swollen, and he’s quiet in body and mind. He stares at the wall, content to look at nothing. When Liam comes back in, he has a black t-shirt on and

Dr. Chang is with him.

“Daniel, you’re in good hands here. How are you feeling?”

“Good,” he says, voice slurred. He swallows, surprised he wasn’t clearer, that his voice wasn’t stronger. He thinks about sitting up, but it’s difficult when he’s so tired and weak.

Dr. Chang chuckles. “I’m going to recommend that you have Liam for at least a month. No guarantees, of course. But that will be my recommendation. And if your numbers improve like I expect they will, we’ll be able to make a good case for it.”

Daniel closes his eyes. “That sounds amazing,” he whispers.

Liam touches his hair, petting him gently. Daniel wants this Dominant so badly that he’s going to put his needs first. He’s going to demand to keep Liam if he can. He’ll speak up, disobey, risk whatever punishment his father wants to give him for a chance with this man.

Daniel’s never fought for himself. He had no idea what he was missing. Now he does. And soon he’ll get more.

Dr. Chang leaves and comes back with a t-shirt and sweats for Daniel to wear. Liam stands next to his bed, touching him gently until the clothes arrive.

“Up, sweetheart,” he says, and Daniel shoves to a seated position. Liam looks at his chest and blinks. “Look how pretty you are.”

Daniel blushes. “They’re big,” he whispers. It’s harder to see when he’s lying down.

“Yeah, they are. Spectacular. You’re making me so impatient, Daniel. I want you on

my knot so bad. Can't wait to get my hands on those pretty tits." Liam reaches out, cupping the flesh in his hands. "Oh sweetheart, you'll be so swollen and soft when I'm done with you."

Daniel blushes harder, wishing Liam would squeeze. He presses against Liam's hand, goose bumps breaking out all over his skin at the pressure, the zap of electric pleasure.

Liam grins at him. "You little minx, trying to entice me. I'm gonna get you home first—a sweet little thing like you deserves to be mounted in a bed. Just a little longer. I'll breed you up so good, Daniel."

"P-please," he says shyly.

Daniel gets the sweatpants on, and Liam lets him wear his shirt, which is so calming and arousing that he's leaking onto the bed. Then they realize he has no shoes, either. He'd collapsed before he put them on. Liam frowns at his feet and goes to get him shoes, coming back with some cheap hospital flip-flops that Daniel puts on.

They leave medical together, Liam with an arm around him, seemingly unwilling to let Daniel be away from him at all. It's nice. It makes him feel protected and wanted. He feels smaller somehow, and he finds himself slouching and ducking in close, wanting to touch and scent his Dominant.

"You're going to stay right next to me. Snug and close, understand?"

Daniel blushes and smiles at him. It's exactly what he wants.

8

Daniel is much taller than Liam expected. He'd seemed so much smaller in the bed. Daniel looks at him, then away, and a blush crawls up his cheeks. His shoulders hunch in.

"What happens now?" Daniel asks.

"We get you comfortable with being my submissive. Your heat isn't close, which is for the best. It'll be enough of an adjustment without that, I imagine." Liam reaches up a hand to Daniel's face, touching his cheek. "Are you familiar with the traffic light system? If I ever do something you can't handle or that you don't like, I want you to say red. And I'll stop immediately. If you're scared or panicking, need a moment or something like that, you say yellow. If I ask you what color you are and you're happy with what's happening, what will you say?" He's staring at Daniel's mouth, thinking about getting his cock into that wet heat.

"Green."

"That's right, my good boy. I won't be mad if you say red or yellow."

"What about—I'm prey. Shouldn't I not be allowed red?" Daniel tries to shrug, to make it seem like he doesn't care very much. As if he hasn't thought about what it might mean to be prey since the moment he came into his designation.

"That might be more advanced than what we have time for. Nonconsensual play is something we'd engage in if we knew each other well. Let's see how it goes and if

you're not evening out well, then we might experiment."

"What if... what if I'm too strong? What if I resist?"

It's an interesting enough question that Liam wonders what Daniel has heard, how much he knows about his designation. "You won't be, honey. If you were able to fight me, then I wouldn't even try it. Your body will help me."

"That's—" Daniel whispers the next word. "Weakness. Isn't it?"

The submissive is gorgeous, attempting to pretend he doesn't know what the condition means.

"That's right. Weakness is very special. It's rare, and it usually only happens to submissives when your body knows what it needs and is trying to help you get those needs met. If you're strong enough to fight me, then I'm doing something wrong. If you can fight me, then you should. Trust me and trust your body. You fight when you need to, and you surrender when you need to."

Daniel whimpers, leaning against the wall as if the very idea is overwhelming. Hell, maybe it's making him weak right now. He puts his arm more securely around the boy.

"I don't want to fight you," Daniel says, as if the very idea of being so defensive upsets him. Maybe it does. Daniel is an extremely gentle submissive who has been badly abused. He needs time and a place to recover. He needs to feel safe and process the things he's endured.

Frankly, Liam isn't sure if any submissive should be in the field. It all seems like one massive mistake that the military is determined to double down on. Submissives stay in the military to be of use to the Dominants who need them. To expect more of them

is wrong.

That is not a popular opinion. He knows a lot of submissives who would be offended by the very suggestion that they shouldn't be fighting right alongside a Dominant.

Anyway, it's just his opinion formed after years of experience, and it's not like anyone is going to let him guide policy, so what does it matter?

The submissive in his arms right now has no business being in the military. He needs to be a pet, a prize, kept in a home and well-loved by a greedy Dom.

Liam leans into his space and kisses him gently on the forehead.

"Oh," Daniel whispers, as if the chaste kiss was unbearably erotic. "I might fall down"

A submissive as responsive as Daniel is a gift. He can't wait to get Daniel home and in his bed. On his knot. "I'm expecting a little bit of fighting, sweetheart. Don't worry about it. Sometimes, submissives have to be shown what they need. Instincts don't always kick in. That might happen a lot with you. It might be very difficult, at first, to give yourself to me as much as we both need you to. Your handlers spent a lot of time making you believe things that weren't true, teaching you to fight when you shouldn't, and doing what they could to confuse your natural instincts. Whenever it's difficult for you, you have to try to remember that it will get better, that I do know what's right, and I want what's best for you. And that it isn't your fault it isn't easy. It's difficult for every submissive in different ways, but because of your experiences it'll likely be especially difficult for you."

Tears fill his eyes. "Why would you want to deal with that?" Daniel tries to push away from him. "I mean, I guess it's your job. But why would you want that job?"

“Listen to me. I know we don’t know each other very well and this might be hard for you to believe. So pay attention and see if you think I’m lying: I want you and it has nothing to do with the job.”

“I don’t believe you,” Daniel says instantly.

He chuckles. “Well, alright. And that’s okay. Over time, you will. Getting weak for me, submitting for me and being on my knot, knowing you’re giving me pleasure and I’m taking care of you will convince you. When you find yourself too weak to struggle, unable to fight me, that’s how you know it’s right. That you’re just a little confused because of what they told you. That’s when you trust yourself as a submissive and you trust me as your Dom. Getting to show that to you is something I want.”

Daniel’s lower lip trembles and Liam kisses it. Then he presses a little closer, hauls him against his cock, and rubs against him. “See what you do to me? I need inside you.”

“G-good,” he whispers. “I believe that.”

It’s a start.

In Daniel’s apartment, all traces of the accident have been removed. The shattered glass coffee table has been replaced with a wooden one and the floor has been cleaned. It smells like disinfectant, but Liam can smell the misery under it. It’s seeped into the walls and the carpet in just the short amount of time Daniel has been here. Daniel shies away from the scent of his blood, chemicals, and misery, his hand going to his face, breathing in Liam’s shirt instead. He stumbles back into Liam, instinctively needing reassurance.

“It’s okay.” Liam squeezes his biceps, pulling him back into his chest. He bends

down and kisses Daniel's neck.

His submissive breaks out into goose bumps, head tilting in offer, arching a little so his ass goes back in invitation, Liam's cock slotting in between his cheeks perfectly. His ass is incredible. The fabric separating them is a crime.

"Good boy. That's right. You're so clever," he praises.

Daniel whimpers and steps forward just a little, but Liam holds him tight. "No, honey. The first instinct was right. We're somewhere bad, in a place that has hurt you, and you know you need to get out. You want your Daddy to help you. Offering yourself is just right," he says. Daniel shudders in his hold. "I don't want you in this place. You're going to pack a bag and we're going to leave."

"W-where will you take me?"

"Home. My home."

"Your.... I don't want to intrude." It's a heartbreaking thing to say. Denying himself the opportunity to be safe and secure in a Dominant's home, protected and taken care of, knotted whenever he needs it. And instead of relief or confident knowledge that of course a Dominant wants to get him into bed and in their territory, he says no. Because he doesn't deserve it. He's a bother.

It's terrible.

"You'll be more comfortable there and so will I. I want you there. You'll get my knot in my bed. I'm feeling a bit feral at the moment. I want you very badly and that's how I need to give it to you for the first time."

"Yes, Daddy," he whispers, unmoving.

“Do you like the idea of that?”

Daniel is so still that it's unnerving.

“Yes. Please. I would... yes.” He hears the submissive swallow.

Liam can't stop himself from pressing his nose into Daniel's neck and scenting him. He gives him an open-mouthed kiss, tongue sliding along the strong column of flesh. He lets his hands roam over his submissive, whispering into his ear roughly, “You say ‘yes, Daddy’ and I swear it's like you're begging me to knot you. That's how it feels, Daniel.” He growls and cups Daniel's chest in his hands, squeezing him gently.

Daniel cries out, jolting against him. “D-don't,” he gasps and his hands come up, covering Liam's. He doesn't pull Liam's hands away, but he might want to.

“What is it, sweetheart?” His voice is rough with desire and rising dominance.

“No one touches them. I'm not supposed to and—and no one else is, either.”

“That's wrong. Your chest needs to be worked, honey. You're a submissive. You've been changed and this is one of the most common changes that happens to men who become submissive. This tissue is heavily glandular. It gets congested, hot, sensitive to touch, and frequently becomes incredibly erogenous. If you've been told not to touch here then you've been denied, and it's going to affect your health and limit your pleasure.”

“I'm not... pleasure isn't something I'm allowed.”

It's a horrible thing to hear.

“You weren't allowed pleasure and look where it's gotten you. You can't deny your

needs and go on functioning. You've been starved, Daniel. And while we're together you're going to get the things you need."

"And then what? My father will recover, take over my care, and then I go back to nothing?"

Liam forces himself to slow down. Daniel deserves the truth. "With your designation you don't have to stay in the military, Daniel. It's so high that you could leave. Or you could demand to have a Dominant. He has no right to interfere with your life like this."

Daniel laughs bitterly. "He's controlled me and my brother for all of our lives. Every time I even thought about disobeying him, he knew and he'd punish me or my twin. Do you know the easiest way to keep someone in line? Threaten what they love. I love my brother more than I love myself. I can't leave him and my father knows that. If I disobey him, I won't just be losing my parents but my twin. I'll lose my name and my place in the world. Before the change, I could have survived those losses but now it's too difficult. I don't have the courage to leave it all behind. They took that from me. I don't know who I am now, I don't know what I'm capable of, or if I'm capable of anything, honestly. I just go where he sends me, I have these procedures done and hope that whatever they do, maybe I'll come out of it and I'll be... done. Finally be enough."

It's heartbreaking.

"Thank you for telling me, Daniel. I'm sorry you've gone through this, that you don't have more freedom and clarity over what you want. I think this time might be really good for you, then. A chance to see what your father has been denying you, what it's like to get your needs and desires met. I know it's counterintuitive, but satisfying your submissive needs might give you the strength to make decisions for yourself."

“I don’t want to lose my brother. We did this together but he came out null. My father’s been able to pull strings and he’s thriving now.”

“Dr. Chang mentioned your brother was null.” Liam has heard of the designation, heard it’s rare, but he’s never met someone who had it. How could it be sustainable? But surely the doctors who’ve encountered it know, and he doesn’t need to be thinking about that right now. Right now he needs to take care of Daniel, the deprived and traumatized submissive in his arms.

He lets his thumbs brush gently over Daniel’s nipples, a light touch through the fabric of his shirt, and Daniel gasps in pleasure.

But Daniel is so unused to getting played with there, the flesh so unworked and knotted up that he whimpers and swallows back a cry, his hands coming up and over Liam’s, urging him to be gentler. His poor breasts are like rocks and will need a lot of attention to get them soft.

Daniel whimpers again loudly, mewling in protest.

“Tell me,” Liam says, working them softly.

“Hurts.”

“It’s good, baby. So good for you. Let’s see, honey. Let’s just see,” Liam demands and rubs his cock against Daniel’s ass, lets his teeth graze down his submissive’s neck. His hands work Daniel harder and Daniel sags back against him, crying out at the rough touch. “There you go. Stop me. I’m hurting you. We both know this hurts you. You haven’t had the love and attention you should have, so this is a lot. Go ahead and lift my hands away, sweetheart. That’s how you get your Daddy to stop. Do you want to try?”

Daniel tries, but it's pathetic, hands lifting halfway and then dropping down by his side. The most perfect example of weakness he's ever seen. His cock aches to be buried in the submissive.

"I'm weak," he gasps, shocked. "Please," he pleads. Daniel presses his neck to Liam's mouth, trying to get a kiss or a bite on his claiming glands. It's needy and adorable.

Tempting.

"Poor baby. Weak as a kitten because your body wants it. So fucking sweet. This is how it will always be, Daniel. Goddamn, I'm so hard. I'm gonna get your pretty tits so fucking soft, have them in my hands all day."

Daniel groans, grinding back. Liam forces himself to get it together, hauls in a hard breath, then wraps his arms around the submissive, calming them both down. He kisses Daniel's neck gently, nuzzling lazily at the gland he wants to take.

He lets Daniel go, making sure he's near a chair so he can sit down, weak from Liam's attention and dominance. Daniel will get used to it. But right now, even that small amount is a lot.

"What do you need so you can leave here?"

"Um, just... a few things. Maybe... I need a shower," he says, clearly not wanting Liam to be stuck with him when he's covered in blood from the night.

"How about you take a shower and I'll go grab a few things from my room here so we can leave?"

"That'd be nice. Thank you." Daniel rubs his hands over his face, trying to dispel the

haze that his Dominant's lust has brought on.

Liam stops at the door. He knows he's being ridiculous, but he can't help it. "How about you give me a key so I can lock the door behind me?"

"Really?" Daniel asks, not believing Liam would be so possessive of him.

Liam lets his embarrassment show, both willing and wanting Daniel to see that he does feel possessive and territorial about him. That Daniel is someone worth worrying over. He's happy for Daniel to know that he's concerned already about his safety, and that the idea of leaving him alone, even in his own apartment, is just about more than Liam can bear at the moment. That's how much he wants Daniel.

Liam shrugs and runs his hand through his hair. "I know it's dumb. I know you're more than capable of taking care of yourself, and that we are in an incredibly safe environment. But, like I said, I really want you, more than I've ever wanted a submissive, and it's affecting me. It'll settle down once I have you in my space and on my knot for a few days."

Daniel blushes. He does it every time Liam mentions having him on his knot. Probably because no one has ever said that to him before. It's also clear the submissive loves it.

Daniel gets his key and brings it over to Liam, holding it out to him. There's a small smile on his face and it makes him look soft and beautiful.

"Alright, I'll be back soon and we will go."

He leaves, Daniel grinning and trying not to when Liam tells him that he's going to be the one to lock the door. But Liam has to hear and feel the twist of the lock sliding into place in order to leave him here. That's how bad his instincts and urges are at the

moment. It's the only way he can leave the submissive alone.

Liam's never felt like this before.

And it will only get worse the more time they spend together. It's going to make letting him go difficult.

They'll burn that bridge when they come to it.

Liam leaves and Daniel goes to take a shower. He stands in the bathroom and looks at himself while the water gets warm. His breasts are flushed and his nipples peaked. They ache from Liam's touch. That's going to happen a lot now. Liam's hands on his chest, his Dominant touching him, making sure he gets what he needs even when it's difficult. His touch had felt so good and then it had become excruciating. He'd wanted to get away, had an overwhelming urge to run, and then he'd felt exhausted. Heavy with desire, unable to fight.

Weakness.

He's aware it's a thing that happens to some submissives when they want a Dominant. He remembers hearing it talked about in hushed whispers. It had seemed like an excuse for a submissive's bad behavior. "I just got so weak, I couldn't help it," a submissive would say with a sigh or a blush. It was considered a good thing. And now he's experienced what it feels like to become weak, and it's terrifying.

Thrilling.

Beautiful.

One moment he was himself, felt like himself and the next... everything was about his Dominant. Everything narrowed down, became complicated and difficult. The moment the pain flashed through him and he'd wanted it to stop, he'd gone weirdly soft and lax. Almost tired. But warm or safe or something. Warm weakness spreading through him, stealing his ability to fight. Forcing him to give in. If Liam hadn't

stopped touching him, he'd still be out there, probably on Liam's knot, struggling and crying and whimpering while he got fucked and his chest throbbed in agony.

Why did his Dominant stop?

Liam had known he couldn't resist. He'd found it amusing, chuckling at Daniel's inability to protest and fight. Because deep down Daniel really, really wanted it. And if it had gone on for too much longer, he'd have cried and just begged to get his Dominant's knot. He cups his chest in his hands, squeezing gently and then letting go. That just hurts. No weakness. His pecs are all muscle and the nipples are flat. Touching them himself isn't the same. His Dominant isn't here, hasn't told him to, isn't doing it himself. He drops his hands.

He'll leave it to his Dominant, then. My Dominant will help me , he thinks.

It's a complicated thought after what he's been through. A lot of people have wanted to help him, from the doctors to his own father. They've told him every slice, jab, drug, and torture was for his own good.

But it wasn't.

Half an hour with a Dominant and he can see that all of it was lies. The only truth is to be found in Liam's arms.

His Daddy.

When Liam cups his breasts and causes him pain, it's glorious. Will it be the same way when he's on the Dominant's knot? Will it hurt and make him struggle and beg for it to end? Will he go weak all over and submit, unable to decide whether what he's feeling is the best or worst pleasure in the world?

And how good will he feel after all the pain and difficulty? Not once has he felt better after the doctors did something to him. Just once he'd like to be willing to endure and have the end result be satisfaction.

Liam will give him that.

He's denied his needs and instincts for all this time and now there's nowhere left to hide. All he can do is give in. Thank god.

Liam is going to demolish him and put Daniel back together. Just thinking about it leaves him feeling heavy inside, aching and needing to be filled. The feelings are getting worse and more difficult to ignore now that he's going to be with a Dominant. At least he won't have to hold on for too long. Liam will take care of his submissive glands, so large and swollen they press against sensitive nerve endings, biologically designed to encourage a submissive to seek out a Dominant. To want their cock.

Daniel's own cock twitches, drawing his gaze down to it. It's too large. And when he's hard, it's fat and Dominant big. It's ugly. The head of his cock is purple and where they wanted the knot to be is red. That's the bit he hates the most and is where his eyes instantly go when he sees himself naked.

That little bulge which is the result of so many injections and minor surgeries. Things were put into the skin and under it, all in an attempt to kickstart and increase his Dominance. His father had been willing to let the doctors keep trying.

That hint of knot was the proof of what he should have been, so they said. The failure. Close but not. It almost looks right but isn't.

Liam has already seen him naked and he still wants Daniel. He clings desperately to the idea.

His hand starts to move down and of course he hesitates, making sure the door is locked, worried someone is suddenly going to come in and yell at him or hurt him because he wants to touch himself. He has a Dominant now. A Dominant who doesn't look at his body with shame and disgust or even disappointment. He wonders if his Dominant will touch his cock, rub the area or ignore it. Daniel isn't even sure how it feels to be touched there. It's something he's been scared of for a while now.

He brushes his fingers gently over the area. It tingles and it might be pleasurable but he also hates it. It has a visceral feeling of wrongness.

Daniel turns away from the mirror and gets into the shower. He scrubs off the scent of the medical ward and his own distress. There's blood under his nails and dried on his skin. He rinses off the lubricant Liam used to do the ultrasound exam. He hasn't been wet like that in a long time, not that most (or any?) of it is actually his.

And yet, he's been focused on not being wet for so long that the sudden switch in his thinking doesn't feel right either. His underwear wet with slick was a bad thing. Sometimes they'd show him, made sure there were lots of people around, staring clinically at his dirty laundry as they discussed it. The quantity of it, the scent. They'd told his father that shame was a powerful motivator for behavioral change. They'd shamed him so much for his biology that he'd have done anything rather than be wet. But now he's got a Dominant and the Dominant will want him wet.

Right?

He's only got one gland so he can't do that well, even if he is certain he wants to. Daniel's dizzy then, certain and afraid that anything he does is going to be wrong.

And then Liam will look at him with disgust.

Worst of all, a shower means washing off the scent of his Dominant. He didn't have

much of Liam's scent on him before. Now there's nothing, no indication a Dominant ever touched him and wanted him. He tells himself he doesn't need to get too worried about losing it. Liam will come back and touch him more. Won't he?

He gets dressed and is almost done packing his bag when Liam returns. Liam takes his bag, holds out his hand and leads him out of the building.

10

Liam keeps hold of Daniel's hand until he's in the car, gets them both settled in the car, then pulls onto the road. Liam puts his hand on Daniel's leg. Daniel relaxes, legs spreading wider without making a conscious decision.

"Very good, Daniel."

The comment is a surprise. "I'm not doing anything," he says uncertainly.

Liam squeezes his leg. "You are, sweetheart. Opening your legs when your Dominant touches you, that's a good instinctive response. My jacket is in the bag on the back seat. Grab it and use it for a pillow."

"I can stay awake."

"You don't need to. It's a bit of a drive still and you're exhausted."

"Where are we going?"

"I have a cabin. If I'm not on base then I'm there."

Daniel takes Liam's jacket, touches it carefully, then lifts it to his nose and breathes it in, biting back the moan he was about to make. Fear slams through him, as if he did screw up and is about to be punished. That's what he's used to, after all. It'd be nice if he could just enjoy the freedom of being with a Dominant. Experience it with enthusiasm and be uninhibited.

What will happen once they get there?

“I think we should talk about what’s going to happen,” Liam says, as if he can read Daniel’s mind, which is a strangely erotic thought. What if Liam could read his mind? How would that work? The fantasy is there instantly.

Liam would be aroused, wanting to fuck him, and Daniel would say no, hell, he could even mean no, but that wouldn’t stop his Dominant. He’d know Daniel could take it. If he tried to leave, just ran, Liam would come after him, press him down to the bed, force him?—

“It’s your first time, your first mounting, and it can be overwhelming. Especially with your background. I’m concerned about how much you’ve been denied in the past. You have some strongly learned behaviors. A resistance to submission.”

He waits, wanting Daniel to respond. What is Daniel supposed to say? “That’s true.”

Liam keeps waiting.

“But I don’t want that to get in the way. Stop you, I mean.” That probably sounds wrong. “The experience. The truth is that I’ve had denial, medication, therapy, you name it, all with the intent of making me other than what I am. I’m tired. I’m tired and I’m... curious. With you, anyway. When my father is well, this will end. So just do whatever you want to do to me, and let’s see how that goes. It can’t be any worse than what everyone else has done to me.”

Liam glances over at him and then away. “That’s not a ringing endorsement. And it’s a very passive response. There isn’t a lot of agency or desire in ‘sure, go ahead and do your worst.’”

“No, but—” He takes a breath, unable to articulate what needs to be said.

“Which might normally be a massive red flag, but your designation is prey.”

Daniel looks out the window, trying to keep his breathing even.

“A willingness to surrender to pain, to bad things, is hardwired into your DNA. I assume you’ve told your father how much you don’t want to be a Dominant, right?”

“My father wants to send me to Montana and put me in the ground. If the doctors run out of possibilities to fix me, that’s what will happen. If you think General Burrows is willing to let his son be a submissive whore, meat for any soldier who wants him, you’re an idiot. None of this has anything to do with me. Hell, my whole life hasn’t had anything to do with me. I should have run. Maybe that’s why I’m prey. Maybe, when they put me in that chamber and started fucking around with my DNA, I shouldn’t have been thinking?—”

His voice breaks and he has to stop talking. Jesus fucking Christ. He did not need to say that.

“Very few submissive soldiers want to be submissive. I’d imagine most men go into it thinking, ‘please don’t let me become submissive’ or ‘Dominant, Dominant,’ again and again. In fact, I’ve heard that from a number of submissives over the years. What happened to you and what you became wasn’t a result of you or some weakness inside of you. Do you think that someone who is exposed to carcinogenic chemicals is responsible for what those chemicals do to them?”

“Of course not,” he says when Liam is silent so long it’s clear he’s waiting for an answer.

“Then don’t blame yourself. Trillions of dollars have been spent over the decades to manipulate DNA in this way. It’s messy and imprecise. The military puts down three percent of Dominants every year. That’s the official number. Unofficially, I wouldn’t

be surprised if it was closer to ten percent. Accidents, missions gone wrong, other reasons being listed as cause of death; it's shocking that these experiments are still going on. It's glorified eugenics."

"Why don't people stop it, then?" Daniel asks.

"Because they can't. Have you heard of Operation Sea-Spray?"

"No."

"In 1950, the military sprayed bacteria over San Francisco. It looked like fog. They said that they thought the bacteria was harmless, but it wasn't. There were illnesses, even one death, and health complications, but people accepted it. The Tuskegee Syphilis Study is another example of what civilized society allows. So long as there is a group of people that others are willing to let be harmed, the experiments will go on. Now people can say we signed up. We knew what might happen. We got paid for it. We deserve this. And occasionally something they do to us can become a useful gene therapy, and so everyone celebrates that their chances of dying might have gone down because ours have gone up."

"So I guess you're not recording this part of our time together," Daniel says.

Liam laughs. "No, I'm not. I won't record anything we do, Daniel, if that's what you'd prefer."

Daniel looks at the man beside him. Really looks. At his strong hand on the wheel, the cut of his jaw, the perfection of his profile. His soft hair and the shape of his mouth. Desire is there—a longing so sharp it could kill him.

"I don't want him or anyone to know what we do together. Swear to me you won't tell anyone, not ever."

“What if disclosure could help you? If getting what you need makes you healthier, your father might let you live your life.”

“I know him. You’re wrong. If submission makes me better then I’ll be one of those statistics.”

Liam sighs heavily and doesn’t answer right away, thinking it over. Which is what Daniel needs to surrender completely to this man and his own biology. He needs Liam to be on his side, to be honest, a man of his word.

“He will know you were with me. He’ll know we slept together. He’ll know your health has improved. I can leave out as much as possible, but if I’m ordered to be honest, I don’t see how I can keep my promise as you are envisioning it.”

“My father will not want to know. He will bury any reports you write, and he’ll bury you if you try to help me. When our time is over, you say that Daniel Burrows has a confused designation and was unresponsive to treatment, but for reasons of confidentiality you can’t be more specific. It’s a complicated case best dealt with by those above your rank. You do that and we’re—” He pauses to take a breath. “I’m yours.” For as long as he gets the Dominant.

“What if that’s a death sentence? What if that is the worst possible thing I can do for you?”

Daniel snorts. “Let’s not be melodramatic. The worst thing that can happen to me is getting nothing out of this. You heard Dr. Chang. I’m already close to death. My life is already decided. I belong to my father until the day one of us dies. You’re not changing my future, Commander Stone. I hate to burst your bubble, but you are, at best, a pleasant interlude in the shitshow of my life. You want to help me, make it good for me. Give me something to remember when—” He gasps. Once again, he can’t say more. It’s too awful.

“Alright. I swear,” Liam whispers, solemn and regretful enough that Daniel believes him.

That kills the conversation for approximately three miles. Daniel’s never had the chance to have an honest conversation about this with someone before. His brother should have been the one, but he was null, clinging on to that by a thread, as far as Daniel could tell, and he didn’t want to hear anything about submissive desires and inclinations. His brother was his best friend, and now they don’t even speak to each other. What is there to say when they’re both drowning in different ways?

“I wasn’t attracted to men before this,” Daniel confesses. “It didn’t make sense to me that they could do that to a person. How can giving someone enough hormones and drugs turn them gay? Remake someone on such a fundamental level?”

“But it does,” Liam agrees. “I was the same. Had a girlfriend for four years before the program. I was gonna ask her to marry me, but figured I should wait. Just in case. They tell us it doesn’t happen to all designated soldiers, and I know plenty of them still trying to cling to their heterosexuality, but for me it was impossible. I came out of the chamber and the first person to help me was a submissive, a gentle twink of a man who was put there for the sole purpose of providing relief to me if I needed it. He’s still one of the most beautiful men I’ve ever seen, just because he was the first. As if I’d been blind. I went from having no desire for men to being desperate to bend him over and use him for days. It’s a massive head fuck. I don’t know what I’d have become if I’d been forced to be changed and then pretend I wasn’t.”

“And then tortured for months and months over it,” Daniel says, forcing a smile, as if that will make light of it.

Liam pulls the car over, puts it in park and turns to him. “Whatever you want, for as long as I have you, that’s what we will do. No shame. I won’t tell your father or anyone else, but you deserve to experience pleasure, Daniel.”

“Is it, though?” he makes himself ask. There’s a fucking lump of emotion in his chest, sitting on his heart. Will being bent over for days actually be satisfying?

“Is it pleasure? Submitting and being weak? Getting mounted by a Dominant? Yes. It will be nothing but pleasure and release. Relief and joy.”

“And the rougher it is, the more I’m... taken against my will, the better it will be?” Is “taken” the best word in the entire English language? He imagines saying it—“take me, Daddy”—or even more profound would be Liam saying it—“I need to take you now; be good for me.”

His Dominant has not gone down the same mental tangent.

His smile is sad. “Yes, Daniel. For better or worse, that is true. Mentally, it might be difficult to reconcile what your body wants and needs, at first, but yes.”

Daniel has never wanted anything more in his entire life.

Maybe it will be difficult to reconcile the needs of the flesh with how his mind thinks about it. He’s willing to take the risk, though.

11

A nother few miles go by, Daniel imagining all the things the man beside him might take.

“Daniel,” Liam says, voice rough.

“Yes?” he asks, voice more breathless than it should be. He clears his throat.

“A good, hard mounting for your first time is military protocol?—”

“Okay. I mean... why?” Daniel asks, curious.

“Because soldiers have reported that they like it that way. Designated soldiers left to their own devices engage in rough sex. Someone with your designation would need it even more.”

Daniel clutches the jacket closer. “Good,” he says.

“Mounting you means I take you without a condom, and even though you’re not in heat, it’s like I’m breeding you, wanting you to catch. I’m tested every six weeks as part of my job. Even though it’s almost impossible for us to catch anything, we want to be sure. You won’t get anything from me. I’ll knot you and bite you, and we keep going until you release. That’s the sign of your real submission, and it means you’ll imprint on me pretty good. As much as you like me now or find me calming, the more you submit initially, the more you’ll get out of this experience. It will help you chemically, get you more stable.”

“So you want me to bond to you. Bond... a lot, or something?”

“Yes. A submissive is biologically driven to find the strongest Dominant for breeding and protection. The urge to nest and be taken care of, to submit, all of that is part of who you are, amplified because of your extreme submissiveness. The most important thing for prey is safety. The more forcefully you’re bred, the longer it is, the more you come, the more I take care of you and give you a nest, the likelier it is that your body will decide you’ve found safety and your mate. The ultimate goal of that is release. If you wet, then we’re there. So that’s the goal, and once we get you there, you’ll feel a hell of a lot better.”

“What do you mean if I wet?” he asks, but he knows. He’s seen it and he’s.... What if he can’t let go and let that happen? Daniel wants to give the Dominant anything he wants but he doesn’t think he physically can after what they’ve done to him and how messed up he is. “What if I can’t?”

“It isn’t up to you. You don’t decide to do it. It’s a physical response you’ll have to me. If anything, I make it happen or don’t. Don’t worry about it.”

Daniel is worrying about it. He doesn’t want to “wet” and essentially piss himself but he also doesn’t want to disappoint his Dom. And he’d like to be good at this whole submissive thing, be good at something for once and get the most benefit that he can out of his time with Liam.

Picking up on his concern, Liam assures him, “You will. You’re so responsive, Daniel.”

“Isn’t it... gross?”

Liam laughs, a rich, dark laugh that makes Daniel hot and heavy in his groin. “It’s so fucking sexy I’ll probably breed you again, won’t be able to resist.”

“Jesus,” Daniel whispers, and does have to wiggle in his seat. “Don’t resist. Just... I’m gonna put that out there now. Don’t resist if you don’t want to.”

“You’re prey. I won’t.”

Daniel’s head thunks against the headrest and he forces himself to take a few calming breaths. Liam just says a few words and he’s dizzy with lust.

“Well, you seem pretty confident about it, at least.” Which is good. He likes that his Dominant is confident and knows how to deal with him. “How many, um, submissives have you done this with? And like this? Where you take them to your home?”

“Truthfully, you’re a bit of a special case. Typically, I stay with a submissive for a few days at the beginning. It might be after trauma or injury, even a breakup. Sometimes, if someone doesn’t have a heat or a drop partner, I’ll go in to tend to a submissive. But I’ve never taken a submissive to my home.”

“Oh,” Daniel says, blinking back the rush of emotion that his body stupidly decides to force upon him. As if he’s special and this is meaningful rather than convenient.

“And you’ve been with people like me before? Prey?”

“Why do you want to know?”

He has to think about that for a minute. “I guess I just want to be what you like. I’m curious.”

“You’re rare, Daniel. I’m a high-level Dominant. It’s a lot for people to handle, and I keep myself in check. It’s never about me, it’s about the submissive. This is different. The best thing I can do for you is to treat you like mine, and... I won’t lie, I’m

looking forward to that. I get to let go a little, maybe a lot, and I'm excited to breed you. I'll use you hard and satisfy myself frequently. I don't get to do that very often."

"Oh," he says, so swollen with need and so empty he can hardly stand it. His Dominant is going to use him and wants him a lot. Because Daniel is special. He rolls his head along the seat to watch his Dominant drive, letting the arousal course through him, focusing on how soft and willing he feels, how eager. It feels incredible to just let himself desire, to languish in the need he has for the Dominant beside him. As if he's ready and waiting.

Available to be taken.

"Sweetheart, your scent changed," Liam says gently.

Liam spreads his legs, winces, then adjusts his cock in his pants, and Daniel gets a chance to see just how big he is. Can Daniel take that?

He's going to have to. "You'll make me take it. Won't you?" He hopes his tone sounds right. Daniel wants to demand the Dominant's cock. He wants to be forced, even if he says no. Hell, he wants to say no. Wow. He really is prey. It might be the first time he's ever really felt and understood what exactly his designation is.

Daniel blinks and looks down, because even looking at Liam right now is too much.

He just wants to submit and be good. He turns his head, offering his neck, and Liam grazes his fingers down the side of his smooth skin while they wait at a light. "Beautiful, Daniel. You smell ripe. You need a cock, don't you?"

He manages a quick nod, unable to say it aloud. He knows he isn't being recorded but it's safer if he doesn't speak. Easier to admit to what he wants.

“Why don’t you touch your tits while we drive. Soothe yourself.”

Daniel is horrified by the idea and grips the side of the seat, then his thighs, pressing his fingers into his own flesh, hard enough to bruise as the request turns over and over in his brain. His hand slides down. He’s watching himself do it, disconnected from his own body. As if he has no control at all. He grips his cock, squeezing tightly.

“No. That’s not what I told you to do. Be good for Daddy.”

“Don’t,” he whispers and looks around at the cars on either side of them, shocked at the idea, stupidly weak from Liam calling himself Daddy. As if it’s the cheat code to his arousal. One word, is that all it takes? “I didn’t mean that.”

Liam gives him a heated look. “I know. Go on. Put your seat back if you need to. I know you’re shy, honey. But Daddy told you what to do.”

Daniel looks at Liam, at how he’s watching him, and he fumbles with the buttons of his shirt, need and desire making him frantic to obey. A button pops off, he’s so clumsy.

“There they are. God, so lovely. Cup them and just squeeze.”

“Daddy,” he whimpers, and then he obeys. Daniel wants to obey, it feels good to obey, but he needs his Dominant to be the one to touch him. Touching himself isn’t enough.

“Open up that shirt a little more. I can’t see. Fuck, I need to see your tits, baby.”

Daniel shivers in his seat, anxiety and arousal spiking in equal measure. He opens the shirt a bit more, and then cups and squeezes even harder.

“Show Daddy what you like.”

“I don’t know what I like!” he bursts out, aroused and overwhelmed, anxiety coiling through him. “I don’t want to do this for me! I want to do it for you!”

Liam laughs, amused. As if Daniel’s misery is funny because he’s no better than a pet. “Pretty boy. Fine, we’ll just do what I like. You might regret that when we get home. When I can’t resist and get impatient.”

“Yes,” Daniel hisses, pinching his nipples hard at the idea.

“That’s right. Focus on your nipples. You want them pink and warm. Puffy. I’ll put my mouth on them when we get home. Give Daddy something nice to suck on while I take you.”

He squeezes gently, and when they come to a light, Liam reaches over, cups his big hand over Daniel’s chest and rubs his nipple. Liam pinches it up with two fingers and it’s so good compared to what Daniel was doing to himself. They’re harder and deeper pinches, encompassing more than just the very tips of his nipples. “Like that. Is that better, baby?”

“It’s making me swollen inside,” he confesses. “It’s a lot.”

“I bet. Do you think people are looking, Daniel?”

“Don’t, Daddy. Please,” he whispers, and Liam chuckles.

“Is that another ‘don’t’ that means do?”

He huffs in arousal. Agreement.

“It’s difficult, isn’t it, sweetheart? Good boy, obeying when you don’t want to. Just give in.”

Daniel can’t think, can’t answer. Five minutes later, he’s drifting. His eyes are closed, mouth slack as he keeps touching his nipples, touching them exactly like Liam was. His head keeps rolling to the side, that’s how weak he is. Then he’s shivering in pleasure.

His legs spread so his cock and balls have more room, everything aching pleasantly below the waist, his tits hot and tingly inside. The more he touches them, the harder it is to ease off. And yet, his frustration is growing. He needs more. So much more. It should be his Dominant’s hands on him. He makes a sound and his Dominant chuckles.

“There you go, keep doing that. Make sounds for me. We’re almost there and then we’re gonna get you knotted.”

“Thank you.”

Time passes. In the back of his mind, all he can think is that he’s finally getting what he deserves.

12

Liam pulls up to a cabin and turns off the car. The ignition turning off pulls him out of the pain-filled haze he'd been drifting in.

“Okay, pretty baby. Stop touching those tits. Leave your shirt unbuttoned. It's coming off as soon as we're inside.”

“But I should cover up.” It's a token protest. He's so pink and sensitive that the very idea of fabric against his skin sounds unpleasant. He shifts in his seat. “Oh, no,” he says, worried.

“What's wrong?”

“There's... it's damp.” His Dominant will be angry. He might lose Liam. No one wants a messy slut.

“Sweetheart, that's good news. We want you wet. A submissive like you should be soaked. I didn't know if it was the surgeries that kept you dry so far, but this is a good sign. Let's get you inside and I'll have a feel.”

Daniel shouldn't be this wet. Utterly soaked. It's awful. It makes him a needy submissive whore. No good to the military except as a fuckhole. He might as well be a cocksleeve. A urinal. Cannon fodder.

He's heard it so many times. Daniel trembles. He can't get up. Liam will know. He'll smell it. He stinks. His arousal is gross. God, he hasn't gotten really wet in so long.

He'd thought he couldn't anymore—that he'd finally learned not to, or the surgeries had worked. It was one of the few things he'd managed to fix.

Daniel curls inwards and his tits throb. That's why. He played with himself and now look what's happened. They should bind him up, get them strapped down so he can't touch his chest.

He's so lost in dark memories and thoughts that he's surprised when his car door opens. Liam reaches inside for him. "Come on, sweetheart. I need you to come back to me. You're mine now. I'm your Daddy. You make me happy. I want you wet," Liam says firmly.

Daniel shakes his head. Liam is lying, he just doesn't realize how bad it is. "I... I'm wet and it's gross. You won't want me. You'll see?—"

"No, it's good and I want it. Out. Now!"

Daniel obeys instantly, the order forcing him into motion, but he freezes when he feels how wet his pants are.

"Daddy," he whimpers, confused. He can hear the voices telling him he's gross and wrong. He knows in his mind and his heart that it's true. But the Dominant, soon to be his Dominant, says differently.

Liam growls and takes his arm, getting him out of the car. Slick leaks out of him in what feels like a stream of liquid, soaking the back of his pants. It's horrible. So awful. He sobs, almost crumpling to the ground, but Liam is holding him up, dragging him towards the cabin steps.

"Be here with me, baby," Liam growls, pressing up behind Daniel, the hard nudge of his cock to Daniel's ass prompting even more slick to slide out of him.

Liam drags in a hard breath, lips on Daniel's neck. His voice is rough and compelling. "You smell perfect. Wet. For me. Come on now. Let's just get you mounted."

He uses the weight of his body to force Daniel forward, up the steps and to the door, then presses him into the frame, a hand on his neck so he stays pinned while Liam gets the door unlocked one-handed. Daniel mewls, too weak to fight.

"This is your home, Daniel. You are to make yourself comfortable. Eat and drink what you want, go where you want, make yourself at home. This is yours. And you are mine."

Daniel has no idea what to do with that.

"I think you'll get the tour later. Let's get your anxiety under control and get you feeling more like you should. Strip, Daniel." He's already helping, pulling Daniel's shirt off, gaze fixated on his chest. "You did a good job, baby. You're really swollen and aching for my touch, aren't you?"

"Yes, Daddy. I'm wet, it's not good."

"Stop. No more. It is good. This is how you're meant to be. Everything else was a lie. Obey." Daniel undoes his pants and slips off his shoes, but then he just stands there.

"Let me," Liam orders, and Daniel drops his hands to his side. He can feel Liam in front of him like a storm, smell the Dominant's arousal curling around him, heavier and denser than air.

Liam's pupils blow wide as he observes Daniel. "Yeah, this is what I want. What you need. You don't think about anything else but me. Daddy will help you," he rasps and shoves his hand down the back of Daniel's pants, between his soaked cheeks. His

fingers slide through the wet, slip inside his tight hole, then Liam brings his fingers out, sucks them into his mouth, and goes back for more.

Daniel cries out. It's shocking. Confusing. Nothing like this has ever happened to him before. What is Daniel supposed to do? What does it mean that this man is acting like the worst things about him are good? He stands there frozen.

Prey.

The word echoes dimly in the back of his mind. Is this what he's supposed to do? Get corralled and trapped by a Dominant he wants and then just let it happen?

Be whatever his Dominant needs? Does he get to allow the treatment and have it?

Maybe that's the best word in the English language. Have. Daniel gets to have whatever his Dominant wants to give him. He whimpers at the idea.

"You taste sweet. Here, babydoll," Liam orders and presses his slick-soaked fingers to Daniel's mouth.

Daniel opens, tastes himself, becomes overwhelmed and sobs as he reaches for Liam.

"I'm gonna lick you open a lot, sweetheart. Don't tell me it's gross. That's not your decision," he says and finishes stripping him. "I'm gonna breed you right up. You'll be ass-up on the bed. A proper mounting for your first time. Hands and knees like a perfect little submissive." Liam goes to the closet, coming back with a quilted blanket. He spreads it out on the bed. The material is padded and thick.

"This protects the bed. Don't worry about making a mess. You can watch me strip and see what you do to me. Your scent and all that slick, plus your sweet tits. A perfect submissive ready to be bred. Onto the bed. Now," he orders, and Daniel finds

himself moving.

He gets onto the bed, eyes down, breathing heavy. He's shaking and throbbing, desperate. There is no urge to fight or protest. He wouldn't know how. He needs to please his Dominant. That's all he can think about, that's all he's really meant for.

Please, please, let me be able to do that , Daniel thinks.

He prays for it, is so desperate to be pleasing and satisfying when he's only ever been a disappointment. Daniel sobs. He won't get it right. He's not going to be good. His Dominant will be disappointed. He should start apologizing right now. Maybe he should leave?

Before he can move a muscle, Liam speaks.

"Look how hard you made me," he growls.

Daniel looks, slowly, head low in submission as he carefully turns to see behind him, only turning until he can just see the Dominant out of the corner of his eye. As if he's scared of being caught or made fun of.

His Dominant is gorgeous, naked and beautiful. His scent reaches Daniel, musky and dizzying. There's pre-come at the head of his cock, and he's rubbing it into the shaft, all those hormones and pheromones spilling out of the man, and Daniel spreads his legs farther apart, dropping lower, chest onto the bed, eyes closing even though he wants to look and admire.

"Please? I'll try to be good. I want to," he whispers.

"You're already good. You're wet and aroused and you want my cock, don't you, baby?"

“Yes, please.” He opens his eyes again, watching as his Dominant rubs at the base of his shaft where there’s already a slight bulge. His knot.

His Dominant’s cock is too big. How can he fit that inside him?

“Do you want me to fuck you?”

He nods, a hint of movement, and feels himself blushing as shame courses through him.

“How can I do that if you don’t get all wet?” Liam asks with a small smile.

Daniel doesn’t know.

“I love you wet. It shows me that you want me. When you get wet, it makes me hard.” He comes close, cock near Daniel’s face. Daniel’s mouth waters. He gasps at the sight of Liam’s cock up close, seeing just how very big it is.

“It’s so big.”

“I know, honey. It’s going to be tricky at first, but you’ll get there.” Liam runs a hand through Daniel’s hair. “I’ll be patient with you. I know you can do it.”

“What if I can’t?”

“Sweetheart, you’re submissive. You’re prey. You’re built to take it. This is who you are. And it’s good that it’s a challenge. You’ll have to struggle for your Daddy.”

“Struggle to... take it?” The words are hard to say, the idea clear in his mind but complicated.

“That’s right, sweetheart. But you will. You’ll get to show me just how much you want to submit. You’ll be so proud of yourself. An accomplishment. And I’ll be proud of you, pleased you’re mine. Dominants keep submissives who make them happy, don’t they? Isn’t that true, Daniel?”

“Yes,” he says carefully. He thinks it over and can't find the lie anywhere. Of course a Dominant keeps a submissive he’s happy with! And a submissive taking a cock, being useful, giving their body to make a Dominant feel good, that’s.... Dominants love that.

“And I’ll show you how much I want you, because I’ll work to get inside you, get it all in because I just want to fill you up and get my come deep inside your virgin hole. That’s going to be Daddy’s, isn’t it? Do you know what that’s called, when a Dominant goes crazy for a submissive? Can’t think until they come inside them?”

“R-rut.”

“That’s right, honey. Is that what you’re doing to me?”

He buries his head into his arms, disbelieving. A Dominant wanting him so much he goes into rut. That can’t be real. Not for Daniel. No one could want him that bad. With his big body, his surgeries, what they’ve done to him in an attempt to fix him.

“No hiding. Go ahead and have a taste. A few kisses, a little lick, even a suck. Take care of your Daddy, Daniel.”

Daniel raises his head, his eyes flicking up, wanting to see approval. Maybe even lust.

It’s there.

Liam is hungry for Daniel. Pupils blown wide, cheeks flushed. He presses his cock to

Daniel's mouth and Daniel opens, licks, flavor exploding across his tongue. He moans and sucks hard, tries to take his Dominant deep and instantly chokes.

He whimpers.

His Dominant pulls out and Daniel swallows, running his tongue around his mouth, trying to get more flavor. God, it makes him weak.

"Fuck, greedy little thing," Liam growls, sounding pleased.

Daniel blushes.

Liam strokes his cock and massages his knot. "One greedy hole at a time, sweetheart."

His legs shake at the promise. It's difficult to stay on his hands and knees. His elbow bends. He tilts to the side and Liam grabs his hips, keeping him up.

Daniel pants. "Sorry."

"Oh, honey. Can you stay in position or not? I've got a breeding bench, if you need it."

He gathers his strength and gets back into position. His hole clenches and relaxes and he spreads his legs wider. He hears the drip of his slick hit the quilt, his stupid hearing too good. He looks and sees another drip. "That's good, Daniel. That's a good submissive, right there. Cockhungry. Good submissives drip, don't they?"

Daniel knows that's true, too. But if that's true then why was it bad if he dripped? Why did he get in trouble?

Liam runs his hand down Daniel's back as he goes to the foot of the bed, climbs up on it, and gets into position behind Daniel, fingers sliding down to touch Daniel's hole, and Daniel's legs give out. "Oh! I can't!"

Liam laughs and lies over him, pressing him down into the bed, his heavy cock slotting between Daniel's cheeks.

"You can't? You can't? What a perfect thing to say. I'm proud of you, baby."

Weakness overcomes him. He can't move. Can barely breathe, he wants it so much.

"I love it. I fucking love it, Daniel. So goddamned submissive you don't have the strength to stay on your hands and knees. Goddamn, I didn't even dream you'd get so soft and weak. That's fucking perfect, baby. You really fucking are. Daddy will get you on the bench and then you can just take it—be limp and weak and let it happen. Poor thing. You'll love it that way. Hang on a second, sweetheart."

Liam gets off the bed, hands wide and running down Daniel's back and his thighs before he leaves him there.

Daniel lies there and breathes. He tries to rut gently into the bed, but it's not right. His cock is too sensitive or not sensitive enough. It almost hurts, and any movement is difficult, as if he's in quicksand or drugged.

He whimpers.

A blanket gets put down on the ground near the bed, and Daniel admires the flex of his Dominant's muscles, the heavy weight of his cock. It's against his stomach but when he bends down, it dips, like it's too heavy.

Daniel's eyes close. He hears a door, then something big is set down.

“Okay. I’ll help you. Come on, baby.”

Liam places his hands on Daniel’s shoulders, encouraging him to get up. It’s difficult. It’s like he’s in the deepest sleep and someone wants him to climb Everest. He’s so weak.

“Don’t... can’t stand,” he mumbles, eyes closing as Liam gets him sitting up.

“I’ve got you. I can take your weight,” Liam says, kissing Daniel’s cheek. He puts Daniel’s arm around his shoulder and hauls him up, the other around his waist. He gets Daniel to the bench and Daniel clings to it with his free arm, collapsing flat. Liam helps get his legs where he wants them.

He’s never been on a bench before. Nothing is more perfect for a submissive than a breeding bench. And he must be one because instantly, he loves it. It’s home. He could sleep there. He sobs, pressing his cheek into the navy leather.

“Sweetheart, this suits you. Looks like it was made for you to show off how pretty you are. I’ll tie you down. How does that sound to you? No escape. You’re captured. Owned. A pretty little thing I’ve caught. You want to be trapped, honey?”

“Please,” he says, just a hint of sound. His legs press against the padding and he gets a strap across his calf and then at mid-thigh. His ass is offered. That’s the only way to describe it. His other leg gets strapped down and then his arms. Daniel tries to resist, a confused impulse urging him to flee. He tries to lift his hands, maybe his head, but he can’t. A bolt of need sparks through him. He’s just so very, very helpless.

“Daddy,” he begs, hole aching with how much he needs something inside. His head is on the cradle and Liam checks him, turning Daniel’s head gently to the side.

“I’ll bite you pretty good, sweetheart. I think there will be a bit of blood. And Daddy

wants to see you when you take his big cock, doesn't he?"

The bench adjusts up, then Liam kisses his cheek, his mouth, pressing his tongue inside, and Daniel moans and sucks, greedy and sloppy about it.

"Good boy," Liam growls and his hand slides down Daniel's back, spanking him on one cheek, and Daniel cries out in shock.

"You're ready, baby. You need it. Be good for Daddy now," he says, and he moves back. Two hands settle hotly on Daniel's ass, his cheeks are split far apart, and then Liam's thumb grazes Daniel's wet, swollen hole.

"Please, please," Daniel begs, and it's dragged from him, just a horrible, honest plea to be given what he has so fervently wanted and been shamed about, and denied, for so long. Who is he if he can't have this? Is he anything? Is he desirable, or useful, or in any way appealing to himself or others, if he can't offer this and find satisfaction this way?

It's not just for Liam, but for him. Daniel needs this, he realizes. How he views himself and how he would interact with the world if he could. To know what he could expect and have if he was allowed to live the life he's now been dealt.

He's on a breeding bench. There's a Dominant who's going to mount and breed him and get Daniel into subspace. He's going to turn Daniel into something good. He is a submissive despite what he's been told and punished for. Isn't he? And how can it be so bad if he can make Liam feel good?

"Is it real?" he rasps.

"Shh, here we go. You're alright. Poor sweetheart, my little submissive. It's real and this is who you are. This is what you need. Be my good boy now. It's big, sweetheart.

There's no escape, is there?"

Two fingers push into him, slow and steady. Daniel whimpers at the sensation, wishing he could push back onto those fingers. But he can't. He's tied down and has surrendered; his Dominant will give him what he needs and when, will take care of him.

He's so weak that it's suddenly hard to breathe.

"You've got a dainty, tight little hole, sweetheart. Look at you straining at two fingers."

Daniel clenches on the fingers inside him and whines at how hard they are. They're not enough. "Cock," he thinks. Did he say it? He isn't sure. And if he did, was it understandable?

"Oh, that's so sweet. Look at you. You're going to make it so good for me, aren't you?"

"Want to," he mumbles, and Liam puts three fingers to his hole, taking a moment to get them where he wants them, slipping each one inside, just past the rim. Then he turns his fingers. It makes Daniel shiver, the sensation all on the inside of his rim.

"Okay, my little submissive. You're gonna help me now. You're gonna think about how much you want me all the way inside, and I'm not gonna stop until you feel my knuckles against your rim, understand? All three fingers, you're gonna be so good and sweet. Do you want to take this for Daddy?"

He wants to say yes or please, but all he can do is whimper, unable to say words. Of course he does!

“You are so fucking wet for Daddy that you couldn’t keep me out, even if you tried, baby. Here we go, come on now.... There you go,” Liam whispers, pressing through his swollen, tight heat.

Daniel can’t move at all, though he thinks maybe he wants to, wants to at least try to escape, have it be slower, easier. He whines, but there is no keeping his Dominant out.

“Good boy. You did it,” he says, and Daniel sobs in relief at being full. His hole burns, his passage throbs as he clenches and spasms all around Liam’s fingers, panting as he gets used to the fullness, relaxes into the discomfort. Almost instantly, it isn’t enough.

He whimpers.

“I know. You want more. That’s how we’ll get you on my cock, too, sweetheart. Just go deep in one, and you take it all, then you get to relax and unclench around me. You’ll have earned that, won’t you?”

“Please?” he whispers, tears slipping down his cheeks. Why isn’t he getting what he really needs? Why is he having to wait?

“Sweetheart, you have a little hole and such a tight passage. You’re just the daintiest submissive, haven’t touched yourself at all. It’s a gift, Daniel. But we have to make sure you don’t get hurt. We have to stretch you the first few times. It’s not bad, sweetheart.”

The fingers come out and Daniel feels open, wet, and worst of all, empty. Alone. “Please,” he begs.

The fingers go back inside him. “Okay. Alright, sweet little thing,” Liam says

roughly. “Can’t stand to be empty now that you’ve had a taste, can you? Poor thing. We might need to keep you plugged.”

Plugged? So he’d always have something inside him and he’d never be alone? “Please?” he begs again quietly, ashamed of how much he wants it. A plug isn’t something he ever thought he could have. He’s never even let himself contemplate such a thing. But now that Liam has suggested it, the idea settles inside him with perfect certainty.

He needs to be plugged. Daniel relaxes even more, utterly pliant and boneless.

“I’m going to breed you now. You’re going to take Daddy’s cock, aren’t you?”

Answering is beyond him.

Liam’s fingers slip out, and Daniel whines at the loss. But then Liam is close, breathing heavy, his cock sliding between Daniel’s cheeks, lining up with his hole and instantly pressing forward.

The cock is hot and slips inside, his sphincter relaxed enough that Liam sinks in some distance. It’s numb and diffuse. Daniel whimpers, unable to quite identify what’s happening or whether it’s good or not. Then there’s more, wide and stinging. He groans at the intrusion, the hard press of Liam’s weight as he steadily forces his cock inside, leaning into him.

Daniel cries out, sobbing hard, and thinks about struggling, but even the thought is beyond him, he’s so damned weak and overcome with the need to be filled.

Weakness. Because he wants to struggle. Wants to make it stop. But his body needs it.

He whimpers again as the sensation intensifies. There are hints of goodness besides pain and a burning sting, but it's not enough. It's too difficult. Liam won't fit. The word "stop" tries to rise inside him, fill his chest and throat, lodge into his mouth, but it's gone with a soft sigh. Liam grunts and presses deeper, and then his Dominant speaks to him and everything is perfect.

"There, there. Good boy. Go on, you're safe, that's right. You've just gotta let me in, don't you? That's all you can do, babydoll. You are so tight. Goddamn. I'm knotting, sweetheart... you worked it out of me, didn't you? It's fast, honey. Much too fast for a tiny hole like this. Obey me now. Understand?"

Daniel whines, holding on to his Dominant's words.

"Good boy. Relax... relax, you just submit now. Relax into it. This is your purpose. This is what you've needed. You're taking me so well, baby. You are," Liam says, the words gritted between clenched teeth.

Daniel whimpers, clenching inside, and fingers dig deeper into his hips.

"None of that now. Surrender. It's a lot. It's so difficult, isn't it? Poor little sweetheart. Fuck, what a tight hole you have," Liam groans, and there's a harsh breath as his Dominant shudders in pleasure. "Exhale. Let me in, babydoll." There's a steady press, too fast, and it's beyond sensation as Liam's knot fills Daniel's ass.

Daniel's quiet, unseeing, all of him boneless as the cock expands.

Something in him gives way and he exhales in a long rush.

Liam laughs and pets him, panting but pleased. There's a sound like water running.

"Yes. Look at you. Oh my god, sweetheart. That's beautiful," Liam says. "Didn't

even need a full knot and you gave it up. Very good.”

Daniel realizes he’s wetting.

Liam growls low and so deep it vibrates through Daniel, then shoves into him a fraction of an inch more. His hole burns and stings. Then the knot is steadily growing inside him, this massive balloon inside his body making his sphincter strain, and he yelps at how big it is, the bone-deep knowledge that it’s just starting. It isn’t over. He wants Liam’s cock out. He can’t do this, can’t take it.

“Daddy?” It’s a whimper.

“I know, sweetheart. You’re doing it, baby.” Liam rubs his inner thighs, thumbs digging around his glands and Daniel comes, his passage clenching and releasing. The clench is unbearable, the release is bliss. When it’s over, it’s easier having the massive cock in him.

But that feeling of relief disappears quickly. The knot is still swelling.

“Good, Daniel. That feels amazing, baby.” Liam’s knot is taking all the extra space. He’s stuffed to capacity and the moment he relaxes, gets more comfortable and a hint of space is created inside him, then Liam’s cock and knot get bigger, and Daniel’s right back where he started. Too full. Unable to stand it. Nowhere to go even if he could fight. He has to take it. This is what he gets to have.

He’d expected a pounding, but that’s impossible. Liam’s knot is locked inside him and there’s nowhere to go, there is no thrusting because there’s just no space. His Dominant hasn’t come yet.

Liam grunts, panting as Daniel tries to clench, needing his Dominant to come.

“Don’t. Be still,” he growls and grabs Daniel by the back of the neck. Daniel goes limp again, his passage eases and then stings with the stretch. Liam massages the back of his neck, deep and painful, into his glands, and Daniel melts further into the bench. When will it be over? He can’t do it. He didn’t know it was like this.

Daniel cries out, overwhelmed.

“Shh, you’re perfect, Daniel. I’m pleased.”

Daniel comes again, a strange wave rolling through him, starting in his stomach and fizzing like a firework up his spine to the tips of his fingers and even in his hair and his toes.

“Good. I felt that. That’s your submission. Give that to me. Feel where that came from, try to make it happen again. Coming that way is good,” Liam says, sounding unsteady. “So fucking good. Come on, baby. Fuck, I can’t move but if you can do that, I’ll be so goddamned happy. Won’t ever let you off my cock. You’re a natural, aren’t you?”

Daniel doesn’t even know what that means. It makes no sense. He wants to ask how, but he can’t speak. His Dominant wants him to do something, but he can’t. He just can’t.

“Give in,” his Dominant growls. “I own you right now. Your ass is mine. Your hole is mine. You’re my good little submissive, and I’m gonna breed you sloppy, princess. You’re gonna fucking take it, aren’t you?”

Yes! The word resonates through him, a bright revelation. Anything for you , he thinks, and he comes again.

“Yeah, that’s it. Good! Such a good boy, there you go,” he says, hands on Daniel’s

shoulders. Liam leans over to bite his neck and the Dominant's cock shifts, getting deeper inside him. Daniel surrenders at the spike of pain in his passage as Liam forces more of his cock inside him, his knot slipping deeper. That's the only conclusion. There was more. So much more that Liam couldn't bite him because he wasn't close enough to Daniel's neck.

That last push made it happen.

Liam bites him, hard and savage, into the muscle of his throat, and his cock pulses inside Daniel.

That overwhelming submission goes through him again. The sound of water running. Oh god, he's wetting again, giving everything to his Dominant.

Wetness drips from his eyes, from his mouth as he drools, from his cock as he wets and comes again. The knot locks into him, suddenly caught hard on the inside of his rim, and Daniel jerks at the feeling and spasms inside in response, milking Liam's cock. His Dominant shouts in ecstasy, pleasure peaking as Daniel slips into subspace.

Liam moans, hips moving in the tiniest increments as he rides Daniel's ass and comes again inside him. He licks at the bite and Daniel can smell blood.

Good , he thinks, bliss coursing through him, and he drifts away.

13

He wakes up to Liam nuzzling his jaw, scent marking him and telling him how proud he is. Liam's hand is under Daniel, gently squeezing his cock, toying with him while he's still strapped to the bench.

"Look at this cock, baby. It's so soft. I shouldn't be surprised," he murmurs, holding it safely in his hand.

Liam's hard cock is still lodged in his ass.

"Full," he mumbles.

"My knot is almost down, but we have to wait for it to slip out on its own."

Tears fill Daniel's eyes and slip down his cheeks and he snuffles. He isn't sure why he's emotional.

"Cry, sweetheart. That's the best thing you can do right now. You've got lots of hormones and feelings after your first mounting, and you need to get used to letting them out."

"I don't want to cry." What would his father say? The team of doctors who poke and prod at him, constantly disappointed with him?

"You'll get used to it, sweetheart. The time will come when you need to cry, need a release, and you'll want me to help you let it out." Liam gives Daniel's balls a final

squeeze and his fingers go back, touching Daniel's rim and testing to see how close he is to slipping out.

"Any moment now, and then you get to be held. You'll get tucked up in your Daddy's bed."

"Daddy?"

"I think that's the best word, don't you? After what you just went through?"

He nods. The word is there, filling the hurt places and soothing him. "Daddy, it was... a lot," he whispers.

What Daniel wants to say is that it was perfect—that he can't go back to the way he was before this. He is submissive. This is the man who is meant to be his Dominant. His Daddy. If he could have this for the rest of his life, he would be happier than he ever thought possible.

For so long he thought that giving in to his submission would be horrible. Miserable. Shameful. He imagined hating himself, wanting to kill himself, so he wouldn't have to do it again. It would be an unnatural, degrading thing.

None of those things describe what he just experienced. It was perfect.

And he wet. He released completely, surrendered wholly, and it's a point of fucking pride. He feels like he could walk down any goddamn street and hold his head up high because he is so fucking good in bed.

Daniel gives up everything to his Dominant.

"I know, baby. You were really good for me. Incredible."

Before the words can even soak in properly, Liam is slipping out of him. It's a loss. So horrible he freezes up, terrified he'll be denied forever if they find out how much Daniel hates being empty. He swallows down a sound and lies there as calmly as he can. There's a fluttering in his lower abdomen, a ripple that intensifies, becoming a pulsing of his passage.

He's alone now. He was a part of his Dominant, he was good for his Daddy and now he's nothing. Liam's fingers cover Daniel's spasming hole, rubbing gently, helping him close up, and he'd give anything, absolutely anything to have his Daddy back inside him.

"There you go. You clench right on up, angel."

Daniel sobs at the oddness of the feeling. Empty and aching with loss, stinging and sharp from what he's just endured. His Dominant's fingers make the pain bright and yet soothe him.

"How well you took your Daddy, baby," he says, and Liam's thumb strokes over his hole, sinking in and pulling out. "That was a hard breeding for your first time. I'm very proud of you. You sobbed and wailed. You struggled and surrendered. Wet twice. Took Daddy's big knot. I'm proud of you."

"Daddy?" he gasps, jolting as Liam presses down on his rim. His hole opens. He spills come, feels it leaking out of him in a gush.

"There you go. Not a trace of pink, sweetheart. You took that well, didn't you?"

His Dominant didn't let him keep the come. Liam took it from him, forced him to release it. Why didn't he get to keep it?

Liam gets down to the ground behind him, between his legs. "You're very sore and

red but there's no tearing. What a puffy little hole you have now. That is so fucking pretty, baby." He keeps a hand on Daniel's hole, grounding him or something. "Absolutely perfect," he says, sounding proud.

Liam stops touching him to undo the straps.

Daniel sobs noisily. Liam isn't touching his hole, isn't touching him anywhere and it's awful.

"I need you," he begs, reaching behind him as soon as he's free. And his hole spasms hard, as if his body is trying to find his Dominant's cock, get it back again, needing him still. "Oh," Daniel says, and sobs.

"I know, sweetheart. To the bed now."

Daniel swallows, and his neck stings, throbbing there, too. "My bottom is empty. You promised."

"Promised? What did I... oh, honey. Do you need a plug?" he asks, sounding surprised. Was Daniel not supposed to want it yet? Maybe Liam didn't mean it at all?

"I... yes," he says, the very idea of it filling him with relief and fear. So much fear. But he needs it so much.

Liam kisses his face. "Just a second. I won't leave the room. I'll get you a plug, baby," he reassures, and he goes to the closet, opens a drawer, and comes back with something. "Something gentle and small, sweetheart. You're quite sore."

"I'm sorry," he says uncertainly.

"Don't be sorry. You're so submissive and have been so deprived; of course you need

a plug.”

Daniel exhales in relief. The plug is cool and heavy as it gets settled inside him. He spasms around it and instantly feels so much better. Safe. He clenches gently, shivering at the sore sting. How can it feel so right to be filled?

Then there’s slick dripping out of him.

“What?”

“It’s a submissive training plug. A special design so you can drip still. I need to know when you’re aroused, sweetheart. No secrets from your Dominant.”

Which means he’ll lose everything. All of his Dominant’s come will be able to leave him. He’d wanted the remnants at least. Daniel snuffles, lost and grief-stricken. “I wanted the come, Daddy.”

“Poor thing. I know. You can’t have that. Not yet. But you can be full if you want.”

“Yes, please,” he says, just in case, worried the plug might get taken from him. “Will I get to keep the come next time, Daddy?”

“Once you get more settled you can keep my come. Right now you need to earn it again and again. That’s going to keep you coming back to me, ensure you stay in a state of heightened arousal and receptiveness. You’ll heal faster, too. It will be easier for you this way, believe it or not.”

He nods in acceptance, even though it isn’t what he wants to hear.

The plug is soothing and good after what he’s just endured, and he needs to focus on that.

Liam lifts him off the bench. Daniel takes a stumbling step to the bed and half sprawls onto it, Liam helping him get comfortable. Liam hauls him into the heat of his body. He's a furnace and he smells like Dominant. He's sweaty and pleased. Smug. He rumbles a sound as he keeps Daniel close.

Daniel tips his head back, mouth open, and Liam kisses him, soft and careful.

"You know you were amazing, don't you? You were so good, Daniel. That was so difficult for you. And you were so beautiful and sweet. So willing, even though it was difficult. Did it hurt, honey?" Liam asks in a low voice and kisses him again.

Daniel sobs and presses closer, kissing his Dominant again and again. "Was I good, Daddy? Really?" That's the important part.

Did it hurt? He doesn't even know. It's so far from an accurate description that it isn't even worth answering.

"Perfect. Why don't I tell you what pleased me? You wet twice, babydoll. You submitted so much you came from it, and you took all of my knot. I came so hard, sweetheart. Got to breed you right up. Pretty submissive. I'm sure you have some complicated feelings about it. Now you get to tell me, we get to talk about it. That's very important."

"Why?" he whispers. He doesn't want to talk about it. Slick leaks out of him in a dribble and he wonders if he could take his Dominant again.

"What are you thinking about?"

He shakes his head. "Not yet. Please."

"How's your plug, my sweet boy?" Liam asks, giving Daniel a reprieve. He reaches

between Daniel's cheeks, touching it gently.

"Daddy!" he gasps, shoving closer and away at once. Somehow his ass is pressed against Liam's half-hard cock.

"You're unbelievable, Daniel."

Daniel almost believes him. The truth is he's never felt so peaceful. He is in the right place, doing what he is supposed to do. He can't think of the last time he was so certain of himself and his place in the world—hell, his purpose. It isn't to kill people or to be in the army. It isn't as a whore to whatever altered man needs a hole to fill. He's meant to be with one man and devote himself to the man he loves.

It's too early to say anything about how he feels. But this Dominant needed him. And Daniel did it well.

He's proud of that.

And Daniel came, too. Came long and hard, over and over, and that was bliss. His Dominant did, too. Liam bred him and called him good. Daniel belonged. He wants to stay in bed with this man forever.

"I loved it...." He shakes his head, unable to articulate how intense and overwhelming it was. And he can't say anything else or he'll start thinking about how temporary this is. That he'll never have it or this man again.

Liam watches him while Daniel tries to get himself together—not cry or cling or who knows what.

"I know, baby. I do know," he says seriously.

He sounds sympathetic, which breaks Daniel down even more.

“I had no idea it would be like that.”

Liam moves so he’s over Daniel, his large body pressing him into the bed. He kisses Daniel on the nose. Daniel reaches up, touching his Dominant’s face, the curve of his jaw.

Liam turns and nips at his palm.

“I’ve never even imagined... and weakness.”

“Did you like it?”

The endorphins are wearing off a little, and the ache in his ass from being mounted is beginning to demand his attention.

Daniel closes his eyes and nods. It’s a feeling he’s already craving again. To be utterly helpless, unable to lift a finger to defend himself, to be nothing but prey ready to be consumed and devoured, placed on a bench and bred by his strong, powerful Daddy.

“It’s beautiful,” he whispers, so quiet that he might be saying it just for himself. So he himself gets to hear it at least once.

“That’s right. Beautiful. Just a weak doll Daddy can have whenever he wants. I could put breeding benches all over the house, furniture you can be comfortable on while you surrender. Your body needs both weakness and subspace to function, sweetheart. At least once a day. If we— Well, if you were?—”

He stops talking.

“Go on. If I was yours, what?” Is it crazy that he knows that’s what Liam was going to say? Does he also feel like he could stay in this bed with Daniel forever? Does he wish Daniel would always be his submissive?

Liam presses his face to Daniel’s shoulder with a slow exhale. “I’m sorry. That’s cruel. I wasn’t thinking.”

Daniel knows it’s a mistake to say what comes out of his mouth next, but isn’t his whole fucking life a mistake? These next few days will be the best days of his life; why shouldn’t he have them be as intense and perfect as possible since the memories will be all that he has? “I want to know. To pretend. Please?”

Liam kisses him and gives him a squeeze. “You’re vulnerable and inexperienced. It isn’t fair to you?—”

“If you don’t want to, then don’t,” Daniel snaps, trying to push Liam away.

He doesn’t budge, and Daniel surrenders almost instantly, a sob escaping him.

“It isn’t that I don’t want you. I do. Of course I fucking do. I brought you to my house, I didn’t even let you get food or drink before I bred you. I have never lost control like this, Daniel. I just don’t know if it helps to pretend. Our time will be up soon enough.”

He picks up Liam’s hand, nuzzling against it, needing to convince the man. “I won’t ever have more than this. If pretending is enough for me, can’t it be enough for you, too? It’s days, Daddy.” He lets his voice break, lets himself be sad and needing.

“Sweetheart,” Liam says, sounding torn up inside. “You already feel like you’re mine. I’d keep you.” The sharp spike of bitterness in Liam’s scent is reassuring. That can’t be faked. He’s sincere. His hand clenches in Daniel’s hair and it’s rough and

perfect.

Daniel whimpers loudly.

“It’s going to break my fucking heart to let you go.” Liam bends down and kisses Daniel’s jaw, his earlobe, trailing kisses all over him. And all Daniel can do is close his eyes, try to open his legs and get more.

Then Liam stops. His smile is sad. “Let me just say this so you know. You’re in a very vulnerable state right now, Daniel. You’ve been mounted for the first time, and the hormones released when you wet make it hard to be objective. You went deep into your submission, and the primal instinct is to latch on and bond to the first Dominant to give you that. But that’s not necessarily how you’d feel in a few weeks. When you get away from your father, when you finally get a life, you can come to me. Do you understand?” Liam smiles, wanting to take the sting out of it, but it’s so goddamned false that Daniel has no choice but to accept that their attraction is mutual. The idea of not being with Daniel in a few days, not keeping him, is going to hurt both of them for a long time.

“I understand,” he says, and doesn’t argue. “I still want it. Pretend like you’ll keep me.”

There’s a low growl and then he’s turned to his back before Liam bites at his shoulder blade, taking flesh into his mouth, closing his teeth enough to leave indentations.

Daniel cries out, going limp with weakness, and Liam does it again to the other shoulder, moving down Daniel’s back, marking him with teeth all over. He bites Daniel’s cheeks, then the tops of his thighs, the smooth skin at his groin. The slick and come make his teeth slip over Daniel’s flesh. A filthy thrill.

He drifts away with the combined pleasure and pain of it all, devoured by his

Dominant.

The plug is removed, his legs are spread, and Liam growls and clamps down on his shoulder as he shoves back home. Daniel cries out at the invasion, then does nothing but breathe and feel, concentrating on staying conscious, on not letting the weakness carry him away completely. He wants to feel everything. His Daddy losing control, slamming his cock into Daniel's sore hole. The beginning bulge of his knot. How much Daniel wants to squirm and whimper.

And then he's knotted again, his body pulsing and straining as Liam's knot locks inside of him, come filling him up, hot and thick.

When Daniel comes back to himself, it might be a lot later. He's lying on top of Liam's chest and he has no idea how he got there. He manages to lift his head and rub his cheek against his Daddy's chest. "Was I good?"

It's still difficult to move. He's so weak and needy.

"Understatement. My good, perfect boy," Liam says and slides his hand down to Daniel's ass, gripping one cheek firmly in his hand, then hauling him tight against him. His fingers brush over the stinging teeth marks, and Daniel's body instantly translates the sting to a buzzing pleasure.

"I loved that," he mumbles.

"Good. You're delicious. I could spend hours biting you all over and breeding you up."

"I'd let you. I've heard submissives talk about spanking or... or a belt... or things, but biting is perfect."

“I’m shocked. Who’d have guessed a young man with a prey designation would love being bitten?” he jokes.

It’s odd that Liam would describe him as a young man. Is he young? Sure, he’s only twenty-four, but he feels ancient.

“How old are you?”

“Thirty-four.”

“I like that.” It feels right. His Dominant should be older than him, experienced and knowledgeable.

He closes his eyes and enjoys the heat of Liam’s body beneath his. He’s going to enjoy it for as long as he can.

14

Daniel has no idea how much time passes. He's fed. He's put into a bath and lifted out again. Another plug is put inside him.

It's dark. He's fed again. In the middle of the night he wakes up with the weakness already rolling through his body, his Daddy behind him, teeth grazing over the flesh of Daniel's neck.

"I'm dripping," Daniel finally whispers, worried.

"I know, you're so wet, baby. That's not just my seed but you. You're all wet for your Dominant, aren't you? Do you need Daddy again? Need me like I need you?"

It's the middle of the night. They're safe. They're alone. It's the hardest thing he's ever said.

"Yes. Yes, I do."

"Good boy. I want a dripping boy, don't I? Wet and swollen for me. So needy you can hardly move because you just need Daddy's knot so badly." Both hands settle over his cheeks, cupping the flesh, and pull him wide open.

"Daddy," Daniel whimpers. He's so hot there, between his cheeks. Hot and throbbing and aching inside. He's swollen because of what they've done—how many times he's already been bred. But it isn't just that. His body wants it again.

“Are you going to use me again?” he asks. That isn’t a bad thing to say. It isn’t him begging to be used. It’s just a question.

Liam mouths at Daniel’s neck and sucks hickeys into his skin as Liam touches around his rim, where the plug is settled. It’s such an odd feeling. He loves Liam’s touch. He loves the attention. It makes him feel safe and good, content.

And Liam loves touching him where he’s hot and needing, the ache and sting of hard use still part of his skin.

He can feel how much his Dominant likes touching him. As possession, but also, as a Dominant, Liam’s enough of a sadist that it arouses him to cause hurt with a gentle loving touch.

And Daniel isn’t just submissive, but prey. He thrives on a certain amount of masochism, so long as it’s given to him the right way. He hadn’t known what that meant. Now he understands.

His body is littered with teeth marks to prove it. He’d stared at himself in the mirror after the bath and wanted to take a picture. He hopes he remembers it forever.

Belonging. Each little mark is a prick of possession, little tracks all over his body that overlap and denote him as loved property.

It’s affection. It feels like adoration. It fills him with pride and pleasure, makes him want to give more. He trails his fingers endlessly over the marks, making them throb and sting, worried they’ll fade too soon.

“Will you give me more?”

“Always. Suits you. And you whimper so sweetly under my teeth and when you’re on

my cock.” His voice is rough with dominance and Daniel closes his eyes, trying to be patient and wait for what Liam will give him. He doesn’t want to beg.

“You like your plug, baby?” Liam’s voice is a low rumble Daniel feels inside him.

“Yes, Daddy. But—” He knows what he wants to say, but he can’t. Saying something so outrageous out loud is impossible. I wish it was your cock. The words are there. One step away from the begging he can’t let himself indulge in.

He can’t.

Liam chuckles. “Do you want to ask me?”

“No,” Daniel gasps. He can’t. The scent of his own arousal surrounds them.

“Ask me, sweetheart. Ask Daddy to breed your tight little hole, and I will.”

He whimpers, wishing he couldn’t resist, but after everything he’s endured, he just can’t. They used to shock him for touching himself. He’s experienced every torture imaginable as doctors endlessly tried to change him.

“Help me,” he breathes.

“Poor thing. You’ll get there. How about this? If you let Daddy have you again, I’ll give you a nest,” Liam says, and he’s got fingers on the plug, pulling it free as Daniel slides a leg up the bed, body open and willing.

“I—please,” he manages. “A nest?”

“Sweet little submissive, terrified of the big, bad world. You’re caught, princess. Caught and trapped and mine. You need a nest to hide in, baby. With blankets and

soft things, so many pillows. A little den. A soft, warm burrow.”

Need slams into him so hard he’s momentarily breathless. A nest! “I’d be safe, Daddy.”

“That’s right, baby. It’s your nest, Daniel.” Liam’s breath hitches. “I’ll keep it for you. For years if need be. Daddy will close the door, and if you come back to me—” He growls, his grip suddenly hard, and then he’s down Daniel’s body with his face between Daniel’s cheeks and he’s licking, sucking, pressing his tongue into the loosened entrance.

“Daddy! I need my nest! Breed me... oh god, breed me,” Daniel begs, whimpering, trembling, and sobbing as the sweet torture goes on and on. His Daddy’s hands are powerful, will leave little marks on his hips from the power and anger he’s controlling, his rage at having to give Daniel up, at being powerless when Daniel is meant to be his. How can he keep him safe in a nest when Daniel will have to leave?

His Daddy forces him into one orgasm after another, reminding him, maybe punishing him for not being able to stay.

“I can’t, I can’t,” he begs, and tries to writhe, squirm away, get his Daddy’s hot tongue off that sweet spot that is oversensitized from too much pleasure. His Daddy growls, demanding it again and Daniel has no choice but to come, harsh pleasure incinerating him, leaving him weak.

“There you go. Now you can have it. Sweet boy,” Liam growls as he fits his thighs between Daniel’s. His cockhead is there, at his tingling hole, notching easily enough, but Daniel yelps, loosely fisting the pillow, and cries out as his Daddy sinks home in one relentless push that lights Daniel up from head to toe.

He cries out and Liam kisses the shell of his ear, panting like an animal, a lion that’s

about to devour him. Again. A warm, dark blanket of submission spills over him and his Daddy gives a relieved groan as his knot starts to fill.

“Good. Relax. Let Daddy come, sweetheart. And then you get your nest.”

Once again, subspace swallows him whole.

15

Daniel's nest is so nice, he's more than a little in awe of it.

It's a dream.

It's impossible that this is his, but it is. This is purposeful and deliberate luxury. It's a place where he will feel safe and protected. He can stay here and his Dominant will be out in the other room, guarding him, Daniel sheltered and safe in the depths of their home.

He'll read and sketch in his nest. He'll nap and rest, he'll be bred and used here, and it's right. He won't ever be demeaned or hurt for wanting to be here. No one will call him a disappointment and pathetic for wanting to whimper and needing to present. He can turn away from the world, burrow down, maybe even with a plug or his fingers playing at his hole, trailing over the teeth marks littering his body, and his Dominant will be pleased with him.

He can be weak.

It's a primal need, and it resonates deep inside him. This is right. The urge to be mounted hard, to be wrapped up in blankets after, or bury his face in his Dominant's groin while he gets himself together after being bred, settles around him. That will happen here.

This is his.

It turns out that Liam has a large antique dresser full of things for submissives. All of them are new, and Daniel's allowed to use whatever he wants. The bottom drawer is filled with lingerie and he closes that drawer and focuses only on the space itself, not how he's an overly large submissive who likely wouldn't fit in the various silk and lace things that are in there. He's decorating the space, not himself.

He puts up fairy lights in the room and gets a soft flannel bottom sheet, while the top sheet is cotton, white and crisp. There are pale pink satin pillowcases for the pillows (two are down and very fluffy, the other two are a better height for sleeping on), and the blankets are a mix of something that feels like velvet and something soft and cloudlike. It's a bed he doesn't want to leave. Now it just needs to be... his.

Theirs.

It won't feel like his until he's in it with Liam.

It's up to a submissive to invite a Dominant into their nest.

And that's what this is. This nesting room has never been used by another submissive. It doesn't smell like another submissive, not even faintly. The things he's been digging through, new and chosen with intention for a nest, indicate a Dominant desiring a mate. He knows Liam is trying to give him the full submissive experience, so it's possible this is just another way for Daniel to really dwell in his submissiveness, but he can't help but wonder if it's more.

Maybe Liam is equally drawn to Daniel and wishes it could be more, too. Maybe even forever.

Maybe that's just a fantasy, but bonding can happen fast. It isn't unheard of for a Dominant to claim a submissive after one mating. The possibility fills him with joy as well as so many complicated emotions that he doesn't even want to think about it.

Daniel doesn't need to borrow trouble, get romantic notions when it won't amount to anything.

What's more likely is that his father will send for him, and he'll be so uneven and unwilling to adapt that his father will have no choice but to get rid of him.

For the first time, maybe since this whole genetic modification nightmare started, he lets himself think about whether or not that's actually true. Yes, his father is a prideful man. Yes, he is stubborn and he can be cruel. But does he really not love his children at all? He'd loved their older brother, and he might have loved their mother. So, isn't the man capable of love?

When he recovers and realizes his son has experienced being a submissive, is healthy and happy, and stronger than he's been in years, will he change his mind? Isn't it more likely he'd be willing to disown Daniel and let him leave the military?

And if that happened, would Liam want him?

He goes to take a shower, uncertain what to do about the plug and losing the come his Dominant gave him only a few hours ago, but surely, it's too pathetic to go and ask his Dominant what he should do? Daniel is fully capable of making the decision. He takes the plug out, cleans himself and the plug, and works it back inside.

He has the oddest feeling that he's lost something. He's done wrong. Should he have asked? How pathetic, he thinks, and realizes there are tears streaming down his face. Daniel wipes them up quickly, needing to be with his Daddy. He's going to throw the tissue away when he sees a capped, empty syringe in the trash.

What the hell is that?

He goes out to the kitchen. Liam is getting ready to cook, dressed in a t-shirt and

pajama pants, his feet bare, hair curling and almost dry from his own shower. “What do you not like to eat?” Liam asks, looking him up and down.

Daniel blushes. He’s only in underwear and Liam’s robe.

“Are you kidding? I like everything. Well, I hate spam. And cabbage. Oh, and oatmeal. Not a big fan of oatmeal at all,” he says, going up to Liam.

Liam leans over and pecks him on the cheek. “We will avoid those things, then. How is your nest?”

“It’s beautiful,” he replies, blushing, joy rising up inside him.

His Dominant’s nostrils flare. “I’m glad you like it,” he says gently.

Daniel wants to ask him if it means what he thinks it means, but he’s terrified the answer will be no. “It’s too nice now. I won’t want to leave.”

Liam points to a plate of cookies. Daniel takes one, nibbles it and then devours it in three bites and reaches for another.

“There’s milk,” Liam says, gesturing towards the fridge. “Are you okay with whole milk?”

“Sure,” he says, and Liam nods, looking pleased.

“I’ve got lots of nuts and avocados. There’s always ice cream. At this point, I just want you to put on weight; I don’t much care how you do it.”

Daniel hesitates over taking another cookie and Liam’s gaze narrows. “I’m hoping you’ll start to feel hungrier soon.”

He takes the cookie, relief at the permission going through him. “Is it bad?” he asks, worried. Daniel knows how thin he is and how much he should weigh. He’s usually just too anxious to eat.

“No. Not at all. You’re beautiful. But you need to be a certain weight for your own health.” His smile is careful. “We’re gonna fix it,” he says, kissing Daniel quickly on the cheek again.

Liam wants to take care of him.

“You have a lot of nice things for a nest,” Daniel comments.

He doesn’t answer, just gives Daniel a distracted smile and looks down again.

“Your submissive will be very lucky,” Daniel continues, sick and waiting, but he needs to know what this is. It’s unsettling.

“Daniel,” Liam says, wincing.

And then Daniel has had enough. There is something going on with Liam. “I’ve heard prey submissives are very attuned to their Dominant. To unspoken cues.”

“That’s true. Being prey means you are very aware of your Dominant and his needs,” he agrees. He doesn’t say anything else.

“Right. So. You don’t get to keep me out. I feel it. Don’t,” Daniel demands.

Liam blinks at him, surprised at his tone. “You’re right. I’m sorry. I can’t figure out how to say what I want to say to you. I’m trying to manage my responses. I’ve got this bizarre... double speak, I guess you could call it, running through my head of what I want to say to you, versus what I should say to you, as this is a job and it will

end. And yet, I'm not thinking of you as a job. My instincts are....”

“Maybe you just say what you want to say.”

Daniel waits.

Liam says nothing.

His Dominant is distressed and attempting to hide it. If he's upset, he should reach for Daniel. What a strange series of thoughts, he realizes. Is that what it would be like if he could be a submissive all the time? Always getting to pay attention to his Daddy rather than fixating on himself? What a relief it would be. A job, something greater than his own neuroses.

“What was the syringe in the trash for?”

“Ah, hell. I knew I should have thrown it away in the kitchen,” he says, sounding annoyed with himself. “You've showered, I see.” Liam has a hint of a smile.

“Yes, I was gross,” Daniel responds, blushing.

“I disagree. Fuck, your scent when you started in on your nest, Jesus,” he says, and adjusts himself.

Daniel whimpers quietly, and Liam's hand clenches on the counter, his nostrils flaring. He's tense and coiled. Liam closes his eyes.

Daniel doesn't know if he's counting, but he's got a look like he's counting, and then he exhales and he's calmer. It's a pretty impressive trick.

“I've taken a suppressing shot. I think I'm close to rut,” he confesses, sounding

ashamed.

“Oh.”

Liam’s voice is hard. “We are here for you. This is your shelter. I know what I’m doing, and I can take care of you properly. I can manage my response to you,” he says, which is not what Daniel was worried about.

“Okay,” Daniel whispers. He doesn’t want to imply his Dominant won’t take care of him properly. He knows Liam will. He’s certain of that. “I mean, I wish you wouldn’t ‘manage your response to me,’ but I’m sure you can.”

That gets him a heated look. Liam moves to the fridge, comes back again after getting nothing, and stares at the cutting board for a moment. He shakes his head. “Look, it’s not easy at the moment, but I’ll be better in an hour. Why don’t you go back to your nest and I’ll call you when it’s time for dinner?”

“What if I don’t want to go?” Daniel asks and moves over a step so he can see past the counter to the large bulge tenting Liam’s sweats. Why doesn’t he just breed Daniel? He clearly wants to. Especially if he’s feeling close to rut.

Liam cuts him a sharp look. “I’d like for you to go to your nest, Daniel.”

Oh. His voice is firm. Overly calm. What exactly might Liam do to him if he says no?

“Maybe you should ask me what I want,” Daniel says, leaning against the counter.

Liam huffs in amusement. “Absolutely not. You have no idea what you want. It would be wildly unprofessional for me—your Dominant who you desperately want to please, and who is edging towards rut because of your sweet ass—to ask what you want me to do.” He shakes his head. “Go to your nest, Daniel. I need an hour.”

That pisses Daniel off. Hell, that's just as invalidating and mean as what his father and doctors have said to him for years.

Daniel's eyes fill with tears. So much emotion and grief wells up within him that it makes it easy to speak up for once. "I'm yours. I'm here to be yours. You know you're the only Dominant I'll ever get to have, that I want everything with you while I can have it. Why would you deny us this? I thought... I thought you wanted me?"

But obviously he doesn't if he can shut Daniel out and deny them both. Close to rut and able to say no, able to choose suppressants when Daniel is constantly wet and eager to be used.

It's awful.

"Daniel, that isn't what this is."

"Bullshit. Why did you give me a nest? Are you gonna take my nest away?" he asks, and he's sick at the thought of it, swallowing down bile. "Is this real or not?" Realization dawns. "It was because of the rut. You don't mean it. I'm not special," he says, wishing he'd never met Liam at all. It turns out this is the worst thing that could have ever happened to him. "You gave me the nest to have space from me. To buy yourself time—" His heart is breaking.

"No! That is not true," he snaps.

Daniel whimpers and turns to run. Out the door, into the woods, anywhere. He doesn't care where he goes, or where he winds up, but the urge to flee is overwhelming.

"Don't you fucking dare," Liam growls, his voice as heavy as death. "Do not run. Do not even think about having me chase you down. If you care for me, at all, you will

not do that to us.”

“I—I need to run,” Daniel whispers. “If I go, you’ll chase me or you won’t. But I’ll know.”

“No,” he commands, so much dominance and power in his voice that Daniel wants to drop to the floor, press his face to the ground at his Dominant’s feet.

Liam won’t chase him down. It’s the ultimate test for prey, how Daniel is meant to be claimed and taken, and his Daddy is telling him no. Daniel has never wanted to cry or scream more. His lower lip wobbles and he can’t even meet Liam’s gaze. His voice is weak. “Is it my nest or not, Daddy?”

“That is yours, Daniel. I swear. Only yours. And…” He exhales slowly. “Your nest will be here for as long as you want it. You have a place and a retreat and a Dominant whenever you want. I have never brought another submissive here. I’ve never wanted to.”

“What good does that do me if I’m here for a few days and then gone forever?” Daniel yells. “And you’re going to go be with some other submissive in need! Don’t lie to me. Don’t pretend like you’re mine, like you’re giving me a home and a nest when you’re not!” He gasps in misery. “You won’t even chase me.”

Liam flinches. His hand clenches on Daniel’s and then relaxes. “I’m sorry,” he says.

Which is worse. This is almost over. He will never have this man again. Is this really how Daniel wants this to go?

“I don’t mean it. I want it. I want you. I want all of it until the moment my asshole father sends someone to come get me. I’m sorry I asked you to—I’m sorry,” Daniel says, finding it too painful to even say the word “chase” again. Not when he can’t

have it. When Liam has told him no.

He shivers, suddenly cold. Wanting. “Fuck. I’m dropping,” he says. His chin juts up. Rejection is burning through him like acid. Daniel calls upon all of his hard-learned stamina and stands his ground for as long as he can.

“I want you, Daniel. I swear I do. I can give you something else. I want—” Liam cuts himself off, closing his eyes. “Yes, you’re dropping. I can feel it. You need... let’s go to bed.”

“Tell me what you’d do to me, then. What you’re resisting. Give me something ,” Daniel begs.

He can see the struggle in his Dominant’s eyes, the indecision. “Alright. I want your cock in a cage.”

His knees weaken and he locks them so he doesn’t fall. “How am I supposed to react to that?” he asks, because he isn’t sure.

“You tell me.”

Daniel swallows hard. His heart is pounding. “Do you have one for me?”

“You didn’t find it in the chest of drawers?”

“I... no, Daddy.”

Liam comes closer, two steps around the counter. His fingers tip up Daniel’s chin so he makes eye contact. “Now I’m Daddy?” he murmurs, voice dark. “Only Daddy would do such a thing to a sweet boy like you, is that it?”

“I don’t know,” he manages, blinking rapidly.

“Are you lying to me, baby?”

Tears fill his eyes. “I didn’t dare think it might be for me. I tried not to look at it.”

That gets him a gentle kiss. “Because you want it? Because you know it’s right for a boy who craves a plug and is in love with being weak? You say it so sweetly. Go on.”

“Daddy,” he whispers, protesting because he’s embarrassed.

“Do you want it, baby? Do you want Daddy’s cage? Do you want to give me your cock? Your pleasure?”

Daniel gasps, keeping his gaze low. He can see the hardness of his Daddy’s cock in his sweats. “I—yes. Please.”

If he can’t have Liam’s rut, can’t be chased and be prey in truth, then at least let him be caged.

Liam moves closer, nuzzles his neck and strokes him gently. Reassuringly.

“Good boy. You’ll be so fucking pretty in Daddy’s cage, baby. So happy, all locked away for me. You’ll know you’re mine, won’t you?”

“Yes, yes,” he breathes, about to fall to the ground.

Liam’s arm slides around him, holding him up. Daniel’s head falls to Liam’s shoulder. And then there’s a hand on his cock, between his legs, squeezing gently.

“Is this mine, baby?”

“Yes, Daddy.”

“Sweet boy. You’ll come on Daddy’s knot or from your submission. You won’t be denied orgasms, baby.”

He doesn’t care about the orgasms. He cares about belonging, feeling owned, pleasing his Dominant. The cage does all of that.

“I have to have it,” he whispers, and the tears spill down onto his Daddy’s t-shirt.

Liam squeezes Daniel’s balls gently, over and over, until Daniel abruptly relaxes, melting into the pleasure and building heat of his touch.

“When you get hard and your balls get full, it takes up space we need for my cock. It’s such a tight fit, sweetheart, that sweet little hole of yours. It’s better for Daddy if you’re locked up.”

“Yes. Yes,” he repeats, in a haze of submission. Liam sits him down on a stool and takes ice from the freezer, wraps it in a cloth, and has Daniel hold it to his groin while he goes to get the cage.

This is happening now. Right this very moment. Then he’s led to the couch in the living room and Liam opens the contraption. Daniel turns his face into the couch, tears welling out of his eyes, too overwhelmed to even look at the man who is everything to him.

“You are just the loveliest little thing, aren’t you?”

“Daddy, please,” he whispers.

Then there’s cold metal on his shaft, then looping over his balls. The click is loud,

reverberating through his body.

“Oh, sweetheart. It’s beautiful. Look, baby,” he says, sounding reverent. It’s enough to make Daniel look. The sight of it is shocking.

Liam touches the little lock that dangles near his balls, tracing a finger over the metal. It’s snug, even though he’s soft and unaroused. Daniel’s hand shakes as he hovers it over his own groin.

“Go ahead and touch, baby. Daddy doesn’t mind.”

Daniel touches himself with gentle fingers, ghosting over the metal. It makes him shiver. “Daddy?” he whispers, feeling very small and good.

“That’s right. There you go. Do you hear it? How little you sound? This takes you right to the edge again, doesn’t it? So what do you say?”

He forces himself to look up, not at his little cock. “Daddy?”

“Very good,” Liam murmurs, then kisses him while the emotion rises and overwhelms Daniel.

“Daddy, I have to cry.” He waits, feeling filled with emotion to the absolute brim. He’s an overfilled cup and one more drop will knock him over and it will all spill out. But he’s still holding himself together.

It has to come out. He doesn’t know how to get the emotion out. He looks at Liam, trying to latch on to what this means for them. He starts to reach for Liam and then stops. “H-help me?”

“Very good. That’s right, babydoll. Daddy helps you. Come cuddle and cry. You get

to cry and be protected. Cry and know you're safe."

He whines, desperate to be filled.

"I just want to be yours forever," Daniel confesses. "I shouldn't think about it. Shouldn't say it. It doesn't mean anything."

"It does. It's the only thing that matters. You're exactly where you need to be. In my home, filled with your Dominant's come, obeying me. Giving me everything. You are only here. You're keeping it together and I see it. It's too much strain. Share it with Daddy. You're mine."

Liam kisses him on the forehead, then his cheeks and his lips before his hand trails down Daniel's neck, pausing at his glands, and Daniel whimpers, legs opening. Liam makes a hmm sound and then he's at Daniel's chest, squeezing gently and then plucking at a nipple. His hand moves down to the cage and Daniel's legs open more.

"Who do you belong to? Who owns you, baby?" he murmurs, kissing Daniel gently.

Warm fingers brush gently over his skin through the cage, and Daniel blinks up at him through blurry eyes. It's a huge thing in his chest, and he realizes it's misery. It's everything he's holding back and it's all caught behind that word.

"You're so lovely, angel. And you're trying so hard when you don't need to. Be soft, sweetheart. Give it to me."

Liam pulls Daniel's hand down to the cage. "I'm yours," he says, feeling cherished. Protected. The most intimate part of him, held safe by his Daddy.

"Good boy, that's right," Liam murmurs and Daniel is in his lap, limp and weak, suddenly safe and protected as he says it again and again, huge racking sobs into his

Daddy's shirt, crying more than he's ever cried before. He can't stop, can't even think about stopping, hitching breaths and so much misery pouring out of him.

He burrows closer, needing more. Why can't he stay here forever in his Daddy's arms?

Eventually, Daniel realizes the crying has slowed. And then stopped. He's staring at nothing, curled up against his Daddy.

He doesn't ever want to leave. He didn't get to run but he knows his Daddy would have caught him.

Would you have punished me? Daniel wants to ask, but it's the ultimate question for a submissive like him. The ultimate test and declaration of devotion. What would a Dominant do when he catches a prey submissive in truth? But the question is too heavy, too dark and needy, scary to even think about. If he ran away from the man then he'd want to be caught and punished severely. He'd need to know his place. Who he belongs to. That part of his designation would be satisfied.

A submissive as high needs as he is can get into trouble, get killed by the wrong Dominant, and sometimes the Dominant can claim it wasn't his fault, that the submissive egged him on, demanded more and more, and somehow wound up dead. He knows that isn't why his Daddy is saying no. He's saying no because it's the only thing left for them. The bond would never be broken then.

He'd be claiming Daniel in truth, not just helping him in a professional capacity.

His Daddy won't let him run. He burrows closer, needing to be content with what he can have.

16

D r. Chang arrives on Monday without warning. They hear the car pull up. Liam makes him stay in the nest and Daniel is so drowsy he goes along with it. Then he hears the doctor's voice outside and realizes that it's over.

His father is alive, then. He hears several pairs of boots coming up the steps. Armed guards to escort him back.

Daniel gets up, throws on sweats and a shirt, runs a hand through his hair and splashes water on his face, trying to wake up a little. It's over. He knew it would end.

If he can keep it together until they leave, that will be a miracle. He has no idea how Liam will react to him leaving, but it won't be good.

How bizarre is it that he knows his Daddy will be devastated? The real danger here is that Liam might fight for him, get into an altercation with the soldiers if Daniel can't convince him he wants to leave. Even if Liam didn't get killed or hurt by the soldiers, he knows his father would love an excuse to court-martial the Dominant who bred his son. And if he couldn't court-martial him, then at least get him demoted, possibly kicked out of the military. If Daniel isn't careful, he could ruin Liam's life.

He couldn't stand that.

Daniel's life is already ruined. It's over. He's going back to what he knows. Liam can still live a good life. Maybe this is the true test of submission, he realizes—being willing to sublimate himself for the good of the man he loves.

He goes out into the living room, and Liam looks at him, his nostrils flaring. “Wait,” he growls, pointing at Daniel.

“I have to go. It’s time,” he says, forcing a smile as he looks at Dr. Chang.

The doctor is frowning severely.

Daniel starts walking to the door.

“This isn’t my decision. We’ll take his labs when we get back to the base and start making a case that his treatment be changed,” Dr. Chang says.

“He’s mine ,” Liam snaps, and grabs Daniel’s arm as he tries to pass by.

“Oh shit,” the doctor says.

Two guards step into the cabin.

The hand on his arm tightens. “Daniel,” he murmurs, and every hair on Daniel’s body rises, electricity crackling between them. He’s still caged. He’s wearing a plug, and the shirt is rough against his nipples. Daniel belongs to his Daddy. But now he has to leave.

“Please do not make this worse for me,” Daniel says.

Liam’s arm drops to his side. Daniel can’t even look at him. He certainly can’t touch him or say goodbye. It’s three steps and then he’s in the bright light of day and walking towards the jeep.

“Daniel!” Liam calls from behind him.

“Sir, I’m going to need you to remain in the house,” a soldier says. Daniel hears a snarl and he almost stumbles.

The car door opens, and a doctor he’s familiar with gets out, leering at him. “Hello, Daniel. It’s been too long,” he says, and Daniel almost runs, just bolts into the forest. Let them shoot him, let them capture him and take him back to his father kicking and screaming.

He doesn’t. Because he knows Liam will fight if Daniel runs. And then Liam will get hurt.

And how does that help anyone?

Daniel gets into the jeep, closes his eyes, and pretends to sleep.

Dr. Chang takes his vitals as they head back to the base. “Your improvement is remarkable. Did he take care of you?”

“Yes,” he replies. It’s a massive understatement but what else is there to say?

Forty minutes later he hears Doctor Chang gasp. “Oh god,” he says, looking up from his phone and at Daniel, an expression of horror on his face before he flinches and looks out the window, rattled.

“Let me guess. My father has decided I need a long, cold nap?”

He doesn’t answer right away. “I’ll talk to him. We’ll appeal it.”

“Do I see him first or just go straight there?”

“I’m not sure if he’ll meet you there.”

“Disposing of his son in person might be too unpalatable. Even for him,” Daniel says, and laughs. He isn’t sure why. But it feels like cowardice for his father to not even look him in the eye and be there when he’s put to sleep. He might never wake up again. He might wake up fifty years in the future. Any amount of time will be odd. Will he wake up again?

What will Liam do? Will he even know?

“Tell Liam what happened. Please?”

The doctor shakes his head, apparently too horrified to speak. Which is strange. It happens all the time, doesn’t it?

“My father is a coward. He’s a pathetic villain, and this is the most unpatriotic thing he could do. If you see him, would you tell him that for me? Even if you won’t, lie to me and say you will.”

“I will make sure he knows how wrong I believe this is,” he finally says.

“Can you tell me,” he asks, swallowing hard. “Are there bonding markers in my blood? Was Liam meant to be mine?”

Dr. Chang takes a deep breath in and lets it out. “I don’t have his scores, but for you, yes. You would have been happy with him. Evened out and satisfied.”

He nods. It’s good to know that he could have had contentment. That it was real, after all this time when he never fit, didn’t think he’d ever belong.

“Does that mean it was likely real to him, too?”

“Yes. There’s a very high chance it was.”

“He gave me a nest. In my own private room. He said he’d keep it for me in case I came back. If you talk to him... he doesn’t need to do that. I don’t want him to waste his whole life waiting for me to come back, when we both know I won’t.” It’s the most horrible thing he’s ever said. The bravest. That’s what it means to love someone more than oneself—to let them go and have the chance to live a good life.

If his father had loved him, he would have done the same thing.

His chest hurts, as if he’s been stabbed. His heart isn’t just broken but ripped out of his chest.

They don’t even go back to Daniel’s apartment. He’s taken directly to the airstrip and put on a plane to the Montana base where soldiers who are not fit to serve, but who the military doesn’t want to eliminate, go to be put into cryogenic stasis.

The flight is two hours. When he lands, he’s directly in the base and is taken to a waiting room that plays soft music and is reminiscent of a fancy hotel. He has to take a shower, is given a thorough enema, and the most horrible part is that he has to remove his cage. They won’t let him wear it into stasis. They put it in a box with the rest of his personal effects and tell him it will be stored until he comes out again.

Dr Chang asks, “Do you want me to send the cage back to him?”

“No. Let him think I got to keep it while I’m asleep,” Daniel says, and that’s when the tears fall and he breaks. How can his father hate him this much? Not even let him go to sleep with his cage? The only trace of the man who loved him?

He is escorted to a small room that contains his stasis chamber. There’s a large one-way mirror on the wall. Is anyone on the other side of that, watching his life end? Large double doors are behind him. When he’s asleep they’ll wheel him out into some giant warehouse, and that will be that. How many soldiers are behind that door,

stacked on top of each other, blank and unknowing as the world passes them by?

This base is thirty years old. There are soldiers who have been on ice for decades and now Daniel will be one of them. He's staring at the coffin. That's what it is. Even though it has a clear glass top and lights on the outside of it, they all know what it is. The interior is white.

"Would you like a sedative?" Dr. Chang offers. "It will make the next bit easier."

He nods in agreement and he's given a shot in his arm. Why the hell not? It stings going in. Thirty seconds later, he's woozy and can't see very well. People are speaking but it's like they're underwater; nothing is distinct. Are they talking to him? Does it matter?

"Liam." He isn't sure if he's saying the name or asking for him, but his words are slurred, and it doesn't matter. "No," he says.

"It's alright," someone murmurs, very close to his ear. He climbs in, foot sinking into the padding. A hand on his shoulder urges him to lie down.

"No," he repeats. He lies down and the cover lowers. There's a buzz, and then cold air at his feet. Daniel breathes, tasting metal at the back of his throat, the air smelling like oranges and ozone.

And then he's very, very cold.

17

Three Years Later

The phone call comes in while Liam is in a meeting, and he doesn't have a chance to return the call until late afternoon. The message is from a Dominant he met at a conference several months back, although there have been so many conferences over the last while, and so many people he's talked to about prey submissives, that he has no idea who Robert Hanson might be.

"Hi, this is Liam Stone, I'm returning your call."

"Hello, yes. We met at a designation conference last year and I was hoping you might give me some advice. My partner's brother has a prey designation and has been in stasis for the last few years. His custody status has changed and we want to bring him out with the least number of complications. We'd like for him to have a Dominant available for his reintegration."

Robert sighs heavily, squeezing the bridge of his nose between two fingers. "I don't have any recommendations to give you off the top of my head. It's very hard to find a Dominant who can give a submissive with a prey designation the appropriate care they need. Any Dominant can fuck a submissive, but to put a submissive with those needs first is not something a lot of Dominants are capable of. Prey submissives in particular are hard to resist and require a Dominant that has an unusual level of restraint. On the rare occasions a Dominant is good enough to be with a prey submissive, they usually wind up bonding. Most often the Dominant is unable to walk away once he's been with a submissive oriented that way. And I'd argue that the

prey submissive is so docile and oriented towards being owned that they would have great difficulty not choosing the Dominant they initially interact with. You have to choose the Dominant wisely. How soon do you need someone?"

There's a long pause. Liam is afraid he knows what's about to happen. This man is going to ask him to help.

"Oh. I sort of hoped you would be there. We don't know if he'll be looking for someone permanent, and we expect his ability to resist his designation is quite high, he's done it for so long?—"

"He will want someone permanent," he interjects. "And just because he's been denied doesn't mean he has the desire or will to continue resisting." Liam can feel his blood pressure rising.

He hears a male voice in the background. "Daniel needs one man and that's it. That's all he's ever wanted," the person says.

Prey designation is rare. Rare enough that hearing about a submissive named Daniel makes his heart clench in grief.

He will never get over the loss. His own failure and culpability led to Daniel's death. He'd been told by General Burrows that Daniel died, didn't make the transition to stasis, and he'd tried to find out if that was true, but had gotten nowhere.

And yet. Part of him has always wondered if that was a lie. And now he's getting a call about another prey submissive with the same name who would have gone into stasis a few years ago....

Liam knows it's unlikely, but he's instantly hoping that somehow this is about his Daniel.

It's foolish. "I don't think you mentioned. What is Daniel's surname?"

"Burrows."

Liam sits down heavily on the couch. His voice is rough. "The person you're with now, Daniel's brother... is he Logan Burrows?"

"How do you know that?" Robert asks.

His eyes are welling with tears and he has to clear his throat. "Because Daniel told me when we were together. Daniel Burrows was my submissive. But Daniel's dead. That's what I was told. I don't even know if I believed it, but there wasn't anything I could do," he says. It sounds like an excuse to his own ears, though he doesn't know what he could have done to discover the truth. "He's been gone for three years now."

"Who told you he was dead?" Logan demands. He can tell Robert has put him on speakerphone.

"Your father. The general. He called me a week after Daniel left and said he'd been put into stasis but that he hadn't made the transition. That can happen if the submissive has a bond. With Daniel's extreme designation, it was... it was believable." And he'd been so sure it was his fault, already so swamped with grief at his own failure that he'd accepted the lie.

He'd hoped Daniel was in stasis somewhere. He'd scoured death records and never found anything but couldn't find any proof he'd survived and was in stasis, either. The last three years his life have been an unpleasant blur filled with regret and nightmares, punctuated by work—a desperate quest to make sure other submissives with a designation like Daniel's get a chance for happiness when his boy didn't.

It made sense for Daniel's father to tell him Daniel had died so he'd stop looking.

Daniel's father was a powerful man and Liam had been blocked at every turn. Eventually, he'd had no choice but to accept that Daniel was gone.

"Daniel was your boy," Robert repeats.

Logan says, "Daniel isn't dead. My father was just an asshole with too much power, and he probably told you Daniel was dead so you'd go away. My father put him into stasis, but now he's gone and we're bringing him out."

"When?" Liam demands. "I have to be there. He—He'll need me. And I need him. My god. I won't believe he's alive until I see him," he says, voice rough with emotion.

"Did you love him?" Logan asks.

"I love him more than I've ever loved anyone," Liam rasps. "I did love him then and I still do." I just didn't know it, he thinks. Didn't say it because the relationship was too new and Daniel wasn't in a position to make choices for himself. And because they'd thought it was temporary.

Daniel is Liam's biggest regret. He didn't deserve Daniel and didn't treat him like he deserved, like he was loved and cherished. In hindsight, he's examined their time together and can see so many mistakes.

"He's perfect just as he is, you know. Gorgeous and smart. Funny and wise about people. But he's shy, and it took him a while to come out of his shell. And I miss him every single day. He loved you so much, Logan. Loves, I suppose." A sound comes from his chest that could be a laugh. "I can't believe he's alive."

They plan to meet up the following day to get Daniel out of stasis. Liam doesn't sleep a wink. He paces and finds himself lost in thought and memory, staring at nothing.

He goes to the gym at three a.m. but starts crying on the treadmill and walks the city until the sun rises instead.

Daniel is alive. Daniel has been so badly abused by the people who were meant to care for him. By his father and even the military, both conspiring to change and ruin him rather than accept him as he was.

Liam eats breakfast, showers, and then shaves. He can't help but look at himself critically in the mirror, assessing how he looks now compared to three years ago when he first met Daniel.

When they'd met, he'd been a man entering his prime. Muscular, fit, confident, and handsome. He'd been a good-looking Dominant who had the respect of his peers and a job he loved.

He'd helped a lot of submissives, partnered with them, encouraged them, but he'd never wanted any of them to be his own. He'd always known he was a temporary partner and that had been fine.

And then there'd been Daniel. They wound up having five days together in total. Just five. And Liam has never been the same since. Daniel was it for him. And Daniel wanted to be with Liam, though he's aware that Daniel was susceptible to bonding with any Dominant he was put with due to his designation.

Three years ago he'd argue he was a suitable match for the deprived young man. He was confident and cocky enough to believe it.

But their bond is gone now. And the last few years have been hard for Liam. So hard that he wonders if Daniel deserves better than him. What if the kindest thing he can do is give Daniel a chance at finding happiness with another Dominant? One who wouldn't let him go?

The man looking back at him in the mirror isn't someone he recognizes. What will Daniel think when he sees Liam again, sees how hard the last few years have been for him?

His illustrious military career went up in smoke when he was informed that Daniel had died. He'd gotten a phone call from Daniel's father himself, been told the news and... well, he doesn't remember much of that time.

Liam had been hospitalized with grief. He'd been given a general military discharge and then he'd floundered for a while. Drank too much, got into fights when he shouldn't. He'd even wound up in jail after a particularly nasty brawl.

His own brother had come to bail him out, had gotten him straightened out, and Liam has spent the last year or so speaking to anyone who will listen about prey submissive needs, because he thinks Daniel would have wanted that. Because someone needs to speak up for them. He hopes that would have made Daniel happy.

Though he doesn't really know. He'd known Daniel for a matter of days and their relationship had been intensely sexual. They'd known each other, but it was their designations that had really bound them to each other.

In Liam's memory, Daniel was the most perfect submissive. Sweet, biddable, hungry for his Dominant and eager to please. He'd also been emotional, traumatized by the denial and surgeries he'd endured, and it had made him shy and afraid.

He should have run away with Daniel.

But he didn't. He was a coward and a rule follower, and he didn't take Daniel or Dr. Chang seriously. What sort of monster would torture his own son the way General Burrows did?

If Liam had been a better man, a worthy Dominant, and what Daniel deserved, he would have gone on the run with him. There are resources, rumors of submissives and Dominants who live off the grid and beyond the reach of the military.

That's the Dominant Daniel deserved. One who would put his safety first, prioritize him above everything.

But that isn't what Liam did, and he's regretted it ever since. He'll regret it until the day he dies. It weighs on him heavily, and the failure and loss of his submissive is etched into the lines of his face, the premature gray of his hair. The tremble of his hand as he accidentally nicks his jaw with the razor.

Jesus Christ. He's probably aged a decade in the last three years. He doesn't sleep, doesn't interact with the world beyond work, and while he doesn't get into fights like he used to, he still drinks too much. His brother described him as maudlin.

Is it cruel to try and claim Daniel again? The bond is severed, so it's possible Daniel could be with another Dominant—not likely, but possible—and what if he owes that to Daniel? A chance to finally make one decision for himself, to get a Dominant who will fight for him?

Liam goes to his closet. What does one wear to meet the submissive they bonded to after years of separation and a cryogenic freeze between them?

He's lost so much weight in the last three years that he isn't even the same size of clothing anymore. Daniel might not even recognize him. He might not want Liam. If Daniel were meeting him for the first time today, he wouldn't choose Liam. Not that he chose him before. Liam was just the Dominant Dr. Chang trusted in the moment.

Their bond is gone, of course. It was faint, just forming, and now years have passed. Daniel has a chance of choosing another.

And there are a lot of Dominants who don't survive without their submissives. They take their own lives. Liam had thought about it, more than once. His brother would say his actions were so reckless that he might as well have been trying to die.

Surely Daniel deserves a Dominant who'd die for him? Run away with him, face military discharge and personal ruin to be with him? That's what a boy like Daniel deserves.

Daniel deserves better than him. Though finding the right Dominant won't be easy.

He dresses in a suit, wanting to make a good impression on Daniel's brother and husband. What will Daniel think of him in a suit? Or will he be so distracted and repulsed by Liam's descent that it won't make a difference?

Daniel won't be bonded to him anymore. Liam has to be prepared for the possibility that Daniel will take one look at him and be so angry that Liam didn't fight for him that he won't even give him the time of day.

But.

If Daniel is willing to give him a chance, if he is willing to be held by Liam, wouldn't he prefer something more comfortable?

He has to sit down, the very idea of it overwhelming. What if he gets to hold Daniel in his arms? He can't let himself think about more than that.

Bringing Daniel home, taking his boy to bed, keeping him safe, making Daniel his—he can't let himself hope. He won't survive the loss if he dares to hope Daniel might choose him.

Liam changes. Just in case. A soft, well-worn t-shirt, comfortable black joggers, knot-

suppressing underwear that are at the back of his drawer. He isn't sure what will happen when he meets Daniel again, but his boy deserves a Dominant who can be what he needs. Liam needs to at least try.

He takes his suppressants, the pills he's on so he can function from day to day, and leaves the house.

18

They meet at an executive airport where Daniel's family has sent their private jet. The Burrows are incredibly wealthy, all the money coming from the military industrial complex. The family would have vast resources to vet Dominants who wanted Daniel. The idea makes bile rise in Liam's throat, but he's determined to do what's best for Daniel. Even if it means leaving him alone. Or worse, helping him find a Dominant worthy of him.

Daniel and his brother Logan are not identical twins, but they look enough alike that seeing Logan steals his breath. Liam can't stop looking at him, reminding himself of what his boy looks like. They speak in a similar way but their voices sound different.

It's overwhelming and he's welling up with emotion from the moment they meet.

Robert is every inch the protective Dominant, holding on to Logan's hand, standing a few inches in front of his submissive like he's a bodyguard ready to give his life for Logan if that's what's needed.

Would Robert have run away with Logan to keep him safe? Probably.

The comparison stings.

Daniel is an incredibly wealthy young man and it's just another obstacle between them. Liam's never even flown business class and now he's on a private plane.

As soon as they finish saying hello, Logan has questions. "Did you bond with my

brother?”

“I did. We were only together for five days. It was when your father had his first stroke. Daniel’s doctor, Dr. Chang, took the opportunity to get Daniel what he needed—not drugs or surgeries but a Dominant. Your brother was not doing well when we met. The things your father did to him were cruel and futile. He was near death.”

A flush crawls up Logan’s neck. His gaze drops. “I know a little about that. I didn’t have it as bad as my brother, but it was still awful. Pretending to be nothing, trying to convince myself I was.... Anyway, my father is dead now, and that’s the past. The funeral, which we will not be attending, is tomorrow. And now we get to save my brother. We have a room for him. He’ll need time to settle in before making any decisions,” Logan says, and Liam understands it as a warning.

“What are your intentions?” Robert asks.

I want him. I’ll run away with him and keep him safe in a fucking shack if that’s what it takes , he thinks. He manages not to say it. But if he’s given another chance with Daniel then he won’t fuck it up.

“Daniel is very high needs. He is prey. There are not a lot of prey submissives, but I’ve learned from the ones I’ve spoken to, and met, that they always bond to the first Dominant that they’re intimate with. Bonding markers show up quite quickly in their blood. If the military attempts to pair them with other Dominants after they’re bonded, they often resort to self-harm and suicide. Prey are meant to belong to one very demanding Dominant and that is all.”

“And that’s you? Are you a high-level Dominant?” Logan asks.

The question is jarring. Everyone with a designation knows he is. They can feel it.

That's just how it is.

But Logan is serious in his question. The reality is that Liam doesn't interact with submissives anymore. And his medications, that keep him from being so depressed that he can't even function, do a lot to mask his designation.

Liam knows he isn't the same, but he hadn't realized a submissive might meet him and not know his designation.

"I am. I bonded to your brother. It wasn't a full-fledged bond because we only had a few days together, but it would have been. It could be again," he says, but wishes he'd said it with more conviction. "I've not been the same since. I'm heavily suppressed at the moment. I have been for years. Obviously, that will stop when we're reunited, and if that's... if he decides..." Liam can't finish the sentence.

Logan's gaze narrows. "You didn't answer Robert's question. What are your intentions towards my brother?"

"That's up to him," Liam says. "I want it to be his choice. He deserves that."

Logan scowls, his distaste for that answer clear on his face.

"I want to do right by him," Liam insists. "I never should have let him go the first time. I failed him. I can't—it's his decision."

Logan crosses his arms. "He should come home with us. We have a big house with plenty of room. We need time to get to know each other again. I want him to know Robert, and even Aaron. We don't know our older brother well, but he is family and Daniel deserves a chance to have that. I think that might be more important than a romantic connection you seem to barely remember."

“Logan,” Robert murmurs, pressing a kiss to the side of his head.

Liam looks away, can’t stand seeing the easy affection between the two of them. It makes him want to scream at his own loss. Logan’s dislike of him is obvious. It even makes sense. If he’d been a good Dominant, he wouldn’t have let Daniel leave. He’d have fled in the night with Daniel and treated him like the perfect boy he was.

Why should Logan like him when he hates himself?

Logan jerks to his feet and walks towards the back of the plane. Robert follows him. The argument is quiet but Liam’s hearing is excellent and he can hear every word.

“I won’t turn my brother over to some stranger! He needs to come home and be with us. You can take care of him?—”

“I very much doubt that I can. If he’s bonded to Liam then there isn’t anything I can do and neither can you. And if one of us tries then it won’t go well. I know he doesn’t feel like a Dominant, but he is. And Daniel isn’t going to be the brother you remember. We may have very little say in the decision.”

“But, you could?—”

“Logan, honey. Your brother is prey. The dynamic he needs is sexual. He’s not like other submissives and he can’t cope like you did. Even if he could, is self-harm and denial what you want for him? A few rules from a brother-in-law he doesn’t even know?”

Logan gets up and stalks to the bedroom, closing the door with a thud.

Robert comes back over and sits down beside Liam. “How long are your suppressants going to last?”

“They’re daily.”

Robert nods. His lips are pursed in a hard line. “You took them this morning?”

Liam can tell by the question that he’s not happy about Liam’s decision.

“I’m pretty close to suicidal without them. If this doesn’t go well... if Daniel isn’t there, if his chamber malfunctioned, if he’s—I don’t even know, if I don’t get my boy, then I will very likely kill myself. And Daniel... he should have a choice. I’m not the man I was when we first met. I’m not in the military anymore, I don’t... I’m not sure I even remember how to be the Dominant I used to be. I didn’t run away with him and I should have. I don’t know that he’ll forgive me for that. And without a bond....” He shrugs, trying to keep from falling apart. “He may want to make a different choice, and I love him enough to endure that.”

“Fucking hell. You said you were bonded. You said trying to bond him to someone else would probably kill him. What the fuck are you talking about?” Robert demands. “Whatever you’re on has you compromised and not thinking clearly. And I get it. I do. I’d die for Logan. But your approach to this is wrong.”

Liam leans forward and thinks he’s going to be sick. He presses his palms to his eyes, choking back the emotion. Is Robert right? What does it mean if he is?

“I don’t even know. I thought he was gone. I dream about him endlessly, and... this is all my fault. If I’d been a better man, I’d have run away with him. He tried to tell me and I didn’t—and now I’m—Daniel is beautiful and I look and feel like a dead man walking. Logan can’t even tell that I’m Dominant. Doesn’t Daniel deserve a choice? If I’m suppressed then he has that.”

“Get off the suppressants,” Robert growls before standing up. He goes to the back of the plane and knocks on the door to the separate room. Neither of them comes back

out until the plane lands.

Getting through security at the Montana Stasis Facility, which is approximately one hundred miles outside of Boseman, is surprisingly fast. They're all microchipped from their time in the military, and the base is expecting them, so they're led straight through to the metal detectors. They take off belts, give over keys, phones, and wallets, and then a metal door clicks open loudly and they're led inside.

Liam lets Robert and Logan go in first and then gives the forms he's filled out to the guards. It's his request to have the option of claiming Daniel for himself, to be the first to see him upon his release. He has no idea if it'll be honored, but he has to try.

Then he follows them inside. It feels like prison—the overly recycled air conditioning, the lack of windows, fluorescent lighting, and walls an indeterminate shade of gray. They're led into a room and told to wait.

There's an old boxy TV on the wall but the screen is blue. There are chairs. Logan sits and makes a little sound of discomfort. If Liam had wondered what they'd been up to on the plane, he doesn't now.

Though, to be fair, he knew. There's one really good way to settle a submissive and it's sex.

He remembers how it felt to get Daniel on the breeding bench that first time. They'd used it every day while Daniel had been with him. His boy had whimpered so sweetly when the buckles tightened across his limbs. They weren't necessary but Daniel had loved being limited, restricted to the point where he couldn't move an inch.

The TV screen abruptly cuts to a live feed. Daniel is sitting upright in a box that looks like a coffin.

“What is your name?” a woman in a white doctor’s coat asks.

“Private Daniel Burrows,” he says, rubbing his hand over his face.

“Rank and serial number?” she asks.

Logan gasps as Daniel answers.

Liam can’t take his eyes off Daniel. He looks exactly as he did three years ago, as if not a single moment has passed. He’s young and beautiful and perfect. What will he think when he sees Liam again? If his bond is gone, he might want to look elsewhere. Liam will have to accept that. He finds the trash can in the room, halfway to throwing up at the idea.

“It’s been three years and four days since you went into stasis, Private Burrows. I must inform you that your father has passed away, and your care has been transferred. Your family is waiting for you in the other room.”

“Who?” Daniel asks and starts to rise. His eyes are wide, and panic fills his voice. “Who is waiting for me?”

“What the fuck? Why don’t they just let us go in there?” Logan practically shouts.

“Your family is here,” the doctor says, her voice calm.

Daniel is led to an examination table and the doctor does an examination. He’s brought a cup of water and given two pills. He stares at them for a long moment.

“What are they?” he asks and looks up at the doctor. He’s blinking rapidly.

A pang of some emotion goes through Liam. Is it hard for his boy to ask? To resist

even to this small degree? His hand is squeezing his thigh and he forces himself to let go. If he were there, he'd have his hand on Daniel's neck to keep him calm.

"Suppressants and hormones to help you with the first few weeks of reentry into society. To help you not make an impulsive decision, it's standard procedure to supply suppressants to soldiers coming out of cryo-stasis. It's often quite difficult for soldiers who've been in stasis to reintegrate, even with their loved ones. Three years have passed," she says, and attempts a half smile, but then she's looking down at the information before her, eager to get through the evaluation.

"Does it say who is here for me?" Daniel asks, voice uneven. "Did you see who it was? Please?"

The doctor frowns. "I don't know. I'm sorry. They just give us the assignments in the morning. Half the time there isn't anyone here to meet a submissive coming out of stasis. You're lucky."

Daniel's brows pull together, lips twisting downwards briefly. Then he swallows the pills, washing them down with a small plastic cup filled with water.

Liam has to look away. His poor boy. How many times has he had to rely upon the doctors and take drugs when he didn't want them? How many times has he had to trust people who didn't care about him or view him as anything more than another task to be completed?

"He's coming home with us tonight," Logan says.

Robert winces. "We need to talk to Daniel first. Liam, did you know suppressants were standard procedure?"

"Of course."

Robert nods. It's the first time he's seen anything like approval on the Dominant's face.

"He's my brother. He's the only real family I've ever had. I need time to talk to him, to explain and reconnect. And he's suppressed. They both are. Surely, the designation decision can wait a day or two?"

"I want to do more with your brother than fuck him," Liam says.

"Do you?" Logan blinks back tears.

Which is a disaster because Robert is going to take one look at his submissive being emotional and of course he's going to do whatever Logan wants.

Liam turns his attention back to the TV and sees Daniel disappearing behind a screen.

"Where is he going? Is he coming here?" Liam asks. The guard in the corner looks up at them from his crossword puzzle.

"He's gotta shower and piss. They have to test his urine and wait for a few blood tests to come back before you'll see him. Probably another hour," he says, and goes back to doing his crossword.

Time crawls by. Finally, the door opens and another doctor comes in. They all shake hands and the doctor explains that Daniel is doing great and will get dressed and then come and meet them.

"Commander Stone, I do see a request from you stating that you would like to claim Private Burrows. There's one from a few years ago and another one from this morning. I assume since you are here, that is still accurate?"

“What the fuck?” Logan asks.

“Is he still bonded to me?”

“We didn’t see any trace of a bond in his bloodwork. Three years in stasis would weaken any bond. His bonding numbers were low when he went into stasis,” she says.

“Of course. But yes, I will discuss it with Daniel, and assuming he agrees, I want to claim him.”

“Wait. I’m his brother . He needs to come home with us first,” Logan says, stepping forward.

“Logan, honey,” Robert murmurs, and frowns. “It’s Daniel’s decision.” He throws a look Liam’s way. There’s a nod of approval, as if Liam’s finally done something right.

“We do give all submissives and Dominants coming out of stasis, if they do not have a legally binding contract in place, suppressants that last for approximately twenty-four hours. This is for their own protection. Because he was bonded when he went into stasis and lost the bond, we’d like him to stay suppressed for a week or two. Get him in with a doctor to see how he’s adjusting before he comes off of them. We will take the commander to a reunification room first, and then you can be reunited with your family member,” she says, and looks down at the form. “Uh, your brother.”

“My twin brother,” Logan argues. “I should see him first.”

“Unfortunately, soldiers with designations have different needs than normal people. A Dominant who wants to make a claim on a submissive has priority.”

It's the best piece of news Liam has had all fucking day. Or year. Okay, it's the best news he's had since Daniel left their cabin three years ago.

"Let's go," Liam says, not bothering to look at either of the men as he's led out of the room.

The reunification room he's led to is like a shabby bedroom. A queen-sized bed in one corner, a couch in the other, a bathroom with toilet and shower, and a basket on a small table that has various sex toys and lubricants.

The room smells like chemicals and eucalyptus, an attempt to cover the scent of how much sex has been had in this room. It isn't pleasant.

He looks at the training dildo in the basket and imagines opening up his boy. What if Daniel doesn't want him? Even if they had sex right now, the suppressants would mean they shouldn't bond.

The door opens. He looks up, expecting it to be another doctor or someone with forms he needs to sign, but it's Daniel.

"You're here," he whispers, stepping into the room. He's wearing a t-shirt, gray sweats, and flip-flops.

"I am. I had to see you," Liam says, voice rough. He pulls Daniel close, hauling him against his body.

Daniel nuzzles into his shoulder and writhes closer, dragging a deep breath in. He starts to laugh. "My father is dead and you're here."

He lifts his face and takes a look at Liam, studying him closely. He frowns. "Do you still want me? Is there someone else?"

Daniel's pupils are blown, his voice slower than it should be. A sign that the suppressants are kicking in.

"There isn't anyone else, Daniel. Of course not. But it's been three years and you're finally free. Not just from your father but from the military and our bond. It's a decision we'd have to make again," he says, forcing himself to remain calm, keep his touch light. He is suppressed so Daniel has a choice.

"I don't feel well," Daniel says, and Liam guides him to the bed, helping him sit down. Daniel closes his eyes and breathes in and out slowly.

"I don't like this room," Daniel murmurs, and he sways closer.

"Your suppressants are probably making it worse."

Daniel puts his hand to his throat. "I feel like I can't breathe."

"Let's get out of here," he says, putting a hand on Daniel's elbow, helping him stand and go to the door. They step out into the hall.

Daniel's eyes are shining with tears. "You feel different. You're not mine anymore, are you?"

"I'm... no. The bond is gone. I'm suppressed. I think I'm even more suppressed than you are. Daniel, sweetheart. I failed you. You deserve the world and if... if the best thing for you?—"

"I had a nest," Daniel whispers, cutting him off. A tear slides down his cheek.

"It's still yours. I haven't been in the room since you left. Hell, I can't even go to the cabin."

Daniel wipes at the tears on his cheeks. “Is that true? Because you miss me?”

“There you are!” Logan says, and then he’s throwing himself at Daniel, holding him tightly in his arms. Daniel closes his eyes, hugging his brother hard. But when he opens his eyes, they’re fixed on Liam.

“I haven’t been back, Daniel. I won’t go there without you,” he says, putting as much dominance into his voice as he can.

Daniel swallows hard, swaying towards him but Logan is there, supporting him, and leads Daniel out of the base, Robert and Liam bringing up the rear.

Logan is doing all the talking, Daniel answering when questioned directly, but he frequently looks over his shoulder at Liam as if he needs to make sure he’s still there.

“You should stay with us for a few days. You’re suppressed, he’s suppressed, no one knows what the hell is going on. The two of you can reconnect and Logan will calm down when he sees you two together. He’s missed his brother. He feels guilty, too,” Robert says.

“I understand. And I would like to be with him,” Liam replies, sparing a quick glance of thanks for Robert. Then he’s back to looking at Daniel. At the swell of his ass. The perfection of his pale skin, his neck.

Liam isn’t hard because of the high dosage of suppressants he’s on, but he is interested in Daniel. He wants to touch him, speak to him, keep him close. There are a hell of a lot of things he wants to do with—and to—Daniel that don’t require his cock to be hard.

“Can you meet his needs?” Robert asks, as if he’s read Liam’s mind.

“Yes,” he says, though it feels like their time together was a lifetime ago. But he wants Daniel. That hasn’t changed. And once the suppressants wear off, it seems unlikely he’ll be able to stay away.

They board the plane, and Logan takes Daniel’s arm and guides him to sit down beside him. Liam takes a seat opposite him, needing to keep Daniel in his line of sight. Daniel can’t stop looking at Liam, either. Logan’s questions are frequently unanswered and have to be repeated, Daniel is so distracted.

By the time the plane lands, Daniel’s anxiety is palpable. It’s taking everything Liam has not to get up and drag Daniel onto his lap. But Logan is strategically placed to keep them apart and Robert is beside him radiating a warning to stay away.

They stand up to deplane. “What happens now?” Daniel asks, glancing longingly at Liam.

Logan is still separating them. He’s surprised Logan didn’t get him thrown out of the plane when they reached five thousand feet.

“We go home. You’ll stay with us for as long as you want. And Aaron is looking forward to seeing you again, too.”

“Liam?” Daniel asks, voice too loud.

“I’m staying with your family tonight. I’ll be there,” he reassures.

“Yes. Good,” Daniel says, and his shoulders slump in relief. He casts a worried glance back at him as they get off the plane.

I haven’t lost him yet , Liam thinks, and a wave of determination goes through him. It’s the strongest emotion he’s felt in a long time. Daniel is his for the taking and he

wants him more than he's ever wanted anything in his entire life. He'll make it up to Daniel, won't ever let anyone hurt him again.

They stand on the tarmac and start walking towards the small parking lot where their cars are.

"Daniel?" Liam asks.

Daniel turns towards him, taking two steps closer. "Yes, Da—Liam?" He's eager, as if he's a plant arching towards the sun.

"Would you like to come in my car?"

Daniel blushes so intensely that Liam has to rethink what he's just said. Ah. Right. Though he isn't sure the word "ride" would have gotten a less intense response.

"Yes. Please."

Robert reaches out, takes Logan by the arm and moves him out of the way.

"We'll meet you there," Liam says, and finally he gets to close the distance between them. His hand settles on Daniel's shoulder and Daniel shivers in response. Daniel's breath hitches and he leans into Liam. Liam lets his thumb brush against the back of Daniel's neck, feeling Daniel's body tense.

"Oh god. Daddy," Daniel whispers.

There's an electric current of desire arcing between them. He presses a kiss to Daniel's mouth and holds him in his arms for long moments.

"We'll see you there," Robert agrees, and Logan's shoulders slump. He lets Robert

guide him away.

Then Logan turns back. “Daniel, I love you. I’m sorry I didn’t help you when I should have. And I’m sorry I believed father. The things he said about you.”

Daniel shakes his head, taking a moment to think through what the words mean. He turns to look at his brother, body staying pressed against Liam. “I love you, too, Logan. There wasn’t anything you could do. We’ll talk about it,” he says, but he’s already turning back to Liam.

He presses his face into Liam’s shirt.

“Do you remember when we first met?” Daniel asks. It isn’t coy but shy, as if he’s worried the answer might be no.

“You were and still are the most beautiful submissive I’ve ever seen. I saw you and all I could think about was breeding you. How could I ever forget that?”

“You’re here, I can’t believe you’re here,” Daniel whispers.

“Of course I am. I haven’t been the same since you left. I have—I think I’ve aged twenty years, that’s how much I’ve missed you.”

Daniel turns, resting his hand on Liam’s cheek. “You look sad, Daddy. That’s all,” he says. He bites his lip, casting a quick glance up to meet Liam’s gaze. “Maybe you won’t be anymore?”

“No, I won’t be.”

Daniel whimpers. “The first moment I saw you, I couldn’t believe you were going to be mine. Even if it was just a few days. I don’t want you to be sad; I want to make

you happy.”

He turns his head, kissing Daniel’s palm. “You’re the sweetest boy I’ve ever met, Daniel. You have no idea how much I’ve missed you,” he says, and Daniel gasps, wiping away the tears he can feel against his hand.

“Daddy, no.”

Liam lets his teeth close on the rise of flesh below Daniel’s thumb. Daniel goes weak against him, his free hand sliding over the front of Liam’s jeans, trying to feel his erection.

“I’m suppressed, sweetheart.”

“Oh.” He doesn’t even try to hide how disappointed he is by the news. “How long?”

“Hours, honey. You are too.”

Daniel frowns. “That doesn’t mean I don’t want it. I guess it’s easier for me, I just have to take it.”

“You want to?” Liam asks, but he thinks he knows the answer.

“Of course I do. I still... well, I think I’ll always feel like I’m yours. But it’s been so long, maybe you don’t feel the same? Maybe that’s why you’re not?—”

“No,” he cuts in, voice firm. “I was ready to build a life around you, and suddenly you were gone from me. I was told you were dead, baby. Gone from me forever, and I—” He can hardly say the words. “I had just gotten you. Losing you broke me. I don’t know who I am now. I’ve forgotten. So much so that I took my suppressants today, even though I was going to see you, because I thought I should—I thought I

should give you a chance to say no. Find someone else if that was what you wanted.” It’s a horrible confession of his willingness to let him go when that is the last thing Daniel would have wanted.

“I’m sorry. I’m sorry I’ve done so badly when you deserve everything.”

Daniel puts a hand on his arm. “You know that it’s like I saw you yesterday, right? I left you and went straight to the facility where they put me under and I was just asleep. Except that apparently three years have passed, and my father is dead. I don’t know who I’d be if I had to live for three years without you, to wake up every morning and try to live. I don’t think I would have made it.”

“It hasn’t been easy. I know you can see it.”

Daniel presses a kiss to the corner of Liam’s mouth. “I’ll feed you. I won’t let you out of bed, Daddy. We’ll be okay,” he says, and the sadness is there. “It was hard for you, Daddy.”

It feels like forgiveness, this recognition that Liam is only diminished because he loved Daniel too well. He did. He does.

“I’ll make it up to you. I swear.”

“I feel numb now. The suppressants have just made everything dull and unimportant. But I still want you. Not like I did before, an inferno of need where I just needed to be owned by you for as long and often as possible, but you’re still the most important thing in the room. You’re everything to me. My brother... I don’t... well. I do love my brother but you’re my life. You’re what I want. I need my nest, Daddy.”

And then Liam is kissing his mouth, licking into him, and Daniel surrenders with a little sigh, mouth opening, shyly kissing him back, his arms sliding around Liam’s

neck.

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Daniel calls his brother in the car. “Daniel, is everything okay?”

“I’m going home with Liam, Loge. I need that. They took me from my Daddy and put me into cryo and I have to go home for a while. We’ll come visit when things are more settled.”

“Daniel, I don’t think—” Logan starts.

“I want to make one decision for myself. I’ve earned that. I don’t care whether you like it or not,” Daniel says, determined.

There’s a long pause as Logan digests the venom in his words. He’s a little surprised at himself, too. At the animosity lurking under the surface. He doesn’t want to be angry at his brother when they were both controlled by his father, but he needs to belong to Liam. And it’s heartbreaking to see how much Liam has missed him.

The last few years have wrought physical changes—the early graying of his hair, the weight of grief that clings to him. And he’s thinner, still lean and strong and muscular, but now he has a runner’s build. When they met, Liam was wider and densely packed with muscle.

But he’s still unbearably handsome. And Daniel can feel the pull of Liam’s dominance even though both of them are suppressed.

Liam’s hand settles on Daniel’s leg, palm flat and fingers spread, and Daniel stares at it and wants.

Daniel's desire is there but it isn't overwhelming. His desire is dulled. His sense of smell and probably his reflexes are dulled, too, from the drugs. But he still knows the man beside him is meant to be his. He still wants to be touched and kissed and held and had.

"You deserve to be happy, Daniel. Of course it's your choice," Logan says.

"I'll call you in a few days. I have to... I have to go now," he says, ending the call.

The memories are so close and Daniel wants to drown in them. He wants to feel like himself again. "We were just here. In your car and on the way to the cabin." You couldn't keep your hands off me. You were so hard and your desire was heavy. I could hardly breathe through all the lust. He doesn't say it. That's too difficult.

Liam makes a hmm sound low in his throat and then he's pulling the car over to the side of the road. "Wait here," he commands, voice hard.

It's settling, relaxing to be ordered to do something. Now he knows his place: in the car, with his Daddy.

Liam gets out of the car and goes to the trunk. It shuts with a thunk and then he opens Daniel's door and squats down beside him.

"My cage," Daniel says, shocked. His eyes fill with tears. He didn't think he'd ever see it again.

"You're going to put it on now. It'll help settle you, baby. You need to be fucked but we have to wait, so let's at least get you in your cage."

Daniel doesn't hesitate, lifting his ass off the seat and shoving his sweats down, exposing himself. His soft cock bounces on his lap.

“Sweet little thing,” Liam says and he bends down, pressing kisses to Daniel’s cock and then gathering it in his large hands, feeding his cock and balls into the device and snapping it shut. It clicks with a sound.

Relief slams through him.

“Pull up your pants, princess. Let’s get you home,” Liam says, voice gruff. He closes the door and walks back around the car to the driver’s seat. His hand settles back on Daniel’s thigh, higher up than before, and then his Daddy presses even closer, until his pinky finger is pressed solidly against Daniel’s cock and the cage.

Daniel gasps in relief.

Liam glances over at him. He smiles, confident and sincere. “I haven’t been to the cabin since you left. I took my things, locked the door and haven’t been back. I had a cleaner go in to handle the fridge and close it up for the winter, but that was a few years ago now. When I found out you were alive, I did call someone to go in to clean and stock the place just in case you were willing to go with me. And I thought about what we might do since I wouldn’t be able to breed you right away.”

“What will you do to me?” Daniel asks, voice breathy with need, which is surprising and right. He’s still the same inside. It’s a relief.

At the light, Liam leans over, kisses Daniel and then bites him on his bottom lip. Daniel whimpers. He rests his hand over Liam’s, urging him to hold him more firmly, needing to be held by his cock, wanting to feel oppressively controlled. As if it’s a side door to his submissiveness. The overwhelming need to be bred that he felt the last time they were in the car together isn’t there, but some form of desire still is. “Control me when we get there. I know I’m not myself yet, but I need it.”

“I was thinking the same thing. I didn’t want to get my hopes up, didn’t want to make

assumptions that you'd choose me, but I couldn't help it. I wanted to be prepared. Daddy will use you so well, honey. I'll play with you and own you, and as soon as I'm hard you'll get bred hard. Knotted."

"What will you do to me?" he repeats, needing to know. Anxious lust spills through him and he squirms in his seat. His nipples get hard and he rubs over them. The sensation is pleasant but dull. He's not all there yet. "I can't feel it all. It's too quiet inside. It's like touching myself through plastic. I want to be lit up with it," he complains.

Liam laughs. He squeezes Daniel firmly.

The suspense builds and builds as the miles pass. What will Liam do to him? The anxiety is so close to lust and by the time they get there he's trembling with it. He holds out his hand and it's shaking.

"I'll help you," Liam says, and he gets out of the car, comes over to Daniel's side and looms over him. He undoes Daniel's seat belt, helping him stand.

"I might fall," Daniel confesses. And it's like before but different. "I'm scared. I think. But I want to stay with you. I want to—" He glances out at the trees, the forest, and the insane thought comes to him that he should just run. His heart is beating so quickly that he can feel it in his throat.

Liam's hand wraps around his neck and he gasps in shock, realizing he lost time. It makes him want to run even more.

"You're panicking. Suits you. Where can you go, sweetheart? You're in the middle of nowhere. No one is expecting you for days. Your drugs are gonna wear off and you're going to be bred so hard you'll be loose and sore. You'll snuggle up into your nest to recover. And you'll invite Daddy inside, won't you? We have a lot of time to

make up for, baby. You won't get a plug. I'm going to keep you on my knot for days, Daniel. If you run, you'll just make it harder on yourself."

"I—right. I know that," he says, barely able to cling to the conversation. Run, run, his mind shouts.

"I'll catch you, sweetheart. You can try and run, but I'll overpower you, and then I'll take you inside and tie you down. I'll punish you for running," Liam warns.

The world tilts around him. He wants to run but he's suddenly weak. His heart is still pounding in his chest. This is what he's wanted since the moment he came into his designation. What he'd dream about. The worst thing he needed—to run and be caught. To be punished and used up.

"What?" Daniel can't think with how loud his heart is pounding.

"Pretty boy. I know who you are, baby. Do you remember who I am? You're not the first suppressed submissive, honey. You're not the only submissive with a prey designation. Don't you know what my job was? You run from Daddy and you'll get it good and long."

His thumb strokes up the column of Daniel's throat, right over his pulse point. Daniel makes an aborted attempt to run, a half lurch to the side before he stops himself or is stopped by the hand around his neck, he isn't sure. He meets his Daddy's gaze.

There he is. Under the facade of suppressants, he can see the predator his Daddy is, see that he is wanted. "Daddy?" His voice breaks. "I couldn't... you didn't let me run before. Would I be bad?"

Liam groans, his weight shifts and Daniel is pressed firmly against the car, trapped. He cries out. Liam settles against him, grinding low and close, and all Daniel can feel

is the cage digging into him. The pain is exquisite. It's close to orgasm, to overstimulation, and that's something he'd loved.

"I—I might—" he gasps.

"You won't. Not yet. My prey. My sweet submissive boy. Why didn't Daddy let you run before? Do you remember?"

"I think—" he starts, but it's hazy. He was so turned on, so lost to desire during those days that it's a blur. "I don't know."

"Poor thing. I couldn't let you run, Daniel. I would have claimed you for good. I wanted you too badly. And it's special to be chased down. A sweet boy like you gets chased and taken down to the ground and you're done. You're going to worship the man who owns you that way. I let you escape. I won't do that again."

Daniel sobs, relieved and horrified to be seen and known.

"Go ahead and run, baby. Let's get it out of your system. And then I'll have your neck. And your ass. Daddy will give you everything you deserve, honey."

Liam kisses him on his cheek, his nose, kisses Daniel's lips. His hand slides off of Daniel's neck and down to his ass. He grips him by the cheek, urging him closer, the pain of his cage flaring bright and hot. Need explodes through him, designation flaring wide, and he shoves at Liam with all his strength and bolts into the trees, running as fast as he can, sprinting.

He can't look behind him because Liam is already close, feet pounding into the leaves behind him, closing the distance.

A horrible squeal comes from his throat as fingers graze his shirt.

“No, no, no!” he chants, but his body is awake and alive, desperate to be caught and bred.

Liam snarls behind him. Daniel’s shirt is gripped, pulled and then released. Some part of Daniel realizes that he’s being toyed with, allowed the illusion that he might escape. Panic floods through his body, makes him weak, and he stumbles. He doesn’t even get a chance to right himself before he’s taken to the ground by a heavy weight on his back. The air is knocked out of him and he can’t breathe for long moments.

Liam is growling, his chest vibrating against Daniel’s back. His teeth sink into Daniel’s neck and a high-pitched wheeze of sound escapes him.

He tries to breathe.

Liam’s weight remains heavy upon him, glorious and oppressive.

“Breathe, Daniel. Good boy.”

Then he’s hauled up, manhandled and draped over Liam’s shoulder, still struggling to breathe and the position makes it worse; it’s not what a kind and loving Daddy would do. It’s what a predator would do, taking advantage of his weakness.

He feels himself release, a wetness leaving him. Liam’s hand smacks down on his ass hard, squeezing the flesh of his ass, a promise of what’s to come.

Then his thumb delves between Daniel’s clothed cheeks, rubbing over his hole roughly. He works Daniel’s hole as he carries him back towards the cabin, as if he’s kneading him open, working a sore, knotted muscle, but that’s his hole.

Daniel whimpers and writhes. All of his attention goes there, focused on that spiraling hurt that spreads through him, down into his balls, leaving him feeling

heavy in his taint and throbbing deep inside as his body starts to release slick.

Air returns to him and he barely notices. He should move and kick, struggle, but the touch is compelling and leaves him weak. It's a shortcut through his defenses.

"Daddy," he manages, just as he recognizes the path around the cabin.

"Naughty thing. Eager to be caught. Not even a quarter mile, princess."

He's taken back to the car, lowered carefully to the ground near the trunk. Daniel lies there, dazed, hole aching as the trunk pops open. He turns onto his hands and knees and tries to crawl away.

Liam laughs. "Oh, honey. How cute are you?" He grabs Daniel by the hair. "Hands behind your back," he orders.

Daniel obeys and hears the click of cuffs opening. The cold metal surrounds his wrists. He whimpers, but then it's done. He pulls his knees under him, gravel rough on his face, some part of him needing to get up and run.

To be caught again. Harder. Rougher.

He's prey.

One ankle is caught and hauled back, and he collapses to the ground with an oof . Liam sits on his ass, hauls up his pant legs, and puts a cuff on his right ankle. Daniel thumps weakly at the ground with his left foot and Liam chuckles, catching his pant leg on the upswing, and then his other ankle is shackled, too.

"Let's get you in a spreader bar. You won't go far then. And you know what else that means? You won't be able to keep Daddy out. Daddy can slide right inside. Lucky

boy.”

“No,” he whispers, and then Liam stands up and goes back to the trunk.

Daniel feels lightheaded with the relief of Liam’s weight leaving him.

He grunts and tries again to escape but his body is uncoordinated, weak. The gravel crunches under him. It hurts.

Daniel whimpers and surrenders. Relief pours through him, more pleasurable than drugs. He releases again and can feel the wet warmth between his thighs as he wets.

He drifts. It’s quiet. And then he’s being picked up and carried into the cabin. How is the door open? He lost time again. It’s the only thing that makes sense.

The cabin is musty from being shut up for so long.

But it’s still home.

“I ran,” he manages.

“You did. Now you’re going to be punished. And then you’re going to be bred. Then it’ll be done. You’ll be mine. Home.”

“Yes.”

Daniel is put down on his breeding bench and his clothes are cut off of his body. He closes his eyes and waits. The metal glides over his skin as he’s stripped. It’s beautiful and he lets the tears come.

“Good boy. You should cry. Let it all out, baby. You’re home. Daddy has you now.”

It's cold and he shivers, naked and on display. Leather tightens around his shoulders, across his waist, over his thighs. He tries to move.

He can't.

"I'm yours."

"That's right, honey."

Daniel's eyes are covered in a silk blindfold and then his cock is fondled, balls squeezed. He's spanked but has nowhere to go, and he yells and wails until his Daddy stops.

Slick is swiped over his hole and then two fingers sink into him, thrusting in and out again and again.

"Here you go, sweetheart," Liam says, and his fingers leave but a thin metal dildo slides into him. Daniel clenches on it.

"Too small. I don't like it."

He gets a kiss on his back. "You're not meant to like it. Ready?"

"For.... For what?"

His passage tingles oddly, contracting on the dildo despite himself. "What is it?" he demands and tries to thrash.

Liam touches him with a gloved hand, stroking over his ass. "Electrical stimulation, sweetheart. Daddy is going to play with you, use you and keep you tied up. The pleasure will be electric. You'll feel it, baby. Even through your suppressants."

“Oh. No,” he whispers, and the sensation intensifies, builds, and he holds his breath while it peaks.

“Breathe, baby. You breathe when it hurts and let it go when it eases. Understand?”

And then the sensation starts again and builds. It’s hot and prickly. Daniel sobs and tries to twist but there’s nowhere to go. And then he weakens. He means to fight but can’t even clench a muscle.

“You’re almost there,” Liam soothes.

“Daddy... do you like it?” The words are difficult to say.

“I do. I wish it was my cock in you but this is good for you. You’re beautiful, Daniel. I’m so proud of you,” he says, and Daniel closes his eyes, tears slipping out.

“More now, baby.”

And then the bright, shocking sensation builds again and he whimpers, unable to do more than make a sound of protest.

“Ride it, Daniel. Squeeze and breathe.”

He has no choice but to obey.

The next several hours pass in a daze. He remembers the brightness of the electrical play, and then the wand was removed and his Daddy’s fingers were there, playing with him, hole soft and the muscle so exhausted he was slack and open. Then he was taken off the bench and held. He was spread open over his Daddy’s lap, and he took toy after toy in his lubed-up, slack hole.

His hands stayed cuffed and he was so weak and so far down in his submission that it didn't even occur to him to resist.

Again and again his hole was made to spread and expand. To swallow and take. At some point he was allowed to crawl away, and he remembers the feel of the carpet on his knees and his chest, but then he was dragged back.

Daniel's cuddled and put to bed in his nest. He's fed by hand. He's dressed in lingerie and then stripped again. He's bathed and taken to the bathroom. He's allowed a nap with his Daddy's soft cock in his mouth. He has no idea how much time has passed but he catches glimpses of himself and his Daddy, knows that his suppressants are wearing off, and that he's getting wet, slick sliding down his thighs.

"Please," he says, and knows he's said it again and again.

"What, baby? What are you asking for this time?"

"Your cock."

"Is it hard yet? Do you want to check again?"

His mouth is sore and his jaw aches. He keeps sucking, keeps hoping that his Daddy's suppressants will wear off so he can get the come he needs, the cock he requires.

Daniel whimpers, needing Liam to decide.

His Daddy chuckles in amusement, kissing him endlessly. Then he goes back to playing with Daniel's nipples, toying with him through his cage, pressing along his taint, and stroking over his hot hole.

“Should I spank you again?” he asks, kissing down Daniel’s throat.

“No... I don’t know.”

“You’re so pretty on my lap when you fall apart. I’m going to keep you here. I’m going to eat you. Do you want to try and escape again?”

“I can’t,” he confesses, pleasure pulsing through him as he’s forced to reconcile just how trapped and weak he is.

“I know,” Liam says easily. A statement. Truth. Daniel can’t escape. He’s at his Daddy’s mercy.

“I’m yours,” he gasps, pressing closer.

Then he’s spanked, and that makes him want his Daddy’s cock even more. That’s the only reward he wants now. The ultimate goal.

Daniel slips to the floor and takes his Daddy’s cock back into his mouth, desperate for him to get hard.

This time he feels it. A twitch, a swelling against his lip where his Daddy’s knot will be. He moans and sucks harder, redoubling his efforts.

“Christ,” Liam groans and his legs spread, his head falling back against the couch. He rocks in and out of Daniel’s mouth. His balls fill. They’re full and tight but his cock isn’t yet hard. It’s thicker, darker, but not hard enough to fuck Daniel or knot him.

He’s pulled back up to Liam’s lap and kissed. “What do you think will happen when Daddy gets hard?”

“What do you mean?”

“You’re trying to work it out of me, get me hard. But it will take a while before I can come, sweetheart. I’ll be demanding and want to fuck you endlessly until I come, and I think you’ve already gotten used quite a bit, don’t you?”

Daniel doesn’t know how to respond to these questions. He knows it’s an opportunity for him to save himself—to get a break and have some time to not be used and played with—but he’s got so much denial to make up for. And it’s part of him, the need to submit and submit hard. To be prey, to be toyed with when he’s caught by an apex predator, batted around and taken.

“What should I say?” he asks, staring down at the ground, ashamed to admit that it’s perfect. He might never say no and mean it.

“The truth,” Liam responds before lifting Daniel’s chin with a finger, forcing eye contact. “I know you, Daniel. I know what you are. Don’t hide from Daddy. Glory in the attention I give to you, and always ask for more when you want it. Not need but want. What you need is your baseline; yours by right. What you want is my gift to you, how much I love and value you.”

Daniel swallows hard. His lower lip trembles. “If you know then why do you ask me? I always want more. I want to feel your control. I like it when it’s oppressive, when there is more. I want to ride that line of?”

Liam waits.

“I consent,” Daniel whispers. It’s shameful. “To everything. That’s who I am. And I want you not to ask me anymore. Because you should know I’ll give you everything.”

“Come see what I’ve made of you,” Liam says, and he helps Daniel to his feet. They

walk carefully to the bathroom, the spreader bar making it awkward. He's still cuffed and it's becoming uncomfortable but he won't ask for it to come off.

The light turns on and he looks in the mirror. It's a surprise.

"Look over your shoulder, too."

Daniel turns, doing his best to see.

"Take pictures," Daniel begs, because he looks amazing.

"I have been. You were unconscious on the bench and I took pictures. You were cock warming and I took pictures. I have so many pictures, Daniel. You're beautiful. Lip bitten red, a little bit of blood," Liam says, keeping a verbal catalogue.

"So many hickeys all over your neck, the marks of my teeth on your back, your ass, your inner thigh. The abuse to your nipples. Fingerprint bruises where I've gripped your sweet flesh. A hot little hole that's taken so many dildos and probes. Your caged cock and all your limbs confined. Sore buttocks from being spanked all over. I'm looking for the limit, baby. You'll ease back from the edge once you're knotted and filled with my come on the regular. Your body will adapt."

Liam kisses Daniel and holds him in his arms. "My suppressants are wearing off. I'm going to make it up to you—the lost time and letting you go."

"We couldn't have run away. That wouldn't have worked. And we both thought there was more time. You have to let that go, Daddy."

"We'll see," Liam says, blinking back tears. He squeezes Daniel tight.

Daniel naps for another hour, held in his Daddy's arms. He wakes up to his Daddy's

finger being removed from his hot hole. He gasps and clenches on nothing. Then his Daddy is pressed against his back and Daniel feels his erection, his Daddy rubbing against his smarting buttocks.

Daniel whines.

“Shh,” Liam murmurs into his ear, and then he’s pressing his cock between Daniel’s cheeks and over his sore hole. He’s open enough that the head catches on his rim.

“Easy. Don’t fight, baby.”

It hadn’t occurred to him to fight. To resist. But he loves Liam telling him not to, as if he doesn’t have a choice. As if he has to take it when he hasn’t been dying for it forever.

“It’s big and you’re gonna take Daddy’s knot, but you’ve had time to relax and let that hole soften up.”

The head lodges against his rim, and then Liam grips his own cock and presses forward. Daniel’s impaled, stretching around the large girth.

“Daddy,” he whispers.

“Tell me no. It’s alright. You can struggle if you need to. But you’re going to get it,” Liam says, voice dark. His cock shoves deeper, pushing in another inch.

Daniel shudders and presses back, needing more. “You won’t stop?”

“I won’t. It’s alright to tell Daddy no and be prey. That’s who you are. And if you need me to stop or give you a minute, call me Stone and I’ll stop.”

“Yes,” he hisses as he’s forced to take another inch. “Not—oh, not Liam?”

“No. I won’t stop if you say Liam. Or Daddy. Or no. Only Stone.”

His Daddy grunts, bites at Daniel’s neck, and then he’s thrusting hard into him and Daniel’s cock throbs, his heart pounding in excited fear. His hole strains to accommodate his Daddy’s giant cock and the beginning bulge of his knot.

“Stop, oh, stop,” he murmurs, trying it out. He’s weak with pleasure, the echo of his words reverberating through him.

Liam grabs his wrists, pressing them down into the bed, and his Daddy’s cock fills him up, leaving him breathless as his balls squash hard into Daniel’s buttocks.

“Good boy. It’s in. Now the knot, sweetheart. Can you take it?”

Daniel almost says yes. He wants to say no. “Please,” he settles on.

“Good boy. Don’t fight, sweetheart. You’re going to get it now, baby.”

It’s perfect. His submission rises to meet him, keeping him weak and receptive as his Daddy claims him.

He’s home. Daniel drifts away, knowing his Daddy will keep him safe.

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It'd been a busy day. Daniel had spent the day with his twin and while it was getting easier to be together and put the past behind them, it wasn't perfect.

They always have to talk about the past. How they were raised, what life was like for each of them when they were apart, and struggling to survive the changes made to them.

How difficult it was to be apart. How Logan wishes things had been different.

But they weren't.

And so there'd been tears, and then Liam had told him it was time to leave and Logan had been sad and it was all just... a lot.

But it's getting better.

The moment he'd gotten in the car to go home, he'd slumped in the seat, so dang tired he'd let his Daddy put the seat belt on him. He'd turned his head towards the window and felt the pull of sleep even before they'd started driving.

It's the door shutting that wakes him up. The engine is off. Maybe they need gas? He's tired enough that he doesn't even open his eyes. His Daddy will tell him when it's time.

His door opens and he jerks.

His Daddy leans in, expression serious as he unclips Daniel's seat belt.

“Where are we?” Daniel mumbles, looking around. It’s the end of a road and he can hear the freeway, see where the lights of all the cars are.

“Out.”

“I’m tired,” he says, because it’s true. But he’s rapidly waking up, and his cock is filling with arousal because his Daddy is hard in his pants and that can only mean one thing.

“Not too tired. Come on, princess.”

He’s pulled out of the car, the back door gets opened, and Daniel is guided across the back seat.

“Oh god, Daddy,” he whispers, because it’s all happening so quickly. He can hear his Daddy’s pants being opened and shoved down, and then there’s a knee between his and hands are on his ass, squeezing the flesh.

He’s spanked several times until he squeaks as loudly as his Daddy wants, and then he’s forced to raise his hips while his Daddy pulls down Daniel’s pants.

He expects them to go halfway but his shoes are removed and he’s stripped naked from the waist down, cool air blowing across his skin.

There’s the sound of slick being applied and that means it’s going to be fast. No prep, no warmup, just fucking. Just Daniel taking and being a good boy and being of service to his Dominant.

“Yes, please,” he whispers and reaches back, hands on his cheeks, showing his Daddy his hole like he’s supposed to.

“That’s right. That’s where Daddy goes, isn’t it?”

“Yes, Da—oh!” he gasps, because his Daddy’s hot cock is at his entrance, pressing inside of him and he’d thought there’d be a finger, or a rub, or something but there’s nothing.

Just cock.

“Breathe, baby. Relax.”

“Knot?” he whispers, and the sweet sting spreads through him.

He’s covered completely with his Daddy’s protective weight. His Daddy thrusts in and out of his tight hole, working him looser with each grind and slam of his hips.

Daniel writhes, and then he’s sobbing, and that gets him kissed and praised.

And isn’t that always the point? Isn’t this all Daniel wants in life?

“I’m just yours.”

“That’s right, you are. Only mine. Mine to take care of and mine to use. Mine to love. You’re gonna take a break from your brother, baby. It’s too emotional. You need to recover. Daddy had to pull off the road and fuck you better, didn’t he?”

“I— hum ,” Daniel gasps, because his Daddy covers his mouth so he can’t speak.

“Hush, sweetheart. Let Daddy fill you up now. And then you’re gonna rest and sleep but you’ll have an ass full of come and that suits you so well, doesn’t it? Isn’t that how it feels best? How long has it been since Daddy bred you?”

The hand lifts so he can answer. “Too long,” he says.

“Fuck, don’t I know it,” Liam growls and then he’s done talking and instead focuses

on using Daniel just as he wants, at getting the angle perfect, the sensation against his cock exactly how he wants it.

“Yes,” Liam hisses and then he’s flooding Daniel with come.

“Knot?” he asks again.

“No, I want you home first. You can fall asleep, baby. I’ll put you to bed and fuck you in the night. It’s going to be a lot, honey. You need to submit.”

Liam pulls out of him and rubs his thumb over Daniel’s twitching hole, the pressure hard enough that he whimpers and writhes, fucking down into the back seat, wishing he could come.

He’s spanked again, sharp and thudding, and then the door closes and he’s left in the back to rest.

Daniel is asleep before they’re back on the highway.

He’s mostly asleep as he’s carried into the house. He’s stripped of his shirt before bed. Clamps are put on his nipples and he whines at the sensation. His hands are cuffed and attached to the bed frame and he’s put on his side to sleep. He knows what that means.

He’ll be fucked soon.

Daniel’s still exhausted but it’s harder to sleep now with his hands cuffed and his nipples throbbing from the clamps. His cock aches in his cage and the bed is too big without his Daddy there. Inside him.

“Sleep, Daniel.”

“I need you. I’m empty,” he says as the covers are pulled up over his naked body.

“Rest. I have a few things to do first.”

“I can’t. Daddy, will you—” His breath hitches. He wants everything. To be fucked, to come, to have the clamps pulled.

Liam waits.

Daniel can feel his Daddy staring down at him.

“What do you want, baby?”

“Anything,” he finally whispers, because it’s true.

His Daddy laughs. “Greedy slut,” he says fondly. The covers are taken down and Daniel writhes, starting to blush in embarrassment at being revealed and exposed. His cock is fondled, his balls roughly pulled until he’s twisting and trying to get away.

But he can’t. And that’s what he needs. To know he’s caught. That things will happen to him and he’ll have to endure. And that it will make his Daddy hard and proud to have him.

“Be a good boy, baby. You’re where I want you, and I’ll use you tonight, won’t I?”

“What if I’m too tired?” he whispers and tries to ride down on his Daddy’s fingers. His Daddy is pinching his taint, rolling the skin between his fingers, and all it’s doing is turning him on. Making him wet.

“That’s not an option, honey. Daddy needs you.”

He closes his eyes but the tears spill out anyway. It’s a relief. It’s what he wants. His

Daddy rubs over his hole until it's warm and sensitized. He spans Daniel with two fingers, over the slick, puckered entrance, and then he pushes a finger in and tugs down so Daniel jerks and cries out, fully aware that there is no escape.

"There you go. Nice and ready. I'll be back, honey. Go ahead and sleep."

He's aroused now. Burning with lust, so needful in his hole that it hurts and takes all his attention. He mewls in discomfort, trying to raise his hips and offer his ass.

"Good boy. That's how Daddy wants you," Liam says before he pulls the covers back up and leaves Daniel there to cry himself to sleep.

He's dreaming about his Daddy when suddenly there's a hand over his mouth and a cock probing between his cheeks.

Daniel whimpers and tries to wake up.

"Shh, it's alright," his Daddy says, and he's filled in one brutal thrust. He spasms around the invading hardness, and Liam groans at the pleasure, the relief of getting his cock inside his boy. "Tight hole, honey."

It is. He lies there acceptingly as he's rolled so he's face down in the bed and then he's taken hard and rough, having no choice but to stay relaxed and docile.

"Good boy. Just sleep and Daddy will get what he needs."

Daniel can't help but make a sound, quiet and weak as submission rolls through him. He doesn't even try to open his eyes. He can't. He's tired and dropping, and then there's a knot tugging on his rim, catching and stretching with each withdrawal.

It's hard to stay awake. The clamps are taken off and he cries out as sensation returns.

“Fuck, you’re beautiful, Daniel.”

And then the knot is full-blown and his Daddy moans and grinds deeply inside him, cock twitching as his balls unload and Daniel’s passage is filled with hot come. “Rest, honey. Daddy isn’t done,” he says.

Daniel wakes to his Daddy pulling out and then whines as he’s filled with a heavy, bulbous plug. He struggles at the widest part, leg sliding up the bed, head rising off the pillow. Then it’s in.

It sits on his prostate, squeezing his glands, and he shudders at the horrible weight of it all.

“Sleep, baby. That fits just right.”

“I can’t,” he mumbles.

He’s kissed on the shoulder and held in strong arms.

Daniel releases in the night, half wakes just as his own body spills, in the middle of a dream where his Daddy is breeding him in front of everyone.

He’s wet but tired, too tired to protest, and he goes back to sleep.

He wakes as the plug is withdrawn, a mess of come and slick slipping out of him just as his Daddy grunts in pleasure and feeds his cock into Daniel’s wide-open hole. He’s fucked and knotted, the clamps are put back on, and despite it all he’s falling back asleep.

Daniel has no idea how much time has passed when the plug presses against his hole. It’s huge and cool, something new. It’s a struggle to take, and he begs for his Daddy to let him sleep, to have only his Daddy’s cock inside. Once it’s seated, he can hardly

Speak because the sensation is so demanding.

Heaviness and weight. Somehow, he falls back asleep.

Daniel dreams he's looking for a bathroom but can't find one, that he's going to wet himself, when he wakes up because the plug is being removed from his hole.

"I have to pee," he slurs.

"I bet. I unlocked you. Get your cock out and let yourself get hard."

Which is when he realizes that one hand is free. Daniel fumbles with his cage. He spills out of it and instantly starts to harden. "I don't have to touch myself; it's happening."

"Good boy. That's right."

It's the most evilly pleasurable sensation he's ever felt and he shivers. His bladder is full. His cock is hard and he can't come. He's being fucked again.

"Daddy, I can't," he pleads. He turns his head, needing to be kissed.

His Daddy kisses him, but his hand slides over Daniel's hip and cups his flat stomach, stroking gently across the sensitive skin.

"I have to pee," he whispers, just as his Daddy presses on his stomach and grinds deeply into him. He feels the knot expanding and knows he'll be tied to his Daddy once again, but this time he'll be hard, desperate to use the bathroom.

His Daddy is so selfish. His Daddy is using him like a toy. A thing. His discomfort and lack of sleep don't matter. His bladder will have to wait—and Daniel loves every moment.

“I love you, baby.”

“I love you, too, Daddy. Thank you. Thank you so much,” he says, and lets the weakness have him, finally safe with his Dominant.