



His Big Offer

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One

“You know what? He was a nice guy, as guys go. But don’t get all macho on me about having a plan and then very obviously not have a plan. That just makes you look controlling. Plus, unfortunately, I wasn’t attracted to him. Bonus, I don’t think he was attracted to me either. So at least neither of us wanted to be there. Anyway, I could have had a better dive back into the dating pool, but as you know, readers, I’ve had way worse.”

—Rock Bottom Caroline

Warm, strong arms slip around my waist, and I snuggle back against his chest. I love when he comes to bed after me, because then I can feel the way his warmth seeps through the sheets, enveloping both of us. His lips are on my neck, teasing, trying to wake me up, and I smile because it’s working. I turn over to face him, and I see the flash of his eyes in the dark as he leans down to kiss me, and...oh my God. His breath is terrible! What is this? Not what I signed up for.

A slobbery tongue whacks against my cheek, and I come awake with a start. Alice’s dog Noodle is licking my face, and his breath is so bad I’m about to hurl. I push him off me, sitting up. Unfortunately, this isn’t an atypical way to wake up when you’re sleeping on Alice’s couch, but I would have really liked to see where that dream was heading. I can guarantee that it’s better than the real-life action that I’ve been getting.

I scrub my face with the blanket, getting the rest of the dog saliva off. Honestly, it’s par for the course with where my life is right now. No girl dreams of waking up with her best friend’s dog every morning. But things could be worse. I’d much rather be

woken up by Noodle than still be living with my parents, where my shortcomings was dinner conversation and I was constantly being ridiculed.

When everything got to be too much, and I couldn't take any more of their passive-aggressive comments, Alice let me move in here. Because she's a saint. And now it's been nine months of me living on her couch, barely contributing to rent because I can't keep a normal job. If I'm not laid off because my position is no longer available, than it's the store closing, or some other thing that seems like I'm making it up when I string it all together.

Thankfully, I still make a little money from ads on my blog, "Rock Bottom Caroline." The trials and tribulations of my love life, all online for anyone to see. It's mostly bad. It's shocking what people will send to women on dating sites and social media, and lots of times, it's down right gross. But I've got a small, dedicated group of readers, and the ad revenue keeps me from starving. Sometimes I write stuff about my life—my struggles to find a job and balance in my life. But the posts that are most successful are the dating stories.

I log on and moderate a couple of comments on my latest post: a summary of last night's date, where the gentleman who asked me out insisted on making the plans for the date, but when I showed up, he had no plans and we ended up walking around the financial district for two hours. Let me tell you, the financial district is not a fun place to walk around in NYC. We didn't even shake hands goodbye. Definitely not the worst date I've been on, but certainly not the best either.

Last night was actually the first time I'd gone out in months. There was a date so bad that I couldn't bring myself to take the chance until now. I'm still a bit anxious when I think about it, but there's nothing I can do. I'm kind of happy that last night's was uneventful, because at least it was normal boring. The two blog comments are from regulars, commenting and laughing at my predicament but also welcoming me back after not posting for a while. At least I know there will always be a few people who

appreciate what I do.

I hear Alice's door open, and she comes out into the living room. "Morning," she chirps. How she's always so perky is beyond me. She pours herself a cup of coffee and grabs a granola bar from our stash while I drag myself over to the bar.

"You're having a good morning, as always."

"Of course," I say. I'm probably the least morning person to ever exist. I'm barely awake before noon on a good day.

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“What are your plans for the day?”

Alice always asks me this. Sometimes I make something up to make her feel better about my lousy life, and sometimes I’m honest. Today I don’t feel like I have enough mental energy to make up anything interesting. “I honestly don’t know. I’ll see if there’s anywhere new that I can apply.” I’m a pro at scanning job listings now.

“That’s always good,” she says. “Can’t hurt.” Alice would be happy if I never got a job, and I think she’d be fine if I decided her couch was my new permanent home, but she knows that’s not what I want, and she tries to be supportive of whatever I do. She’s going off to her absurdly well-paying job at a bank. A job which she tried to bring me on for as well, only I totally crashed and burned in the interview, and I’d be surprised if they didn’t throw me out of that bank if I ever decided to show up there again.

“Can’t hurt,” I mumble, taking the coffee she hands to me.

My computer makes a small dinging sound, and I wince. I’m so used to bad news that I don’t even like the sound of email arriving anymore. Maybe I should change the sound. I click open my email, and the cup of coffee almost falls out of my hand.

There, in the dark black letters of an unopened message, are the words: Job Offer.

Alice sees the look on my face. “What is it?”

“Am I crazy or does that say what I think it says?”

She comes around the corner and peers at the screen. “Oh my God.”

“Am I hallucinating?”

“No you’re not. Open it!”

I do, and am greeted with a sleek logo and an email that’s a few short lines. The person emailing, a guy named Chance Montgomery—with the initials CEO attached to his name—has seen my blog and thinks he might have a position for me at his company called Heart Makers. Is there any way for me to come in sometime today to speak with him about it?

“Is this for real?”

Alice reads over my shoulder, her jaw dropping open. “I think it is. What the hell is Heart Makers?”

I open up an internet tab and run a search. Heart Markers search results explode across my screen, with news stories piling up at the top. I get the gist pretty quickly. Heart Makers is the new matchmaker on the block and they’re shaking things up with the way they work. They’re young, fashionable, and the best place to go if you’re single in New York City.

“Oh my God.” My fingers are on the keys before I can even register that I’m replying. Yes, I am so interested. I hit send having barely proofread it, and I’m sure that I have typos that make me look like an idiot but I can’t even care. A job offer. A job offer. I mean, I have no idea what I would do working for a matchmaker, but I didn’t even realize how hopeless I’d become until this showed up in my mailbox.

“You’re going to go?”

“Of course I’m going to go,” I say. “I need a job. I can’t keep bumming on your couch for the rest of my life even if you’d let me.”

She grins. “This is so exciting! I really hope it works out. You have to tell me everything when you come home tonight, okay?”

“Deal.”

“I’ve got to run.” She pours the rest of her coffee into a to-go cup. “Raid my closet, take what you need, make sure you look fabulous.” And just like that, she’s out the door, Noodle looking after her mournfully.

My computer dings again, and it’s a reply.

Can you be here in an hour?

I look at the address. It’ll be a stretch, but I think I can make it. I type back an enthusiastic yes and sprint into Alice’s room. I’m not sure how I manage, but I get ready faster than I ever have in my life. Thank God I showered last night. At least I don’t have to waste time washing and drying my hair.

Barely twenty minutes later, I’m locking the apartment behind me, trying to walk to the subway as fast as I can in Alice’s borrowed pencil skirt and heels. I have my own clothes, but none of them are new, and the few nice things I have that are appropriate for an interview are better suited for things like the bank or an upscale retail job. Not a matchmaker with an office in a downtown high rise.

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I make the train with only seconds to spare and find a seat. Now I just have to keep from panicking all the way there. That sounds totally doable and totally like me. Not.

Two

“The first time this guy messaged me, he complimented my eyes. I should have known that was too good to be true. The bad ones are easy to tell. But if someone shows up and it sounds like he stepped out of a romantic comedy? That should be the biggest warning sign of all.”

—Rock Bottom Caroline

The Heart Makers office is like a dream out of a magazine. Walls of windows combined with bright lights make for a happy atmosphere as soon as you walk in the door. Exactly the kind of vibe you want for customers coming in for a matchmaking service.

I’m proud of how well I’ve managed to keep my panic in check, but now that I’m in the office, I’m shaking just a little. But I’m on time. I think that’s probably the most important thing. I walk up to the receptionist—who looks like she’s from central casting with her neat up-do and earpiece—and wait for her to acknowledge me.

She gives me a thousand-watt smile. “Welcome to Heart Makers. Can I help you?”

“Yes,” I say, clearing my throat. “I have a meeting with Chance Montgomery. I think he’s expecting me?”

A few keystrokes later. “You’re Caroline?”

“That’s me.”

“Great,” she says. “Follow me.”

I do, past a fabulous view of downtown Manhattan and an open-plan workspace. I also see little alcoves where one or two people are working, and I wonder if that’s where they interview you when you come in to use their service.

I’m so busy looking at my surroundings that I almost bump into the receptionist when she stops short in front of an impressive looking door.

“Have a seat,” she says, pointing to the couch outside the door. “Marcy will let you know when he’s ready for you.”

I sit. And wait. I see Marcy—who I’m assuming is Chance’s assistant—subtly look me up and down. Thank God I’m wearing Alice’s clothes because if I were wearing mine, I know I wouldn’t have made a good impression. I’m trying not to fidget, but I can’t help but tap my toes. I have no idea what kind of job offer to expect. I mean, it’s definitely a legit company, but who just emails someone a job offer out of the blue? What if it’s something weird?

“You can go on in,” Marcy says, with a sickly sweet smile that lets me know she’s not my biggest fan. Is that because she knows I’m walking into a trap? Get it together, girl! You can do this.

I straighten my skirt and push open the door to his office, and holy mother of God, there’s a lot to take in. First, the office is huge, and the window behind the desk has a picture perfect view of lower Manhattan and the New York Harbor. And lastly—because there’s nothing else I could possibly look at now—Chance

Montgomery is standing behind his desk waiting for me.

It's almost like I'm far away from myself as I freeze, and my mouth drops open. Because Chance Montgomery is hot. Hotter than the sun hot. So hot I feel like I should look down to see if my clothes have burned off hot. But I can't move because I'm frozen in place by that same hotness. Holy. Shit.

"Hello," he says.

I blink, and I feel like the world has started turning again. "Hi." I manage to take the necessary steps forward to shake his hand. "I'm Caroline." The nervous laugh that escapes my lips sounds hysterical even to me.

The only reaction from him is a small amused smile. "It's good to meet you, Caroline. Please, take a seat."

I step back and run into the chair, because it's closer than I thought, and I tumble into it, my purse landing on the ground with a thud. I'm kind of laying sideways in it. Chance is looking at me with that same amused smile, and I feel the blood run to my cheeks. I manage to reseat myself in a more normal fashion. "I'm usually more graceful."

He smiles. "Graceful can be overrated. Especially when it's a replacement for charm."

I blush again.

"I appreciate you coming in so quickly," he says, changing topic. "I'm sure that you've either heard of us or googled us when I emailed you this morning, but let me tell you a little bit about the company."

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“Sure.”

“Heart Makers is a pretty new company, just over two years old. We’re focused on creating lasting romantic partnerships for people in their twenties and thirties. We started the company as a way to fight back against the hook-up culture and the way most dating sites are simply becoming unusable. So here, we strive to make lasting connections using the typical things like personality and temperament, but also expectations, timing, industry, and phase of life.”

“That sounds really great,” I say. Because it does. Given my experience, I’d do almost anything not to have one more guy message me that I have nice tits.

“We’ve been successful so far, and I think it’s only going to get better. But because of the personalized nature of our service, we’re expensive. I don’t want our expertise to be limited to the people who can afford our matchmaking services, and that’s where you come in.”

Shock rolls through me. “Really? I don’t know anything about matchmaking.”

Chance laughs. “I don’t know if I’d agree with that. I’ve seen your blog, and I think you know plenty about the perils of bad dating. Matchmaking is just one step further.”

He’s read my blog. Oh my God. Oh. My. God.

“I’d like you to come on and write articles for our website about dating, matchmaking, romantic advice. We’ll give you some things to write about, but you’d

also have some creative room. From what I've seen of your writing, your voice and sense of humor are a perfect match for what we're looking for. If you're interested, that is."

"I am, of course. But...you don't know anything about me. You're just willing to have my writing up on your site?"

"I read a good deal of your blog, and I've shared the relevant posts with my COO and CFO. They all agree that you're perfect."

There aren't any words I can say. Can it really be that easy?

He laughs again. "Tell you what. Why don't you stay here till the end of business? I'll show you where you'd be working, and you can see what working on an article would be like. Then you can let me know."

"Okay." The word is out of my mouth before I'm even realizing that I'm saying it. How in the world would I ever be able to say no to this?

He stands and comes around the desk until he's standing right in front of me. I have to lean back to look at him and damn if this isn't the best view I've had in my life for a long, long time. Chance reaches out a hand to me, and I take it, letting him lift me to my feet like I weigh nothing.

"Come with me, I'll show you your office."

He walks out of the room and all I can do is gape after him.

Three

"Ladies, the walk of shame is over. You looked fabulous when you went out last

night and that dress looks just as good on you the next morning. There's nothing shameful about choosing to have a good time and owning it. So own it, and soon enough we'll be calling it the walk of victory."

—How to have a Fantastic One-Night-Stand as a Successful, Independent Woman, Heartmakers.com

This isn't possible. It's not real. Things like this don't happen in real life, except maybe they do, because I'm standing in what might be the most gorgeous office I've ever seen. It's not huge like Chance's office. It's the perfect size: cozy, with a desk and a floor to ceiling window and another wall that's painted a shade of teal that makes me feel like I'm in the Mediterranean.

In the corner, there's a chair that looks like you could sink into it with a cup of tea. I don't think I could have designed a better office for myself if they had asked me to. It's like they read my mind. Which is kind of freaky and kind of awesome.

"This would be my office?" I feel like I need to ask because I'm still not entirely convinced that this whole morning hasn't been a fever dream brought on by Noodle's horrible dog breath.

Chance gestures to the desk. "Sit."

I do.

He leans over me and moves the computer mouse. Dear God, he smells good. Like water and pine and soap and something else that makes me want to take a bite out of his arm. "Since you're not officially on the payroll, you don't have a log-in. I'm going to let you use mine."

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“Thanks.” I’m glad that thanks is the word that came out because I’m so distracted by how delicious he smells that my brain could just as easily have said ‘waffles.’

He pulls up a document filled with headlines and smaller paragraphs. “We’ve been thinking about bringing in a writer for a while, so my staff and I have kept this document of ideas for articles we think might be beneficial for the website. I already know that you’ll be perfect for this, but why don’t you give the first one a try, and I’ll read it at the end of the day.”

I look at the top of the list, and the pitch is a good one: How to have a one-night stand as a woman in the modern age. That, I can do. It’s been a while, but I’ve had my fair share of one-night stands. It’s a tricky thing to get right.

“Even though we’re here to help people have lasting connections, we know that one-night stands are going to happen, and in the current dating culture, they’re way harder on women than they are on men.” Chance half sits on the desk next to me, and I feel like he’s his own center of gravity and I’m being pulled toward him. With him so close, and thinking about one-night stands, I can’t help but imagine what it would be like to go home with him.

The whole night flashes behind my eyes. Meeting at a bar. Drinking and laughing. Pretending to be surprised when he kisses me before I get in the cab, and secretly being delighted. I’d pull him into the cab with me, and we’d be off to his place. I know myself, I wouldn’t be able to keep my hands off him in the cab, and we’d hardly be able resist giving the cab driver one hell of a show.

We’d barely make it through the door before our clothes were off and he’d have me

up against the wall before I could take a breath. All that built up heat would jump back and forth between us, and by the time he's pushing inside of me, I'd be so close that it wouldn't take long for either of us to finish. And then we'd have another drink before moving to the bedroom for round two...and three.

Hell, if I went home with him I'd try for more than three. It's easy to tell that the body under those clothes is pretty much perfect. You don't get to be the CEO and face of a matchmaking company without having the entire package, and if his face looks this good, everything else must be exquisite. My mind is distracted now, forming dark and smudgy images of us tangled together with sheets and nothing else. Slow and pulsing and—oh God yes—I want that.

“Caroline?”

My focus snaps back to him and I realize that I've been staring and that he finished talking a while ago. “Sorry,” I say, blushing. “Already thinking about the article.”

He smiles, and I get real life, honest to God butterflies. Chance stands. “I'm glad to hear that. If you need anything, please don't hesitate to ask.”

“I will. I'll get started right away.” I reach for the mouse so I can at least pretend to look like I'm going to start, and I miss, knocking the mouse off the desk. It lands at his feet. Damn it, why am I such a klutz?

“Whoops,” I say, trying to sound light. I reach down to get it, and...oh my God.

He's still standing so close to me, and I didn't judge the distance. Now I'm grabbing the mouse and my face is...against him. Right there.

I get myself back into the chair as fast as humanly possible, and I'm pretty sure that all the blood from my body is now in my face. “I'm so sorry,” I say. “I swear I'm not

usually this awkward. I'm just...nervous."

"That's all right." Chance isn't smiling now, and he doesn't seem angry just...I don't know, shocked? "I'll give you a chance to work. Email me the piece when it's done. My address is already in the email program under my name."

And then he's out the door and I watch him walk down the hall. Two of the office walls are glass and I can see people looking in my direction, which makes me blush even more. I have no doubt that they just saw that. They either think I'm the klutziest girl alive or that the new girl is already hitting on the boss. No matter what, it's a pretty humiliating start to a job that I'm not even sure I have yet.

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One thing's for sure though, Alice has got to hear about this.

Four

“Picture this. You're in a bar and you see a guy across the room. He's so hot that you imagine ripping his clothes off right there, damn the audience. But you stop yourself. Why? Because odds are you think that he's out of your league. I'll tell you what, he's not. Men don't think twice about approaching women, and even though it can be terrifying, you should do the same. I don't know about you, but I have way more fun flirting when I'm the one who initiates. There's a reason men like the chase: It's fun, and you should try it.”

—How to have a Fantastic One-Night-Stand as a Successful, Independent Woman, Heartmakers.com

I pull out my phone as soon as I'm sure that Chance is out of view. I have no idea if Alice will see this since she's working and she's not technically allowed to have her phone at her station, but she usually does. I text her.

So the CEO is hot. Mega hot. So hot I'm literally melting into the floor. Oh, and the job is amazing. They want me to write articles on sex and dating for their website. I'm writing an article and they're going to read it when I'm finished. I would have an office!

I'm right about the fact that she has her phone with her, because she texts back almost instantly.

OMG. YES. HOT BOSSES ARE THE BEST. Also, ummm, hello that job is perfect for you! How much does it pay?

I forgot to even ask. I was too busy making a fool of myself in front of him. Don't worry, I'll tell you all about it when I get home tonight. But if he doesn't hate this article I'm TOTALLY taking this job even though it makes no sense!

Why wouldn't it make sense?

Because this shit doesn't happen, Alice. People don't just get random job offers from blogs.

EMBRACE IT. You deserve it. Now stop talking to me and write that article! Oh, and if you have the chance to send me a picture of the hottie, please do!

I send her a heart emoji and click my phone off. She's right, I need to get on this article, even though the thought of tracking down a photo of him to send to her is really tempting. I already have the perfect vision of him my head: Sandy blonde hair pushed to the side, the sleeves of his button-down rolled up to the elbows and showing off forearms that are just...gorgeous. Forearms are never something that I think of as sexy until I see good ones and then they practically make me salivate.

My mental picture pans down and shows the trim hips and waist and makes me want to find out what's underneath. I've already gotten a feel, even though it was only for a couple of seconds. God, just imagining him fully clothed has me warm, and it's leading me back to those fantasies about meeting him and having a one-night stand.

Actually...that's perfect. I haven't had any of those one-nighters that I would want to write about. They're usually awkward and less fun than you imagine when you're at the height of your tipsiness. But imagining what a night with Chance would be like? That would be fun, and I'd be able to write about it perfectly.

Despite my nerves and my continued disbelief that this is actually happening, I fall into my normal writing rhythm, and write my way through this fictional one-night stand as if it's going to go perfectly. The fictional version of me is the awesome, badass, confident woman that I sometimes wake up feeling like. It's the me I want to be. Hopefully it's the me a lot of women will want to be. Chance is right, this is an article that will hit home. I would love to take home a man with confidence and know that it will be hot, fun, and perfect. It rarely ends up that way though, so anything I can do to help the ladies of the world I'll consider a victory.

It's a combination how-to and story about a fictional couple. The blend between the two is really working. I layer in maybe a little too much detail about the sex between this Chance and this Caroline because once I start thinking about it, I just cannot. Stop. Thinking. About. It.

I imagine the way his fingers would brush across my skin as he pushes the shirt off of my shoulders. His hands on my waist as he pulls my body against his so I can feel every hard inch of him, and the way he'd kiss me. Softly, and then deeper, pulling me in with that unbelievable gravity that he has.

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The way he'd lay me out on the bed, teasing me with his mouth from my collarbone to my breasts and lower, tasting me with the same thoroughness that I imagine he uses in everything that he does. And the actual sex. My God, I can just see it, and I realize that I've been staring into space in this gorgeous office and now I'm wet thinking about the man who hired me.

There's not much more to write. I read through it, blushing a little at how graphic the content is, but I think it fits with the tone of the article. Women shouldn't have to shy away from talking about sex like we don't like it and want it just as much as men do. I make some minor changes, edit a little until I'm completely happy with it. I'm nervous about sending it to Chance. I'm a blog writer, so I don't spend a lot of time editing. What if it's not good enough simply because I didn't spend enough time on it?

I mean, it's later in the day than I thought, going on four o'clock, but still...what if I went through all of this and he doesn't like it after all? What if he realizes that I was using him as my inspiration? But I don't exactly have a choice. He wants to see it, and I don't think there's anything else I can do to the article without a second opinion. Before I second-guess myself more, I open the email program and send it.

I sigh. I guess I go and see him now? At least to let him know that I'm done, and to ask about salary. I can't even believe that I forgot to ask about that.

It was hard to pay attention when Chance was leading me to my office because I was so distracted by looking at his ass, so it takes me a couple of minutes before I figure out where I am and how to get back to his office. Marcy isn't at her desk, so I just knock on the door.

Chance's voice is muffled. "Come in."

I push the door open, and the image of his office is just as striking the second time. "Hi," I say.

"Hello." Again that small amused smile. "How's everything going?"

"Good," I say, nodding. "I finished the article. It should be in your inbox, if you want to read it."

"Excellent. I'll give it a read sometime this evening. Have you given any thought to whether you're going to say yes?"

I stare at him for a second. "You don't want to read the article first to make sure I can do what you're looking for?"

"No," he says. "I told you earlier that I'd already made up my mind. If I have any thoughts on changes to the article I'll let you know, but I don't have any doubts about its quality." I shake my head, and he raises an eyebrow. "What?"

"You probably looked into me before you offered me this job, right?"

He inclines his head. "We did."

"So you saw my job history." I sit in the chair I almost knocked over this morning. "It's not the best, and certainly doesn't paint a good picture of me. Why on earth would you offer a job to someone like that? Especially when you'd never met me? I'm sorry that I keep questioning it. It just seems like something that's too good to be true. And too good to be true never happens to me."

Chance leans forward on his desk, suddenly even more engaged with a fire in his

eyes. “People are good at different things,” he says. “I don’t believe that there’s anyone in this world that doesn’t have something that they can excel at. I don’t give a damn that you weren’t cut out for the jobs you had before. Your blog has been successful and you clearly have a knack for writing engaging content. Since that’s exactly what I’m looking for, why would anything else matter?”

Wow. That...actually makes sense. “When you put it that way, it makes sense.”

“Good. Now are you going to say yes?”

I laugh. “I was planning on it. Even though I forgot to ask about how much it pays.”

“Here.” Chance picks up a folder on his desk and hands it to me. “This is an employment contract. All the details of your salary and benefits are inside. I’d like it if you signed before you left today, but I’ll also accept if you need the night to think it over.”

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I take the folder. “You really want me to say yes.”

“Yes I do, because I think you’re talented. But I also don’t like hearing the word no when it comes to business.”

A laugh escapes me. “That probably doesn’t make you very popular.”

“No, but it does make me successful.”

I can’t argue that point, given the office that we’re currently sitting in.

Opening the folder, I glance at the top sheet which summarizes what’s in the document in further detail, and my jaw drops—fully drops—when it gets to the salary. “You’re joking.”

“Not in the slightest.”

“You can’t pay me this much for just...writing.”

Chance smirks again. “Of course I can. Your work is going to be highly visible within the company. You’re going to be the brand new voice of Heart Makers, and you deserve to be paid for that. Granted, you’ll also see that there’s an exclusivity clause. You’re being compensated highly so that you don’t lose money from not having the ability to write for other publications. Of course you can still update your blog. In fact, I encourage it, even though I don’t want you to go on anymore bad dates. It sounds like you’ve been on more than enough.”

I start to flip through the contract. There's a lot of legalese, and even though my instinct says that I can trust Chance, it's not so short that I can read it while I'm sitting here. I do want this though. "I want to accept," I say. "But I hope you'll understand if I take this contract home to read and come back in the morning to sign it."

He smiles again. "I do understand. It's good that you want to read it. Smart."

"Okay then." Relief flows through me. "So I guess I'll see you in the morning? Boss?"

Chance gives me a long, serious look. So long that I start to worry that I said something wrong. "You certainly will," he finally says, and a perfect little shiver runs across my skin. That voice—I'm going to dream about it all night.

"Okay," I say, standing. "Have a good night."

"You too, Caroline."

Five

"When I tell you that this guy didn't stop talking the entire three hours we were at dinner, you have to believe me. Whoever said that women talk more than men never met this guy. I think I may have said fifty words during the entire date, and in the mean time, I learned about this guy's cat, his mom, his grandma, his cousins and extended family, his hopes, his dreams and possibly his predictions for the next fifty years of his life. There's a possibility I might be asked to write his biography using only the information that I learned on this date."

—Rock Bottom Caroline

When I get home I spill every detail of the day to Alice, who's dying for details after a full day at the bank. Which, she assures me, is boring as fuck. I find some pictures of Chance online and Alice can't stop staring, and when I tell her that the pictures really don't do him justice, she just shakes her head. This is all crazy, right?

When Alice heads to bed, I read the contract until my eyes feel like they're going to fall out. It's not a bad contract from what I'm gathering. A lot of it is standard employment legal stuff limiting Heart Makers' liability and making sure that I understand that what I write on behalf of the Heart Makers' brand belongs to them, but they don't own anything else that I write, now or in the future.

Then there's the explanation of my exclusive contract and my compensation. With money like this I'll be able to pay off what's left of my student loans and get my own place in just a few months. I can't screw this up, because money like this could really change my life.

I can't screw it up by doing something like fucking the boss, even if he is the most gorgeous piece of man candy walking around downtown Manhattan. Ugh. Seriously, how do you even get to be that hot? Is there some sort of vitamin you can take? Did the hotness fairy appear out of the sky and hit him with the hotness wand until it broke?

Great. Now I'm thinking about him again and how delicious he smelled leaning over me and that last long look before I said good night. Tomorrow's going to be a long day. Hell, every day is going to be a long day of keeping myself—and my hands—off of him. But I think that it's a good trade off.

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I'm tempted to give in to my temptation to masturbate with all this pent up sexual energy, but I always feel weird doing that on Alice's couch. Soon, when I have my own place, I'll have plenty of privacy and time to do that. And then Noodle won't be staring at me with his head tilted from across the room, wondering what the hell I'm doing. There's nothing that kills the mood more than an animal curious about your sex life.

And with thought in my head, I sign the contract, put it away, and collapse into sleep.

I raid Alice's closet again. I'll be able to buy a new wardrobe soon. That will be fantastic! But today I settle for one of the outfits I regularly borrow from her: a deep blue button down that has short sleeves and somehow makes me look like I have bigger tits than I actually do, and black slacks that make my ass look amazing. I pull some flats from her closet, too. They're a little big, but I'll deal with it. I'll be sitting at a desk all day, not running a marathon.

On the way downtown, on the subway, it hits me. I have a job. I have a job! A job that I'm actually going to like. A job that I have a shot at being good at! I don't know what divine being or lucky star let me have this great fortune, but I'm certainly not going to complain about it.

When I get to the office, I'm pulled through a whirlwind. I have to fill out employment forms with HR, get my photo taken for my ID and building keycard, and I have to get log-in credentials for the computer system. Then, the HR woman, who seems like she's in a hurry, gives me a more thorough tour of the Heart Makers offices. I pay attention this time—I don't want to be the new girl who constantly has to ask for directions.

She leaves me at my office, and I'm exhausted even though it's only ten A.M. I decide that I need some coffee, and thanks to the tour, I know where the break room is. There's a group of women in the break room when I step inside, and there's a momentary hush as everyone looks me over. I give a little wave. "Hi."

One of them quickly steps forward. "You're the new girl, right? The writer?"

"That's me."

She holds out a hand. "Hi. I'm Emily."

"Caroline."

They all introduce themselves to me. Helen, Eileen, Darcy, Lila.

"Coffee is over here and Eileen brought in doughnuts on a whim," Emily says.

"Thank God for that," Lila says, and everyone laughs.

I pour myself a cup of coffee and pick up a donut with a napkin to take back to my desk.

"We've all been waiting to see who would get hired for that position. They've been talking about it forever. How did they find you?"

I laugh nervously. "I honestly don't know. I have a blog about my dating experiences—good and bad—and yesterday morning I got an email from Mr. Montgomery offering me the job. It's all been really fast."

The girls giggle when they hear me mention Chance's name. "You interviewed with him?" Darcy asks.

“I wouldn’t call it an interview,” I say. “He’d already decided he wanted to hire me. If I’d said yes he would have had me sign the papers as soon as I came in. Does he not normally do the interviews?”

“No,” Emily says. “Almost never. Mr. Montgomery is always nice, but he rarely mingles with the staff. He’s really...busy.”

Eileen nearly chokes on her coffee. “If by busy you mean hot.” She looks at me. “Did you notice?”

I hesitate, not sure if I should be gossiping about the boss, but I can’t pretend like I didn’t see him. “It’s hard not to,” I say.

“He has a strict no dating employees policy,” Emily says, pouting. “Unfortunately for every woman who works here. But that doesn’t mean that there aren’t rumors.”

I can’t help myself, my curiosity is out of control. “Rumors?”

“About his...package.” Emily says.

Eileen leans closer to me conspiratorially. “That he’s huge.”

I blush immediately. I already have an obscene amount of dirty images of Chance in my mind, and this isn’t going to make it better. Oh God.

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“Like, almost too big to fuck huge.” Darcy says.

Lila smiles. “And that he’s pierced.”

“Prince Albert. God, what I wouldn’t give to see that,” Lila says with a dreamy look on her face.

“Where do these rumors come from if he doesn’t date anyone he works with?”

Emily smirks. “He still dates other people. And being the young, hot, single CEO of a groundbreaking dating company gets him plenty of press. The rumors come from the tabloids. We all assume that they’ve talked to the girls he’s actually slept with.”

“Wow.” I’m fighting the urge to picture what he would look like naked in all his glory, because I’m not sure that I would survive it. But a part of me is relieved. Even if he is brilliantly perfect, if he’s made himself off-limits to employees that makes it that much easier to make sure I don’t screw this up by screwing him. Not that he even wants to, but it’s nice to know that I won’t have to worry about it.

“Good morning, ladies.” As if appearing straight out of my thoughts, Chance is in the doorway of the break room, and a hush falls. His eyes land straight on me. “Caroline, can you meet me in my office to finalize the contract and talk about some things?”

“Sure.”

He gives a quick nod to the other girls in the room and steps out. All of their heads swivel to look at me at once.

“What contract?” Emily asks.

“Non-compete,” I say. “While I’m employed here I can’t write for anybody else aside from my own personal blog.”

They all nod, but the rest are still too stunned by Chance’s sudden appearance to say anything. I give them a little shrug. “Don’t want to keep him waiting,” I say, stepping out and heading back to my office to drop off the coffee and doughnut and grab the signed contract. I have a feeling that after that little interaction—innocent as it was—there’s going to be some entirely different rumors floating around, possibly involving me.

Marcy waves me straight into the office when I approach, so I don’t bother knocking. I hold up the folder. “I signed it.”

He smiles at me, coming to take it from my hands. “Excellent.” He lingers for a second, almost like he’s unsure of what to do, and then heads back to his desk. “To start, I thought we might knock off some of the simpler ideas quickly, like an article per day, so that we create a backlog of content to post for when you’re taking more time with the more in-depth topics.” He gives a long look again, like he’s forgetting himself. Then he shakes his head a little. “Does that sound good?”

“Yeah,” I say. “That sounds fine.”

“For today, there’s a pitch in the documents about having a good first date. Let’s do that one.” He’s looking away from me now, like he’s avoiding my eyes.

“Is everything okay?” I ask, suddenly nervous. “Was the article okay? I know it may need work. I’m not used to doing multiple drafts but I’m willing to do whatever work you think it needs.”

He turns back to me and smiles softly. “Your article was fine. I thought it was really good. I loved it, actually. The tone is exactly what I was looking for.”

Sweet relief runs through me, and I didn’t even realize how panicked I was about losing this job before I even had it until I started rambling about the article. I step forward out of instinct, and before my mind can catch up, I’m hugging Chance. I see him move to stop me, but it’s not fast enough, and my arms are wrapped around him.

This is...totally inappropriate. And—oh my God—it feels so good. I should pull away, but Chance suddenly relaxes and his arms fall around my shoulders like it’s the most natural thing in the world. And then, he pulls me closer. For a second, I think that I imagine it, but he holds me a little tighter.

I pull away quickly. “I’m so sorry—I was just really happy that you liked it—”

The words fall out of my mouth because I’m looking up into Chance’s face and the look there is one of pure lust. It’s there and gone in an instant, and then he’s completely professional once again. But it was there, and the same lust that I’ve been feeling since I set eyes on him flares in response. Shit. This is bad. This is really, really bad.

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I clear my throat. “I’ll get started on that article for you, and check in at the end of the day.”

“I look forward to it,” he says, and there’s no mistaking the lust in his tone. It sets my heart racing and I can’t help but look back at him as I leave his office. He’s following me with his eyes and—oh fuck—I am so screwed.

Six

“First dates are always hard. It can be amazing, it can be terrifying, it can be exhilarating or disastrous. But there are a few things you can do to keep all of those adjectives on the positive side, starting with your expectations. Going on a first date is just a little bit like playing the lottery. You’re picking numbers at random hoping to win that one-in-a-million prize. In this case, the prize is love. But just like the lottery, while you should be hopeful, you should also be realistic.”

—Tips for a Good First Date, Heartmakers.com

I grab my phone off my desk as soon as I make it back to my office. In fact, I almost knock over my coffee because I’m in such a hurry. I text Alice a quick summary of what just happened. She texts back a stream of expletives and exclamation points and emojis. Then, words.

Are you sure?

Pretty damn sure. And I know I shouldn’t be, but I’m so into him. I told myself this morning that I couldn’t do this, that I couldn’t mess this up. And some other girls told

me he that he doesn't sleep with co-workers so I thought that everything was fine. But now there's this! This is bad, isn't it?

You've had this job for one day. And it's the first job I can remember you ever having that you've liked. I know he's hot but don't throw it away for him.

You're right. I know you're right.

I am right. Love you!

I put the phone down on the desk. Get yourself together girl. It's flattering that he has the same instinctual reaction to me that I'm having to him, but we can't do this. It's not a good idea. I take a sip of the coffee and I try the doughnut. Caffeine and sugar. Just what I need.

I can't write this article if I'm constantly thinking about him and all the stuff we could do together. Pulling up the document from yesterday, I find the article pitch about first dates. It's pretty simple, just a piece offering suggestions about avoiding the most obvious pitfalls of first dates. I can do that. I haven't had a whole lot of really good first dates myself, as my blog can easily show. But I'll give it my best shot.

I try to lose myself in the article like I did yesterday, but I can't. Yesterday I used Chance and my fantasies about him to finish the article. If I do that today, I'm afraid that my brain will go down a path that I can't come back from.

I start on the article, and it goes okay. It doesn't flow the way the first one did, though. I get more coffee and try again. Usually when I'm having trouble writing a blog post, I leave it for a couple of days and come back. Or I take a few hours off and focus on other things. Here in the office I can't really do that. I should find a few diversions to keep here for when I need a break. I've never worked in an office like

this before, but I don't think anyone could just write for eight hours straight.

Before I know it, it's five o'clock, and I'm still not done with the piece. For whatever reason, I can't find a good way to finish. I've gotten through most of it, but I'm not sure what to say about ending a date. There are so many variables, all based on how the date went, how attracted you are to the person, what kind of vibe you get from them. Dealing with all of the variables would make the article way too long and boring, but I can't just skip the end of the night.

I'm stuck.

I don't want to give up, but when I look up, an hour has gone by and I haven't written anything else. I may just have to tell Chance that I need the night to think about the ending. But I'll give it a few more minutes. Maybe there's some hope that inspiration is just around the corner.

I swivel in my chair and look at the evening view. This time of summer the sun is still pretty high in the sky, but the city is glowing with the fading light. It's reflecting off windows in shades of bronze and gold, and all of downtown Manhattan is sparkling.

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“You’re still here.”

Chance’s voice surprises me for the second time today, and I swivel around to see him. “Yeah. I’m having trouble ending the article. There’s just...a lot to think about when ending a first date.”

He leans against the door frame like it was put there just so he could. “That’s okay. The one article per day thing was just an idea. You can take as much time as you need. You could even work on more than one at a time if that works better for you.”

“Okay,” I say, running a hand across my face. “I’m at least going to take the night to think about how it should end.”

He nods. “Most people have left for the day. Care for a drink?”

I look at him, and I don’t know what I’m talking about. “Are you sure that’s a good idea?”

Chance pauses, and the air between us goes taut, both of us thinking about the unsaid things in the room. “Just a drink. I’ve got a stash I save for special days, and I can show you the best part about this building.”

“All right,” I say. “Just a drink?”

“Just a drink.”

I make sure to save my progress before I follow him out the door.

When you're on the ground in Manhattan, you never really think about the roofs of buildings. But they exist, and I don't know if they're all like this one, but the one that Chance just led me to is fucking beautiful. There's nothing up here but open air, and a couple of chairs which clearly don't belong up here.

Chance grabbed a bottle and two glasses before he led me to the stairs, and he sits in one of the chairs and pours us each a drink. I take the other chair, and lean back, taking in the same view as my office but bigger, better. With the wind in my hair and the fading sun on my skin it's positively glorious. "You come up here often?" I ask.

"Not as often as I'd like," he says, taking a sip of his drink. "But this is where I come when I need some inspiration. It sounded like you could use some."

"That's really sweet of you."

He gives me a half-smile, "I try to give my employees the tools they need to do their jobs well."

"I appreciate that. I want to do well. Like I said yesterday, I don't exactly have the best history, and I think I could actually be good at this."

Chance laughs. "You're already good at this, Caroline. I never would have thought to frame the one-night stand article through the lens of a couple in that way."

I blush instantly. "That...just came to me."

"Is that look because it's a story from personal experience?"

"No," I say, laughing. "Not actual personal experience. Just something that I wished would happen."

“Ah. I see.”

“Yeah.”

He leans forward, elbows on his knees, cradling his glass in front of him. “I guess I assumed because of your blog—are you single?”

“Are you asking me that out of pure curiosity or for another reason?”

He doesn’t meet my eyes. “Would it matter?”

I knock back the drink he’s given me in one go, savoring the burn. “I’ve worked here officially for not even a day, and I was already told that you have a strict no dating policy. I don’t want to ruin this opportunity by jumping into bed with the boss. Even if the boss is all I can seem to think about.”

He glances up at that, and gives me a wicked little smirk. “There are lots of places beside beds that I can think of.”

“Mr. Montgomery—”

“Chance.”

“Chance,” I repeat after him, and it feels good to say his name. “What about your policy?”

He finishes his drink. “You’re right. I have had that policy. It’s easier in some ways, because you don’t have to worry about having exes in the office, and you don’t have to worry about employees flirting with you. Especially when you don’t know if they’re flirting with you for you or because they’re trying to get ahead with their career.”

I notice that he's leaned closer to me, and I can't help but match his progress, leaning closer toward him. "Then this can't happen," I say. "No matter if we want it to."

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“You know when I stumbled on your blog, I loved your voice. I thought the way that you wrote things was funny and clever and vibrant.” I blush at his words, but he doesn’t stop. “And then you walked into my office, and you were...not what I was expecting. I don’t even know what I was expecting, but you were beautiful and adorably clumsy and you have this talent and it’s been all I can do not to kiss you every time I’m close enough.”

He’s moved closer again, and I can see the sincerity in his eyes. “You’re close enough now,” I say.

“Yes I am.”

“But this is a bad idea.”

He nods. “It probably is.” And then he kisses me. It’s everything I was hoping for and more. It’s pure light and I feel like I’m on an updraft and never going to come down. I’m fizzing with it like a glass of champagne and his lips are perfect and oh God. I’m kissing Chance, and I swore that I wouldn’t. I swore.

I pull away. “I’m sorry. We can’t. I don’t want to risk this.”

He doesn’t say anything, but his hand finds its way to the back of my neck and he pulls me back to him. Our lips meet again, and there’s only so much that that I can resist. I feel my body give in before my mind, and then I let go because this is by far the best kiss I’ve ever had.

“You’re sure this is all right?” I ask against his lips.

His voice is a growl. “This is more than all right. This is perfect.”

I’m in his lap somehow, like we came together and I didn’t even notice. The way I’m straddling him, I can feel he’s hard, and I’m thinking the rumors about how big he is are true. “The article,” I say, breathless. “Even though I’m going to write about how to go home with someone if you want to, I usually don’t. I rarely have sex with someone unless I’ve been out with them a few times. Never this fast.”

His hand is still firmly planted behind my neck, and his thumb caresses my collarbone. “How far do you want this to go right now?”

“There’s what I should say,” I bite my lip, “and what I actually want.”

“You think that you should say to stop.”

I nod.

“Let me tell you a secret that I’ve learned watching people getting together and breaking up and getting together again.” He pulls my mouth to his. “It’s always better to admit what you want.”

And then he’s kissing me again, and I moan because it’s perfect. I do want him. I want him with that wild, animal instinct that made me almost fall over when I walked into his office. I want him because he’s given me everything I could want. I want him because I know that as long as I’m around him, I’ll always want him, and I’ll always wonder what it would be like. It was going to happen. I can feel the certainty of it between our lips, and in the way his fingers start unbuttoning my shirt.

I hesitate for only a second. “Here?”

He chuckles softly, and gives me a pointed look. “With rare exceptions, I don’t like to

share things like this. I'm the only one with the key."

Something about hearing that unlocks whatever's been holding me back, and I kiss him again. I shrug out of my shirt and toss it onto the other chair and go to work on his buttons. I break away from our kiss so I can watch as I unveil Chance's gorgeous chest—tan and lean with lines that show me he works hard for this body. He catches me around the waist, leaning forward so that I can help him out of his shirt and suddenly we're skin to skin. It feels like fire and light and sparks and we're not even naked. Holy fuck. I was stupid to think that this was not going to happen. We're on this train going eighty miles an hour and jumping off now would kill us both.

Chance deftly unhooks my bra and adds it to the pile of clothes, and I shiver from the exposure. I've never been naked in public like this. We're on one of the tallest buildings, but not the tallest. Someone could conceivably look down from one of the skyscrapers and see the two of us going at it. And I don't care.

I gasp, my head falling back as Chance gathers my breasts into his hands. Squeezing, kneading, and bringing them to his lips. His mouth covers one nipple, and then the other, tongue swirling and sending eddies of sensation swimming straight down to my clit. I reach down between us, blindly feeling for his belt while he feasts on me. I want to see him—know if the rumors are true, and even if they aren't, it's not going to stop me.

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I'm not sure how I manage to get his belt unbuckled with the way his lips and tongue are moving on my skin, but I do. And then the button, and then the zipper, and then...

I lean back and look down. Chance's cock is straining through the cloth of his boxers, and I'm almost nervous to release it, but I do.

Oh. My. God. I realize that I said it out loud. Chance has the biggest cock that I've ever seen. I'd thought when the girls were telling me that he was big that it was exaggerated, or that he'd be like...a normal big. But this isn't normal big. This is porn star big. This is so big that every other cock retreats in shame.

And they got the other part right too, two metal studs decorate the head of his cock, the metal emphasizing the sheer size of him. I glance back up into his face, and he's wearing a wicked smirk. I shake my head. "That's not going to fit inside me."

"Yes it will."

"No, I don't think so."

He pulls me against him again, his cock now a steel rod between us. "It will. I happen to know how to use my cock, and I'm very good at it. Just like everything I do."

"But—"

A kiss silences my protest. "Don't run," he says softly. "We'll go slow. Let me show you how good it can be."

I glance down, still not believing that I'll be able to take that. But the thought of him using that to my advantage, to bring me pleasure, makes me shudder with anxious anticipation. I step back, standing so I can take off my pants, and Chance retrieves a condom from his wallet. It's stamped with the Heart Makers logo, and he smiles when I raise an eyebrow. "People think it's clever when you hand them one instead of a business card."

He has a point, that is clever marketing for this kind of company. I can't help but stare at him as he rolls on the condom. It's just...so big. There's no other way to talk about it. He sheds the rest of his clothes and then he's standing naked in front of me and it's everything that I imagined and more. Artists could use him as a model if they were sculpting Greek gods. And his cock is there, jutting toward me, straight and proud and huge. Arousal rolls through me.

We're kissing again and he pulls me back onto his lap, fingers finding my clit. I gasp against his lips, letting the shivery pleasure spread across my skin while he deepens the kiss. A breeze chills me while his body warms me and it feels like I'm caught in a storm of sensation. Chance's mouth moves to my neck, to my chest, and his fingers tease me until I'm grinding against his hand. I love it.

He brings me all the way to the edge. I'm panting against his skin, so close to coming. I can feel an orgasm hovering on the horizon. I'm so close I think that the next breeze might send me over. But he doesn't let it. Instead, he pulls away, lifting me higher and fitting the head of his cock against me. Just the tip of him feels bigger than anything I've ever taken.

Slowly, so slowly, Chance pushes the head of his cock inside me, and I come without warning. Pleasure bursts outward through my skin and I can't even cry out because I'm so surprised. It's a silent, shuddering orgasm and I have to hold onto him so I don't fall over. "Oh God," I say, and I keep saying it.

He rocks his hips, pushing deeper in tiny increments, and I glance down when I feel full and realize that I've barely taken half of him. My breath goes short, and I can feel the strange sensation of the studs as he pushes in deeper. "Chance," I say. "It's too much."

I meet his eyes, and he pauses. "You're not full yet."

"I know, but—"

"Does it hurt?"

I shake my head no, my pussy tightening around him. There's a chance that I might be wetter than I've ever been in my life, and I don't want to stop. The pause helps. My body adjusts, and I suddenly feel more at ease. I know I can take more, and I want to feel what it's like to have all of him inside me—or as much as will fit. I bite my lip and lower myself further, and Chance helps me. I sink deeper and deeper, until it feels like I can't take any more, and even then I take a little more.

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There's so much of Chance inside me that I can barely breathe. I can't squeeze him, I'm so stretched. I'm on the roof of a New York City skyscraper, and it's like I'm on top of the world and full of the world and I've never felt anything like this. I'm frozen in place, bound and impaled on him, unable to get used to the feeling of being so full. It feels good. Impossibly good, and we're not even moving.

There's just the tiniest movement, Chance lifting his hips, but I feel that movement for what seems like miles. Because I'm so full, there's friction everywhere and even the smallest movement sets all those nerves on fire and has me shaking. He pulls me down to kiss him, a soft kiss that has me melting, relaxing, leaning into the feeling of being connected like this.

Oh my God, we're really doing this. A light snaps on in my mind, and I remember where we are. On the roof, entirely naked, and Chance is inside me. If my mouth weren't already occupied by his tongue, I'd have a stupidly happy grin on my face.

Chance's fingers find my clit again, and I moan with the pleasure of it. I can feel myself grow wetter around his cock, and those tiny movements of his hips are amplified. Damn it, he wasn't wrong. He does know how to use it. I'm overloaded with the feeling of him and I think I might come again. It's been a long time since I've had sex and I've never felt anything like this. I've heard of people who will only date people with giant cocks, and now...I think I can understand why. I don't ever want it to end.

He moves his hands to my hips, fingers gripping me and holding me in place as he moves a little more. And then more. He's steadily increasing his speed, pulling out a little further each time, and every stroke is delicious pleasure on top of pleasure. I

lean back, feeling the setting sun on my face while he fucks me, and I think I could stay in this place, right here, forever. When the orgasm comes, I let it take me.

I'm too overwhelmed by it to say anything, to make any noise. He's literally fucked the voice right out of me and I couldn't care less. Chance's hands land on my ass, and he grips hard. "Don't move."

I open my eyes when I feel our balance shift. He stands, holding me to him, never letting us separate as he reverses our positions and places me in the chair. "Oh, fuck." The words are pulled out of me because this is so much tighter. Every line of him is pressed up against me and it's worse and better as he presses my knees closer to my chest.

I can look down and see the way our bodies are connected and a rush of pure heat floods my system. I'm so wet and ready and I don't know what to feel because I'm feeling too much. "Caroline," Chance says, and I look up to meet his eyes. "How do you feel?"

"Good," I say right away. "Good. I feel good. Really good." There's got to be more words than 'good,' but I can't seem to find them right now.

He smiles a wicked smile that makes me shudder with anticipation. "That's good," he says. "Because I'm going to fuck you now."

I have to close my eyes because he thrusts in and pleasure bursts behind my eyes like fireworks. "You weren't fucking me yet?"

Chance chuckles and captures my lips for a kiss. "Not even close." And then he thoroughly proves his words to be true. Plunging in and pulling back, I can feel every inch of him. I don't think I've appreciated the concept of friction in my life until now. I'm coming apart around him, not quite there but so close, almost drawing in the

pleasure of it, and now my voice is back. I can't stop the moans that are coming out of my mouth, and they're only getting louder.

I can feel the studs of his piercing, brushing against that spot deep inside me that I don't think any other guy has been able to hit. Every stroke taps against that spot, a bright pop of fizzy pleasure that spreads through the rest of me, heightening, honing, and drawing me toward the edge.

Looking down, I watch him fuck me. I see that massive cock disappearing inside me, and I'm taking almost all of him. I can't look away, and watching is the thing I need that sends me over. I cry out, my pussy trying to squeeze him, trying to get more pleasure from him. And he doesn't stop thrusting through the orgasm; he's taking me straight into the next one.

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Thank God the wind is stealing my voice away because I can't stop screaming, and anyone listening would have no doubt about what's happening. I'm looking at Chance and his eyes have gone dark with lust and arousal. He's grunting softly with the effort and I can see that he's close. I squeeze down on him as much as I can, and he closes his eyes, groaning.

I'm still on the tail end of the last orgasm, and I can't even remember how many times I've come. It's like my body doesn't know how to handle all of the sensation and so it keeps overflowing. Chance reaches in between us, circling my clit with his thumb, and I can't hold on anymore. I scream, the echo of it jumping back to me from other skyscrapers. It's the biggest one yet and I can't stop. Chance thrusts in deeply, with purpose, and again, and again, and I feel him jerk inside me as he finds his pleasure. His groan is low, deep. It sends goosebumps across my skin.

My body is shaking in the aftermath, little spasms on my skin and in my muscles. Neither of us move, just breathing together, with him still buried inside of me.

"You were right," I finally say after I've caught my breath and come back to myself enough to speak.

"About what?"

I smile, leaning my head back against the chair. "It was more than all right, and it was perfect."

Chance kisses me, not soft or gentle. This is deep and possessive and arousing. It raises up all the feelings I just felt and makes me want to ask for more. But before I

can, he pulls away. “I’m glad.”

Together, we retrieve our clothing, and Chance helps me dress with a tenderness that’s unexpected after everything. We don’t really talk, because there’s nothing left to say. I don’t even protest when he puts me in a cab home instead of letting me take the subway. I’m still fuzzy, still overwhelmed and blissed-out. He kisses me one final time before closing the door to the cab.

“I’ll see you tomorrow,” he says.

“Yeah,” I say. “Tomorrow.”

Seven

“There’s a certain stigma when it comes to different kinds of sex. Like if we choose to do something a little different, it’s inherently wrong. Let’s get rid of that stigma together, because there are some things that I can tell you that you need to try. I’m talking about everything from toys to the continually made fun of edible panties. Nothing is off limits here. We’re going to get down, dirty, honest, and HOT. Let’s dive in, shall we?”

—How to Spice Up Your Sex Life, Heartmakers.com

I think I may have made a huge mistake. Yesterday was unquestionably amazing, and in the moment I put aside all the hesitations I had about sleeping with the boss. But in the morning, my head is clearer, as it usually is. What happens to me if that’s all he wanted from me? The contract I signed didn’t have a length of time attached to it. He could fire me today if he wanted to. And what if he doesn’t want to? What if he wants to keep going and I’m the first employee that he’s slept with? That’s an entirely different ball of wax and not even necessarily better.

I didn't tell Alice what happened when I came home last night, because I knew what she would say. That it was utterly, utterly stupid. Which it was. And then she'd ask for details. I'm not ready for either of those things yet. Seeing how it goes today, I'll be more prepared.

My stomach is in knots on the way to the office. What do I say to him? How do I handle this? The hypocrisy of it all hits me. I'm writing content for people that hopefully makes their dating and sex lives better, yet I can't get my own together.

I try to keep my head down, avoiding as many people as I can. I don't know if anyone saw Chance and me go to the roof together, but if they did, I don't want to answer questions about it. I hope that everyone I met in the break room had gone home by that point, because if there were rumors about me meeting him in his office, then there would definitely be rumors about the roof. And those would be true.

There's a note on my desk when I get to my office. Chance is out for the morning, and the article that he'd like me to start on next is one about keeping sex interesting after you've been in a relationship for a while. I haven't even sat down yet and I'm already blushing. I have no idea if he chose this topic because of what happened yesterday, but it's certainly on my mind. I already have ideas for the structure of the article, and they all feature fictional Chance and fictional Me.

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I grab some coffee and get to work. Unlike the first date article, this one pours out of me. I cover everything from toys to food to exploring potential kinks. There's so much here that I feel like I've barely scratched the surface by the time noon rolls around.

Frankly, I'd be happy thinking about this article for a very long time. I get to imagine what it would be like to have Chance use toys on me, and the thought of him licking whipped cream off my nipples has me so worked up that I'm squirming in my seat. The possibilities are endless.

An email pops into my inbox, and I catch my breath because it's from Chance. Just a few words.

Can I take you to lunch?

My heart leaps into my throat. I want to. Being out with Chance sounds like a dream come true. Even though the sex was amazing, it's more than just sex. But should I? I'm not sure if I should keep this going. There are so many variables and so many possible things that could go wrong.

But then I think about yesterday and what I wrote about first dates being like lottery tickets. We've already had sex, but this would be our first date. I need to practice what I preach. I need to scratch off the numbers and see if I win.

Absolutely.

He responds right away.

I'll come by in ten minutes.

I spend that ten minutes trying not to imagine all the possibilities I've covered in my article while touching up my make-up and hair. I wore a skirt that I love today, swishy and fun, perfect for a lunch out.

True to his word, Chance appears at my door ten minutes later and we walk out together. I'm going to have to accept that the rumor mill is running. At least Darcy and Emily see us on our way out, as well as a bunch of employees that I haven't even met yet.

"So where are we going?" I ask him when we reach the elevator.

"There's a little Italian place around the corner that I really love, if that's okay with you."

I smile, suddenly relaxing. "Fine by me. I love Italian."

It really is just around the corner. One of those airy little restaurants that throws open their walls in the summer and lets their tables spill out onto the sidewalk. As we enter, the host smiles at Chance and waves him through even though there's a line. "I come here all the time," Chance says to me as he pulls out my chair, "so when I call and ask for a last minute reservation, they're very willing to accommodate."

"I'm sure being an extremely good-looking and rich CEO doesn't hurt," I say, smirking.

He laughs. "No, it doesn't."

We take a few minutes to look at the menu, and I end up ordering Spaghetti con Polpette and he orders Fettucini Alfredo. The waiter takes our order immediately and

our water glasses are never less than half full.

“Is this a date?” I ask. “Are we dating now?”

“This is definitely a date,” he says. “This is not a ‘we had sex and I feel obligated to have lunch with you’ situation. And if you agree, I would very much like to keep dating you.” That smirk reappears. “Dating among other things.”

I can’t keep the grin off my face. “I think I can live with that.”

He smiles too, and for a second we’re just smiling and the world is perfect.

“So,” Chance says, leaning his elbows on the table, “what I know about you I know from reading your blog, but I really don’t know anything else.”

“What do you want to know?”

He shrugs. “Anything. Everything. What’s the story? How did you get here?”

I laugh, even though it’s not particularly funny. “Are you sure? It’s not really a fun story.”

“I’m sure.” The tone of his voice makes me think that he’s talking about more than just hearing my life story.

“My parents,” I say, “are really successful people. That’s important for later in the story. They’re both lawyers.” I clear my throat and take a sip of water. Generally, I try not to tell this story. “But when I went to college, I decided that I didn’t want to be a lawyer, or a doctor, or any not the careers that my parents thought were valuable. I decided that I wanted to study classic literature. My parents were so furious that they said they wouldn’t pay for school, which was fine. At the time I was convinced

that I would a great job using the degree and that paying back the loans wouldn't be a big deal. They thought I would back down and do what they wanted.”

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“Sounds like a good time.” Chance laughs softly.

“You bet. Fast forward to graduation, and my parents make it clear to me that they expect me to be gainfully employed, because I’m a McLean, and McLeans contribute to society. So I got a retail job while I looked for a job that I actually wanted.”

The waiter appears with our food, interrupting me, but Chance waves me on. “Keep going.”

“It didn’t work. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn’t seem to keep a job, even a crappy one. I had a string of bad luck. I got laid off, my position was downsized, and I’ll even admit that I did get fired. And every time it happened, my parents became more frustrated with me. It became unlivable in their house, so nine months ago I moved in with my best friend, Alice. I’ve been sleeping on her couch. Though now that I have a salary that’s way more than I ever expected, I’m hoping to get my own place really soon.”

“I can relate to that,” he says. “I had parents who were...very similar. They had dreams of me becoming a politician, and they did everything they could to push me in that direction. But it was never what I wanted, and they’re absolutely mortified with my current job. Which I have to admit makes me smile a little.”

I shake my head. “I’m sorry. It’s the worst. Because you love them but they just don’t understand why what they want for you is the worst thing that could possibly happen.”

“And when we reject their plan they feel like we’re rejecting them,” he says.

“Exactly.”

He laughs. “Glad we’re on the same page.”

“Are we, though?” I ask, shifting the topic. “You know how complicated this could get. Are you sure? Because now you know that this job is basically the best thing that’s ever happened to me, and if all you want is a little sex, then I’d rather keep the good memories of yesterday and move on.”

Chance clears his throat. “I would love for you to keep yesterday’s memories as good memories. But I don’t want to move on. At all. I said yesterday that it was easier to have a no sex in the workplace policy, but that’s not the only reason. I was never interested in anybody I worked with before. I was never tempted to break that policy until you walked into my office, and I don’t have any regrets. I don’t want to stop; I don’t want to slow down. I want to know as much about you as I can. And,” he lowers his voice, “I want to fuck you in as many creative ways as the two of us can think of.”

I snort into my drink. “Just wait until you read the article I’m working on. You’ll have plenty of ideas.”

“Oh really?” He raises an eyebrow and I see that lust in his eyes, the kind that lets me know that he’s thinking about taking me on this table right now. “I look forward to being very, very inspired.”

His eyes have gone dark, and I recognize that look. It’s the same one he had yesterday on the roof when he was all the way inside me on the verge of coming. Blood rises under my skin, and an unexpected hunger seizes me. And it’s not hunger for the amazing food that’s in front of me.

“By the way,” he says, “We’re going to post the one-night stand article tomorrow. I

know we talked about having a backlog of articles but everyone is really eager to see the response.”

“Great,” I say, trying to ignore the flurry of nerves that just sprang into my stomach.

“It’s going to be amazing. You’ll see.” He glances behind me, and I realize that it’s not the first time he’s done that during the meal. “Are you okay?” I ask. “You keep looking over there.”

Chance clears his throat. “There’s a guy watching us eat. I’m used to it, because it happens a fair amount. This one just seems a little intense.” He smirks at me. “And it’s not usually men.”

I laugh and glance over my shoulder. I don’t see anyone obviously staring, but I don’t have as good a view of that side of the restaurant. “Well,” I say, “I’d take it as a compliment.”

“Sounds like a good idea.” He stops looking and focuses again on me.

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We chat a little bit more about his parents and the stress of having a family who isn't supportive, and we talk about other things. The kind of music we love and hate, our favorite places in the city. But now that Chance has alerted me to it, I can feel that I'm being watched. I look over my shoulder a couple more times and manage to locate the source: a man with large, dark sunglasses in the corner who does seem to be staring with a certain amount of intensity. Even trying to ignore it is hard, because I can feel the gaze like it's a laser on my back.

I'm focusing more and more on it until I can't take it. "Okay," I say. "I know that I said to take it as a compliment, but that guy is making me uncomfortable."

Chance doesn't hesitate, gesturing to our waiter for the check immediately. He stands and holds out a hand. "Let's go. I'll tell the Maître D' to put it on my account."

He guides me out of the restaurant and back onto the street, and it takes me a second to realize that we're holding hands. Chance seems to realize it at the same time I do, but he doesn't pull away. Instead, he weaves our fingers together as we walk back toward the office.

"Is this okay?" I ask. "I mean, are you okay with people knowing?"

"Why wouldn't I be?"

I shrug. "Because some people might be unhappy about you suddenly dating someone at the company?"

He pulls me to a stop just outside the door to our building, and wraps his arms around

me so I have no choice but to look up at him. “I don’t think keeping secrets ever ends well,” he says. “Especially in business. I’m not dating you because I want to make other people happy. I’m dating you because I want to, and that makes me happy. Everyone else can mind their own damn business. Okay?”

Soft, warm butterflies take flight in my stomach. “Okay.”

And then he kisses me and I forget where I am entirely.

Eight

“How you choose to end your date is entirely up to you. For some it’s easy to go home and try to have a different kind of happy ending. For others it takes time, and there’s nothing wrong with taking the time you need, no matter what anyone says to you. It’s just a first date. Keep it light, keep it simple, keep it fun.”

—Tips for a good first date, Heartmakers.com

Chance and I spend more time than we should making out in front of the building. I never thought I’d be one of those people who make out on the street, but now that I’m doing it, I’m wondering why the hell I’ve never done it before because it’s fantastic.

And as soon as the elevator doors close, his hands are on me again. This time the kisses are deeper, more insistent, and his hands are roaming to parts of my body that he probably shouldn’t be touching in public. “Chance,” I say, managing to speak against his lips. “Not being a secret is one thing. Getting caught having sex with you in the elevator is another.”

He chuckles softly, and his hand strokes up my leg and under my skirt, teasing the line of my underwear. “I’m the CEO. I can do what I like. Besides, there’s not nearly enough time for us to have sex.” Slipping his fingers into my panties, he makes

contact with my clit, and then he's pressing one finger into my pussy, and then two. My gasp is silenced by his kiss and that hunger that rose at lunch is back in full force. There may not be enough time for us to have sex in here, but we're going to if he doesn't stop.

His fingers curl, and they brush against my G-spot. My body jerks with the force of the sensation, and I'm soaking his hand because he's making me so fucking wet. I reach out, and I can feel that he's hard through his pants. God, he's so huge. I'm not sure how it's not going to show. I grip him through the material and he growls against my lips, biting softly. It makes me laugh and I'm pulling him closer to me when we stop.

The elevator dings, and the doors start to open, and by the time they do, Chance isn't touching me anymore. He smiles at me, nods, and walks out of the elevator as if we were doing nothing more than having a pleasant conversation.

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Are you kidding? The words are screaming in my head as I exit the elevator, but I can't exactly scream it at him in the hallway. He turns and smirks at me when he reaches his office, and I give him a glare that will melt him, because now he's turned me on and I'm not going to be able to get any work done. I'll be thinking about how things should have ended in the elevator. Damn it.

I sit down at my desk and there's already a message from him on the screen. I can practically see the damnable little smirk on his face as I read it.

You said you didn't want to get caught.

I groan internally. I did say that, but I also didn't mean that I wanted him to turn me on and then not follow through. I click on his message to respond and I can't think of anything to say. Damn it. Why is it that I'm only clever when I'm writing a blog post? Speaking of, I flip to the document I started this morning and quickly add a section about carefully and cautiously trying to fool around in public. Because damn. Those couple of minutes were hot, even if I'm not going to admit that to him.

When I'm done adding that section to the article, I open up Chance's message again.

I don't like being aroused and on edge either.

The next message come back quickly.

There's an easy way to change that.

My pussy clenches at the thought. But I want him to say it first.

Oh? How?

There's a pause for a couple of minutes and I'm left hanging, imagining the different ways he could respond. Does he want us to go back to the roof? Does he want to take the rest of the day off? Get back in the elevator?

Come to my office and find out.

Oh God. A second later a smiley face comes through. I can almost see the sparkle in his eyes that's asking me to come play. I glance at the article, and it's mostly done. It won't take me long to add on an ending, and I can still have it finished by the end of the day.

I take a deep breath and leave my office. It's crazy to me—even though I wrote about my dating life online and managed to make it funny and engaging, I never really took these kinds of risks. I didn't dare to have sex on a roof just because I could or think about having sex in an office when someone's secretary is sitting right outside.

The path from my office to Chance's office is familiar now, and Marcy looks up when I appear. "Mr. Montgomery asked to see me," I say.

She gives me a tight smile and waves me into his office. I don't bother knocking. Chance is waiting just inside the door, so close I'm startled. He pushes the door shut and I'm up against it, pinned between his body and the cool wood of the door.

"I didn't say that I was coming," I whisper. "How did you know? You could have scared the shit out of someone standing right there."

"I thought the odds were in my favor," he says just as softly as he reaches behind me and locks the door with a quiet click. His hand is on my leg again, and then his fingers are back inside me and he's smiling. "I think this is about where we left off,"

he says roughly. “But if I’m not mistaken, Ms. McLean, you’re wetter than I left you.”

“No shit,” I say, a little breathlessly. “You can’t just turn a girl on and then walk away like that.”

“Are you calling me a tease?” He puts on a mockingly horrified face.

“Absolutely.”

He pulls away and I groan at the loss of contact. “Well then,” he pulls me over to his desk, “allow me to prove to you that I’m not a tease. He lifts me onto the desk, and his hands are under my skirt again, pulling my panties down and off, lifting my skirt around my hips.

Chance sinks to his knees in front of me, and my eyes widen. “Are you—”

And then I can’t speak because his mouth is on me and all the words are sucked out of me. I’ve never never had a man voluntarily go down on me. Only as a grudging and quick reciprocation for a blow job, and it was rarely that enjoyable. Chance licks into me like my pussy is his last meal on earth and it’s his favorite thing.

The way his tongue is curling inside my opening, spinning up to circle my clit and back has me gasping. My fingers find his hair and I hold on, pulling him closer to me. Sealing his mouth over me, Chance sucks my clit deep into his mouth, and only the fact that we’re in his office keeps from screaming. His teeth brush across me and I shiver as he moves again, fucking me with his tongue.

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I'm panting now, and I don't know how long I'll be able to hold on because he's so good at this, just like he promised yesterday. Damn him, there's nothing that he's not good at. He sets up a rhythm, licking into me and on me and every circuit he makes drags me closer to that inevitable and delicious fall into pleasure.

Chance pushes a finger into me, curling it in that same way he did in the elevator, and with his mouth on my clit, I'm so damn close. Sweet and unbearable pressure is building in my core, and my thighs are shaking from the effort of holding onto pleasure, of trying to make it last as long as humanly possible. But he sucks my clit between his lips again and it's over.

I bite my lip to keep quiet, but I'm still loud in the quiet of his office. The pleasure breaks over me like a crashing wave, and I dig my fingers deeper into his hair, holding him against me as he licks through my climax. I flood his mouth, and he drinks me in, reveling in it like a man dying of thirst. He doesn't stop, even when I'm spent and gasping, his tongue making me jump with each new contact now that I'm so sensitive.

"Fuck," I finally say into the silence, and he laughs. The vibrations of his voice are almost enough to make me come again. They're definitely enough to make me wet again.

"Am I still a tease?"

"No. Not a tease," I say as he stands. "But I definitely have an idea for a new article."

Chance raises an eyebrow while he casually unbuttons my shirt, fingers teasing and

stroking the skin that he reveals. “If you were thinking about writing articles while my mouth was on you, I didn’t do a good enough job.”

I laugh loudly, and it almost echoes. “Trust me when I say that that was amazing. But there’s definitely an article, aimed at everyone, revolving around oral sex.”

“Oh?” he says, as he undoes the last button and opens my shirt all the way and proceeds to tug on my nipples through the lace of my bra. “Tell me.”

“It will say that everyone should be giving everyone oral sex because it makes their partner happy, not out of obligation or reciprocation. That, just then, was the first time I’ve had a man do that first, or volunteer.”

Chance’s eyebrows shoot into his hairline. “Really?”

“Really,” I say, hopping off the desk, “But I think more guys should be willing to do that. Because it makes us girls more willing to do something naughty.” I watch his eyes darken as I kneel down in front of him, watch the way his breathing speeds up as I open his belt. “Something like this.”

I free his cock, and as big as it is, it’s that much more so when I’m this close. There’s no way I’ll be able to take all of him in my mouth, but I’m going to give in my best shot. No matter what, I know that I’m also very good at this, and I have no doubt that I’ll make him come.

He’s already hard and getting harder underneath my fingers, the tip of him glistening with anticipation. I’ve yet to see Chance speechless, and yet he’s staring at me like he doesn’t know what to say. Like he’s awed by me.

He groans at the first touch of my tongue, closing his eyes and bracing himself against the desk. I take advantage, using my tongue as much as I can. I tease him in

that sensitive spot under the tip, and I lick along his length and back.

I've always enjoyed this. I love the focus it takes to bring pleasure to another person, and with Chance it seems deeper. Larger. I like the feeling of him under my tongue, the duality of hard and soft, the way he jumps when I do something unexpected. I use my tongue at the base of his shaft, teasing his balls and the underside of his cock before working my way back to the tip. Locking eyes with him, I take the head into my mouth and suck. He's so big, that already he's filling my mouth, but I take more of him anyway.

A guttural moan comes from Chance, and it spurs me on. I dive onto his cock as far as I can take it. Circling the rest of him with my hands, I stroke him in sync with my mouth so he feels like I'm taking all of him. His hands land in my hair, so I know I must be doing something right.

Chance's breath is short now, quick gulps of air like he's fighting his own arousal and making it last. I hum with him in my mouth. I know the vibrations will feel good, and I do it again as I swirl my tongue around the head of his cock.

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“Caroline,” he says, and his voice is rough.

I don’t stop. I know he’s close, and he’s going to finish. His hands tighten in my hair, and I take him faster, using my mouth on him like he’s fucking me. I push further, taking as much of him as I can, holding him deep. Sucking back to the tip, he gasps again. “Caroline. I’m going to—”

I feel him try to pull away, to stop me from taking him all the way. I glare up at him, and instead take him deeper, holding him there, stroking him with my hands, and satisfaction rolls through me as he swears, coming. He spills into my mouth, hot and strong, and I swallow as he comes. I want all of him just like he drank all of me.

He looks even more spent than I was, holding the desk for support as I let him go, swallowing the last of him. The look of awe is still on his face. It’s my turn to smirk at him.

The intercom on his phone crackles, and Marcy’s voice is loud and harsh in the silence. “Mr. Montgomery, Emily is here to see you.”

“Shit,” I say, standing up and trying to get the buttons fastened on my shirt.

Chance reaches across the desk. “One minute, Marcy.” He puts himself away and runs a hand through his hair. I do too, after I manage to get my shirt closed. Fuck. Where is my underwear? I glance on the floor but I don’t see it, and it’s not on the desk—

“Emily, come in.”

She enters, and freezes when she sees me. “Oh, hello. This is perfect, actually. Mr. Montgomery, we want to get some pictures of Caroline to run with the new article tomorrow. We wanted to run wardrobe by you? We can shoot in the morning and have them in plenty of time to run.”

My jaw drops. A photo shoot? “Do we have to?” I ask. “I really don’t photograph well.”

“Oh, don’t worry,” Emily says, giving me a smile that’s overly sweet, and I can’t tell if she’s actually happy or she’s picked up on Chance and me and is jealous. “Jeffrey is the best. He’ll make you look good.”

“If you can stomach it, Caroline,” Chance says, “photos really help with things like this. If people see who’s giving the advice, it feels more like it’s coming from a friend than from stranger on the internet. It helps drive up the traffic on the site.”

I swallow. “Okay, but don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

Emily hands Chance a folder and he glances through it before handing it to me. “They all look fine to me, but I think Caroline gets final approval.”

Looking through the photographs, there are five different outfits, all adorable and perfectly styled. If I could look this good all the time, I don’t think I’d have a problem being photographed. “These are beautiful,” I say. “Did you put them together?”

Emily nods. “I did.”

I hand the folder back to her. “I need you to style me every day because you’ve got fantastic taste.”

“Thank you.” Suddenly there’s a slight blush on her cheeks. “When you come in the morning we’ll get you set up. The photo studio is a couple floors down.”

“Perfect.”

As soon as she leaves the room, I turn to Chance. “That’s what I was afraid of in the elevator.”

He grins. “We didn’t get caught.”

“But almost!”

“Almost,” he says, pulling me closer, “is just fine with me.” He kisses me, and it’s hard to remember that I’m supposed to be mad, or frustrated...or something.

When we break apart and I can suddenly think again, it hits me. “Where is my underwear?”

He gives me an innocent look. “I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

“You have them, don’t you?” I ask, but I’m laughing.

“I suppose you’ll just have to come see me at the end of the day to see if I’ve found them in this enormous office.”

I give him a look that tells him I know what he’s doing, but I’m fine with it. “Fine,” I say. “I guess I’ll see you at the end of business.”

“Looking forward to it.”

Nine

“I know it may be cliché, but elevators...let’s just say I know from personal experience that elevators can be an excellent place to spice up your relationship—even if the sex is still amazing. There’s something about the thrill that makes the risk worth it.”

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—How to Spice Up Your Sex Life, Heartmakers.com

The next few days pass in a whirlwind of writing and kissing and secret exchanges. I have my first photoshoot, and even though I've never loved photos of me, Emily was right. Jeffrey is a genius who makes me look amazing. And Emily was sweet to me the whole time at the photoshoot, without a hint of the weird jealousy I thought I had sensed.

In between working on articles, Chance will pop into my office and sweep me off to lunch, or into his office where we've nearly been caught doing naughty things twice more. And once to the floor below ours to a dark and empty conference room where he took me on the table until I was screaming. He claims that no one works close enough to that room to have heard me, but I'm not sure that he's not just saying that to make me feel better.

And on top of that, the first article debuted to rather ridiculous success. With Heart Makers being in the news and advertised everywhere, the post went viral. The comments have been crazy, but mostly positive. It's strange how everything has fallen into place. Part of me thinks that because everything is so perfect, the other shoe has to drop at some point. But for now it's great, and even though it's been barely a week, I feel like I'm living a whole new life.

I do feel a little guilty that I still haven't told Alice about Chance. I don't want to see the disappointment on her face that I did the exact thing that I said I wasn't going to do. And even though Chance says secrets never lead anywhere good, I want this to stay quiet for a little while. I will tell her, but I've never had something like this before, and I want to enjoy it for a little bit before I spill all the gory details to her.

On top of that, now that I'm making money, I'm making plans to move out and I don't know how to tell her that. I'm sure she'll be happy for me, but as cramped as her apartment is with the two of us, and even with the inconvenience it sometimes causes, we have a really good time living together. I don't want to spring moving out on her along with the new boyfriend. It might make her feel like I'm just moving on entirely, which couldn't be further from the truth.

I grab some coffee from the break room, waving to some people hanging around, and head to my office. The fact that I now have a routine is really comforting to me. I've always liked structure, but I hadn't realized how much I needed it until I started coming in here every day. It settles my mind. I sit down at my desk and check the emails that came in overnight. There's one from the PR department that immediately catches my eye.

It's letting me know that someone is spreading a story about me, and linking to Rock Bottom Caroline. They want to know if they should delete the comment, even though the poster has spread it to multiple places. We haven't been secretive about the fact that I'm the same writer. Views for my blog have gone through the fucking roof since the first article, and I've gotten a lot of messages from people praising how funny and insightful it is. This person...doesn't agree.

I click on the link which is the original comment on the one-night-stand piece.

Caroline McLean's bio says she's a talented writer with a unique view on dating in New York City. It turns out she's actually just a FAKE BITCH who mocks anyone who dares to write her on a dating site, or even worse, ask her out. She's not only a dating failure, but cruel. No one deserves to be mocked like the men on her blog, and she should think hard about her next steps. Because actions have consequences.

He includes a link to Rock Bottom Caroline at the bottom of his comment. And even though there are plenty of replies defending me, I get goosebumps while I read it

again. This doesn't sound like a random commenter who doesn't like the fact that I'm encouraging women to take power in their one-night stands—and there have been plenty of those. This comment feels oddly personal, though I can't think of anyone who would write it.

I tell PR to delete the comment, and see that the newest article, the one about spicing up your sex life, has been posted. Chance and I agreed that the ending of the first date article needed a little bit more work before we publish it, so we went with the sexier piece first. If it has even half the response of the first article, I'll be happy.

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I proceed to work, even though the comment still haunts me. There's some people talking about it on twitter, and the same anonymous poster made an identical comment on my blog even though I haven't posted anything there since I started working for Heart Makers. There have been some other nasty comments in response, some trolls coming out of the woodwork in response to one of their own. But none of them creep me out in the way that that one does. I try to ignore it, but it sits in the back of my mind.

It's just after noon when there's a knock at my door, and I look up to find Chance standing there. The smile that comes to my face is instant. "Hi."

He comes over and leans down to kiss me. "Hello."

I stretch in my chair and he comes around, hands landing on my shoulders in a welcome massage. He sees my computer screen, which is half open to the article I'm working on and half showing the discussion of the bad comment on twitter.

He glances at the tweets, quickly picking up on the general tone. "What happened?"

I shake my head and wave it off. "Some troll posted something on the one-night stand article last night. It's fine, just your regular internet bullshit. This one just felt...weird to me. But it's nothing to worry about. It's my own fault—you shouldn't read the comments."

"Okay." He says it in a tone that tells me he'll be monitoring it, but I don't mind. He's been watching the response to the new features pretty closely, so he would have found out anyway. "The reason I came by was to see if, since it's Friday and I'm your

boss, if you'd like to play hooky with me for the rest of the day."

I smile, even though he's behind me and can't see it. "And what would we do while we were playing hooky?"

"Well," he says, leaning down and wrapping his arms around me from behind, "I thought that we'd go back to my place and maybe try a few of those ways to spice up your sex life."

"I don't really think our sex life needs spicing up just yet." But the way he's kissing my neck could damn well convince me.

"I don't either, but those are still some fun things to try."

I turn to look at him. "And no one will care if the CEO disappears in the middle of the work day?"

"It's Friday and everything that I needed to do is done. If there's something dire, that's what email is for."

"Well, in that case," I give an exaggerated sigh, "I suppose playing hooky wouldn't be terrible."

"I was hoping you'd say that."

Chance's apartment is huge and gorgeous. I shouldn't have expected anything less, but it still makes my jaw drop when I walk in the door. The style and vibe is very similar to his office: wide open space with lots of glass and clean lines. We're on the Upper West Side now, so the building is older but the apartment's interior is fully updated and modern. I love it.

“This is beautiful.”

“Thank you,” he says, and it’s not just the words. He means it. “It’s one of my pet projects, architecture and design. I put a lot of work into this place and into the offices downtown. I don’t really get a lot of time to work on things like that, but when I do I enjoy myself.”

I look around at what I can see of the apartment with a new appreciation. “Well you seem to be really good at it.” A thought hits me. “So did you design my office?”

He’s wearing a shy smile. “Yeah.”

My jaw drops. “I don’t think I ever told but I love that office. The first time you showed it to me I kept thinking that I couldn’t have designed a better space for myself if I had been the one to do it.”

Chance’s smile turns bold and wicked as he pulls me further into the apartment. “Oh really?”

“Definitely.”

I glance at the rooms we’re passing, and Chance notices. “I’ll give you a tour later.”

“After what?”

“After you thank me for how much you love your office,” he says with a playful light in his eyes.

“I knew I shouldn’t have played hooky with you,” I say, laughing. “So impatient.”

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“Yes, I am,” he says, suddenly serious. He pulls me into a bedroom that’s almost the size of his office, with a bed that seems to go on for miles. Dark walls and navy accents are scattered through the room, and that’s all I manage to see before Chance draws my gaze back to him. “I have you in my apartment and I’m about to have you in my bed for the first time, of course I’m impatient.” He weaves his hand into my hair, tilting my head back so he can give me a searing kiss that leaves me weak in the knees.

I lose track of time in the kiss, and when he pulls back, I have to take a second before I open my eyes. “Wow.”

His hands are still in my hair, and he keeps me looking at him. “Undress me.”

Raising an eyebrow, I resist the urge to smile. “Is that an order?”

“Yes, it is,” he says, smirking. “And feel free to take as long as you like, because once it’s your turn, I’m going to take my time.”

I run my hands up his chest and push the suit jacket off his shoulders onto the floor. “In that case, I’d better get started.”

He laughs softly, but the laughing dies when I start to unbutton his shirt and press my lips to his skin beneath. I enjoy the time I take with this, because finding stolen moments in the office doesn’t allow me to appreciate his body in this way—and there’s a hell of a lot to appreciate.

I trace my lips and tongue along the lines of his shoulders, and then his chest and

stomach—I swear I could spend hours worshipping his abs if I didn't know there were even better things waiting below. Chance is already hardening through his pants, and I stroke him through the fabric, my eyes never leaving his as I undo his belt and shove his pants to the ground. He steps out of them and his shoes, and it's nothing but him in his boxer briefs, which are doing next to nothing to hide his enormous erection.

Stroking him through the fabric again, I notice the way Chance tenses, hands tightening into fists as he struggles with the pleasure I'm giving him. I hook my fingers into the waistband and tug them free, revealing his cock, which stands straight outward proudly. I take him in my hand, and tease him, feeling him harden further under my fingers. "What do you want?" I ask. "Do you want my mouth on your cock?"

He gives me a wolf's grin. "I always want that. But right now, I want you naked and in my bed." He steps behind me, peeling the blazer off of my shoulders, and dropping a kiss to one to them. Pulling me to him, I can feel his erection pressed against my back as he lifts my shirt and smooths his hands over my skin, my breasts, my nipples. Then my bra is gone too, and he has perfect access to play.

Chance toys with me, my nipples hardening to the point of pain under his attention. I'm overwhelmed by his presence, wrapped around me, pressed against me, warm and insistent. He reaches down and unbuttons my slacks, his hand making a quick move into my panties, not doing anything, but gently resting just shy of my clit. Now I'm hanging on the anticipation of when he'll touch me there. When he'll move. I step out of my pants and kick aside my shoes, but his hand stays glued to my skin. I'm in nothing but panties now, and I'm soaking wet. There's nothing between us but a piece of fabric, and as soon as that little barrier is gone, there will be nothing but pleasure.

But he doesn't finish undressing me. He scoops me up, carrying me to the bed and

laying me down. And for a second he stands above me, looking down at me with awe and hunger like I'm a feast laid out just for him. Crawling up my body, his mouth lands at my collarbone first. And then I'm lost in the feeling of his lips.

Chance is carving a path down my body with his mouth, and his tongue is leaving a trail of fire. I'm arching into him because I don't know why something so simple feels so good, but it does and I want more. His tongue swirls around one nipple, sucking it deep into his mouth, and I swear I feel it drive straight down to my pussy. I'm getting wetter, more desperate, with every touch of his lips, and by the time he moves on from my breasts, I'm writhing underneath him.

He licks down my stomach, stopping short of the waistband of my panties. I can't even breathe because I want him to touch so badly. "Please," I say, my voice more breath than voice, and I spread my legs further apart.

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“What do you want?” he asks, reflecting my question back at me. “Do you want my tongue in your pussy?”

“Yes.”

Gently, he touches my clit through the fabric of my panties, and I shudder. And then his mouth is there, stroking me, the friction of his tongue and the added friction of the cloth driving me mad. Finally, after what feels like forever, he hooks his fingers in my waistband and removes my underwear, tossing them away. But he doesn't skip a beat. He pushes my legs even further apart, holding them there while his mouth plunders my pussy. His tongue is everywhere and I'm already coming. I can't help it, the shuddering pleasure rumbling through me like an earthquake, and I'm moaning for him to please not stop. Please keep going.

He obliges me, and I'm gripping the sheets, trying to keep still as he licks into me again and again, bringing me back to the edge with confidence and certainty. The pleasure builds faster this time, already there and waiting, and I cry out as I climax, my whole body arching off the bed with it. Chance seals his mouth over me as I come, sucking me like he would die if he didn't and the orgasm just keeps going. I'm blind with it, spent, heaving breaths.

Chance climbs up my body again, straddling my hips and leaning over me. I can taste myself in his kiss which is strange and intimate and erotic, and I like it. He smiles against my lips. “Should we keep track of the number of times I make you come today?”

“Are you going for some kind of record?”

“Pride, mostly.”

“Ooh,” I say, reaching between us and stroking my fingers against his cock. “I see. You want to be able to say ‘I made my girlfriend come this many times in one day.’”

“I also imagine it might be a good bargaining tool if we ever fight. I can tell you ‘remember the day I made you come ten times?’”

“Ten? That’s a little ambitious.”

He nips my lips, teasing me into a kiss. “I just made you come twice, and I have you for the rest of the day. You don’t think I can make the other eight?”

I have no doubt that he can, but I’m going to make him prove it anyway. “I’m really going to enjoy you trying either way,” I say with a laugh.

Chance rolls off me and retrieves a condom from this bedside drawer. “Let’s start now.” He rolls the condom on, and he’s back between my legs, guiding his cock to my entrance. Even though I know he’ll fit, and that I’ll love it, I’m not sure I’ll get over the split-second panic when I see how big he is. But right now, after the work his talented mouth did, I’m so wet that he eases in without any trouble at all. I’m already relaxed and I’m not afraid of his size anymore. Every time it’s been easier, and he slips into the hilt without having to stop.

The way he fills me still makes me short of breath in the best way. Already, my body is primed for orgasm, and I groan, because Chance is determined, and it’s entirely possible that he’s going to make me come more than ten times. When this day is over, I’m going to be nothing but a puddle of pleasure on his floor.

He sits back, settled between my legs, and he looks at me. He idly draws a finger down my chest, tracing down between my breasts and circling around my belly

button to rest against my clit. “I love that you can take all of me,” he says.

“I love that too,” I say, back arching as he pulls back and thrusts in. That little added push from his piercing when he’s this deep inside me is everything. He continues with little thrusts, circling his hips and making me wetter, letting him slide in and out easier. Those fingers tease my clit and I’m squirming again and I want him to make me come again. I want him to move. I want him to fuck me.

I catch his hand as it moves and pull him down to me again. “Fuck me,” I say to him. “Now.”

“I’ve been teasing you for a reason,” he says. “I’ve been holding back.”

“What do you mean?” He’s still moving his hips in ways that are sparking of pleasure in my body and my brain is blurry with it.

“I mean that when you’re as...well-endowed as I am, you have to be careful. But you can take all of me, and now that you’re in my bed, I want to fuck you. Really fuck you. I’m going to have you screaming my name so loudly that the entire building will hear it.”

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Oh God. My mind flashes to the sex that we've had, intense and hot and mind-blowingly good. I would never have thought that he was holding back at all, and if he really was, then I might die from the pleasure of it.

I kiss him, and our tongues dance together. He growls against my lips, and pulls back, only to drive into me. And I know instantly that he wasn't lying about holding back. He fucks me with a determined and focused force that blows everything else out of my mind, and a swift, brutal orgasm follows.

Wrapping my legs around his waist, I pull him closer, embracing him through the pleasure. I'm clinging to him like I'm drowning because I am, and I surrender to it. It feels like hours of pleasure, I can't keep track of time or space, I can barely keep my eyes open. Chance grinds his hips into me, and now every stroke brushes across my clit, taking me higher, and I've lost any ability to keep quiet or hold back.

I'm telling him yes, yes, yes, more please and the next time I come it's like lightning, and the time after that like thunder. And I do scream his name, loudly, wildly, shaking with pleasure and unsure if I'll survive anymore.

Chance plunges deep into me and holds, crying out as he climaxes. Now that we're both still I feel that he's shaking too, and he lets himself rest over me. We're breathing together, coming down from the storm and trying to catch our breath. He leaves me for a moment to clean himself up, and then he's back, pulling me against him and wrapping us in a soft blanket that I have no idea where it came from.

There's a kiss on my neck, just below my ear. "Five down, five to go," he says softly.

“Mmm,” I say. “That sounds nice. But you’re going to have to feed me first.”

His laugh echoes through the room. “I’ll make sure of it.”

And then I drift off to sleep, mind hazy, body sated.

Ten

“He walked me home, and I said good night on my street a little way from my apartment. (I never tell dates where I live.) That’s when the problem started. I told him I didn’t want him to come up, that I was tired, but that I had a nice time. He tried to convince me that all he wanted was a drink. But when I still said no, he got pissed. He said that because he had paid for dinner, I owed him something, and that I was—at the very least—going to give him a blowjob before he left. That’s when I punched him in the face.”

—Rock Bottom Caroline

I slept for a while and woke up to Chance teasing me with his fingers, which led to two more of my ten promised orgasms and had me climbing on top of him for a third before telling him that I was so hungry that I was going to leave him if we didn’t get some food.

After a delicious dinner of delivery pizza, Chance proved that he knows how to keep things spicy, fucking me senseless while using a vibrator. I went well over ten orgasms. Now, as I wake up from my second nap of the day, it’s dark outside, even though the clock tells me it’s nine o’clock.

Chance is asleep beside me, and I take the opportunity to sneak out of bed. I retrieve my phone from my bag and head to the bathroom so I can check my messages and freshen up. I should also tell Alice that I’m probably not coming home tonight so that

she doesn't worry—although she's going to want to know who I'm staying with.

I slip on my underwear and bra before I go to the bathroom because I feel weird walking around Chance's apartment entirely naked. I spend some time splashing water on my face before I decide to grow a pair and just tell Alice the truth. But when I click on my phone, the stream of notifications on my home screen is longer than I've seen it in forever. The top ones are from Alice.

Caroline, where are you?

Have you seen this?

What on earth is going on?

I don't know where you are but you need to look at the Heart Makers site RIGHT NOW.

What the hell? I open up my web browser and navigate to the site, and I almost drop my phone. The site is covered in pictures of me. Only they're not really pictures of me. My face—from the Heart Makers site pictures and my blog and some I don't even remember where—photoshopped onto porn. In the photos 'I'm' being fucked by multiple men at once. Some are pictures of just my face, with cartoon dicks drawn on it like they're coming all over me. Some have my eyes scratched out with the words 'Cunt,' and 'Bitch' scrawled over my mouth.

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I feel like my entire body has gone numb, and dread sinks through me. Who could have done this? The answer is already in my mind. It is probably the anonymous poster from this morning, the one who called me a fake bitch. I should have listened to my instincts when I felt something was oddly personal about it. Fuck, what am I going to do?

I open my email, and it's filled with panicked emails from Heart Makers PR people, and friends asking what the hell is going on. But there's one that stands out: with the subject line 'Hey Bitch.' I have to hold my breath as I open it.

Dear Caroline,

By now you've seen what I can do. This is what you get for being a selfish cunt. Delete Rock Bottom Caroline, and quit that ridiculous job you have thinking you can tell people how to date, or these pictures will go national. Do it by Monday, or you'll be viral—I guarantee it.

I barely make it to the toilet in time before I'm dry heaving into it. Oh God. What do I do? This is the other shoe dropping. I knew things couldn't be perfect, but this? Chance is going to have to fire me. He'll never be able to keep me on staff after I managed to turn his matchmaking company into a porn site. And he doesn't even know yet. I have to tell him.

I go back into the bedroom, and to my horror he's awake, and looking at his phone. He's pulled on sweatpants and is sitting on the bed, frowning at the screen.

"Chance," I say.

“I know.” He doesn’t sound mad, but he doesn’t sound...anything. “Do you know who did this?”

I shake my head. “My best guess is the guy who commented this morning. I don’t know who he is.”

His phone vibrates in his hand. “It’s the chairman of my board.” He swipes the phone call on. “Hi, John. Yes, I’ve seen it.” He listens for a minute and I can hear the frantic voices on the other end of the line.

“Chance,” I say, “Can you call them back? I want to talk to you—”

He holds up a hand, telling me to wait, and he stands and goes to the window, still listening to the phone. My stomach drops to my feet. He is mad. Every line in his body is taut, and he won’t even look at me. They’re going to tell him to fire me, that he should never have hired me in the first place, and that it’s a PR disaster. All of those things are true, and I don’t think I have the strength to hear them in the same place as I just had the most amazing night of my life.

Chance’s back is still turned, and I jump into my clothes, slipping out of the room before he can notice. I don’t want to see him angry, and I don’t want to see the regret and disappointment on his face when he realizes that I just wrecked everything.

I stop for a second in the hall outside his apartment. I just wrecked everything. I can’t stop the tears that start to fall as the elevators doors close.

When I wake up I’m surrounded by tissues. I think I’ve used a whole box now. Alice was out of her mind with worry when I came home a crying mess, and sat with me while I cried and told her everything. She was at once shocked and unsurprised when I told her about me and Chance, and she was so great as I pretty much ruined the shirt she was wearing by crying on it. Even Noodle was sweet, laying his head in my lap

and licking my hand.

Now my head hurts, and I feel swollen from all the crying that I did. But all I want to do is cry more. I had a perfect week, and then it all fell to pieces. Never trust something that looks too good to be true. It always is too good to be true. Always.

My phone was buzzing when I woke, with Chance's name on the screen. I can't talk to him yet. Even if it's inevitable, I need to hang onto the dream of what I had a little while longer before it's final. It's late in the morning—I slept for longer than I have in a while. I think Alice is still asleep since it's Saturday and she stayed up late with me.

I pull my laptop off the coffee table and put it on my lap. I guess I should get to work on taking down the blog. As bad as the pictures are, I don't want naked photos of me to be the top news story in the country. If this guy is good enough to do everything he's done so far, I'd be stupid to call his bluff.

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Checking the Heart Makers site quickly, I see that they've taken down all the photos. Thankfully. I flip to Rock Bottom Caroline, glancing through the posts and reading some of my favorites. The thought of leaving the blog behind doesn't make me as sad as I thought it would, but deleting it because I'm being blackmailed leaves a bad taste in my mouth.

I get to the more recent posts, and I go completely still. I'd practically blocked this guy from my memory, the fucking asshole that thought he could force me into having sex because he bought me dinner—the whole reason I quit dating for months. He wouldn't have known that I had a blog talking about my dates anonymously. But if Heart Makers pushed my blog posts out to the dating sites, he would have seen my picture, and then looked at the blog, and...oh God. It has to be him.

I didn't know that he was a hacker or that he had the ability to do something like this. And even though I didn't give him my address, he knows what street I live on. If he's a hacker, it won't be hard for him to figure out my real address, and if I don't delete the blog...

There's a knock at the door and I jump. Noodle barks in response. It can't be him, right? That's too coincidental, and it's not Monday yet. Even so, I grab the baseball bat Alice keeps behind the door and peak through the hole. My body relaxes immediately because it's not that guy—who's name I barely remember—it's Chance. How the hell? I lean against the door. I filled out paperwork for the company. Of course he has my address.

I unlock the chain and let the door swing open. "What are you doing here?"

He glances at the bat in my hand. “You disappeared last night and you weren’t answering your phone. I was worried...”

We stand there looking at each other for second before he asks, “Is it all right if I come in or am I going to get beaten with the bat.”

I put the bat down again, “Yeah, sorry. I’m just...on edge.”

“Why? What’s going on?”

I shake my head, and he catches me by the shoulders. “You know more about what happened than you’re telling me, Caroline.”

I didn’t really think that I had any more tears to shed, but they spring to my eyes, and I can’t stop crying again. I tell him everything. About the asshole and punching him in the face and my very small revenge on him by writing about him on the blog, and Chance nods because he’d read that post too. I tell him about the email and the ultimatum and then I’m telling him I’m sorry because it’s all my fault.

We’re on the couch now, and Chance has me cradled in his arms. “Hold up a second,” he says. “None of this is your fault.”

“Of course it is,” I say. “I didn’t have to write about him. I didn’t have to have a blog at all. I could have taken it down when I got hired—”

Chance’s voice is stern. “That asshole got what was coming to him. You had every right to tell people what happened, and it’s important that you do. The fact that this man is so insecure and so angry that someone wouldn’t have sex with him, that he’d stoop to this level has absolutely nothing to do with you.”

I lean my head on his shoulder. “Alice spent all last night telling me that, but it still

feels that way. And I still have to do what he says or else everyone in the world is going to have those pictures.”

Chance kisses me softly. “Of course you don’t.”

“What?”

He smiles gently. “I own a web company. I have a few hacker friends of my own, and I already know who this guy is, where he lives, and as we speak my lawyer is speaking to a judge about pressing charges. I expect that he’ll be arrested in a couple of hours.” He shifts so he can get his phone out of his pocket. “Is this the guy that you went on a date with?”

The picture pops up and I recoil. “Yeah, that’s him.”

“Turns out he was also the guy staring at us that day at the restaurant. I had a feeling, and I asked my friends to look for some security footage, and it was a match.”

“So that could have tipped him off too. This is so messed up.”

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“It is, and entirely not your fault. But I want to know why you left last night?”

I look down at the floor, “I thought you would be angry, and I thought that the board was going to tell you to fire me. I just...I couldn’t face it.”

“I’m not angry at you, obviously,” he says, smiling. “And even if the board did tell me to fire you, I wouldn’t. It’s my company. I can do what I like. And all I wanted to do last night was to kill the piece of shit who thought he could make you feel less than what you are.”

“You’d do that for me?” I ask, still sniffing.

“I’d do anything for the people I love.”

We both freeze, the admission shocking and unexpected. Then warmth fills me and I’m smiling and happy crying. “Me too.”

He kisses me and I can’t stop laughing even though he’s kissing me and Noodle is trying to sit between us, tail wagging and wanting to know why we’re so happy.

“Please come home with me,” he says. “I missed you last night and I wasn’t nearly finished—”

“Before you finish that sentence,” I say, putting a finger to his lips. “Alice, you can come out now.”

She emerges from her bedroom with a sheepish look on her face. “Sorry, I heard all

the noise. It's nice to meet you," she waves. "Now get the hell out of here and go have fun. I don't have any doubts that I'm going to see you again, Chance." She gives him a wink even as he's pulling me up off the couch and toward the door.

"It's nice to meet you too," he says with a giant grin on his face. "Now if you'll excuse us, we're going to have a lot of sex."

Alice snorts, "Better at your place than on my couch."

"Love you!" I shout as the door closes behind us. "Now," I say, turning to Chance, "you can finish your sentence."

Epilogue

One Month Later

"You're never really going to know, but when the right time comes to say it, you'll feel it in your bones. Don't ignore that feeling—or you're going to regret it later."

—When to Say 'I Love You,' Heartmakers.com

I open the door and Chance comes through with the last of my boxes, setting them down inside the door with a small grunt of effort. Now my new apartment is a maze of boxes and sunlight, and it's going to take forever to get everything unpacked and in place. "I still think," Chance says, wiping sweat from his forehead with his shirt and revealing those amazing abs that I'm thinking about licking now, "that it would be easier if you just moved in with me."

"And my reason for saying no is still the same," I say. "I've never lived on my own before. I want the chance to have my own space, even if you are going to be here most nights."

He grins. “Fair enough. By the way, I got a heads up from the lawyers just now. Strict house arrest and a ban on accessing the internet for the duration of that house arrest, which is five years. He’s going to be pretty bored.”

I raise my hand and he high fives me. “Thank you, you’re my hero.” Chance has been so great through this whole ordeal, making sure that I had to see the hacker, who’s name is David, as few times as possible while still making sure that he got the absolutely harshest punishment for the crime.

“Does that make you a damsel in distress?” he asks, pulling me closer so that I’m pressed against his body and can feel his growing erection.

“It makes me a damsel who’s horny,” I say, rocking my hips into him. “Even though there’s no furniture to fuck on.”

Chance sweeps me off my feet and then we’re on the floor together. I wore a skirt today, because it’s hot as fuck and I needed something light. He has my skirt up around my hips and his pants undone in record time. “I think I’m not the only one who’s horny,” I say, laughing.

“You’re right about that,” Chance says. I hear the wrapper of a condom, and his erection is resting against my ass. He guides it into me with certainty, and I gasp, because this position allows him a different kind of deep thrust, and I know it’s going to make me come apart.

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His chest is against my back and his hand is under my hips, teasing my clit and rocking me back into him. “As a hero,” he says, his words punctuated by his thrusts, “it’s my job to make sure my damsel is very satisfied.”

“How will you know when I’m satisfied?”

“I’m not sure,” he says against my ear, “But there are a lot of walls and floors in this place, and I plan on using them all to fuck you.”

“Oh God.” The way he talks turns me on even more, and the red fire of arousal curls through me like a flame.

Chance stops talking then, holding me still while he fucks deeper, harder, and I’m filled with him until I’m almost bursting. “Yes. Yes. Yes.” It’s a chant that’s echoing around the apartment. I know this is going to be fast. We’ve been flirting all day, and I’m too aroused to last long.

His Prince Albert is pressing against me in exactly the right way, and I come, hard and fast. I feel it spilling down my legs as he continues to fuck me, grunting with the effort. The pleasure is red-hot, consuming me and remaking me, and I’m still in the middle of the orgasm when he comes, sending me over again into a second level of pleasure. It always takes us a few minutes to come back to ourselves, but we do.

He cleans up and joins me on the floor, pulling me into his lap so we can rest against the wall. “See?” he says. “We don’t need furniture.”

“I guess we don’t.”

Chance weaves his fingers in my hair softly, pulling my head back for a kiss. “I don’t need anything, as long as I’m with you.”

“You’re right,” I say. “It’s enough.”

The moment hangs between us, the unspoken I love yous passing between us. And then there’s a light in Chance’s eyes and he grins at me. “You have a lovely kitchen island in this apartment.”

“And?”

He shrugs. “It’s not furniture, but it’s close enough.”

“You make a good point,” I say, laughing.

He lifts me off the floor, and tosses me over his shoulder and I squeal while he carries me to the kitchen. “I can’t think of a better place to taste you than in the kitchen,” he says, laying me across the island. “And that’s just the start. I’ve got so many plans.”

I can’t speak, because his mouth is already on me, and the pleasure is carrying me away.

THE END

Want to find out what happens six months later? Sign up here for a bonus story!

And come say hi on Facebook! <https://www.facebook.com/PennyWylder>

Excerpt of BIG MAN

Want another hot and dirty read? Check out the first chapter of Penny’s other book,

BIG MAN, available on Amazon now!

Chapter One

Sasha Bluebell

The letter arrives at the worst possible time.

I'm currently between clients, juggling freelance jobs from my last company, where I was their head paralegal consultant until I had enough of their bullshit pseudo-assignments and quit to pursue my own thing. But it's been slow-going in the freelance world, and it's taken me a while to build up a private client base. Originally I took on a couple of gigs for my old firm on a case-by-case basis. Now they've flooded me with so many that it feels like I'm full-time again, minus the healthcare benefits.

Not that I can complain about the money. That, at least, has been more than decent.

Still, my schedule is a wreck. So much a wreck, that when the letter first arrives, I don't even notice it in my inbox for a week straight. When I do, I take one glance at the cover letter and find myself wincing, wanting to shove it straight back under the stack of unread incoming mail that awaits me on my desk. The longer I can prolong this, the better. Because I don't want to confront any of the emotions that rise up when I read that first line.

In the Matter of the Estate of Maryanne Bluebell...

No, thank you. I spent a year after Mama died being heartbroken. I don't need to relive that again, thank you very much. Besides, it took her estate that whole year and an extra 8 months to even get this letter to me. How important could it be?

But eventually, after a week of ignoring that half-opened letter on my desk while I sorted through my current freelance projects, I ran out of excuses. I couldn't prolong the inevitable anymore. I had to face the music.

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I unfolded the full letter over a hefty pour of Cabernet one Friday night, with my favorite cheesy TV reality show on in the background, and a long-overdue weekend off ahead of me. I figured that might mitigate the blow, knowing that for once I had some free time to myself coming up. I'd worked overtime for the last month and a half straight to carve myself this little slice of freedom.

And this is how I decided to reward myself? I really am a masochist in disguise.

By the time I reach the third line of the letter, I've already downed my whole glass of Cab. I need to refill to finish reading. Because this one, I didn't see coming.

I didn't expect the middle block of text, written by my mother herself, years before her death.

I didn't expect the plea to resonate so deeply.

I didn't expect to feel it in my bones when I read her words on the page, ink long-dried, words she asked her lawyer to add to this case file long before the breast cancer stole her from me.

Sasha,

You are my only legacy. I don't say this because I'm ashamed of it—you are the best thing that ever happened to me. My dearest dream in life was to raise you right, and I am so proud of the woman you have become.

I know how much you love your life in the city, and I'm happy that you've found

your place. But I hope you recognize the history and importance of our home back here, too. Your great-great grandfather built this house with his own hands. For generations, your family has tilled the soil, lived off what this land produced. I hope that when I am gone, you will respect the legacy we've both been entrusted with and do what is right for this place.

If you're reading this letter, it all belongs to you now, my love. I trust you with it, as I trust you with everything in my life.

Your loving mother

She left it unsigned. That, somehow, makes it sting even worse.

I just keep rereading the words this place and our home. She means the family farm back in Nowheresville. That place and I haven't been on speaking terms for fifteen years. Not since I applied to the farthest college away that would take me, packed up my bags and got the fuck out of dodge.

I've spent the last fifteen years right here in New York City. I can't imagine going back. Hell, I barely even visited, not until two years ago, right at the end, when things were so bad Mama couldn't make it on a plane out here. She visited me in the city as often as she liked because I couldn't stand to visit her.

I visited that one time. The last time. I held her hand as she closed her eyes and breathed her last. I barely stayed long enough to sign the estate over to my more-than-capable legal team and then I high-tailed it out of dodge.

I never thought I'd need to go back. I never planned to set foot in that tiny town ever again.

But here are her words, staring up at me in black-and-white, asking the impossible. Asking me to return.

I can't, is my immediate gut reaction.

You have to, is what my frontal cortex yells at my monkey brain.

Because how can I ignore this letter? How can I disregard the last wishes of my mother when I'm her only child, her only heir, the only one she ever had to lay all her hopes and dreams on?

I fold the letter back up, for tonight. For tonight, I concentrate on my shitty reality TV show and my bottle of Cabernet, which I'm definitely going to polish off by myself, propriety be damned.

For tonight, I let myself enjoy the first day off I'd managed to carve in my schedule since as long as I can remember. Life here in the city is hectic, but it's what I love. There's always something going on, always a new project to focus on, always something to occupy my attention. Much better than country life. Much better than that stifling hometown I escaped the first minute I could.

For tonight, I enjoy the life I built myself, on my own sweat and blood and tears and exhaustion.

Then the next morning, hung-over and bleary-eyed from lack of sleep, I unfold the letter one more time and dial the number at the bottom.

"Paul?" I ask the moment the estate handler picks up. "I need to book a flight back home..."

And that's how the real trouble began.