



Her Daddy Valentine (PROJECT VALENTINE)

Author: *Lena Little*

Category: Action&Adventure

Description: Vaughn Valentine

Hopeless.

That's how I felt for a very long time, holding onto a dream that someday my turn would come, but knowing that miracles don't really come in threes. Or do they?

That's the question I ask myself when Claire walks into my office.

Valentine Group's latest hire, and better yet, her role is right under my wing. So, yeah, I'm a walking cliché, falling head over heels for the newest face in my company. But can you blame me?

From head to toe, Claire's perfect.

Everything I've ever dreamt of finding in a woman and so much more.

Will she be the one to end my torment?

Or am I destined to be alone forever?

Her Daddy Valentine is an OTT, standalone Lena Little romance always with an HEA, no cheating or cliffhanger

Total Pages (Source): 11

Page 1

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 2:44 am

1

VAUGHN

“ I ’m coming to get you,” I roar through the house to the delightful sounds of rapturous, gleeful giggling from my nieces and nephews, who are meant to be hiding and silent. But I’ve become an expert in navigating children, thanks to my brothers, who have seven children between them and a set of twins for Victor on the way.

With these newly learned skills, I pay no mind to the giggling. Instead, I search the farthest corners of the house, pulling sofa cushions out of place and tugging on curtains to get closer to my giggling niece, but I never quite catch her.

“Hmm, where could they be hiding?” I say to myself, looking high and low around the room. Even without their carefree chuckling, Vincent, Vance and Hana’s son, has his toes sticking out from underneath the silver curtains.

“Maybe I can offer a hand,” Hana says from the sliding door leading onto the backyard patio.

“It might be necessary.” I smile at my sister-in-law, who begins searching through the various places I’ve already checked. But her sudden interruption of our game makes me feel funny, and not the good kind, either. “I’ve never met anyone as great as these two at hide and seek.” The strange sensation trickles over my words.

It's not sadness; at least, I don't think it is. It's more like a longing to have what they do. Victor and Olivia, Vance and Hana, happy families growing together while I lag

behind. And I know it's not that crazy.

As the youngest Valentine son, it makes sense that I'd be the last to fall into the old tradition. But it's been years now. The children have grown to walking, talking little humans, and I can't seem to find a single person I like to have a conversation with.

"Are they..." —Hana grabs the curtain closest to Vincent and pulls it aside—"...here?"

He erupts into squealing laughter less than a foot away from his mother, but she pretends she can't hear anything.

"You're right, Uncle Vaughn." Hana bends over, slowly moving her fingers toward Vincent's toes. "They're better than us. I guess they're the winners."

"Beaten again," I add to it, fighting off the urge to let the longing claw its way out of my mouth. "How will we ever find them?"

"Maybe we can ask this little piggy," Hana says, grabbing Vincent's pinky toe. He bursts out from behind the curtain straight into his mother's loving arms, tears lining the rims of his eyes from all the laughter.

She peppers kisses across his face, tickling his sides, and I get to see firsthand how a mother and son's bond strengthens.

Fuck, it's beautiful. And I want it for myself.

Wait a second. A father and son bond.

"Where's your niece?" Hana asks, and Vincent's face turns stone cold as the question comes. He can't lie to her, even if he wants to. Slowly, nervously, he raises his arm in

Rebecca's direction.

She's huddled beneath a sofa throw next to the chair. Like Vincent, I spotted her instantly, with her head moving from side to side under the blanket. But where's the fun in rushing to the point? These are memories I hope my nieces and nephews are going to cherish for years to come or, better yet, the rest of their lives.

I tiptoe my way over to the blanket and turn back to my nephew before I pull it off. I point at it in a subtle question of is this the right place and he grins, nodding his head frantically.

I've never seen so much joy on a turncoat's face before.

I yank the blanket off Rebecca. She looks at me, absolutely mortified that I managed to find her, but when her eyes turn over to Hana and Vincent, she knows what happened.

She scowls at him, shouting, "That's not fair. You had help."

"But we needed it. We'd have never found you if Vince didn't show us," I say, ruffling the hair atop her head. "And you wouldn't want to be hiding under grandma's blanket for the next two weeks, would you?"

"I guess not." Rebecca crosses her arms over her chest in frustration.

"Well, between you and me, and don't tell your aunt Hana I said this, but you definitely won." I speak loud enough for Hana to hear but try to keep it inconspicuous so Rebecca will believe me.

It's not very hard to do when it's a six-year-old you're trying to convince, but if you're gonna play the game, play it well.

Her mood instantly brightens, and she jumps to her feet and runs to the door. No doubt to tell her parents that she foiled me again for the sixth time tonight.

“I’m grabbing drinks. Do you need anything?” I ask Hana, who is holding her son in a tight, loving hug.

“Two beers and a whiskey for Victor.”

“Nothing for Mom?” I raise a brow, a little surprised. She’s usually the one trying to keep the party going, not flaking out first.

“I think the last G and T she poured was a little stiff.” Hana chuckles, standing upright and taking her son’s hand. “She’s still working on it.”

We go our separate ways, her back to the table and me to the kitchen to fulfill the orders. Returning outside, I take a seat next to Mother. Vincent and Hana reclaim their seat next to Vance, and Rebecca sways on her feet next to Victor.

“Oh no,” my oldest brother says, with mock surprise twisting his facial features. “Has someone caught the sleepy bug?”

Rebecca nods, letting out a long yawn.

I’d be lying if I said I wasn’t jealous. Not necessarily of anyone in particular, but just how easy love seemed to find my brothers. It’s like the perfect woman fell into their lap, and they’ve never looked back since.

“What’s wrong, my boy?” Mom asks, resting a hand on my shoulder. “You don’t seem yourself.”

“Must’ve caught the sleepy bug from Rebecca.” I could never admit it outright. At

least not yet. This foreign, overwhelming sensation came so out of the blue that I nearly felt crazy for thinking it at all.

Mom smiles at me, no doubt picking up on my distant stare at Victor, lifting Rebecca onto his lap. She rests her head against his chest and nuzzles into a comfortable position. She'll be sleeping any second now.

“You know it isn't anything to be ashamed of, Vaughn. You're reaching that age. It's okay to want it,” she says, and I nearly chuckle at how close it comes to the birds and bees talk. “A family of your own. Little ones clawing at your hip. And all the other beautiful things that come with it.”

“Who knows? Maybe if I'm lucky enough?”

“It'll happen sooner than you think?” Mom smiles at me, her hand moving up to my cheek. “Keep your chin up, Vaughn. Good things come to those who wait, and you, my little prince, have waited a long while.”

And I'll wait longer still. Because I don't want a rushed relationship that falls apart or erupts into a dumpster fire of meanness and cruelty. I'll wait forever if I must, as long as there's a glimmer of hope that someday, I might find what they all have.

Page 2

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 2:44 am

2

CLAIRE

Two Weeks Later

“I can’t believe it.” Mom’s eyes are coated in a shiny layer of tears. “My little girl’s all grown up.”

She flings herself forward and pulls me into a tight bear hug. Under normal circumstances, my mom’s loving embrace would be just what the doctor ordered. It would settle my nerves, make me feel comfortable, and give me the motivation I need to get through the rest of my day.

But it would’ve been way more welcomed an hour ago while I was a panicked mess to get ready for my first day on the job. Having it happen now, in the middle of my new office, while all the staff stares at us like we’re crazy, makes my cheeks reach new levels of burning hot.

“Mom, please. You’re going to embarrass me,” I mumble against her chest.

It’s bad enough that she insisted on following me into the office, but it’s much worse with Veronica Valentine a few feet away. Without her, I’d have never gotten this job. Freshly out of university with no work experience behind me, I don’t feel like I belong here. I’m a little fish in a tank full of sharks, and they’re circling to gobble me up.

“Oh, nonsense,” Veronica says, and Mom breaks her hug to look at her oldest friend. “There’s nothing more beautiful than a mother showing her child love.”

Mom crinkles her nose at me as if to say, See? I win.

I can’t help but laugh. Getting ganged up on by two old ladies wasn’t on my itinerary for the day ... or my life, for that matter. I’ve gotta admit, though. It does go a long way to making me feel better.

“Thank you again, Mrs. Valentine. I really appreciate the opportunity you’ve given me,” I speak humbly, feeling my shoulders slump at my sides as the last word leaves my lips.

“Then why do you look so glum, hon?” Veronica crosses her arms over her chest while a brow lifts above her expertly painted eye.

“Because I don’t think I deserve it.” I’ve admitted it to myself a thousand times over but never once said it out loud. Hearing the words leave my mouth feels like a huge weight being lifted off my shoulders. “It’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. One that so few will ever be able to get, and you’ve given it to me as my first job back in the States.”

“Had it been up to me, you could have called me out for nepotism.” Veronica reaches out one of her dainty hands and rests it on my shoulder. “But the decision isn’t mine to make anymore. I handed the crown over to Victor a long time ago, and all hiring and firing goes through him.”

“See?” Mom cuts in. “You got the position by your own merits.”

I have no merits, so either one of them is lying to me, or this whole thing is an enormous blessing.

“Speaking of Victor, would you like to meet the boys?”

Oh God, no, anything but that. I fear my blessing is turning into a curse mighty fast by being part of the Valentine matriarch’s inner circle. I wanted my first day to be easy. Not coasting by and being lazy, of course, but definitely not standing face to face with the big boss who wouldn’t even know my name.

“She’d love to,” Mom answers for me, and my heart sinks straight past my tummy and shatters into a thousand tiny pieces on the floor.

“I would,” I lie. Having spent my nervous honesty on feeling like I don’t belong here, saying any more would make me want to curl up into a tiny ball and die.

“Wonderful.” Veronica starts to walk with Mom and me close behind. She gives me a brief tour of the building, mostly the part of the building I shouldn’t have to come anywhere near unless there’s something serious amiss.

As we pass each room, she gives me the name, occupation, and a brief rundown of the person working inside it. By the time we reach Victor’s secretary, I’ve forgotten half of them.

“Is he in?” Veronica asks, and the rest of the names poof out of my mind.

“He is. Should I let him know you’re here, Mrs. Valentine?”

A cheeky smile forms on Veronica’s face. “Warn him that we’re coming in, but don’t tell him who it is.”

The secretary does as instructed, lifting a telephone receiver on her desk to announce our arrival.

“Sure, Suzy. Let them in,” Victor’s voice answers. It’s layered with intensity, and a sharp, cold spike shoots up my spine, leaving me glued in place as Mom and Veronica head for the dark wood double doors.

Time to be a big girl. I head into Victor’s office, instantly stunned by the monstrous size of the man in a three-piece suit, towering over Veronica and my mom.

“Hello, Mother. Why did I get a feeling it would be you knocking on my door?” He opens his arms and gives her a big hug.

“Probably because you knew I was coming in today?” Veronica snickers, hugging her oldest son back.

“That would do it, wouldn’t it?” Victor’s eyes move to Mom and me before he breaks away from Veronica. Mom extends a hand to him, and Victor takes it and kisses her knuckles in an old-fashioned gentlemanly hello. “Henrietta, it’s a pleasure to see you, as always.”

“Oh, you’re such a charmer.” Mom follows Veronica’s lead and snickers at his flattery.

“And that must make you Claire. The newest addition to the Valentine family.” His entire focus locks onto me, and I’m just about ready to fall over from the rush of blood to my head. “Welcome aboard, but don’t think I’m going to take it any easier on you because our mothers are here.” Victor takes one long stride toward me, extending his hand to me.

I take it and shake, scanning his face to see if he’s judging me. But he’s impossible to read. Straight-faced apart from one corner of his mouth ticked upward.

“I wouldn’t have it any other way, Mr. Valentine.” I can’t help but feel impressed that

I managed to speak without a quivering lip or fumbling my words.

Veronica jumps to my rescue. “Come now, Victor, you’re scaring the poor little thing half to death.”

“Not my intention.” Victor releases my hand and heads back to his desk. “But you know I love to rule with an iron fist. So maybe it was.”

Veronica rolls her eyes at Victor as he drops back into his plush leather seat with a devilish smile. “Don’t mind him. He’s just trying to rattle you.”

It’s working ... way too fucking well.

She grabs my arm by the wrist and walks me back to the door. Mom’s a few steps behind us.

“Stop by before you leave, Mother. I want to talk to you about something,” Victor says once we’ve passed back into the hallway. Veronica doesn’t answer him as we continue to the next Valentine brother.

We arrive at Vance’s office, but he’s not there. His secretary tells Veronica she doesn’t know when he’ll be back as he went to talk shop with a few different people.

After a short, courteous goodbye, we make our way to the youngest Valentine son’s office.

We stop in front of our final door, not greeted by a secretary, but instead a golden nameplate on the wood that reads Vaughn Valentine, C.F.O. Out of the three brothers, Vaughn is the only one I’d say is imperative to meet. Having accepted the role as an accountant for Valentine Group, I’m certain we’ll meet often enough.

Without anyone to lead us in, Veronica knocks twice and enters.

“Mom? What a wonderful surprise,” Vaughn says as the doors open. I haven’t even seen him yet, and my heart thumps faster in my chest. “I didn’t know you were coming in today. And you must be Henrietta. Mom’s told me all about you. However, she neglected to mention how beautiful you are.”

Mom bursts into an echoing laughter that catches the attention of the people parading through the halls.

“This isn’t what it looks like,” a second male voice comes from inside the room. “Well, it is, but?—”

“Meetings all across the office, huh?” Thickly layered sarcasm hangs on Veronica’s words.

Okay, now I’ve got to see what’s happening in there. Curiosity overshadows my ever-tightening nerves, and I approach the doorway passively. I stick my head through to see one of the men, nearly equaling Victor’s beastly size, holding a child-sized golf stick in his hands. If size didn’t confirm it, the golden eyes are confirmation that he must be one of the brothers.

I clasp my mouth shut with my palm to stifle my chuckle.

“I met up with Vaughn,” he speaks, which must mean he’s Vance. “That counts as a meeting, right?” His eyes instantly snap toward me. “Woah, woah, woah, what’s this? A fresh face in the office?”

“None of that,” Veronica scolds, wagging a finger in his face. “Poor thing’s nervous enough as is. You’re not going to add to it.”

“Can I?”

“You’re the youngest. You can do whatever you want,” Vance teases, turning his attention back to the plastic golf ball on the ground. He slumps over, squares his shoulders as best he can in that position, and takes a swing at the ball. It glides over the carpet and hits a flag that must’ve come from the same toy set as the club.

He pumps a fist in the air in celebration.

“Can’t do much if she doesn’t come in.” Vaughn’s voice is softer than his brothers’. Reserved and calculated. Something about hearing it speak about me makes my heart skip a beat.

First-day nerves , I tell myself as I step through the door. Every little sound will make me jump. Don’t overthink this, but that was much easier when he was just a disembodied voice.

Like his calm and smooth voice, Vaughn Valentine doesn’t have the same ridiculously muscular proportions as his brother. He also lacks the sharp edge of their cutting gaze, favoring a more humble approach with a warm smile and softer eyes.

Where the other brothers are broad-shouldered with their musculature on display, Vaughn is slim, choosing lean, cut muscle over titanic shapes. His dark brown hair is slicked back, with a clean-shaven face that shows off his square jawline.

But those eyes. It seems it’s always the eyes with the Valentine siblings, burning a fiery golden glow.

“Claire, I take it?” He looks at me, unblinking. Almost forced. As if given the opportunity to look anywhere but my face, he’d drink in my body instead. Much too awkward around our parents, so I applaud the strained effort.

“And you must be Mr. Valentine.” It’s my turn to fight the urge to speak in any other way than polite and formal. Every inch of me screams that it should come out in a deep, sultry whisper, but with our parents here, that would be awfully embarrassing.

The best part is that looking at Vaughn, the fears and nerves I felt by both Victor and Vance have dissipated into thin air.

Maybe working here won’t be so bad after all.

Page 3

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 2:44 am

3

VAUGHN

I must have died and gone to heaven.

It's the only explanation for seeing this angel with my own two eyes.

"Please call me Vaughn." My voice is raspy, and I clear my throat to get rid of the irritation causing it.

But there is no irritation, is there? It's caused by the stunned shock of this beauty walking into my office and realizing that I will get to spend every single day with her at my side.

Is that a good thing or a bad, I wonder? Part of me is excited by it. Thrilled that I won't have to look very far to see Claire again, but the rest of me is terrified. How can I get through a hard day of work when she's here, too?

With long hair cascading down her shoulders in a river of gold, and her big blue eyes I want to get lost in forever. I'm losing my mind by looking at her face alone, and the rest of her is just as exquisite. Petite frame, with two gigantic pillows stretching the front. Wide hips and a plump ass that threatens to draw my eyes away and leer uncomfortably while our parents watch in shock and disgust.

More than her hot-as-fuck body, I'm drawn to her plump, red lips. They're so inviting. I swear she feels the same way as I do ... that if we were alone, without the

prying eyes of my mom and hers, we'd be making out like naughty kids behind my desk.

"Vaughn it is," she says, smiling.

She just radiates perfection. From head to tippy toe, there isn't a thing about her that doesn't make my body tingle with desire.

Fuck, I shouldn't have stood up to greet my guests. If I'm not careful, they might have the shock of their lives, seeing my discomfort come out in unexpected ways.

"You're looking a little flustered, brother," Vance says, giving me the perfect reason to look away. "What's the matter? Cat got your tongue?"

Not yet, but a pussy will be silencing me sooner than he might think.

"It's not every day three beautiful women walk into my office." Smooth. Good. No one's going to think I'm being a creep if everyone gets a compliment.

"Yeah, sure." Vance chuckles and tosses the plastic putter at me. I catch it mid-air and rest it on my table as he starts to walk. "I better get going then."

"To more meetings," Mom teases him.

"Yes-sirree," Vance says, slipping through the door. Before he leaves completely, he sticks his head back through and winks at me, nodding feverishly.

Is it that obvious? Sure, I know I'm not holding it together well, but if he can see my intrigue in Claire this quickly, what chance do I have to hide it from the parents?

Calm down, Vaughn. Don't need to add blushing embarrassment to the list of things

they can see straight through.

“So, you two are going to work closely together?” Henrietta asks, making her way over to the black leather sofa on the far side of my office.

“Close enough,” I admit, turning my attention back to Claire to see if she’s happy with the news. “Claire will be reporting to the company’s controller, but I like a hands-on approach with my team. Staying in the loop keeps troubles at bay.”

Total bullshit. I interact with whoever needs me when they need me and stay far away the rest of the time. For Claire, I’ll make an exception. I’ll make a thousand if it means getting closer to her.

Holy shit, what is this woman doing to me? These can’t be the thoughts of a sane man.

“I’m sure it’s going to be great getting to know you,” Claire says, and my legs start to wobble. I fall back into my chair, doing everything in my power—from breathing exercises to mental gymnastics—to get a grip on myself. “I mean working with you.”

Okay, so I’m not the only one too stunned to think straight. Fucking fantastic. We can dive into this pit of awkwardness together.

Mom chuckles at Claire’s slip of the tongue. “I’m sure you two are going to get along swimmingly.”

“I know we will.” I catch myself right before adding, Just look at her. She’s fucking exquisite . I’m sure that wouldn’t go down very well.

At least not with her mom. Mine, on the other hand, seems awfully playful when it comes to Claire and me stumbling over our words at one another.

“Speaking of getting along.” I get up from my seat and walk to Mom’s side. I give her a hug, both for hello and goodbye, and add, “I think it’s time for me to say goodbye. I’ve got something important I need to do.”

“You mean calling Vance back in here and finishing your round of eighteen?” She scoffs, gesturing with an eyebrow toward the tiny flag sticking out of a hole inside a plastic housing.

“Not in the slightest.” He thrashed me anyway. No way I’m challenging him to a rematch yet. “It’s way more personal than that.”

I won’t elaborate, half hoping she understands that it has something to do with the conversation we had a while back. But it doesn’t matter, really. I just can’t handle another line of questions about my work relationship with Claire when all I want to do is drink in her body and undress her with my eyes.

It’s definitely not the kind of environment I want to foster for our dear old parents.

“Why are you here, by the way?” My brows furrow in confusion.

Both mothers are here on Claire’s first morning, wandering through the office and introducing her to the Valentine boys face-to-face. Something smells fishy, and it’s not the day-old tuna can stinking up the kitchen.

“You, my little prince,” Mom starts, and Claire giggles at her nickname for me, “will just have to wait and see.”

Then it hits me. Like a ton of bricks landing square on my crown.

Holy shit.

I've been trying my hardest not to seem like a complete buffoon ever since Claire walked into my office, while Mom's been getting a kick out of seeing me stumble. She isn't introducing Claire to us one by one to show her around the office. No, she did it knowing my office was their last stop. Maybe with a little hope involved to make that dream we spoke about a few weeks ago a reality.

She cups my cheek in her hand as the realization dawns on my face.

"Well, we'll leave you to your very important work," Mom says.

Before I have a chance to say another word, the three ladies are out of my office, leaving me to the thunderous noise of my heart beating in my ears and a little lightheaded that it might finally be my time.

CLAIRE

Day one down, and where I'm not the kind of person to pat myself on the back, it was a great success. Not only are the people working at Valentine Group kind-hearted and more than willing to help me catch my footing here, but I've also felt the sting of Cupid's arrow.

I'm doing everything in my power to temper my expectations of what might happen with Vaughn somewhere down the road, but it's no easy feat. A few minutes with the man left me weak-kneed and out of breath. It took me twenty minutes to settle down after our meeting, and I couldn't for the life of me say why.

Maybe this is one of those situations where words can't do the talking, though. It's purely based on the swell of feelings that erupt through me whenever he crosses my mind.

Even now, I find myself struggling to focus on the words on my laptop screen. It's a summary of my tasks and what's expected of me in this position, but it seems so trivial and boring in comparison to the vivid image of Vaughn's face dancing across my mind.

A knock comes at my door, snapping me back to reality. I jump out of my chair and walk over to it, fanning air over my face to cool off. My attempt is in vain because when I open the door, the man who caused this sudden flush of heat rushing to my cheeks is standing outside it.

“Saw your light was still on. Thought I’d stop in and check on you.” He’s wearing a charming smile that fits perfectly on his face. “Hope I’m not interrupting anything.”

Towering over me, he can easily see over my head to inspect my desk.

“No, nothing at all. I’m just going over a few notes about role requirements and the like.”

Deep breaths, Claire. Don’t overthink it. It’s probably just him being a hands-on leader, like he said he was.

“I’m surprised to see you’re still here.” Vaughn leans against the doorframe, sliding one hand into his pants pocket. “We closed shop over two hours ago.”

“You know how it goes. First day in the office is always the hardest.” Is that how it goes? When I finished my studies in the United Kingdom, I spent a few months working as a junior accountant in a tiny firm to get an understanding of the job. But that was hardly any real experience, and with it being a husband and wife running a small team of six, it was way more relaxed than this. “I’m just trying to get my bearings and get comfortable. How better than to spend a few extra hours behind the desk and familiarize myself with what’s expected of me?”

Yes, that’s good. A diplomatic answer that doesn’t scream I’m nervous, can’t handle the pressure, and feel like I’m sinking .

“My first day here went differently.” Vaughn tilts his head to the ceiling as he travels down memory lane. “Victor and I went out, got drunk, and came into the office wearing yesterday’s clothes, reeking of booze. We called it early when the hangover kicked into full swing.”

“Sounds lovely.” I giggle at his upfront honesty. I’m not sure if many people would

have the nerve to say that out loud, especially while they're still in office.

"You know, we could still make your first night one to remember," he says, and butterflies immediately erupt in my tummy. "Dinner, drinks, I'll have you home before eleven. No, make it twelve."

Is he asking me on a date? That sure is what it sounds like. But maybe I shouldn't read into it too deeply. For all I know, he could do this with everyone who joins his team, and he's using surreptitious phrasing because of how he led into the question.

"Sounds like an offer I can't refuse." And not because it's my boss asking me, either. I'd give anything to have a night out with Vaughn.

To calm my nerves, right? Yeah, that's all. Not because I can't stop staring at him whenever we're in a room together. That would be crazy talk.

Shit, I'm not fooling anyone, let alone myself.

Some inexplicable force draws me closer to him. Makes me want to be at his side. I'd even take it as an opportunity to learn from him when what my mind really wants is to see what's hiding under his expensive suit.

"That's because it is." Vaughn's tone shifts sternly but somehow manages to keep the playful lightness he started with. "So, what do you say? And it can't be no."

"How many options do I have?" His words and tone do something to my body, and I find myself rubbing my thighs together.

"Just one, and it's a yes. So grab your things, and let's get out of here." I've gotta hand it to him; Vaughn knows how to take control. It's another trait that leaves me a little woozy and more than inclined to say yes.

“How about you give me your number, and I’ll meet you wherever we’re going?” I slip my hand into my pocket and pull out my phone. “I’m gonna be a while closing up for the night.”

“Fine.” Vaughn takes my phone after I’ve unlocked it and adds his name and digits to my contact list. “But don’t keep me waiting too long.”

He hands back my phone, and I immediately text him so he’s got my details. His phone makes a chirpy sound as the message comes through. With an ever-widening smile, Vaughn spins around and walks off, leaving me to finish what I need to do.

And it isn’t much. A quick glance at the notes I was busy with before shutting down my computer and gathering the things I scattered across my office throughout the day. By the time I finish, and just about to leave my office, a text from Vaughn pings on my phone with the name of a restaurant and a location pin for me to follow.

I can’t believe this is happening. I expected my first day to be a nightmare, but Vaughn has single-handedly turned it around with an offer of making it special. However, it makes me wonder what his intentions are more than before.

For me, it’s easy to accept his offer. I get to celebrate my first night working for a mega-corporation with my new boss instead of back home with my mom and dad. In this office’s less intense, high-stress environment, I’ll be able to fawn over him without judgment.

That leaves me with the burning question of what he’s after. Dinner, drinks, and a welcome aboard or something more? Could it be that he feels the same way about me?

My thoughts keep me distracted until I reach the underground parking lot. A few cars remain scattered across it, all high-end and fancy, but there isn’t a soul in sight.

The setting instantly creeps me out, as I'm sure it would anyone walking alone. Though I know there's nothing to fear with security actively patrolling the grounds and late-night workers still present, I can't help but shake it until I reach my car.

When I'm finally inside the driver's seat with the key in the ignition, my nerves start to fade. Okay, maybe no more late nights until I've gotten used to this place a bit better.

I turn the key, and the engine rolls over. Shifting the car into reverse, I cast my eyes into the rearview mirror, and that's when I see someone.

He's dressed well but not in a suit and tie like the other Valentine Group staff. A deep scowl cuts through his gaunt face as he stares back at me. My heart starts beating harder, faster, making me rush to slam my foot on the pedal and reverse out.

As I line my car up with the road, he waves goodbye. I do the same, realizing I just labeled this man a monster when he could literally be anyone. Security, a member of staff called in after hours, and that's why he shed his suit, literally anyone.

God, that's embarrassing. At least no one will know since, apart from screeching tires at my hasty escape, everything played out in my head.

At least I won't be troubled by these thoughts for very long. Because whenever Vaughn's around, my mind is no one thing...

Him.

5

VAUGHN

“ A nother round,” I say to the waiter hovering over our table. “Or would you like something less sweet than a Strawberry Daiquiri?”

Claire smiles a bright, white-toothed smile. It melts my heart into a puddle that drips into my belly. But I wish that were the only rush of liquids she’s spurned on inside of me.

I can handle a fluttering heart and a few blushes here and there, but good God, if any more blood pumps south and settles in my loins, I’m going to collapse on the floor.

How did he die? They’ll ask, teary-eyed.

Too much blood to the cock and none for the rest of him , a doctor will answer, with reddening cheeks all of his own.

“I should probably tell you now,” Claire starts, moving her cocktail glass closer to the waiter. He places it on his tray full of empty plates and napkins from the feast we just concluded. “I’m not much of a drinker. I’m already a little lightheaded, so it might not be a good idea to have anymore.”

“Then two bottles of water it is,” I say.

There’s no chance in hell I’m going to feed her more booze if she’s teetering on the

edge of inebriation. I want this to be a night to remember, not wondering how she ended up in my bed tomorrow morning or fearing I did something. IT has to be grand, spectacular, perfect...

Just like Claire is.

“Don’t let me stop your fun.”

“Being here is my fun,” I answer, reaching out to her. It’s only when my fingers brush against the back of her hand that I realize this isn’t a date. She isn’t my lover yet.

Slow and steady wins the race, I have to remind myself. But it’s so difficult around her. If I felt more secure in her intentions, I’d make my move right here and now.

I quickly pull my hand back in a hasty retreat while Claire’s eyes linger on the spot I just touched.

“I don’t know what came over me.” I swallow as her big blue eyes flick away from her hand and straight into mine.

“Probably the same thing that got into me,” she coos but quickly adds, “Too much liquor.” In a more frantic response as if to correct herself.

I gaze into her great, big oceans for a while, not saying a single thing as my mind runs away in a delusional sprint. Maybe I’m approaching this all wrong. We’re both adults, we’ve played the game, we understand that dinner after seven rarely means business.

Could it be that Claire shares my interest?

I'm sure the answer will slap me in the face before the end of the night. Which gives me even more reason to hold off on drinking in favor of getting drunk in her company.

"So, tell me. How was your first day?" I polish off the remnants of my drink just in time for our waiter to bring the water. He puts down two wine glasses with a slice of lemon in each and pours.

Claire first, then me. Good man, he knows to show the goddess respect before her underlings.

"It was fine, thanks." Claire grabs the stem of her wine glass and drags it over the table toward herself. "Nerve-wracking, especially with our moms throwing me in front of you three. But no complaints, not really. I think I'm going to have a great time here with..." She trails off after saying it, hoping I won't notice she didn't finish the sentence.

With me? Is that what's running through your head, my golden-haired minx?

"Splendid news. And don't let my brothers intimidate you." I feel a sheepish smile trickling over my face. "Behind the fancy suits and serious looks, they're big softies."

"What about you?" She takes her first sip.

"Me?" I ease back in my chair.

"Are you a big softy too?"

"There isn't a thing about me that's soft." Honesty blurts out of me, but this time, I don't fight it.

Sure, I'm acting as a total cliché. The new girl in the office catches the boss's eye—a story as old as time. But it's different, ever so slightly. Usually, the big boss has found a partner in these scenarios, and the woman who catches his eye torments him.

With me and Claire, we're both unattached, young enough to make stupid decisions but old enough to approach them with a certain level of tact. Guess we'll find out if I'm right about this in the morning. If I don't see letters from H.R. littered across my desk, it'll be a good sign.

“Oh my.” Claire turns away from me, and a light shade of red consumes her otherwise fair cheeks. She takes another hasty, nervous gulp of water, and I give her all the time and space she needs to process the thought.

Best part is, I'm not even lying. Every inch of me is rock solid. Has been since she sat down at this table.

“Well,” she starts, finding her courage to continue, “I'd say prove it, but I don't think that would be wise in a room full of people.”

“There are other ways.” The sheepishness on my face devolves into a devilish grin.

Fuck, there's no stopping it now, and no point in trying to either. I didn't choose to walk this road, but it sure pulled me onto it. Focused, determined, and wanting.

She raises a brow. “Is that so?”

“Sure. I could move a little closer.” I slip out of my chair opposite Claire and into the one next to her. “Take your hand.” Mine slips out from under the table while I speak, curling over hers resting on the wine stem. “And guide you straight to the problem you've caused.”

I wait for Claire to give me a sign of wanting to play along before going any further. As expected, her hand moves without my guidance—not far enough to get anywhere important, but more than enough for me to know I’m not delusional for thinking she’s into me.

Her eyes lock onto mine once I start leading her hand under the table.

“This is scandalous,” she says, making no effort to stop me.

“Nothing’s happening. You asked for proof, and I’m giving it to you.” Our hands collide with my knee, sending a shiver through my body.

Somebody pinch me. I need to know this isn’t a dream.

I stop shy of the tent in my pants, and Claire’s face twists into a half-pout, half-sowl. “Why’d you stop?”

Honest answer? As badly as I’m screwing it up, I’m still trying to adhere to slow and steady wins the race . What I say to Claire is, “You’re not ready for what my body has in store, pretty little thing.”

“There’s only one way to know for sure.” Her eyes stare into mine under a hooded gaze.

I flick my wrist, and her knuckles brush against my aching muscle through my trousers. Her eyelids widen, and her eyes nearly bulge out of their sockets. She hasn’t even done anything, and fireworks explode inside my head. My whole body starts to tense up, and I’m on the verge of pure fucking ecstasy.

If it weren’t for Claire’s reminder that we are, in fact, in a room full of people, I fear I might’ve made a mess of my pants.

“What the fuck?” she whispers in a far-off sort of way. “It just keeps going.”

“Told you you weren’t ready.” Sounding cool and slick when your whole world is erupting is much harder to do than I thought it would be.

Claire giggles, allowing her hand to take complete control, brushing my girth from tip to base. Once her inspection is completed, she pulls back and steeples her hands in front of her face.

“The evidence is inconclusive,” she says. “We’ll have to go somewhere more private for a thorough examination.”

And just like that...

I think I’m in love.

Page 6

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 2:45 am

6

CLAIRE

Vaughn drove like a bat out of hell from the restaurant, reaching speeds through the city I was very uncomfortable trying to match in my Kia Picanto. I suppose I should take some responsibility for his erratic behavior. I wasn't exactly subtle with my wants for the rest of the evening.

I don't even know where it came from. Him guiding me to the throbbing muscle in his pants or me insisting on taking our party elsewhere. One minute, I was a flustered mess, doing everything in my power to stand on my own two feet, and the next, I felt transformed. Reawakened from that nervous little thing into overly eager neediness only Vaughn Valentine can satisfy.

He's resting against his car's trunk when I pull into the parking spot next to him. By the time I've killed the engine, he's waiting outside my door, ready to pull it open. And oh, how it flies when the locks disengage. For a second, I'm worried that Vaughn smashed my door into his Porsche, but if he did, it doesn't seem to faze him.

"My lady," he says, extending a hand to me. I take it, and he pulls me out of my car.

His attempts at playing the charming, devilish gentleman are adorable, but they're slipping into his own incessant desires.

He guides me through the parking lot and front lobby of his apartment building with long, determined strides. Like we're on a mission and can't slow down. No, that

would be very bad. The fate of the world hangs on our shoulders. We're the only two people left who can accomplish this task.

The more I think about it, giggling fiercely at my internal game, the more I realize how accurate it is. Not saving the world. His cock sure seems magical, but that's a job for someone else. But we sure are the only two who can deliver insurmountable pleasure to the other.

We reach the elevator, and Vaughn's hands lock onto my hips. He pulls me into his muscular body, squeezing me tightly, with deep rumbles emitting from his chest.

"I'm gonna kiss you now," he says.

Such a strange phrase to hear from Vaughn, and it knocks me off balance. Vaughn catches me with one hand on the small of my back and dips me sideways as our lips meet for the first time. It erupts into an earth-rattling makeout session, with our tongues slipping and sliding between our mouths as he steals one breath after the next from me.

"Better than I imagined it would be." Vaughn breaks our kiss as the elevator comes to a stop. The doors open, and two people on the sixteenth floor get on. However, he doesn't shy away like I expect him to. Sure, he stopped kissing me, but he doesn't break his touch, holding me close. Bodies rubbing together. His girth pressing against my tummy as a constant reminder of what's to come.

The two people, older than us, probably in their fifties, focus their attention on the doors when the elevator starts to move again. A few hours ago, I'd have been too nervous and uncomfortable to stay in Vaughn's arms like this with others around. Now? I don't care anymore. This is his show. He's in full control. Body, mind, and spirit, I'm his.

“Have a good night, fellas,” Vaughn says to the pair as the elevator dings on the top floor of the building. He breaks away from me to walk into the hall, but as soon as we’re out of their line of sight, he latches onto me again. He pulls me into another explosive embrace.

We stumble our way down the hall to his apartment. Our hands move freely over one another’s bodies, and our minds sync in lust-fueled harmony.

Vaughn slams my back against his apartment door, and I throw my arms over his shoulders to steady myself against him. He rifles through his pockets for his keys with one hand while the other grabs at my ass, feeling and squeezing every inch it can touch. But as Vaughn opens the door, I realize that he wasn’t just trying to cop a feel. I stumble backward, nearly toppling over as the hardwood swings away behind me, but Vaughn’s there to catch me before I fall.

He walks me in, never breaking our kiss, and kicks the door shut.

Now, the real fun can start.

Vaughn moves with tactical precision from the entryway and through his house, never having to lift his head to see where he’s going. With every step, it seems, we shed a new layer of clothing. My heels and his shoes scattered in the entry hall. His jacket thrown over the living room sofa, and my top discarded on the dining room table. His shirt and pants, a pooled mess in his bedroom door, and my skirt not much farther away from them.

Then it’s just me and him, standing in our underwear, as he finally pulls away while his tongue runs over his lips.

“Christ, woman. You’re something else, you know that?” It’s followed by deep, husky breaths.

“Something good, I hope.” I take a few steps back. It’s partly to remove my bra in a slow, sultry way. Teasing him with a strip show we missed out on with the flurry of tearing our clothes off. The rest is for me to see the body that’s tormented my mind from the very second I met him.

And I’m not disappointed. Not one bit. Vaughn really is rock-hard all the way down. Every inch of him is lean and cut. Big arms, six-pack abs, and thighs that could crush a watermelon.

That’s not even talking about the most important one, stretching the front of his boxers ahead of him.

Vaughn’s eyes are glued to my chest as I unclasp my bra strap. His mouth drops a little when my tits bounce free from their confines, and one of his hands moves over the twitching muscle inside his boxer shorts.

“Like what you see?” I bite my bottom lip and try to control my racing heartbeat.

He doesn’t speak, or maybe he can’t, opting to respond with a nod.

I walk back to him, taking slow, methodical steps while hooking my thumbs into my panty’s waistband. I sink them, inch by inch, until I’m close enough to touch him, letting them fall to the floor completely.

“Fuck, you’re sexy,” Vaughn says, gently gliding his hand up and down his length.

I smile but don’t speak, giving his boxers the same treatment as my panty’s. He moves his hand away while I pull them down, and with a growling moan, his head shoots straight up to the ceiling.

His cock springs free, and before I manage to get them off completely, the tip brushes

against my belly. My eyes widen at the sight of the massive cock, standing upright and eager.

“Can I touch it, Daddy?” Oh, crap. Where the hell did that come from?

“Daddy?” Vaughn’s lips curl in a smirk. “That’s so fucking hot.”

Vaughn grabs my hand by the wrist and starts moving me toward his cock. Oh fuck, it’s actually happening. We’re going to do this. I can’t tell if I want to jump for joy or if I’m about to faint from my unsteady, rapid breathing.

“Well, it’s your fault.” I turn my nose up at him. “Because you’re so fucking hot.”

A deep growl rumbles out of his chest, but it quickly turns into a feverish moan as my fingertips graze his veiny erection.

“You’re going to split me in half,” I mutter, feeling it in full for the first time tonight. Thick enough that my hand can barely close when I try to wrap around it, and lengthy to the point I can’t see a world in which the whole thing will fit inside me.

“Daddy will be gentle,” he groans as I start to stroke him.

“Promise?”

Vaughn hoists me into the air and throws me onto the bed. He follows closely, and as soon as I stop bouncing, his mouth hits my clean-shaven legs.

“You’re incredible,” he mutters, starting to pepper kisses against my shin. Each one higher than the last, making his way upward. “Beautiful. Funny. Smart.” My body stiffens into a knot as he passes my knee and strikes sensitive thigh meat. “You’re the whole fucking package, baby girl.”

“Your package,” I whimper at the sensation of his cool breath tickling my damp inner thighs.

“That’s right. Mine. All mine.” He runs the flat pad of his tongue over the wet spot, getting his first taste of me. My legs close in around his head, pinning him in place. God, if this is how I’m reacting to him licking my leg, there’s no way I’ll be able to handle his mouth against my pussy.

“Fucking delicious,” he mutters, going for another lick. Again and again while his head continues moving on its course.

I throw my hands downward, clawing at handfuls of his hair. Deep in the throes of desire, I can’t stop myself from tugging and guiding him closer to my core.

Not that Vaughn needs anymore of an invitation. He looks up at me before he moves to his final destination. Fiery determination burns in his golden eyes, blending incredibly with his own desperation.

His tongue slips out of his lips, and the point strikes against my intimacy. I howl out at the soft, prodding muscle’s touch. He follows with another sharp lashing, but with the third, his mouth engulfs my clit, and my body starts to spasm uncontrollably.

Noises erupt from both of us. Vaughn’s primal in nature, focused on his task of thrusting pleasure into me. Mine, a mixed bag of whimpers, moans, and unnatural noises that no human should ever make. It’s a good thing he’s in a corner apartment. The poor neighbors would be traumatized hearing me.

While his mouth continues to work my sensitive bud, Vaughn hooks an arm under my knee and lets his fingers drift closer. It slithers across my skin, taking its time to reach my hole. A low grunt escapes him as it finds the silky, soaked spot between my legs.

Vaughn mutters something, but between his tongue lapping at me and my own heartbeat in my ears, I can't make out the words. Not that it matters; I couldn't answer him if I wanted to, being pushed closer and closer to the edge of release.

His other hand shoots up my body, grabbing my breast in a perfect cup as his thumb grazes my pussy lips. I choke out a noise, and taking that as a cue to go harder, Vaughn rams the digit inside me. A spasm of delight courses through every muscle in me, and I jolt forward, unable to control myself with it all becoming too much to handle.

"Don't stop, Daddy," I sputter. "Right there. You're gonna make me come."

Vaughn thrusts his thumb in and out while his tongue bashes haphazardly across my clit. My grip tightens in his hair as a tremendous moan echoes through his room.

As I come down from the high of an earth-shattering orgasm, Vaughn slithers his way up my body, trailing kisses against my skin until he comes face to face with me. His cheeks, chin, and lips are still glistening with my liquids, and a deep urge compels me to lean forward and lick myself off him. Vaughn groans when my tongue glides over his lips, but before I can get any further, he slots a hand behind my head and pins me there.

"That was to prove how serious I am," he says, pecking me on the lips. "You're mine, Claire. All mine. And I don't like to share." His cock flexes with his words, and the tip brushes against my pussy.

I groan as the tip settles into place against my entrance as if magnetized in place. Knowing what it wants and where it wants to go.

"All yours, Daddy. No one else's," I whimper.

A wicked grin flashes across Vaughn's face. He pecks me again, a few times in quick succession. "Good girl." And with those two little words, Vaughn jostles his hips, and his head breaks through my barrier.

He grumbles and groans while it moves deeper, and his face shows the signs of pure bliss from my tightness squeezing tightly around him.

His first push is slow. Giving us both time to adjust to one another's bodies and the intense sensations they bring. I can't speak for Vaughn, but for me, it's being filled to the brim while excruciating pleasure pulses over every single nerve.

I hook my arms around his shoulders as he drives every inch of himself inside of me. Well, that answers my question. He can fit. It's just very, very tight.

Every subsequent thrust, movement, and sound shows Vaughn's inability to stay in control over whatever animal is taking control of him. His moans are replaced by savage growls, his hands move to my waist, latching on to steady himself, and his eyes burn with the fiery glow of a man on a mission.

Before I even realize what's happening, Vaughn's plowing into me with hard, vicious thrusts. I dig my nails into his back and claw my way back to his shoulder. I stop on them, holding on for dear life as he pumps an orgasm out of me. My legs stiffen around his sides, and my eyes roll to the back of my head, but cresting over that mountain of bliss drives Vaughn forward in another burst of frantic movements between my legs.

"Ah, fuck." His voice booms above my head. "I'm gonna come."

"Yes, Daddy, do it. Come inside my tight little hole," I sob. "Give it to me. Fill me up?—"

The feeling of Vaughn's cock flexing against my walls shuts me up. He buries his face between my breasts, kissing and licking my hot, sweaty skin as he does what I ask and releases every drop from his balls. He thrusts into me a few more times for good measure, or maybe it's because he can't pull himself away.

"You're so fucking amazing, baby," Vaughn groans.

He crumbles on top of me, cups my cheek in his hand, and starts to kiss me passionately. He keeps me there until his body gives out on him, and he collapses in full, with his head finding its place atop my bosom.

Panting, spent, and floating in pure bliss, I can't speak. All I can manage is lifting my hand to his head and stroking the places where I must have ripped hair from.

Oh, fuck.

Maybe I was wrong.

After experiencing it firsthand, maybe Vaughn could save the world with his magic cock.

I wake the next morning to twelve messages from Mom asking where I am with increased panic, up until the last at around midnight.

Mom: Okay. I think I've figured it out. You better wear protection.

My face sets ablaze reading those words. Am I the only one who took so freaking long to realize what was going to happen between Vaughn and me? But maybe that's not what's leaving me in a mess. After all, protection was the last of our concerns last night.

And something tells me it won't become a part of our bedroom fun.

From the en-suite bathroom, I hear the shower running. I rush out of bed and into the bathroom, seeing my man glistening beneath the water in his lean, muscled glory.

"Well, good morning, sleepy head. Hope I didn't wake you," he says, scooting over and gesturing that I can join if I want.

No, scratch that.

I will join.

I strip out of his shirt and spring into the shower next to him.

"You didn't," I say, shivering as the water strikes my naked body. "But I kinda hoped you would have."

"Is that right?" Vaughn steps closer, giving me a deep kiss before he shows me where the soap, shampoo, and conditioner are.

"It is. Because now we don't have any time for some more fun before work," I tease.

"I'm not known for my punctuality." Vaughn's hand travels around my body while he speaks. "And no one's going to miss us for an hour or two."

"On my second day?" I roll my eyes at him. Had it been my second month, I'd have indulged him without a second thought.

"You make a good point. Better get a move on then. The quicker we get this day over with, the quicker we can come straight back to this bed." He gives me a gentle tap on the ass, and I instantly regret my decision to decline.

After our shower, we have a cup of coffee and a slice of toast with jam for breakfast. Vaughn scans through a newspaper, and I reply to my mom and let her know I'm safe. Then it's off, back into the rat race of working for a corporate powerhouse.

Vaughn walks me, hand in hand, to my car when we get outside. Well, he's walking. I'm skipping from one cloud to the next. But staring at his face, I notice it go from the dashing smile he hasn't been able to shake since the shower to far more stern for my liking.

"I think you've got a flat," he says. Looking over to my car, I see the same thing he does. The right-hand side is limp and low to the ground, while the left looks normal.

"Damn it," I say under my breath. I still have to go home, brush my teeth, and change out of the clothes I wore yesterday.

"Never fear, not while I'm here." Vaughn releases my hand and slides it across my back, pulling me into a hug. "I'll drop you off at your place and take you in myself."

"Are you sure? It's a lot to ask."

"I'd be delighted." He smirks. "Me and your mom can look at your baby pictures over a cup of?—"

He falls silent as we round the side of my car and see what caused the flat. Two long gashes in each tire, made by a steak knife still sticking out the front one. What makes my heart jump and my body tense painfully is the insignia at the bottom of the blade's handle.

It's the steak house we were in last night.

"What the fuck?" Vaughn snarls. It's the wrong time to think it, but he's so hot when

angry. So much so that he melts away my fears and turns them into a little puddle of lust trickling down my thighs.

Jesus Christ, Claire. This isn't the time!

He's seething. Heavy breaths raise and sink his chest in rapid succession.

"Don't let this bother you. We'll get to the bottom of it and make them pay." I know he probably means to literally pay for the damages, but what I won't give to see him go full monster on the bastard trying to terrorize me.

I slide my hand back into his and interlock our fingers, squeezing tightly into his side.

My protector.

Ready to burn this whole world down if it means I'll be safe.

Vaughn Valentine couldn't be any more perfect if he tried.

Page 7

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 2:45 am

7

VAUGHN

The prick who did this better hope I never find him. I'll rip his fucking head off and kick it to the dogs. How dare anyone think they can come to my home and scare my woman?

I'm white-knuckling the steering wheel as I drive through the busy New York morning to our office. After an interview with the police and a short stint at her parents' place, Claire seems much calmer than when we stood beside her vehicle.

I'm happy to see it. She shouldn't have to deal with this bullshit at all, and with me as her protector, she never will.

"Do you think they're right?" Claire's gentle voice snaps me out of my fury.

"What's that?" I don't look away from the road, afraid she might see my anger. "I disappeared there for a second."

"The cops." She sighs, no doubt noticing my fury. "Do you think it's just kids being vandals?"

"Sure." I try to console her, but I'm going to fall flat if I try to further the lie.

We're in New York, and a fresh set of tires gets slashed a couple of times an hour. I'm sure the cops had good intentions when they came up with the theory of rowdy

teens causing havoc, but I can't disregard the fact that the knife came from the restaurant we were sitting in. While we ate, drank, and fucked, some piece of shit made his move.

It's too well-thought-out to be some hooligans getting their kicks on someone else's misery.

"So, you don't," she says glumly.

"I don't know what to think." My first bit of honesty so far. "But what I can tell you is that it won't happen again." I'll make damn sure of that.

"And can't that be enough to put it behind us for now?" She rests a hand on my leg. "No good's going to come of being this angry, Vaughn." She pauses, and from my periphery, I see a naughty smile trickle over her face. "I mean, Mr. Valentine."

It makes me smile and soothes my burning temper.

"Fine, I'll try not to think about it anymore." I turn into the office parking lot. "You're right, anyway. Why think about some mystery person when I can daydream about you until tonight?"

"Now you're getting it." Claire winks at me and lazily drags her hand over my cock. It thickens instantly, and her punishment would've been finishing what she started, but there are way too many people rushing through the parking lot to get inside the building.

We leave the car and head inside, taking the elevator to our floor with the stoic seriousness a workplace expects. I walk with Claire to her office, and as much as it aches in my marrow to leave her without a kiss, I stay strong and head to mine.

Once inside and seated in my chair, my secretary comes in and gives me a rundown of what my day entails. The same old business, involving meetings with different department heads, a chat with Victor about a budget increase for the marketing department, and sitting in on one of Vance's meetings.

"Oh," my secretary Suzy says before slipping out the door. "And don't forget that you're meeting with Joel Abrahams at five."

I've never smiled at having to terminate someone from the company. It's a sorry business where no one walks away any better than before. This time, I can't help myself.

If Joel Abrahams had not succumbed to greed, he would have never been ousted from his seat. And if he were still here, Claire's perfect, round behind wouldn't be planted in it now.

"Right, yes. Joel's severance. It's gonna be good to be rid of him once and for all." Not that he's been much of a thorn in my side since we fired him.

Today's meeting was at his request, and Victor insisted I take it. But I'm certain it won't go the way he thinks it will.

Hours fly by as I get on with my day, and before I know it, Suzy's back in my office with a folder in her hands. "Joel's in the lobby. He should be up in a minute. Here are the notes you requested."

"It's five already? I almost can't believe it." And it isn't because work kept me busy. Five o'clock means one last conversation before I get to have Claire in my arms again.

"Time flies when you're having fun." Suzy places the folder on my desk. "Is there

anything else you need from me?”

“No, thank you. You’re free to leave whenever you’re ready.” I grab the folder and thumb through the first few pages. But something catches my eye on one of them—a messy divorce that resulted in Joel throwing a brick through his ex-wife’s living room window.

It’s crazy. Don’t even think about it. My logical mind screams, but the other half turns in a different direction. Prone to violent outbursts when he’s upset, what if Joel Abrahams had something to do with Claire’s wheels?

A few minutes go by, giving me enough time to glean the most important information in Joel’s file. Not a minute too soon, it seems, and Joel steps into my office with a shit-eating grin plastered over his mouth. He dressed up for the occasion, wearing a black suit and red tie. His hair is neatly combed in a thinning side path, and the only stubble on his face is a five o’clock shadow.

“Vaughn,” he greets, walking over to me. Hearing my name out of his mouth feels an atrocious lack of respect. In the five years I’ve worked here, he’s never called me anything other than Mr. Valentine, so maybe there’s more reason to smile by him getting axed.

“Joel.” I stare at him straight-faced, showing no signs of my suspicions. “Have a seat, let’s get started.”

He sits, kicking one leg over the other. “You know, I could sue you for declining me a worthwhile severance.”

His threat might have scared me under different circumstances. He’s good with numbers, has a semi-decent understanding of the law, and knows how a company is meant to operate regarding terminations. He’s done enough of them to know what

goes into them.

“You could,” I say calmly.

I want to see where this train of thought is going to carry him before I deliver my death knell.

“And I will.” He rests one hand under his chin, stroking it with his thumb to convey seriousness. “I worked for this company for nine years. I deserve a decent severance package. From my calculations, oh, let’s say, eight hundred to a million.”

“More than reasonable.”

“So?” His brow furrows in frustration.

“So, what?” I force my face to remain neutral, doing everything in my power to keep from smiling.

“Get your fucking checkbook out and start writing it up,” Joel hisses.

“Oh. No, I’m not going to do that.”

“What did you just say to me?” He drops the hand and sits forward in his seat, flexing his chest in some failing intimidation tactic.

Mocking a man with violent tendencies isn’t the smartest thing I could do, but damn is it fun.

“See, Joel, it would have been a reasonable assumption and I would have paid it fairly had you not stolen from our company. It’s all in this folder—proof of every transaction you made from our accounts into some offshore bank.” I slide the file

over my desk to him, but he doesn't need to look at it to know I'm right. It isn't some smoking gun in case he comes running back with his lawyers. Valentine Group was very clear about why he was being dismissed from the start.

"Ninety-seven thousand, three-hundred and forty-two dollars, and twenty-seven cents." I list the exact amount he stole from us. Joel's eyes widen and his jaw drops, realizing he set up and walked into his own trap. "You can thank Victor for not wanting the bad press that comes with a trial, but your sticky fingers pocketed your severance from the day you started working here."

"You can't ... I'll call my lawyers, and I'll..." he stammers, searching for a way to fight back.

"You'll get out of my office, get in your car, and go home. You'll put your time at Valentine Group behind you and go on doing whatever it is people in your position do. And you'll be grateful that you were given an opportunity to move on because if you come after us, Joel, we will destroy you."

"This isn't the end of this, Vaughn." Joel stands and makes his way to the door.

"For your sake, Joel, it better be." I give him a few seconds to walk before launching out of my chair and following.

There's no way I'm letting this psycho wander through my office unattended, especially not when Claire's alone in her office.

CLAIRE

I s every day going to be this hard working here? The people are great, all kind, and very helpful, but it's not them making it challenging. It's my ever-increasing need to fend off excuses to see Vaughn. Walking into his office in a slow, sultry saunter. Circling his desk with the false need to give him something. Dropping what I'm holding or knocking a pen off his desk and bending over with my ass in his face to drive him crazy.

Goosebumps run over my arms at the thought alone. Knowing it will drive him crazy. That he wouldn't be able to control himself, and his hands would graze against my legs. Travel up my skirt to my soaking core and deliver me unto a whole new world of pleasure.

Okay. It's my second day. These thoughts will calm down. Right?

The niggling sensation in my tummy answers with a firm no. That the answer is yes, working at Valentine Group is going to be a damn near impossible task.

And yet, I can't wait to see it through.

Three knocks come at my door, and I hop to my feet. Time to leave already? How delightful.

"Coming," I say, turning my laptop off and grabbing my handbag. I stayed neat

today, so I didn't have to keep Vaughn waiting when he came to collect me.

My heart starts skipping in my chest as I head for the door. Excitement makes my walk feel closer to a jog. But as I grab the handle and pull it open, I nearly collapse backward at the tall, rake-thin man blocking my path out.

Wait, I recognize him. But from where? Dressed in a suit, he might be someone around the office. It's one of the many faces I've seen but haven't had the opportunity to meet in person. Another friendly soul coming to greet the new girl. But the sour look on his face dispels the notion that he stopped by to say hello.

And when it contorts into a scowl, I remember where I've seen this face before. In my rearview mirror, when my heart felt like imploding from fear in the creepy, empty parking lot.

Oh shit.

"Y'know, this used to be my office." His eyes turn up to the ceiling, moving from one corner to the other. "And I was rather fond of it."

I don't speak. Can't. Frozen in place like a deer in headlights, watching him slowly walk closer.

"But you had to go and take it all away from me, didn't you?" A few seconds pass, and with each one, his nostrils flare, and his breathing intensifies. "Answer me."

His loud voice makes me stumble back in a panic, and I nearly trip over the visitor's chair in front of my desk. His intense green eyes stare deep into mine as if searching for something—an answer to the delusions running through his head, no doubt.

None will come. I've been here for two days. I have no idea who this guy is or what

he's talking about.

"Answer me!" he roars again.

"I don't know what you're talking about" is the best thing I can come up with. Tears prick my eyes, and my blood runs ice cold.

There's always got to be something, right? Life looks at your happiness and chooses to have a laugh at your expense.

"Yeah, you do." His voice returns to a more neutral state. "You ruined my life. And for what? To fuc?—"

"Hey, Joel." I hear him before I see him. My big, strong man. My protector rushing to my aid.

The monster looming over me turns around, but he never manages to meet Vaughn face to face before a massive fist connects with his jaw. Following up, Vaughn grabs his shirt and drives two more punches into his chin until Joel's legs go limp, and the only reason he's still standing is because Vaughn's keeping him that way.

"Should've listened when I told you to go," Vaughn says, pushing him with the hand balled in Joel's shirt. Joel stumbles a few steps before the thunderous blows to his face take hold, and he crumbles to his ass.

He says something incoherent, but Vaughn ignores him, rushing to my side.

"Are you okay?" He rests his hand against my neck while his eyes scan my body for any obvious injuries. "Did he hurt you?"

I shake my head, feeling the tears in my eyes melt away to astonishment at how well

Vaughn handled the situation.

I must have lost my mind somewhere through it all. In a matter of seconds, I went from a feeble mess about to beg for mercy to wanting nothing more than for Vaughn to take some of that ruthless aggression out on my pussy.

“Mr. Valentine.” Another voice comes from my door.

Vaughn points in Joel’s direction, and two men wearing black pants, white shirts, and guns on their hips rush over to the knocked-down brute. The security guards zip-tie his hands behind his back and drag him out of my office.

“I’ll never let anything happen to you, Claire,” he says, with the same brooding severity he had on entering my office. “You’re safe, and I’m going to keep it that way.”

I stand up on my toes and peck him on the cheek. I shouldn’t let my wants get in the way of this beautiful moment, but seeing Vaughn beat the shit out of someone to defend me is too much to ignore. So, I say the words I know will drive him crazy and fulfill my deepest, darkest wishes.

“I know you will...” —I lower myself and look at him with a pout— “Daddy.”

Exactly as I wanted it to do, that little word throws Vaughn off the deep end.

VAUGHN

Pavlov. He's the guy with the dog, right? Conditioned it to come running for food anytime he rang a bell.

Well, I must be that dog, and Claire calling me Daddy is my bell. It's a simple word. One I've heard a million times in my life and probably said at some point too. But with her? It's my kryptonite. Changes me from a man into a lust-hungry monster that cannot be satiated by anything other than Claire.

I feel the sting of my bruised knuckles as I wrap my hand behind her head and take it in a firm grip. The adrenaline that surged through my body in preparation for a fight shifts south to my loins, where it nestles in my throbbing erection.

I pull her into me, then up and lock our lips. A whimpering sound passes through her and into me, confirming my suspicions that she said it on purpose. That this is where she wanted my heroic attempt at saving her to end. My free hand moves up the side of her body, stopping at her breast and cradling it through her shirt.

"Hold on a second." She tries to pull away, but I keep her locked in place. "I need to shut the door."

"You're not going anywhere." Using my hand behind her head, I turn her around. She moans, flinging a hand up to her mouth to silence herself. I lay my free arm across her desk, and with a sway of my body send everything atop falling all over the floor.

“Oh God,” Claire mewls.

I press her body forward and onto the desk, pinning her ass up over the table.

“Be a good girl, and don’t move,” I order, heading for the door. I push on one end, not realizing just how revved up I really am, and it slams shut.

Claire’s looking over her shoulder at me when I face her again. A naughty smile has crept its way over her face, and a twinkle of wicked delight dances across her eyes.

“See, Daddy? I didn’t move.” She arches her back and sucks in her lower lip. “Can I have my present now?”

I tug my zipper down while taking slow, deliberate steps back to Claire. I prefer to do this naked, but even in my lust-driven state, I’m not foolish enough to get naked in my office building.

“Depends.” I stop behind her and free my cock from my briefs. It jumps free and falls against Claire’s ass with a hefty thud. She squeals in excitement, grabbing the far end of her desk tightly and driving her hips back to feel my length explore more of her body.

“On what?” she asks, starting to move in a more rhythmic manner against me.

“What it is you want.” I bend over, hooking the bottom of Claire’s skirt in a loose grip and slowly dragging it up. I stop at the crest of her ass, finding myself staring for an ungodly length of time at the sliver of black covering my promised land.

Claire giggles, noticing my leering. “You’ve already given it to me. Well, halfway.” She thrusts her hips back, and my manhood slides between her cheeks.

My grip tightens on the hem of her skirt as I try to keep myself upright at the overwhelming pleasure her movement jolts through my body. Enough messing around. I need this.

NOW.

I hoist her skirt up the rest of the way, and as I bring my hands back to my sides, I tear her panties away with them. They sink into a bundled knot around her ankles.

“We can’t have that.” I grab my cock by the base and slide the tip against her. I hold myself steadier this time, still feeling the thrum of satisfaction tickling my nerves. But I’m back in the driver’s seat, so I won’t be tumbling over today. “You’re my good girl. You deserve everything you want and more.”

“Then give it to me,” she whines. “Give it to me now. I want it, Daddy.”

“Ah, fuck,” I roar, forgetting myself for a moment. At this point, I don’t give a shit who hears me. I glide my head through her slickness one last time to soak it as best I can before resting it against her entrance.

Delighted moans escape Claire, and she drops her head against the table. I’m sure it wasn’t intentional, but lowering her front, propping her ass out, and giving me an even better view of the tight, wet hole waiting to be stuffed.

I gulp down, breathing steady to combat my lightheadedness, and plunge my girth into Claire’s depths. Choking back a noise, trying desperately to escape me, Claire doesn’t have the same restraint. I reach over her, but the motion drives me deeper inside, but this time, I manage to still her noises by clasp her mouth shut with my palm.

She sputters against my hand as I start to rock back and forth. Slow and steady, at

first. The irony is almost enough to make me chuckle. But soon, the animal inside me takes control, and I'm sliding my full length back before slamming it into her.

Claire bucks her hips into each one of my strokes, extracting her own pleasure from this scandalous ride. Her moans into my palm, and the sound of our flesh slapping together cascades through the room like the greatest music I've ever heard.

It only takes a few more thrusts to feel my muscles tighten. Threatening to cut my fun short, but there isn't a thing I can do to stop it. While I hold her mouth shut, I need to do the same to myself as I reach my peak. A fierce war cry erupts out of me, barely stifled against my covering. But even while my body grows limp and weak from releasing everything I have, deep inside Claire, she continues to push back. Takes every thrust she can before my legs give in, and I collapse on top of her.

She twists her head out of my grip and starts to kiss me. I want to meet her with the same passion she brings to it, but my body, mind, and spirit have been fucked right out of me.

"I gave it some thought," she says, somehow still bouncing with energy while I'm more of a husk than a man. She wriggles out from under me and hops back to her feet to fix her skirt. "I don't think that was only a present for me."

"Okay, then what was it?" I roll onto my back, panting for air. Claire grabs my cock and shoves it back inside my pants. She keeps her palm over it once it's tucked away, stroking up and down, making me want to throw myself into her for round two already.

"It was a present for both of us." She leans over me, keeping one hand over my throbbing, oversensitive manhood while the other moves to my face. "Me, for staying in place, and you." She leans in and gives me a deep, long kiss. "For protecting your good girl."

I throw my arms around her, finding a new sense of vigor from her words, and stand upright. Claire bursts into a laughing fit when I start carrying her, digging her legs into my sides for stability while I go in for another kiss.

“I’d do it again in a heartbeat,” I say, once our lips part, “because you’re mine. And I protect what belongs to me.”

Page 10

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 2:45 am

CLAIRE

Six Months Later

“W hy so glum, honey bun?” Vaughn asks. The cheery way with which he speaks isn’t evident on his face at all. He looks at me with deep concern twisting his face and extends his arms out for a hug. “We’re two days out from the biggest day of our lives. I thought you’d be over the moon.”

I flop against his body and hold back my tears from spilling all over his silky, soft white shirt.

“It doesn’t fit anymore,” I mutter against his chest.

“What doesn’t fit?” He strokes my back tenderly, speaking in the calmest voice he can muster.

“My wedding dress.” I wipe my face against his chest in frustration. It isn’t because I’m angry at anything in particular. I knew it didn’t fit this morning, and I wasn’t nearly as bothered by it. But now it seems like the whole world is about to end because I can’t close the zipper on that white dress.

I’ve said it before, and I’ll say it again. Hormones are a bitch.

“Then we’ll get it resized.” He pecks a kiss against my crown and squeezes me tightly into the hug.

“There’s no time. We’re a few days out and—” I cut myself off before I get lost in a panic. “I just want it to be perfect.”

“You’re going to be there. You’re going to become my wife. And we’re going to spend the rest of our lives together as the happiest of families. How could it get any more perfect?”

“But what about everyone else? It’s a wedding. They’ll be expecting?—”

“Screw everyone else.” Vaughn’s turn to still my ever-growing nerves. “They can count themselves among the lucky ones for being invited. It’s not their day, it’s ours.” His hand slides under my shirt and over my swollen tummy. “Well, ours and this little fella right here.”

“You really mean it?” I look up at him. Vaughn moves his hand out from my shirt and cups my cheek, using his thumb to wipe away a few straggler tears that managed to fall.

“More than anything in the world,” he says. “Because I love you. I want to spend the rest of my days at your side. It wouldn’t bother me if you were in a stunning dress or oversized sweatpants and one of my T-shirts. You’re perfect from head to toe, and nothing’s going to change that.”

“I love you.” I swing my arms over Vaughn’s shoulders and pull him down to me for a kiss.

I don’t know how Vaughn manages to do it every single time. Easing me out of my woes and leaving a smile where a quivering lip used to be. That’s got to be a sign of true love, right? That no matter how hard things become, your partner can show you the silver lining.

“But it’s your fault, you know?” I say with a humph. “If you put this baby inside me a few weeks later, we wouldn’t be having this little problem.”

“Yeah, but how could I wait?” He smirks, starting to sway his hips in a slow dance to non-existent music. “And I’d be a terrible father if I didn’t let our child be part of such a monumental day.”

I move with him, dancing across our entire apartment, giggling freely now. In some ways, I suppose he’s right. We’re starting our family off the right way. Together for every special occasion right from the start.

And what a wonderful family it’s going to be. I stop our dance and pull him against me for another hug. Vaughn gives in without any fight, stroking the back of my head as he holds me close.

The future is bright, and it’s only getting brighter with Vaughn Valentine in it.

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 2:45 am

VAUGHN

One Year Later

“ So, Mother, was it worth it?” Victor asks, his head resting on Olivia’s shoulder.

His question silences the table, and Claire looks at me as if to ask what he’s talking about. I roll my shoulders, genuinely confused, as I have been every time they share this secret conversation of theirs.

“Was it worth it?” Mom repeats the question, casting her eyes over the horizon as she ponders it. “Three wishes and three happy sons, all in love with fantastic young women, and, most importantly, I get to say I told you so . Yes, it’s worth it.”

Victor chuckles, but it quickly erupts into a deep belly laughter that catches Addison’s attention. Still too young to understand but curious and observant, our little girl stares at her uncle in awe and bewilderment. Claire giggles fiercely at Addison’s reaction to Victor, and it’s that sound right there that melts my heart.

“Grandma had three wishes and didn’t share?” Vincent frowns. “That’s not fair.”

“It isn’t, my boy.” Vance tousles his son’s hair. “But without those wishes, you wouldn’t be here.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Vince asks in the broken English of a young kid.

Vance looks at Hana, then at me for some reason, and shakes his head. “Nope. Not

going anywhere near that one. I'll explain it when you're older." The table howls with laughter.

It's hard to believe that one year ago, I was sitting in this exact same chair, feeling empty and alone. Things can change in the blink of an eye, and Claire proves it. Without ever needing to try, she gave me hope, a sense of purpose, and a promise that everything would be all right.

And those feelings are amplified tenfold, sitting among my family and relishing in all our successes.

"You look beautiful today," I whisper to my wife. She looks beautiful every day, of course, but I love to remind her of it. And no matter how many times I say it, her cheeks always flush the same rosy pink that makes me fall in love with her all over again.

Claire adjusts herself until her lips are right against my ear.

"You're just saying that because you're trying to get in my pants, Daddy," she says in a breathy whisper, doing her best to hide it from the table.

A rolling wave of desire runs through my body when I hear that word. From the very first time she said up until now, it always flicks a switch in my brain that makes me want to do unspeakable things to my woman.

"You're not wrong." I speak a little louder since no one can guess what we're talking about.

However, I've always been terrible at judging these things, and as a napkin flies from Vance's side of the table and lands against my chest, I realize I've fumbled it again.

"Get a room," he hoots. "No one wants to see you two making out."

More laughter, more joy, and another reminder that life is good. Great.

That everything has fallen into place, and it can't get much better than right here, right now.

My wife at my side, our baby in her arms. My brothers and their partners, with nieces and nephews scattered around the table. My mom, smiling, so close to tears, I swear she's about to burst into a wailing fit because of how happy she is.

And I'm right there with you, Mom.

Because this life is damn near perfect.

The End

Thanks for reading!