



# Her Forbidden Flesh

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**Category:** Suspense Thriller

**Description:** ADDIE

There's something wrong with me. The things I want, the things I crave aren't normal. I know I'm crossing lines, pushing boundaries I shouldn't, but the man in the skull mask swears he'll give me everything my body needs with only one condition.

He gets to keep me.

So, I give him a list and an all-access pass to me. All of me. Whenever. Wherever. I'm his.

It's all fine until the mask is removed and the face beneath is the one person I have no business touching, never mind giving my body and heart to. But it's far too late now.

RHYS

Addie is mine. She fights it, tries to run, but I am always one step behind her, tucked in the shadows, outside her window, watching her. She's my light, my only anchor to sanity. Without her, I am nothing.

So, I give her the thing she wants most. I give her the fear and pleasure she whispers to me in the darkness. I give her everything she puts on her list even though I know if she ever saw beneath my mask, it would be game over.

Society and our parents may never understand, but she is mine. Her body, heart, soul is mine, and she can run, but nothing will ever stop me from catching her. Taking her. Tasting her sweet, Forbidden Flesh.

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RHYS

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NINE MONTHS AFTER HALLOWEEN...

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I don't expect people to understand why I'm standing in the freezing downpour, watching the restaurant across the street. I don't expect them to approve of my response if they ask, because, although I'm dressed in black with a mask covering most of my face and hugging the shadows, I'm not hiding anything.

I'm watching Addie.

I'm waiting for her to finish her interview so I can follow her home, climb her fire escape, and wait for her to fall asleep. Perfectly normal behavior. Not that the authorities would agree, nor would they understand that Addie is mine. My light. The flame in the darkness pulling me to her like a moth.

She's my reason for existing.

The reason I moved three hours away from my job to be closer to her because she won't move back home because of me.

I love her with every breath in my lungs.

Some might call that level of obsessiveness unhealthy, but I never said I wasn't crazy. I'm a level of deranged and dangerous that probably should be studied.

For her. Only her.

Addie with her wild mane of dark curls, her forest green eyes and porcelain features stirs something in my chest. Something hungry and feral, like I would sink my teeth into her flesh until she's bleeding just to mark her as mine.

Just the thought of her sweet flesh in my mouth, under my hands, tight around my cock has my fingers twisting into fists at my sides.

But I have to wait.

Across from her, the drab silhouette in the dark suit picks up his phone for the third time when the screen lights up. Addie pauses in whatever she's saying, but I can tell from the way her lips pinch, this job isn't going to happen.

Good.

I don't need her changing her plans in three days because this asshole wants her to start right away. I have worked too hard making sure everything is exactly right to fail now.

Hell, job or not, I will have Addie to myself this week. The plans I have for her, the fucking things I'm going to do to her fucking body...

Fuck! I need to calm down. I need to focus. I can't be hard in the middle of the street. People will definitely call the cops, and I can't get arrested right now. Addie's expecting me.

I train my attention back to the window and Addie's solitary shape watching the man push back his chair, phone already at his ear, one finger held aloft for Addie to wait.

Addie.

The woman he should have been focused on. The woman his phone should have been muted and ignored for. Instead, he's hurrying away, leaving Addie alone at the table.

If I could go to her, I would. I would take her bunched fist off the table. I would lace her fingers through mine and take her away from there. Away from him. I would steal her. I would put her on the back of my bike and take her home where she belongs with me.

But my Addie isn't weak. She's not mild. I'm not surprised when she gathers up her clutch, gets to her feet and marches to the doors.

A moment later, she's huddled under the awning as the rain pounds down on the city. A dark coat covers her dress, and she tugs the collar closer as she squints down the street, searching for a cab no doubt.

She can't see me. Even if she catches a glimpse, all she'll see is my bike helmet, but I still inch a step back, fully submerging myself with the night.

In case.

Just in case she turns those hypnotic pools of green across the busy street to where I'm watching her. Protecting her.

Not that she would see it that way. She'd have questions I can't answer. She might get scared, tell me to stop and I can't stop now that she's pulled me in so far into her games that I can't even think straight.

“Will you play with me?” eighteen-year-old Addie’s voice whispers across the cavities of my brain like silk over naked flesh.

Fuck, baby, yeah, I’ll play with you. I’ll play out every dirty fantasy in your pretty head.

She started this. She haunted me, lured me into her web and filled my veins with promises of her sweet, tight cunt. It was mine the second she let me spread her wide across the floor. It was wrong and we both knew it, but she begged me to use her, take what I wanted, and I almost did. I was so fucking close!

Instead, my Addie got down on the knees she uses to worship God and sucked my cock. She guzzled my cum like it was her job and kept sucking after I was empty down her throat, sealing both our fates. Committing a sin we both knew no one could ever know about.

The memory alone has me reaching to soothe my throbbing cock chaffing against the soggy front of my jeans. I have to push the rest of that night from my mind to keep my focus on the present.

The doors behind Addie flies open and the man charges out, face red with probably embarrassment. Maybe anger. Doesn’t matter. I’m pushing out of my corner and starting across the bustling street in their direction. I stay several feet away, phone out like I’m texting someone, but fully listening to the two.

“Hey, where are you going?” he’s saying.

“Home. You seem busy.”

The guy chuckles, the sound raspy with nerves. “No, no, my wife ... my ex-wife was putting the kids down and they wanted to say goodnight. Come back inside and we

can finish, unless you'd like to go somewhere quieter...?"

Addie sucks in a slow, calming breath. Showing much more restraint than me; I'm half a second away from slamming my fist into his mouth.

"Mr. Landon, I appreciate the opportunity, but I don't think this job is the right fit for me."

"You're wrong." He laughs again, but I'm not liking the tension he seems to be holding back. "I think you're perfect for ... the position. Let's get a cab and go somewhere less distracting and you can finish telling me about yourself."

"I would rather dry fuck a cactus," Addie declares in the same deadpan tone and even my eyes bulge. "Thank you again for this experience, but it's a hard no thanks."

"Wait. Hold on now."

The fucker grabs her arm and I'm ready to commit several felonies when Addie slaps the appendage off and spins to face the startled fuck.

"Touch me again and I will slice your dick up the vein from balls to tip. You picked the wrong girl, Mr. Landon. I am so many layers of crazy you can't even imagine, so don't try me."

Landon staggers back three steps. A wise move. I would too if Addie was looking at me with that level of murder in her darkened eyes.

Satisfied she has made her point, Addie stalks away in the opposite direction from where I'm standing. She's using her purse to shield her face, but she's still soaked in seconds.

“Fucked up bitch!” Landon sneers under his breath.

I wait until Addie has a good head start before I move forward.

I step directly into the fucker’s path and have the pleasure of watching his eyes widen with surprise, then fear as I loom over him with my mask covering my face. He can probably see his own reflection in my visor staring wide eyed back at him.

Without a word, because Addie has already made her case, I let him taste the leather covering five bunched fingers. The crack of fist into flesh is muffled by the rain, but his cry of pain isn’t, and I relish in it.

I hit him again across the jaw and send him sprawling across the wet concrete in a pathetic heap of whimpering and pleading.

“Next time, I’ll break your fingers for touching what’s mine.”

I leave him in the filth where he belongs and hurry to keep up with Addie.

I catch up to her at the corner as she stands waiting for a car to finish making their turn. She doesn’t look up, doesn’t even notice when I stop just behind her. Close enough that I could twist a damp lock of hair around my finger.

We would have to discuss this obliviousness she seems to have, this lack of awareness of her surroundings, but part of me likes to think she feels so safe because I’m there watching over her. Still, I keep my distance as I walk with her the five blocks to her apartment. She’s soaked and not really making any effort to hurry which annoys me; she’s going to get sick.

I ball my fingers into fists at my sides and glower at her slender back.

Walk faster! I want to snap at her. Call an Uber. Hail a cab. Don't just walk in the rain.

But Addie carries on the whole way with me trailing behind her. The soft click of her heels on wet concrete matches the patter of rain drops, the rush of traffic. I don't know what she's thinking, but it's definitely not the possibility of pneumonia.

My frustration mounts but is redirected by the sound of soft music coming from Addie's pocket. The rain has all but stopped when she fishes her phone out and puts it to her ear.

"Hey Mom, how's Greece? I just left. I don't think it's going to work. Yeah, at least I still have my position with Dr. Goldblum. No, he's still a sweet man. I hate looking for a new job when he's been so kind, but ever since Jenn left and Dr. Goldblum hired his wife to run the front, she's firing people left, right, and center. No, I don't think I should be worried, but I don't want to think she's going to keep me when she let Verona go. Verona! I know. She's been with Dr. Goldblum since he opened the clinic twenty years ago. She said Verona wasn't filing things correctly. Never mind that Verona set that whole system up and it was practically art. Now, we can't find anything. I know. Me too. But enough about me. How's Greece?"

She's silent for an entire block with the exception of the occasional hum or giggle.

I listen and follow, wishing I could slip my fingers through hers and walk with her shoulder bumping mine gently as we go home together.

"In three days. Just the one week. No, you are not flying home early from your anniversary vacation to Europe that you've been planning for a million years to sit with me in a cabin. I don't care that Oz won't mind. Mom, no. Stop it. I'll be seeing you in two weeks for the party and to get my gifts. What do you mean what gifts? You're traipsing all across Europe and not even bringing me anything? That's rude."



I smile at the laughter I can hear from both women.

“I promise I’ll be back before the party the following week unless I meet a sexy Yeti with a nine inch—”

I can practically hear Paloma’s horrified shrieking from across the ocean. It’s barely masked by Addie’s hysterical laughter.

“Yetis need love, too, Mom, and you’re the one who taught me to spread ... what? I was going to say the love. You’re such a pervert.”

Even I’m face palming and trying not to laugh.

“Fine! I won’t join a mythical gang bang in the forest. God, you used to be fun. Yeah, but you still raised me.”

We continue in silence as Paloma chatters on the other end.

“I texted and emailed you all the information, including the address. I even forwarded a copy to Oz. Rhys?”

I jump at the sound of my name. I’d been staring at my feet, too focused on the conversation.

My head snaps up, heart racing thinking I’ve been caught. But she’s still walking.

“No, I didn’t. I don’t think he cares...”

She’s so wrong and I know she knows it.

“I haven’t talked to him. We don’t have anything to talk about. I know he’s my ...

yes, we should keep in touch.” She exhales heavily. “Yeah, I’ll text him. Tonight? Mom, it’s late...” I can almost hear her eye roll. “Fine. I’ll text him tonight. Look, I’m home. I need to shower and eat. I will. I will. I promise. As soon as we hang up, I’ll text him. Okay, love you. Tell Oz I said hi and love you. Oh my God, will you stop? I said I will. Yes, I will text you before I leave.”

They hang up and Addie stuffs the phone into her pocket.

She pulls it out. Turns the screen on. Off. Puts it back in her pocket.

“Fuck sakes,” she grumbles, pulling it back out.

She unlocks the screen, and I see her thumb scrolling through her contacts.

I don’t have my work phone on me. It’s the only number she has — that she knows about. The only one I carry with me when I’m with her is my spare. But now, as I watch her type something, I’m curious to see what she sent me.

At her apartment, Addie digs out her keys and lets herself in. The eight-story walk-up built with layers of bright, red bricks sits nestled between other apartment buildings on a fairly busy street. It’s not exactly fancy like her dad and stepmom’s penthouse across town, but it fits Addie’s immediate needs. It’s walking distance from most amenities and affordable enough for her to make rent every month on her part-time job at the walk-in clinic downstairs. The thing I like best is the fire escape leading up to her third-floor apartment at the back of the building where no one ever pays attention to the hooded figure climbing up.

My apartment, a squat three story block painted a depressing gray is almost twenty minutes away. A safe distance from Addie, but still close. I can’t just accidentally bump into her getting groceries. She has no idea I packed my things and relocated two months after Halloween. Neither does anyone else we know because they might

tell her and she'll ask questions. Three hours to work and three hours home is a small price to pay for my deception if it means I get Addie to myself.

I reach her window with the neat boxes of flowers hanging off the lip and the assortment of pots and baskets cluttering the landing. It's definitely a fire hazard given that it's nearly impossible to find a place to sit, but that's something I can't exactly tell her right now.

I hover off to the side and peek into the modest, open concept of her single room space. It's barely large enough to open the futon, but it's kept meticulous and organized. There's no clutter or Knick knacks. Despite being an avid reader, her collection is a small pile of paperbacks stacked neatly on her nightstand. Aside from the main space, there's a cramped little bathroom through a doorway wedged next to the fridge.

The apartment door is directly across from me, and I watch as she gets home. Her stiff fingers work the chunky buttons on her coat, popping them through the holes as she kicks her heels off next to the door. Her coat is tossed over the back of the single chair tucked beneath the table nestled in the corner of the minute kitchen. Clad in her black dress, she pads barefoot into the bathroom and shuts the door.

I make myself at home on the steps. The rain isn't a demanding force, but a light drizzle that pings off the metal railing and fills Addie's already overflowing pots. I drain them while I wait; it would crush her if they died, and while I'm not an expert, too much rain can't be good for them.

I close my eyes and rest my helmet covered head against the bricks. I will myself not to imagine Addie under the hot spray alone, small hands gliding over soft skin, caressing places I haven't touched in ten months — that she knows about. These nightly visits don't count, and I need her. I need to sink my cock into her tight heat. I need to fist her hair from behind and slam into her ass as she fucks her pussy with the

dildo she keeps in her nightstand; it's not as big as I am, but it'll do.

Stupid rain. I want to be inside with her. I want to slide under her bed and wait. I want to feel the mattress sag as she climbs under the sheets and gets comfortable. I want to hear her pussy as she fingers herself whining my name.

My fucking name.

The one name she knows she shouldn't have on her lips when she's teasing her nipples and rubbing her clit, but I know if she ever moans another man's name, I will find and kill him. It shouldn't be my name, but it better only be my name.

It's fucked up. I know I should walk away. I should stop going to that damn chatroom, stop looking for her messages. Her dirty fantasies that she leaves just for me, but I'm in too deep. I'm too invested. I need her. I want her. I crave the release she gives me. She's become my drug, and I know there is no walking away from this for me. Not anymore.

I sometimes wonder if she knows it's me. I wonder if she's so vivid and detailed with her desires because she knows I will give them all to her without judgment or, maybe, she doesn't care who satisfies this deviant side of her if it means getting railed by a cock.

It doesn't matter. I get the messages. I get to collect her wishes in a jar on my nightstand and I get to think of all the ways I'm going to make them real for her.

Me. Only me.

Soon enough, I'll let her see me, but for now, I get to sit and watch as she finishes her shower and emerges from the bathroom in a cloud of steam and a fluffy towel.

Her wild mane is a damp wave down her back, the ends brushing the round curves of her ass.

The towel is unfastened and I'm holding my breath as it's dragged off and tossed on the chair with her coat, but all I see is Addie in nothing but a pink flush from the shower and my eyes taking it all in.

I drink my fill of her body as I do every damn night. I let myself trace every line, every delicious curve. I linger and savor the high globes of her breasts, the soft pink of her pussy.

She tucks a stray curl behind her ear and props her phone at the foot of the bed, between her open legs.

For me.

The phone in my pocket buzzes and I swipe it on, careful to keep my camera and mic off. But there she is, open and wet. Pussy fully on display for me. Soft and perfect. The rain rolls off my heavy duty, waterproof case, a safety measure I learned quickly from the first time when the rain actually killed my phone in the middle of our chat.

I was not going to let that happen again. Ever. Time with Addie is precious. Nothing is ever going to keep me from them.

"I need you," she breathes, voice desperate.

"I'm here, baby. Show me how much," I text back.

My perfect girl spreads her lips between her fingers, teasing me with a clear view of her tight hole already soaked and ready to pull me in.

“Fuck, I miss her, dimples,” I write. “I miss how beautifully she cums for me.”

She pushes two fingers home and we both groan. Her digits are coated. A thin stream rolls free with her pumping and pools at her second opening.

I haven’t fucked her ass beyond a courtesy finger, but I plan to.

“I’ve been wet all day thinking about you,” she pants, lost in her own pleasure as her hips gyrate into her palm.

“Did you touch her?”

From my angle on the phone, I can’t see her head rock side to side, but I’m not watching the phone. I’m watching her live and in high definition splayed across her bed, one hand cupped over a straining breast, pinching and rolling the nipple while her other hand tries to get her off.

“No!” she gasps.

“Why?”

She’s not looking at the screen anymore. Her moans are louder coming through the speakers built in my helmet. Her back is arched nearly off the mattress.

“Get your toy,” I growl to myself, knowing she can’t hear me.

But she must have sensed the demand because she stops and moves to her drawer. A soft mesh bag is drawn out containing her toy. The phallus rolls into her waiting palm. She washes it quickly in the kitchen sink before returning to the bed. To me.

I hold my breath as she repositions herself. Watching her is the highlight of my whole

day. Watching her go up on her knees and slide the fat head of her dildo deep into the cavity of her body has me biting back a groan. She fucks it with hard, fast thrusts that have her tits bouncing and her head falling back. I know it's not enough. I know she wants to be violated and destroyed. She wants bruises and bite marks, and my hand around her throat as I take what I want from her willing body. As I use her cunt to satisfy my cock like I did last Halloween when she came so hard she squirted in front of a whole room full of strangers.

For me.

On my cock while I made her ride me and the handle of my knife. Made her cum again and again while forcing her tight pussy to take every fucking inch.

I made her clean it off me with her tongue before I used her pretty mouth the same way I had her cunt until she had my cum down her throat.

She has no idea it was me. She has no idea the masked stranger she let violate her over and over again that night, the one she begged not to stop is the same guy she's been avoiding like the plague since game night. The night we aren't supposed to talk about.

I do wonder if she could taste the similarities or does all jizz taste the same? I don't know. I've never sucked a cock, but maybe it's been so long she can't remember what the real me tastes like anymore.

Regardless, Addie bucks and humps the toy. The futon rocks under her and I imagine the noises we could make if I had her legs over my shoulders, taking her deep as she screams for more. As she whines and begs for every inch.

I know she's making those sounds now. Even with a window between us and rain hammering down around me, I can hear every shallow breath, every guttural whine.

If I wasn't dripping wet and worried about leaving puddles on her floor, I would wait until she's passed out to push open her window and climb inside. I would stand over her slumbering silhouette, brush aside her coverings and stroke my cock until I can stain her soft flesh with my cum. I would coat her sweet cunt then use my fingers to get my seed deep inside her while she rides my hand in her sleep and whimpers for more.

But not tonight.

I free my cock in the cold and rain. It doesn't matter. Raindrops drip from the tip, mixing with my pre-cum as I jerk in time to Addie's thrusts. I imagine pounding into her. I imagine being the reason her back arches and her toes curl into the sheets. I imagine I'm the reason her head is thrown back as she orgasms.

I guess, technically, it is me. I've sat outside this very window a hundred times listening to her beg the phantom me to not stop.

It's ironic really. I'm right here, willing, ready and able to give her every dirty thing she wants and more, but if I show up at her door, she'll slam it in my face and lock it for good measure, yet it's my face that makes her cum every night.

Well, in three days, we're going to fix that problem, dimples, I think darkly, pumping my dick harder. In three days, I will finally give her exactly what we both want.

But for now, I watch my pretty baby rub and grind against the silicone phallus and cum. My release hits the window in white spatters that the rain washes off, but not before I use a gloved finger to draw a heart in my jizz.

"Three more days, dimples. Then you're fucking mine."



## Page 2

*Source Creation Date: July 21, 2025, 3:54 pm*

ADDIE

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“Hey, you,” I hit send on the text and wait with the phone in my hand, our chatroom open on the screen.

“Hey baby,” comes his almost immediate response and my stomach does a little dance.

My heart floats in my chest, a giddy airlessness that never fails to make me lightheaded as I write back.

“I’m getting ready to head out. I’ll be back in a week.” I hit send on the message and wait.

I see the trio of dots ripple as he types, and I bite my lip in anticipation.

“What am I going to do for seven days without you?”

God, this man.

He’s killing me. Making it impossible to go a day, an hour without seeing his words pop up on my screen.

It’s the very definition of madness — being so completely and utterly in love with a man I’m hesitant to be with, but terrified of being without. He’s become my whole

world. The center of my universe and I can't even let him show me his face. I don't know his name beyond the one he uses in our chatroom — Atticus — or where he lives, yet I've cum so viciously on his cock I've seen stars. None of it makes sense, except I know that if I lost him, I would never recover.

“Get a break?” I say, trying to put humor in the situation because I can't ask him to come with me.

I can. I'm allowed one guest, but I doubt that means my masked stranger with his monstrous cock chasing me through the woods so he can fuck me when he catches me.

Still, that's a week with a man who only knows half of me and can only ever know that small piece. A week is too much time isolated together and too many opportunities to slip up. Plus, what if I accidentally say Rhys's name in my sleep? I have never even mentioned him to Atticus. He'll ask who Rhys is and I'll have to explain why I never brought him up and Atticus will finally realize I am a sick, fucked up person and leave.

And I will die.

It sounds dramatic, but the very thought of losing him guts me. It rips me apart. It's a pain I can't even explain into words, except I know I'm not strong enough to handle it.

It's why I haven't asked to see him since Halloween, why I haven't asked to see his face in nineteen months. If we submit everything, if I dive in, I have to let him into the other parts of my life. It'll become real and tangible. It'll be an actual relationship with all the trimmings. We'll go out. We'll meet each other's friends ... families.

I will have to explain why I live three hours away from everyone I love. I have to

explain why I can't bring him home to meet Mom and Oz even though he knows I talk to my mom thirty times a day. I can't tell him it's because Rhys will be there. I can't tell him that it already feels like I'm being unfaithful to both of them, and I can't tell him why.

I can't tell him I let Rhys spread me open across the carpet to check how wet I was. I can't tell him I grinded my pussy into his cock, writing his name with my hips until I came soaking his crotch.

These are things you take to your grave but the second I see Rhys, I know it'll show on my face.

The second I see Rhys, I'll want him to finish what we started.

The phone chimes in my palm.

"I don't ever want a break from you, dimples," he's written back, using my username — using Rhys's nickname for me — and my insides twist.

My fingers squeeze the plastic until I swear I can hear it crack.

Why is this my life?

I feel the hot pinch of tears in my throat and have to suppress the urge to start bawling like a child.

Frankly, my life is wonderful. I love my life. I like my job — most days. I like my friends. I have an intense and vicious bond with my mom who is literally my best friend in the entire world, and I love my stepfather with my entire heart. I live in a cute, affordable apartment. And I am adored by a man who would walk on hot, broken glass for me.

It's selfish to want more, but I want Rhys. I want Atticus. I want Rhys without the pain and chaos it would cause. I want Atticus not to hate me.

I bite my lip hard enough to taste blood as my thumbs work over the screen.

"I don't think I can handle a break from you either."

"Fuck, baby."

I've heard him growl those words into my ear as he rode me violently against the wall, driving my clit back and forth across the handle of his knife. The memory rumbles across my brain now as I stand in the middle of my apartment, core throbbing.

Okay, so there is something seriously wrong with me. I don't deny that. I can't explain it, except that I must have been dropped on my head as a child and it fucked something up. But it's fine. I've managed to deal with it for the last twenty years without too many regrets.

No regrets.

One regret?

No.

Yes. Yes, definitely regret that night. At least, I should. A normal person would. They would have been horrified to even bring out the game never mind let herself get spread open.

"No, stop it!" I mutter to myself, fingers pinching the bridge of my nose as the vivid and erotic images threaten to take me back to that night, to the rough carpet beneath

my knees and Rhys's thick, hard cock dangling over my upturned face.

But it was his eyes peering down at me, the hard clench of his jaw as he fought the hunger flaring his nostrils, furrowing his brows. He was doing everything he could to keep from touching me and that was all I wanted him to do. I wanted him to fist my hair and slam me down the veiny girth of his beautiful cock. I wanted him to use me to get himself off.

Up until that night, I'd never met a man I willingly wanted to blow. To fit his whole penis into my mouth and suck until he filled my throat with his hot, salty cum. Ironical that his would be my first. One of the few people I should never have looked at with lust and want in the first place.

I blow out a breath and focus on the stranger on my phone to find he'd sent another message.

"Just don't forget me."

The fact that he thinks that's something even remotely possible makes me want to laugh. I can't count the number of times I wanted to give him the address and had to stop myself.

I should let my masked stranger go. I should free him to find a woman worthy of him. But on top of being a vile human being, I'm also a selfish bitch, because the thought of him with another woman makes me think I would look damn good in orange. He's mine.

Rhys isn't.

He. Isn't.

He never will be.

But this guy, he's here. He cares for me. He stayed when he had no reason to.

After the party, after we were both too exhausted to cum again, he took an Uber with me to my place. I didn't ask him to stay. He didn't offer. He walked me to my door, kissed me like I was hogging all the air and waited for me to get inside.

I remember standing in the center of my apartment, heart breaking into a billion pieces as it registered that I would never see him again. He no longer had any reason to stick around. We fucked and fooled around in that basement for hours. Why would he want more?

The reality of the situation was clear: he could have anyone. Someone who let him take his mask off. Someone who wanted to know his name. Someone who he could fuck regularly.

What was I even offering beyond what I already just gave him?

The horror of that realization crushed me. It destroyed every shred of my confidence. I hated myself for being so stupid. I never should have given him so much of me that he could annihilate me so easily.

I was spiraling. I could feel myself coming apart at the seams when my phone chimed with his message.

"I already miss you so fucking much. Call me. I need to hear your voice getting home."

Just like that, he shredded my fears. He wrapped me back up and held me — metaphorically speaking — and he never left.

He doesn't ask me to give more than I can. He never judges me when I ask him to add one more thing to our list, no matter how deranged or weird it may be. He makes me laugh. He listens and comforts me, and I know if I text him right now and ask him to come to me, he would.

So, why not? Maybe this is the solution. Maybe this is how I'm supposed to get over Rhys once and for all.

Before I can second guess myself, before I can unfurl the mile long list of all the reasons why this is such a bad idea ... I send him the address.

"I don't want to be without you for seven days," I write.

I stow my phone away quickly into the side pocket of my duffle before the nagging voice at the back of my mind convinces me of what an idiot I'm being. I hook the strap over my shoulder and do a quick inventory.

The rest of my bags were already in my car. Mrs. Vega from across the hall has promised to watch my apartment and I'm not expected at work for the full seven days. I'm dressed comfortably for the four-hour drive in black flipflops, a black, plaited skirt and white camisole. I have my phone, wallet, credit cards, and eReader just in case; the contract recommended limiting our devices to a cell phone. Apparently the connection is spotty, but I never go anywhere without my books, especially not a remote cabin in the middle of nowhere.

I'm not going to lie, I was skeptical when Giselle, with her sultry voice, called to congratulate me on being the winner of an all-inclusive vacation. It sounded as scammy as all hell, but I'm not an idiot. I did my due diligence. I searched up Morning Glory, an all-women's wellness organization specializing in yoga, meditation, and spiritual retreats. The meadow is owned by the company, and they do the raffle once a year to send one winner to the cabin to enjoy seven days of spiritual

release and grounding. I even pulled up the previous eight winners on social media and made sure they were still alive — they are. As an added bonus, I sent a copy of the contract they emailed me to Oz, Mom's amazing, brilliant and talented criminal attorney husband. Even he looked into the company just to be sure.

They're legit and I'm not passing up the chance for release.

I don't even care that I don't remember entering the raffle. I don't care if they got the wrong Adeline Broker. I'm going.

Sure, I've seen that movie, too. The one with the idiot girl wandering off into the woods alone to get away from whatever is happening in her life and winds up summoning a demon or getting chased through the wilderness by cannibals, but I'm okay with that. I've read *Monster Smut*. I know the way demons are built nowadays, and I haven't been eaten by anyone in months. I'll take what I can get.

I adjust the strap of my bag on my shoulder, take a final glance over the shoebox sized room and set off.

It's balmy despite the chill we're supposed to be getting. Autumn is taking its time tinting the leaves and the entire city is still basking in the harsh glow of radioactive sunlight that makes my eyes water as I jog to my black Subaru parked against the curb.

The bag is tossed into the backseat, and I take a few minutes to set the GPS on my phone. The coordinates I was emailed is a three-hour drive straight out of the city and deep into the wild. I add an extra hour for breaks and gas and estimate my arrival a little after one in the afternoon.

I text Mom quickly to let her know I'm heading out and she replies as I'm pulling into the morning traffic like she's been sitting with her phone in hand waiting.



“Text me when you get there.”

I use the speech to text to send, “Will do. Love you.”

I initially jumped at the idea of her joining me. A week of just me and Mom would be heaven, but she and Oz are currently on vacation for their ten-year anniversary in a whole other country and I’m not making her fly back to go on vacation with me even though Oz is a saint and wouldn’t mind.

I place my phone into the holder mounted on the dash when a new message lights up my screen.

“Driving?” Butterflies dance in my belly with his follow up message. “Go Live.”

I don’t right away. The cars are moving around me, and I focus on driving for several blocks until I’m at another light.

The request shuts off my GPS, but I practically have the route memorized just in case and switch to the live option in our chat. His screen is black, but I can see the thumbnail sized video of me behind the wheel from the neck down. Not an intentional angle. Unlike him, he’s seen my face, but the holder must have jostled down when I set my phone into it.

I leave it. Let him enjoy the swell of my breasts pushing against the lace cups of my camisole.

“Pull your straps down,” his message instructs. “Show me your tits.”

I bite my lip at the demand. I’m surrounded by other drivers. The flow is heavy, and my car is small enough to see into, especially since I don’t have tinted windows.

But I know that's the point. It's on my fantasy list.

Fumbling, I work the thin straps down each arm slowly until they catch on my elbows and spill my breasts free for the viewing pleasure of anyone who happens to glance over.

I steal a glance at the car next to me but the woman in the passenger side seat has her head down, focused on her phone.

Still, my nipples tighten as if with anticipation. The tingle ripples down my spine to pool between my legs

"Play with them," I'm instructed.

"I'm ... I'm driving," I try to reason.

"You have two hands."

Every labored breath strains my chest, erecting the mounds proudly to the man watching me play with myself in the middle of traffic.

But I do it. I pull my right hand off the wheel and brush my thumb over the crest. I roll the peak and pinch the way I like to be teased. The sensation has my head swimming and my core pulsing. I have to bite my lip to keep from moaning even as my head falls back against the headrest.

I'm grinding against the leather seat. My thighs are rubbing together to ease the pressure building in my clit, but I need more.

"Lift your skirt, but don't touch her."

I can taste blood from the gash I'm cutting into my bottom lip with the effort to restrain myself, but I flip my skirt up over my stomach, exposing the pink laced panties covering my mound.

"Push it aside. Show me your pussy."

My hands are shaking as I drag the wet fabric to one side and part my thighs to show him my sex.

"Spread your lips."

God, I'm on fire. My skin is scorching despite the AC on high. My pussy is throbbing, begging to be filled, but I obey and use two fingers to spread my lips, baring my swollen clit to him.

"Stay like that."

"Like this?" I choke out, horrified and thrilled by the idea of driving through the city with my slit leaking across the seat and my clit just out for the world to see.

I want to touch it. I want to stroke my finger over the bump and down to where I need him. I want to fill the void and pump until I cum. But he's watching and more than my own release I want to please him.

"Pull over when you can. Take your panties off."

I don't for several miles. Miles where I drive with my tits out and my pussy open. When I finally get the chance, the fabric is soaked. The stain has turned the pink transparent and I hold it up for him to see.

"Fuck, you're such a messy girl. Put your finger deep in your cunt and show me how

ready you are for my cock.”

Still pulled onto the shoulder, I kick off my flip flops and lift my knees to my chest. It’s tricky, but I press two fingers in and groan as they slide through the mess with ease.

“Oh God!” I whine, head falling back against the headrest. “Oh fuck. I’m so close.”

I don’t realize I’ve closed my eyes until I open them to see his commands.

“Do not cum.”

I whimper, fingers ignoring him as they take what my body is desperate for.

“Stop. Now.”

Wheezing, I jerk my hand back. A string of cream follows my fingers from where my pussy visibly contracts as if trying to latch on to the lost stimulation.

“Please. Please, I’m so close,” I beg.

“Show me your fingers,” he says instead.

I know he can see the tremor as I raise my hand to show him the glossy sheen coating my skin.

“Suck them like you sucked my cock after you squirted all over him.”

My cheeks blaze with heat at the memory of his cock not only fucking me in front of the whole party but hitting something inside that sent a jet of clear liquid gushing out of me and all down my quivering legs. He’d torn my body in two and I didn’t even

know if I was standing anymore.

I was, but briefly before he shoved me clean onto my knees and grabbed my jaw, prying it open wide to shove his cock down my throat.

I took it. I wrapped him in my lips and tongue, and I sucked. I cleaned my release off his skin. I consumed every inch and matched his pounding hips driving deeper, bruising my face. His hold on my hair had tears springing to my eyes, ruining my makeup, but I didn't stop him, not even when he came, spraying the back of my throat with his thick, salty seed.

There's no hint of him on my fingers as I follow the memory into reality. It's just me coating my tongue and the words scrolling across my screen.

"Such a good cock sucker. You looked so good on your knees with my cum on your lips."

"Please can I cum?" I practically sob.

"Get back on the road. Skirt up. Top down."

It's four hours of this.

Four hours of being told to pull over and show him my wet cunt. To flick my clit and fill my slit until I'm so close I can taste it only to be stopped. My frustration is at an all-time high. I can barely stand straight when I stop to get gas. The fact that the nozzle started to look appealing is testament to my level of desperation.

"What if I lose signal?" I ask him sharply. "Will you leave me like this for seven days?"

“Yes. You promised me your pussy, remember? I can do whatever the fuck I want to it. It’s mine. My toy to use and abuse. If I tell you not to touch her, do not touch her.”

Asshole! I want to snap at him, but I love this. I love the wait and want. I love his authority and the power he wields over me with just his words.

I will wait the seven days if he tells me to. I’ll be feral and ready to fuck the kitchen faucet by the end of it, but I’d wait.

True to my fears, I lose signal the deeper I rumble down a long, dirt road. The thicker the canopy of trees tightens around me, the less of civilization remains; even the radio dies at some point, plunging me into an all-encompassing silence you don’t get to experience in the city.

It’s not terrible. I grew up in the lush wilderness, enclosed from all sides by trees and mountains. I grew up barefoot, hair wild, running down uncharted paths for hours with Rhys.

But Pinecrest is still only twenty minutes away from the nearest town. We have full access to the radio, internet and electricity. We weren’t so cut off that existing was a challenge.

But seven days without a phone? That’s going to be an interesting week. It also reminded me that I didn’t text Mom to let her know I’d arrived.

Mom doesn’t hover. She’s not the kind of parent who insists she know where we are at all times but if we tell her we’ll text and don’t, she will worry, especially if she tries to reach me and gets a dead phone.

Crap. Hopefully, she’ll wait until morning before sending the swat team, or that Oz will remind her I’m going deep into the mountains and connection may be spotty. Oz

can calm her down. He's very good at that.

A set of high, arch gates distract me as the forest parts, and they sweep into view. Brass beams intertwine in an elegant pattern of vines and flowers. They open to a winding road paved in dazzling white framed by miles of lush, vibrant green. At the heart, nestled at the center of Eden stands a modern style cabin of dark wood and tinted glass. All around it, flowers bloom and sway in the light breeze.

It's the most beautiful place I've ever seen.

Parking at the base of a set of wood steps, I cut the engine and hop out.

Even the air smells cleaner. Crisp and fresh. There's no sound, except my heartbeat. I don't think I've ever heard such an echoing silence or felt so small surrounded by so much.

Pocketing my keys, I reach into the backseat and drag out my duffle. The instructions for the alarm are in the manila folder I was sent after I returned the contract promising not to destroy the place.

A single set of silver keys slide into my palm with the notes, and I bunch them in my fist as I jog up the steps to the sheet of dark glass doubling as a door.

Not safe, in my opinion. Definitely wouldn't be able to get away with that in the city, but here with not a soul in sight, it made sense.

Also, the designer clearly has never seen a horror movie in their life, but that's not a me problem at the moment as I step inside and deactivate the alarm and take my first real look at the inside.

Gorgeous.

The wood and glass theme runs through the single floor space with bits of iron and marble. Most of the walls open to showcase the wide yawning of wilderness hugging the space. Even the ceiling over the loft containing a single, king bed is glass.

No. A mirror!

I laugh shortly thinking back on the website promising absolute release.

Now, I really do hope Atticus will join me. That mirror could definitely be interesting.

Biting my lip, I leave exploring for later as I hurry back to the car to grab my bags.



## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: July 21, 2025, 3:54 pm*

RHYS

---

She made it.

I'm practically humming with excitement listening to the muffled patter of her feet moving through the house. She's hauling her things in from her car, a small mountain of luggage she piles in the foyer. The short plaits of her skirt swirls around her toned thighs with every motion of her perfect body.

She's naked underneath. I know because I spent most of her drive staring at the smooth folds of her lips. The angle wasn't great, but it was fine. It got me through.

Now, she's shuffling around in the next room, settling in with me just down the hall.

I already had the address before she sent it to me. I was going to show up regardless. This is now my game and she's my victim for a whole fucking week. But I do like that she willingly gave it. Willingly put herself at my mercy.

It took a lot of sweet talking, bribery and some mild blackmailing to get Giselle — the contest coordinator for Morning Glory — to sneak Addie's name into the raffle and make sure she won. It took every chip I had to play to convince her, plus a few I still owe her, but hearing Addie's soft humming as she unpacks her clothes makes it worth it.

I've been in the house since last night, organizing and setting everything up for the

week I have planned for us. Wiring the house and grounds without damaging anything was the hardest part. I had to make sure she couldn't see the cameras without dismantling anything that would piss Giselle off. It worked out in the end. I had eyes and ears on Addie from the locked room at the back of the house labeled Closed. It took me ages to pick the lock and set up camp inside the spare bedroom, but at least Addie isn't going to find me until I'm ready.

She's flipping through the binder listing all the provided meals for the week. The ingredients are supplied. She just has to cook it. From my vantage point, she selects a pasta dish, but rather than grab the ingredients, she picks up her phone and stares at the screen.

She has no signal; the heavy-duty jammer I paid a small fortune for is seeing to that. But I wonder if she's hoping to finish what we started earlier. We'd been cut off when she hit the perimeter. That was my cue to double check everything was ready for her arrival.

With a sigh, she drops the phone down and peers around at her surroundings with the look of someone not sure what they'd gotten themselves into.

Don't worry, baby. I'll keep you amused, I promise as I study the gnawing of her teeth on her bottom lip. Her weight shifts with the squeezing of her thighs together. The familiar little dance has my eyebrow lifting.

Don't do it, I warn when she licks her lips and glances at the phone again.

Part of me hopes she'll disobey, and I'll get to punish her, but she blows out an exasperated breath and stomps out of the kitchen.

I smirk to myself as she paces to the front door and out into the late afternoon sun.

It's amusing watching Addie try to figure out what to do in a place designed to disconnect from life and reconnect with your inner self. She seems almost confused by the offered books, the meditation cards and even toppled backwards off the exercise ball, which added to her frustration when she found no alcohol and nothing with sugar, salt or caffeine.

I'm pretty sure if it was still light enough, she would have gotten back into her car and gone home. Part of me takes some of the responsibility for her boredom cutting her off from her phone and laptop, but I don't want to ignore her if she tries to finish our earlier game; the house is small and not soundproof. She would definitely hear me.

All I can do is wait for her to get into the shower before making my move.

I pack all her clothes and hide them in the backroom, except a single pair of white bikini bottoms that I drape neatly on the mattress. I hurry downstairs, unlatch and open the front door before going back and sliding under the bed to wait.

Wait and watch as Addie finishes running soapy hands up and over her damp body and rinses off. She steps out and runs a thick, plush towel across her wet skin. I'm practically salivating as she leaves the bathroom and stops at the edge of the bed where she'd left her things.

Her head cocks. She swings her gaze over the rest of the bed, lingers on the bikini before moving to the dresser.

"What the fuck?" she mumbles when she finds the drawers empty.

She rips open each one just to be sure before straightening with one hand on her hip. Her head turns to the bed and the only covering I've left her. But she storms to the closet and tears open the sliding door to find only empty hangers.

I can only watch her feet at this angle, but I don't miss them stalking to the bed and snatching up the panties I left her.

She pulls them on but keeps the towel securely in place across her chest as she hurries down the loft stairs.

I crawl out of my hiding place and wait for her to see the open door framing a dark outline of the woods.

From the top, I watch her run forward, maybe to close the door but I need her outside.

I descend the steps. Putting all my weight into creating a heavy thump that echoes through the cabin.

Addie spins and sees me. Surprise melts into confusion. Then ... then realization.

Little brat doesn't even try to hide her excitement when she spins on her heels and bolts out into the night.

## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: July 21, 2025, 3:54 pm*

ADDIE

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Excitement and terror crashes through me as I tear out in no real direction. My feet have decided I need to put as much distance between me and the heavy, black boots as possible and the only way to accomplish that is to run headlong into the forest like the absolute idiot in every horror movie.

But into the woods I delve, making a world of noise crashing through the brush. My mind spins as I try to process what's happening even as I know and love it.

Something snaps behind me and I'm suddenly aware of the figure gaining fast, big boots pounding into the ground with zero attempt at stealth.

I scream.

I'm already a glowing beacon in the dark with my white towel. He's only a few feet behind me. Hiding was never an option, so, I keep running.

Solid muscle slams into me and we both go crashing to the dirt in a tangle of arms and legs with my captor taking the full weight of the collision by landing under me with a twist of his gorgeous body.

But that doesn't last. The second we hit, he flips us over, taking me down onto my stomach, pinning me into the ground with his bulk.

I try to scream again, but his gloved hand clasps over my mouth. The other fists my towel. I wrench my body to push him off, to wiggle free. Fear courses through me, but barely. It's excitement. A tsunami of anticipation as he rips my only covering away. My freshly cleaned flesh presses into rocks and dead leaves. It scratches my belly, my kicking legs. My breasts. All my flailing fails when he positions himself over me. When the hiss of his zipper rips the night in half.

"No!" I cry against the leather grinding my lips back over my teeth.

But I'm not fighting. Not anymore. I dig my nails into the packed earth as he snaps the panties off me and forces his knee between my thighs. He shoves them open wide, and I let him.

I let him align his thick head with my soaked opening. I lift my ass in welcome.

He groans into my ear once before surging in with a single, powerful thrust of his hips.

I want to scream. I might have. I can't hear anything over the shriek of bells going off in my head as he rocks into me with deep, even pumps, increasing with every plunge until he's pounding me with a violence that drives the air from my lungs. Ribbons of pain crackle up my belly and it's too much, but I can't move. He's got me wedged and he's hitting the same spot over and over, and I'm ripping the skin on my knees as I lift my ass to take it because it's right there.

The cliff.

The shiny void.

I squeeze my eyes closed, wheezing through my nose as I shatter. As my body seizes with such cruel brutality, he's no longer fucking me but letting me slam myself down

on him. Railing myself on his cock like it's my life support.

The waves go on forever, lasting eons as he releases his hold just enough to straighten, to pull me up onto my bruised and bloody knees. His hold returns in my hair, around my throat. He squeezes as he pounds his full length deeper. Harder. I want to tell him it's too much but the hand at my throat drops to finger my clit and I choke on a sob as he takes us both over.

Hot, thick ropes of cum spatter deep inside my channel and I know I should be concerned, but I'm so tired. Too tired to think as he gathers me up into his chest and carries me back to the cabin.

## Page 5

*Source Creation Date: July 21, 2025, 3:54 pm*

RHYS

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Addie's asleep by the time I step into the cabin. Her head is on my shoulder, her breathing slow and gentle against the side of my neck as I carry her up to the loft.

She's filthy. I know I should wake her to take another shower, but I go grab a damp rag instead and lightly sweep away the streaks of dirt. I pull free the twigs and leaves from her hair and clean the shallow scrapes on her knees and palms. Her feet are the worst though from her running. It takes several attempts to wash them clean.

I stay perched on the edge of the mattress, next to her naked hip to watch her rest.

My beautiful Addie.

So perfect.

For me.

She's almost too unreal to accept, but she's here and she's mine. Really mine. There's no denying it anymore. Fully and completely now that my seed is coating her walls.

I catch my lip between my teeth as I pull my cock out. I'm hard again. Not surprising when she's lying here completely at my mercy with her flawless body bared and her wild mane unbound across the pillow.



I love her hair. I love its wild, untamable chaos. I love its weight and satin texture. I fucking love seeing the dark threads captured and twisted in my fingers the way they had been when I caught her on Halloween. When I fisted all those curls and fucked her from behind just like tonight.

Addie tries to resist but it never lasts. She loves my cock too much to keep up the attempt and I'm fine with that.

Fuck, Addie, you have no idea the plans I have for you. The sweet torture.

I squeeze my leaking cock until the pain chases away the threatening orgasm.

I'm not ready to cum. I'm not done admiring my prize. I'm not done going over all the things she begged me to do to her in her messages.

I bite harder on my lip, barely containing my smile. My excitement.

Halloween had been fun.

Hunting her down in a sea of a hundred faces and spotting her in her bride of Chucky outfit. Tight dress and high, white heels with tiny bows. I don't know how far she thought she was going to get on those stilts, but I gave her a head start, didn't I? Because I'm a gentleman. I let her think she could evade me. I let her think she was safe, but I was always just behind her.

Tonight was the same. I fulfilled her fantasy of the chase and capture. That raw, primal play seems to be her favorite and I am more than happy to be her personal demon hungry for her sweet flesh.

Careful not to disturb her, I undress and crawl up onto the mattress with her. I gingerly pull apart her thighs to expose her lips. I've done this so often, Addie

doesn't even stir anymore, but her body knows my touch. It recognizes my fingers when I pull apart her already slippery folds and tease her sweet, little clit. My Addie moans for me and shifts across the sheets. Her breathing changes from soft and even to ragged and desperate. Her hips chase my touch, legs parting wide in invitation as I ease a finger deep into her hot channel still dripping with my cum.

“Rhys!”

Her groan of my name sings through me. It ripples across my skin and tightens around my balls.

I'm careful though. I give her just enough not to startle her awake. I keep my thrusts slow and even, especially when I penetrate her ass. I want her to feel me the next morning, but not with concern.

I just want to be on her mind. I want her to wake up wet and slightly stretched and not know why, but that's just another part of her fantasy. Touching her like this, violating her at her most vulnerable is on her list.

She wants to be used and manhandled. She wants to wake up with a faceless stranger using her pussy for his own release. She craves the fear.

I add a second finger and Addie sobs as if this is what she's been wanting the whole time. Her core ripples with fresh heat. The walls suck me deeper, and I comply. I even hook them slightly and tease her upper wall.

We're celebrating after all.

“Oh God! Oh God ... don't stop,” she pants in her sleep.

Her back arches as she meets my hand. Fuck. She's such a responsive little prey. So

desperate for relief.

“Greedy little cunt,” I murmur quietly, pumping faster and watching her thrash as I hit that spot inside her that makes her walls spasm and squirt.

Keeping my fingers in place, I use my free hand to roll my mask up over my nose and mouth. Just enough freedom to wedge myself between her thrashing thighs to lick the mess we made with a sweep of my tongue. Addie makes a pathetic little sound that blooms into an incoherent garble when I take her clit between my lips.

She whines again, head flinging back as her body gives a violent shudder. Her lungs hitch. Her hands fly up over her head to close around the bars of the headboard as she comes awake mid climax. Her pussy pulses as she grinds it into my face, fucking my tongue.

I pull back, drawing my mask down as she opens her hooded, sleepy, sexy eyes to fix on my face. Hers curves into a sweet, lazy smile that kicks me in the chest.

“Hi,” she murmurs huskily.

Rather than answer, I go up on my knees between her parted thighs. Her attention immediately drops to my cock and her eyes widen in surprise.

“Jesus, no wonder it feels like you rearranged my insides.”

A small hand drifts between us and reaches to touch, but I pull away; I’m already too close. If she touches me, I’ll cum in her palm in two seconds flat.

Instead, I nudge her down with one hand and take my dick with the other. I stroke, watching her face, enjoying the way she’s biting her lip as if in anticipation. Her knees are bowed and open flat against the mattress. Her pussy shines with my saliva

and her juices. It takes all my control not to take the hole she's promised me, the one she's given me full ownership of to fuck and destroy as I see fit.

But it's tradition. An act I need to complete nightly.

I cum across her pussy. I spray over her smooth lips. I let my hot seed hit her soft skin like a dog marking his favorite toy.

Addie makes a sweet choking sound and shivers as I shake out the last drop.

The mess looks perfect on her. It looks right dribbling down to pool at her slit as if drawn to her heat. Her womb. As always, the thought has my stomach muscles seizing. My heart thumps with giddy anticipation at the thought of my seed finding its way inside her, finding her egg, burrowing home.

I have to sink my teeth into my lip to contain the growl the image of Addie big and round incites. I would give my soul to pump her so full of my cum there's no way I don't impregnate her. I want her to beg me to knock her up with my baby. I want to keep her on the bed, face down, ass up for hours, days even just to take my cock until I'm spilling down her thighs in a thick stream.

Delirious with the fantasy I'm not quick enough to stop my hand from reaching out and gingerly parting her slippery lips. A glob of me rolls over her sweet, little clit. The tender muscle is stiff, swollen with need. I know a few strokes and I could end her torment, but I use my finger to nudge my cum inside her instead.

Addie sucks in a breath. Her hooded eyes meet mine — more or less through the mask. Her chest rises and falls, straining, begging for me to play with them, but I'm distracted by the hand Addie slips across her belly to join mine.

I watch, mouth dry, cock reawakening as she dips into the white puddle. Strokes her

clit a few times before drawing her dripping fingers to her fucking mouth and sucking them clean.

Mind lost in a barren fog of pulsing red, I attack. I lunge at her. I rip her legs open, practically tear my mask off and I tongue fuck her. I suck myself and her from her sopping channel as she holds my head in place. Pins me to her cunt and forces me to clean every drop while pumping her hips into my face.

“Don’t stop!” she growls. “Eat my pussy. Clean what you did to her.”

Ravenous and half out of my mind, I claw at her hips. Dig my fingers into her skin and I eat her. I munch on her cunt like it’s my job while she purrs for more, cooing soft whimpers of praise.

“Cock,” she pants when she hits the ledge. “Fill my pussy again.”

This fucking girl is going to be the end of me, but I fuck her. I pound her into the mattress until she’s screaming and kicking and cutting my back to ribbons with her nails, begging me not to stop as I force her to climax again and again, and fucking again, until she’s hoarse and my cum is pouring out of her.

## Page 6

*Source Creation Date: July 21, 2025, 3:54 pm*

ADDIE

---

I'm running.

I recognize the woods enclosing Mom's property, the same ones I've run through most of my life. But no matter how hard I push, how desperately I pump my legs, he's there. A shadowy silhouette visible only by his glowing red eyes tracking my every futile attempt.

My white dress is a beacon in the dark, a startled rabbit bounding over roots and rocks, frantic to escape the wolf dogging my steps.

He's so close. Always right there when I turn. Always watching, waiting for me to fall so he can pounce.

But I'm not scared.

I am. My heart is racing and I'm coursing with the panicked adrenaline of a small creature trying to flee, but I'm excited. I want the chase. I want him to hunt me. Catch me. I want that mouth on me again.

Propelled by a new sense of urgency, I dive around a knotted tree and skip down the incline I know takes me to the river further ahead.

Rhys and I used to play there as kids. I think my love of being chased stems from

those long summers with him hot on my heels, tackling me to the damp earth when he caught me.

But this isn't kid-Rhys stalking me now. It's the tall, broad stranger from Halloween who terrorized me for his amusement. The brute who finally had enough of my running and grabbed me by the hair, yanking me back into the steel cage of his arms.

My core pangs at the memory. It floods with the desire to feel that again. To have his long fingers cup my sex without warning while holding my head jerked back to his shoulder to growl into my ear, "Enough. Give."

It's him stalking me now, but under that mask is Rhys. It shouldn't be. I know that, but it's my dream and I love Rhys's face. I love the hard contours and chiseled lines. I love his full mouth and deep, dark eyes that make my heart trip. I want so badly for my masked stranger to be Rhys that it only makes sense that this is the only way I can have him.

In my dreams. Only where no one else can ever know how sick and twisted I am.

Soggy leaves and wet earth squish between my toes and darken the hem of my skirt but I don't stop until he stops me. Until he steps out from behind a tree and catches my throat with gloved fingers and slams me into a tree.

The sharp bark slices into my arms and back. Bits of it rain down the back of my dress. Clings to my hair, but I am oblivious to everything, except the haunting eyes leering back from beneath dark voids on a plastic face.

"Please," I beg.

The fingers tighten, cutting. The other hand lifts to my face and light slices up the curved blade in his fist. The sight of it makes my heart skip in my chest. I'm barely

breathing as he brings it to the strap on my right shoulder. The bit of fabric snaps easily with the jerk of his wrist. The ends fall down my chest, baring my breast.

My captor hesitates a second before lightly grazing my nipple with the flat edge of the knife. The cold touch of steel on my hot flesh sends fire rippling across my skin. I gasp when he flicks the bundle with the dull edge.

He brings the knife to the other strap and slices it. My dress slithers down my body, baring me entirely to his torment. To the humming knife butt he runs down the center of my body starting from between my breasts to the apex of my thighs.

He grinds the vibrating metal into my clit. He rocks his wrist, sawing back and forth in steady pumps and I'm chasing the friction with my hips, meeting his motion while he tightens his hold on my throat.

I'm so close. So close. I don't want him to stop.

I come awake disoriented.

The world is still dark but tinted with a faint blue at the edges. I'm face down across the mattress, my cheek pressed into the cool sheets, but I can't move. My arms are pulled taut by satin tethers fastened under the mattress and there's a relentless humming between my lips. Pressed into my clit.

"What—?"

The vibrator glides and rubs and my thoughts scatter as fire races through my core.

I grunt into the mattress. My hips jerk up to give him more access. My knees widen as I arch my back.



He takes that as an invitation to get behind me. His cock presses against my opening.

“Please,” I pant, needing him to fill me, stretch my walls when I cum. “I need your cock.”

He obliges with a deliberate slowness that makes my thighs tremble. My core clenches hungrily with every inch he allows me and I’m begging shamelessly for all of him.

The vibration increases with the flick of his finger and the piercing buzz zaps through my body with a vengeance I’m powerless to resist when my orgasm rips through me and I greedily impale myself on him again and again. Taking my own pleasure while he holds the toy against me.

Longer.

Without mercy. He stays even after I’m too sensitive to take it, but he forces another orgasm. Then another. I’m bucking and wailing as he gives me no chance to recover before I’m cumming again.

“No more. Please, I can’t. I can’t ... shit!”

I’m begging. Sobbing and pleading. But my body makes me a liar as it gives him another.

I’m drenched in sweat. My throat burns from crying out. Tears soak the sheets both under my cheek and between my quivering thighs where I can feel myself drenching his cock and leaking onto the bed.

Gingerly, he withdraws. I’m very aware of his absence but grateful for the reprieve even if only temporary because he returns only, he’s not aiming for my vagina. He’s

nudging against my ass, against the puckered hole I've never had more than a finger in. He's definitely bigger. Thicker. Even coated in the wet sheen of my arousal and the cool drizzle of lube, my poor orifice isn't prepared for the invasion of his head breaking past the ring.

"No!" I whine, mashing my face into the mattress as the pain wracks down my back.

The vibrator finds my clit and I'm lost between the blurred lines of pain and pleasure. I'm bobbing my hips even as I'm shuddering a fresh release that pulls him in.

All the way.

He's in my ass to the hilt and I'm so full I can't breathe.

He fists my hair as he pumps his hips, pressing himself deep and I'm cumming against my will and squeezing him hard enough to make him groan.

"Mine," he growls, rocking his pelvis against my body and lighting every nerve on fire. "Your tight, little ass. Your wet pussy. Your greedy mouth. Mine. All fucking mine."

I'm nodding vigorously and deliriously as he takes me, rides me like he has nowhere else to be. The toy at my clit never wavers so no matter how much it burns, how much it hurts to have his size lodged somewhere it shouldn't be, my body is a mess of bliss.

"Take it, baby. Enjoy me in here because next time, you're going to ride me in your ass and your dildo in your pussy."

I'm convulsing and it has nothing to do with the vibrator he's slipping in slow circles over my sensitive clit, but the raw image of him filling both holes simultaneously.

“Now. Do it now.” I wheeze, pointing to the nightstand.

Atticus freezes behind me. This clearly wasn’t part of the plan, but he comes through and pulls out. I’m barely registering the loss of him when he returns.

There’s no time to wash my still clean phallus. My knees spread wide in invitation as he breaches my opening.

He fucks me for several seconds, but after having him warp my walls, the toy which had given me so much pleasure in the past just doesn’t do as much ... until he’s back at my tender back hole. The burn is fresh, the pain equally aggressive, but it’s renewed and hostile with my other opening stretched around the dildo.

“Too much! Too much. Please, I can’t—”

He moves. The momentum of his push drives him and the inanimate object deeper, in sync and my brain reels. My vision wavers. I can’t breathe as he works both channels in perfect coordination.

Then the vibrator returns and I’m dragging against the tethers as I slam back against him. Pain is a distant memory, a different lifetime as I feel my body heave. The pressure squeezes around my core and he swears viciously, fingers cutting into my writhing hips as I scream and explode.

Possibly literally.

Hot, searing liquid gushes from my vagina. It’s nothing like Halloween. This is a violent release of my body unraveling with such an intense brutality, I may have died a little.

Atticus is still fucking me and I let him. I lie in a heap of my own sticky mess and let

him take what he wants. I let him use me to empty his cock into my ass.

The dildo isn't inside me, I'm vaguely aware. It must have popped out with my release. I can't be sure of anything, except that I'm exhausted. I can't move. I don't. Not even when he undoes my wrists and gently shifts me into a comfortable position.

"You did so good, dimples," he murmurs into my sweat soaked temple. "I'm so proud of you."

Giddy, I snuggle into his chest and promptly fall asleep.

I'm alone when I open my eyes to the sharp glow of sunlight crashing through all the glass. Exhausted from a long night of getting fucked, I almost consider going back to sleep, but my bladder is threatening to rebel, and I need a shower. Badly.

Only knowing I need to get up and getting up are two different things when my used and abused body screams in protest. Absolutely everything pangs in reminder that I haven't been fucked by an actual man in so long, I'd forgotten how good it was.

But even then it was never like this. My dildo has never made me incapable of walking. I never had to slide off the bed, brace to give my thighs a moment to remember their purpose before hobbling to the bathroom.

Am I complaining? No. Absolutely not.

Am I ready for another round? Also no. I need a minute. A day. I'm so sensitive and tender that if he comes near me with his dick—

The reminder that I have a masked stranger somewhere in the house nearly has me choking on shower water when I gasp and inhale while rinsing shampoo from my hair.

Holy shit, there's a masked man somewhere in the house. A man I invited to chase me naked through the woods, to tie me up when I was sleeping to fuck my ass.

And loved every minute of it.

Oh man, Addie, what the fuck is wrong with you?

This is definitely how murder documentaries start. Stupid, sex crazed bitch let's masked serial killer repeatedly fuck her into a coma.

Mom would be horrified. Grams would set up camp at her church. The aunts ... well, I know what they'd say, and it wouldn't be nice or comforting.

Nevertheless, this doesn't solve my problem.

Maybe he's gone. Did he even sleep? I was knocked out cold after everything he'd done to me.

My clit pangs with the memory, and I tell that needy bitch to shut the fuck up. She's the reason we're in this mess.

"Christ," I mutter, slapping the faucet off and stepping gingerly onto the plush mat.

Fucker took my clothes.

Everything, except the single pair of panties he tore off. I'm left with nothing but a towel to swaddle up in.

Then, I go searching for the man with the magic dick.

He's in the kitchen, tall, built, mouthwatering and cooking bacon in a pan ... topless,

and holy fuck, the man is perfect. Brutally, undeniably ... so perfect with muscles on top of muscles and a tight, lean waist dipping into a delicious V into the waistband of his pants. I'm staring, but he's just standing there in gray sweats and a mask, like some dirty whore and I'm only human.

"You need tattoos," I blurt.

His head comes up and, although I can't see his eyes, I can feel them run up my form in the same assessing once over I just gave him.

The pan with the sizzling strips of meat is shoved off the fire. The element is snapped off. He raises a hand and crooks a finger at me.

I go happily and have my waist captured. I'm lifted up onto the counter and my knees just spring open like my joints aren't throbbing in protest.

"Morning," I say, arms sliding around those wide, hard shoulders.

"Morning."

I kind of heard his voice the previous night when my brain was melting and everything rang with a fuzzy echo and during Halloween when the music was too loud to be sure. So, I ignore the prickle at the back of my head telling me he sounds familiar. Instead, I focus on the fact that it was so ... simple. He just uttered words so casually in the light of day.

He chuckles at the look of pure shock I'm sure is on my face and the sound is so deep, so gruff, so delicious ... fuck. Fuck! No! I need to ice my vagina.

"How are you feeling?"

More words spoken by the man running large hands across my back and along my sides. My face is hovering inches over his covered one and I'm suddenly so glad I can't see him. I'm already devastated by what I have seen so far, his penis is a masterpiece, and his voice is about to make me orgasm. If his face matches all that, I'll be ruined. If it doesn't, I'll still be ruined.

"Dimples?"

I shake my head to clear my one tracked brain and realize my mistake when he freezes.

"No, I'm good. I'm ... so good. Really. I would like to know where my clothes are though."

His palms continue rubbing me through the towel. "No clothes."

I frown. "You're wearing clothes."

His head cocks, then, without a word, he hooks his thumbs into the elastic of his sweats and yanks them down around his ankles. Boots and sweats get kicked aside and he stands before me gloriously naked.

I can't tell if God is punishing me or if I'm being rewarded because this man's dick is quickly becoming my obsession. The fact that he's already hard and just waiting to nestle where it belongs deep, deep inside me has my insides liquefying with anticipation. I'm leaking and soaking into the towel I'm gripping like it's going to protect me.

"Towel. Off."

All notions of giving myself a day to recover vanishes when I find myself sprawled

across the island, legs wide around his shoulders as he eats his breakfast with the zest and gusto of a starved man getting his first meal. I don't think I'm capable of climaxing after the previous night. I'm half worried it won't work when he takes his first sweep up between my folds and my entire body caves. It bows up against the cold marble. It takes no time at all to take me over with just his tongue flicking steadily at my clit.

"How am I not numb from last night?" I pant, staring up at the lights dangling over the counter. "I should feel nothing."

"You were perfect last night," he says gently, pressing wet, open mouth kisses down the inside of my thigh to my knee.

"I have never cum so much or so hard in my life. I'll be honest," I tuck my chin down to peer to where the dark holes of his eyes look back up at me, "I didn't think it was possible."

Atticus straightens. His big hands splay the soft flesh of my pelvis, forming a diamond with my mound at the center. His thumbs part my lips, baring my clit.

"You had no choice."

I chuckle, finding myself baffled by this guy who can't seem to stop touching me. His obsession with my body thrills me.

"Do you think we did too much?"

He lifts his head. "Do you?"

I shrug. "I've never done any of the things we've done so far. I'm a bit sore. I'm not complaining," I promise quickly when he tenses. "I'll get better—"



He drags me up to a sitting position and grabs my chin. I'm forced to look into the hollow fabric where the mesh covers his eyes.

"You are perfect. It's my job to take better care of you." He brushes lightly at my cheek with the pad of his thumb. "I should have gone slower. I should have taken my time—"

I put a hand over his mouth, muffling his words. "I asked for it. All of it. It was exactly what I wanted." I lick my lips nervously as I realize where I'm headed with this conversation. "I've only been with one person, besides you on Halloween. My first back in high school. It didn't end well. Ended really badly, actually. I'm not used to this, but I love it. I don't want you to stop."

"I will always give you what you need."

I will a smile and bump my nose to his. "I could go for some breakfast now that you've had yours."

His roar of laughter is beautiful. Thick and rich, and humming with a vibration that rockets down my spine.

The material of his mask scratches my skin as he leans in to nuzzle my cheek.

"Oh, I'll give you breakfast, dimples."

I glance down at the solid length of his erection he's stroking and feel my mouth water.

"You certainly know what I like."

He gives me actual food after I've swallowed every drop of his cum. He pours me a

bowl of cereal promising all the fiber with almond milk. We sit on opposite ends of the sofa with our legs intertwined across the middle cushion with our bowls.

I can see him struggling to keep his mask over his nose as he eats. The fabric keeps rolling down with his chewing.

“I’m sorry,” I blurt, heart tight with regret.

Atticus lifts his head to peer at me. “For what?”

I motion with my spoon to his face. “This isn’t right. You shouldn’t have to ... can you even breathe under there?” I bite my lip as I finally admit to myself how unreasonable I’m being. “Last night, I was cooking I was so hot. I can’t imagine—”

His large hand captures my foot lying against his thigh. “I wasn’t wearing it last night. When you’re sleeping, I take it off.”

Hot tears burn my throat, sting my eyes. “God, I’m fucked up. Why are you doing this?”

His bowl and mine are placed on the coffee table and I’m dragged into his lap. He holds me close. The embrace is firm, but gentle with his warm hands splayed across my back.

“Because this makes you feel safe. I want you to be comfortable and yourself. I want you to be happy.”

I swallow the golf ball lodged in my throat. “It’s not fair.”

He bumps my chin with a hooked knuckle. “I have you. I get you. That’s all I want.”

How did he always know exactly what to say? How did he have the power to wrap all my worries up and take them away?

I take his face between my hands and rest my brow to his. “I’m scared.”

His arms tighten around me automatically as if prepared to protect me. “Tell me. I’ll fix it.”

I shake my head. “I’m scared you’ll realize just how fucked up I am and leave me.”

“That will never fucking happen.”

I’m breathing hard and I don’t mean to be, but I’m terrified. My entire body is shaking, and my heart is racing. I want to cry but I know if I start, I’ll never stop and I’ll be a mess when trying to tell him about Rhys, about that night in the parlor, about how long I wanted it to happen, how I tricked him into doing things with me that destroyed any chances we ever had of going back to what we had.

Because Rhys was my best friend. Immediately, without question from the moment our parents introduced us, we bonded. The two years between us meant nothing, not even when he became the star quarterback in high school, and everyone loved him.

He was still my Rhys.

He gave up time with his friends to walk me home after school. He skipped parties to spend time with me or he’d watch over me if we went together. No one ever messed with me because they loved him. I was protected by the whole school because Rhys said so.

When my first attempt at a boyfriend ended with the guy telling the whole school he took my virginity in the backseat of his car, Rhys broke his jaw, fractured his ribs and

shattered his kneecap. I had never seen Rhys so enraged. He came home to find me on the sofa with Mom holding me while I sobbed into my raised knees.

His only question, “Who?”

I begged him to let it go, but he was gone with the slam of the door.

The next morning, I learned the guy was in the hospital. He’d told the police he was in a car accident. When they asked where the car was, he told them he couldn’t remember while both of Rhys’s hands were busted. So badly he couldn’t play for two months.

Everyone knew. It didn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out what happened. Even when Cory returned to classes, he never said a word about it again. He dropped out of every class we had together and transferred out the following year.

But things changed for me after that. Only me. Rhys still only saw me as a friend. He never once gave me any indication that maybe, just maybe he saw me the way he saw the girls he dated.

Until I forced that to change and ruined everything.

“Baby?” Atticus touches my face, drawing me back from the hole I can feel myself falling into.

“God, I can’t,” I choke out.

I can’t tell him.

“Okay,” he says gently. “I don’t care. Whatever you think will change my mind about you, it’s not possible.”

My voice wavers even as I shake my head. “I did something terrible, and I can never take it back.”

“Tell me.”

I shake my head harder. “I can’t. Not yet. Please.”

His long fingers run along the curve of my back, tracing the ridges. They comb through my hair, brushing back the strands off my neck.

“I’ll wait. As long as you need, if it’ll prove to you that I’m not going anywhere.”

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*Source Creation Date: July 21, 2025, 3:54 pm*

RHYS

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I never expected our game to last forever. It wasn't even supposed to go as far as it has. I only followed her into that chatroom to talk. That's it. I just wanted to ask her why she was avoiding me. What I did. If I hurt her ... scared her.

After that night in the parlor, I could barely get her to stay in a room with me. She wouldn't look at me. Didn't even acknowledge that I existed. Then, she packed her things and moved and not even in the same town.

She moved three cities over.

I'm pretty sure if she wasn't close to our parents, she would have left the country.

That chatroom was my only connection to her. The only way I could still have her in my life, and maybe that makes me pathetic, but I don't care.

Addie's mine.

She's been mine from the moment she came into my life at ten years old. Maybe not intimately, but she was my best friend. She encouraged me, stayed with me. She knew all my secrets and I knew hers. We were there for every one of the other's firsts.

We were inseparable.

Then she walked in with that game, and everything changed. I lost her and I don't know what I did.

She's in the kitchen when I return. The music is a low hum coming from the radio. She's swaying slightly in time while flipping through the menu. She glances up when I stop in the doorway and smiles the way she hasn't given the real me in years.

"Want to order pizza with extra cheese?"

I feel my grin that she can't see and move to pull her into my arms. My face drops to the curve of her neck, and I nuzzle the pulse. The satin texture of her flesh rubs against mine as I lift her up. Addie loops her legs around my hips.

It burns how badly I want to tell her how much I love her. That no matter what she thinks, I will never leave her.

"You were in the bathroom for five minutes," she teases. "You can't have missed me that much."

"I have been empty without you for years," I confess.

"Atticus." Her arms tighten around my shoulders.

I cup her ass and squeeze. Addie giggles and I smile as I set her down again.

"Food. Then I want to sit with you and count every freckle on your body with my lips."

She bites her bottom lip and touches my chest. Her hands splay across my breast plates. My own eyes are drawn to her firm tits sitting proud on her chest. The nipples, pink and swollen in the comfortable temperature of the room.

I tease them. I pinch them and roll them until Addie is pushing them into my palms and I find myself sucking them, taking them between my teeth and flicking my tongue.

I've been careful not to fuck her after our conversation earlier this morning, but the way she's wrapping both hands around my cock and pumping, I'm having a hard time focusing.

"Did you like cumming in my ass?" she whispers into my ear, fingers tight, jerking faster.

Double fisted.

"Yes," I growl.

"Did you like fucking me with another cock?"

I raise my head to search her face, her hungry expression.

"Yes."

A thick stream of liquid pools at the head of my penis and Addie sweeps her thumb over it. She smears it around the fat head.

"Will you share me with another man?"

I freeze.

My head jerks up to find her already watching me.

"Do you want me to share you?"



Her lashes drop to the task of her hands. She gathers another dribble of pre-cum but brings it to her own mouth. She purses her lips around the digit and sucks. But doesn't answer the question.

I back my baby back into the counter and tuck a hand between her thighs.

Addie moans as I finger her, matching her strokes over my cock.

“Why?” I press her quietly, adding a second, a third finger and making her groan loudly and push into my palm. My free hand closes around her slender neck, forcing her head back. “Do you want another cock, dimples? Do you want to get railed from both ends? Do you want another man pounding your pussy while I fuck your ass?”

She's getting so wet. Her slit flutters around the fingers impaling her. Her grip on my dick trembles.

“I ... I...” she pauses to lick her lips. “Yes ... no,” she breathes at last, green eyes peering up into my hooded face. “I don't want anyone else.”

But I hear the slight lie in her whisper and my brows furrow. Was there another guy? When? How? If I wasn't following her home, she was on the phone with me. Where would she have met another man?

But I can tell there is something ... someone on her mind.

“Who do you have in mind?”

My little brat licks her lips again but avoids my eyes.

“I don't have anyone in mind. I was just curious.”

I let it slide for now. Part of my brain prickles with the question if she means me. The real me. Not the guy in the mask, but the man she's trying to run from.

The notion is hilarious in the most unfunny way.

Still, I let her keep her secret, but my mind churns as we work together to make supper — a bland mix of beans, rice and leaves; there's a lot of boiling involved and zero seasoning. I watch Addie move around the kitchen, hair floating down her naked back. I love that she's unabashed about her nudity. I love how comfortable she is in her body, her skin.

Her wants and desires.

I love that she tells me what she wants, that she's so fucking open and vocal when I fuck her. I love that she trusts me not to hurt her.

Sure, there's a lot she hasn't told me. A lot she thinks she's keeping from me, but I've known Addie for ten fucking years. I know her better than I know myself. She's been my twin flame from the moment I met her.

It just took me longer to realize it. To see what I had right there living across the hall from me.

Fuck if I know when it hit me that I loved her.

That's a lie.

It was somewhere between driving to Cory Cornwell's house and walking away with his blood dripping off my busted fists. It was on the drive back home, my hands barely closing around the wheel. It was walking into the house and getting ambushed by a mane of thick, dark hair and the sweet scent of honeysuckle.

It was that exact moment, as I pulled her tight into my arms that I realized she was mine. I just had no idea what I was supposed to do about it. Addie wasn't the girls at school. I couldn't just ask her out for pizza. Plus, there was the matter of our parents, the town, our families. Loving Addie wasn't simple, but nothing was going to change my mind.

"Bean paste it is."

I blink and look down at the pot I'm supposed to be watching to find most of the beans have liquefied and the water is a dark, murky burgundy.

"Shit!" I jerk the pot off, but I know it's too late.

Addie chuckles from next to me. "Might make the rice taste better."

I exhale heavily that feels thick and suffocating through the mask. I hate the damn thing, but I know it won't be for much longer.

After supper, I take Addie's hand and lead her out onto the back patio. She fidgets slightly getting her flip flops on, but she follows me through the night, along the curving cobblestone path. Dusk is thick, a heavy navy barely held at bay by the elegant lampposts guiding us to a bubbling fountain at the heart of the garden.

"It's so beautiful here," Addie says, sucking in a breath. "It reminds me of home."

Home's better, I want to tell her.

Home is a wild sea of forest we explored for hours as children. Home is our lake where I taught her how to swim, how to row a boat. Home is her room across from mine, her seat across from mine at the table, her place on the love seat next to me.

This is nothing like home.

But I take her to the wooden bench tucked between two bushes and I sit. I pull Addie around and down over my erection. Her walls encompass me greedily as she takes me to the hilt and reclines her back against my chest.

“Feet up,” I instruct.

She kicks her sandals off and anchors her heels into the edges of the bench on either side of my knees. Her knees part without prompting to allow my hand between them.

I grin into the side of her face at her anticipation. “I’m not letting you cum, dimples. You’re going to fuck my cock until I fill your hole, but you are going to wait. You’re just my little cum dump.”

Her head falls back against my shoulder with a groan of pleasure and desperation. Her cunt squeezes me, the walls soaked.

I finger the exposed bundle of nerves bared for the world. I flick it quick and steady, enjoying her writhing.

“Whose face do you want here?” I coax into her ear.

“What?” she pants.

I roll her clit under my thumb. “Licking your pussy while I fuck you. Whose face?”

“Atticus.”

“Who else, dimples? Who do you want in your mouth when I’m pounding in your ass?” I add pressure to my fingers and Addie bucks with a gasp. “Who do you want

licking your cunt after I've kept you face down on our bed, ass up all day just to pump my cum in you over and over again? Whose face do you want to squat over and drip into his mouth—"

"Atticus!" With a panicked cry, Addie cums.

I realize a little too late I went too far. It's my fault. I lost myself in the fantasy.

"Well, that's unfortunate," I say when Addie slumps against my chest, wheezing. "I had hours of torture planned for you."

Addie laughs incredulously. "Hours?"

I'm back at her clit, teasing all over again. "Hours."

We take a shower. Mainly she does. I keep the mask on. It's horrible. Uncomfortable and distracting, and it's fucking sweaty as fuck, but a necessary evil.

When I carry her to bed, I spread her perfectly, beautifully across the center of the mattress. I pull the tethers out and position her arms straight over her head. Her legs I hook under the knees and pull back to the headboard so her every hole is exposed and available. Spread open and wet, completely at my mercy.

Her body, my forbidden playground.

And, God, I'm barely keeping it together. I'm kneeling over the buffet being offered to me, my mouth is watering.

"Tell me what you want." I circle her hole with the tip of a finger. I push in to one knuckle before pulling up and around her clit. "Tell me how you want me to play with her."

Addie lowers her gaze to my cock and the shameless way she licks her lips makes me chuckle.

“You’ll be getting him regardless.”

“Slow. I want to beg you to fuck me.”

It’s the one we haven’t done. Each time was fast and hard, and violent. I’m not sure I know how to fuck her slow, but I roll the bottom of my mask over my chin and mouth. The material is damp from the shower, but unimportant as I begin the intricate process of driving her crazy, taking my time nipping and sucking my way up her inner thighs, getting so close to her junction only to draw away. I pull around her spread lips and work up to her navel.

Addie groans her displeasure but goes quiet when I press my palms onto her thighs and spread my fingers into her sweet flesh. My thumbs curve in along the seam on either side of her pussy.

I squeeze just slightly. Not enough. Her hips lift into my hold but I’m already moving up over her hip bones, following the curve of her waist. My lips are counting her ribs, leading up to the underside of her breasts.

I bite the spongy mound. I sink my teeth into that soft, pink flush. I mark her. A stain on her flawless body to remember this.

Remember us and how fucking good we are together.

Addie cries out but doesn’t stop me. But she’s watching me with a haze of unfiltered desire as I flick a tongue over the rosy bud. Her lips part in a silent moan. She’s gripping the tethers with white knuckles and trembling limbs.

I suck her nipple. I graze it with my teeth. I nip hard and soothe with my tongue. Addie's a whimpering mess of motion begging for even a breath of friction on her pussy.

"Start begging," I tell her, moving to the other tit and starting over. "Beg for my cock, dimples. Tell me how much you want it stretching your cunt. Beg me to fill you with my cum."

She gives a violent shudder that arches her spine. Her legs thrash, spreading wide around my hips as if trying to reach the cock dangling over her wet mound.

Her scent is thick and musky filling the room. It's potent. A heady fragrance I want to bottle and carry with me everywhere.

"Fuck me. Please. I need your cock."

I click my tongue. "That's not what I said." Her throat muscles flex with her heavy swallow as I begin my journey down once more. "Beg. Beg to get my cock. Beg to let me use your cunt. Beg to be my filthy, little cum whore."

"Oh God! Fuck!" Her entire body convulses beneath me as if I'd dropped a lit match onto her flesh. She twists her eyes closed as if in pain. The headboard groans with the strain of her arms. "Say that again. Tell me again," she pants, eyes snapping open to find me.

She's trembling so hard the bed is vibrating.

I let the corner of my mouth snake up into a smirk. "Which part?"

She wheezes around a gasp. "Call me your whore again."

My chuckle is dark, predatory. I don't even recognize it. "You're my dirty fucking whore, Addie. My cum whore."

I realize my slip, but she doesn't. She's too far gone to fathom anything but my torture.

"Shit!"

I work my way down her grinding torso to her soaked apex.

"Use your words, baby. Tell me she's mine. Only mine."

"Yours. I swear. Only yours. I don't want anyone else."

I part her lips, not at all surprised by the slippery state of her swollen cunt.

"When can I have her?"

"Anytime. Whenever you want."

I smirk as I run the flat of my tongue up her entire sex, cleaning her juices with a single sweep.

Addie bows practically in two when I dance around her clit. The headboard rattles.

"Fuck, please. Please. Use me. I want to be your whore."

I suck lightly at her hip bone while I consider her request. I wonder if she will still feel the same once the mask comes off. I wonder how this will play out at family dinners, but that's a later problem.



I move up over her and claim her sweet lips. My tongue still coated with her essence sweeps between the folds and I feel her guttural moan all the way through my skeleton. I never want it to end. I'm drowning in her taste, her little sounds as she matches my need for more.

I keep her pinned under me, keep her lips hostage, her moans only mine as I enter her with a maddening slowness that nearly capsizes my sanity. Addie's sob fills my throat as her body clamps down around me and drags me deeper.

"Fuck, you feel so good, dimples. So, fucking perfect."

"Don't stop," she gasps.

Our movements are fluid. A beautiful choreography of two people who have done this a million times. Who know when to move and dip, to kiss and touch. We're not fucking. This is deeper, a super charge of passion I can feel to my toes.

"I'm cumming," Addie whispers against my mouth, her body tense, thighs trembling. "Take your mask off. I want to see your face. Please."

My heart claps wildly in my chest, a panicked pounding that rattles through me, but I obey. I give her what she wants.

With my cock buried deep in her wet, rippling heat, I reach up and drag the hood off.

## Page 8

*Source Creation Date: July 21, 2025, 3:54 pm*

ADDIE

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“You?”

I cum because there’s no stopping the wave of fire already blazing through me. My body bows off the mattress, hips writhing as I impale myself on his rigid shaft with shameless abandon.

He’s inside me. Rhys is filling my channel, stretching my walls. He’s moving and thrusting in languid rocks that draw my orgasm out for what feels like forever while he watches me, his dark hair a wild mess, his eyes ravenous.

“Rhys?” my chin drops to where he’s joined to me. Where he’s coated in my release. “Oh God, Rhys, what are you doing?”

It’s a stupid question.

I can see exactly what he’s doing. What I should be telling him is to stop, to pull out.

To not cum in me.

But he already has. A lot. It’s been coming out of me in gushes all day and I begged him for more. I begged him to make me his whore and use me.

I still want it. I want it with a maddening desperation that steals all my other senses.

“Rhys...”

“Yes, Addie?” he taunts, hips sliding back until I’m scared he’ll come out only to sweep back in.

Every rigid inch.

The tethers hold me open wide for him, but it’s the mirror over the bed, the square of glass where I get to watch his ass flex and pump between my sprawled thighs as I lie here bound and helpless. It’s so painfully erotic, I can’t look away. I can’t stop tracing the corded muscles of his broad back ripple as he bucks over me. The strain in his arms bracing him as he wrecks my body.

“Rhys ... Rhys, you need to stop,” I choke as another crash of release tightens my core, the pre-warning before it takes me under. “Rhys...”

God, I’m going to cum again.

“Say it,” he bites through clenched teeth. The shadows twisting his features to one of barely suppressed hunger as he takes me with frustratingly even strokes. “Tell me to stop, Addie.”

The tethers twisted in my hands cut my damp palms. The fabric squeaks, the headboard rattles with the strain of my body.

“Rhys, please ... please.”

I don’t know what I’m asking. I want him to stop. Just a minute. To take his cock out so I can think, but the thought of him listening, the thought of him drawing out and leaving me empty has my muscles fisting possessively around the pulsing appendage.

I need to cum. I'm so close. I just need him to fuck me a little deeper, a little harder. I need that electric current of pain when he fills me until I can't breathe, until the agony is pure, raw pleasure.

"Please," I whimper again, thigh muscles straining to get wider for him.

His low, guttural growl washes over my face. It claws across my lips as he lowers his head. The proximity has my head lifting off the pillow, lips parted in anticipation to taste him, but he ignores my attempts, dropping his head instead to take a nipple into his mouth. The hot rush of his breath on my skin, the sharp sting of his teeth...

"Rhys!"

"Tell me to stop." He trails to the other nipple. The breast is already straining, eager to be equally spoiled. "Tell me to stop fucking you, Adeline." His thrusts pick up speed. Pounding harder. Harder. Thrusting. Slamming. Taunting with little rolls of his hips. It's so close to what I need I can't even think to answer him when he lifts his head and presses his lips to my ear. "Tell me you're not about to cum all over my cock. Again." His growls fill my ears, roll down my spine to pool in my belly.

With a defeated cry, I slip. I plummet off the cliff with an explosion of colors as he drives wildly into me, cracking the headboard into the wall as he drags every second of my orgasm out until I'm thrashing, begging him enough.

"Such a good cunt." He flicks my bottom lip with his tongue and I automatically open, but he doesn't give me the kiss he keeps teasing me with. "Do you know what good girls get?"

My hazy gaze drops to where he's pulling back, slick and glistening with my release until only his head is being sucked by my opening.

“What do good girls get, Addie?”

I bite down hard on my lip, wrestling with the answer, struggling to get free.

One, heavy brow lifts at my disobedience.

His head pops out and I’m painfully empty.

“No!” my panicked whimper is met with sly amusement.

“Tell me to put him back, Addie.”

He nudges my opening, adding just enough pressure, just enough to almost penetrate, but not enough. And I can’t touch him. I can’t move. I can only watch as he tortures me.

“Say it,” he coaxes, head bending to nibble on my nipple. “Say you want my cock in your pussy.”

I do. I’m close to tears with how much I want this. Need this. But the war raging through me is stronger.

“You shouldn’t be in there,” I breathe, breathlessly watching him rock his dick back and forth across my opening and over my clit. “It’s so wrong.” I lick my lips. “Undo my hands.”

Rhys blinks, but rises up to pull the Velcro, releasing my wrists.

I’m going to hell. It’s already too late. It was too late that night in the parlor when I went to bed with his cum in my mouth.

“Do it,” I hear myself whisper in the soft shimmer of dusk. My arms snake around his shoulders. “Cum in my pussy, Rhys.”

Even in the dim glow of the kitchen light radiating up into the loft, I don’t miss the hardening in his jaw before I’m folding him in my arms, pulling his mouth down to mine as he drives up into my body, burying himself to the hilt.

Overhead, I watch us hungrily in the mirror as he takes me. As my Rhys fucks me. As he uses my body to pleasure himself. I watch his ass pound and drive, his knees dig into the mattress, his face in my neck as I stroke his bunching back muscles. His hair. As I flex my vaginal walls to tighten with every inward thrust.

“Addie!”

I would have smirked but I’m falling into my own sins. “Don’t stop,” I whisper into his ear. “I’m cumming again. Cum with me, Rhys.”

“Fuck!” he snarls, pushing up with his fists planted on either side of my head.

He drives us both over with six vicious slams of his hips. His release burns my walls and finds their place deep inside and I want to clutch every drop of it to me.

Our labored breaths fill the space, the silence. It matches the uneven tempo of our hearts thumping in sync. Rhys is still inside me, still semi hard and I want to wrap my legs around him to keep him from dislodging.

“Addie.”

His face turns into the side of my neck. His nose grazes my jawline before he lifts his head, and our eyes meet.

It's not fair, I think, tracing the lines and angles on a face I have longed for since I was seventeen. Of all the men on the planet, why did it have to be him? Why the one guy who could set a bomb off on so many lives if anyone found out?

Still, when he raises a hand and brushes a stray tear away, I instinctively turn my face into his palm. When he drops his lips to my cheek, I tighten my arms around his neck.

We lie in the tangled afterglow of our sins, and I have never felt so much pain and peace.

Morning sheds light on our shame, or at least, it's supposed to. Instead, when I open my eyes, I'm molded into the hard curve of Rhys's front, enveloped in his strong arms. My face is nestled in the hollow of his throat. His nimble fingers trace the line of my spine in soothing strokes that would have lulled me straight back to sleep if his gorgeous cock wasn't a throbbing distraction grinding into the soft flesh of my belly.

I want it.

I want him.

The morning is supposed to fix my skewed reality, slap me back to my senses, not have me reaching down between our bodies to the thick piece of man meat already smearing pre-cum across my stomach.

"Addie." His tone is heavy with sleep and warning, but he doesn't stop me when I slip a leg over his hip and pull myself on top.

Neither of us say another word as I take him. As I sink inch by agonizing inch down his girth. I don't stop him cupping my breasts, teasing my nipples as I ride him with leisurely shallow thrusts. My nails leave marks in his chiseled chest. My marks. My ownership. I love seeing the welts blaze crimson.

Mine.

For now, at least.

Until I have to face my choices in the light of reality and the consequences of my actions. Until I have to face Mom and Oz, and—

Rhys sits up without warning and I tumble backwards off him with a squeak. He grabs me and flips me over onto my stomach. His heavy hand smacks into my left ass cheek and I yelp. He does it again in the same spot, making the skin burn and my legs kick.

“Rhys!”

His response is grabbing my hips and dragging me down under him.

“Stop thinking,” he hisses into my ear right before he plunges inside me, capsizing my soul and sending my nerves into chaos. “In my bed, the only thought you should have is how I’m going to fuck you next.”

The clock on the nightstand declares it to be well after noon when Rhys finishes with me, and I can look him in the face without wanting him back inside me. The several hours between waking up and my last orgasm is a blur of hands and mouths and satiated moans as we made up for the last two years.

I’ve never been so happy. So unimaginably relieved. The face reveal had been a gift from God and if I wasn’t stunned at the same time, I would have cried with joy.

“Not disappointed?” Rhys — my Rhys — asks with his mouth on my neck and his cock in my hands.



“With him?” I give the appendage a playful squeeze. “Never. He’s brought me so much happiness. Five stars.”

Rhys laughs and the vibration tickles my skin. “I meant that I’m Atticus.”

“Ah, that. Well,” I scoot up onto my elbow and peer down into his breathtaking face. For a moment, I’m too overwhelmed with the knowledge that he’s actually here that I forget what I’m going to say. “I didn’t want him to be anyone else,” I confess quietly. “I couldn’t ask him ... you to take the mask off because if it wasn’t you...”

I sound so stupid and pathetic, but I don’t know how else to explain the fear that had sunk serrated claws into my chest for two years.

Rhys captures my chin and lifts my eyes up, forcing me to face him.

“I wouldn’t ever let it be anyone else who got to have you. It was me or nothing.”

I have so many questions, so many thoughts, they tangle up in my head, making it impossible to think, nor do I get the chance to when my stomach gurgles loudly, demanding sustenance.

Rhys is out of bed before I can function and he’s pulling me with him despite my protests. I’m dragged into the bathroom where he takes an exceptionally long time lathering every inch of my body with body wash. Somehow, rubbing his palms down my legs, his mouth finds my sex and I’m holding Rhys by the back of the head, one foot braced on his shoulder as I ride his face.

Downstairs, he makes the rest of the turkey bacon and eggs with whole wheat toast. He sits me on the counter to feed us both from the same plate and ... I can’t stop staring at him.

I can't look away.

I'm terrified he'll vanish or worse, turn into someone else if I take my eyes off him. My heart has been a giddy mess of delight and panic all morning, and I can't help feeling like it's going to get ripped away from me if I'm not vigilant.

Rhys is in my arms. He's between my thighs and in my head and tattooed across my heart, and I never realized just how much I missed him until he's making me laugh like we were never apart.

I love you, I want to blurt, but the last time I took initiative, I fucked things up so badly, I bite my tongue.

"The photo I took of you that night on your hands and knees, my handprints on your ass, showing me your dimples is still my screensaver on both my phones," he tells me, grinning like a naughty little boy.

My face flames as I think just how many people might have seen it, but I also get hot by the idea. I love that he kept it and looked at it every time his phone went off. That he kept something so personal from that night, and that photo was personal.

"What happened to that game?" I ask, changing the subject before I distract us both.

"It's in my room. Hidden in my closet." He grins when I laugh. "I was really hoping we would finish it."

My heart skips in my chest even as I bite my lip unsure. "You wanted to finish? I mean, you wanted..."

No matter how I try to word it, it sounds so ridiculous that I wish I never opened my mouth.

“You?” he finishes quietly for me. “I wanted you. I want you. I will always want you. But yes, I wanted everything we did.”

I can hear the crack of my heart against my breastbone. It vibrates through my skull as I forge to life the fear in my gut.

“Even though it was wrong?”

Rhys pulls in a slow breath that lifts his shoulders. His warm eyes watch my face for too long before he speaks.

“Is that why you left?”

Caught, I tear my gaze from his and try to avoid his prodding into my soul, but he has my chin between his fingers and I can’t.

“Is that why you wouldn’t talk to me after?” he presses, not exactly sounding angry, but genuinely curious.

I try to dampen my lips with a dry tongue. “I didn’t want you to ... I pressured you to be with me and because of my selfishness, you had to live with what we did. I thought it would be easier if—”

“Pressured?” he murmurs quietly, cutting me off.

“I got the game. I came to you knowing ... knowing you wouldn’t say no because you never said no to me, and I took advantage—”

Rhys bursts out laughing, making me jump. “Oh fuck, Addie. My sweet, beautiful Addie.” He captures my face between his hands and kisses me so deeply, so thoroughly I’m floating in a liquid stream of pleasure. “If I told you all the times I’ve

wanted to bend you over something, all the times I wanted to follow you into your room at night, all the times I watched you with my cock hard in my pants, you would call me a pervert, and this was before the game. The night you came to me was the best night of my life.”

I bite back the excited little smile fluttering in my chest. “Really?”

Rhys kisses me again. “You did nothing to me I wasn’t a hundred percent committed to finishing. If our parents hadn’t come home when they did, I would have ruined their little girl in ways that would ensure we both never got into heaven.”

I never want to leave our bubble. I don’t want to face the world when everything I have ever wanted is reclined under me, arms folded beneath his head, looking up at me as if I hung the stars. As if he can’t bear the thought of looking away.

A feeling I understand to my marrow because I can’t stop looking at him either from my throne straddling the chiseled landscape of his stomach while we cuddle on the couch.

“How did you find me in the chatroom?” I ask, running my hands over his shoulders and down his sculpted pecs.

His hands move up my thighs, over my hips and waist to curve under my breasts.

“You left your phone in the kitchen over Christmas, and it was on. Some fucker with some stupid username wanted you to send nudes.”

I pause in my exploration to cock my head to the side. “Nudes? I don’t remember that.”

Rhys scowls with furrowed brows and pursed lips. “That’s because I blocked his ass

and deleted the text.”

“Rhys!” I gasp, trying to portray outrage, but actually amused.

“Fuck that. Your body is mine.”

I stifle back my grin by bending down and kissing him lightly. “I wouldn’t have done it.” I sit up. “I only just joined that app the week before. I was lonely being so far from everyone. I was trying to make friends. Nothing more. Whoever he was, I would have blocked him, too. I didn’t want that.”

“But you didn’t block me,” he points out.

I shrug. “You weren’t an asshole. You didn’t ask to see my boobs.”

“I did though.”

I chuckle. “Not right away. By the time we got to the intimate stuff, it was months of talking to this guy who understood everything I said. He listened and talked to me like he’d known me forever.” I cradle the side of his face. “I felt safe with him. I still missed you, but I wasn’t obsessing over the fact that I betrayed your trust.”

Rhys swipes his thumb across my lips, and I instinctively kiss it. His eyes darken as his hold on me tightens.

“I wish you’d talked to me, Addie. You just took off.”

The warm feeling vanishes.

“I was so ashamed of my behavior. I hated myself for ruining what we had. I thought it would be easier.”

He sits up and I slide down between his legs on the cushion. We're chest to chest, legs entwined, my head in his hands.

"You thought it was easier to live without you?"

"Yes!" I blurt. "What's the point when we can't be together once we leave the cabin?"

"What are you talking about?"

Why was he making this so hard?

"We can never tell anyone about us. They will never understand, and it will destroy our whole family. It will jeopardize your grandpa's construction company. Oz's law firm. Mom's craft business. Not to mention the chaos it will cause our parents. The looks Grams will get at church, and our cousins at school. It's not just our lives on the line, Rhys. We can't be selfish."

He's quiet for a long stretch of time. I'm thinking he's taking my word to heart, and he will agree.

"The fuck I can't," he says flatly. "I don't give a shit what anyone says. We're not breaking any laws. Anyone who has a problem can say it to my face because I'm not losing you. I'm not letting you go. I'll give you time to figure out how to tell everyone, but they're going to find out."

I stare at him. "How? How would they know if we don't say anything?"

Rhys leans in and nips on my bottom lip with his teeth. "Because nothing is stopping me from grabbing your ass and pulling you in to kiss. Also, as soon as you say yes, I'm putting my baby inside you and telling every last fucker who asks that it's mine."

My pussy seizes with the same ferocity as my heart leaping in my chest.

“That’s cheating,” I whisper hoarsely when he pulls back.

His sharp gaze bores into mine, unapologetic. “I’ll play as dirty as I have to. I’m not letting you go.”

I’m being foolish. I’m being short sighted and unrealistic, but why can’t I be? Just for a little longer at least. It’s already too late to pretend we haven’t been fucking relentlessly for almost forty-eight hours. It’s too late to pretend he doesn’t make my whole world bright.

“You are crazy.”

He captures my mouth. Kisses me deep and hungry until my head is rushing, and my pulse quickens.

He draws back to peer into my eyes. “You make me fucking crazy, Addie. You make me feel deranged. You make me want to do things no sane person ever would.”

My heart is pounding in my chest, but I cup his face and smile. “Like chase a half-naked girl through the woods just to fuck her?”

His dark, brown eyes are sharp, brutally focused when he twists my hair in his hand. His chest rises and falls, and I’m suddenly unsure I want to know.

“Like climb up her fire escape at night to watch her fuck a dildo while moaning my name.”

I freeze.

My heart claps harshly against my chest, a frantic bird slamming into a window. It jitters in the cavity of my ribs, uncertain, but aroused.

So. Fucking. Aroused.

“You watched me?”

Our eyes never break contact. Neither of us even blink. We stare into the other’s soul as layers are peeled back on our darkest secrets.

“Every night. I imagined you riding my cock like that. Taking me deep. Riding me the way you did this morning.”

I lick my suddenly dry lips. “Did ... did you touch yourself?”

He gives the faintest nod.

We’re sitting so close. There’s no missing the hard bulge growing between us or the way it’s pressed right up against my center, but I’m trying.

We stay so still, whispering secrets we both know no one else would ever understand.

“Did you cum?”

Again, he nods with just the slightest inclination of his head.

“In my flowers?” I half tease.

He draws in a breath. Shakes his head.

I’m breathing hard and I don’t know why. “Where?”



Rhys lowers his face. Brushes his mouth over mine in a feather light whisper before leaving the words on my skin.

“On you. In you.” He nips my bottom lip between his teeth. Sucks once. “After you’d fall asleep.”

Shit.

Fuck.

“Rhys...”

I kiss him hard and desperate. My arms tighten around his neck, flattening my chest to his as I press him closer.

Part of me always suspected something was happening when I’d wake up with my lips coated in crusty, white flakes. Other times, I had an odd taste in my mouth or an extra sticky spot on my skin. I never paid all that much attention to the mysterious occurrences. Never once did I ever think the man of my dirtiest fantasies was climbing up to watch me get myself off with him in mind.

“Did you fuck me, Rhys?”

Rhys shakes his head. “Fingers only. Sometimes my tongue.”

Still. God, that image. That visual has me practically coming apart at the seams.

“I want you to fuck me next time,” I tell him. “I want you to spread my legs and use me to cum. I want to wake up with you deep inside me.”

A muscle hardens in his jaw, mirroring the harsh pull of his hand in my hair dragging

my head back.

“My perfect, little cum whore.”

I shiver at the name and wiggle against the dick I can't get enough of. My lips settle over his as he folds me tighter into his chest.

Yours. Only yours.

Hours later as I lie awake cocooned in Rhys's possessive embrace, the scent of my honeysuckle body wash and our relentless coupling steeped in the air around us, I have no choice but to face the colossal fuck up I've created. Without Rhys distracting me and my own body completely abandoning sense, I know I have made things so much harder for everyone.

This can't continue. It can't. Never mind the fact that I tell Mom literally everything, I can't go home knowing Rhys will be there and not touch him. I can't sit across the table from him and pretend his cum isn't drying inside me.

Also, Mom isn't stupid. Oz isn't blind. They are both incredibly perceptive and brilliant. They will take one look at my face and know I'm a disgusting and foul individual. Filth. An embarrassment.

I bite down hard on my bottom lip, stopping the quiver as my eyes burn. I turn my face into Rhys's collarbone and immediately his arms tighten around me, and I have to stifle back the sob lodged in my throat.

This isn't going to work. In no world can we be together. Not unless we leave everything behind and move to another country. But I can't go a day without calling Mom. We may not live in the same city, but she and Oz come to see me almost once a month. I have never not had contact with her. Running off, cutting ties would

destroy us both.

But finding out what I did ... she would be horrified. I know she would be. I was there with her and Iris in the kitchen the day after what Rhys and I did.

I had no plans for afterwards when I took the game to Rhys. Tomorrow was a lifetime away and a problem for later. At eighteen and feeling like I knew everything, I had zero concept of consequences, but they came in the form of Rhys's Aunt Iris in her oversized coat, smudged, red lipstick and plastic bangles that clattered noisily as she stormed into the kitchen waving a book over her head.

"Can you believe this!" She smacked the book down on the island in front of me and Mom. "I was at the store this morning grabbing groceries for supper and found this at the register."

Mom and I both leaned in to study the graphic, but tastefully done art on the cover. At a glance, it resembled every other romance novel displayed at the register of any store, but the man was green and scaly with the captions, double the breeding across the top.

Aunt Iris slapped the book from my hands when I reached to flip it over to read the description. Her expression was one of abject horror and disgust.

"That is not for you to see!"

I blinked. "Why not? What's it about?"

I had an idea; the lizard man was double the size of the tiny brunette nestled against his chest, and she looked very, very happy.

"Nothing you need to concern yourself about. This is what's wrong with the world

and girls today.”

I raised an eyebrow. “Sexy lizard men with two—?”

“Adeline Josephine Broker!” she hissed, slapping the book down with a vicious smack. “The very fact that you can talk so candidly about something so vile shows how lax your parents have been raising you. This is trash. Human waste. The author clearly has no father at home to teach her what is proper.”

I tried to sneak a peek at the author’s name for my own personal research later, but Iris was on a roll.

“They’re all like this now. Degrading trash some godless publishing house deemed fitting for publication. Monsters. Demons ... dogs! Mating with humans. The Bible...” she stopped abruptly to suck in a breath. “Those who breed with animals...”

I bite back my laugh. “They’re fiction.”

“They’re someone’s fantasy. Women who read this, want this.”

I dare a glance at the cover on the marble counter, at the lizard man with the big, strong hands and apparently two penises.

My brain immediately flipped to Rhys’s dick sliding between my lips, across my tongue. His pre-cum hot and salty filling my throat. I had to press my thighs together at the memory alone.

“And that’s why I demanded to speak to the manager.”

Mom, who hadn’t said a word the entire interaction met my eye and shook her head.

This was Iris. This was what she did. We all just accepted it.

“I made sure she took every one of those copies down.”

I didn't point out she supported the author by buying a copy. It didn't seem to have registered yet and I wasn't going to bring it up.

“But I followed her to where they keep the other books and...” she clutched her chest and dropped into a stool. “The sheer volume of pornographic filth. Women with criminals. Women being sold and traded between multiple men. Brothers fornicating with their sisters.”

I freeze as she spits out the latter. My entire body goes rigid with a cold chill. My heart thumps wildly in my chest.

“Incest. Can you even fathom?” she slapped her purse down and chucks the book inside. “The very idea that you could look at your brother and think, that's the one. Of the billions of men in the world, my brother is the one I want. It's sick. It's vile and disgusting. People who think this way need to be checked. There's clearly something wrong in their heads.”

I licked my lips nervously and hazard a glance in Mom's direction. She had a pensive furrow to her brows as she cradled her tea between her slender fingers.

“I understand what you're saying,” she said slowly after a moment. “There is a lot we can't all agree on.”

“Your brother, Paloma?”

Mom winced. “Well, maybe not—”

“I would never look at Oz that way. I would never ... ugh! The very thought.” A thick hand shot up and waved in my direction. “Could you imagine Adeline and Rhys doing something so unholy? What would you do? Accept them like it’s fine? Celebrate their depravity and welcome them into the family? People who crave their own flesh and blood will go on to hurt their children.”

Mom chuckled quietly. “Well, I don’t think I have to worry about that.”

I would never hurt my children, and I know Rhys wouldn’t either, but maybe Iris was right about everything else. Maybe there is something wrong with us. Maybe we are sick and twisted.

But when Rhys dips his head and brushes a kiss to my temple in his sleep, I can’t imagine this feeling of bliss being wrong.

RHYS

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Something's wrong.

It's not glaring, but a feeling in the pit of my stomach, a knot I can't unravel. We're still passionate and she's still vocal and open with what she likes, but afterwards, even as she curls up in my arms, she's not there. Her mind seems to leave her body and I'm just holding half of her.

"Addie?" I brush a lock of hair off her temple, trailing my fingers down her downy cheek to slip beneath her chin. I tilt it up, forcing her green eyes up to mine. "What's wrong?"

She hesitates. Her lashes flutter down but flip up when I nudge her chin again. Only there's tears in her eyes and the sight of them swarm me with panic and concern.

"Addie?"

I start to push up onto my elbow, but she shakes her head and catches my arm.

"I'm scared." She licks her lips before sucking the bottom one between her teeth. "I can't lose Mom and Oz."

"They love us, Addie. They would never—"

She shakes her head rapidly. “Not for this. Not their children doing this. What if they’re disgusted?”

I pull her closer, refusing to give her space to fall into. She’s toeing the edge, and I will not let her slip.

“I don’t care.” I put my finger lightly over her trembling lips. “I love you, Addie.” I hear her sharp inhale, feel her lips part, but I push on. “I love you so much. I will always love you. I will fight the world for you. I will burn it to the ground for you.”

Her mouth crashing over mine tastes so sweet tinged with her tears. Her arms close around my neck and she melts into my chest.

“I love you, too,” she whispers. “I love you so much, Rhys.”

We didn’t solve anything. The week we have ends too quickly and still we are no closer to figuring out what we’re going to do back in the real world.

“One day at a time,” I tell Addie as we stand next to her parked car on the final morning.

Neither of us slept much the night before. After supper, Addie helped me dismantle my equipment and pack it into the trunk of her car. I took down the cameras and made sure nothing was out of place.

We also washed all the linens and disinfected every place we fucked.

There was a lot.

I wanted to give Giselle no reason to regret her favor to me.



“Giselle, huh?” Addie asked when I voiced my concerns.

She was scrubbing the counters, her movements as tense as her tone. I had to bite my lip to contain my smile.

“She’s a client.” I slipped up behind her and nuzzled the back of her warm neck. “I helped install her new kitchen. I’m told her husband and three kids really love the towel rack I put in.”

She wrinkled her nose at me, but her cheeks deepened in color, a pretty pink that reminded me of my handprint on her ass.

“I didn’t say anything.”

I kissed the warm skin. “I know.”

If I could kidnap her and take her deep into the mountains to keep as my own, I would.

Instead, I brush back a rogue strand of hair that has escaped her braid and tuck it behind her ear.

“I’ll be right behind you.” I motion with a nod of my head towards the bike I’d brought around from its hiding place in the shed. “My helmet has a built-in microphone. We can talk the whole way.”

She raises an eyebrow. “Were you driving when telling me to finger myself on the way here?”

I burst out laughing at the outrage on her face. “No, I was already here waiting for you.”

Addie closes the foot between us and leans up to touch her lips to mine. “Good. I guess you’ll have to miss the action on the way back.”

The implication has my hand clamping down around her slender throat and forcing her back into the driver’s door. My little demon moans.

“Do not touch her.”

She smirks. “What if I do? It’s four hours. That’s a long drive and I forgot to wear underwear.”

I’m grinding my molars. “I swear to God, woman.”

I check because obviously I have to and my reason for madness parts her legs as I slip a hand under the soft cotton folds of her skirt and cup her soft, wet pussy.

“Why are you wet, Addie?”

Even I can hear the thick warning in the question leaving my chest.

She bites her lip but groans loudly when I penetrate her with two fingers and thrust.

“I ... I think a lot of it is you,” she pants. “You came in me a lot last night and this morning.” She grins like she’s pleased about that. “I have no idea how much is too much or if my birth control will actually work with this amount. I’ll have to talk to my doctor and maybe double—”

The hand still around her pretty neck tightens. “Don’t. You can take your pills if you want, but if I get you pregnant...” I growl in my throat and pump harder, faster. “If my seed grows inside you, Addie, I want it.”

“Shit! Rhys!”

Addie cums. Her head falls back against the car roof as she rides my hand.

Her misty eyes open to mine and she gives a little giggle. “A baby, Rhys?”

“Yes,” I say without hesitation. “I want you to have my baby.”

Her cheeks darken. “I want to wait. There’s still so much—”

I kiss her lightly, tasting her sigh when I pull free of her body.

“I’ll wait. As long as you want, but that’s what I want. You. Me. A family. Forever.”

We stand there in the calm morning sun, wrapped in each other’s arms. Our mouths taking long, slow sips of the other. It’s perfect until we have to pull away. The reluctance on both our part only makes the situation worse when she climbs into her car. I get on my bike and wait for her to pull out first, but my phone lights up in the holder. Addie’s smiling face glows on the screen.

I grin as I connect the call to my helmet and answer.

“Hey baby,”

“Hey, I’m thinking pancakes and the biggest cheeseburger we can find..”

I chuckle as I watch her turn her car around and start in the direction of the gates.

I follow.

ADDIE

---

Rhys cheated.

I realize as much a whole week later when I find myself in the passenger seat of his truck watching the highway wind out behind us.

To be fair to myself, I never stood a chance when he broached the subject that lazy afternoon in my apartment. He picked me up from work on his bike. We stopped for tacos at our favorite takeout place and went back to my apartment just as the rain started. The soft patter filled the cramped space as Rhys kissed me that way he knows fucks with my senses. It's always the cause of my clothing issues — they come off too quickly.

But this time, he went in with a plan. He nestled between my thighs, his tongue swirling in teasing figure eights between my opening and clit. He had a finger in my pussy and a vibrator in my ass. I wasn't even listening when he made the suggestion we carpool to Mom and Oz's house that weekend, especially when he followed the question with a sweep of his tongue over my swollen muscle. I would have agreed to anything.

"You play dirty," I grumble, arms folding across the soft material of my hoodie.

Rhys smirks from behind the wheel. The sun reflects off the black frames of his glasses with the tip of his head in my direction.

“You said yes like nine times. You sounded really excited about the idea.”

Despite my best efforts to maintain my annoyance, my lips twitch. “I wasn’t saying yes to this.”

“No?” The hand on my naked, upper thigh squeezes. The fingers have been steadily climbing higher beneath the hem of my skirt since we left my apartment and were now angling to slide under the elastic of my panties. “Well, this is definitely awkward then.”

I’m not angry with him. I’m not even upset about the situation. I love that I get to spend three hours with him. Carpooling from the same city to the same town made all the sense in the world, but it isn’t normal for us. It’s going to raise questions and speculations. What if Mom takes one look at my face and knows I’ve been climbing her stepson like a jungle gym?

I know I’m being crazy. I’m overthinking a perfectly reasonable thing, but my gut is in knots. I’m so nervous my bladder has shriveled up to walnut size. The fact that Rhys is calm about this should be making me calm, but it’s only infuriating me because I feel like I’m the only one freaking out.

“Hey,” Rhys squeezes my thigh again to get my attention. “I promise you, no matter what happens, I’ll be there. We’ll get through it together.”

He’s been saying it for days and I believe him, but...

“If Mom hates me...” I don’t miss the way my voice catches on the confession.

“That’s not going to happen, baby. She might be confused at first, but she could never hate you.”

I place my hand over his and give a little squeeze.

I love the wild landscape Oz owns deep in the belly of nowhere and nothing. The small square footage of wilderness basking on the cool shores of Lake Eden is a haven I devoured as a child. I know every inch of it better than my own shoebox apartment.

Pinecrest, a breathtaking structure of unlimited glasswork buried in the heart of a grove has my soul. My love. I would live there forever, become a wood witch frolicking naked through the trees.

But the four-story home has been in Oz's family for generations and, although Oz is the type of man who would give the shirt off his back if asked, it rightfully belongs to Rhys. Even if he's never treated me as less than his own, I'm not taking his ancestral home.

Dark, rich oak and gleaming tinted windows glint in welcome as I pull up the gravel path. The sun is at the highest point where the sharp edge of the roof reaches past the towering trees to pierce the sky. All around, the air smells so clean and crisp, a cleansing brew of sunbaked earth, sweet pine, cool, bubbling water. I'm so happy to finally be here, I almost forget to wait for Rhys to park before tumbling out of the car.

"Addie!"

Mom comes tearing out the front doors and down the marble steps. I meet her halfway in a collision of bodies.

"Oh my God, you made it." Mom pulls back just enough to grab my face and pepper every inch of it with kisses. "I'm so happy you're here."

Laughing, I extract myself and smile at her. "I missed you, too, Mom."

Mom is disgustingly beautiful with a wild explosion of thick, black curls and deep, green eyes the shade of damp moss over an elegant nose and full lips. She's draped in a stunning, Grecian slip in a soft green that makes her eyes seem to glow. The five, gold bands at her wrist clatter noisily as she loops her arm through mine and drags me in the direction of the house and the gorgeous man grinning at us from the doorway.

Ozias Delgado extends his big arms to me, and I release my mother to race up and throw myself into his wide chest.

"Ah, my sweet Addie." He squeezes me hard once before stamping a kiss into the side of my head. "You are home at last. You are never allowed to leave again."

He says the same thing every time I come to visit, and he means it, and I want so badly to accept.

"Don't tempt me." I say, pulling back to face both of them now standing side by side, studying the figure coming up behind me.

"Rhys!" Mom moves to engulf him in an equally crushing embrace. "I'm so happy both my babies are home."

I don't look at Rhys.

"You didn't mention you and Addie were coming together," Oz says, and I have to resist the urge to grimace at his unintended remark.

Rhys draws back from Mom but keeps a loose arm around her shoulders as he addresses his father. "Cumming together just seemed like a fun idea."

He's intentionally being impossible knowing I can't say shit.

“I’m so glad.” Mom squeezes his middle. “I guess you guys started talking again after Addie texted you a couple of weeks back?”

I forgot all about the text I promised Mom I would send Rhys. I forgot I sent it, but not what I sent, unfortunately.

“I did get her text,” Rhys assures her, but his eyes are burning into the side of my deliberately averted face.

Mom hadn’t specified what I should say to the guy I was intentionally avoiding so, I said the first thing that had come to mind — “Texting.” He never texted back so I had considered my obligations fulfilled.

“Well, now that I have you both here, I want to hear everything.”

“Why don’t you and Addie go ahead?” Oz touches his lips to the side of Mom’s head. “We’ll get the luggage.”

They share a slow kiss, and I find my attention lifting to the man watching me. His loving gaze moves over my face to rest on my mouth. I feel them tingle as if he’s touched me and my chest aches to go to him. To press my palms to his shoulders, go up on my toes and taste him. He’s barely a foot away and I fucking miss him.

“Love you,” he mouths, and it only hurts more.

I mouth it back just as our parents pull apart. Mom turns to me with a happy little grin that glows pink on her cheeks.

She claims my arm, threading hers through it and leading me deeper across the gleaming, black marble cut from the same material as the front stairs. It runs through the entire first floor, a sleek, black river with gold veins.



I peel my slippers off and set them on the mat just inside the door, noting mine is the only pair there.

“No one else has arrived?”

“Not yet, but they should before the dinner. That means,” she presses my arm to her chest, “I get you to myself for a little while longer.”

I am more than happy to have Mom to myself. All the stress I’d been hauling around the last week vanishes the deeper Mom drags me through the house in the direction of the back patio.

She practically shoves me into a cushioned wicker chair facing a full view of Lake Eden in all its splendor and grace. The evening canopy of navy-blue shimmers across the calm surface, creating a hypnotic ripple I can’t tear my eyes away from.

“How’s your father and Sue?” Mom pulls my attention away from the familiar scent washing off the clear surface to kiss my cheeks.

It’s a good question.

“I have no idea,” I tell her with a shrug. “I haven’t seen or talked to either of them since Christmas. Eight months ago. I texted Dad for Father’s Day, and just to check in, but he hasn’t responded.”

A fine line appears between Mom’s eyebrows, a tiny dent that mirrors the twin set on either side of her mouth. The hurt and apology in her eyes tell me what she’s about to say before she even speaks.

“I’m so sorry, baby.”

I wave the apology away. It's not her fault. She's not the reason Sue has a weird tie around Dad or that he's too weak to stand up to her. It's not Mom's fault Sue is the very definition of an evil stepmother.

"It's fine, honestly. I think I like it better this way."

Because the alternative is worse. I had to live with her cold shoulder, snide remarks and manipulation for almost four weeks when I originally moved to the city and asked to stay with them in Sue's swanky upper west side penthouse for a little while. Just until I could find my own place.

My regret in that decision had been immediate.

Sue was a fucking nightmare. The worst kind.

She wouldn't stop accusing Mom of keeping me away from them. Never mind that I was turned down every time I asked if I could visit over Christmas or the summer. Never mind that I texted Dad a lot more than he's ever texted me. Never mind that Mom and Oz have offered to have them visit over the summer and stay in the guesthouse.

They were given every opportunity and still, somehow, Mom and Oz are the problems.

I wasn't allowed a key to the apartment. The doorman — who Dad introduced me to — wouldn't let me into the building unless Sue granted permission. I wasn't allowed to go out after six unless she approved of where I was going. She monitored what I wore, how much I ate, and even had the audacity to tell me I talked to Mom too much.

That had been the straw that finally broke my patience. Everything else I can deal

with, but limiting my time with Mom is an absolute no.

“How’s work?” Mom asks, shoving a frosty glass of fresh lemonade into my hand.

A droplet of condensation drips off the bottom and hits the naked skin on my thigh a millimeter below the hem of my skirt.

I smooth the moisture away with the pad of my thumb and wipe it on the soft fleece of my hoodie.

“Nothing has changed. Mrs. Goldblum hired one of her friends and the two of them are practically taking over. Simone, the other woman, yelled at me in front of a patient that I stole his prescription.”

“Mr. Cordially?”

I nod. “Thankfully, I was able to point out it was in his glove box like always, but it was so crazy. She threatened to call the cops on me.”

Mom slams her drink down on the glass and wicker table between us with enough force to make me wince. “I beg your pardon? That man has been calling the clinic once a week with the same complaint and she has the nerve to yell at you?” Witnessing Mom lose her temper is always entertaining because it rarely ever happens. “This is harassment. We should have Oz look into it.”

I chuckle. “No, it’s honestly fine because I already planned on leaving once I found something else.”

Mom huffs and drops back against her chair. “It’s terrible.”

It really is. Dr. Goldblum is such a sweet man, and I love working for him, but his

wife ... she's a piece of work.

"You know though..." the deep creases between Mom's brows soften and she grins a little. "Deloris is retiring in two months."

I blink. "What? Why?"

Mom laughs. "Because she's eighty-five. I don't blame her."

I can't believe it. Deloris has been working at Oz's office since I was a kid. She taught me everything I knew about being a receptionist. I interned with her every summer and helped on weekends since I was fifteen.

"I'm sad, but happy for her."

Mom nods, picking up her drink again and taking a sip. "But Oz is going to be looking for a new receptionist, someone who knows the ropes." She bats her eyes at me from over the rim. "You could move back..."

My laugh bursts out of me. "Most parents want their twenty-year-old child to move out, not live with them forever."

Mom gasps in feigned outrage. "You're not moving in with me. There's a whole guesthouse just across the yard." Her expression grows serious. "With you so far away and Oz at work and Rhys living on his own, this place is just too empty. I tried to get Rhys to move back the few times I've seen him in town working—"

"He still works in town?"

Mom pauses. "Where else would he work?"

“I just thought since he moved, it would be a shorter commute.”

Mom’s frown deepened. “I don’t think it’s that far. Ten minutes, maybe?”

I’ve been to Rhys’s apartment. It’s not in town unless he’s living a double life which I highly doubt. The only thing I can think is he’s been driving to and from work every day for six hours both ways so he could be close to me.

My heart warms and breaks at the thought. He’s been with me the whole time, refusing to give up on us and I acted like a child. Sure, I still believe my fears are valid, but it makes my heart ache.

“You have no idea how happy I am to see you two together again,” Mom’s saying when I climb out of my thoughts. “Rhys was devastated when you left. He had no idea until he came home to find you gone.” Mom clicks her tongue and shakes her head. “He was crushed. I asked if something happened, if you guys got into a fight, but he wouldn’t say, and you wouldn’t say, but you were both hurting. I hated it.”

My stomach writhes like a dark pit of angry snakes. I stare at a chunk of ice floating across the yellow surface of my drink to clink into the side of my glass.

“I kissed him,” I blurt before I can stop myself.

My gaze darts up quickly to catch her reaction, her face. Kissing is a tame explanation to that night, but I have to see what she’ll say, how she will react. This is a tiny prod sent out to test the waters, and Mom doesn’t disappoint.

Her jaw drops. Her eyes go round. She stares at me with a soft, “Oh.” But I see something register and her expression morphs into a grimace. “Oh!” she repeats with remorse. “Oh, Addie, I’m so sorry. I’m sure Rhys was just taken by surprise. You know he adores you.”

I'm amused that her immediate thought isn't, what the fuck is wrong with you, but sympathy that I'd been rejected. So, out of shame and hurt, I ran.

She's not wrong, I suppose. Shame was exactly why I left.

"Ad?" Mom touches my arm gently and I blink out of my thoughts. She's watching me with concern tilting her head. "You okay?"

I nod and clear my throat. I take a sip of my tart drink to busy my hands. "Fine. Just thinking I can't believe it's been ten years for you and Oz."

Mom does not fall for my attempts to distract her, but she doesn't press. "Me neither. It feels like only yesterday he walked into my life."

I snort a laugh. "You mean when you crashed your car into his at a stop sign?"

Mom's cheeks darken. "Same thing."

We both laugh at the guilt wrinkling her nose; only my mom could total a man's whole car and walk away with a date.

"I'm really happy for you guys," I say, settling back in my cushions with my drink cradled between my palms. "I love Oz, and I love that you're so happy."

Mom sighs and unfurls her legs to stretch out before her. "I don't know what I would do without him. He's my whole world, next to you, of course, and Rhys." She taps a French tip against the side of her glass contemplatively as she stares at something across the lake. "Addie, why did you kiss—?"

I quickly interjected like I hadn't heard her.

“How’s the macramé business?” I counter, changing the subject.

Her eyes narrow, but she lets me evade the question. But a shadow flitters over her expression and she quickly averts her own eyes to the lake. The fingers around her glass tighten.

“Mom?” I press, setting my drink down on the table at my elbow.

Mom sighs and follows suit placing her glass aside.

“A few months ago, Ozzy had some clients over for dinner and the wife loved the piece I have over the loveseat in the living room. Ozzy told her about my business when she asked where I got it.” She took a sip of her drink, gaze still avoiding mine. “She was so lovely and complimentary. I showed her a few others when she asked and she looked up my website. During dinner, she mentioned knowing companies that would buy my pieces in bulk all over the world.”

My eyes widen. “Oh my God! Mom, that’s fantastic. What’s the problem?”

A wrinkle formed over the bridge of Mom’s delicate nose. “Love Knot is my baby. It’s a passion because it’s personal. I hand create each piece with care and love. If I start hammering them out in bulk, it’s not the same.”

I consider her worries and understand her concerns, but this is a huge deal. Too big to ignore.

“You can still do both. Keep your storefront and online but expand. Pick companies you align with and maybe hire a few of the women from town to start. You deserve to get your name out there. It doesn’t mean you’re selling out. You’re reaching a broader customer base. It’s a good ... no, great thing. I think you should go for it.”

Mom slices a hesitant glance in my direction. “You think so?”

I nod enthusiastically. “A hundred percent.”

“See? I told you it was a good idea.”

Oz saunters towards us with his hands casually tucked into the pockets of his white slacks. His dark, chocolate brown eyes are all for Mom as he moves to press a kiss to the top of her curls. A shiny lock of black slips free to fall over his brow.

“Do it, mi amore .”

Mom nibbles her bottom lip, looking excited and apprehensive. “I’ll think about it,” she says at last.

Oz kisses the tip of her nose. “Good.” He straightens and turns those warm eyes on me. “We took your bags up to your room.”

At the mention of we, my gaze darts to the beautiful figure standing just over his shoulder.

His eyes are already on me, already so full of want and need. Every nerve ending crackles with an awareness that makes my heart pang to be with him. I have become so reliant on his existence in my life that his absence — even temporarily — feels like a physical wound. And he won’t take his attention off me. It’s knowing and dirty in a way it shouldn’t be given our parents are sitting right there.

But I bottle the prickling urge to go to him. I grip my armrests a little tighter in restraint. I try not to stare as Rhys moves to take the seat across from mine. Close, but so far.



“What were you ladies talking about?” Oz sits on Mom’s ottoman and drags her feet into his lap. Her black flats are gingerly removed and set aside and replaced by his long fingers drifting along her tiny toes.

I don’t miss the glance Mom darts at me, then Rhys. A subtle little shift that assures me the topic of my kiss with Rhys will be brought up again the next chance she gets.

“Just Addie’s job,” she says at last.

Mom and I tell each other everything. After her divorce from Dad, it’s been just us and our bond is unwavering. I know I can tell her anything and she will never judge me, but this is different. Mom may not judge my feelings for Rhys, but it would change something between us. For ten years, Rhys has been her son. One of her babies. I don’t even know if it’ll matter that we don’t share blood only that she considers us her children. This might be too much for her. For Oz.

I feel a light tap against my foot and I have to swallow hard to push free of my spiraling thoughts to look up.

Rhys cocks his head to one side and gives it a gentle shake as if to tell me to stop it. Like he knows exactly what I’m thinking.

I swallow again, desperately calming the panic in my chest.

“Are they still giving you a hard time?” Oz asks, drawing my attention to the other two.

I clear my throat, giving myself time to lighten my tone when I wave a dismissive hand. “It’s really not a big deal. I’ve been looking for other employment anyway.”

“I mentioned Deloris’s retirement in a couple of months,” Mom chimes in slyly.

Oz's eyebrows shoot up. His eyes widen with excitement. "Do you want the position? It would save me training someone new and you already know how I like my coffee."

I laugh at that, the temptation overwhelming.

Yes! I want to come home so badly. I miss Pinecrest. I miss Mom and Oz so much. I miss the woods and the lake, and all the memories I made here with Rhys. Times and events that make up a large chunk of my childhood.

Inadvertently, my gaze shifts to the man next to me. His focus on me is resolute, but unhelpful.

Am I ready to come back? I have no reason to stay in the city anymore. Everyone and everything I love is here. Logically, it makes sense.

"Let me think about it," I tell Oz, wanting to talk to Rhys about it before I make up my mind.

"You could come work for me," Rhys drawls. "I've been thinking I might need a secretary."

Heat explodes beneath my skin. "I don't think they're called—"

"I like secretary."

I have to bite the inside of my cheek to keep my grin in check.

On our list, he's added a few things he'd like to try. Role play is one. I guess playing his dirty secretary is something I'm going to have to fulfill for him.

"I'll think about it," I say, careful to keep my tone neutral.

“Well, I asked her first,” Oz interrupts.

Rhys frees me from his level stare to meet his father’s mock irritation. “I have more to offer.”

Oz huffs. “Like what?”

The asshole with the crooked grin replies smoothly, “Flexibility.”

Good Christ.

Oz, the poor man, looks momentarily resigned at the remark. “Unfortunately, the office hours are set...”

“I really don’t need flexibility,” I assure him quickly.

“Don’t you?” Rhys counters, cocking his head.

I narrow my eyes at him. “Nope.”

“That’s not the impression I got when we were talking last night—”

“You heard wrong,” I cut in.

The asshole hums and settles back in his chair. “No. I remember you being very pro flexibility.”

He’d had my arms and legs tied wide across his bed. The straps were taut, giving me no movement as he took full control of my body in ways that make me shift in my seat.

Bastard notices and grins.

“I can talk to the other members about hours...” Oz hazards, seeming confused as he glances between us.

“It really isn’t a problem, Oz. Rhys is being a turd. The hours are fine.”

“But you know, speaking of flexible, how was the yoga retreat?” Mom pops in. “You barely said two words about it when you got back. Was it awful?”

“She was very tight lipped about it,” Rhys agrees. “Couldn’t get a thing out of her when I asked. Just kept making these sounds—”

“It was fine!” I snap, ready to pitch my glass at his head. “There’s really nothing to tell.”

“Nothing?” Mom grumbles. “You don’t even have a single picture. What kind of place was this?”

“Remote. No cell service so ... so I didn’t take pictures.” Mom and Oz aren’t tech savvy, but they know I’m lying. Terribly. The camera feature has nothing to do with Wi-Fi. “I forgot.”

“Well, what did you do all week?” Mom pushes, and I really should have seen the questions coming. I should have prepared better answers.

“Slept, mostly,” I confessed. “Did a little yoga. Exercised a bit. It was pretty isolated so not really much to do.”

I recognize my mistake the second Mom pauses with her drink poised at her lips. Her eyebrow arches with a very deliberate disbelief.

“You ... exercised?”

I should have stopped at slept. I’m not athletic. I barely passed gym class. Willingly admitting to working out is the equivalent of me confessing that I’m a world class athlete — laughable and highly unlikely.

“I mean, not overly a lot,” I babble stupidly.

“What kind of exercise?” Rhys pipes in, and my cheeks burn.

“I’m more interested in the yoga,” Mom partially saves me. “I have a group of friends who I occasionally go to yoga class with. Maybe you can join us once you move back.”

“Those yoga pants look fun,” Rhys adds.

I draw in a slow, calming breath. “Thank you, but it wasn’t for me.”

“You just need the right teacher,” Mom assures gently. “It’s the most relaxing thing. It makes your whole body feel amazing.”

“I’m really liking the sound of yoga,” Rhys says evenly.

“You should try it too, Rhys,” Mom adds with excitement. “We can all go together!”

“What do you think, Addie?” he says, never looking away from me. “Want to learn yoga with me?”

I deliberately turn my attention to my drink and take a gulp. “I think I’ve learned all I can this weekend and—”

“Oh, I’m sure there is still plenty to learn.” He leans in and takes the glass from my hands. “We could make a list of all the things we haven’t tried.”

I watch with a mixture of amusement and irritation as he downs the whole thing.

“I do like lists,” I grumble around the grin I can’t suppress.

Rhys runs a pink tongue across his upper lip and my core seizes. “Oh, I know it.”

Damn the man.

He was seriously fucking with my head, and senses. How am I supposed to act like I’m not about to jump him when he’s practically stripping me with his eyes?

“Still not joining your yoga group though,” I tell Mom. “I plan on being sick on those days.”

Mom purses her lips but knows me well enough not to push physical activities on me.

As kids, Rhys and I were all over the place. We hiked for hours, rowed all across the lake, did a million things outside, and I still loved those things, but my heart preferred a cozy bed and a book. Plus, the way we fucked, did I need a gym?

“I think Addie just needs a little convincing,” Rhys murmurs, drumming long fingers on the armrest of his chair.

“I think we should let Addie decide,” Oz offers, and I’m almost so grateful until he continues, “The last time we made her do sports, she pretended to break her leg.”

“I think it was her hip,” Mom mutters, shooting me a severe side eye. “All to avoid a little running.”

“A little? It was cross country,” I object vehemently. “I had to run for miles!”

“It wasn’t literally across the country, Adeline,” Mom huffs. “The whole thing was an hour long.”

“An hour of running!” I cry, still outraged by the sheer audacity. “Absolutely not.”

“I thought you liked running,” the dead man next to me announces breezily.

He’s lucky he took my drink, or I would hit him with it. “If the occasion calls for it.”

Rhys tips his head to one side. “What occasion casually requires running?”

Definitely a dead man.

Well, two can play this game.

“Getting chased through the woods by a masked man wielding a knife.”

Mom gasps, hand actually going to her chest. “Addie! That’s not funny.”

Despite everything, Rhys and I can’t help exchanging amused glances as Mom goes into detail about a murder documentary she watched the week before.

We lapse into a comfortable flow of conversation while we watch fireflies skip across the water and the sky fade from pink to the deep blue of a fresh bruise. I almost forget others would be joining us until Mom checks her watch.

“Where is everyone?”

“Maybe they won’t come,” Oz decides hopefully and gets a poke in the leg by Mom’s

toes.

“We have a kitchen full of food and a small army of people coming tomorrow to set this place up. If no one shows up, I’ll cry.”

Oz’s face morphs into one of sorrow. “Of course, people will come, my love. I only mean that I would much rather have my beautiful wife and children to myself. We haven’t been together like this since ... Christmas?”

Mom nods and I try not to think how terrible and tense the few visits I’d made where Rhys was also in attendance. I spent the entire trip avoiding him, barely looking at him, and leaving as quickly as I could. Now, all I want to do is crawl into his lap and let him hold me.

“How many people are we expecting?” Rhys asks and the sound of his voice makes my skin tingle.

“Tonight, only family,” Mom assures. “The actual party tomorrow will have a few extra people. Friends and family mostly. Are either of you bringing anyone?”

The hopefulness in the question makes me grimace. I think the fact that neither Rhys nor I have had a significant other since our school days is beginning to stress her out. Out of pure desperation to get her to stop her not so quietly stressing, I told her about Atticus. I could have declared I was moving back the way she practically came apart with happiness. That happiness dimmed only slightly when I told her we’d met online.

“You’re going to get murdered,” was her response.

I had to swear on her life that I would not let myself get murdered.



I stare a little too hard at the dock stretching across the center of the lake.

“Addie?” Mom prods. “Why don’t you invite your friend?”

Oz glances from me to Mom, dark eyes thin slits. “That masked weirdo? I don’t want him here. There is something wrong with a grown man who runs around dressed up like Zorro .”

“It’s not a Zorro mask,” Rhys mutters, and quickly adds, “I’m guessing. It wouldn’t be very practical...”

“Does it matter what kind of mask?” Oz snaps. “He could be a criminal who preys on young women. I should have my guy look into him. He sounds unhinged.”

I am barely holding my hysterical laughter in check when Oz pivots his outrage on me.

“Honestly, I don’t want you to see him anymore, Addie. You have no idea what he looks like under there. I mean, how old is he even to be wearing a mask? Are you sure he’s not a child?”

The absolute outrage on Rhys’s face, the personal offence has me choking back my laughter as I fight to maintain a stoic expression.

“You know what, you could be right,” I muse slowly, with all the conviction I can muster. “He could totally be a weirdo.”

Oz nods, face the most serious I’ve ever seen it. “If you want to date someone, Gerald’s son is currently in university to study law. Good kid. I will introduce you.”

“Oh!” I say, putting some excitement into my voice. “A lawyer, huh?”

“Better than some mask wearing nut job with no teeth.”

“What do you mean no teeth?” Rhys snaps, glowering at his father. “You can’t know he doesn’t have teeth. The mask could just be ... a thing.”

I’m dying. I’m pretty sure my insides are about to explode.

“He’s a lunatic,” Oz shoots back. “Your sister deserves a good boy.”

“She deserves to be...” I have never seen Rhys swallow down his words so quickly. He clears his throat. “She absolutely deserves something.”

Pleased he’d won, Oz turns to me. “I’ll tell Gerald to text me when Jordan visits next time, and we’ll set up a dinner here at the house.”

Sobering, I shake my head, deciding I better clear things up before the vein in Rhys’s temple explodes. “That’s not necessary, Oz. Thank you though, but I’m happy with my masked man. He’s all I want. And I have seen his face,” I add quickly when he looks ready to argue. “It’s a beautiful face with all his teeth. I’m very fond of it and him. And I’m not letting him go.”

“You’ve seen Atticus?” Mom leans forward with excitement. “Why didn’t you say anything? When? Where? What does he look like?”

I hesitate, but I make the split-second decision that this was the best way to break the news to them. Gradually and with care. Maybe if they see how much I love Rhys and how good we are together, when we finally tell them, it won’t be such a surprise.

“He stayed with me at the cabin,” I tell them very carefully, speaking slow like I’m trying to calm two startled horses.

“The cabin?” Mom cries.

“You took some deranged lunatic to an isolated cabin in the woods for a whole week with no reception?” Oz roars, looking on the verge of lunging to his feet and strangling me.

I quickly put a hand up. “I have known him a really long time and I have never felt safer with anyone.”

“Adeline!” Mom exclaims, looking as frantic as her husband. “He could have murdered you. He could have buried you somewhere and we would—”

I grab her trembling fingers. “Mom, I swear to you, I’m safe with him. He’s amazing and he loves me and ... I love him. So much.”

There’s no missing the war rampant on her beautiful face. I know she wants to squeal and hug me with all the elation in her heart, but she’s struggling with all the possibilities of losing me.

“He would never hurt me,” I assure her quietly. “You know I’m not stupid. I wouldn’t have asked him to stay with me if I didn’t trust him with my whole heart.”

That seems to ease some of her worry. Her fingers squeeze mine and she draws in a breath.

“Of course you’re not stupid.” She pauses, sounding a little breathless like she’d been holding her breath. “I just wish you had told me you were going to be alone with a stranger the entire week. I could have—”

“You were in Greece,” I reminded her.

“I could have sent Rhys. He could have made sure you were okay.”

I fight not to grimace. “Mom, I’m fine. Look at me. I don’t need a babysitter. I’m a whole grown person fully capable of handling myself.”

“That was still a very reckless decision, Addie,” Oz says.

“I wanted him there with me. I wanted to spend time with him and—”

“Yoga!” Mom yelps suddenly and claps her hands over her mouth, but she has everyone’s attention.

“Yoga...?” I began, bemused.

We make eye contact, and I see the understanding dawn across her face. The realization. Now, I’m covering my mouth as fire erupts beneath my skin.

“What about yoga?” Oz breaks into our locked stare.

Mom has her lips mashed together, smothering her grin as she lowers her hands and faces her husband. “Nothing. We just really love yoga.”

We both burst out laughing as Oz frowns at us with disapproval.

But Rhys.

Rhys is watching me, eyes dark fire pits devouring my very essence. There’s a warning and a promise in his perfect stillness that steals my air and dampens the place between my thighs.

“I don’t think this is funny, my love. We could have lost her,” Oz is stressing to

Mom, oblivious to the fact that his son is practically fucking me with his eyes a few feet away.

“I would never have let that happen,” the man in question murmurs quietly.

Oz ruffles a hand back through his hair, looking no less stressed. He shakes his head.

“Well, it seems like I’m the only one who is worried you could be someone’s lampshade right now.”

Rhys frees me from his spell long enough to glance at his father. “Do you think I would ever let anything hurt her?”

Oz takes a slow, steadying breath. “No, of course not, but...” he shakes his head again. “I guess we should meet him then, right?”

Shit .

RHYS

---

I wait for my Addie in the shadows of the corridor.

Below, voices drift up as guests arrive and move through the house to the patio. My Aunt Iris barks the loudest, a tirade of indignation over some commercial she'd seen. The actual complaint fades the further she goes.

I can't tell how many people have actually made it, but there seems to be a lot.

It makes no difference to me, but someone may notice our absence and I fucking need Addie.

I need my baby.

It's been way too long since I held her, smelled her delicious scent, kissed her sweet mouth. I can't wait until everyone's gone to hold her.

She's not in her room when I slip inside. It's dim, lit only by the lamplight next to the bed she's had since coming into my life.

Addie has always been a creature of habit. Her space is always neat and tidy. Even as children, while my room had been a tornado-struck mess, Addie had all her books neatly organized by author on the three rows of bookshelves Dad built into the wall at the foot of her bed. Her work desk consisted of her laptop, a cup of pens and her

schoolwork. Her bed was made in the morning and her clothes tucked away in the closet and dresser.

Currently, her overnight lies open on the mattress. Items are placed in neat piles across the floral spread.

Addie herself emerges from the dark bathroom attached to her room and we both jump, startled by the other.

“Rhys!” her little gasp dissolves into a brilliant smile. The next second, she’s running straight into my arms. “I was hoping you’d come up,” she whispers into my chest.

I tighten my hold on her. “You told our parents you loved me,” I murmur into the top of her head.

“I thought maybe if we broke things to them slowly, got them used to the idea...” she tips her face back to peer up at me. “I also don’t want to be set up with anyone else.”

My fingers slide into her thick strands and cup the back of her head. “Good, because you’re mine, Addie.”

She nods vehemently. “I only want to be yours.”

“Mine,” I stress, dropping my lips to her waiting ones. “Your mouth.” I bite her bottom fold, eliciting a moan. “Your skin.” I travel along the curve of her neck. My hands work the hem of her hoodie, and I drag the fabric off over her head. “Your tits.” The neckline of her tank top is dragged down under the generous globes and I’m on them, sucking the nipples and palming the spongy mounds.

“Yes! Yours.”

Her small hands are in my hair, holding me to her as she tries to go up on her toes to get more.

I cup her tight ass and lift her. Her long legs snap around my hips, and I take her to the bed.

“Who does your sweet pussy belong to, baby?”

I dump her down at the foot and claim my place between her already spread thighs. Her arousal wafts through the room and I can feel myself getting drunk on it.

Her plain, white panties already have a wet patch at the crotch, and I think how I barely touched her. I haven’t done a fucking thing to her yet.

“Who does your pussy belong to?” I say again, hands working the belt at my waist.

“You,” she breathes, big, dark eyes on my hands. “She’s yours.”

The leather slides free of their loops and I wind it in my hand until only a foot of leather remains dangling free.

“Rhys,” my greedy girl begs.

I traced the end of the strap down the inner flesh of her right thigh towards her soaked apex.

“Who gets her?”

I smack her pussy with a sharp, quick flick of my wrist. My Addie howls and falls back across the mattress. Her knees almost snap closed but she catches herself and opens further.



“You. Only you.”

I land another hit on her inner thigh, her mound again, her left breast. I tease the nipple before giving it a smack.

“We have no time to play, Addie. There’s a house full of people who will notice we’re gone.” I reach for her hips and hook her panties at the waist. I drag the material down her legs and pitch it aside. “No panties tonight. I want access to her whenever I want.”

Like the good girl she is, Addie slips her hands under her knees and offers her glistening slit for me to fuck. Her swollen clit begs me to relieve her, but no.

“Get dressed, dimples.”

“But ... I need you. Please. We can be quick. Fuck me, Rhys.”

My cock swells with her delicious whines. I’m so fucking tempted to sink deep into her hot channel and lose myself. I want to pound deep into her until she’s sucking my seed into her womb. I want it dribbling down her thighs all night. I want her leaving stains on the chairs.

I palm my dick through the fabric of my jeans. Addie watches my hands with her lip between her teeth.

“Let him out to play,” she teases, shifting a small hand over to her pretty cunt and rubbing the clit.

“Do you think you can be quiet, baby?” I sink two fingers into her hole and thrust.

“Yes!” she sobs, back arching, fingers flicking faster.

We don't have time, but I'm incapable of stopping now as I watch my Addie chase her own release. I let her soak my fingers, getting them nice and slippery for when I pull back and descend to the tight pucker of her ass.

I stretch the hole. Scissoring my fingers and sending Addie's back off the mattress. A fresh dribble of liquid runs free of her cunt to drench the fingers I slam inside her again and again, working the channel with rough strokes.

"Don't stop. Don't stop!" Addie's voice is climbing, getting too loud as she practically snarls at me to fuck her ass harder. "Harder! Fuck. Fuck, Rhys! God, more! I need you."

She's rubbing her clit furiously, eyes fixed on my pounding wrist.

"I want you to fuck my ass on our way home. I want you to pull over, bend me over your hood and fuck me on the side of the road. Like this. So fucking hard I cum."

She's killing me. I'm leaking in my pants and can't remember why I'm not inside her fucking her the way she wants.

Instead, I fill her tight cunt with three fingers from my free hand and I fuck both holes while she screams.

"My dirty little whore!" I hiss at her as I finger her the way I wish I could fuck her right now. "My greedy little cunt. Cum for me, Addie. Show me what a good girl you are."

She's close. She's bouncing on my fingers and rubbing her clit. She toys with her nipples with the other hand, pinching and tugging.

"I am. I'm your dirty whore."

I growl and slam harder. “Prove it. Cum. Cum for me, my perfect little—”

Addie comes with a whimpering sob of my name. Her muscles contract all around me, holding me hostage to her pleasure as she rides her wave.

I pull her to me when she floats down again and kiss her with every drop of my brewing madness.

“Fucking love you,” I growl into her mouth.

The soft folds curve into a happy, sleepy smile. “Love you, too, my masked weirdo.”

I bite her bottom lip, and she giggles.

“Get dressed, my sweet addiction. I’ll go distract the masses.”

Addie laughs and brushes her lips over mine. “My hero.”

With a final meeting of lips that nearly has me dragging her down to the bed, I leave. Quickly. With Addie’s giggles following my heels.

Little brat.

The patio is a mess of people. People I thankfully only deal with on holidays and the odd party. People I never saw or talked to otherwise but was raised to deal with when necessary.

Paloma catches sight of me as I step through the patio doors. Her eyes, the same brilliant green as her daughter’s, light up and she detaches herself from her sister Tully and hurries over to me.

I'm pretty close with my mom. Not nearly as close as Addie is to hers, but I text her throughout the week and see her when she travels through town in her RV. We have a very simple relationship, and it works for us, and I think a lot of that is because I never felt like I got cheated out of a mother when Paloma just clicked into place in my life. I still love my mom, but it worked out for everyone when Mom and Dad split, Mom followed her dreams of seeing the world and Dad found Paloma and Addie.

I think one of the reasons it's impossible not to like Paloma or my mom is because they could be sisters. Both have an aura of calm and peace that immediately puts everyone at ease. I don't think I've ever heard either of them raise their voices. Mom is a wild explosion of colors, a true daughter of the seventies to her soul. Peace, love and weed for all is her life mantra. Paloma is a calm river, a serene, white mist that envelopes and soothes. I used to think it was funny that Addie looked exactly like a younger version of her mother but had the spirit of mine.

"Hello sweetheart." Paloma slips her arm through mine and hugs it to her chest. "How are you?"

I let her guide me along the edges, giving the crowd a wide berth and us privacy.

There really is too many people present. Aside from Paloma and my dad, Paloma's older sister Tully, her husband Julian and their two kids, sixteen-year-old Dayton and eighteen-year-old Clio are in attendance. Tully is yelling at someone on the phone, her voice an irate shriek over the hiss and pop of meat being roasted over the grill. Her family stand several feet from her, a wide berth from her and each other on opposite sides of the porch. All their heads bent over their phones.

Uncle Grayson, Iris's husband stands too close over Dad's shoulder. Too close. Close enough that I want to shift uncomfortably. Like his wife, Grayson has zero awareness. Both have no concept of reality. The world revolves around them, and no

one can tell them differently.

I could have done without any of them. I would have loved the night to be just me with Addie and our parents, but it's Dad and Paloma's anniversary. It's their weekend. Only twenty-four hours and these people would be gone.

"Rhys?"

I blink and glance down at the tiny woman at my side. "Sorry. I'm good. How are you?"

She stops us at the edge of the patio before the set of stairs leading down into the yard and turns to me. Her big, green eyes peer up into mine and I'm struck by how much Addie resembles her.

"Can I ask you a favor?"

"Anything," I say without hesitation.

Her smile is a brilliant light spreading across her face. "I know it's probably asking a lot. You guys only just started talking again, but I think if anyone can help me convince Addie to move back, it's you. I know you care about her as much as I do and—"

I don't falter when I take a breath and murmur, "I love her."

Paloma's smile widens hopefully. "So, you'll help me? I don't want to gang up on her, but she's so far for no reason. I know you guys had an incident and she's a little embarrassed about it, but I know you guys are too close to let something as small as a kiss come between you."

I have no idea what she's talking about, but I do agree that Addie needs to come home. She doesn't belong in a shoebox miles from her family.

"I'll talk to her."

Paloma's whole face lights up. "You will? Oh, Rhys!" She pulls me into a suffocating embrace. "Thank you." A hard kiss is stamped into my cheek before she pulls back, still beaming. "Now, I have to convince her to convince you to move home, too."

I burst out laughing. "You know, most parents want their children out of the house, right?"

Paloma purses her lips and scowls. "That's what Addie said and like I said to her, there's a whole guesthouse right there."

I chuckle. "You want me and Addie to move into the guesthouse together?"

I am perfectly fine with that. Hell, I'll drive back right now, pack all my stuff and hers and have us moved in before sunrise, but I am curious how Paloma — who has no idea her daughter's release is still sticky on my fingers — thinks that would play out in a regular situation.

"Well, I mean..." she wrinkles her slender nose, "you're both adults. You can figure out your own rules about company and chores. Or we can expand!" she decides excitedly. "We'll add a whole section, like a duplex."

It's on the tip of my tongue to confess the conversation I'd had with Dad earlier while we were unloading the truck. The one where I made him an offer for the square of land directly across Lake Eden. My gaze even flicks over to the thick span of wilderness barely visible across the water, the whole patch of untouched earth waiting for me and my crew to break ground and build Addie the home of her

dreams.

It's been on my mind for a while. I initially wanted to build it, have it ready to bring Addie to, but this is for both of us, and I want her to make the plans with me. I want us to picture and create our home together. Arriving this morning, seeing the excitement on her face, I knew it was time to put that plan into motion and ask Dad officially.

"You want to buy it?" he'd asked, pausing in the process of pulling Addie's suitcase down. "From who? The land already belongs to us."

"From you," I said, amused by his confusion.

"Rhys, the land belongs to you already. It's been in our family for years. It's already yours and Addie's."

I wanted to roll my eyes at how simple he always made these things sound. Like when Grandpa passed and left Dad his construction company even though Dad had zero understanding or interest in the business. He simply looked at me and asked if I wanted it because Dalgado Constructions has always been mine and Grandpa's passion. Grandpa had me out on the field since I could walk. I knew the company inside and out and loved the intricate art of working with my hands. Dad just signed it all over to me and told me to make Grandpa proud.

"Can you just let me please pay you for it?" I begged, seeing where this was going.

Dad froze as if I'd pulled a gun on him. "Pay me? For what? You're going to pay me for what is yours?"

I groaned and pinched the bridge of my nose. "You own it, Dad. It's under your name. Grandpa left it to you, so, it's yours and I would like to make an offer to buy

it.”

If disgust could be more potent, I would be dead, but he scoffed and waved at me to get out of his way with that shit. “Mine. Yours. You’re my son. This is your land. Your home. You want to build a home here for yourself? Throw a rock and pick a spot. Don’t come to me talking about money again or I’ll disown you.”

I bite back my chuckle. “If you disown me, can I buy the land then?”

He smacked me upside the head as he passed with Addie’s bag in hand.

But I keep the idea to myself until I can talk to Addie. I want to take her to the spot I’ve chosen and watch her face as she sees where I want our lives to start. Where I want our children to run and grow. I know Addie enough to have zero doubt in my mind that she will love it.

Still, I chuckle and lean forward to press a kiss to the top of Paloma’s head. “I’ll move back if Addie does.”

Like a child being told they’re headed to Disneyland , Paloma squeals with happiness and gives a little clap of her hands. The gold bands at her wrists clink noisily over the hum of chatter. She pivots slightly on her flat sandals as if prepared to hurry over to my dad and tell him the news but stops to turn back to me.

She lowers her voice. “Oh, Aunt Iris isn’t having a good day. Please be patient with her.”

I groan and she pats my arm sympathetically. “Great.”

My gaze drifts over the many faces glowing in the soft light of the setting sun. My aunt Iris is nowhere to be seen, my Grandma Khalida has snuck in when I wasn’t



looking, and Dad is guiding her wheelchair to a spot at the table.

I'm guessing Iris must have picked her up from her retirement home. That was the only explanation why the troll hasn't caused havoc yet.

I also dimly notice that Iris's daughters Eve, Ruth, Miriam are absent, unsurprisingly. They rarely ever joined family events unless it was mandatory. I suspect they're too embarrassed by their parents' behavior to bother.

I don't know if every family has an Aunt Iris, but she's the reason everyone drinks during family events. She's the reason everyone stays quiet during conversations because anything you say will be scrutinized and shamed. It's worse when something displeases her, putting her in a foul mood. Then she sets out to make everyone else miserable.

"Does she have to be here?" I grumble.

Paloma touches my arm again. "She's your aunt and your dad's sister. We need to be kind. Let's get through tonight and hopefully she'll be in a better mood tomorrow."

I disagreed. Anyone who went out of their way to make my family that miserable can just stay the fuck home. Paloma knows I will happily go toe to toe with the woman if she even thinks about crossing the line with Paloma or Addie. I give zero fucks about her place on the family tree or what she thinks about anything. She can talk all she wants about whatever she wants, but the second she oversteps into my territory, all gloves will be off.

"I'll do my best to watch my tongue for you," I promise the tiny woman peering up at me because it's her damn day. It's her anniversary and she shouldn't be warning people to tiptoe around assholes.

Paloma smiles and touches my cheek. “Thank you, baby.”

The appearance of two figures on the porch has us looking around. I don’t recognize either one of them, but Paloma and Dad don’t seem surprised by their appearance.

“Long, lost cousins?” I partially tease because one is a fully grown man in his mid-twenties. The tiny creature next to him was half his age, but has the same piercing blue eyes and soft, blond hair.

Paloma chuckles. “That’s Brooke and Michael. Brooke is dating Dayton. He asked if she could stay for the night. Her mom was fine with it as long as her brother tags along with her.”

Brooke has to be sixteen at best.

I narrow my eyes at my stepmother. “I remember a very firm rule about no boys or girls spending the night when I was Dayton’s age.”

She rolls her eyes. “I would have said no here, too, except Tully said yes and her mom said yes, and I’m not responsible for either of them, but...” she grimaces a little and looks over to where Michael, a tall, broad man with supermodel features smiles wanly at Dad. “He’s going to be a problem.”

I look over his jean clad legs and polo shirt. “I can take him.”

Paloma laughs. “No, I mean...” she exhales softly, “I may have also agreed to have him over so he can meet Addie.”

“My Addie?” I blurt without thinking.

She winces. “It was before the conversation this morning. I was thinking if she meets

someone in real life with an actual face...” she pauses to nibble on her bottom lip. “Shoot. Well, I better go face the music. Who knows, maybe they’ll hit it off.”

Paloma moves to greet her guests, and I stay where she leaves me, scowling at her back, pissed off at her for the first time in my life.

But it doesn’t last. A solitary movement in the doorway has already redirected my attention. My anger is a distant memory as the light from the house frames her perfect silhouette, outlining every delicious curve with such haunting precision I can’t breathe.

The dress, a thin sheet of fabric practically transparent with the light falls deep between the valley of her gorgeous breasts before the waist is cinched to fold the material in place around legs I would sell my soul to live between for the rest of my life. To finish it all off, high, black sandals are strapped to her feet.

She descends the stairs, one hand on the railing. The skirt shifts and sways, and parts up one leg. High. High up. I can almost see her hip.

No panties.

Fuck, I’m so hard it hurts. The soft head of my cock grinds into the zipper of my pants. I want to adjust it but there’s no way without drawing attention.

As if sensing the danger she’s in, my helpless prey peers up through thick, dusky lashes. Her full, red lips curve as if she thinks I won’t fuck her right here on the table. Like I won’t bend her over, press her naked tits into the glass as I fuck her ass and fist all that beautiful riot of curls in my hand. I don’t care who watches as Addie begs me to fuck her harder. Let them watch as I claim her. Mark her right there as mine.

Not for my sake.

I know she belongs to me, but to certain fuckers who think they stand a chance taking her.

My Addie turns her feet as if prepared to come to me, to let me do all the things in my head when Michael appears in her path like a syphilis relapse with Paloma at his side. They stop her. They force her to stay and make small talk while I'm crackling with a rage, a violent madness that is making my vision darken.

If he touches her, I will drop kick his ass into the lake.

"Hey, why are you standing over here?"

Dad appears at my side, a glass of scotch in one hand and a pair of greasy tongs in the other. I don't think when I reflexively take the drink and down it. It scorches a flaming path down the center of my chest to fuel the fire in my belly.

"Everything okay?"

"Yeah, why?" I hiss through my teeth, eyes never leaving Addie.

"Because you look like I'm going to need bail money ... and you finished my drink."

I look down at the empty tumbler in my fingers and wince. "Sorry."

He clears his throat. "You seem ... tense."

"Nope," I mutter like some petulant dick. "I'm fine. Just avoiding conversation."

"That's too bad. I was thinking you should come talk to your uncle for a bit and keep him busy."

I hear the desperation in the statement and follow his gaze to where Grayson has cornered Clio. The girl looks like she wants to be anywhere but there as a fully grown man criticizes her plaid skirt, black t-shirt with a mesh top underneath, and big, chunky boots that go to her knees. Whatever he's telling her has color rising under her white makeup.

"What the fuck is he saying to her?" I snap, and Dad sighs.

Grayson points to Clio's sharp pixie cut and I'm ready to stalk over but Paloma has already beaten me. She slips between the two seamlessly and faces the stupid fuck with a sweet smile. The distraction is enough to help Clio slip away, leaving Paloma to take his shit.

"You need to stop inviting them," I tell Dad. "They're the worst kind of people."

"She's my sister," Dad cuts in sharply. "She doesn't mean to be brisk. That's just her nature and Grayson doesn't think."

"Stop making excuses for her. Paloma is a saint. If anyone talked to Addie the way Iris talks to Paloma, I would be in jail for manhandling her out the door. She would never be allowed in our home."

"Iris loves Paloma. She has never said—"

"To your face."

Dad points the tongs at me. "Stop it. This isn't the time for this conversation."

My irritation only builds from there.

Michael says something to Addie, and she laughs. Neither one of them has moved

even though Paloma is no longer there.

Maybe I will need bail money.

Dinner starts and Addie sits in her usual place across from me. Dad and Paloma take the ends with everyone else going filling in around us. Michael the monumental fuck takes the seat next to Addie and flashes her thousands of dollars in dental work.

But Addie is looking at me. Her green eyes are soft and watchful. She's not trying to get my attention or even saying a word, simply watching me and something in that calms some of my fury.

When Dad stands to give a speech, Addie looks away. Her head turns to listen as he describes the last ten years of his life with Paloma. The happiness and contentment. He talks about Addie and me, and us as a family. I'm only partially listening as my brain can't seem to detach from how beautiful Addie looks in the soft twinkle of fairy lights strung up overhead. How her eyes glittered. How delicate the lines of her profile were.

As she always seems to, her glance flicks to the corner of her eyes in my direction. Her little nose crinkles playfully over a quirked lip. My own lips twitch and I bump her foot lightly under the table.

Food is distributed. Something is placed in front of me. I don't look at it. I don't care when I'm given a knife and Michael leans — fucking leans like the foot between them is too far for whatever shit he just has to tell her — into Addie's shoulder, breaking her connection with me to focus on him.

I could kill him.

I have thirty tons of wet concrete and a basement to finish. Nobody would ever find

his fucking body.

The idea becomes even more enticing when I can hear his useless mumbling asking about her job, where she lives, why so far. Idiot things that are none of his business.

“Do you have someone back home?” he asks finally, acting ridiculously casual cutting his chicken.

“Yes,” Addie says without pause. Without consideration. She carves a sliver of her own chicken and pops it into her mouth.

“Oh, that’s great,” Boy-Wonder mutters. “How long have you been together?”

“A while.”

He nods slowly. “So, you’re serious about him.”

It’s not a question, but Addie bobs her head once. “As a heart attack.”

I feel my lips curve until the idiot lifts his head, a frown on his face. “But he doesn’t think you’re worth committing to?”

Addie stops chewing. My grip on my knife tightens.

“Excuse me?”

Michael shrugs, but we don’t hear his response when the grating whine of Iris’s complaints filter down the table like shit rolling down a hill. The snide sneer carefully kept below Dad’s radar is an octave higher, catching my and Addie’s attention.

I don’t miss the hard pinch in Paloma’s jaw, the tightness in her knuckles as she saws

into her steak. She's listening politely to the troll on her left as she's berated at her own table.

"I don't mean to be cruel, Paloma. But you've been a part of this family long enough to understand the importance."

Paloma's shoulders lift in a slow, measured breath. "Yes, thank you for the reminder."

I set my cutlery down gently across my untouched steak and baked potato, my irritation too high to even consider eating. I also shouldn't be trusted to wield a weapon at the moment.

"Mom?" Addie calls down the table.

Paloma's eyes hop up to her daughter and she smiles like everything is fine. "Does anyone need a refill?"

"I could use one." Grayson lifts his empty cup and shakes it, filling the silence with the rattle of ice against glass.

"Of course!" Paloma starts to push her chair back, but Addie's already on her feet, her face a beautiful, dark cloud of vengeance. "Addie," her mom says quietly, but with warning.

Addie pinches her lips. Her jaw flexes. There is rage running down every line of her body when she stalks to Grayson and snatches the glass violently from his fingers.

"What do you want?" she hisses at him.

"A smile would be nice." Grayson barks a laugh like he's a comedian.



“Answer her, unless you want me to get your drink,” I say, pinning my uncle until the grin melts off his round face.

“Just a coke,” he mutters.

Addie sucks her bottom lip between her teeth to contain whatever she’s trying to hold back. She manages to as she spins and stalks to the drink table. The glass is filled and brought back.

“There’s hardly any ice in here,” Grayson grumbles when Addie slams the cup down with enough force to vibrate up the table to where Dad turns away from his conversation with Julian.

“Addie? Everything okay?”

Addie looks to her mother who gives the slightest shake of her head.

“Yup, fine,” Addie grinds through her teeth.

“Wait. I need more ice,” Grayson complains when Addie starts to leave.

I’m on my feet. Addie meets my eye, and I gesture with a nod of my head towards her seat, but she’s still there when I round to her side.

“Sit,” I tell her quietly. “I’ll get it.”

Her big eyes watch me, dark and hungry, and I have to resist the urge to lean in and nibble on her lip the way she is.

“Now, dimples,” I add even quieter, with warning.

Little brat grins slightly before returning to her seat.

I get Grayson more ice and set it down next to his plate. I press into his space as I do so, practically bowing him back as I glower into his eyes.

“Go ahead. Tell me to smile,” I growl through my teeth.

He says nothing. Not a peep as I draw back.

“I just don’t understand what the big deal is,” Iris is pattering on when I round back towards my seat. “When did ten years become such an ordeal? I mean, do you really need to celebrate every year that you don’t get divorced from the man you chose to marry?” she goes on. “A month in Europe. Two parties. Another trip next month to ... where are you jetting off to?”

I watch Paloma’s cheeks darken, but she smiles sweetly at the vile woman. “We’re not actually flying, but driving to a couple’s spa resort—”

“Just for being married for ten years?” Iris shrieks loud enough that the table quiets. “Good lord. My poor brother will have to start saving for the twenty-year mark at this rate. Lord knows what extravagance he might be required to pay for if this continues.”

I can feel my patience hit my threshold. My head snaps to the opposite end of the table, expecting my father to jump in, but his chair is empty. He’s nowhere to be seen. Of course, Iris saw this as the perfect opportunity to start her shit.

“I beg your pardon?” Paloma’s tone is gentle, but the white knuckled hold she has on her utensils tell a different story.

Iris waves a hand lined with thick, chunky rings. “I don’t mean anything by it,

Paloma. I just think it's too early to be celebrating when, weren't you only married to Addie's father for ten years before ambushing Oz a few months after? Barely long enough for the ink to dry on the divorce papers." Her fists saw through the steak covering half her plate. "Now, look at you. You don't have to do anything, except live in this beautiful home while my brother—"

"That's rich."

All heads pivot to where Addie is cutting neatly into her chicken but staring into Iris like she's picturing the other woman under the knife.

"Excuse me?" Iris barks.

"Addie..." Paloma warns softly.

But my Addie has fire in her eyes and a knife in her hands.

"I said, that's rich coming from you. Your dad took care of you until you married Grayson. Since then, you've done nothing but be a miserable cunt—" she ignores the chaos her words cause as she plows on, "—my mom, on the other hand, has built a very successful business on her own. I'm not one to put another woman down, but if you ever talk to her with anything but the utmost respect going forward, I will bitch slap you so hard—"

"Adeline!" Paloma gasps.

"How dare you!" Iris screams at the same time.

"So fucking hard," Addie snarls, pitching her voice higher, knife point straight and steady aimed in Iris's ruddy face, "I will break your jaw. I don't give a shit who you think you are, I will rip that stick out of your ass and beat—"

“Adeline!”

A deafening silence crashes over the table as Dad returns with a bottle of hot sauce in hand.

His dark eyes are fixed on Addie who has gone very still in her seat. The joints in my body tenses, coils in preparation to jump in if he thinks for a second I’ll let him yell at her.

“Oz...” Paloma begins only to get silenced by the hand Dad raises.

“What is going on? Addie only!” he snaps when Iris breaks in. He slams the bottle down on the table and fixes everyone with a sharp glare. “Addie?”

Addie is breathing hard, but her tone is steady when she answers, “I called your sister a cunt and I threatened to bitch slap her.”

Despite the situation, I have to resist the urge to chuckle. Dayton and Clio were having no luck at all when they snicker loudly.

“Why?” Dad ignores the teenagers and focuses entirely on Addie.

Addie grinds her jaw but doesn’t back down. “Because, although I love my mom with my whole soul, she has a giant flaw. She loves you. That’s not the flaw. Loving you is her whole world because you are her everything. She would walk through red, hot coals for you, and I love that. I love how happy she is with you. But because she would do anything for you, she has endured unimaginable abuse at the hands of that...” she stabs her knife point in Iris’s direction, “that crusty discharge for ten years. She has been torn apart, belittled, and disrespected, but she has smiled through all of it because she doesn’t want to upset you or cause a rift between you and the cunt monster. But not today, Satan. I’m not doing it. Mom has been excited for this

party for a year and I'm not going to let a used sanitary napkin humiliate her. Now, I am sorry that you're related to that, and I'm sorry, Grams," she turns to my grams who has no idea what's going on, "for saying this stuff in front of you. You know I love you, but I truly believe deep in my heart that your baby was switched at the hospital, and you were saddled with Rosemary's demon."

"Adeline," Paloma groans, covering her eyes.

But Addie's looking at my dad again, her every line rigid with defiance. "I'm not letting her talk to Mom like trash anymore. I'm sorry, Oz, if that hurts your feelings, but Mom's been hurting for ten years."

It's unclear how long the silence stretched, broken only by Clio and Dayton practically under the table trying to smother their howls. Iris looks on the verge of exploding, and everyone else is doing their best not to make eye contact with anyone else.

The only people who seem genuinely confused are Michael and Brooke.

I'm just fucking proud. Not at all surprised by Addie's unique handle on the situation. We've both gone years biting our tongues because Paloma begged us to keep the peace. She reminded us it was only a couple of hours, and it would upset Dad — her main and only worry no matter how disgusting Iris's behavior was towards her.

"How dare you with your gutter tongue. Is this how you raised your daughter, Paloma? To talk with such embarrassing language to her elders?"

Paloma's beautiful face is splotchy with color, a mixture of embarrassment and panic as she tries to smooth the other woman's vulture feathers.

"Iris, I am so—"

“Don’t.” The ferocity of that single command startles even me, but I push on. “Do not apologize to her. She doesn’t deserve it and I won’t let you. She should be apologizing to you.”

“Rhys?” Iris gasps, garish mouth flapping. “My own flesh and blood turned against me?”

“This here is uncalled for behavior,” Grayson barks, weaseling his way into the conversation. “To treat the people you love so shamefully.”

“Settle down, Colonel Mustard . No one here loves you. Not even your wife,” Addie mutters under her breath.

“Quiet!” Dad snaps.

I can’t take my eyes off Addie. If I wasn’t already hopelessly enthralled and devastated by this woman, I would have fallen to my knees in worship. I still have every intention of doing just that the second I get her alone; I’m going to worship every inch of her until dawn.

“Paloma?” Dad says at last.

There are tears in her eyes, but she shakes her head. “It’s really fine. It’s not a big—”

Dad marches to her end of the table and pulls her out of her chair.

“Wrong,” he growls. “This should never have gone on this long.”

“I didn’t want—”

He kisses her. A long, deep kiss that has the rest of us suddenly interested in literally

anything else, but the couple entwined together.

“We will finish this later.” He tells her at last and I’m not sure if he means the conversation or the kiss. Perhaps the conversation because he turns to his sister in passing and says, “We will discuss everything.”

For the first time in my life, Iris says nothing as everyone resumes eating. She’s a quiet figure sitting at the end of the table alone. Dad has taken Paloma’s chair to his side, but she sits in his lap, feeding him. Her chair abandoned.

Across from me, Michael is back to leaning into Addie’s space. His head is too close to hers like he’s telling her the secrets of the universe, but my Addie has her knife in his face.

“I’m going to stop you right there, Michael. Your little sister is sitting right there so I’m going to keep my voice down when I tell you that I don’t have to explain my relationship to you because you are never getting into my pants. I would rather grind my pussy on sandpaper before I let you touch me, so get out of my face.”

Michael looks like he has a lot of thoughts on the verbal smack down, but we make eye contact, and I don’t blink until he’s shifting in his seat and turning his attention to his plate.

Fucker.

Only when I’ve won do I swing my gaze to my Addie, her eyes are on me, her expression soft. Something about it, about the way she gives me the sweetest smile soothes the possessive fire in my chest.

She’s mine.

All the assholes in the world won't change that.



ADDIE

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The night tapers out.

With Iris seething alone off to one side, the very air has become softer, satin almost. The lights shimmer in the cool dusk, challenging the stars pinned to the velvet canopy overhead. Music and wine flows through the crowd as smooth and natural as the laughter and chatter.

It's perfect.

Everything about it is exactly the way the night should have gone from the beginning.

"You were insane!" Clio crows at one point, her heavily lined and shadowed eyes enormous against the white powder caking her face.

I don't think I've ever seen my cousin look so elated. Her soft, round features were usually a drab mask of impatience and teenage angst. But lips slathered in thick, black lipstick are bowed into the widest grin.

"I would give anything to talk to her that way. Mom would kill me."

While my love for the vile woman is nonexistent, I took no joy from telling her off. I didn't feel better for it. I didn't take pleasure in hurting Oz's feelings or ignoring Mom's pleas. But ten years was long enough to sit back and listen as someone tries to

tear your mom down and watching your mom always strive to be the bigger person by turning the other cheek.

I am not the bigger person and enough is enough.

“I’m sorry you had to see that,” I tell the girl instead, knowing it’s what Mom would want me to say for causing such a massive scene.

“Dude, it was fucking epic. I wouldn’t miss it.”

I couldn’t argue. At eighteen, it would have rocked my world, too.

Thankfully, the funeral march went off on Clio’s phone and the girl rushes away to answer it, leaving me to stand at the porch railings alone and watch my parents sway to some sultry jazz number.

Oz and I make eye contact, and I offer him the smallest grin, feeling pretty terrible about causing so much chaos on his big day. Sometimes, my temper gets the better of me and it doesn’t always end well.

“Hey, dimples.”

I glance up and my heart leaps in my chest as Rhys moves towards me, big and powerful. His hair tossed by the wind and his eyes fixed only on me.

“Hey stranger,” I say, resisting the urge to step into his chest and let him hold me.

He takes the piece of railing next to me, just close enough to bump my shoulder with his and I am immediately enveloped by his warmth.

“What do you say we blow this popsicle stand? I want to show you something.”

I peer up into his face, into his gorgeous eyes and heart-breaking smile. A rogue lock of hair tumbles over his brow and I'm helpless to stop my fingers from reaching up and brushing it back.

"I'll go anywhere with you," I tell him quietly.

The teasing glimmer of amusement darkens, sharpens to a fine point of need so serrated, I'm not capable of thought when he captures my hand and holds it. His callus thumb rubs my knuckles. Traces a circle across my palm. Sends electric currents up my arm before he frees me.

"Did I tell you how beautiful you look tonight?" At my subtle head shake, he reaches up and captures a lock of my hair caught on a breeze and brushes it back. "You took my breath away coming down those steps, Addie."

My heart skips in my chest. My lungs hitch. It's such a simple statement, but the way he stares into my soul ... the way his voice deepens to a husky drawl when he practically growls my name...

"Rhys..."

"Hey, you two."

Mom and Oz are moving towards us, and I quickly struggle to school my features and straighten away from Rhys. My very soul is trembling, and I can't bring myself to meet Mom's eye when she approaches.

"Why are you guys just standing all the way over here?" Mom asks.

Rhys offers the briefest little shrug. "Just talking."

The pair exchange glances. Mom touches Oz's arm gently as if in support and he takes a breath.

"I owe all three of you an apology. Rhys tried to tell me that Iris was overstepping boundaries, but I didn't give it the attention it deserved. She's my sister. I know she's abrupt and brash, and opinionated. She always has been, but that does not excuse her behavior towards my family. Ten years is ... inexcusable. The fact that you thought you ever had to put up with anyone disrespecting you to keep me happy..." He touches Mom's face with such a loving skim of his fingers, I almost sigh. "Never. Absolutely never. I don't care who it is. No one is ever allowed to hurt you. You three are my world. I would die to protect you. I'm sorry I failed you."

"No!" Mom cries. "That isn't true."

Oz put a hand up. "I have ten years to make up for and I hope you will give me the chance."

"If you forgive me for ruining your anniversary dinner and calling your sister a few choice names, we can call it even," I offer.

Oz chuckles. "It wasn't the best time, I won't deny it, but you were standing up for your mother, a job that should have been mine. I'm proud of you."

I'm trying hard not to grin at the praise.

"Just keep her away from me," Rhys requests. "You might be forgiving, but I'm not. I don't want her anywhere near Addie ... and Paloma," he adds quickly, and I have to bite the inside of my cheek.

Oz inhales deep and gives a slow nod. "I will be having a very long discussion with Iris once the party is over and things settle down. I will be very clear that she is not

welcome in this house if her behavior doesn't improve and that she owes each of you an apology. You especially, my love."

Mom immediately starts shaking her head. "I really don't feel—"

"It will be done," Oz insists, cutting her off. "I will not accept anything less if she wants to continue to stay in my life."

Mom sighs heavily but doesn't argue. Her green eyes move to my face, then shifts over to Rhys's. "Thank you both for protecting me. I'm grateful."

I move away from the railing and pull her into my arms. "Always." Then, just for her ears, I whisper, "I will still slap the fuck out of her. Just blink twice."

Mom bursts out laughing as I pull back. "No, please don't."

I shrug. "Well, the offer stands."

Rhys gives her a tight hug next. Whatever he murmurs to her has tears glistening in her eyes when they separate. She touches his cheek warmly. "I am so lucky to have you both in my life."

With a teary wave, she lets Oz guide her back to the dance floor and I'm turning to face Rhys.

"I'll tell you what I said if you tell me what you said."

Rhys only grins and starts to reach for me but stops himself. "Come on a walk with me."

I raise an eyebrow but let him guide me down the steps onto the lawn. I pause at the

bottom to struggle with the strap at my ankle. The tiny buckle is impossible to make out in the dark and I'm not breaking an ankle trying to walk across soft grass in heels.

Rhys bends at the knees and brushes my hands aside. His large, warm ones replace mine and he nimbly threads the strap through the loops. Each shoe is peeled off gingerly and placed next to the stairs. He straightens and I smile up at him.

"Come on, dimples. I need you to myself," he says, placing the full weight of his palm against the small of my back and guiding me along the familiar path down towards the lake.

His touch never lifts and I let my body tip into his as we move further away from the crowd. My head finds his shoulder and I breathe in the heavy musk of wet sand and pine. It's the smell of home. The smell I have missed. Not to mention the security. I can completely let my guard down without the stress of being attacked by a mugger. A terrible habit I took with me to the city; it's a miracle I survived as long as I did.

"Addie?"

Basking in the familiar tickle of grass beneath my bare feet, the humming silence of endless nature, I keep my eyes closed when giving a quiet, "Hm?"

"Move back with me."

My lids open slowly to the rolling darkness tinted with edges of navy. "What?"

Rhys stops walking and turns to face me. I can barely make out his shape, but I can feel his heat inches away.

"Will you move back with me?"

Yes! My brain screams. My heart screams. My very soul screams.

“I told you, I’ll go anywhere with you, Rhys.” I touch the hard muscles of his chest through the cotton of his top. “But if we move back, we’d have to live in constant fear of getting caught. We’d have to watch how we look at each other, careful not to touch too long. I hate the city, but no one there will judge us. I can kiss you in public. I can go to any restaurant with you and hold your hand. I can only pretend I have a masked weirdo waiting for me for so long before people start thinking I’m making him up, and you, you can’t be a bachelor living with your sister forever.”

His hands find my waist in the darkness, and he pulls me flush into his chest. “I already told you, sweetheart, I don’t give a shit who knows I love you. I’m going to marry you, baby. I’m going to start a whole life with you next to me. I just need you to say yes.”

My heart is hammering in my chest with a vengeance that’s making it impossible to breathe. “Are ... are you asking me to marry you?”

His fingers touch my cheek, slide down to my chin and tip my face up. “Are you surprised?” He kisses me so softly that whatever little air I had in my lungs vanishes. “We’ve known each other for ten years, Addie. We’ve been best friends for eight. Been together for two. You’re it for me. I want my name officially at the end of yours. I want my ring on your finger and my baby inside you. I want to build you a home and sit on the porch with you and watch our kids play in the same lake we grew up in. I want to stand right here on our ten-year anniversary and make plans for the next sixty.”

He brushes away the tears running down my face with his fingers, then his lips. He scatters tiny kisses all across my upturned face, my damp cheeks to settle over my lips again.

“I don’t have a ring, not yet, but I have the land. I have the tools, and I’ll get the ring.”

Sniffing, I pull back just enough to try and squint at our surroundings. Mom’s place is the only glowing beacon for miles, a glistening shimmer across the rippling lake.

“It’s a fifteen minute walk to see your mom,” he murmurs into my ear. “Close enough that you’ll never be too far from her, but far enough that she can’t hear you scream when I chase you naked through the woods.”

I feel his grin against my jaw when I burst out laughing.

“Are you serious about this?” I croak.

“Baby, this is all I’ve thought about since that night in the parlor. I already talked to my dad. The land is ours. I can break ground as soon as we plan the layout. It’s a bit backwards, I know, but I want to give you a home, Addie. A home with me. Want to be the place you come to every night and—”

I kiss him. I wind my arms around his neck and squeeze him hard as I grind our mouths together like I can’t exist without him. I’m sobbing and I can’t stop, but I try to speak.

“Yes. Yes! I’ll marry you. I’ll build a house with you. I’ll have your babies. I want everything.”

With a growl, he lifts me off my feet and sweeps his tongue between my lips to find mine. My legs around his waist and somehow, I’m on my back against the sharp blades of grass. Our hands are fumbling and tearing away clothes, not stopping until he’s buried deep inside me.



We're not fucking.

This is a promise between us as the stars spin overhead and the wild things watch from the trees. We make love where we're going to build our future, immortalizing our passion with every rise and dip of our bodies, every meeting of lips and skimming of hands.

Rhys puts me on top and lets me ride him with slow, deliberate rocks while he worships my breasts. He paints my skin with his tongue, and I beg him not to stop as a whole galaxy implodes behind my closed eyelids. He holds me as I shudder and milk his cock. He tells me he loves me over and over until he's filling me with his cum. Seeds that spill out of me to become an offering to the earth.

"We should talk to our parents," I whisper minutes later as I lie snuggled against Rhys's side, his shoulder serving as my pillow. His arms my blanket.

"Tomorrow," he says simply. "After the party."

I agree.

"I'm so excited." I go up on my elbow to peer into the shadowed place I think his face is. "I want to tell everyone."

Rhys laughs and pulls me back to him. "Good. Me too."

RHYS

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I open my eyes to too much sunlight and zero Addie. The place she'd been — a soft, sated bundle trapped in the folds of my arms — is empty. The sheets cool under my searching palm. One blurry-eyed peek at the open bathroom door and a follow up sweep of the room indicates that my brat has left me in my slumber and gone off to some other part of the house.

My guess — wherever her mom is. Most likely, the patio.

Groaning and rubbing my eyes, I roll off the rumpled mattress and pad a groggy path towards the bathroom for a shower.

There was a faint, pink blush in the sky when Addie and I finally unwound from each other and made the journey back. We tiptoed up to her room where she pulled me inside only to abandon me in the light of day.

I wanted to wake up with her. I wanted to see her face and make sure she hadn't changed her mind. I wanted her to kiss me and tell me she was still excited. But she's gone.

Frustrated and nervous in a way I haven't been since I asked my first girlfriend out back in high school, I shower bits of dirt and grass off my skin and out of my hair. I have to do the walk of shame with a towel from her room to mine to pull on clothes.

Dressed and feeling mildly less crazy, I set off to find my woman.

Instead, I find a house in chaos. All manner of people are rushing through the place carting lumber, lights, and other items I don't recognize. The early morning chill sweeps through the corridor from the open front door, following the bustle to the opposite end of the house where everything is taken out to the patio.

At the end of the hall, standing guard in front of his office with a newspaper in one hand and a steaming mug of coffee in the other, Dad glances up when I descend the stairs. Our eyes meet and he stops. Something in his expression has me pausing as well.

"What?" I say.

He shrugs and shakes his head simultaneously. "You vanished last night. You and Addie," he adds after a heartbeat.

Addie and I agreed to tell our parents the first chance we got, but I don't think she would want me to just blurt out that I asked her to marry me and consummated our promise all night in the field where I'm going to build our house. That feels like a sit-down type of conversation.

"We went for a walk," I offer vaguely.

Dad takes a slow sip of his drink, dark eyes never wavering off mine over the rim. "Long walk. I'm glad you two are talking again."

I nod, at a loss to do much else. But when seconds pass and he doesn't say anything else, I clear my throat and ask, "Have you seen Addie?"

He studies me a second before motioning with a bump of his chin towards the

kitchen.

I'm moving before I can think differently. The muffled sound of her soft laughter fills the quiet of the room and I follow it to the patio doors and the whole beehive of activities circling them as preparations are made for the evening's events.

She's in her usual spot with Paloma sitting on her left. Both are cradling mugs that emanate a light coil of steam. I know Addie's would be coffee. A drop of cream. Two sugars.

She looks happy. Relaxed. Not at all like she regrets making rash decisions in the void of darkness.

"Did I ever tell you how stressed I was about introducing you to her?" Dad appears at my elbow with just his coffee cradled between his palms. "I'd heard horror stories of sibling rivalry, and I was terrified you wouldn't like her. I was terrified that you would be mean and dismissive because even then, from the moment Paloma walked in with a ten-year-old Addie to meet me, all I wanted to do was to protect her. She was this tiny thing with big eyes and gaps in her teeth that whistled slightly when she talked, and I fell immediately in love with her. I never stopped. She's been my baby for ten years and I would commit unimaginable crimes for her."

I slant a glance in the other man's direction, trying to gauge the reasoning behind this trip down memory lane.

His expression gives nothing away, but he slants me a glance from the corners of his eyes.

Without a word, he steps onto the patio and moves towards the two. They pause their conversation long enough for Dad to press a kiss to Paloma's offered lips and claim the ottoman at her feet.

Addie rests her head back against the cushion and closes her eyes as our parents start discussing the small circus taking place all across the lawn. But my eyes are only for Addie. Addie with the sun tangling in her hair and highlighting the long fans of her lashes. Addie in her black, silk camisole and long wraparound skirt with the slit up the leg. My mind is lost in the possibility that she might be bare under, her sweet, perfect lips waiting for me to spread and explore. To tease until she's gushing on my face, around my fingers.

Fuck, I love this woman. Love her with an obsessive madness I'm pretty sure should be studied. She consumes and wrecks me. I can't stop staring.

Without rethinking my decision, I pull my phone from my back pocket and frame her in the lens. I snap a photo to add with all the others tucked away in the password protected folder on my device. So many of Addie that I don't share with anyone. Photos of her I sneak peeks of throughout my day to keep me going when she's not around. They're my little secrets.

Satisfied it's been tucked away safe, I text her and watch her phone buzz on the glass table. Her head jerks up at the sound. She scoops it up and reads the message.

I don't recall holding my breath until she pushes to her feet, makes an excuse I don't hear and hurries in my direction.

I edge back into the kitchen to wait for her. My heart is an anxious bird beating against its bone cage. I'm so nervous my stomach hurts. I don't know what to brace for when she appears in the doorway, a vision draped in golden curtains of light.

Her eyes meet mine and I stop breathing for a heartbeat. Two. Waiting.

Her flawless face breaks into a smile that crashes through me with the power of a fist driving into my sternum. It expels the air I'd been holding in a rush.

“Hey.”

She closes the distance between us at an almost run and I catch her and squeeze her into my chest. My face finds its home in her neck, and I inhale her sweet honeysuckle scent.

She giggles and squeezes me tighter. “Miss me that much, huh?”

I shake my head. “I wasn’t sure if ... if maybe you changed your mind,” I confess into the steady pulse at her throat.

Addie jerks her head back. There’s fear in her eyes raking over my face. “Why would you think that? Did you?”

I tighten my hold.

“It can’t happen fast enough, Addie. I’d marry you right now if we could.”

She’s searching my face, apprehension a dark stain of worry on hers. “Are you sure?”

I kiss her.

I mold her into my chest, into the lines of my body like we’re puzzle pieces finally coming together. I back her into the island and pin her in place while I take my fill of her taste, her little moans. I melt under her gentle touch brushing up my shoulders to curve along the back of my neck.

“Marry me, Addie,” I whisper into her mouth.

Her eyes open to mine, the irises expanded to nearly consume the green.

“Yes.”

I can't believe Addie's mine. I can't wrap my head around the knowledge that she's going to be mine forever. It feels like a dream, and I'm terrified of waking up.

“Let's tell them now,” I decide.

Addie smiles and kisses the tip of my nose. “Tomorrow. First thing. Let today be about them.”

I agree reluctantly but dip my head for another kiss.

I see very little of Addie for several hours as everyone dives in to help set up for the party. I'd see her in passing as she's bolting into the house or I'm running out. It's always fleeting glances, frustrated, but accepting smiles before we rush off.

At lunch, Paloma forces everyone to stop and gather at the patio table to eat. I'm so starved to see Addie, touch her that I grab two random sandwiches off the catering tray, two drinks, her hand and drag her forcibly after me towards the docks.

She doesn't protest but sits when I nudge her down and dips her feet into the cool water. When I drop down next to her, she scoots close until our entire side touches. Her head finds my shoulder.

I know I should tell her they can see us from the patio, but I don't. I don't care. In a few hours, we'll be telling them anyway.

“I'm exhausted,” she breathes, dragging her sandwich to her mouth and taking a bite. Her feet sway in the water, occasionally bumping mine. “For our ten years, let's just run away and roast on a beach somewhere.”

“A nude beach.”

Addie laughs. “We’re not fucking on a beach. The sand will be a nightmare to get out of my cooch.”

I chew my mouthful contemplatively. “I’ll get it out.”

She laughs harder and I grin.

Break ends too quickly, and I have to give Addie back.

I don’t see her again until hours later when I’m stepping through the patio doors and spot her leaning into the counter by the fridge, a frosty bottle of water tipped back against her bottom lip. Her eyes are closed, her cheeks pink from all the exertion. The smooth column of her throat flexes with her deep pulls, her chest rises and falls rapidly.

A droplet of clear liquid slips past her lips and hits the top of her left tit. It shivers there in the waning light.

I’m in front of her before I can register the progress of my feet. Her lashes part in surprise, but my lips have already replaced the bottom rim. My tongue is sweeping in to savor the water still cold on her tongue.

Addie groans and twines her arms around my neck. Her body curves into mine and I crush her closer.

“God, I’m so thirsty,” I rasp, breaking the kiss to latch onto her breast, sucking the droplet off her salty skin.

“Rhys,” she whispers, arching her back, giving me full access to her breasts. “We’re



... we're in the kitchen. Someone—"

I force a knee between her thighs and push up into her mound, and Addie is putty in my hands as I bite and suck my way up the column of her neck.

"We should take this to the parlor. I have a reoccurring fantasy of fucking you so hard on the carpet you have rug burn on your ass and knees."

Addie laughs and slides her hands under my hair. She drags my face to hers and nips at my bottom lip. "Tonight. When everyone's sleeping—"

"Addie! Rhys!"

We both jump, but Addie jolts like she's been electrocuted. Her whole body convulses in my arms. Our heads snap up to Iris's violated sneer and the two horrified people just over her shoulder.

"Mom. Oz," Addie whispers. Her wide, green eyes flick up to me before darting to the two staring at us like we were ... well, humping against the kitchen counter. "We can explain."

"Explain? We saw exactly what you two were doing," Iris hisses, a jewel studded finger stabbing at Addie. "Fornicating with your brother, you disgusting—"

"Finish that sentence and it'll be the last thing you ever do." I push Addie behind me and face our parents. "We were going to tell you."

"Tell us?" Paloma murmurs softly, small hand closing into Dad's tense upper arm.

"Well, it's obvious, isn't it? Your whore of a daughter has managed to sink her claws into another member of my family."

“Rhys!” Dad gets in my path, saving his sister from finding herself manhandled out the front door. He faces the bitch squealing like I actually touched her. “Iris, stop. That’s enough. I talked to you last night regarding this behavior and I warned you of the consequence if you inserted yourself into my family business. You promised me you would control yourself and keep your opinions to yourself.”

Iris’s eyes widen with panic, anger and confusion. “I haven’t done anything. Your children were doing ungodly acts under your roof for lord knows how long. She no doubt manipulated him, offered herself to him and corrupted Rhys—”

“Who hurt you?” Addie blurts, silencing Iris. “Were you not loved enough as a child? Or are you just not getting enough dick—”

“Addie! Enough.” Dad warns with a resounding boom in his voice he’d only ever used once on us when we were kids and crashed and sunk his brand-new jet skis.

Addie immediately snaps her lips closed.

Dad turns back to his sister. “You should go, Iris. This is a family matter and does not concern you.”

“But ... I am family, Oz.”

Dad’s features soften. “You have your own family, la hermana. This is mine.”

For a second, a pinprick of a second, I almost feel bad for the woman. She could have been told her dog died the way her whole presence shrunk before us. Defeat bows her back, pulls her shoulders to her ears. She looks up at her brother, the only person who ever stuck by her and her chin wobbles once before it all vanishes in the blink of an eye and the Iris we all know and hate returns.

“If this is how you want to run your family, Oz, fine. You can take it up with God. But there is only one place these two will be going. Vile, shameful acts with your own brother—”

“What shame?” Paloma steps forward, brows dark slashes pulled low over heated eyes. “They’re not related, Iris. You know that. Oz never adopted Addie, and I never adopted Rhys. Addie was ten when Oz and I married. Rhys was twelve. Both of them were old enough to know they’re not actually brother and sister. The fact that you keep throwing that out there is just you trying to shame them.”

“They should be shamed!” Iris cries. “They grew up together. They lived in the same house their entire lives. Just how long have they been disrespecting your home?”

“That is none of your business. My children are none of your business. You’re welcome to be in their lives if you’ll be a loving, caring aunt to them, but if you can’t, they’re better off without you.”

“Are you giving me an ultimatum?”

“Friendly advice,” Paloma counters smoothly as she takes a step closer into Iris’s space. No one sees the sweep of her arm slicing back or the launch until the crack of her palm colliding across Iris’s face shatters the silence.

“Holy fuck!” Addie yelps, hands flying up to cover her mouth.

But Paloma is a looming angel of fury towering over the stunned woman clutching her scarlet cheek.

“If you ever call my daughter a whore again, I will tie you to the back of my car and drag your ass back to whatever hole you crawled out of. Now, get the fuck out of my house.”

Iris sprints from the kitchen and out onto the back deck. No one watches her go. No one can stop staring at the tiny brunette cradling her hand, blinking at it like it belongs to someone else.

“Oh, I hit her,” she gasps at last, spinning to face Dad. “Oz, I am so sorry.”

He barely lets her finish. His hand is a fist in her hair, dragging her in for a kiss that is much too personal for my delicate eyes.

I glance at Addie to find her studying her sandals. I touch her cheek gently, pulling her gaze to mine.

“You okay?”

“About to find out, I guess,” she whispers back.

I dare a peek at the two adults finally breaking the kiss only to stare into the other’s eyes like they’re about to finish acts I’m unwilling to witness.

I clear my throat.

Both blink as if only just remembering us.

Dad straightens, cheeks nearly as red as Paloma’s. “You two in my office.”

ADDIE

---

It's not exactly outrage in Oz's face when we follow him into the black and gold office. If I have to put a name to his pursed lips and furrowed brows — resignation. Maybe annoyance. But anything is better than disappointment.

The room with the black walls and enormous, black desk is too silent considering the four people occupying the space.

We claim opposite sides of the glass coffee table, grouping on the leather sofas facing each other.

Mom is still rubbing her hand. I'm not at all surprised since that was the first time she's ever struck another person. Paloma Delgado considers violence distasteful and unnecessary when words are more effective. Watching her slap Iris was a thing of beauty. I'm so proud of her.

“All right you two, talk.”

Rhys and I exchange glances. He's still holding my hand, his fingers intertwined with mine in his lap.

“We were waiting until tomorrow to have this conversation,” Rhys says at last. “We didn't want ... this.”

“How long?” Dad demands.

“Two years,” I whisper as Rhys says, “Nine months.”

Both our parents raise an eyebrow.

“Not long,” I correct, deciding to keep things as simple as possible. “We only just made this official.”

“Two years?” Mom cut in. “How...?”

I dart a glance up at Rhys before murmuring, “Rhys is ... was Atticus.”

“The masked weirdo?” Oz barks.

“Not a weirdo, but yes,” Rhys grumbles.

“How did this even happen?” Mom cries, waving between us.

“That is a very long, very complicated story.” I force myself to take a breath. “And it’s not important. What is important is that we haven’t done anything ... too disrespectful under this roof.”

What I had hoped would be assuring only seems to upset the two. Their exchanged glances were panicked with a tinge of horror like either they hadn’t thought of that or they were trying to figure out what that meant.

“I love her,” Rhys says before anyone can utter another word. “None of this was intentional. I had no idea I would wake up one morning, look up and realize the person who makes me feel whole is the same person I’ve been living with. It surprised me too, even more so when she returned my feelings.”

I rub the back of his hand gently, lungs too tight for words as he voices everything in my head.

“We get this isn’t conventional. We know it’s going to be hard for a lot of people to understand and accept, but ... I’ve asked Addie to marry me.”

Mom cries out. Her hands fly up to her mouth, her face torn between excitement and uncertainty as her green eyes lock with mine. It’s taking all my resolve not to jump up and run to her. To not let her pull me into her arms and share my happiness the way I know we both want to.

“We were going to wait until after your party to talk. To explain,” Rhys continues in his calm, even tone. “We want your blessing. It might seem like a big ask right now, but you’re both two of the most important people in our lives and we don’t want to lose you.”

The copper tang of blood is filling my mouth from the gash I’m cutting into my bottom lip. I barely notice as I watch my parents exchange glances, their expressions so guarded. So set. Even with the tears glistening in Mom’s eyes, her features are a mask I can’t read.

Please, please don’t let me lose them, I beg the heavens. It would destroy me. I know I wouldn’t survive it. I can already feel the brewing bubble of devastation creeping up my chest.

Rhys brings my hand to his lips. He kisses the back gently and I realize I’m crushing his fingers, but I can’t unlock my joints.

Finally, after eons of suffering, Mom and Oz face us. They seem to take a unifying breath that steals every drop of air in the room, leaving my lungs burning while I wait for them to rip my world apart.

“We guessed something was going on when you went off into the woods in the middle of the night and didn’t come back until dawn,” Oz says at long last. “If that hadn’t been hint enough, neither of you are very good at being subtle. You arriving together. Rhys asking for the land to build a house. The murder trial I thought I would need to put together to defend you once you murdered Michael with your steak knife. Not to mention, I could have grilled last night’s BBQ off the heat you two were giving off since you arrived.” I would have died of mortification right there if he wasn’t still talking. “But you’re right, this is not conventional. People will disapprove and will have a lot to say on the matter. You grew up together. That alone will have people speculating.” He turns his dark eyes to Mom. She meets his gaze and gives a slight nod. “But fuck people. I make a living pissing people off anyway. If they don’t like it, they can take a long walk off a short bridge.”

I understand everything he’s saying. The words are clear and concise, but a pulse of panic is pounding between my ears, and I can’t process it until Mom is pushing to her feet, arms open.

I am tearing off the sofa with a sob and slamming my body into hers. My arms clamp hard around her solid warmth, sucking in her sweet scent of orchids. Her hold loops around me tight enough to cut off my oxygen even while I’m already struggling to contain my relief.

“I was so scared,” I choke out into her shoulder.

She shushes me gently, hands stroking my back and hair. She kisses my wet cheeks and holds me until Oz moves to take her place.

He holds me tight in his strong arms. His warm breath brushing my ear. “You will always be my baby girl, Addie.”

Fresh tears soak into his top and he squeezes me hard before drawing back. He smiles



down into my face.

Mom swoops in the second I'm free and grabs my arm. Her expression is one of such unadulterated happiness that I feel momentarily ridiculous for ever thinking they would ever leave me.

"A wedding!" She gives a little squeak and holds me tighter. Her nails bite into the skin of my arms, but I don't care. "We have so much to do."

I watch Rhys emerge from our joint shower in a towel and miles of perfect, flawless skin. Water droplets roll off the ends of his dark locks to trail over the hard lines of his shoulders, down his chest.

God, he's delicious.

How is it possible for one person to be so gorgeous?

"You keep looking at me like that and you'll make me forget we can't fuck in your childhood bed."

After the talk in Oz's office, we had gone straight to work getting the house ready. Rhys and I shared a hurried kiss before we were pulled in opposite directions. Oz took him and Michael to help set up tables while Mom and I helped arrange the catering display. Well, I had. Mom wouldn't stop talking about venues and the best time for an outdoors wedding.

I loved that she was so excited. Loved that she was as happy as I was, but it wasn't the time. She was supposed to be concentrating on her anniversary.

When the only thing left was us getting ready, I practically broke an ankle rushing up to find Rhys. When I found him and dragged his beautiful ass into the shower, I was

gifted with his slippery hands drifting over me, his mouth hungrily moving over mine, his cock hard and pulsing between my palms.

But nothing.

He hadn't fucked once since the night before in the clearing and I'm ready to climb the walls for release.

I didn't realize there is an actual reason he hasn't touched me since we arrived.

“Who made that rule?”

He shrugs. “I don't know. Didn't think it would be a good idea. We don't fuck quietly or gently.”

He's not wrong, but I'm not waiting until we get home to feel him inside me.

I tug on the knot keeping my towel in place and let the fabric drop to the floor. I step over it and backwards towards the bed.

“Do you want to know what I did that night after I sucked your cock in the parlor?”

A muscle shifts in Rhys's jaw. His fingers tighten in his towel.

“Yes.”

I slide up onto the mattress, keeping him in the wide V of my legs.

“I came up here with your cum on my tongue. I took off my clothes, got on this bed and I sucked my fingers—”

“Addie...”

I ignore his warning growl as I pull my ring and middle finger between my lips and sucking like I would his dick. The appendage in question rises against the fabric of his towel in appreciation.

Hiding my smirk, I pull my fingers free and trail them down to the place I need him and slip the wet digits through the folds.

I groan and lift my hips.

“Then I fingered my pussy.” I press both fingers past the ring. “With your seed on them.” I thrust harder and deeper, enthralled by the ravenous gleam in his eyes watching my hand. “I wasn’t on the pill yet.”

Rhys is on me before I can finish. His towel is torn off and chucked aside and I get a second to appreciate his gorgeous cock before his hands are on me. His fingers grab and bruise shoving my hand away to clamp down on my hips. My thighs. They’re torn apart and he slams into me.

No warning. No playing around.

He drives the full length of his bulging erection into my body. The momentum burns with delicious pain that rips my back off the mattress. Metal feet carve trenches into hardwood as the sturdy oak structure of my bed heaves back. The scream of it is nowhere near the wail that leaves me.

“Quiet!” Rhys snarls, gripping my hips and dragging me down to take him. “Do you want everyone to hear you, Addie? Do you want them to hear how you beg for my cock? How you can’t get enough?”

I don't care about anything, except the fat head of his cock hitting my base and sending cobwebs of excruciating agony across my belly.

"Hurts," I whimper, only to cry out when he jams himself deeper. "Rhys!"

"You're going to fucking take it, dimples."

My legs are grabbed under the knees and twisted over his arms. They're bent to my chest, and he makes me take his weight and the full length to the hilt.

"You're so deep," I choke out, head thrown back, legs flailing. My nails claw down his hips to anchor into his taut ass. "God, it hurts, Rhys."

His hips roll in slow, even circles and I shudder. I swear and bend in two as fire devours me from the core up. My toes crack on either side of his head as the pressure blinds me.

My nails claw at his shoulders, his chest, rack up his back as I cum with a scream he silences with a palm over my mouth and his lips at my ear telling me what a fucking good girl I am. How well I take his cock. How good my cunt feels begging to suck every drop of his seed from his balls.

He has such a filthy mouth and I fucking love it.

"Don't stop," I whine under the sticky skin of his palm. "More. Use me. Use my pussy. Hurt it."

He groans thickly against my jawline. "Wait until I get you home, Adeline." He doesn't thrust. He barely moves. He conquers my channel with the beast between his legs, ruining my cunt forever as he grinds. As he rubs his pelvis into my mound. My clit. "Wait until I get you in your restraints, open and helpless. Your holes mine to

play with for hours, filling them until it hurts and you scream and no one comes to save you. No one. No one will ever save you from my torture. Just the way you like it.”

Memories of that rainy afternoon in his apartment where he kept me bound to his bed and spent hours edging me and using me to cum in and on without a shred of relief for me has me squeezing my eyes closed and groaning loudly. My pussy shudders violently around the stone shaft rubbing my soaked walls and my tormentor snickers darkly.

“God, Rhys, I love you.”

I cum whimpering I love him over and over again as he rocks and pumps and drags my release on. His cock is so hard, so swollen it has to be hurting him, but his face is a set mask of determination as he takes care of me, and it makes me tighten around him. Tease him.

“Behave,” he warns.

I do it again with a mischievous little grin. “Or what?”

His eyes darken. His jaw flexes. The muscles on his arms shift as he lifts himself higher over me, dragging my legs to his shoulders.

“Or I’ll make sure you don’t walk properly tonight.”

Oh, the threat.

I know he’s serious, but ... my walls contract without my consent. A tiny flutter I don’t think he feels, but his low growl is my only warning when he slams into me.

He fucks me with the violence of someone who hates me. He takes my body like it means nothing to him and I'm cumming sobbing his name. My legs twitch, my fingers claw, but he only presses me deeper into the mattress and takes what's his.

I'm weak and exhausted when he flips me over, drags me over the edge of the bed and squeezes half the bottle of lube down the crack of my ass.

I just took a shower is my only coherent thought when he takes my tender channel with the same anger. The same reckless force.

My screams are incoherent wails buried into the mattress. Even I don't understand what I'm asking of him as I cum for the fourth time.

His hands twist in my hair and my head is yanked back. Spine curving as I grind back to meet him.

"Shut your mouth, Addie," he hisses, pelvis slapping my ass cheeks. "You were warned to behave. Good girls get orgasms. Bad girls get their ass fucked."

I disagree about this being a punishment, but his free hand is cupping my mound. His fingers are at my clit. Two pinch the muscles and I'm beating back against him. I'm pounding myself on his dick and making him groan. The bed squeaks. The frame rattles. But they're nothing to me threatening him not to stop.

"Don't stop. Don't fucking stop. You feel so good in my ass. God, I love your cock. Harder!"

He shoves me face down and falls over me and I can't breathe. His weight is crushing me, suffocating me. But he's still at my clit and I am so close my thighs quiver.

"Yes. God, fuck yes! Rhys ... Rhys, I'm cumming. Harder. Fuck my ass harder, baby.

Don't stop."

Rhys growls and rails me harder. "My pretty little whore. I'm going to cum in you so fucking deep you'll taste it on your tongue."

I fall off the edge of the world. My body heaves and bucks. My hole fists his cock and he roars a series of expletives that drowns my snarls to give me more.

I can't tell when he cums because my own fluids are already a hot stream running down my legs. But he's gone semi soft, and I think he's done with me.

I'm wrong when he flips me onto my back and replaces his cock with his tongue. I'm so sensitive I almost bolt away and earn a sharp smack on my inner thigh for the effort. Rhys glowers up my body at me.

"You started this. I'm going to finish it and stop only when I'm done. You are going to fucking take it."

I do because I'm his good little whore. I take everything he does to me and love every second of it, except the part an hour later when I have to get up, shower again and get ready for the party.

"Can we call in sick? I'm pretty sure you broke my pussy. That should count as a medical emergency."

Already showered and dressed in dark trousers and a white button up and looking like I want to fuck all over again, Rhys raises an eyebrow.

"Broke it?" he moves to stand where I'm still a sprawled mess with both of our multiple releases and lube drying on my thighs. He slips a finger inside me, and I groan and arch into him. "Seems to be working fine still."

Despite wanting to both sleep for a year and hit him, I laugh.

He grins and steps back, letting me roll to my feet as he sucks both our releases off his finger.

I shuffle in a stagger to the closet to unhook my dress from the back. I tuck the bag against my chest, the cold plastic sticking to my clammy skin. I turn to the man watching me with eyes he needs to avert if we're ever going to leave this room.

"I was thinking," I say instead, redirecting my thoughts and libido, "tonight, it should be all about Mom and Oz." I go to Rhys and touch the center of his chest with the flat of my palm. The cotton is warm over the firm muscles of his chest. "We should avoid drawing attention on us. What do you think?"

His dark head dips and he nuzzles a kiss to the curve of my shoulder. "It's going to be a long night but agreed."

With a final kiss that curls my toes, Rhys releases me, muttering something about checking if Oz needs help setting up.

Alone, I shower and dress in the dark green velvet gown I picked out months ago for the occasion. The off the shoulder straps dangled down my arms in soft lace while the top cinches tight at my chest and trims my waist. The straight cut neckline plumps my breasts, but nothing too wild.

I curl my hair and pin it up in a riot with stray coils dangling at my ears to tangle with the diamond chandelier earrings I hook to my ears.

With my strappy, silver heels properly fastened to my feet, I leave the room in search of my mother.



“Rhys!”

Halfway down the stairs, my head jerks up at the sound of Oz’s sharp cry and a deafening bang. I pause in my descent, the hem of my skirt still twisted in my hands. My focus on my steps falter when I find myself caught in Rhys’s dark, consuming eyes.

A bench with a velvet cushion sits between them, forgotten.

Rhys moves away from his father to meet me at the bottom of the steps. His large hand is extended to me.

“Run away with me.”

I laugh. “Thank you, but I’m already taken,” I tell him, accepting the palm anyway.

He helps me to the final step. The height brings me nearly to his level.

“Fuck him.”

“Oh, I do...” I promptly cut myself off when I catch sight of Oz from over Rhy’s shoulder. I clap my lips shut and poke Rhys in the belly. “You’re going to get me in trouble.”

He presses in closer. His warm hands curve around my waist, pulling me the rest of the way into his chest. “Oh, I plan on it.” His gaze drifts down the length of me. “I thought we agreed not to draw attention.”

Heat prickling my cheeks, I wrinkle my nose and nudge him back a step. “I’m going to find Mom. You stop looking at me like that.”

He bites his lip around a dirty little grin. “Like what?”

Laughing, I sweep past him and meet Oz’s eye who, up until that moment had been deliberately avoiding our conversation by being unrealistically intrigued by a smudge on the hallway mirror.

“Is Mom in the yard?”

He clears his throat and nods. “She is, and you do look beautiful.”

I smile at him and press a kiss to his cheek. “Thank you.”

I find Mom in the middle of a garden blooming with flowers and strung up with tiny lights. A hardwood dance floor expands across the yard under looping chains of roses in every color. Tables cluster the outer area draped in white cloth and displayed with ornate bowls of floating tea lights. It’s breathtaking.

“This is amazing!” I gasp, reaching the woman watching the catering team arrange the food along a table near the edge of the patio.

Mom beams turning to me, but her eyes widen as she takes me in. “Oh my God, Addie! You look incredible. The pictures you sent did not do that dress justice.”

I smile and brush a kiss to her cheek. “Thank you, but you’re the one rocking that dress.”

Mom runs a hand across the shimmering fabric making up the Grecian gown with the single shoulder strap and thick, gold belt. The cream brings out the soft tones of her face and compliments the bands securing her dark curls back.

“I think we’re both dressed really nice,” she decides, looping her arm through mine

and guiding me around the edges of the makeshift floor. “Everything looks okay, right? I wanted simple, but cozy.”

“I love it,” I tell her honestly. “It’s perfect.”

Mom beams and squishes my arm against her. “You should use it for the wedding. Like—”

I stop and face her. “Stop that. I told you, not tonight. No talking about me or Rhys, or the wedding. Tonight is about you. Only you. Everything else can wait until tomorrow.”

Still, she bites her lip and giggles like a little girl. “I am just so excited! I want to tell everyone.”

“No!” I grab her arm. “Mom, no. It’s your night.”

She rolls her eyes. “It can be two things.”

“No, it can’t be. Promise me.”

“Seriously?” she huffs when I narrow my eyes. “Fine. God, you’re a mean child.” I laugh as she takes my arm and leads me a little further. “Okay, but there is one thing I do actually have to talk to you about...” she stops to face me sheepishly.

“Okay...?”

She nervously licks her lips and lowers her voice. “I was thinking it might be best if you and Rhys relocated to the guesthouse tonight.”

I stare at her for a long moment, not understanding. “Why?”

Mom purses her lips and averts her eyes to somewhere over my shoulder. “It’s nothing terrible. Oz and I just feel like maybe a little privacy might be good ... for all of us.”

I continue to eyeball her, certain she’s intentionally being vague. “Because you don’t want to see us together...?”

“No!” she grabs my hands and squeezes them between both of her warm ones. “That is not it at all. I cannot be happier that you’re with Rhys. It’s just...” she clears her throat. “The walls are very thin at the house and—”

It clicks and I’m not fast enough to stifle my gasp of horror. “Oh my God, Mom, I—”

Mom puts her hand up. “No, no, it’s perfectly natural to want to ... practice your yoga.”

“Oh my God,” I moan, covering my face. “Did you guys hear...?” I cut myself off. Of course they heard. Rhys hadn’t been joking when he said we weren’t quiet or gentle, but had we really been that loud? I am so mortified, I want to die. “I am so sorry.”

Mom gracefully waves a dismissive hand, the corner of her mouth tilted in amusement. “In the guesthouse, you and Rhys can practice yoga all you want.”

I feel my brows furrow even as the heat amplifies in my cheeks. “Mom, I beg of you, please stop.”

But the devil woman is smirking cruelly and going on. “From a whole floor down, it definitely sounded like you both take yoga very seriously.”

“Mom!”

She blinks innocently. “What? There is nothing wrong with a healthy yoga session, Addie.”

“I swear to God, stop saying yoga.”

Mom shrugs innocently. “I don’t think either of you need a yoga teacher—”

“I’m walking away, you twisted woman.”

Her maniacal laughter follows me across the floor to the edge of the patio where I stand and watch as guests arrive in clusters. I recognize a few but no one I’m eager to meet beyond a brief greeting.

Still, the whole time, I get to witness women flock Rhys. He may as well have been the only fire source drawing all the moths to his flame. I don’t like it, but Rhys is keeping a polite distance and the conversation brief. I’m telling myself I’m not the jealous type. He’s mine and I don’t have to worry about anything.

But why do they keep insisting on touching him? Grown ass bitches running their manicured hands over his chest like consent isn’t a thing.

“Addie?”

My head snaps in the direction of the man standing at my elbow, concern painted over his handsome face.

I quickly smooth out the annoyed expression I’m sure I’m wearing and give Oz what I hope is not a psychotic smile.

“Hi.”

He looks away from me to where a stunning redhead old enough to be Rhys's mother helpfully adjusts the perfectly straight row of buttons on his shirt with long, red tipped hands. Rhys offers her a kind smile and edges a step back, but the viper follows his retreat.

She raises her hand as if to touch him again and Rhys edges out of the line of her bony fingers.

Maybe I'll break snap off each one and make her eat them.

"LuAnn is harmless," Oz assures me with a hint of amusement.

I shoot him a frown. "I'm not worried."

I don't miss the tongue he rolls over his back molars at my grumble. "She has a son Rhys's age."

LuAnn laughs dramatically at something Rhys says and grabs his bicep. I don't miss her squeezing the muscles.

My muscles.

"If you're telling me she sees Rhys like her son, someone needs to check on her son."

Oz laughs and offers me his elbow. I accept because if I stand there any longer watching Rhys get manhandled, I might need bail money. So, let Oz guide me down the steps to the makeshift dance floor where a few couples are already moving to the soft hum of violins and flutes. The majority linger around the refreshment table or cluster at their assigned seats. Oz stops on the outskirts of the dancers and tugs me into his chest.

“I don’t think there’s a woman on earth who has the power to lure Rhys away from you. He hasn’t taken his eyes off you once since you arrived. Even now.”

I turn my head back over my shoulder when Oz gestures with the nod of his chin and I am immediately captured in Rhys’s beautiful, infinite pools of dark desire. The love and longing in them make my cheeks warm and my heart dip. But I turn back to the man moving me expertly around the other dancers.

“He’s not the one I’m worried about,” I tell Oz truthfully. “They’re touching things that I don’t like other people touching.”

Oz flashes me an amused grin. “You sound like your mother.”

I feel my own lips twitch. “We’re possessive.”

He hums softly. “It seems to be a common trait amongst. I don’t know how Brooke has managed to keep Michael from leaving after his many ... accidents this afternoon.”

I have to search the yard to find the man in question. He stood by the drink table, a vivid, purple bruise shadowing his rugged jaw, a cut across his bottom lip, and a disgruntle scowl darkening his handsome face.

“What happened to him?” I ask, turning back to my stepdad.

“I trusted him alone with Rhys.”

My eyes bulge. “Rhys hit him?”

Oz grimaces. “He claims Michael had a couple of accidents.”

I dart another glance at the blond, but my shock is short lived when I remember his fucked up comments the night before. It's hard to feel bad for a guy who thinks manipulating you is the best way to get into your pants, especially when he thinks he could ever take Rhys's place.

"He does seem very clumsy," I decide. "He probably should have been more careful."

Oz bursts out laughing. "Why am I not surprised?"

I give him my best feigned flutter of lashes. "I don't know what you mean. If Rhys says he had an accident, he must have."

Oz merely rocks his head slowly from side to side but doesn't press. "Your mother wants to know when you will be moving back," he says instead.

My gaze shifts to where Rhys stands alone. Our eyes meet, triggering a whole galaxy of butterflies in my belly.

"As soon as we pack up our apartments." I decide. I face Oz once more. "I know Mom wants us back, but do you?"

"Addie, if it were up to me, you would already be here where you belong. You and Rhys, this is your home. You can live in the main house, the guesthouse or build your own place. I don't care as long as you're both here."

I nibble my bottom lip as I chew over my next words. "Are you really okay with me and Rhys being together?"

He brushes a strand of hair off my cheek lightly. Eyes so much like Rhys's search mine carefully.



“This isn’t what I expected from either of you. I also can’t see it any other way. The situation is a delicate one and it will take time to adjust to the change, but...” He stops moving to peer down at me with steady focus. “There is no man I trust more with the second most precious person in my life, Addie. I know my son is a good man. He’s kind and hard working. He’s loyal and compassionate. And he loves you with the same undying love I feel to my soul when I look at your mother. He will protect you and care for you the way you deserve and that is all I want.”

My attempts to keep the emotions bottled up, keep the tears from ruining my makeup fail. Warm tears trek down my cheeks.

Oz smiles a little sadly as he brushes the stray tear away lightly with the pad of his thumb.

“Don’t cry, my love. You’ll make him think our conversation is going badly.”

Willing back the rest of the flood, I glance back to where Rhys’s brows are furrowed, his stance rigid like he’s debating whether or not to march over. I give him a quick smile and a wave before returning to the other man who holds my heart.

“How did I get so lucky?”

Warm lips brush the skin between my eyebrows. “I’m the one who is lucky, mi amor.”

The song ends and Oz starts leading me to where Rhys stands watching us, watching me with eyes that beg me to go to him. I want to so desperately it physically hurts, but I resist.

“We’re trying not to get people talking,” I tell Oz when I stop him from taking me to Rhys. “Your anniversary should be about you guys.”

Oz scoffs. “Let them. Like I said, I’m not worried about it.” He kisses my cheek. “Go to him.”

I don’t need to be told twice. I practically sprint in my heels to the man I love with all my heart.

Rhys doesn’t hesitate. His arms are open even before I reach him. They slide around me with fluid ease and draw me the rest of the way into his chest.

I blow out a breath heavy with all the weight in my chest.

“Yeah, I fucking hated that, too,” he murmurs into my temple.

“It won’t be for much longer,” I remind us both.

Rhys grunts and I snuggle closer.

“Dance with me.”

I accept the offered hand and let him lead me back onto the floor. He draws me into his arms. Too close. We are leaving no doubt in anyone’s mind that we’re together and my will to care fades when I tilt my head back and find myself the center of his whole focus.

“Every man here is hoping I will drop dead so they can have you,” he murmurs quietly. “You’re so fucking beautiful, Addie.”

My cheeks warm. “Thank you, and none of them stand a chance.”

He hums quietly and brushes a palm lightly down my spine. “I am the luckiest man alive.”

I reach up and adjust the row of buttons LuAnn contaminated with her grubby hands. “Did you hit Michael?”

His expression never falters. He continues to watch me as if I personally hung the moon.

“Yes.”

If I could muster a reaction, it’s hindered by LuAnn and a portly middle-aged man sweeping past us. The bitch gives Rhys a four-finger wiggle that fills me with the urge to punch her in the grinning mouth.

Instead, I deliberately turn my frown back to Rhys. “I don’t think you realize how close you came to getting your leg peed on,” I grumble.

Rhys raises both eyebrows. “Baby, I’ll try anything with you, but that might be my hard limit.”

I burst out laughing. “It’s absolutely my hard no, but I did learn something about myself while you were over here, getting pawed at by all those women.” He wisely makes no comment, but I catch the tongue he rolls over his teeth in amusement. I reach up and gently touch the side of his face, brushing my thumb over his bottom lip. “I learned I don’t like other people touching what’s mine, Rhys.”

Hard, greedy edges darken his eyes as he pulls me flush against him, against his hard front. His head lowers until his nose bumps mine.

“Agreed,” he says with a possessive growl.

My hand slides across the warm skin at the back of his neck. “Good.”

He hums and lowers his eyes to my lips. “Kiss on it, Addie.”

I do. Happily. I might not be able to pee on him, but I claim him. I make sure every bitch watching knows he’s fucking mine.

I drew back to peer into his face. Into the satisfied smirk tilting his mouth like he’s the one who won something.

“What are you so happy about?” I tease.

The heavy hand wedged against the small of my spine travels up to cup the back of my head, holding me in place when he pulls his teeth back in an arrogant smirk.

“You may have been ready to pee on me, but I was ready to fuck you against the porch rails to get all the fuckers here to stop staring at you.”

Despite the heady thrill coursing through me, I laugh. “We’re definitely a pair.”

Rhys brushes his quiet hum against my lips. “When can we leave, Addie? We have a game I need to finish with you.”

At the mention of game, my head jerks back. I blink up at him with a grimace. “About that...” I nibble on my bottom lip and touch the center of his chest. “We’re being evicted to the guesthouse as of tonight.”

*Source Creation Date: July 21, 2025, 3:54 pm*

RHYS

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ONE YEAR LATER...

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She smells like honeysuckles and me.

The scent lingers in her hair and dusts her soft flesh. I like it. Any scent as long as it's combined with mine.

“Do you think we can add a greenhouse?” Addie tips back her head on my shoulder, taking her green eyes off the blueprints of our new home to search my face.

I'm already looking at her. My eyes have an inability to notice anything else when she's there.

She's my flame. The light that draws me.

“We can add whatever you want,” I tell her, brushing the pad of my thumb over her chin.

She's in my lap clad in a tiny, white dress with a million purple flowers all over it. The front has a lace up that's been taunting me for hours to tug loose. But I haven't. Instead, her hair is brushing my jaw, her tight, sweet ass is on my thighs and my cum

is drying between her perfect thighs.

A man really can't ask for more.

The sun dances in her eyes and glistens in the thick strands she's twisted into a braid over one shoulder. It's been an exceptionally scorching summer, but it's been perfect for laying down the foundation and starting on the walls. Neither of us are in any hurry to get the structure done, both of us agreeing we want to make sure it's perfect. I think Addie's excuse is getting to live across a yard from her mother. The two have been inseparable since we both left our apartments six months ago and returned home — to the pool house — to oversee the construction and plan the wedding.

"How many bedrooms do you think we'll need?" she asks.

I brush the side of her face with the tip of my nose. "How many babies are you going to give me?"

Addie laughs and kisses my nose. "How many do you want?"

I shrug. "Until you can't anymore."

Her laugh deepens. "Jesus, my poor vagina. No, we're not going for a record here. Why don't we start with two?"

I nip her bottom lip with my teeth. "Four."

"Three," she counters.

"Four."

"Fine, four."

“Six.”

She huffs, amusement dancing in her bright eyes. “That’s not how negotiations work, mister. I’ll rescind my offer and go back to two.”

I growl deep in my throat. “Ten.”

“Lord...” She kisses me deep and hard. “Four!”

“Five.”

She rolls her eyes. “Let’s start with one, okay?”

My heart leaps in my chest. “Now?”

“No, not now! We need to finish the house and get married.”

I’m practically vibrating with excitement when flattening my palm over her smooth belly. “After?”

She’s searching my face, her expression full of so much love my chest hurts. “After.”

I kiss her with all the raw happiness brewing up through me. It seems the feeling has been growing stronger with every passing day until I can’t seem to breathe around it.

I would die without her, I realize vaguely. My entire existence hinges on her every breath.

“What?” she says when we pull apart.

I shake my head, unable to find words to describe the thin line between madness and stability I’ve been walking on.

I'm thankfully saved from having to blabber my way through it when my phone chimes in my back pocket. Addie makes to get up, but I tighten my hold on her middle and pull the device out with my free hand.

"It's Dad. He wants to know if we want to join them for supper tonight."

Addie thinks about it before giving a slight nod, but her phone dinged on the makeshift table the crew has set up on the outskirts of the project to keep the plans when they're working. No one's here now. It's just me and Addie and a lifetime.

"Aw!" Addie turns her phone so I can see the screen and the banner congratulating her on being a member for three years. "I miss our chatroom." But she shuts the screen off and tilts her face back to me. "Want to start heading back? If we're going to have supper with our parents, I'd like to help make it."

I graze her delicate jawline with my fingers before brushing her lips with my thumb. "I love you."

Her features immediately soften the way they always do when I tell her. "I love you, too."

She kisses me briefly before pushing to her feet.

I let her. I let her brush her skirt down around her thighs and take her phone. I let her take several steps away from me, moving in the direction of our parents' house. I watch the sweet sway of her hips and stroke my cock once through the rough grain of my jeans.

Without taking my eyes off her back, I open the app and send her a single message in our chatroom.

"Run."



I watch Addie glance down at her phone. Read my threat. Turn.

Our eyes meet.

Neither of us blink as I reach down and undo my belt. The useless little straps on her pretty dress shiver. The fabric tightens with every labored breath as I drag my belt free.

Addie sucks in a breath. Her eyes go wide with fear and excitement.

I fold the long strip of leather and smack it into my palm once with a satisfying crack.

My baby squeaks. Turns on her heels and bolts into the woods.

I let her run.

I give her a head start.

I wait until she thinks she's gotten away before starting after her.

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THE END