



Little Puppet

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Category: Dark Erotica

Description: Cain: Everything ceases when he sees her at the gas station off Old Highway 28. Even the voices in his head. Armed with his training, wits, and a few weapons, Cain sets off on the hunt of a lifetime. One that'll only end in bloodshed.

Grace: Nothing could've prepared Grace for the Christmas she was about to have. On her way to her parents house for Christmas Eve dinner, she realizes she's being followed. There's no escaping the man who has set her in his sights, either.

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In a town in the heart of Florida, a house sits abandoned and weathered by time and circumstance.

Its doors hang off their hinges, and boards hang over its windows with rusty nails holding them in place.

Grimrose house is on the side of Panther Trail, a dead straight that cuts through the middle of Florida's heartland.

Legend has it, however, that for one week a year, and one week a year only, lights illuminate Grimrose's cracks and crevices, and screams echo off the heated asphalt of Panther Trail.

Everyone knows that it coincides with all the missing women who vanish that same week every December in Dunhaven. The authorities are perplexed, and the townsfolk are too superstitious to look directly at the glaring issue .

For a small community like Dunhaven, whoever creates the scariest week each December is likely a resident.

Someone's neighbor.

Someone's friend.

It could be any one of them.

So, for that one week a year, Dunhaven locks their doors, limits their outside

exposure, and lets the Christmas Snatcher do his thing.

You don't become his victim if you don't cross his path.

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Her kind of beauty makes me fucking feral.

Blonde hair wisps on the wind in sinuous, twining quivers. The fact that she's outside right now, on night one of my hunt, means she's not from around here.

All the better.

She's got her head on a swivel in an unfamiliar town. She doesn't seem to feel my eyes on her from the shadows.

My breath expels, sounding trapped behind my mask as I keep my eyes on her.

Her front plate says New York State, and I wonder what's brought the beautiful damsel to Dunhaven.

When she replaces the pump nozzle and waits for her receipt, she shivers against the curl of a cold December wind. Although December in Florida is milder than in any other state, the salty, muggy air chills to the bone .

She growls when the machine tells her it's out of paper. She turns, hits the fob to lock her car, and heads inside to see the clerk. Little does she know that the most unsafe thing is her, not the belongings inside her vehicle.

The bell tolls as she enters, and I take a moment to crank my engine.

Once she's on her way, the hunt begins.

I toggle my gearshift back and forth, toying with my sense of calm as I eagerly await her reappearance.

Last year's girl hailed from the north, too. The kinds of girls who travel this far south alone always surprise me.

It's either a skewed sense of safety or it's ignorance. Either one, I find refreshing in prey. However, last year's girl didn't last long. I hope that doesn't happen again this year.

Part of it was my impatience with seeing her bleed and hearing her scream, but the other part was an oversight on my end. Had I checked her vehicle for clues about her, I'd have known she had diabetes and needed insulin.

I'll be more careful this year.

I'll take care of this one.

At least until the end.

Her Honda Civic is making great time down the dead straight of County Road 402, and I'm keeping my distance for now. She doesn't know she's being followed. How could she?

She can't know that no one in this area will be out this late, not on a day like today, not during the week leading up to Christmas.

Because it's when I'm on the prowl.

They don't know who I am but know I live amongst them. For ten years, I've been preying on the town of Dunhaven during Christmas—the one week I hate the most.

It's how I turned my life around and made myself a functional member of their society by limiting my bloodlust.

Whittling it down to its root.

When I was a teenager, I learned so much about myself with the help of a therapist. She called it introspection.

She helped me see that my hate of Christmas was due to what happened to my parents the week before it when I was only ten.

Double homicide will leave a crack in one's psyche, especially in the ever-growing mind of a child. Hidden away in the hall closet, I witnessed it all: the blood, the thrill, the atrocity.

The murder.

And while it left me a bit fucked up, it also molded me. It turned me into the man I was meant to be .

For years, I thought they'd catch me. After all, they know where I am for this perfect week every December.

But they've never come.

I've often pondered it, but as of late, I find I don't give a fuck. They stay out of my way. I don't kill them. There's a truce between me and the town of Dunhaven.

I kill those that wander through or don't heed curfew, and the townsfolk remain safe for another year.

I think all is well that ends well.

When her Civic turns onto Panther Trail, I feel a giddy tightening in my stomach. She's driving into my trap, and it's time to play.

I give it a few moments as she rounds the first and only curve in the road before I shift and redline my truck, pressing the gas to the floor as I near the rear of her car.

I can almost smell her fear, nearly taste it on the wind that rips through my open windows.

Her frantic eyes must be in the rearview, but I can't see them.

I nudge closer, hovering near the back of her car.

She tries to get away, and I get even closer, gripping the wheel with a smirk growing on my lips behind my mask.

Now and again, the woman on the other end of my anger is a local, so the mask comes in handy.

But for her, my lucky little puppet tonight, the mask will only add another layer of fear to the cake I'm cooking for her. The one laced with venom and rage .

When she hits the spikes in the road, she's going nearly ninety miles per hour, as I'm going eighty-five to keep up.

She swerves, trying her damndest to keep on the road, even when her tires are completely blown out.

Oh, this one has fire.

I like it when they have a bit of nerve.

Even after her best efforts, she loses control and rolls into the ditch before Grimrose House, wheels spinning and engine smoking as she hangs upside down in her seatbelt.

I've run many women off the road, but it has never looked that spectacular, and my heart has never beat so rapidly.

I pass her, slowing and downshifting as I turn my truck around. The diesel engine hums, the turbo whistling as I pick up speed and crawl back towards her wreck site.

Once I pass her again, I throw the truck into reverse and look over my shoulder out the back window, reversing as I whistle a Christmas tune. Thrill is humming through my skin like a wild animal who knows it's about to be released.

When I get out and don gloves, her screams cascade through the air on the salty breeze. Closing my eyes, I let them serenade me.

It's six days until Christmas, and my present has come early this year.

I can't deny how excited I am .

Working the winch off the back of my tow truck, I hook it to her rear tow hooks, listening to her beg for help. Beg for me to free her.

My whistling never ceases. It's what's going to keep me present. It's going to keep me on task.

Don't want another fuck up like two years ago, when I got so excited about hunting that I accidentally killed the girl in the first two hours.

No. This one deserves my time.

I ignore her pleas and sniveling cries and get back into the truck, pressing the gas and towing her slowly from the ditch, still upside down.

The sound of the roof grating over asphalt drowns her screams as I turn into the drive to the right of me that leads up to Grimrose House, her car's metal pleading with me to stop, to flip it back on its blown tires for relief. But I don't.

I continue to tow the car through the haphazardly cut trails I've towed many vehicles on, deep in the woods behind the house. Florida's mix of palms, palmettos, and oaks blend for a beautiful Everglade effect the deeper I tug her car behind me.

My whistling has moved on to the First Noel, and I let it soothe my soul. Even if it was the song blasting through the speakers as a neighbor slit my mother's throat.

Trauma has a way of comforting us. And mine? Mine wraps a thick blanket over me and protects me whenever needed, even if its fibers are prickly .

I pull her car to a stop next to a hollowed-out shell of a Toyota Camry I've burnt to nothing but a frame.

Ashley Wilson, I think that was her name. The car was a Godawful color of yellow that no one should ever drive around in. If you ask me, I did the world a service getting her off the road.

Donning my gloves again, I remove the car from the cables, using the electric winch to draw them back.

Her sobs continue, reminding me she's still alive. Even though I might have to tend to some of her injuries before I play, I'm thrilled to have found a girl so quickly.

After all, it's only midnight on day one of my hunt.

Usually, it takes longer than this to drum up some fun.

Christmas came early this year.

Tossing my gloves into the truck, I turn off the engine.

My boots sound on the cold ground as I approach the driver-side window and drop onto a knee.

Leaning over, I come face to face with my lovely new toy.

"Please, don't hurt me," she begs, her soft voice full of rasp and promise— a promise to be my good little girl if I'll only set her free.

It's something I can work with.

Yes, she'll do just fine.

"Let's get you out of there," I say, my deep voice sounding muffled behind my mask .

Pulling my blade out, I work it through her seatbelt that's keeping her dangling upside down.

"There we are, puppet," I coo, hefting her out of the window.

I slowly stand her on her feet, holding onto her to keep her steady.

"Are you hurt anywhere?" I ask her.

She seems to assess inwardly, moving this joint or that before she shakes her head. “N—No, I don’t think so.”

“Good. That means you’ll be able to run.” Glee leaks into my voice as I step back from her.

“Wait, W—What?”

She’s perfect. Her breasts are large and spill out of her V-cut T-shirt. Her stomach is far from flat, showing a healthy appetite. All I can think about are my teeth sinking into its lush skin. Her curves are winding, unlike the road outside of Grimrose House. She’s short, far smaller than my six-foot frame.

“If you’re unharmed,” I start, reminding myself why I’m here, “you’ll be able to run.”

She looks at the tow truck and then back at her upturned car, likely putting pieces together in her adrenaline-riddled brain.

“You ran me off the road,” she accuses, and I grin, even though she can’t see it.

“Did I?” I toy with her.

“Why would you do this? Just let me go, please. I won’t tell anyone. ”

I lick my lips, stepping closer. As I loom over her, her vanilla, candied scent wafts up my nose and thickens my cock with blood. “Puppet, I told you to fucking run. Don’t make me repeat myself.”

Her swallow is audible as she sidesteps me and dashes off to my right, headed right toward the road.

Good. One with a sense of direction.

I fucking love it when they're smart.

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My breaths are white puffs of mist before me as I try to ignore the deep ache in my bones and the burn in my lungs. It's as if he's breathing down the back of my neck, like he's right behind me, even though I hadn't heard him running after me.

It's some sick game, I realize.

I've fallen into some fucking trap. I hadn't just gotten a flat; all of my tires blew, which is highly unlikely. Unless something was placed in my path to do exactly that.

The road has to be near, but I don't know what to do once I get there. The store I stopped at for gas was at least fifteen miles from here, and the roads leading to this house were empty.

I'd searched for food the entire way, only finding businesses and streets empty. It was like Dunhaven was a ghost town.

My mom told me to stick to the main highways, but when there was a seven-car pile-up on I-75, the highway patrol led us off an exit near Belleview, which led me here.

All I wanted to do was go home for Christmas. Well, home as I know it, anyhow.

My mom is my home, and she moved here three years ago, leaving me behind in New York to make my own way. Which I have, but not well enough to come down every year. Funds are tight.

I finally saved enough to come this year. Now, look.

“I can still smell you, puppet. I’m getting close!” the man’s deep voice shouts through the woods.

He’s definitely behind me. Judging by the heavy footfalls echoing off the trees, he’s close.

My body burns, my lungs ache, and my brain is telling me to give up. But my heart is beating rapidly, reminding me I’m still alive.

I can survive this.

Where there’s a will, there’s a way, right?

“Puppet!” he calls tauntingly, and I whimper as tears dry on my cheeks as fast as I cry them.

Finally, I push out of the overgrowth and into the house’s backyard.

It’s decayed, and one look tells me it’s unoccupied. There’s no one inside me to help.

I brush past the house, running full-out for the road. I can’t look back. I don’t know where he is, but I can’t look back.

I’m too afraid.

When I’m shoved from the side, I topple over, rolling into the latticed wood of the rotting porch of the house as I cry out. Stabbing pain shoots through my ribs as I try to sit up against the agony.

“Please,” I beg, but he only steps closer and closer.

He crosses his arms over his chest, looking down at me. It's like he's disappointed.

"Maybe it's your short legs that make you slow," he says as if studying me. He crouches, lifting my chin with two fingers. "Did you even try?"

My breathing hurts, and my lungs sting from the cold air as I keep silent, tears ambling down my cheeks to the cold, causing a bitter chill to spread.

Damning fingers still hold my chin.

"Answer me," he grumbles, and my brain can't fathom why I should.

Survival is the only thing that makes me open my mouth again.

"Something feels broken," I tell him, shifting as I feel something move in my belly that likely shouldn't be there.

He sighs, looking down as I lean against the porch, my hands finding a stick shoved into my stomach a few inches. Warm blood trickles out of the wound, and I cry out as panic seizes me .

"Don't remove it." His voice sounds annoyed. Like I've clumsily ruined his game.

"It hurts."

"Mm, I bet it does. You should've run faster, puppet, and I wouldn't have caught you."

He helps me to my feet and lifts me into his arms.

I try my hardest to see behind the mask. I need something to tell the police when they

eventually find me.

Someone has to know by now that I'm missing. My mom had me checking in every hour on the hour of my drive, and I was about to call her when I saw headlights getting far too close to my rear end.

She knows something's wrong, and she's had to have called the police by now. She tracks my phone. She knows my location. And even if that malfunctions, my phone will detect a crash and alert her, as she's my emergency contact.

Pain takes hold of my thoughts as I'm thrown down on a bed without a care for the stick jutting out from my gut, and I grab for it, trying to hold it still.

"You've made quite the mess of yourself, puppet," he tsks, shaking his head as he rips my shirt open to get a better look at my wound.

His scent is nearly overwhelming, spiced, yet laced with a sickly sweet tang that has me licking my lips.

His mask looks like the one Jason Vorhees wore, a classic hockey mask, except it is worn and has blood staining it. The longer he looks over me, lingering with his overwhelming scent, the more confused my brain grows.

I know it was him who ran me off the road. Why else would he have then come back and towed me into the woods? However, he could be working with someone else.

His veined, thick hands look at the jagged entry wound where blood oozes each time he moves the stick.

"I need a hospital," I breathe, and I hate how small and helpless I sound.

“You only need me,” he growls back, not looking up at me.

His dark hair is wet with sweat. His leather jacket is worn and has the last name Mordova embroidered on its lapel. It looks like a bomber jacket worn by a pilot in some distant war.

“And who are you?” I ask, knowing he’s not going to answer but trying anyhow.

“Your master, of course.”

His answer skitters through my cortex. “What?”

He looks up at me, his ice-blue eyes stabbing into mine as they hold my gaze steady and stern. “Every puppet needs a master.”

What the fuck?

This was the stupidest decision I’ve ever made. To come home alone. Now, I’m captured by a fucking psychopath who thinks I’m his toy, and a stick is going to be the end of me.

All on the week of Christmas, too .

But it wouldn’t be my life if it wasn’t a shit show.

“This will burn,” he tells me, and I tug back to my reality that’s growing blurry around the edges the more blood I lose.

“What will?”

Before answering, he leans over the bed, and a prick stings my neck as he injects me

with something.

His cologne hovers dangerously close as I slip back onto the bed, feeling like I'm sinking into each fiber, becoming a part of the woven fabric as its hostage forever.

"Don't worry, puppet. When you come back to me, you'll be whole again," he says, but it sounds like he's talking through water.

I open my mouth to reply, but the world goes fuzzy, and I close my eyes and lean into the feeling of heavy, unburdened sleep.

Nausea rolls in my stomach, and my mouth is dry. My lids are heavy, almost to the point that I can't lift them.

"Come on, puppet. Fight it."

His voice alerts me that all that happened before darkness swept in was real. I gasp, battling the heaviness to open my eyes and find him in the candlelit room.

"Help," I rasp as pain shoots through my body .

Now, it's not only my stomach that aches but my shoulders and arms.

Rolling your car into a ditch seems to leave a nasty hangover behind.

"I did help. You'll see."

His words don't make sense, and nothing has made any sense in the last few hours.

"I don't feel good," I say, trying to sit up.

It's not as if any one thing doesn't feel good; it's a general feeling of being unwell, and I want to go back to sleep.

There's a sour taste at the back of my throat, and my stomach flips with unease.

"But I made you better," he says, curiosity lacing his tone. "There's no reason you should feel bad."

I scoff, still trying to sit up.

"Be careful, you'll tangle your strings."

My strings?

"I don't have strings."

I shake my head, trying to clear some of the fog, but it doesn't help.

"What are you talking about?" I manage, sitting up in the bed against the pain in my stomach.

My hand finds the bandage over where the stick previously was reeling from my flesh. It's far less painful and has been cleaned.

Looking down, however, I find myself naked. He's removed my clothes when it wasn't necessary to tend my wound .

While I was blissfully floating in the haze of whatever drug he'd injected, he was doing God only knows what to my lifeless body.

The sick feeling in the back of my throat stretches, threatening to make me hurl.

“You do now,” he says matter-of-factly.

Confusion muddles my thoughts as I follow the tiniest of strings glistening in the air. It seems connected to me, and my eyes follow it downward to my arm.

Delicately placed under my flesh are pierced hoops. Connected to the hoops are hooks with strings.

Strings that bind me to a board on a conveyor in the ceiling that’s rigged so I can move on it.

Panic ceases my chest.

“What in the hell?” I mutter, looking over the rest of me. My shoulders and back all have new piercings and hooks that connect more of my flesh to the ceiling.

Footsteps come closer, and I look up at the masked man with tears brimming in my eyes.

“Welcome home, my beautiful puppet. We’re going to have some fun, you and I,” he says, gravel raking through his tone.

Shivers make gooseflesh rise, and the hoops in my skin burn.

“What have you done?” I ask him, feeling the warmth from my tears track over my cheeks.

“I’ve freed you, my darling.”

“Freed me from what?” I whimper .

“From them, from the world. Here, with me, you’ll be happy and cared for—as long as you behave.”

“And if I don’t?” I swallow.

He sits on the edge of the bed. “If you don’t, you’ll cease to exist.”

He says it so calmly that it sets my teeth on edge.

His hand lifts and brushes a lock of my hair back over my ear, his blue eyes searching my face for something.

“If you’re my good little puppet, you’ll be the happiest girl in the world.”

Fear wobbles in my stomach.

I’ll never be free of him. Unless someone finds me.

Hope is the only thing that’s going to keep me alive, hope that my mom finds me and saves me.

I only have to stay alive long enough for her to find me alive and not dead in a freshly dug hole in the back of this psycho’s yard.

“How do I be a good puppet?” I ask him, trying to get a good read on him.

Sure, I’ve only taken a few of my pre-requisite psychology classes so far, but I’m hoping they are enough to help me survive this fucker.

“You do whatever your master tells you, darling.”

His voice is deep and commanding, and my nipples bead under its power.

To survive this man, I'm going to have to lean into that, I realize. Lean into the psychotic way the brain will adapt to survive.

Even if it changes my makeup in the end .

“Are you going to be my good little puppet?” he asks, his blue eyes hopeful behind his mask.

I nod, swallowing down fear and nausea. “I am.”

He purses his lips as if that was the wrong answer. “They all say that in the beginning.”

He stands and leaves the room, slamming the door behind him, and I lean back on the plush pillows, letting my tears fall now that he's gone.

Pleasing him to live might be the death of me.

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She looks beautiful with my hoops in her. It took hours for the surgery. I had to debride her wound before I could close it, and while she was already under, I took the opportunity of silence to pierce her in peace. It's a much simpler task than when they're awake.

Something about her is different than the others. Where they'd immediately begun ripping at the hoops, she asked how she was to be my perfect puppet.

Dr. Lynn says this fantasy of mine stems from a life that was out of my control, but I think I'm just searching for a bit of pleasure in a world full of hate and misery.

I'm not some loose cannon who can't control his urges. I do it all fucking year.

No. I'm just searching for a bit of happiness, not unlike anyone else.

The fire in her eyes told me she might be the one .

But I thought that about Valerie, too. She's buried somewhere deep in the woods, her hoops the only thing likely not rotten now. At least now, her outward appearance will match her wicked insides.

She nearly broke me more. And in turn, it pushed me closer to the edge of whatever madness I teeter all year long. She made me think she loved me, and for that, she's six feet under now.

The railways I created in the ceiling run the house's expanse, even upstairs. My new toy is on strings, hooked to one solid board. The board is connected to a system that

allows her to move freely. It also allows me to unhook her if and when I see fit.

Crawling on the ground, I search her upturned car for anything I can find. Her purse is on the passenger side, and I'm thankful it hadn't fallen out.

This morning, before she woke, I cleaned the roadway free of any debris from her crash and picked up the spikes, not that anyone will travel this stretch of road for the next week.

Hauling the bag toward me, I sit up and lean against the crumpled Civic.

Opening her wallet, I search for her ID, which I find haphazardly thrown inside, not in a specific pocket or holder. This gives the impression that she's an unorganized mess or doesn't take a certain amount of pride in her identity.

Maybe she will be malleable after all.

Grace Wilcott, the license reads .

Grace.

The name rattles through my head, and I can't help the immediate reaction.

I rub my cock through my jeans, trying to appease it a little with some attention.

I dump the rest of her bag out.

What women keep in their bags tells the story of them. It took me three girls to figure that out.

She has an inhaler—that I pocket—a hair brush, a few random pieces of makeup,

pain medication, and a book.

Not much.

Other women had their purses full to the brim with shit that they likely had forgotten was inside.

Not my Grace, however.

She's a simple creature.

I like that.

I stuff the purse back together and spy her phone.

It's in a black case covered with snakes slithering over the plastic. It's edgy, and I feel something thrumming in my stomach at the sight of it.

It's locked and needs her fingerprint to open.

But the missed calls on the notifications screen tell me her mom is looking for her already and could become a problem.

I power it off to turn off any location, something I should've done last night.

But I'd been too distracted by her.

I was too caught up in fixing her once I got a good look at her .

I've had to start over before when a victim got themselves hurt in the chase back to the house, and I could have last night, too. Something about Grace, however, had me

delving into my daytime professional knowledge to piece her back together without a second thought.

I need her whole if I'm going to play with her.

That thought reminds me I haven't fed her, and I groan as I shove the phone in her purse and make my way back to the house.

She's right where I left her on the bed when I bring her a sandwich and water.

Her hazel eyes track my every move, trying to see through my mask every chance she gets.

It wouldn't hurt for her to see my face, not when she'll end up dead just like the others, but something is unsettling about her. So, I listen to my gut and keep the mask firmly over my face.

"I need you to eat," I tell her, and she eyes me warily.

"You're trying to keep me alive?" she asks, snagging the sandwich from me and taking a tentative bite.

Her pupils dilate as she realizes how hungry she is and takes another. My veins burn with an ache I've never felt before, and my hands flex as I watch her swallow the food down.

"How will you be my perfect puppet if you're dead?" I ask her, batting the ball back into her court.

She licks her lips, taking another big bite of the peanut butter and jelly, chewing longer than is necessary as she keeps her mouth busy enough to think her words over

before she says them.

“If I’m your good girl, I get to go home?” she asks.

The way she said the good girl has my skin on fire, and I can’t ignore the painful erection in my jeans much longer if I’m going to keep my sanity in hand.

The idea of letting her go is abhorrent, but I need her to have a goal to work towards, or this won’t work.

I’ve learned that the hard way, too.

I nod. “Yes.”

Her breathing speeds as she finishes her sandwich. I hand her the glass of water, and she gulps it down.

“Will you tell me the rules?”

I narrow my gaze at her. She’s too perfect, and I know she’s trying to play me to survive. Half of me gets angry at the thought, but I need to remain level-headed, so I brush the anger under the proverbial mat and sit taller on the edge of the bed.

“You will do as you’re told and never sass back. You have free rein of the house, as your strings are connected to a series of tracks that’ll allow you to go wherever you want to, but you’ll stay out of the last door on the right upstairs. You won’t harm yourself or remove your hoops from your flesh, and you will never try to run from me.”

She takes it all in, weighing out what she thinks she can handle. The cogs in her eyes turn as she thinks deeply.

“You’ve done this before.” It’s not a question. It’s an observation .

I nod. “I have.”

“How many survived?” she asks, her voice growing meek.

“None.”

She tugs her knees into her chest as sadness veils the strength I’d watched growing in her over the last few minutes.

I usually like sadness and fear, but I find it appalling on her.

I push the stupidity away, however, and keep myself even keel.

“Now, are you ready for your first task?” I ask her, excitement winding through me as I clean up her plate and cup and head for the kitchen.

I leave the door open, hoping she will follow.

And she does.

When I turn back, I watch her as she tries to get used to her strings. She’ll never be able to put her arms down at her sides, and for the first few days, her hoops will be too fresh to let her arms dangle against them, so I watch as she winces in pain as she tries.

“What is my first task?” she asks me, finally resting her arms awkwardly. She looks like the perfect puppet already as her bare body teases me delicately from across the room.

“Dance for me.”

Her look of confusion only lasted a moment before she began to twirl.

I dropped into the chair before the fire, taking a glass of whiskey with me as I settled in to watch her twirl and spin.

She grinds her hips this way and that, swaying on them when she gets a bit dizzy—aftereffects of the drug I’d used to put her under.

Her full, curvy body sashays and teases as she moves closer, her arms moving on her strings the best they can.

Her nipples bead as she dances closer to me and the chair.

When she turns around and swivels her hips, her generous ass jiggles and teases.

I’ve never had a puppet come around and try to survive me so quickly, and I can’t say I mind it.

It’s sexy, even.

I know she will eventually turn and start to fight me. She’ll eventually break a rule or try to run, and it won’t end well, but I might as well soak it up while she’s cordial.

While it lasts.

“Face me, puppet,” I order, voice filled with gravel and heat.

She listens immediately, stepping even closer to the monster in the mask that has captured her, bringing her beautiful curves to a stop between my splayed legs.

My toes wiggle in my boots, anticipating what Grace will do next, and I lick my lips.

Though she can't see my face, I wish she was looking at me and not this damned mask.

"Give me your foot," I command, and she lifts a brow.

Without another word, she balances on one foot, lifting the other in the air with great effort, pointing her toe as she presents her foot to me.

Sitting forward, I let her foot rest on my chest as I lift my whiskey over her knee.

With my free hand, I lift her big toe toward my open mouth, using it to tip the mask up a bit as I pour the liquid fire down her leg and let it dribble onto my tongue. Her taste imbues with the malted drink, flavoring it slightly before it cascades off her toe and down my throat. Some of it dribbles over her thigh and hits the floor, but I don't pay any attention to that. When the glass is empty, I close my lips around her toe, reveling in the soft squeak that comes from her lips as I suck all the whiskey off her flesh.

When I'm done, my hand splays over the inside of her alcohol-covered thigh, sopping it up before I take my hand back to my mouth, tongue darting out to lap at my palm.

Her breathing is erratic, and I can almost taste the fear permeating her flesh, but she doesn't let it show enough for me to care .

No. She pushed past her fear and allowed me to see how good she could be for me.

She rose above.

And for that, she'll be rewarded.

Her master will show her what good little puppets get for behaving.

“Go to bed and wait for me,” I tell her dismissively, and it’s all I can do to make my tone sound bored and even.

Inside of me is a ravenous monster thrilled with the prey in his grasp, but I’m also a skilled killer who knows that if you spook prey, its terror will ruin its meat.

So I must tread carefully.

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I make my way to the room, all the hoops in my skin begging not to have my arm's weight pulling against them. After crawling up four stairs on its edge to get inside, I crawl over the plush bed.

The room is beautifully decorated. The outside of the house looks menacing and dilapidated, but the inside is pristinely curated and cared for.

The bed is raised so far off the ground that you need to take the steps beside it to enter, and the mattress is thick and fluffy. The blankets are soft and inviting, the complete opposite of my captor.

“Now, while I gave you an easy first task, the second one was something most wouldn't have allowed me to do. You surprise me, Grace,” he says as he enters the room, and his use of my name has fear lacing through me again, adrenaline following and easing some of the pain from my strings .

I swallow.

How does he know my name?

My brain doesn't have time to work it out, however.

“Lie back.”

His words are stern and loud, and my stomach flips as I try my best. I can't lay all the way flat because I don't want to get my strings tangled up or have any of them pull on the sensitive piercings. Also, the wound in my belly still feels like it'll rip open at

any moment.

What I did in the living room, I did to survive, and it seems I've displeased him even though I did the best that I could.

Even as his words seem praiseful, the look in his icy eyes behind his mask is conflicted, scary, even.

"You're going to be rewarded," he announces, opening a drawer on the bedside table and grabbing something from it.

He holds a massive candy cane in his hand when he climbs onto the bed and sits on his hanches between my legs. My breathing speeds as I try to close my legs, but I'd have to lift them over him, and I know he wouldn't allow it. I shift up on the pillows, and he shakes his head.

"Don't start misbehaving now, or this will go worse than you can imagine."

"Please, don't," I whimper, anxiety thrumming in every tissue in my body.

He cocks his head to the side. "You don't want your reward?"

He shakes the otherwise clear candy cane in his hand, with its glistening red stripes gleaming in the candlelight as he does so.

I swallow.

I have a choice.

I fight him off, rip off these strings, and maybe get outside bare and alone. Or, I go along with this and give my mom time to find me.

“I—I want my reward,” I stammer.

He nods once. “That’s what I thought. Now, be a good puppet and come closer.”

I wiggle down the bed towards him.

“Lift your knees and spread your thighs for your master,” he orders, and I listen, tears trickling down my cheeks as I expose myself fully to him and his torture.

“Not everything in this house has to hurt, puppet. This life is what you make it,” he taunts as he finds my entrance with the silicone candy cane, fucking it inside me slowly at first.

I can keep myself grounded for the first few strokes, ignoring my bodily response to infiltration. That’s until he bends, lifts his mask again to expose his perfect lips, and sucks my clit.

“Fuck!” I cry, bucking upward, pleading with a roll of my hips for more.

“See, darling. See how good it can be here? How wonderful being my good little puppet can be?”

I’m breathless, and every sinew of my body is flexing and stretching as I try to ride his mouth, where he flicks his tongue over my clit as the candy cane moves in and out of me in measured, even thrusts.

“Please,” I beg, and now I know I’m genuinely dangling over the dark side. I’m not begging for him to stop now. I’m begging for more, for him to make me come. For him to take the ache in my soul away.

“Beg your master for your orgasm!” he commands, still moving the candy cane, but

his tongue has stopped its work over my clit.

I look down, seeing only the mask he has at an angle over the top of his head. His face is free and hovering over my pussy, threatening to take me where I want to go if only I behaved.

“Please, master. Please make me come.”

“And how do you want me to make you come, little puppet?”

“Suck my clit, please, master. Suck it until I come all over your candy cane.”

My words spill out, sounding mad and frantic, but he growls and sucks my clit into his mouth, moving the candy cane faster, harder, deeper, my cries echoing through the room and mixing with the sounds of the crackling fire in the fireplace at the end of the bed.

“So close, master,” I plead, begging with my tone for him not to stop, and I realize how deranged this is.

This man ran me off the road, chased me through the fucking woods, tied me to his ceiling, and now I’m writhing over his mouth like a schoolgirl about to have her first orgasm .

But I can’t care.

It feels too good.

I feel too free.

It makes no sense when I’m his bound prisoner to feel like that, so I stuff the thought

away to deal with later.

“Master!” I shout, melting to bits as my orgasm slams into me, his lips only sucking my clit harder, making it seem to go on far longer than I’ve ever experienced.

The pain in my belly only adds to the overwhelming rapture.

I’m trying to catch my breath when he stops moving the candy cane. My breathing hitches as he sits back onto his haunches between my open legs, tugs the candy cane out of my center, and shoves it into his mouth to clean it.

He’s forgotten all about his mask, and I search his beautiful face for the malice it would’ve taken to have run me off the road and done everything he’s done.

But I can’t find it.

Who the fuck is this man?

I wake on my back, and my body aches from how I slept. After the mind-blowing way my kidnapper made me come, he tucked me in and told me to sleep.

I didn’t need him to command me because as soon as he’d closed the doors, I’d closed my heavy eyes and drifted off .

I listen for him for a moment before I get the blankets off me and move to the edge of the bed. I find that panties and a strapless bralette have been put on me at some point, and I wonder how the hell I’d slept through him dressing me.

But the fact that he’s given me any clothing when I’m to be his puppet perplexes me.

This entire scenario perplexes me.

As he said, I can leave through the now-open bedroom door and enter the living room.

Brown leather furniture fills the room, a roaring fire in the hearth, and a blue and tan rug beneath the furniture on the cherry wood floors.

He's nowhere in sight, however.

When standing, my strings are too tight to do much of anything. I look like a puppet in a children's show, awkwardly angled and dangling for someone else's pleasure.

My stomach grumbles, reminding me how hungry I am, but I know I can't do much for myself.

Growling in annoyance, I inspect my surroundings before I walk up the staircase from the living area. It has a matching blue paisley rug running up the middle of it, keeping the chill of winter off my feet.

I was surprised by how the cold in Florida felt when I crossed into the state only days ago.

When I get upstairs, I look around at the surrounding doors. There's one that's closed, and I vaguely recall him telling me there's one I'm not allowed to go in. That's likely the one since I can't even reach the door handle with all my strings keeping me upright.

To my left, two more doors have been left wide open.

I don't know what time it is because all the windows have been boarded up to give the home an abandoned feel, but it feels late, as if my internal clock is still working somewhat.

I find my kidnapper sprawled out on his back, face bare, snoring without a care in the world.

He knows I can't get free to harm him, or at least, he seems to think so.

A tight beard on his face is dark and matches his hair, which wasps off his head in delicate waves.

His chilling eyes are hidden behind his closed lids, but my eyes wander down further.

He's shirtless, clad in only gray sweatpants that ride his v-cut perfectly. His cock is hard beneath them as if whatever he's dreaming about behind his closed eyes has a thrill racing its length.

Without the mask, he's beautiful. Something out of a film or from a magazine cover, so I wonder how he came to be who he is. Why he's kidnapping and torturing women, killing them, even?

I remember him saying that none have survived him.

But the way he looks right now, innocent and handsome, with an air of mystique, I can't reconcile the fact that he's a killer with the man I'm looking at.

"Look your fill yet, puppet?" His voice is absent of sleep, and I wonder if he was ever asleep to begin with .

My stomach jumps, and my chest seizes as I step back away from the bed.

"I was just hungry," I answer, heading for the door.

"Mm, I could see that. Well, if you're hungry, you'll need to convince your master to

get up and feed you.”

I turn back, looking over his sinful face as he grins.

It gives his beauty a twist, the smile. Turns it into something sinister and malicious.

There he is.

There’s the man capable of killing.

“Don’t make me repeat myself. I’m not a man with any amount of patience.”

His bed is the same height as mine, likely for the same reason. When I’m on my bed, I’m close enough to the ceiling that my strings have leeway. It relieves me from being strung up like the puppet he’s made me.

I slowly climb the steps to his bed, and he places his hands behind his head, awaiting what I’ll do to him.

I’m hungry, but half of me hates what I’m doing right now, even so.

Survival makes people do crazy things.

“Come, puppet. I won’t bite. Hard,” he taunts.

I climb over his body, straddling the same rock-hard cock he still has displayed beneath his sweats, and grind over it.

“And what is it that I’m to pay you for feeding me?”

“Master,” he grinds out, anger seething the edges of his beautiful eyes .

“What would you like me to do, master?” I ask again, voice shaking.

He grips my hips, holding me tightly as he slips from beneath me, coming in front of me on the bed on his knees.

“Sit.”

I drop onto my butt, sitting awkwardly with one leg dangling to the first step over the edge and one drawn up in an L shape.

On his knees, his waist is at my face.

“Take out your master’s cock,” he orders, and his voice is dripping with something sinful, but it’s nothing I’m afraid of.

Instead, it seems to sate some gnawing hunger in my stomach.

I listen, tugging down his sweats to his knees to free his massive erection.

My eyes travel over it before lifting to look at his. His hands are on the ceiling, holding onto the wooden plaque my strings anchor into on the tracks above. “Suck, darling,” he rasps out.

A shaky breath expels out of me before I lean forward with my mouth open, licking the drop of salty pre-cum off the head of him.

He hisses, and it lights something in my belly.

A candle with a primal flame I didn’t know existed within me before flickers to life.

“Be a good puppet and suck my cock, and then I’ll feed you until your heart is

content. ”

Forgotten is the hunger I had, replaced with a far more bone-chilling one.

Because what I'm hungry for now is him.

The man who ran me off the road and strung me up like a plaything.

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I hold onto the wood where my puppet dangles, twisting it back and forth, and the strings on her hooks pull with each movement.

She's afraid of the raw lust in her veins, I can tell. I have to admit I was surprised to see her up here. No other woman has left the confines of the bedroom.

I felt her presence like a fucking heatwave as I awoke, and I watched her study me like a problem she was trying to riddle out. The way her eyes raked over me and her teeth sunk into her bottom lip told me she was hungry for more than food.

“If you want me to feed you, little puppet, you must behave. I won't tell you again. Suck my cock down like a good little darling.”

She licks her lips and leans forward, taking me into her hot mouth and sliding me down her slick throat .

She feels so good, and my eyes nearly cross as she bobs on my dick, swirling her hand behind her mouth.

Her piercings line the back of her arms from right above her elbows over her shoulders and upper back.

It took me three women to get it right, three times of trial and error. With its swivel technology and never-ending patterns where my girls can go, the track took five women to perfect. The bed height had to be optimal for them to sleep without me having to disconnect them, and that took four women to get right.

It seems to me now that all the work I've done over the years might've been for this moment.

For her.

My perfect little fuck doll.

"That's a good girl, darling. Take me deeper," I coax, letting one hand leave the plank of wood she dangles from, sliding it through her silky blonde hair.

When I fist it, she moans, and it vibrates across my dick sinfully.

She picks up her pace, fucking me with her mouth as I lose myself and thrust my hips in time.

"God, where the fuck did you come from?" I growl as she adds her other hand, creating a tightness I can't fight against much longer.

I'm eager to give her something to eat. Something to swallow.

The idea of part of me inside her makes me moan, fisting her hair tighter as I try to hang on to reality.

Quickly, things change .

Her teeth skim my dick, and pain sears my flesh.

I tug out of her mouth and backhand her across the face. "No fucking teeth."

As soon as it's happened, regret wavers in me. It's not something I'm used to, regret. I sit back a bit, my cock still throbbing, as I let go of her hair and lift her chin so she's

looking at me.

Beautiful tears rush down her face and spit dribbles over her chin.

“I hate reprimanding you, puppet, but you have to do things properly to be rewarded.”

I’m waiting for her response. I’m used to an irrational, wild woman who fights me tooth and fucking nail, so I know I’ve just ruined this amazing moment where I was closer to heaven than I’ve ever been.

“I’m sorry, master. I’ll do better,” she says in a soft voice.

Something inside me purrs at her reply.

Fucking purrs.

I want to curl up in her beauty and worship at her altar all night. But that’s not right.

She should worship me !

“See that you do,” I reply, turning my tone to something cold and unreadable, even with the war of heat wafting through my body towards her.

I pull back up to my knees, my cock still hard as steel for her as I present it to her.

She slides me right back into her mouth, and the frenzy once again takes me over .

It doesn’t matter what just happened. It doesn’t matter how angry or conflicted I was.

All that matters is her and how she feels locked around my cock, sucking like her life

depends on it.

I'm once again thrusting with her, moving with her, this time more lost than I was only moments ago.

"Grace," I all but whimper when I feel the head of my cock tingle, warning me I'm going to explode at any moment.

She hums on my dick, speeding as if she knows what's coming.

"Don't waste a drop of your master's cum, or you won't eat, puppet," I manage, grabbing onto her head on both sides, riding out the orgasm as my cock pulses ropes of cum down her beautiful throat.

When I finally come back around, she's still lapping at my cock, cleaning every last drop from it.

"Still hungry?" I ask her, my tone softer than I've ever let anyone hear before.

She nods, licking her lips.

There's something in them I can't quite get a read on, but I don't care enough to prod and find out what it is.

I pull up my sweats and get off the bed, extending a hand to help her down the steps. "Come then, darling girl. Let your master feed you."

I fry up bacon, scramble some eggs for her, and toast her a bagel while I do. After plating the food, I sit at the table and motion for her to do the same, forgetting that she's connected to the ceiling too tightly in this area.

“Should I move to the bedroom?” she asks, her hazel eyes looking innocent and eager to please.

It feeds something in me that I didn’t know was starving before.

I shake my head, motioning for her to sit on the table, giving her enough room to let her arms go lax.

I sit between her thighs, forking up food and feeding her. She takes each bite willingly, the first few gaining me a moan of pleasure as she closes her eyes.

“Why did you take me?” she asks before I can put the bagel back into her mouth for her next bite.

“Why wouldn’t I?” I tug my brows together in genuine confusion. I sigh, setting down the bagel. “Every year, I take a girl. She’s mine for the week before Christmas until she meets her eventual end. It helps me get through the holiday.”

I don’t know why I’ve told her; I’ve never told anyone. It won’t matter, however; even the ones who were malleable in the beginning got themselves killed.

“You don’t like Christmas?” she asks me, motioning for a bite of eggs, and I oblige.

“No. I don’t.”

She nods, leaving it alone, likely because of my curt tone.

I feed her the rest of the eggs, and she’s quiet. My eyes can’t stop looking over the red mark where my hand slapped her earlier, itching to rub over it and feel the welt I left behind.

“You thought I was beautiful?” she asks me, and I halt the fork before her lips.

She leans forward and takes the food off it at my pause.

“Anyone who doesn’t think you’re beautiful is fucking blind,” I tell her.

She shifts on the table, arms trying to move downward, but they meet the string’s resistance. Almost as if she is going to cover her stomach that curls in soft rolls as she sits on the table.

I drop the fork and splay my fingers over it, my hand sinking into the soft, pliable flesh as she leans back.

“I couldn’t keep my eyes off you when I saw you at the pump.”

Her eyes light with recognition. “At the gas station?”

I nod. What’s the harm in her knowing?

Maybe this will be something new I add to my routine, getting to know them and telling them my motivations.

It almost makes me feel as if we’re growing closer.

Even though that’s an idiotic thought.

“Why are you in Florida?” I ask her, turning the tables on her as I remove my hand from her stomach and offer her a bite of bagel.

She takes it, chewing as she decides to tell me anything .

“To see my mom. She moved here a few years ago, and I had finally saved up enough to get out of the snow for Christmas and spend time with her.”

“Why did she leave you?” I ask her, cocking my head as I give her a sip of orange juice.

It’s four in the morning, so it felt fitting to feed her breakfast. Even if the bagel is soaking up all the cum I already fed her.

“She didn’t leave me,” she counters. “She moved down here because she met a man on the internet, and they fell in love. He runs a major company here and didn’t want to move north for her. So she moved here.”

I nod, taking in the information.

I’ve never known much about the women I kidnapped. It feels odd to know anything about her. I wonder if it’ll make it more challenging when the end of our time comes.

“Why do you hate Christmas?” she asks, and I’m nearly knocked breathless at the question.

But when she picks up her feet and rests them on my thighs, it’s as if she gives me the strength to answer unwittingly.

“I saw my parents murdered in cold blood on Christmas Eve. I was hiding in a closet.”

She gasps, sitting forward and reaching to comfort me, but her strings pull taut, and she hisses. “God, these things are fucking infernal.”

She realizes her misstep and eyes me. “I’m sorry.”

However, I don't let myself get annoyed by the behavior because I'm too confused about why she would try to comfort me.

I give her another bite of bagel and silently riddle out the meaning behind her gesture.

"Did they catch their killer?" she asks, her eyes filled with caution.

"No. But I did. Years later. You can't forget a face when something like that happens. It was like it was etched into my fucking brain."

She nods. "I can understand that."

"Can you?"

"Yes. While nothing bad has happened to me, I learned about it in one of the psychology classes I was required to take."

"What are you studying?" I ask, knowing it's a moot point to ask because she'll never finish school.

"I wanted to work with kids. Ones who've been abused."

The way she'd spoken in past tense means she's accepted her fate here with me. It's curious when no one else has ever done so.

"Admirable profession. We need more people who care," I say, knowing I've said too much.

"I, too, took psychology, and I've also spent time on the leather couches of doctors who sought to evaluate the dark shit in my head, and yet, it hasn't helped me. While I understand my urges, I don't care to change my ways."

“Why did you take psychology? ”

I weigh telling her who I am in the daytime. She could survive. She could make it out.

Though, none ever have.

“I’m a doctor. A surgeon.”

She swallows. “You took an oath to do no harm,” she says, confusion floating in her eyes.

I nod. “I did. And for the entire year, I do no harm when my badge is hooked to my scrubs. But for one week a year, I let every dark urge that I have out of my body and take the wheel. It’s how I survive the world.”

Goosebumps rise on her flesh, and I wonder what drives them.

Not enough to ask, however.

“Are you full?” I ask her, and she looks at her half-eaten plate and nods.

“I am. Thank you, master.”

Her behavior only strokes the dark fucker living beneath my skin, but when he answers with another purr, I begin to worry.

Ms. Wilcott might be the very thing that unravels me.

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Three days. I've been a prisoner for three whole days, during which time I've learned that Doctor Death is my kidnapper. He lives, works, and plays in Dunhaven's city limits, all while the town allows it to happen. They hide away and turn their heads so he can come and go as he pleases.

Why?

Why has he been allowed to roam free when he's clearly bloodthirsty like a monster? As I sit up in bed, not knowing what time it is but knowing that I can't sleep any longer, I'm careful not to tangle my strings. Yesterday, I tested their strength when he'd gone to bed, tugging on them to see if they'd give.

They didn't.

I'd gone to sleep defeated and annoyed, uncomfortable, as my strings were impossible to sleep with. I've walked the entire house, trying to find imperfections in the track system and find any way out of here. I found nothing.

I sigh and flip again, strings tangling as I get frustrated and growl, tears staining my cheeks as I sit up in defeat.

"Can't sleep, little puppet?" His voice carries through the room from the doorway.

I look over, sniffing and wiping my face. He's perched against the doorframe, hands in the pocket of his sweats. His abs are on full display, rippled and perfect.

It's fucking annoying, to be honest. He's perfect. Chiseled, annoyingly perfect. And

yet, he has me hostage and hanging from the ceiling of this hell he built.

No one's come for me, and the longer I'm his prisoner, and no one bursts through the front door to save me, the more I worry time will run out on Christmas Day. I've gotten the impression a few times that Christmas is the day that ends it all.

His game is done then.

He'll go back to work to save lives after mine is stolen.

"Puppet," he warns, coming closer.

I sniffle again. "No. I can't sleep. The strings are just getting to me tonight."

"Mm, but you understand why you must have them, right?"

"Because I'll run?"

He smiles, slinking up the stairs at the side of the bed. "Because every puppet has strings. How are you to be mine if you're untethered?"

"But you're going to let me go in the end, right?"

Then, this will only be a nightmare. The hoops are going to scar, though. I'll never forget. Not that I could ever forget him.

With all that he is, he's alluring. When he touches me, it's as if he commands every nerve in my body, ordering my pleasure on a whim, conjuring satisfaction the likes of which I've never experienced before. Fuck, when I had him in my mouth, it was unholy, the way my center awakened at the sounds coming out of him.

A flash of him backhanding me moves through my head, and I sigh, remembering. I felt embarrassed at first, foolish, even. Then he straightened out, beckoned me back on his cock, and I felt whole again.

Something in my psyche is breaking already from pretending to be his good little puppet to survive.

It's almost as if I genuinely want to be just that.

His perfect doll behaved and pristine.

"Is that what you want? To be free of me? Of this place?" he asks me, and I tug away from my berating thoughts.

I can't deal with how I feel around him right now. I have more significant problems, like surviving to get away from him.

"Yes. Why wouldn't I?" It had come out a bit harsher than I'd meant it, and I shifted as I sat up a bit straighter. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean it to sound like that... it's just that this isn't my home."

"Understandable, puppet." He turns away from me, his feet resting on the first step on the side of the bed. "I've been too kind to you, maybe. Too much leeway makes you too complacent. That's my fault."

I swallow.

What have I done?

"Lie down, puppet. I'll help you sleep."

I don't want to lie down, but I do so not to anger him. Even more than I already have.

He moves back onto the bed and straddles me. Methodically, he removes each of my strings from their hoops, letting them dangle freely over the bed.

I all but sigh as the last one is released.

"I never used to speak to my girls, you know?" he tells me, but his eyes are far off, like he's speaking to himself aloud.

"Probably smarter that way," he adds. "You've been afforded more comforts than they were, yet you still seem to want the same thing they wanted. Freedom. When that's exactly what I offer."

He's working something over from the corner of the bed, but I can't see it through the darkness.

When I hear the rustle of metal, fright dances in my chest.

"Master, I?—"

"Hush now, puppet. I haven't spoken to you."

"No, but... "

His eyes snap back to mine, growing darker even in the dusk surrounding us. "If I haven't spoken to you, foolish girl, keep your lips sealed. Before I teach you a lesson that I'd rather not."

I swallow audibly and nod.

He works cuffs over my wrists and ankles, which attach to the four corners of the beds, somehow becoming anchors.

If I thought the strings were terrible, this is literal hell. Tears fall freely and silently down my face.

“Are these more comfortable for you?” he asks as if he’s liberated me somehow.

“Yes, master,” I answer softly. It’s almost a whisper.

He’s breaking my spirit more than he’s breaking my mind. I don’t know who I’ll be if I do escape him.

“Good. Now, I think you should be punished for waking me up, don’t you? Good little dolls go to sleep when told to, wouldn’t you agree?”

I grit my teeth. “Yes, master.”

Every defiant fiber in my body wants to lash out and tell him to go fuck himself. But my body is exposed. My bralette is barely over my breasts, and my thin panties aren’t a very good barrier against a monster.

I don’t want him to get any fucked up ideas, so I have to agree with him. No matter what he does to me, I have to survive.

Mom is looking for me. She has to be.

“Mm, let’s see, shall we?”

I shiver against his eyes as they take in my body. I look like a starfish, laying on my back, ready for him to do whatever hellish thing he decides to.

He could rape me.

The realization has my heart thumping rapidly in my chest.

Please, God. Please, no.

I keep pleading with the deity as my kidnapper moves off the bed and out of the room, claiming he has some grand idea of how to punish me.

I'm sobbing by the time he comes back and gets onto the bed a little too giddily.

"Oh, don't cry, darling. You're going to love what I have in store. And if you don't, you brought it on yourself, didn't you?" He shrugs as I nod in agreement.

By the end of this week, I think I'll be begging for death.

At first, I thought he wouldn't come back, but then I heard him clambering back through the house. He's got a black box with him, and he gets back on the bed between my spread legs. I lift my head to watch him work, and he acts as if he's consumed by thoughts of whatever the box he has offers.

"What is that?" I ask, forgetting the new rule about speaking when spoken to altogether .

"Don't worry, puppet. We're going to fix that mouthy little issue you have."

He takes out what looks to be a probe with a cord attached. The cord splits into two small plugs, which he plugs into the small device. He then lays the device down on the bed.

"This, my darling, is a TENS unit. They're used for nerve stimulation. What I use it

for, however, is a far cry from relieving pain. I use it to train whores to know their place.”

I bite back my anger, barely, at his words. Fire rages in my chest. Who the fuck does he think he is...

The thought dies as he invades my center with the probe. It's cold and hard, unfamiliar.

Once he has it deeply seated inside me, he sits back and grabs the small box attached to it.

“Now, we test it.”

He turns a dial on the top of the box, and a jolt of electricity shoots through me. I arch off the bed and scream bloody murder.

“Please, please, stop. I'll behave!” I beg.

It doesn't hurt, but I don't want him to do it again. It's like every nerve in my body clamped down at once, like being electrocuted from the inside out.

His dark chuckle only strums me like the aftershocks of an earthquake. “Will you, now?”

I nod frantically.

“A lie, clearly. ”

He turns the dial up again, this time further, leaving it on longer.

My body seizes off the bed, arching into the power rumbling through me, and my teeth and jaw clench tight.

“Help!” I manage to scream before he dials it up further.

“They can’t hear you scream, puppet. They’re all too afraid to save you.”

He turns the dial off, and I pant in relief. The thrumming of my center is all I can focus on.

The second throb of my core is becoming unbearable. He crawls over me on the bed from where he’d been between my legs, hovering his face over mine.

“They’d rather save themselves, darling. They’d turn the other cheek even if they knew you were here. I’m the only one who cares.”

I lick my lips, unabashedly looking at his as I imagine how they’d feel on mine.

Madness, he’s torturing you. Don’t fall for his allure.

I can’t get caught in the spider’s web.

He’s venomous.

“Do you?” I ask.

“Do I what, puppet?” His face drops even further, and my already throbbing core tightens even more, begging for whatever this man will give me.

Scraps, even.

“Do you care?”

His lips dust mine, his face moving back and forth, the soft skin of his lips driving me wild with need .

“Oh, darling girl, why would I be here, teaching you lessons, if I didn’t?”

I delete the distance between us by lifting my face.

He pulls back quickly, evading my kiss.

Grabbing the box, he has me arching under its power again, and this time, I don’t think he’ll ever let up.

Orgasm is around the corner, but he turns it back off, diminishing it.

“I don’t kiss.”

“Why?” The question comes out as a plead.

He turns the dial, but not enough. “Because it’s too personal.”

I lift my head off the pillow to argue that this experience is too personal, but he turns the dial full out, and I seize again.

“No more words, puppet. Scream for me.”

I do just that. Over and over, he takes me to the very edge of pleasure, only to rip it away.

I’m a sniveling, shaking mess, dripping with sweat and begging for relief by the time

he pulls the device from my body and shoves two fingers inside me, hovering over me like the maniacal god that he is.

“You need to come, puppet?”

“Please,” I whisper because it’s all I have the strength to do. “Please, master.”

“Mm,” he groans, satisfaction in his voice. “You’re so beautiful when you behave for me, Grace. It’s like you’re the only star in my galaxy. The center of my universe. All is right when you’re a good little puppet. ”

I’m right there. All the torture I’ve endured this last hour is about to be rewarded. My belly burns low, and my body is culminating in an orgasm that will be transcendent. But then, he pulls his fingers out, leaning down to kiss my forehead.

“Good girls get rewarded. You weren’t my good girl, darling. Goodnight.”

In all my frustration, I want to fucking rage. But all I can do is watch him take his godly fingers and little black box back to his room as he leaves me tied to the bed at four points, throbbing and wishing I’d been his good little puppet.

And that last thought scares the shit out of me.

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Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:07 am

I'm up before Grace. She's sleeping on her stomach, ass perfectly poked up, one leg cocked up in an L shape. No wonder she hasn't been able to sleep; her strings would never allow her to lie like that.

I'd come in after she was asleep and unhooked the cuffs from around her wrists and ankles, freeing her so she could sleep. It was a calculated risk. Something in me felt shitty after leaving her there whimpering for me in a puddle of her sweat and arousal.

That's new for me.

I've never cared before.

I sigh as I slowly work my way onto the bed and work only three strings onto her back, the one over her spine and the two next to it. Hopefully, it's not a stupid move. But these three are the bigger hoops I pierced her with. She'd have to rip them out, and they'd be very painful.

"Please," she begs, turning in her sleep .

I watch as she flips onto the strings attached to her back. They don't tangle, only move with her.

Those will work much better, I think.

Still, my brain tries to determine what's so different about her. I've never untethered any other woman.

Her next moan makes me crawl closer, straddling her as I hover over her fitful body.

Is she remembering what I did to her last night? Is she thinking of another man?

The second thought makes my hands fist the sheets next to her head.

She moans louder, arching off the bed. The imagery of this moment will be etched in my brain forever.

I grin.

It's me she's thinking of then.

I've never seen them react to the TENS like she had. She blows my mind at every turn. She sets my entire playbook ablaze because she's nothing like them.

She's something more.

Another moan passes her lips, and she wakes in a fit, head lifting off the pillow as her lips open, an exhale passing them.

Her frenzied eyes find mine.

"Hello, Grace. Good morning." I smirk, looking over the patter of her beautiful heart that thwaps away in her throat.

"You—You're here. Were you..." She licks her lips. "Were you touching me?"

"In your sleep? No. I would never, darling. I want to watch you as you scream for me, fully aware that I'm the reason you're screaming."

I lick my lips, and she follows my tongue's path over them. "Tell me, Grace. Were you dreaming of me?"

Her pupils dilate.

"Don't lie, either. You remember how I punish. You'll be sent to bed hungry again tonight, and not for food, either."

"I was dreaming about you," she admits in a whisper.

"That's a good little puppet," I tell her. "Now, what was I doing to you in your dream?"

She uses her exhale to steady herself as she lifts her head off her pillow, her lips coming dizzyingly close to mine. I told her I don't kiss.

I've never kissed one of them.

It's too personal. It'll turn the tables.

"You kissed me in my dream. Kissed me, sunk your cock into me, fucked me so fucking good. And you let me come." Her eyes flutter closed as if she'd go back to the dreaming and visit that version of me.

My dick aches behind my sweats at her words, and my fists tighten on the sheets beside her.

"I don't kiss."

Her eyes open and roll, her face turning toward the board-covered window. "I know. You told me to tell you my dream. That was it. Are we done?"

Dismissal?

Who does she think she is ?

“Don’t play games with me, darling. Many have tried, and it didn’t end well for them.”

She turns her face back, something dancing in her eyes.

Recognition.

She’s just realized something.

“I’m going to die either way,” she says matter-of-factly.

“Yes.”

A tear leaves her eye, headed over her cheek towards her ear before it hits the pillow beneath her head. “So, you lied? You were never going to let me go?”

I sigh, tired of her mood this morning. It’s partly my fault; I know that. I sent her to bed with her body on fire, on the cusp of coming, with no way to touch herself and work out the tension. Had I known she’d wake up like a riled beast, I still think I would’ve done it, but I wouldn’t have come here this morning.

I would’ve saved myself the headache.

“Were you ever going to let me go?” she asks, her untethered hands grabbing my biceps and keeping me prisoner over her with the sheer power of her touch on my skin.

“No.” My admission seems to float between us, her eyes growing heated with anger.

“So, either way, I die in the end?” she asks as if she needs it spelled out.

“Yes.”

She nods a few times before she lifts her head off the pillow once more, slamming her lips to mine as she wraps her legs around my backside.

I’m flabbergasted.

I’m thrown off-kilter completely.

My lips have a mind of their own, opening to allow her tongue to sweep inside and touch mine.

My growl only spurs her on, and my hips grind, my erection grinding into her needy pussy.

I did this. This is my fault.

I pull away, wrapping my hand around her throat and shoving her back into her pillow. “No.”

“Why?” her crackled voice is full of heat, but I don’t understand.

No one wants me . They want to survive.

“Because I’m tired of your games.”

“It’s not a game...” Her heady eyes glass over as I tighten my grip surrounding her

neck. “Tell me your name,” she manages.

“Why?”

“So I know what to cry out in my dreams.”

I lick my lips. “I’m master to you.”

“And when you’re not my master? When you’re the man between my thighs sucking my clit like you’re a starving man, and I’m your sustenance?”

“Cain,” I whisper, leaning into her further without understanding her power over me.

I have to be careful. She could be the one to kill me, the one to play the game better than me .

“Cain,” she whimpers as I grind into her again to hear it on her lips.

“That’s right, darling, whimper for me.”

Nudging her to turn her face, I sink my teeth into her neck, tasting her flavor as it invades my senses.

One of her feet slides down my ass, shoving upward to coax me to grind into her again.

And I oblige.

“Please, Cain.”

“I left you so needy for me last night, didn’t I, darling?” I whisper in her ear, tongue

teasing its shell.

“So fucking needy,” she begs, her hand tangling in my hair before fisting it and lifting my head.

Before I realize what’s happening, her lips are on mine again, and we’re inhaling one another, breathing one another like we’re the oxygen the other needs to feed their bloodstream.

My hand sinks beneath the front of her panties. “Is that what you need, my beautiful puppet?”

She breaks our kiss, choking on her next moan.

She’s dangerous to me. Already I’m giving her things I normally wouldn’t.

Her power is filtering beneath my skin like radiation, and I can’t escape. I’m captive.

I sink two fingers into her wet, swollen pussy, fervently fucking her with them and watching her arch for me.

“Cain!” She’s gone, lost inside the swirling covetous hunger I left her with last night being sated .

“Oh, pretty darling, look at you. Fuck, you’re so mesmeric to watch.”

Her hands come up and free her breasts, her fingers tweaking her nipples softly as she puts on a show for her master.

“Cain, please,” she begs, her carnal eyes gobbling me up as I lick my kiss-bruised lips.

“I’m here, puppet. I’m giving you what you need. Let it wash over you.”

She shakes her head frantically. “No! More. Please.”

She’s grinding on my fingers to the best of her ability, eager and needy for something more than I’m offering.

“What do you need, puppet? Your words.”

She only whimpers and writhes. She’s too delirious.

I remove my fingers, and she cries out in such a melodic tone I feel it in the tip of my cock that’s leaked all over my sweatpants.

Wrapping my hand around her delicate neck again, I ground her, finding her eyes with mine.

“Use your fucking words. What do you need?”

I don’t know why I need to hear her say it but fuck me, I do.

“Fuck me. Sink inside my pussy and make me come. I want to feel your cock in me. Your fingers aren’t enough.”

Fuck, ask, and ye shall receive.

And my puppet always delivers.

“You sure you don’t just want my tongue on you, darling girl?” I make like I’m going to slide down her body, and she quickly sinks both hands into my hair, fisting to the point of pain.

Her eyes are feral.

“No,” she growls.

I think I underestimated the state I left her in last night, and now it has her a bit ravenous.

I usually leave fucking for the end. I fuck them as I bathe in the blood that spurts from their veins. It’s my beautiful finish.

But I can’t help but consider giving her what she wants. Fuck, just look at her.

Her cheeks are a beautiful rouge, her lips swollen from kissing me, her eyes are heady, her pupils blown wide. Her perfectly peach-colored nipples are hard and begging to be suckled. The rest of her thick, curvy body is slick with sweat, pheromones practically leaking out of every one of her pores, calling to me like cat nip.

I heave in an inhale, which is much needed. The space is so charged it’s almost dizzying.

“Take what you need, little puppet.”

One of her small hands unfurls my hair and slides between us. She yanks down the front of my pants, and all the while, our gazes are locked.

Her hand slides over my cock slowly, not pulling it out, only teasing.

“And does master want to fuck me?” she asks.

I hiss as she continues to torment my cock with her maddening strokes. “Would it

matter what I wanted? You're fucking feral for me, puppet."

She squeezes the head of me before pulling me out.

My mouth drops open.

"It matters, Cain. I don't want to take what isn't offered freely. You can't feed me because I'm hungry. I want you to feed me because you want to. Because you want to be my meal."

Just when I think she's going to let my dick go, she grasps the shaft and runs the tip through her wet, swollen mess of a pussy.

"Fuck, Grace." It's an unholy plea from my lips that even I have never heard.

It's like I've broken her psyche down enough where she's on my level, and God, I wish she could stay there. I never want her to leave.

I want to fucking keep her.

It's illogical. It can't happen.

"Do you want to feed me, Cain?"

I reach between us, yanking her hand off my dick, and in one thrust, I'm deep inside her.

I pause, eyes frantic as I realize what I've just done.

I've played her game and lost. She flutters around my shaft as her eyes grow heavy, and a moan spills from her perfect lips.

“Yes, feed me, master,” she pleads, and my body takes over where my mind is still reeling.

She’s so fucking voracious, starving for me and only me, and it gives me something I’ve never had before. Something I’ve been chasing from here to hell and back for years.

Power.

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As he drives in and out of my body, our greed amps, turning ravenous. His cock fills every aching space inside me, massaging muscles, battering my inner walls.

His eyes are frenzied, confused, as if this isn't what he usually does with the women he kidnaps. I know I shouldn't be allowing this right now. Fuck, he's done so much to me that he should repulse me. But all I want is more.

"Cain, harder. Please," I whimper.

Every sinew of his body is taut and beautiful as he writhes inside my body like he owns it. He left me here last night, bound and starving for him.

It only grew as I slept.

When I awoke with him over me, there was no going back. No way this wasn't going to turn into this.

Kissing him will likely bite me in the ass because he said he doesn't kiss, so I don't know what my punishment for that will be, but I don't care.

He feels so good.

In a swift movement, he flips us, and I'm riding him.

My hoops tug, and I realize I'm back on my strings, but he's only attached a handful or less.

But the tug of them against the pleasure of him filling me makes me moan.

It only adds to my pleasure, the knowledge I'm tied up for him—his little doll.

It's so fucked up. I know it is, but I lean into it, reaching overhead and grasping the strings for leverage, writhing my pussy back and forth, riding him slow and methodical.

"Fuck, Grace," he says, gripping my hips, watching me as I let go further than I ever have with any other man.

"You like this? Seeing your little fuck doll tied to her strings while she rides your cock?" I ask him, not knowing who the fuck I'm becoming in this man's house of horrors.

"I do. Fuck, I hate you for this," he growls, digging his fingers into my hips, adding a bite of pain with the way he feels inside me.

I nearly lose my breath.

"You hate me?" I ask, rolling my hips as he lifts off the bed and fucks into me from below, stealing my breath with how deep he is.

"I. Fucking. Hate. You." He punctuates each word with a deep thrust inside me .

"Show me." I let go of the strings, moving them with me as I get off his cock and get beside him on all fours.

He lets his head loll to the side, and his cock glistens against his stomach, where it falls, hard and covered in my arousal.

“Show me how much you hate me, master.”

A ferocious snarl rips free from his chest as he gets behind me, grasping my neck with both hands firmly, slamming home in one thrust.

He’s so deep that even if he wasn’t stealing my air with his hands, that one movement would have knocked me out.

“You need to mind your fucking mouth, darling,” he tells me, skin slapping as he fucks me as hard as he can.

My eyes cross as my lungs burn, begging for air.

I let my eyes fall closed, fully ready to die in this man’s hands, which is pure lunacy.

Who the fuck am I?

A survivor? No, I think I’m more than that.

Part of me wonders if he found me because he saw a bit of himself in me. He knew who I was before even I did.

“God, your cunt feels so fucking good.” His words open my eyes again, the edges blurring as little pinpricks of light dance in them.

“Making me fuck you before it’s time, who the hell do you think you are?”

I gape like a fish out of water as my orgasm slams into me .

It’s bliss. It’s euphoria. It’s something I’ll never touch again.

Not because I'll be dead, but because this man is the one that owns my pleasure. Even if he were to let me go, nothing would ever amount to the way he makes me feel.

Tears leave my eyes as I close them, ready to go into the gates of heaven with a smile on my face.

His moans are rhapsodic as he spills inside me, his poisonous cum branding me like boiling water that spreads through me as it coats my fucked up soul.

"Fuck, you're such a good little puppet," he groans, his hands loosening and giving me wisps of air.

He pulls out and flips me onto my back, and I gasp massive gulps of air into my lungs.

He crawls over my body, lies on top of me, and gingerly tucks my hair behind my ears as I work myself back into the land of the living.

"You still with me, darling?" he whispers, kissing my mouth.

My eyes close as I turn my face into his, softly meeting his lips.

His tongue breathes life back into me slowly as I come back into my satisfied body.

"There you are, beautiful puppet. I worried you'd left me."

"Never."

The one word hangs heavy between us as he pulls back and stares into my eyes with questions written all over his ice-blue irises .

“My perfect little fuck doll.”

I exhale shakily, hating how his words make me throb between my thighs, where a delicious ache is settling in.

“Why do you hate me?” I ask him. Sure, it was hot at the moment; who doesn’t love hate sex? And if that’s the kind of hate sex Cain has, I want him to hate me until the very end, but I’m still curious.

“Because I don’t hate you. Not even a little.”

It isn’t apparent, but it makes so much sense because it’s exactly how I feel about him.

“What’s going to happen now, master?” I ask, sinking my hand through his soft hair, which has fallen over his forehead and mixed into his sweat.

“Mm, I have to think about how I’m going to punish you for toying with me. You’re my plaything, not the other way around, darling. I can’t let your misbehavior go unanswered.”

My center clamps, hopeful.

“Well, if I’m already going to be punished...” I lift my head, lips working over his softly. Slowly, he comes around, his massive hand cupping my face as he deepens the kiss.

My body thrums to life as his tongue swirls the tip of mine.

“Fuck, what am I going to do with you?” he asks, and it’s the first time that I realize there might be a way out of here.

I have a power over him, and he knows it.

And now, I know it, too .

I have to use it wisely, or I'll never escape. If he gets any inkling that I'm angling to get free, he'll kill me before Christmas. And I only have two more days until Christmas day.

I have to be careful.

Or the killer between my thighs will add me to his collection of corpses.

He hasn't reconnected the strings to my arms. The only things tethering me to the ceiling above are the ones on my back and shoulders. It's freeing. Yet, I'm still his little doll. His perfect puppet, tied and ready for when he wants to play with me.

I step into the shower, tugging the curtain closed behind me. The spray of hot water has my muscles unfurling and knots releasing in me, where I didn't know there was tension before.

"Fuck," I mutter to myself, leaning into the heat of the water and letting it soothe me.

Two days until Christmas.

Two days until he decides what to do with me.

My mother hasn't come. No police have shown up that I'm aware of, and it's unnerving. How he made me disappear from the world as if I never existed confuses the mind .

It makes me wonder if those around me genuinely care if they haven't come to save

me.

I move through the motions of washing my hair and body while listening for him beyond the frosted curtain.

After what happened earlier, he's been keeping his distance. Food was laid out for me on the counter, which I ate alone with my untied arms, and then I decided, after a long look in the bathroom mirror, that I needed to bathe.

It was apparent that he didn't fuck the other women. Or maybe he waits until their dead to fuck them? Either way, I'd thrown him off his typical path, which had him spiraling. I don't know if that's a good or bad thing.

On the one hand, I could use it to my advantage if I could keep him circling the drain of his insanity. But on the other hand, it could turn him even more ruthless.

He could lose control.

The curtain peels back, and there he is, his ice-blue eyes looking over my body in frantic passes, his lips pursed in a thin line behind his tightly trimmed beard.

Did he think I escaped?

Did none of his other pets make themselves at home?

"What are you doing?" he asks, his brows furrowing tightly.

I smile, laughing softly as I move closer, water dripping over my breasts.

His hungry eyes follow the drops teasing down my body.

“I’m showering, Cain. Would you like to join me?” I speak in a sweet tone, trying not to alert him to the war inside me.

I have to use this angle that my greedy actions earlier gained me.

“I don’t think that’s appropriate,” he says, clearing his throat as he steps away.

But his hand stays fisted on the curtain. I lay mine over his, rubbing my thumb over the top where all his veins run highways through his flesh.

“Come in with me. You can help me wash,” I coax.

I already washed, but it doesn’t hurt to lie. To lure him into my sickly sweet trap in hopes he’ll get sloppy.

He doesn’t move away, but he doesn’t get in the tub.

I drop my hand and tug at his waistband.

“Come on, master. Let me wash you.” I bite my lower lip as I look over his thick, soft cock hanging between his thighs.

It’s so big that I don’t know how he didn’t break me to bits.

“Grace.” It’s a plea from his lips to go easy on him.

He’s a broken, delicate soul. Anyone can see that. But he’s also a fucking monster, so I need to tread lightly.

He gave me a glimpse earlier into the power I hold over him, and it’s the only thing that has me confident that this will be okay.

Unless he's playing me for a fool, all my effort will be for naught.

But at least I'll have had some fun before he kills me. There's that to fall back on .

He steps into the tub, cock swinging as he closes the curtain, and I step back, giving him a berth to move under the water.

"Where would you like me to wash first, master?" I ask, my tone playful and raspy.

The last part I can't help. It's his power over me that makes it drop an octave.

"You're toying with me," he says as I rub the bar of soap through my hands, making suds.

"Am I?" I lift a brow, licking water off my lips.

"I'm certain of it, and if you keep it up, you're going to coax a darker fucking nature out of me," he promises, ending on a hiss as I grasp the soft, flaccid shaft of him and work soap over it, bringing it back to life as I wash him clean.

"And this darker version of you, what will he do to me?" I ask him, using the slickness of the suds to stroke him as his cock fills with blood, hardening in my hand.

One of his hands slams against the shower wall, a thud reverberating under the power of where he grasps for stability.

"He'll cut you just to watch you fucking bleed, Grace. Don't press him. Don't call him out." His tone is pleading, as if he, too, is afraid of this dark alter ego that lives beneath his skin.

"Don't worry. I think he'll like me as much as you do. I think I'm safe with either

version of you.”

I don’t know what made me say it. But I realized it was the wrong thing to say quickly as something changed in his eyes.

As they darkened around their edges.

His hand juts out, the back of it slapping across my wet cheek, and my head turns violently from the motion, my chest heaving in breaths through the pain and shame.

“You’ll never be safe as long as I have you in my sites, darling. Don’t you understand that? I want to fucking kill you. I dream about it. Fantasize about what your lifeless mouth would feel like with my cock spearing through it. What your dry, cold cunt would feel like as my warm fingers pressed inside. I’m not a man you should be fucking with, puppet. It seems you need to be taught. Seems you’re a hands-on learner.”

There’s dark promise in his words, and my body quakes as I drop my hand from his steel cock and gently rub it over the welt on my cheek.

Despite all he’s said and the damage to my face, there’s a deep ache between my thighs that I can deny to Cain but not to myself.

So, I keep silent and press my legs together to calm it.

“Get out of the shower and dry off. When I get out, I want you on the bed, kneeling.” His command is even-toned and precise.

I don’t hesitate to step out and grab the towel I’d laid out for myself on the counter, pulling one from beneath the cabinet out for Cain.

When I'm dry, I hang my towel and do as I'm told, kneeling in the middle of the bed with my head bent .

When I hear the water shut off in the bathroom, my breathing hitches, and a dizzying feeling races through my veins.

“On all fours, puppet,” he says, and my legs shake as I obey.

“Mm, good girl. Now, let's introduce you to Cain Mordova, shall we?”

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Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:07 am

Her plump ass with creamy skin is in the air, and her pussy is already glistening. She's the perfect puppet that doesn't even realize how perfect she is.

The way she treated me in the shower felt disingenuous. It was as if she had realized a bit of her power over me and was learning to use it. She needs to be put in her place before her ego grows too large.

Before she truly overpowers me.

If anyone was going to, it's her.

I climb the steps behind her, smacking her right ass cheek and watching it waggle under my blow. A red welt forms, and I bite my lower lip until I taste blood.

Fuck, she's beautiful.

Mezermizing when she listens.

"I need to teach you about who you're fucking with, Grace. Teach you how a puppet behaves for her master, but I need you ready."

She doesn't say a thing, but when I bend and bury my face between her ass cheeks, she shies away, tugging it away from me.

"You. Are. Mine. Behave yourself."

I almost didn't recognize my voice as I ordered her to be still.

She breathes a heavy sigh as I drop my head once again, finding her clit from behind with my tongue and trailing it to her entrance. She's slick with need, and I'm gobbling up her musky flavor.

She's always ready for me, and it's addicting.

She's an addiction.

"Cain," she says, her voice a bit shaky. She's uncertain with my nose and mouth so close to her asshole. It's a normal reaction when society likes to beat into women that they should have no smell, that they should always be prim and proper and ladylike.

I slide my tongue over her puckered little asshole, shoving two fingers inside her pussy. She presses back into my mouth, and I can't help my grin.

There's my filthy little fuck puppet.

I knew she was hiding in there somewhere.

I know she's sore from earlier, but I need to ready her for what I'm about to do to her. Or I could damage her. If she were any other woman, I wouldn't care.

I want to be delicate with her, however, even while I'm teaching her all about who Cain Mordova truly is .

"Relax for me, puppet. Let your master take care of you," I coax, earning a breathy moan from her as I flick my tongue over her ass once more, feeling her walls ripple around my fingers as I fuck them in and out of her at an even pace.

I need her to be pliant. I need her to come for me so that her muscles are lax and ready for what comes next.

“Cain,” she whimpers as I add a third finger, stretching her as I lick her ass, sliding my tongue in and out of her tight hole, fucking her ass, feeling my fingers through the thin tissue dividing them.

I want to tell her it will be alright, but it’s not, not for her.

I’m going to push her limits. I’m going to shove her further than she thinks she can go.

When she comes apart, screaming my name and bucking on my fingers and tongue, I slide them out of her.

“Flip over on your back.” My voice is darker than she’s used to, and even with shaky legs, she does as she’s told quickly and efficiently, careful not to injure herself or tangle her remaining strings.

Lifting her slightly, I slide her head to the very edge of the side of the bed, grabbing the cuffs from the top and bottom of the bed and cuffing her wrists.

Her frantic eyes are a little less worried under the haze of her recent orgasm, and I work quickly to grab the lube from the dresser next to the bed.

I won’t let her come down. I can’t. I need her in this space as I show her just what my dark mind wants to do to her. Show her the fantasy I’ve repeatedly seen since I saw her pumping gas into her Honda Civic five days ago.

I squirt lube onto her swollen pussy and my hand, using a generous amount, and she watches with heady eyes.

I shove the three fingers I had already worked inside before back into her pussy, going deeper than I had before, letting my thumb work over her clit for extra friction.

“Oh, God,” she whimpers, tugging on her bindings and lifting her ass to fuck my fingers down deeper.

“You want more, puppet?”

She nods. “More.”

“Good. Because I’m going to give you so much more.”

I add my pinky finger inside her, cupping my fingers together like a beak inside her sideways, moving them in and out slowly as they stretch her.

Twice, I splay my fingers, opening her a bit more to get her ready, and her gasping breaths only make me greedy and impatient to keep going.

“Ready, Grace?” I ask her, my tone dark, inky promise wavering in it.

“For what?” she asks, panting.

“To be my puppet, of course.” I shake my head at her ignorance as I add my thumb inside her and slowly move my hand fully inside her entrance.

Her eyes widen as she lifts her head and looks down at the onslaught .

“C—Cain,” she stammers, panic filling her voice.

“Ah, ah, ah, don’t do that, my perfect puppet. Relax.”

I feel her muscles give way some as she listens, her eyes still greedily watching my hand work in and out of her pretty cunt.

“Now, you wouldn’t be my puppet if I didn’t make you sing for me, would you?” I tease, finally curling my fingers against her G-spot one by one as I close my fist inside of her.

It’s never been like this before. Her eyes are eager, her cries are full of ecstasy and excitement, her body pliant for my fist that’s deep inside her.

I can almost feel the pitter-patter of her racing heart, and it contradicts my earlier words. I love to feel her warmth swallowing me. I love to feel how alive I make her.

I don’t know how I’d feel if she was lifeless and rigid, and the thought makes me growl.

I move my fist inside of her, brushing her G-spot over and over, my mouth dropping open as if I can eat her moans for sustenance.

“Cain, fuck, please, master!” She’s stuttering, making a menacing smile spread my lips up my face.

Slowly, I move my fist out, pressing it back in once I’m nearly out of her slick warmth.

She’s bucking and screaming my name and praises that are incoherent to the naked ear, and part of me is worried she’ll hurt herself.

“Perfect little slut puppet, look at you with your master’s fist deep inside your pussy. Scream for me, you filthy whore,” I taunt, having to yell my words over her rapturous shouts.

When she comes, a rush of fluid exits around my fist, soaking me and the sheets, splattering my fucking soul like a brand.

Here, I thought I was going to teach her who I was and scare her a little to get her to behave, and she's only entranced me with the way she responds to me.

As I slowly work my fist out of her body, careful not to hurt her, she heaves an exhale of relief.

Since I already have to change the sheets, my little puppet is just soaked with her cum; I wipe my hand on them before leaning over her.

"Who are you?" I ask her, and she fights to keep her eyes on me as her lids likely feel heavy.

"Your perfect puppet," she answers with a sigh, and it stabs through me like the darkest realization I've ever had.

She just might be.

And I don't know what the fuck to do with her now.

I wake to the smell of food, and panic washes through me.

When had I fallen asleep ?

Swinging my feet out of Grace's bed, I nearly trip over myself as I descend the steps beside it.

She's in the kitchen, her few strings still attached to her back and anchored above her, stirring butter into rice.

A timer goes off, and she grabs a pot holder and pulls a pan of chicken out, testing to see if it's done.

I stand in the kitchen, gobsmacked at what I'm witnessing. It's as if she belongs, and I don't know if I like it.

Unease spreads through me like a fucking cancer.

I don't know if she's trying to fuck with me intentionally or if she's simply trying to survive.

She turns, gasping as she sees me standing in the kitchen archway.

"God, you scared me." She grasps her chest.

The fear feeds my soul, and I grin and step closer.

"I found your phone," she says, and panic again grips firmly onto my heart. Is that what this is? She's got the cops on their way, and this is her farewell meal?

"I hope you aren't mad, but my sense of time in this place is all fucked up. I realized it's Christmas Eve, and I wanted a nice meal."

My brows knit tightly together on my forehead, and I loom over her as her hand touches my chest softly.

"Why? Have you poisoned it?" I ask her, fully serious and waiting for a reply.

Her face shows genuine shock. "What? No."

"Then what are your intentions, then? Hm? Why the fuck do you keep being so nice to me? I don't like it, Grace."

My admission and unhinged tone have panic laced in it, and I hate to break down like

this in front of her.

“Well, I...” she swallows as I tip her chin back up as she tries to look down to the floor. “I don’t know. Honest, I don’t. I’m questioning my sanity with everything new you do to me that I enjoy. I’m questioning my mom’s loyalty and love because she hasn’t come for me. And I’m wondering who the fuck lives in this town that they won’t even help when they seem to know I’m here.”

“How do they know you’re here, puppet?”

“It was a ghost town on my way in, and you said one week a year, you take a girl into this house and do this to her before you kill her. The locals are in hiding, it would seem. So that girls like me are easy picking out in the open.”

“Riddled that all out yourself, did you?” I step into her, pressing her closer to the stove.

Her strings get stuck above as they try to move from one track pattern to another, and I reach above and yank them to right them.

She whimpers as they tug against her strings, and I grin.

“It’s just a theory,” she answers me.

It’s a damn good one, not that I’ll confirm a thing for her.

“You walk amongst them, and they have to know that. You never move on from Dunhaven. You always hunt here. They’re scared enough to go into hiding and turn the other cheek.”

“I’m a god to them, puppet—a mythical creature, hunting and feeding on the most

magical day of the year. The question is, am I your god? Will you feed me?"

She swallows, her delicate, beautiful neck working over the lump building there as I've caged her into the hot stove with my body.

"I'm trying to feed you, Cain. But you think I'm trying to poison you," she mutters, jutting her chin up in fake confidence.

I can't help the laugh that bursts free.

I cup her face in both my hands, the size of them swallowing her round features. "Because you are a poison, little darling. And you are infecting me."

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His admission has my stomach dropping out and my breaths shallow. His hands on mine feel like a command even though he's ordered nothing of me. They say be still, and I won't pounce.

My heart shouldn't be beating so fast, and I shouldn't have giddy energy in my veins at him saying I affect him. It's fucked up. Everything is fucked up.

Even as I tell myself it's just my brain and body's way of trying to survive, I know I'm lying to myself that I'm ignoring all the signs that I'm attracted to my kidnapper.

The same man who ran me off the fucking road and turned me into a puppet.

"Go, sit," he says, breaking me out of my thoughts. "I'll make your plate since you so generously cooked for us."

Tomorrow is Christmas day, and it's the day he's promised will be my end .

No one has come for me, and I don't know if that means no one can find me or that he's blocking them somehow. Did Mom try to find me, and the town somehow intervened?

I wonder if I'll ever know. Or if I'll go to his graveyard blissfully unaware of how many people were involved in the search for me.

I go to the table and sit next to his chair. I'd already set the table except for plates, and I bounce my knee as my back is turned to Cain, nerves gobbling up the idea he could be getting a knife right now, preparing to fillet me instead of letting me have

my last meal.

I tried to get into his phone, but it was fingerprint-protected. I found it beneath his pillow in his room and saw the date and time, which oriented me a little bit. Knowing that it was Christmas Eve, four in the afternoon, made me feel more normal, so while he napped, I cooked a Christmas Eve meal.

I'm not a great cook, but I did what I could. I'd prepared roasted brussel sprouts I found in the fridge, some chicken breasts with butter and lemon pepper, and made rice, which I buttered to perfection before I was startled.

Cain comes to my right side, sliding my plate in front of me as he sits next to me with his own.

He sits back, crossing his ankle over his knee. "Go on, puppet. Eat."

He's testing me. He made the plates to ensure I hadn't done anything to the food, and he's going to watch me eat it to know if it's been tampered with.

I shake my head, pulling my chair closer as I pick up my knife and fork and dig in.

"Oh, man. I was worried the chicken would dry out, but it's so good," I say, grabbing my glass of water and gulping some down before forking some rice into my mouth and following it with a Brussels sprout.

After about five minutes, he seems appeased and begins eating his food, all while eyeing me warily at the gesture.

It's sad, really.

He's a beautiful specimen of a man and a surgeon to boot. Women must fawn over

him all the time, yet he seems as if no one's ever cooked him a meal before.

"This is very good, puppet, I'll admit."

I smile, his praise going straight through my soul and coddling it.

I shake my head at myself inwardly.

What is the matter with you?

I'm long past the stage where I've gotten too complacent with my kidnapper and moving on to the stage where I've accepted my fate and am readying for the end.

"So, tomorrow, how will you..." I clear my throat, grabbing my water again. "You know, how will you do it? It won't be another chase through the woods, will it?"

He sits back, using his napkin to dab at his lips. "You don't want me to chase you, puppet?"

"No. I mean, while it's thrilling and all, I think I'd much rather go out with a moan on my lips. Fuck me until the end, don't let me see it coming."

At this, he startles and sits up rigidly in his chair. It's like he doesn't like the idea, which frightens me.

I know his full name and where he lives; it wouldn't be hard to find out where he works. He can't let me go. So, if he doesn't kill me, what else would he do with me?

I can't be his puppet forever.

Even though I know the thought to be accurate, my stomach flips at the idea of being

here for the rest of my life.

“I haven’t thought about it yet,” he admits, returning to his food, but this time just pushing it around with his fork.

“What? But it’s tomorrow.”

“I’m aware it’s tomorrow.” His tone leaves me no room to respond, so I shift in my chair and shove chicken into my mouth as I consider a new approach.

“Where did you go after your parents’ murder?” I ask him for small talk, even if it’s dark.

“Going to analyze me, puppet?”

I sigh. “No. Just trying to know you better.”

“I was bounced around through the foster care system until a couple in Duhhaven adopted me. The man was a doctor, and his wife was a nurse. They raised me from the age of twelve on.”

“Raised? They’re dead?”

He nods. “He died of old age, and she mourned herself to death. Died nearly a year to the day after. It was awful to watch.”

“I bet it was. I’m so sorry you had to go through that.”

The way that I’m connecting with a serial killer is worrying me. Because seeing him as anything more than what he is is insane. Right?

My inner banter isn't helping my appetite, and now I'm pushing my food around on the plate.

"Is your father dead?" he asks me, batting the ball back on my side of the court.

"Why would you ask that?"

"Well, I got into your car the day after the crash. The only missed calls you had were from your mother."

I nod. "I don't know my father. She would never tell me who he was. Not even his name."

Cain thinks about that for a moment and sits back. "I wonder why."

His curiosity over a problem I've riddled over my entire life is endearing. Too much so.

I shrug. "I don't know. Do you have anything a bit more..." I lift my glass and swirl my water around, hoping he'll find some alcohol he has squirreled away somewhere for me to have.

For a captive, I think I've behaved well enough to earn some. After all, he had whiskey the other night.

He smirks, tossing his napkin onto the table as he moves into the living room. I hear keys rattle and a lock being turned. It's likely the cabinet beside the front door. I tried to open it the first time I perused this place and couldn't gain entrance.

He returns with a bottle of fancy red wine with French writing on the label and grabs me a glass from the kitchen. Filling it halfway, he then sits and recorks the wine.

I close my eyes as the first sip warms my belly. “Mm, thank you.”

“You’re most welcome,” he answers, and it’s that moment when I see through the facade of the killer I’ve been living with and get a glimpse at the man he hides behind all year.

“Did you always want to become a surgeon?” I ask, wine warming my belly on contact. I go back to eating now that my nerves are steadier.

He cuts into his chicken with precision, which I’m in awe and a little afraid of. “No. But my adoptive father was adamant I become something that allowed me the life I deserved. He always said I went through the rough times in my childhood, and I should strive to live a colorful and vibrant life beyond it.”

For a moment, I forget I’m sitting beside a murderer and nod in agreement as if we’re two old friends sitting down to a meal together to catch up.

Then I grab my wine, and my piercings sting as my strings pull too tight, and I’m reminded of who I am to this man.

His prey.

I’m in a constant war with myself and my thoughts. Don’t even get me started on the way he makes me feel sexually. I’m certain I’ve crossed some line of mortality God set in the sand millions of years ago. At least twice.

“That’s a nice way of putting it, though,” I answer, trying to stay out of my head and all its drama.

Part of me wants to be present for my last days on earth. Live it to the fullest.

I finish my wine, feeling the buzz beneath my skin as I ask for another glass. He fills it halfway once more.

“Last glass, puppet. I don’t want you hurting yourself on your strings if you get too drunk.”

I nod, licking my lips as I put them to the rim of the wineglass again, looking at him through the glass as I tip it.

I can’t help how he makes me feel, and I’m honestly sick of fighting it, but my brain won’t let me forget who he is and how I got here.

Not even if I tried.

We discussed a few more things, like where I live and where I go to school. He tells me where he went to school and about the first girl he kidnapped.

Once the meal is cleaned off the table and I’m thoroughly buzzed, he tells me he’ll clean the kitchen and helps me to the room.

When he walks back to the kitchen, I have the distinct feeling I was just on a date with a serial killer, even though that wasn’t the intent I set out with when I decided to cook .

I shake away from the thought, flick the lights off, and get into bed.

As I sink into the mattress, I try to conjure dreams that keep me company as I rest—made-up scenarios full of happiness and cheer.

But all my brain chooses to do is remember his fist grinding against my inner walls, waking me a few times as my core throbs and my body writhes of its own volition.

Heat is what wakes me.

It's so hot.

I try to toss the covers off and find they won't move.

I whimper, rolling over, well, trying to. There's a wall behind me.

Cain snores, and I realize he's in bed with me. Not only that but his leg and arm are thrown over me lazily as he sleeps.

He's cuddling me.

What the fuck?

If I'm honest, his identity directly contrasts what's happening and makes it scarier.

I'm in the arms of a man who murders women for no other reason than he hates Christmas because of what happened to him as a boy and part of me wants to snuggle back into him and go back to sleep .

I need to get the fuck away from him.

But even though I think that and know that, my heady eyes close again.

Until he moves.

He grinds into my ass, moaning in his sleep, and it sets my body on fire.

Well, there's no going back to sleep now.

This is where my dilemma lies.

I know I need to escape, but how can I when he makes me feel like this? When his touch makes me feel like I'm so fucking alive, even though I'm on the brink of death.

"Grace," he whispers, nibbling the shell of my earlobe.

"Mm," I answer, realizing I've grabbed onto his ass and pressed further into his rock-hard dick.

"I'm going to unbind your strings, darling girl. But if you run..."

"I'm not going to run," I admit, and once I realize it's the god's honest truth, my eyes fly wide as he takes my strings off my tethers.

I'm not going to run.

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I unhook the strings off her back, and the newfound access to the back of her neck has me sliding her hair off her shoulder to sink my teeth into her perfect skin. Her scent, even with my soap permeating it, is mouthwatering.

My hand slides beneath her panties, fingers prying her lips apart and finding her wet for me.

“Always ready for your master,” I tease, slipping them over her clit in rough circles.

She whimpers, lifting one leg to give me more room to open her. To savor her.

“It’s Christmas, my perfect puppet.”

My words have her going rigid against my hand, but I use her spread thighs to slide two fingers inside her and hook them upward, causing her to wiggle and moan.

“It’s Christmas, my puppet, and I don’t want to kill you. ”

“You don’t?” she breathes, riding my hand like the perfect little whore that she is.

“No. I don’t. I want to lick your cunt until you’re shaking on my tongue, and then I want to sink my cock deep inside it and fuck you until you scream Christmas carols for me. I don’t want to slit your throat. I want to kiss you, tangle my tongue with yours, and swallow those perfect little whimpers you make.”

She whimpers right on cue at my words and my fingers’ increased pace. I bite her shoulder.

“Those whimpers, right there. I want to fucking bottle them so I can listen to them all day long.”

She leans back into my body, opening to me like a flower embracing the sun.

“Please, Cain. Don’t fuck with me, do it.”

I pull my fingers out and drag them across her lips. Her tongue darts out and tastes herself on them before I move over her as she adjusts onto her back.

She slips out of her panties, opening her legs to me and lifting her pretty little cunt to my mouth as I dive into it, lapping at her like she’s the last woman on earth.

It’s never been like this before, and even though I hate to admit to her that I don’t want her dead, I need her to know.

I need her to realize we have to figure this out. What the fuck am I going to do with her?

“Fuck me, Cain. Master, please, fuck me,” she reaches for me, fisting my hair and yanking my face off her pussy. I’m glistening in her arousal as I climb up her body and take her mouth with a bruising kiss.

She never once bristles at her flavor on my tongue, only deepens the kiss, shimmies against me, and moans when I flick my tongue against hers.

My cock tips inside her with the help of my hand, and she ripples around me in a symphony of muscle convulsions.

“Goddamnit, you feel so fucking good,” I grit out, grabbing her hips and squeezing as I pound into her, watching my cock disappear.

“What are you going to do to me, Cain?” she whispers, cupping my face with her tiny hands and pinning me with a glare as somehow our connection deepens at the moment, my pace changing to reflect it.

It feels raw and unyielding, like the sun. I can’t look away.

I grind and thrust, drive, and swirl my hips and fuck her any way I know how to as she closes her eyes in bliss and wraps her arms around my neck.

“I can’t let you go, darling puppet. I can’t ever let you go!”

I’m so close, and so is she.

She’s so close that she doesn’t reply to my admission.

“Come for me, you filthy fuck puppet. Come for me and milk my fucking cock. Take me with you,” I breathe, barely containing the need to spill inside her.

She cries out, shattering around me as I let go of my ends, cock erupting inside her as I slow into jerky strokes I can’t control.

“Holy fucking hell,” I groan.

She opens her eyes and smirks, and I shake my head, flipping her over and driving into her from behind shallowly as I lay atop her.

I lean down, lips at her ear. “I’m not fucking done with you yet, my little whore.”

She doesn’t give a rebuttal, only lifts her ass so I can sink deeper inside her, inviting me into the cavernous pits of her body.

I grab onto two of her piercings for leverage, causing her to cry out.

“There you are, puppet. Come back to me from your haze, have you? Beg me not to rip these out, darling. Fucking beg me.”

We fucked into the afternoon before we meandered to the shower and washed off, both silent in the aftermath of what happened all morning.

This is the best Christmas I’ve ever had, and yet, I’m more confused than I’ve ever been.

I meant what I said.

I can’t let her go. But to keep her forever would raise too many flags. There are no guarantees she won’t run to the authorities the first chance she gets .

I have nothing over her to keep her silent. To live my life without her having tasted her, too, would be pure agony. If I were to offer her a proper relationship with me, though, would she take it?

Who’s to say she’s not faking her interest in me? While I pride myself on being an insightful man with preternatural instincts, maybe I’m too enamored with her for my own good.

Maybe I’m too close to this and not thinking clearly.

No. That would mean she’s dazzled me with her pussy, and that just doesn’t happen to the likes of me.

I feel as though what I have built inside of me is more profound than the sexual shit, and that’s what’s fucking confusing. Because I’ve never had feelings for anyone.

Even when Salice at work tried her best to date me, I felt nothing. Sure, I sunk inside her lithe body that she offered up willingly to get some pressure off myself, but that was it.

I've never connected to anyone like I have with Grace.

I likely never will again, either.

She's it for me, and the thought has me reeling.

I'm ten years old, in the closet, with one eye pinned to the scene beyond it.

I haven't felt fear in a while, and I can't say that I want to feel it again.

"Cain?" Grace's voice has me shaking away from my anxious thoughts and looking at her where she's exiting my bedroom .

She's in my sweatpants and a T-shirt. I hadn't thought to reconnect her strings to her piercings, and now I'm glad I hadn't. Though, it's ignorant. She could've left me.

She comes to the chair where I am in the living room and straddles over me to sit down. "Do you want to talk about it?"

"About what?"

"About what you said in the bedroom earlier. About how you don't want to let me go."

"I'm scared, Grace. I've never admitted that to someone, but you scare me."

She laughs, and the sound of anger roils my veins.

Before I think twice about it, I grasp her throat in my hand, cutting off her oxygen. Her eyes light with heat.

“What are you laughing at? You find me funny, Grace?”

She licks her lips, and my cock stirs.

It's never sated. It always wants to be inside her. Have more of her.

I release her throat. “You see? Do you see who I am? With you, I'm more raw, more myself. How am I ever to stuff this part of me back down if you're not dead, darling? I need you gone to return to life as it always is.”

“But why?” she asks. “Why do you have to go back to it? Why can't you be yourself at home with me and be Dr. Mordova at work with them? Those peasants don't need to see you as I see you, Cain. You save those bits for me. You don't need to repress it and save it for one week a year. You come home and fuck me, cut me, slap me, do whatever you need to do to me to feel alive. To feel happiness. Then, you go to work in the morning with my scent on your lips, the feel of me on your cock, and you save lives. That's what you do.”

Her words awaken the beast in my chest, and he rolls his neck in answer.

“It sounds great, puppet. But it can't happen. Be honest. You're going to run from me the first chance that you get. You're going to call the police, rat me out. I'll rot in a cell, fisting my dick to thoughts of you, coming all over concrete walls and writing your name in it, night after agonizing night.”

Her cheeks heat with blush, and I rub my thumb over it as if some will sink into my skin.

When I glide my thumb over her bottom lip, she opens for me, a small breathy exhale billowing out.

I only have another week of vacation before I have to go back to real life. I give myself only two weeks each year: one to hunt and play and one to preserve my puppet.

She's made it to Christmas and is still alive. But before New Year's, I have to kill her.

We both know she's going to run.

"Run along, puppet. Go to bed."

She opens her mouth to give a rebuttal, and I shake my head once, the look on my face warning her not to push me tonight. I'm too on the edge. I don't trust what I'll do if she continues.

"Can I sleep with you tonight, master?" she leans in, her lips dusting over mine. The whispers of her scent curl around me, and I breathe them in deeply.

"Yes. But you'd best be bare for me when I get up there, understand?"

"Yes, master."

She slides off my lap and up the staircase, but I don't follow her with my gaze as I usually would, and that's where I fuck up.

Even as my brain says that we could try it her way, her next move solidifies her death.

Her scream carries down the stairs, and I sit rigid as I turn my head slowly, knowing just what my puppet has found.

I sigh as I stand, turning for the stairs and taking them two by two.

She's backing away from the open door, the one I expressly told her to stay the fuck away from. She backs into my chest, and I walk her into the room, flicking the light switch.

"Now you see me, don't you, Grace darling? This is Cain Mordova, doctor and serial killer. This is who I am, puppet."

Her eyes roam over where the girls' bones are strung up like full skeleton puppets from my ceiling. All nine of my past victims. It had taken time and a lot of effort to have them preserved and beautifully hung in my time capsule of death.

"Do you see why I know you'll run, Grace? Do you understand now? "

She's shivering against me, sobbing as she looks her fill.

When she sidesteps me and rushes into my bedroom, I know I'll have to reconnect her strings tonight.

My puppet broke the rules and is now a liability again.

I take one look backward as I switch off the light and shut the door behind me, heading towards my bedroom.

I've been grappling with how badly I want to keep her, but now I know self-preservation will allow me to do what I need and keep me on my path.

“Take your shirt off, puppet. Master needs to string you up again,” I say as I enter the bedroom.

When I step in, however, something crashes over the back of my head, and I slump to the ground.

Grace steps over me, clocking me once more, this time harder.

As my vision fades and I fight to hang on, I realize I was right about her.

She’s going to unravel me.

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Standing over Cain, my hands shake, lamp in hand.

For a moment, I freeze. Looking down at him, I realize he's still breathing.

I haven't killed him.

Thank God.

I can't be him. What I saw in that room shocked me. I don't know how many of his skeletal puppets are hanging from the ceiling in there, but they're someone's family. People are missing them, all while they hang there like bones in an anatomy lab.

All because they crossed paths with this psycho before Christmas.

It's a few minutes before I drop the lamp and head for the stairs. I shove past the closed door where the women are dangling like good little puppets for him .

It takes me far too long to find his truck keys, and I continue to listen and watch for him.

There had been no time to bind him up, no way to ensure I had time to do what I needed to get free. When I finally found them hidden beneath a fruit bowl in the kitchen, I made for the door, hurrying like my life depended on it.

Because it does.

Cranking up his truck, I quickly lock the doors, back up, and turn toward the road.

The back tires spin out, digging into the yard as I make my hasty exit, turning back toward the way I came.

The truck is a manual, but lucky for me and unlucky for my kidnapper, my uncle taught all of us kids in the family to drive a stick. Because of his love for imported cars, he said everyone needed to know if they were ever in a pinch and required the skill.

I've never been so thankful for his wisdom as I am right now as I shift into third and continue toward town.

I don't have any of my things or phone, and I need help. I have no map, GPS, or way to get to my mom's house.

I need to find the police station.

Even though I know I have his only vehicle—or what I hope is his only vehicle—I keep my eyes flicking between the road and the rearview mirror.

I'd been lucky; he seemed to have some weakness for me, and because of it, he had unhooked me.

There would've been no escaping without it .

I can't stop seeing the bones hanging in that room in my head. Over and over, they dangle on their strings, and I can't make the thoughts cease.

Tears flow down my face, and there's nothing I can do to make them stop.

When I finally find the police station, I zip into a space.

Shutting off the truck, I try to gain my composure. It's the first time I've realized I'm in a bra and panties with no shoes. The hoops running my arms, back, and shoulders look like I had a run-in with someone out of a horror film.

But I guess I did.

The town looks more alive now.

People are walking the streets, and I gain more than a few looks as I get out of the truck and walk toward the police station entrance.

"Ma'am, are you alright?" a female officer from behind the desk asks me as I reach the middle of the room and collapse to my knees, relieved to be in civilization again.

I never thought I'd see the outside world again.

Not if Cain had his way.

"Help," I beg, unable to lift back onto my feet.

"Steve, help me, would you?" the officer shouts, hefting me the best she can.

A broad man comes rushing over, keys rattling on his belt as he helps her get me into a chair next to a desk in an office down a cold, bright hallway .

"Are you alright? Steve, get her a blanket." She rubs my arms before her hands bump over my piercings, and her eyes go wide. "What the hell."

"You don't have long. He's unconscious, but he won't stay that way. You need to hurry. There are bones," I'm rambling, but there's so much to say and so little time.

“Bones where? You’re not making any sense.”

A blanket wraps around me, and hot coffee is placed before me.

I grab it, warming my hands.

“Follow this road until you hit Panther Trail. There’s an abandoned house. A man has been holding me there. Cain Moldova. He’s a killer. An awful man. He’s been killing for years,” I spew out rapidly.

“Are there more like you that didn’t escape?” the woman asks me.

I shake my head. “No. It was just me. He says he only hunts once a year.”

The male officer who had been writing on a pad stops. He puts the pad and pen back in his shirt pocket. “What’s your name, sweetheart? So we can make sure we get you where you belong safely.”

“Grace. Grace Wilcott,” I answer, feeling a giddy rush thrum through me as coffee heats my body.

I’m safe.

I’m alive.

The first chance I get, I’m going home, too.

Fuck this place.

I’m dressed in an orange jumpsuit, looking one step away from handcuffs, but there’s food in my belly, and I’m warm. Two detectives are sitting across from me. One is

eyeing me as if he doesn't believe a word coming out of my mouth, and the other is dutifully taking notes.

I told them everything.

Every detail, from getting run off the road to how I escaped.

"Are you going to send officers?" I ask.

The detectives eye one another before the larger of the two sighs and sits back in his chair.

He has thin hair, thick-framed black glasses, and is skinny as a rail. His suit hangs off him like he got it from the rack and never had it tailored to fit him. It makes him look sickly. He runs his hand over his clean-shaven face as if he has a perfectly trimmed beard.

Cain and his tight-bearded face flutter through my mind, and I shudder in disgust as I close the door on the thought.

"Well, it's a little more complicated than that, Ms. Wilcott."

The way he says my name has my stomach tightening. It's that feeling you get when something's wrong, but you don't know what it is. Instincts are rarely wrong, and I keep my hackles up as I pay close attention to mine .

"How is it complicated? I was held prisoner, pierced, molested. I escaped. I saw multiple bodies hanging from the ceiling. You're telling me you don't have the right to go out there and check it out?"

He sits forward, his thin hands running over his pen as he toys with it back and forth

in his hands.

“This is a tiny town, Ms. Wilcott. That house you’re describing is abandoned. Has been for many years.”

I scoff, crossing my arms in defense. “Yet it has electricity running to it and smoke coming from the chimney,” I counter.

“We sent two units by the house shortly after you arrived, ma’am. The house is abandoned.”

His words make my ears ring so loudly that whatever he says afterward is barely audible.

How the hell could Cain have cleared out that quickly? There’s no way.

“And my car?” I squeak.

They look at one another. “No car was found, ma’am.”

“Did you even look?” I accuse, getting louder than I mean to.

I likely look like a fucking mental case, and the more I defend myself, the worse it gets.

His cheeks heat with an angry flush. “Of course, we looked. We do our due diligence here in Dunhaven, but your claims are unfounded.”

“Yeah, sure you do,” I mutter, rolling my eyes.

The way I hear it, all they do is look the other way and hide like scared little bitches

for one week out of the year.

“What’s that supposed to mean, young lady?” the other officer asks. A man in his late fifties or early sixties, with greying hair and beard, and a stomach that says he likes beer a bit too much.

“Nothing,” I reply, sighing. “Look, can you just get me home? Can I call my mom?”

The thinner of the two stands, heading for the door. “You know her address, so we can arrange to get you to her house, right?”

I nod. “I do.”

The other detective slides his pad across the table toward me, dropping a pen on top. “Here. Give us her phone number and address, Ms. Wilcott.”

I jot down all my mom’s information before the two detectives leave me sitting in the room, mind reeling and stomach in knots.

They made me feel as if I was the problem. It was like I was on trial when I was the one who escaped.

The skinny detective, who finally tells me his name is Detective Anderson, comes in an hour later with dinner.

He said I’ll soon be transported home, and my mom is thrilled to have found me.

Once my belly is full, I can barely keep my eyes open. It’s as if all the adrenaline left me once I knew I was safe, and now I’m in the aftermath stage of recovery, feeling as though I’m hungover.

A fear hangover .

I lay my head on the table and drift off until Detective Anderson comes for me a while later.

I'm put into the back seat of a cop car, assured that it's only because they have no other vehicles to take me to my mom's house, and I lay down and close my eyes again, completely exhausted.

When I'm jolted awake only moments later, I hear the detective speaking to someone, but his voice is muffled.

"She's a little worn out, but we can help you get her inside," he says, and I try to sit up against the haze of exhaustion.

What the hell is the matter with you? Wake up. You're home.

But the voice that skims across my skin leaves an ache when the backdoor opens.

"Thank you, Detective. I do appreciate your fine police work. And my truck?"

"It'll be towed here before dark. Make sure you keep a tighter leash on your belongings, Dr. Mordova. I'd hate to do this again," Detective Anderson says.

"What? Wait... no! You were supposed to take me home?!" I try to kick, but I'm too uncoordinated.

I feel as if I've been drugged.

My mind fumbles as I try to get away from Cain, who reaches in and grabs my ankles, tugging me out of the car and onto the cold ground.

“I’ll be much more careful with her from here on out, Detective. The mom?” Cain says.

The detective sighs. “We’ll handle it. ”

“See that you do. How is your daughter, by the way? Nellie, is it?” Cain asks the man, and even I see the fear dancing in the Detective’s eyes.

“She’s responding to treatment very well. Thank you for asking,” he replies.

I might be drugged, but even I know Cain doesn’t care about this man’s daughter. It was a reminder of what’s at stake if the good detective doesn’t keep his mouth shut.

“Have a good night, Dr. Mordova.”

“You too, Detective. Drive safe.”

Cain hefts me over his shoulders, and I don’t fight or give him hell.

Defeat curls through me as whatever drugs the detectives had snuck into my food cause me to float in a thick, clotted smog. I’m a prisoner once again.

One with no one around to help me.

I’m astonished that the place I thought was going to be my saving grace brought me back to my killer.

I’m resigned to the idea at this point.

Cain Mordova, M.D., is going to kill me.

Then, he will go back to his life as if nothing happened.

As if I never existed.

That's the saddest part.

I drift under the weight of drugs and anxiety as Cain drops me onto the bed.

I'm listless as he hooks my strings back painstakingly, not forgetting the ones on my arms this time, doing his due diligence.

"I once had strings, but now I'm free. There are no strings on me," I sing drunkenly, remembering a song from a Marvel movie I'd watched on television and thinking of how funny the connection is to my current predicament.

"No, beautiful darling. You're not free. You never will be again."

My eyes grow too heavy to fight, and I close them.

He says, "You are my wicked puppet, and I'm never letting you go."

A shiver moves through my marrow as I drift into the space where I'm not a prisoner and have no strings.

Even if it's only momentarily.

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Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:07 am

It's been hours. Grace is finally coming around, and won't she be surprised at the situation she's gotten herself into? Her legs are now pierced with thick hoops, thick enough to bear her weight when I need her incapacitated. New strings rated for a decent amount of weight hold them open and suspended in the air. A pussy clamp keeps her pretty pink cunt open for me, and for good measure, I've pierced and strung strings to three hoops running her sternum.

"Cain?" Her raspy voice runs its fingers down the hard length of me, and I close my eyes against its touch.

"Good morning, little puppet. Or should I say good night? It's after midnight, after all."

I've had to sit here and look at her, suspended and drugged, the entire time drooling at the lush allure of her pussy and delirious, relaxed state .

"What have you done?" she breathes, looking herself over.

"Seems the strings you had weren't enough, darling."

She lifts her head off the pillow, her chest heaving as she looks at the clamp over her core.

"Now that you're home and alert, I think we should discuss what happened between us, don't you?" I ask her, getting up from the chair I'd placed at the end of the bed and ascending the steps. I sit on the edge of the bed, and she shifts.

She can't go anywhere, but instinct makes us forget reason even when it's right before us.

"Do you know why you have more strings? Why your beautiful cunt is clamped open?" I ask her, running my fingertip over her nipple in circles.

She tries to keep her breathing even and fails. I keep my smirk inward.

I don't want to boast. Not yet.

I need to show her that she's already in too deep with me. There's no running away. There is no freedom other than the one I offer.

"I tried to escape," she says, and she can't hide the lusty dip in her tone.

Her nipple is hard as stone, and I lean back to look over her pussy.

"Mmm, can't hide anything from me now," I tell her, watching as she grows wetter, glistening for me like a frosted glass of my favorite bourbon.

"You didn't try to escape, puppet. You did escape. "

She licks her lips as I reach over and run my fingertip over her belly button, drawing circles around it, relishing in the goosebumps rising to meet my fingerprint.

"You escaped only to find the world is unforgiving, didn't you, puppet?"

She swallows audibly, and it's as if I can feel her throat constrict on my cock because it jumps at the sound.

"Answer me, puppet. You've already been a bad girl. You don't want to add to your

indiscretions, do you?”

She shakes her head, watching as I slide my fingers lower, dancing them over the mound of flesh over where the clamp sits.

“I did. They brought me back to you. Back to hell,” she answers, but even as she tries to offend me, her breathing is hitched, and her pupils are blown wide.

“Why do you fight it?” I ask her, growing infuriated as she denies what’s right in front of her, what she feels.

“Fight what?” she asks, choking on air as I rim my finger around her exposed, sopping entrance—never entering, only toying.

“What you so clearly feel.”

“I don’t know what you mean,” she whines before biting it back.

I roll my eyes, pinching her clit between two fingers, stiff and firm. “Stop lying to yourself and stop lying to me. Your pupils are the size of saucers, your nipples are hard as stone, and your cunt is dripping and soaking my sheets. You want me. You want to fuck a murderer. One that strings his victims up like puppets, even after expiration. You are as deranged as I am, darling. Stop denying it.”

She shudders, unable to contain it, and I smile.

A satisfying smirk of power.

She’s the only one who’s affected me this way, and it makes me positively fucking mad.

“And what about you?” she asks, and I let her clit go.

“Me? We’re talking about you, puppet.”

She lifts her head, her beautiful hazel eyes boring a hole through me. It makes me feel vulnerable, and I try my damndest to swat the feeling away.

“You didn’t kill me on schedule. Those detectives were surprised when I told them where to find you. At first, I thought they were surprised that a local doctor would do the things you’ve done. Now that I’m home, I realize their surprise was because they couldn’t fathom that you haven’t killed me yet. Why would that be, you fucking psychopath?”

I lick my lips, dropping over her and leaning against my hand, which drapes over her stomach. Pressing my face in close, I drop my tone an octave. “Don’t forget your place, puppet.”

“How can I? I’m hanging from the fucking ceiling,” she counters.

“Does it bother you? That you haven’t killed me? That you want to keep me? It does, doesn’t it? You’ve got this entire town in check. Everyone is in the palm of your hand, doing exactly as you command. But I was unexpected. Now, what are you going to do?”

She’s stumped me, and it pisses me off. I’m flustered and panting, leaning closer to her lips as she lifts her lip and snarls at me.

“We’re both fucked up,” she says, dropping her head back onto her pillow.

I adjust my cock beneath my jeans as I slide off the bed and pad over to my dresser. The first drawer has all kinds of fun devices. I look back at her clamped pussy,

licking my lips as I choose wisely.

Grabbing a vibrator that will sit inside her and blow her fucking mind as it sucks her clit at the same time, I shut the drawer behind me.

“I thought I was in trouble,” she muses, her voice cutting through my fraying nerves.

“You are, puppet. You’re in so much fucking trouble.”

“Then why are you going to give me pleasure?”

I get back on the bed, insert the toy inside of her, situating the sucker over her clit as I palm the remote in my other hand.

I waggle it in the air so she can see it. “There’s a fine line between pain and pleasure. One that if you skirt too close, pleasure becomes torture. You’re going to learn about that line today.”

“Cain,” she warns, but she can’t hide the thrum of excitement and lust in her tone.

“I’ll let you enjoy this first one, puppet.” I click the vibrator to life, slowly moving through the speeds to get her acclimated.

Laying next to her on my side, I watch her writhe.

“It’s too much, Cain,” she whimpers, facing me.

I click the button again, shaking my head. “No. It’s just right.”

The closer she gets, the more she moves on her strings.

“Careful, puppet. Those strings are rated for a lot of weight. You won’t break them. You will, however, rip hoops from your flesh if you’re not careful.”

The ones in her arms tug taut as she arches off the bed into the toy’s vibration.

“Cain, please,” she moans.

I shift closer, rimming her ear with my tongue. “Go on, darling. Come for me.”

It’s as if she was waiting for permission. She screams and shatters, bucking on all her strings, and I watch like she’s my orchestra and I’m her conductor.

“It’s too sensitive. Cain, please, turn it off.” She’s wiggling on the bed, forgetting how much damage she could cause if her flesh gives way and her hoops rip through.

“Remember that line we talked about? You’re not close yet, but you will be.”

Turning the toy up all the way, I inch closer, slinking my hand down to her ass below the clamp. My finger rings her tight hole before pressing inside. Her cum has slithered downward, and I press it inside with a deep thrust of my finger, causing her to lift her head off the bed.

Her mouth is wide open, her beautiful blonde hair smattered across her sweaty skin. Her eyes are as feral as a lioness wandering on a fresh kill.

“You see,” I tell her, pumping in and out of her ass, feeling the vibrations of the toy trembling against my finger. “The more you come, the higher you go, the more sensitive your body gets, the less it wants pleasure. Hence, the torture. I’m going to fuck you until you’re well over that line, puppet. And then, when you think I’m done, I’m going to fuck you more.”

“Cain, please!” Tears are running down her cheeks, and I want nothing more than for her to cry until her well runs dry.

Even though I can’t kill her for some ungodly fucking reason, I can take her close enough. Take her right to the edge of life to watch her dangle there for me.

Knowing my hand is the one who controls the strings is intoxicating.

Part of me wishes I’d have known it could be this good. The other part of me knows it’s only this good with her .

As I stretch her ass with another finger, she comes, her cum gushing out around the toy, warming my fingers as I tug them out, gather it up, and shove it back inside her ass.

“God, please! Please, stop!” Her begging only makes me feral, and a deep sense of animalistic power burrows through me like a mole seeking shelter.

“Never,” I growl, removing my fingers. Slinking down in between her suspended legs, I free my cock.

I don’t prepare her. Shoving inside her ass, the vibrations of the toy nearly overwhelm me as much as the tightness of her muscles that work to invite me home.

“Fuckkkkk, puppet,” I groan, letting my head fall back as I slide in and out of her perfect ass hole, the toy juddering and making me crazy at the feel.

“That h—hurts,” she whimpers, renewed tears falling over her flushed cheeks.

“Good,” I grit out.

Falling forward, I use one hand to unhook the strings running up her sternum one by one.

When I fall over her body, dropping onto my elbows, she's too exhausted to fight me when my lips crash down on hers.

"Good girl, your ass takes me so fucking well. Do you know how good you feel?"

She lifts and retakes my lips, tongue lashing at mine. I swallow her moan when I twirl mine around the tip of hers, driving her wild for me as I fuck her ass hard and deep.

She's close again, as her whimpers are growing needy and hungry.

I pull back, listening to her panted breaths and pleas of longing. "You filthy little fuck doll, you like having a murderer's cock up your ass. Look how flushed you are. How close to coming all over my cock you are."

"No," she breathes, unable to help it when the overwhelming orgasm washes through her like the roar of a waterfall. Her screams are loud this time, her ass tightening around me in mind-numbing waves.

I break, thrusting forward as I fill her ass full of cum.

"Do you feel my cum inside you, puppet?" I manage, breathing through each throb with gritted teeth.

She nods, delirious.

I lean into her face, nuzzling her nose. "Is it darkening your soul? Your good nature?"

She sobs as I run my tongue up her cheek and collect her tears.

“You’re so fucking pretty when you cry for me. You’ll be prettier when you’re dripping with my cum, though.”

“Please, Cain. I’m sorry, turn it off. Please,” she begs, her body shaking uncontrollably on her strings.

I tug out her ass, sitting back on my haunches as I look over her body. Her pussy is swollen, her ass rimmed in red where I hadn’t been gentle with her.

“Push it out, puppet.”

“W—What?” she cries.

“Push my cum out of your ass. I want to see my evil seed seeping from you.”

She seems mortified by the request, but I watch her listen like the best little puppet and work her muscles.

A stream of white leaves her ass and slides down toward the bed .

Leaning forward once more, I gather it with the head of my cock, slathering it all over my shaft before reaching up and dialing the clamp looser that holds her pussy lips open for me.

I remove the clamp and pull out the toy.

“God,” she breathes in relief. “Thank you.”

“Don’t thank me yet, darling. I’m nowhere near done with you.”

I don’t let the words settle before I slide my cock inside her swollen, battered pussy

and close my eyes against her mesmerizing cry of anguish.

“Good fucking girl, puppet. Now show your master how sorry you are. Milk my cock with your perfect cunt,” I groan, fucking into her, relentless and rough, despite all I’ve already done to her.

“Cain!”

This time, it wasn’t a plea. It was a shout of rapture.

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Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:07 am

My body is beyond done with Cain's torture, but even so, I'm going to come again. This time, around his thick cock. He's pistoning into me like his life depends on it. It's like he can't get enough of me. His need and attraction for me is intoxicating.

I can't breathe around it.

"My beautiful fuck doll," Cain growls, cupping my face in his hands and dropping his knees open, grinding into me like the world is crumbling around us and we're in a time crunch to finish.

What's bothersome to my psyche and sanity is that if the world were tumbling down around us, this is where I'd want to be.

I don't know how to reconcile this need for him without knowing who he is and what he does.

No, I do know. I can't.

"Get out of your head, and clamp that perfect pussy around my cock, or I'll put the toy back in," Cain says, pulling me from my dancing thoughts.

"Please, no," I whimper, unable to say more than that with the way he's fucking me.

It's hard even to catch my breath.

"You stay here with me when I fuck you, darling." He drops his face into the crook of my neck and bites down hard.

I cry out as my next orgasm rolls through me, mowing me down and making my vision blur. “Cain!”

“Fuck, it’s never enough. I could listen to you scream my name over and over until the Devil came to get me for my sins, puppet.”

He continues his onslaught, his cock battering my sensitive insides until it once again feels so fucking good.

“You come for me again like a good girl, and I’ll let you sleep.”

His offer makes me feel like the end is in sight. I can see the light at the end of the dark tunnel.

“I can’t. Not again, Cain, please, stop,” I beg helplessly.

He shakes his head, sweat dripping off him and painting my body.

“Give me what I want, puppet.”

There’s no threat following his words, but it’s laced in his tone.

His hand slides between us, his mouth dropping open to mirror mine as he rubs over my clit in delirious swirls of torment .

It’s like he knows my body better than I do. Like it’s his instrument to play, and I’ve been wandering through my entire adult life, unsuspecting that this kind of pleasure was out there.

“Come on, pretty darling. You can do it; come for me again, and you’ll be wrapped in my warmth, covered in blankets, and dozing sleepily before you can blink.”

The rapture he promises has my eyes growing heady, my body needy and begging, but I'm afraid of the next orgasm. Fearful of how powerful it's going to feel.

I've never come so much with a man before, and just my luck that the man who knows how to make my body break into bits is a fucking psychopath.

My belly warms, and my spine tingles, and I lift my head to look down at where his hand is strumming my clit, mouth hung open in disbelief.

"There it is, puppet. Give it to me. Come all over my cock again like a good little girl."

This one fights him, sitting right at the surface but not breaking through the water the entire time. My body burns and aches. I'm panting by the time I come, screaming incoherently and begging for mercy as Cain presses inside me and comes, his cock now claiming another part of my body.

I'll go to bed with his cum leaking out of my ass and core, sore and used more than I've ever been.

With this knowledge, I still loved every second of what he did.

I fucking hate myself for it, too .

I couldn't believe the cops brought me back here, and I worried what he was going to do to me. There's still blood on him from where I sliced open his head with the lamp.

Never in my wildest dreams did I think he was going to make me come until I was crying and pleading for him to stop.

"Now you know what lies beyond the line of pleasure, love."

As he unhooks the new piercings at the front of my ankles and eases my tingling legs onto the bed, I reel internally from everything he'd just done.

However, what bothers me most about everything that just transpired wasn't even the things he did or how I responded.

It was that he called me love.

It's afternoon, and I'm washed and fed. I sit at the table next to Cain as he finishes his lunch.

We haven't spoken much since last night. I fell into a deep sleep and woke to him wrapped around my body as if I were his teddy bear.

Do psychopaths like stuffed animals?

The thought has my mind going in different directions as Cain clears his throat and sits back in his chair, quickly dropping his hand onto my thigh .

"Today, little puppet, we're going to burn what's left of your old life."

I swallow. "What?"

There's a fucked up, dark part of me that had come to terms with the fact I was going to end up with the rest of the women in that room of his. Another puppet in his collection.

Once he uses me up, he'll kill me and move on. Going back to his life as if nothing ever happened. It seems he has other plans, however. It makes me very unsettled.

I shift on the table as he sits forward, running a finger down my cheek.

“I love it when you blush. Makes you look so... alive,” he finishes.

I swallow.

“Is that new to you? Liking to see your victims with blood running beneath their skin?”

He rolls his eyes. “Don’t be a smart ass. I’m not in the mood for it today. Not after all the shit you pulled yesterday.”

“How am I to burn my old life, Cain?” I ask, sighing. “It’s not as if I can become something new.”

He beams, and my chest stings.

“But you can. I have a connection that is getting you all new papers. You’re going to become a brand new girl, puppet. New name, new home?—with me, of course.”

I swallow. With him?

“You’re going to keep me? Alive?”

It’s not the worst possible outcome .

So much is rushing through my head that I can’t riddle it all out right now. Not when his hand is rubbing up and down my exposed thigh.

He let me off all but three strings on my back and allowed me to dress in one of his shirts, which swallowed me whole.

“I am. I can’t get rid of you, Grace. Not when you’re perfect for me.”

“Well, I’m not going to live with a killer. You can’t change the past, but you’re not going to keep killing girls,” I tell him.

“And who’s going to stop me, Grace? You?”

I scoff, slipping off the table and stepping away from him. “You want me to be your little fuck doll while you fuck and kill other women?”

His face twists with anger as he stands, looming over me. “I’d never touch another soul sexually, Grace. I’m yours. Haven’t you realized that? The day I didn’t slit your fucking throat, I became yours. You blatantly disregarded it, however, and ran.”

Despite logic, my stomach curls with guilt. “I?—”

He shushes me with a finger over my lips. “Ah, ah, don’t worry yourself, puppet. I’ve forgiven you. After all, you were such a good girl for me this morning. I bet my cum is still seeping out of you even now, isn’t it?”

Blood paints my cheeks again, and when I try to look away from him, he captures my face in his hand, cinching my cheeks hard as he snarls. “Look at me when I’m speaking to you. ”

I fucking hate that my pussy throbs the meaner and the more wicked he treats me. I press my thighs together.

“Sorry, master,” I say softly.

He rolls his eyes. “Don’t bait me.”

I bite my bottom lip, moving my thighs to work some tension out as he lets my face go.

“Now, we’re going to need to get going. You won’t be on your strings for this field trip, but you’ll wear a leash for me like a good girl. We wouldn’t want you getting any more ideas, would we?”

A fucking leash? Is he kidding me?

The stone-cold look in his eyes tells me he is not kidding, and he moves to the kitchen to place our dishes in the sink before padding to the bedroom.

Since I escaped, I feel we’ll be sharing a room. He’s not going to let me out of his sight.

I follow after him into the bedroom. “So, I’ll spend the rest of my life on these strings?” I ask him, plopping onto the bed as he digs through dresser drawers.

“No, you won’t. Until you’re trained and behaved, we will live here, and then, when I think you’re trustworthy, I’ll take you home with me. You’ll be untethered, puppet. Free.”

He snatches a leash out of a drawer and turns, a glint in his eye that has me biting back a gasp of excitement.

I hate that he’s changing me into this creature who can’t see that he’s wrong for me.

That this is wrong.

He’s a killer .

He sidesteps the stairs leading into the bed, his height allowing him to still come face to face with me on the edge. His hand juts out before I can blink, hand grasping onto my pussy like a clamp.

“Ah,” I breathe, ending on a whimper that makes me feel vulnerable as fuck as his eyes darken, his pupils going blown.

“That right there makes me think you’ll eventually be my good little puppet, Grace. You’re going to love me one day. You’re going to behave so well for me because you know how I torture, and you know how I fuck. You also know how it feels to be filled with my cum, my thick cock, and you know no one else owns you the way I do, darling. There will come a day when you’re free of your strings and leash and crawling to me on command like a good girl. I, for one, can’t wait.”

His fingers have been rubbing over my traitorous pussy as it grew wetter and wetter with each word he uttered. All the while, my mouth was dropped open, panting at this speech.

“Now, let’s get this on you, shall we?” He works the leash over my throat before removing the strings from my hoops, and when I’m secured, he stands back, holding the other end of the leash with a gleam glowing in his ice-cold eyes.

“Fuck, you’re so beautiful.”

I can’t deny how it feels to be the one coveted by Cain Mordova, and I can’t make sense of it.

His presence is like this overwhelming thing that beats you over the head and makes you forget all reason and morality. No matter what he’s done or will do in the future, I desperately want everything he said.

I step down the bed stairs, standing straight as he still grazes his eyes over me. My teeth sink into my lower lip as he clucks his tongue.

“I can’t help myself, puppet.”

I don't understand what he means until he steps closer, eyes turning downward to look at me from his massive height. "Kneel."

My knees buckle before I permit them, knowing who their boss is. I drop to the floor, looking up at him, as I'm caught in his aqua stare.

My heart flutters and my stomach grows warmer the longer we look at one another. Me, submitted to him. Him, holding the reins.

Before I question what I'm doing, I reach out and run my hands over his hard length, feeling powerful as he steps closer, hissing.

I rub my cheek over his clad cock, feeling as he growls low in his chest as it vibrates through his entire body.

"Puppet," he warns, and I turn my face, biting it through the fabric of his jeans. "Fuckkkkk," he moans, and my eyes grow heavy.

At this very moment, I lean into the idea that this life won't be as horrible as previously thought.

After all, there's power in being a powerful man's right-hand, isn't there? At least, it feels like there is, even with my knees bent to him.

"You won't kill any more girls without me present," I tell him, running my tongue over his hardness through his jeans, flicking my eyes up to look at him. "Do you agree?"

"Puppet," he warns again, his tone firmer, darker.

"No. If you agree to this one thing, you'll get me unbidden. I won't fight it anymore."

“If you think you’re going to change who I am...”

I shake my head. “I’m not trying to, Cain. I’m attracted to this version of you. For you to come back to this place without me wouldn’t feel right. I don’t know the other man outside of here.”

“Well, puppet, having you will allow me to be more of myself all year.”

His words make pride well in my chest. I don’t dwell on the feeling, though. I just let it settle.

“You’ll still be killing, though, won’t you? You said I wouldn’t change you. If you stop killing, then you’ve changed.”

He shrugs. “I don’t know, puppet. I don’t know that the urge will remain with you as my perfect girl. I think that all along, I was looking for you. Each girl that I took, each one that I killed, wasn’t what I needed. They weren’t perfect.”

My heart slams into my ribs in loud, its meaningful strikes nearly cracking bone. I almost can’t hear him over its beats .

“They wouldn’t submit. They wouldn’t kneel. They didn’t scream my name when they came. Some didn’t come.” He rolls his eyes.

The knowledge makes my stomach churn, but my body thrum.

It’s only me that’s his perfect girl, and I’m giddy that I am.

“Only time will tell where things go between us, darling.”

I lick my lips as my favorite thing he calls me falls from his mouth.

“But,” he adds, reaching down and cupping my face. “I will only kidnap and kill in your presence. I’ll never do anything behind your back.”

I nod, closing my eyes as my leash tugs and yanks me to my feet.

My eyes fly open as his lips crash to mine, his tongue parting them like he’s invading my senses. Slowly, they close again as I wrap my arms around his neck and kiss him back like I haven’t before.

I let go entirely.

If this is my life now, it’s time to embrace it.

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Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:07 am

Looking away from her with that leash around her neck is hard. I lead her out to her Honda Civic behind the house, holding out a gas can towards her as she looks over the wreckage from the night I took her.

It's been nine days since I ran her off the road and dragged her up the hill to Grimrose House, and I don't regret it in the slightest.

She has exceeded every expectation I've ever had. However, I gave up on expecting a thing a long time ago. People have always let me down, not Grace.

She's perfect.

There's a glimmer of awareness in her eyes, too—one that says she'll come around to my lifestyle with time. Grace is a psychopath's dreamgirl, and I'm glad she happened to take a detour through Dunhaven when she did, or I'd have never found her .

That would've been a fucking shame.

“You want me to burn my car?” she asks me, gazing at the can still outstretched in my hand.

“I already put your purse and phone back in there. Your old life will go up in flames. Then we'll go get your new documents.”

She looks back to the car, absently grabbing the can from me as she riddles it all out.

I expected a fight from her. Giving up the past and starting fresh is hard. I know that.

She clears her throat, shuffling toward the car as she pours the gas all over it. Her leash dangles down her back in the wind, her silky blonde hair dancing against the cold breeze.

When the can drips and the car is covered, she tosses it on top of the heap of metal. “What do you want me to light it with?”

I crook my finger, beckoning her toward me.

I give her a match, holding the book to strike against, watching her intently. “Don’t do anything you’ll regret,” I tell her when I watch a flicker of defiance light in her hazel eyes.

She licks her lips, striking the match. She stares into the tiny flame momentarily before turning slowly, protecting it against the wind with her hand as she approaches the symbol of her old life, the old her. When she tosses it, I think the damn thing went out when it doesn’t immediately catch .

Soon, though, the fire bursts to life, and Grace backs toward me, her back hitting my chest.

I lean down. “The fire will burn away all that you were, puppet. You’ll belong to me when you walk home like a good girl on your leash. For good.”

My hand slinks around her front, fingers grabbing at the collar connected to her leash, tugging as a breath escapes her.

I back us away from the car before the gas tank catches. Grace still watches as the flames engulf all she was nine days ago.

Using my hold on her collar, I turn her around, tugging her close.

“What name will you take?” I ask her.

Emotion floats in her eyes, tears brimming. Change is hard even when you know it’s coming, so I’ll allow her the momentary show of weakness even if it grates my nerves.

“What name?” she asks.

I nod. “We’re going to get your new documents today. You’ll need a new name.”

“What name do you want me to take?” Her voice is meek and unsure. I don’t like it—not when I’ve come to like her bratty mouth and witty comebacks.

“Grace, I think. It’s what suits you. You’ll take my last name.”

She swallows against the tips of my fingers curled under her collar. “Grace Moldova.”

I can’t help myself. I growl as I lean down and tug her face to mine.

The car behind us explodes as the fire reaches the fuel tank. Neither of us bristles. We’re too caught up in the fire breeding between us as I hover over her mouth.

“Would you like that, puppet?” I ask her, my lips ghosting over hers.

She nods, pushing forward to close the distance.

I pull back, teasing her—my favorite thing.

A small whimper of need escapes her.

I smirk.

“Will I be your wife or just your plaything?”

She licks her lips, and I wonder what it would be like to be her tongue, to feel each etched crevice of her lips so tenderly.

“You’d be more than my wife, darling.” I tug her back to my mouth, taunting her with a drag of my tongue over her lower lip.

“More than your wife?” she breathes against my mouth.

“I’ll own you. Possess you like you’re a piece of my soul. Our connection will go far beyond a piece of paper, my perfect puppet.”

Her shallow breathing has her grasping for anything she can hold onto, and her hands dig into the sides of my shirt for stability.

When I seal my lips on hers, what’s between us feels like the flames licking at her past right behind us. It’s been frantic with her since I laid eyes on her, and I have a feeling it always will be.

Her tongue glides between my lips greedily, seeking more. Searching. I open and smirk against her kiss as she tosses her arms around my neck, kissing me as if it’s her pass into heaven.

This kiss is the beginning of something, I realize.

She’s letting go of what was and embracing what will be.

I lift her, and she wraps her legs around me.

“I knew you were going to be my perfect girl when I first laid eyes on you,” I tell her, walking down the hill and out of the woods toward my truck.

Dunhaven P.D. returned it to me shortly after they’d brought Grace back.

I drop her onto her feet again and break our heated kiss. “Wait here.”

She looks at me inquisitively as I open the passenger door and rummage in the glove box, snagging handcuffs out and slamming the door behind me as I head back toward her.

She eyes the handcuffs and toys with her collar.

Even though I’d love to hang her from the winch of my tow truck by her collar, it would kill her. Never getting to play with Grace again or feel her cum dripping down my cock would be a damned shame.

“Hands in front of you, puppet.”

She doesn’t hesitate, and something in my chest blooms. I choose to ignore it, working the cuffs on her hands.

“Hands above your head,” I tell her, grabbing the hook and chain on the boom to connect between her cuffs.

Using the buttons on the side of the truck, I tighten the cables holding her, hearing her squeal as tension holds her arms above her head.

I leave her dangling over the ground by a few inches, her shoulders struggling to hang against her weight.

“Fuck, you’re beautiful.”

The words sound foreign from my mouth. They’d even tasted a bit acidic. As much as I’m changing her, she’s fucking with me.

“Cain,” she says, looking apprehensively at how far above the ground she is.

“Mm?” I ask, tugging her pants down and strumming two fingers through her pussy lips.

“You have a thing with strings,” she breathes.

“Strings, cables, chains. Especially when it comes to you,” I admit, relishing in the unholy noise she makes when I glide two fingers inside her heat.

“Why?” she asks as she wraps one of her legs behind my ass to try and encourage me to work my fingers deeper.

I smirk. “I don’t know. Perhaps I enjoy seeing you suspended so I can play with you. Maybe it’s how you look displayed for me—like a flawless painting I get to worship like you’re the stained glass of a gothic cathedral. ”

She scoffs. “Do they have churches in hell?”

I hook my fingers, curling them against her G-spot, making her quiver and cry out. “Behave, darling. Or master won’t let you come.”

“I’m sorry,” she pleads, her body shaking as she loses her grip on me with her leg.

She swings away from me, and I don’t catch her. My fingers slide out of her, and I step back, watching her sway as I lick her flavor off them.

“The things we’re going to do, puppet. The places I’m going to take you...” I trail off as she grapples with her feet to touch the ground, her toes almost making it.

She’s not listening to me.

Stalking closer, I grab onto her collar. “Pay attention to me!” I snarl, pulling her face to face with me.

Her eyes grow heady. “I am paying attention to you, Cain. I’m always paying attention. Even when I’m asleep, I know that you’re near because my body still pays attention. It’s all I can do. You’re becoming the only thing I can give my attention to.”

Her words are filled with malice even though my stomach twists gleefully at them.

“You say it as if you don’t like it.”

“Does anyone like to be consumed by someone to this magnitude?”

Her question becomes a riddle in my brain, swirling my thoughts in circles.

“I do,” I realize. “I think this is what I’ve been searching for, puppet—this enthralling, ardent connection that we have.”

She’s struggling on the tow chain, her shoulders likely burning, and the idea of her pain has blood filling my cock.

I lift her, and she wraps her legs around me, her wet core and shivering body shuddering as my hardness presses against her center.

“Cain, it’s cold.”

Her blatant disregard of my words is welcomed because I don't know what bullshit she has me spewing. I believe it's how she blew up her past to go into the future with me that has me reeling.

Though I've never had a sentimental bone in my body, I know things with her will be different. Choosing to keep her is going to alter my reality. It's already begun.

"Don't worry, darling, I'll keep you warm."

Reaching between us, I work my cock out of my pants, sliding it through her bare lips, working into her entrance.

Warmth encapsulates my length as she swallows me whole.

"Fuck, always so wet for me, puppet."

She has to be aching from her punishment, but she gives no tell she is. Her mouth opens, moans spilling out and swathing around my sick soul as I bend my knees and fuck into her.

My cock thrusts in and out, and her walls ripple around me. My grunts aren't enough to relieve the overwhelming urge to maim, bite, or cut. Neither is the punishing drive of my hips.

"You're too much. This is too fucking much. It wasn't supposed to be this way." My lips spill the truth of the distress plaguing me since I ran her off the road nine days ago.

Running my nose down the underside of her arm, I open my mouth and let my teeth skim over the fabric of her jacket before I bare them and sink them into her body.

Even through the jacket, she feels my bite.

“God, Cain!” It’s not a painful scream but rather a plea for more.

I continue my onslaught on her cheek, and this time, the wail is a gut-wrenching one.

I fuck her harder, reaching between us as I rub her clit, working her closer.

Her head falls back, exposing her throat to me, and I dive in, inhaling her scent.

When my teeth sink into her neck, her sharp cry shoots along my dick as if she’s tugged it.

We come together, the pitiless way I just fucked her, leaving her raw, and she hisses when I pull out of her.

I step back, watching my cum leak out of her pussy and down the inside of her thighs. “Fuck, puppet, I’ve always been one with a preference for blood. I love to watch women bleed, knowing that I caused their pain. But watching you dripping my nut from that perfect cunt makes me feel hysteric. Obsessed. Manic. Push more out for me.”

Even though she’s in pain and struggling on the chains, she spreads her legs the best she can and works her muscles, causing a little gush of cum to expel.

I drop to my knees beneath her, locking eyes with her as she looks down at me, pupils blown as her body shivers in pain. My tongue purls through the mixed flavors of both our cum leaking out of her, savoring our blended tang.

Once I’ve made her come for me again, I unchain her and take her inside.

We clean up and get dressed again, this time making it inside the truck to meet my contact two towns over for her new documents. For a while, I wondered if she'd changed her mind about me. Even though I know I have the resources and wit to keep her hostage for as long as I want to, I want her to stay of her own volition.

Something depraved in me wants her to consent to her torture.

Then, she lays over the truck seat, resting her head in my lap, and my body goes rigid even though my insides unfurl.

A smirk tugs my lips up as I focus on the road and not her soft, sleepy snores as she falls asleep on the lap of a psychopath.

This might work.

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Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:07 am

A soft hand brushes me awake, caressing my cheek gently. I come around and remember falling asleep on Cain's lap.

"We're here, darling."

My insides do the flippy thing they do when he calls me darling as I push up, sitting in the middle seat on the bench as I look out the front window.

We've stopped in front of a house that looks more neglected than the house Cain stole me away to.

"Where are we?" I ask sleepily. My body is much more drained from recent activities than I thought. The drive had lulled me into a stupor.

"Outskirts of Gainesville. We're north of home," he tells me, turning slightly to look me over.

His eyes are searching.

I feel the most normal since he ran me off the road. I'm in clothes, and all my piercings are covered. I can't deny how the fabric brushing against them feels, though, especially since they're in the stage of healing where they itch something fierce.

"You're exhausted," he echoes my inner thoughts perfectly.

I nod. "I am."

He cups my face, and I can't help but lean into the warmth of his massive hand. "I need to take better care of you. We go home soon, and everything will change then."

I nearly shiver as his words pass through my body. It's an inkling of foreboding I know I shouldn't ignore.

I'm caught in his gravity when he leans forward, his lips dusting mine back and forth.

He loves this: soaking in how he makes me mindless. The way his presence increases my breathing and pulse. It's as if he gets high off his effect on me, so he drags it out.

I can't complain, though. As he toys with me more, licking my bottom lip to beckon me to open for him, a moan escapes me.

"Cain, please," I whisper against his teasing mouth, and he smirks.

"Always so well-behaved for your master," he taunts before pressing forward and kissing me with bruising pressure.

It's because of the way he plays with me beforehand that I devour each kiss he gives, always greedy for more—for harder, for deeper.

My tongue dances against his, and his hand fists the back of my hair, his mouth widening as he turns his face and deepens the kiss to something I've never experienced before.

Before I think of the repercussions, my hand slides over his thick hardness beneath his jeans, and he breaks our kiss, panting as his wild eyes take me in.

There's something addictive in his stare. Something animalistic in nature that calls me to do it again.

Soon, I'm squeezing, tugging on him to hear each groan. Feel each panted breath against my lips as he hovers over my face.

I kiss him, taking the lead and feeling more confident as he responds.

I've never felt so powerful and so wanted.

It's fucked up that a psychopath is the very man who makes me feel as if there's someone for me. My specific brand of lover.

Maybe it's how safe I feel with him.

Which is ignorant.

But if he's the worst thing out in the world, and he covets me, I'm the safest I'll ever be.

His fist, tight in my hair, works my lips free of his, and he tries to regain control of himself as he looks deep into my eyes, his breathing frantic.

"Hold that thought, darling. We have to get this done. Then, I'm all yours."

I look down at his jeans, where his cock is still hard, and pre-cum has wet his jeans.
"What about that?"

He smirks. "What about it? "

"You're going to go in there like that?"

A laugh bubbles out of him, and it sounds like the madness within has leaked out momentarily. "Puppet, I'm a killer. A little cum on my pants doesn't bother me." He

leans in, hovering and retaking control of my breathing. “Nor do I mind anyone seeing how much you affect me.”

Fuck, that’s hot.

I swallow audibly.

His hand moves down, clamping over my throbbing center, thumb rubbing back and forth over my pants. “Besides, I’m not the only one with wet pants, now am I?”

He’s not wrong.

I wiggle against his hand.

“I don’t know how I’ll ever get enough of you.”

With that, he lets me go and opens his door, hopping out into the windy cold.

I take the moment it takes him to round the truck to open my door to center myself, adjusting my aching, greedy pussy in my pants before turning toward the door as he opens it.

Hand in hand, we enter what looks to be a residential home, but the front is a shop.

Four men are working on computers, and papers and boxes are everywhere. The faint stench of weed permeates the room, tangoing with cigarette smoke and the faint smell of day-old pizza.

“Mr. Moldova, we’ve been expecting you.” One of the men turns in his chair, standing and wiping his plump hand on his pants.

He looks like he's in his mid-thirties, balding and heavyset. Cain looks down his nose at the hand offered and decides against shaking it.

The man pushes up his glasses, shrugging as he walks to a filing cabinet, opening it with a key.

"Do you have what I asked for?" Cain asks, reaching into his pocket for his phone.

As I watched him unlock the iPhone in his hand, I realized I didn't miss my connection to the outside world. The thought worried me, so I stowed it.

"I do. Grace Moldova. I have everything in order here for you, and the fee is..."

"Paid," Cain says as his phone rings right before the stocky man's phone goes off in his pocket.

"Prompt, per usual. Good doing business with you again, Mr. Moldova."

Per usual?

I swallow as my heart rate speeds in my chest. Does he do this often? I thought I was the first one he'd kept, but what if I'm not? What if all those girls lived with him until he tired of them? What if this is all a sick game?

He lulls them into complacency by thinking they're the ones who survived and got a new lease on life by his side; then, he kills them when they get too comfortable.

When he grabs my hand again, turning us to leave, I know he can feel the sweat in mine.

I can't help it .

When he helped me in the tow truck this time, he pushed me over to the middle of the bench seat and set my papers beside me.

I look at the folder hard and long as he heads for his door. I'd gone along with it.

I'd fallen for each part of his game.

So much so that I can't discern whether my feelings are real or contrived by the need to survive.

"Now, puppet, let's go home, shall we?"

It's not until much later, however, that I realize he's not taking me back to the fucked up little Christmas farmhouse he had me holed up in.

We pull into the underground storage container lot, driving to the back as he parks the tow truck and takes a deep breath.

For a moment, all is still.

I'm still reeling to understand what's going on with Cain and me and if he's going to kill me in the end.

I feel as though I've been played, and I don't know how to go forward.

On one hand, I can't alert him that I know I'm not the first girl he's kept. He'd surely kill me immediately and move on with his life as if it never happened. On the other hand, it's going to be hard to go forward with the idea I'm being fucked with.

Or so I think.

His hand unbuttons my pants before sliding inside them beneath my panties. His cold fingers graze my clit, pressing in enough to make me open further and lean back against the seat.

“Now, I know this next bit will be a lot for you, Grace. I want you to remember your place and mine, though. Remember how you’re my good little puppet.”

His fingers work at an ungodly pace, and my belly burns as I grind against them.

“Remember how much you want to please me. How good it is when you’re behaved,” he whispers against my ear, and I turn my face into his.

Maybe it won’t be so hard after all, not with this blazing attraction between us.

“Cain, please,” I plead, forgetting every worry I had only two minutes ago.

“Please what, darling?” he teases, kissing me and stealing my train of thought.

“Please, I need to come.”

It’s like my body will never get enough of him. Like I could feed from him for hours and still be starving afterward.

“Say you’ll be my good girl, darling. Tell me you’ll be my perfect girl, and I’ll give you the fucking world.”

From the lips of a psychopath to the ear of the depraved puppet, he makes his promise, and I’m too weak to say no.

“Yes! Yes, I’ll be your good girl, Cain. Please!” He knows what he’s doing.

Only he can give me this. He commands every nerve-ending moment of pleasure I've ever had. He's efficiently erased every man that came before him. So he knows I'll comply.

It's all a sick, psychological game to him.

One I'm dying to keep playing.

When I come, I lift off the seat into his hand, riding out every drop of the high as he nibbles my ear.

"Good girl, puppet. Good fucking girl."

A whimper escapes as the last visages of orgasm throb through my body. He tugs his fingers out and cleans them thoroughly, and I'm in a trance as I watch him.

"Come, darling. Let's go home."

Home is a penthouse apartment in the city next to Dunhaven, the town I'd gotten off the interstate in to make my way to my mom's house.

My heart wavers as I realize I'll never see her again. Eventually, they'll pronounce me dead, all while I'm living a few hours from her upstate.

Cain had left his tow truck at the storage yard, then led me to his Audi parked not far from the tow truck.

The penthouse is pristine, with marble floors, floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the city below, and granite decorating every inch of the kitchen and bathrooms.

The shower looks like something you'd find in a mansion. The house's theme is

black, and it's splashed against tans and creams, making the vibe a bit clinical.

It doesn't fit the Cain that I know one bit.

"Come, I'll show you to your room."

My room?

My footsteps make so much noise against the floors, clacking annoyingly. This isn't how a home should feel. Even the farmhouse felt more homey than this penthouse does.

"I'll have my own room?" I ask, thinking it's confusing when I thought I was more to him than a live-in plaything.

Or maybe that's all he can handle romantically.

Romantically? He kidnapped you!

I shiver at the thoughts still warring in my head. When I think I've worked everything out, I get more confused.

"I figured you'd like to acclimate to your new life before we move forward. You'll need space to process, I'm sure."

The tone of his voice and the way he's behaving is different. He feels... off. I can't put my finger on why, but something's wrong.

"I thought you'd want to keep an eye on me, is all..." I trail off as he turns and looks down at me, something like shame in his eyes.

“You’ve said you’ll be my good girl. I don’t think there’s a need for that.”

We stare at one another momentarily, and then he sighs, cupping my face. I forget all the bullshit in my head again and close my eyes.

His touch silences everything, even the things he’s caused.

“This is going to be an adventure for us both, Grace. I want you to be comfortable. I’ll leave you to get settled. I’ve already arranged for your closet and bathroom to be stocked. I hope you’ll get used to living here soon.”

He walks away, and I’m stunned.

The way he spoke was elegant and kind, even warm. But it almost made me uneasy and uncomfortable. It was like he was play-acting.

He’s donning an acceptable role now that we’re in the outside world.

The most fucked up thing about it all is I didn’t like it.

He acted like the man I should want— an average, sweet man—and I wouldn’t say I liked it.

As I hear him move through the penthouse, I turn and look at the beautiful room he gave me.

But my stomach sours and turns over as I curl my lip in disgust.

A sick part of me wants the Cain I’ve come to know, and I know I need to get the fuck away from him before I do something I regret.

Like falling in love with the psychopath currently playing the piano in the living room.

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Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:07 am

She hasn't come out of her room all evening. After eating and checking over the documents Blake did for her, I took the chance and returned to Dunhaven to close up the house for the rest of the year and make sure the car had stopped burning.

After everything was in order, I returned home to find her still in her room.

Being back home always makes me feel slightly off for the first few days. It's like putting on a thick sweater that coats my real personality beneath its weight.

It's sad, really, that I have to become something different to survive. Though I guess a lot of us do to make it anymore. For fifty weeks a year, I do no harm. I suppress all feelings and desires within me and take care of others.

Those two weeks a year when I'm free of society's constraints are intoxicating. Now, I'm home early. It's after midnight, so it would've been my tenth day at Grimrose, and I'd be cleaning Grace's bones right about now.

If things hadn't gone awry.

The moments we shared in the truck yesterday were the rawest I've ever had with someone. Though I was already gearing up to return home, I was comfortable and bewitched by her proximity and touch.

She has this way of making me feel like being myself isn't a crime against humanity.

When we got home, it hadn't gone unnoticed that she was confused by my change in demeanor. She looked at me as though she were seeing me with fresh eyes.

I've been low-key worried about how she'd respond to seeing this side of me—when it's absurd, really.

She should want this side of me over the other. This man is a renowned surgeon who performed two major surgeries overseas last year that not only earned me awards but also national attention.

I make over six figures a year, and I have my shit together. My home is beautiful, and I always drive the latest cars.

Nothing about this version of me is anything but desirable to women. It's the other side of me I've always had to worry about.

It's why I've never been in a relationship before.

But she seemed to crave the deep, dark version of me she met. She came for him, even. She begged for his touch. That's why I thought she'd be perfect for me .

Now, though, she's hidden away in her room like she can't stand to look at me.

It's confusing the shit out of me.

Finally growing the nerve, I shuffle down the hall to her room. Pushing the door open, I find her sprawled out on the bed in only her panties.

It looked like she was so tired she couldn't even make it beneath the covers.

I inwardly berated myself for spiraling in my head while she was asleep.

"Cain?" she whispers as I flip her over and pick her up.

Using one hand from beneath her body in my arms, I peel back the covers and lay her down. “Shh, darling. I’m just putting you to bed.”

“Mm,” she answers, grabbing my wrist as I turn to exit. “Stay with me, psycho.”

My brows tug together at her request, my heart thrumming at her nickname for me.

I don’t know if it’s wise to keep her because she’s seen who I am beneath all the money and power. As much as I can hide him away beneath Armani suits and flashy diamonds, I can’t make her unknow him. Force her to unsee the things she’s seen.

Removing my pants and shirt, I get into the bed, sliding beneath the covers with Grace and snuggling close.

The feel of her cuddling against me lulls me beneath a thick, clotted fog of complacency as I close my eyes .

“Goodnight, darling.”

“God!” I shoot awake with a scream, unsure of why I’m screaming in the first place, until I look down into the hazel eyes of the blonde beauty with her mouth on my cock.

I stretch out, jutting into her mouth deeper. “Fuck, puppet. Good morning to you, too.”

Her piercings gleam in the sun streaming through the windows, and I regretfully eye them. I hadn’t known I’d keep her with me, and now she’s got them for the rest of her life. Of course, I could remove them all, but there’d be scars.

“Use them,” she says, pulling her mouth off my length, spit trailing her chin. “Tug on

them,” she adds.

The thought of being who I am two weeks out of the year while actively trying to be who I am the rest of the time makes my heart race even faster.

“No. I can’t be... No.”

She wipes her mouth, climbing over me to straddle my lap. Looking down at me with fevered eyes, she asks, “Why? You put them there, yet now you look at them like they disgust you.”

I run my hands over her piercings, some of them shifting as I glide past. She hisses as if it feels good, head lolling back .

“I didn’t know I’d want to keep you, little puppet.”

“So?” she counters. “We’re going back to that house next year, right? They will be there for when we go back.” She leans down, her lips gamboling close to mine. “For when you make me dance for you again.”

A lunatic-driven chuckle heaves from me before I can staunch it. I clear my throat, trying to fight the war between good and evil in my chest. “What are you doing? What game are you playing this morning?” I ask her, grabbing her shoulders and straightening her, pushing her away from my lips for my own sanity.

“It’s no game. I’m only trying to reconcile the man you are here with the man you were there.”

Just as I thought, she’s confused.

“Think of it like two personalities, Grace. I can’t be him while I’m here. He’s not

accepted by society.”

She reaches between us, standing my dick up and teasing it through her wet cunt. Now I’m the one hissing.

“But he’s accepted here. With me.”

Her words mean nothing, even if it’s enticing to think I could come home each night and take off the mask I wear for the world. It would never work.

“Stop pushing me,” I grit out as she slides down my length with her hungry center, heat, and tight muscles enveloping me.

She grabs my hand, leading it to her throat. “Choke me, master. Come on. You stole me for this. You ran me off the fucking road, pierced me, strung me up like a fucking toy, and ruined me. I can’t go back to the world, Cain. You’ve changed me. I’m fucking ruined!” she screams her words at me, rage filtering through her voice as tears stream down her cheeks.

She hasn’t stopped riding my cock, and it’s a high all its own, rivaling her words and tears.

“Stop,” I plead, feeling the mental wall in my brain attempting to shatter.

It can’t. I don’t know who I am without the structure of how I live and how I’ve survived for so many years.

“You have to stop,” I tell her.

She grips my hand around her throat. “No. I don’t. You did this to me. You did this to us. You want me to embrace this life and be your good little fuck puppet; you do the

same. Or I'm leaving, Cain."

Her words rattle me, and the wall I've built to keep others safe, to keep myself in check, breaks. As bricks tumble down and dust permeates my mind, I grip her throat firmly, flipping us over and driving into her at a bruising pace.

"You're going nowhere, puppet. You are mine," I growl, watching her eyes turn heady and fill with bliss.

"I'll leave," she manages. "I'll walk away and never come back."

I thrust harder, punishing her cunt at her words. "You'll be chasing the fucking high I give you the entire time, darling."

She lifts off the pillow, tiny hands wrapping around my wrist at her neck. "If you hide away beneath the plastic veil of Doctor Mordova, I'll be chasing the same high."

Her words ripple through me, truth slamming me over the head like a hammer.

I stop moving, cock throbbing inside her, begging me to continue.

She whimpers at the loss of movement.

For a long moment, we stare at one another.

"You know I'm right," she says. "You made me see what I was missing, Cain. You can't ask me to go back to before. To ignorance."

"I can't... It's complicated..."

She shakes her head. "No. It's not. You be what you need to be out there. But at

home, you're mine. And you're free. You're you."

"It'll never work," I tell her, teasing her with one slow stroke through her pussy.

She moans, arching and dropping her head onto the pillow.

She lets go of my wrist, outstretching her arms on the bed, giving over to me completely.

"Then kill me."

I keep taunting her with slow, deliberate strokes.

"Kill you? Darling girl, that would be counterproductive."

My other hand rubs her clit, swirling and grinding against the little bud as Grace digs her heels into my ass.

"I don't want to go back to before. I can't. As much as I hate how you derailed my life, Cain, I'm addicted to this."

Her words have me teetering on the edge. I am intoxicated by the idea of being me all year long. Will I still have the urge to kill? I don't know. However, I do know that I found someone who seems to accept me for me.

That's the dream, too, isn't it? To find the one person in the entire universe that sees you. That quiets the world's noise beyond the bubble the two of you live in.

She might be it for me.

There's an idea in the back of my head that says she's toying with me, trying to gain

her freedom by dropping my defenses. However, she could've escaped while I was in Dunhaven last night. I was gone for hours.

"Cain, harder," she begs, pulling me back to the moment like she's my tether to reality.

I give her what she wants, curling my hand around her throat until I hear her struggling for air.

Tomorrow, she'll have petechiae surrounding her beautiful eyes from the loss of oxygen, and it makes me nearly come at the thought.

"You want me to leave the doctor at the door and let the madman free?" I ask her, pounding into her as I feel my spine tingle and orgasm loom.

She nods, unable to speak under my power.

"As you wish, darling."

Letting her throat go, I don't give her time to catch her breath as I drop my face into the crook of her neck and sink my teeth in deeply, tasting blood .

Frenzy sets in for us both.

She bucks against me from below, arms wrapping around me, nails digging down my back.

I growl into her neck, fucking her with everything I have, knowing this moment is life-defining. I can feel it between us.

Like a contract, we're both signing with blood and promise.

Promise to be ourselves within the walls of this house.

“Fuck, you feel so good, damnit,” I whimper, losing myself in her tight body, drilling as deep as I can as she grips my ass.

“Don’t stop. Fuck, don’t stop,” she begs, and the tip of my cock tingles at the tone of her voice, at the way her walls flutter around me.

“Cain!” she shouts, coming hard, and stars pepper my vision as I follow.

“Fuckkkkk, Grace!”

Our pace is unrelenting as we wring out every ounce of pleasure from the moment as our breathing melds together and our bodies shudder against one another.

“Don’t hide from me again,” she says into my ear, causing gooseflesh to rise.

I lift off her, striking her throat with my hand like a pissed-off cobra, my teeth oozing with venom. My eyes harden as I look down at her as she grips my hand to get air, her eyes growing with delicious fear. “Don’t tell me what to do, puppet. Or I’ll fuck your ass raw as you dangle from one hook. Do you understand me?”

I swear I see grim satisfaction in her eyes as she smirks and nods in my hold.

“Good girl.”

However, as I slide out of her, I realize I’m still hard. Painfully so.

Driving back inside, I don’t let go of her delicate neck as I fuck her hard and fast, racing the clock before she passes out.

“I think you were right, puppet. It feels good to be myself at home for once.”

Her pupils are blown, and panic is setting in, but I know my little perfect doll is completely fine because her pussy is squirting around my shaft like a filthy little whore.

“Fuck, look at the mess you’re making, you slutty little girl.”

The more I fuck her, the more she soaks my sheets and cock. It’s how I know everything will work out in the end.

How I know she’s mine.

“Look how wet you’re getting my cock, fuck puppet. Goddamn, you feel good.”

When I come this time, I pull out and shoot it in her gaping mouth as she tries to breathe from my hand, releasing her.

“Swallow me down, puppet. Wouldn’t want to waste your breakfast.”

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 3:07 am

SIX MONTHS LATER

I tilt my head as I look at myself in the length of the bathroom mirror. More piercings litter my body, and I toy with a few of them as I think of how Cain had pierced me. This time, while awake.

It's been six months since Cain ran me off the road and kidnapped me. I'm forever changed.

I'm settling into work at the hospital. Cain got me a job in the registration office that keeps me busy. Though I don't need to work, I like to have somewhere to go. I've made friends, and Cain and I even have a few couples we go out with from time to time now.

Of course, none of them know who we are in the dark, but how well do you truly know anyone anymore? You don't.

Stripping the bullshit away at the door of the house is like a weight off our shoulders each night. Dangling from my hoops for my master is where I'm free.

He was right.

I often wonder if I've lost my fucking mind. Or if Cain unlocked something in me I didn't know was locked away in the first place.

Maybe he saw what I couldn't.

“Mm, darling. I love it when I walk into a room and you’re naked.”

I lick my lips as he comes behind me, enveloping me in his scent, his hands traveling down my stomach and over the new piercings that lead south.

“Don’t tease me unless you plan to deliver, psycho.”

He chuckles, nipping my ear and grinding his cock into my backside. “Don’t I always give you what you need, puppet?”

It wasn’t long after I forced my madman to come back to me that he told me everything: how he changed his name, using the same men he had to change mine, and how he existed in the world as someone other than who he was.

He had to remake himself to feel whole.

I’m the only woman he’s kept, and the knowledge seemed to lock something in place for me, something I needed to know before becoming his good girl.

I’ve always been a bit overwhelmed by life. I never found where I fit before. I went through the day-to-day motions, barely surviving, smiling fakely through it all.

Until I met Cain.

I feel alive now. Even at work, thoughts of what I’ll go home to later dance in my mind until I clock out and rush home.

I’m living now.

Though I know I have to accept something living within Cain, it’s not time for that yet.

When the time comes, I'm sure we'll survive it.

My chest tightens, and I ignore it. Choosing to focus on the man standing behind me, demanding attention as he slips two fingers inside me. I bend over the counter, hands gripping the granite as I moan and press back into him.

"There's my girl. You looked a bit bogged down in there." He taps my temple with his other index finger, watching me in the mirror as I fight to keep my mouth closed and my eyes open.

"Look at me, Grace. Watch my fingers fuck your pussy." He backs us up until his back hits the open door, the door banging against the door stop.

His booted foot comes between my legs, kicking them open so that he can spread me with one hand while his other fucks me expertly.

"There you go, darling. Now you can see what I do to you."

I'm dripping with arousal around his fingers; his hand is glistening with it against the bronzed-finished vanity lights gleaming overhead.

The hand that spreads me slides north, finding the hook pierced through my nipple as he yanks on it, tugging my breast upward.

"Cain," I whimper, bucking on his hand.

"All in due time, puppet. Before I suspend you from these pretty little hoops of yours, I want you dripping with cum."

My moan is loud and drawn out as his heel presses against my clit, fingers speeding in pace.

He lifts my nipple with the hook, twisting it in little waves and adding to the heat thrumming my body.

“Look at yourself, puppet. Look how fucking good you are for me.” His voice is dripped with heat and malevolence.

When he dragged me from my car into the cold grass of the woods, I had no clue that this was what we were going to become. Puppet and master, in a dance of wicked euphoria until the day we die.

I fight to keep my lids open as my body tightens and burns.

“Cain,” I get out in warning.

He chuckles, dropping his lips to my ear. “Don’t worry, darling. I’m not going to stop until you soak my hand. Go on, come for your master. I’ve got you, fuck puppet.”

My knees buckle against his words, but true to them, he keeps me upright, hand working me harder and faster .

I watch in the mirror as I writhe for him, coming alive before my very eyes as I let go, head lolling back on his chest, body shattering in pleasure.

“Good girl, give me all of it,” he whispers, crooking his fingers against my G-spot as I feel wetness bathe us both. “There it is, love. Now, let’s get you hooked up, shall we?”

Hoops in my torso, arms, and front of my legs tug as I’m suspended on one anchor over my middle. My legs hang bent and open, and Cain walks around me, his gaze skimming my body like a fine artwork.

“It never gets old, Grace. Seeing you like this, watching you submit. You must trust me, darling.” He stops at my head, leaning over and hovering over my lips. “Do you trust me?”

If he’d asked me the night of my accident, my answer would’ve been a resounding no. Now, however...

I nod, breathing heavily and under his spell. His proximity causes my heart rate to spike, as it does every time.

“I don’t know why. You probably shouldn’t.” He grins.

I hear it before I see it as he walks around my body—the clicking of a lighter. I watch as he plays with the tiny flame when he rounds to my right side.

“Cain,” I warn, lifting my head the best I can. I teeter on the rigging, and my strings tug even more .

“See how quickly that trust went up in flames, love?” His grin turns dark, dangerous even.

He comes closer, pulling a bottle of something out of his pocket. Pouring it in my belly button, he then moves the flicker of the lit lighter closer.

My breathing is erratic at best, and my neck burns as I keep my eyes trained on where he hovers the flame over my belly.

“Is it going to hurt?” I ask him, exhilaration worming through my veins as my blood roars.

“I don’t know, puppet. You tell me,” he replies, smiling as he lets the flame ignite the

fluid in my belly.

The flame is blue and beautiful as it dances momentarily. Cain leans over, breathing life into it, causing it to waver.

He covers it with his hand, and it's gone. The pang of thrill it left me with, however, is alive and well, thrumming through me like a wild beast.

"Well? Did it hurt?"

I shake my head. "No."

"Nearly seven months, and you haven't realized yet, darling." He leans over again, peering down at me from above.

"Realized what?" I whisper, unable to breathe around the intense rush of being suspended and the aftermath of the flames on my skin.

"That I can't hurt you. Even if the desire is still there, even if the call to kill is strong, you're the one I can't maim. The one I must preserve at all fucking costs. The other half of my psychotic soul."

My lip quivers as his words take me even higher, to a space even I haven't been after six months with Cain.

There's a reason I've fallen head over heels for this psychopath, and it all stems back to how he makes me feel loved and wanted. Even in his obsession, I feel worshipped.

No one else on the face of this earth will ever make me feel like Cain Moldova does.

"Cut me," I whisper, not knowing what I'm doing but letting it slip out anyway.

“What was that?” He leans down, turning his ear to my lips.

“Cut me. If the desire is still there, make me bleed,” I tell him, leaning closer to his ear and skating the tip of my tongue against it.

He straightens, looking down at me with crazed eyes, darkening by the second. “You don’t mean that, darling.”

I nod. “I do.”

Even if it sounds fucking insane.

“If you still have the desire to maim, let me be the one to bleed for you.”

It’s not so much a want to save others from him more than to be what he needs.

I want to be everything that he needs to survive. How better to accomplish that goal than to become his perfect little victim, strung up and vulnerable ?

He rolls his neck, his demeanor becomes less controlled, and his body becomes more rigid. “You can’t mean that. You don’t want... Fuck, darling, you’re going to make me have a fucking meltdown...” He growls, turning back toward where I’m suspended at his mercy.

His face looks so animal-like, teeth bared like he’s lost control.

Out of nowhere, he opens a knife, the blade black and threatening. He pinches the tip into my stomach, dragging it down my skin with insane-looking eyes.

He’s unbalanced, and I’m the one who’s tipped him.

“Cain,” I tell him, trying to reel him back. “I didn’t mean to upset you. I want to be what you need.”

He snarls, turning his head almost preternaturally, his dark eyes wide with rage and irrationality. “You’re trying to save them !”

I was afraid of this, and that is the exact reason I haven’t offered myself up. I didn’t want him to think I had an ulterior motive.

“No, my psycho. I want to be what you need . I don’t want you going outside of our home to be fulfilled.”

My words settle between us as I watch the muscles in his neck uncoil. It’s as if he were a venomous snake ready to strike, only to decide there’s no longer an enemy to sink his fangs into.

“You want to be what I need,” he repeats.

I shudder out a long breath. “Yes.”

“Do you understand the needs of a man like me? ”

His question at first pisses me off because I’ve been with him for six months. I gave up my life and identity for him. To stay his perfect little puppet. I know, however, he’s trying to make me see the error in my decision.

“I understand. Who better to understand than your other half?”

The tip of the knife presses into my skin, the slice causing me to cry out.

He never looks away from my face, not even to see how deep he’s cut me.

Even though I have to fight the urge, I don't look at the wound. Breathing through the sting, I moan when he pulls the tip back out of my body.

“A man like me needs more than kind words to sate his dark urges, Grace. I need action.”

I bob my head in understanding. “I know.”

He finally turns and looks at the blood trickling out of the wound, and I sneak a glance downward. It's not deep, only a flesh wound, but the way he's looking at it has my pussy throbbing.

“You were already my perfect puppet—the epitome of flawless, darling girl. Now...” he trails off, reaching up and running his hand through my blood.

Lifting his hand to his face, he inhales deeply, getting high off the metallic scent.

“Now, what?” I breathe, enlivened by his response.

“Now, my puppet, you're a fucking masterpiece. ”

When he makes his second cut, I let my head loll back, and a feeling of release washes over me. I'm safe in his hands, even when there's a blade in them.

Because I'm his perfect girl.

His masterpiece.

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Her flesh is pulled taut away from her body, and it's covered in blood. My cock pistons inside her, giving her the rush of being weightlessly fucked, suspended from her rigging, while the hoops tug and give her a pinch of pain.

Grace has surpassed my expectations and given me something I thought no one ever could. She's my perfect girl. My puppet. My muse. My fucking everything.

The scent of blood on her flesh gives me something I primally need as my cock gathers steam inside her.

She's come for me twice, not including how well she came for me in the bathroom, and I know I will soon need to let her down. She's been suspended far too long, but the high she's giving me.

"What a fucking gift you are, Grace." I grip her hips as I fuck straight into her.

She's suspended at the perfect height, all over her weight evenly distributed on her pierced hoops, rigged above us.

She looks like a fucking angel. Like resurrection made flesh.

"Cain," she whimpers, and her eyes tell me she's close. Her hands tug at the piercings at her nipples—the ones she'd wanted for herself—and I feel my own orgasm building.

"Come for me like my good girl, and I'll let you down." My words promise an end. A light at the end of the proverbial tunnel.

She feels fucking sublime around my cock, and I groan and let my head fall back.

“God,” I moan.

“Tell me I feel good,” she begs, hands curling over mine, her nails digging into my skin.

I hiss, fucking her harder, using my grip on her hips to pull her down as I drive forward.

Skin slaps, and our cries meld.

“You know you feel good, darling. Like a tight-fitting sheath made only for me. Were you made for me, Grace?”

I’m barely hanging onto my control as I open my eyes and find hers.

“Yes! I’m all yours! Made for you!” she screams, body buckling around my dick, her walls wringing out my ends I wasn’t ready to reach yet.

“Fuckkk, Grace, goddamn you!” Cum shoots from my cock, finding its home inside her as she shudders and pulls every last drop from me .

We come down slowly before I work her off the hooks and down to the floor, scooping her into my arm and moving her to the bedroom.

My bedroom.

I lay her down and get in next to her.

For a while, our breathing was erratic, and the world around me twirled and tilted.

Soon, though, we were both breathing normally, and Grace turned on her side and snuggled into me.

“That was... I don’t think I have a word for what that was, actually,” she says, and I curl my arm around her, rubbing her back with my fingertips.

“We need to check your wounds,” I tell her, the surgeon inside me knowing one of them might need stitches. “We’ll also need to get rid of these sheets.”

She smirks. “That’s alright. I’m sure they won’t be the last.”

Something crosses her face, and I steel my insides at what comes next. She just witnessed all of me. The darkest parts I’ve kept hidden away. Only those dead and dangling have seen what lurks below my skin, and I don’t know what her following words are going to be, but I’m confident I won’t like them.

“I have to say something, and I don’t want you to freak out about it,” she says, pulling up to sit next to me and looking down at me as if she needed a higher vantage point.

I allow her to keep it as I lay on my back and cross my arms in defense .

“Go ahead. I’m listening.”

She takes in my rigid posture and change of tone, shifting her naked body on the bed awkwardly.

“I don’t want you to think you have to say anything back, and I don’t want you to run away, either. I have to say my peace, and then we can move on from it.”

I narrow my brows. “You’re making me anxious, and when men like me get anxious,

it's not good for anyone, Grace."

Her eyes flare at my use of her name, and I fight a smirk. I do it to unnerve her, just like I use darling at the perfect times to melt her into a puddle. I discerned early on it was a weakness of hers, and have been using it to my advantage ever since.

She takes a breath and then releases it, not saying a word.

Finally, I sit up and pull her into my lap, wrapping my arms around her. "Spit it out, or I'll spank you."

Her cheeks heat. "How about I tell you, and you still spank me?"

I shake my head, fighting a laugh. "Incorrigible little puppet."

She beams. "I love you," she says, and my heart stops. Fucking stops in my chest, suspended in paracardial fluid, fighting to regain its rhythm.

"Excuse me?" I ask her. I heard her, but I crave to hear it again—like the defibrillator that'll restart my heart.

"I love you," she repeats, more sure of herself this time .

"That's what you had to tell me?" I ask, waiting patiently for the other shoe to drop.

She nods, nuzzling her nose against mine. "It's fucked up, I'm sure. For the kidnapped woman to fall for a blood-thirsty kidnapper, but I can't help it. Whether you keep it beating or not, my heart is yours."

I can't think. My brain is short-circuiting. Neurons are misfiring.

It's a full system failure.

"Cain?"

"Mm?" I come to as she kisses my lips softly, slowly.

"Are you alright?"

"I love you, too," I blurt and freeze.

After assessing my insides, running a system diagnostic, and then nodding when I agree with the words I just spat at her, I double down. "I love you, too," I tell her again.

She turns in my lap, straddling me as she attacks my mouth with a punishing kiss.

"I thought you were leaving me," I tell her when I pull back from her kiss.

Her hands gently cup either side of my face, her hazel eyes softening. "And go where, Cain? After touching the flames of wild passion, one can only descend to the pits of hell, I'd think. Nothing in life would be fulfilling without you beside me. Besides, I think I'm still a prisoner, right?"

I laugh despite the seriousness of the situation. "How do you figure? "

She leans back, running her hands over her piercings. "Well, because you've got your hooks in me, of course."

Her grin is rueful as I tug her back into my mouth, kissing her breathlessly as I let her words bathe me in a new veil—one that'll shroud me from the world surrounding me for the rest of my life. With her love, I'm protected.

With her beside me, I'm whole.

Grogily, I pad to the kitchen, where I hear Grace banging around. However, when I entered the room, I discovered more than her just cooking breakfast.

"What in the hell are you doing?" I ask, looking around in confusion.

She pops up, blowing her blonde hair away from her face, which had fallen out of her messy bun. "Packing, of course."

"Of course," I say, looking into the living room and finding it likewise in shambles. "Uhh, darling girl?"

"Yes?" she asks, lifting a box and closing it with packing tape.

"Can I ask where we're going? We both have jobs here and to my knowledge, I might be losing my mind, so excuse me if I am—we haven't discussed moving."

I wait for her to explain, but she only smiles.

"We haven't, but I thought we agreed that I would be everything you need."

I nod in agreement, grabbing her as she tries to pass me with a box. I take it from her, sitting it on the island as I turn her to face me. "Where are we going?"

"Home. To where I fell for you, of course."

My brows tug together in confusion. The farmhouse?

"Grimrose House?" I ask her.

She nods. "Is that its name? I didn't know. Very gothic, I like it."

She's in good spirits today. Six orgasms will do that to a person.

"You want to go live at Grimrose house?" I ask her.

She sighs, motioning around us to the room. "This is a lie, Cain. It's a facade you've been living in for years. It's time to live how you want to. We don't have to if you don't want to live at Grimrose House. I'll get an agent to find us a house. I get it could be weird to live there being that..."

I shut her up with a kiss. "We can live wherever you want."

My mind flickers to the bodies suspended in the room off the stairs, and I narrow my gaze at her. "And the women?"

She doesn't bristle. She thought of that, apparently.

"They're part of our story. Part of who we are. Though I don't think they should hang like puppets in the house, we can find something to do with them."

"You've truly thought of this. You really want to stay with me? "

She wraps her arms around my neck, lips pulling into a sinful smirk that boils my blood. "Oh, my precious little psychopath, has no one ever loved you before?"

She's baiting me, I tell myself inwardly.

Even so, my ego rises to the occasion.

My hand rises, cutting off her air as the man from the depths cracks his neck back and

forth, preparing for a fight.

I keep wondering when she'll have had enough. When is the point she stops wanting a killer's hands on her? When does she decide it's enough?

I can't think like that, but it spurs me on.

"Don't taunt me, darling. You know what happens when you do."

She grins. "It's why I do it, you fucking monster."

I can't help myself. I forget who we are to one another, leading her by her throat to the wall beside the fridge, slamming her back into the drywall. "Puppet," I warn.

"I want to be with you," she says, and my hand flexes. "You need to get past this."

I can't shake the haunting feeling of every time I've fucked her. Every single time I've been inside her. Even though she's flesh and bone before me, like she's infused me with fever, she's wriggled beneath my skin and infected me.

It's unfathomable to me that she's still here of her own volition. I'm surprised to see her each night I come home from work .

Like she's a gift that keeps on giving.

"The bodies go," I growl, not giving her any room for rebuttal or explanation.

She nods. "It's your call."

She has this way of being just what I need when I need it, which keeps me guessing with her. We have a lot of life ahead of us, her and me; I'm ready to dive off the deep

end with her. To walk unthinkingly into the future and see what it brings.

I'm a fucked up man, and finding her wasn't easy, but I'm so fucking ready.

"It's Good of you to allow me to make some decisions still," I tell her. "You know I hate it when you bait me, darling."

She smirks, turning around and pressing her ass against my cock. "Go ahead, then. Punish me, master."

I fist her hair, tugging her head backward. "What monster have I created in you?"

"Not a monster, master. A perfect puppet, remember?"

I growl, skimming my nose up her neck and getting high off her scent. "Oh, darling, how could I fucking forget."

I turn her, dropping her hair when she's facing me again.

"Get on your knees, puppet."

Her eyes look devious as fuck as she slowly descends to her knees. "Of course, master."

For quite some time, I've wondered if my entire existence, the reason I was killing and maiming, was to find this woman. It's this very moment that solidifies that theory.

I know it was all for her.

Even if it's fucked up to the onlooker, every bit of it was worth it.

She closes her lips on my cock, and my hands press into the wall as I box her in beneath me, shoving forward and gagging her.

“That’s a good little puppet. Gag on your master,” I taunt, driving down her throat over and over until tears are staining her rouge-filled cheeks.

I fuck her mouth, forgetting everything around us, focused solely on her and the feel of her around my dick.

“Swallow your master’s cum, my perfect puppet. Fuck, that’s a good girl. Right there, here it comes, goddamn...” I jut forward, emptying down her throat as she fights to swallow and breathe.

When I pull out, I grasp my still-hard cock in my hand, slapping it across her face.

“You’re going to need a lot of training, darling.”

I slap her again, and her answering grin is as wicked as she is. “It’s a Good thing we have plenty of time for that, psychopath.”

Fuck.

the very next Christmas

“ You need to hold still,” Cain warns, holding a Christmas ornament in his hand, the curved edges of it glimmering in the lights he’s strung around my body.

I roll my eyes. “You’re taking too long.”

He smirks. “Didn’t I tell you I would be taking my time because of what happened yesterday?”

I sigh. “Yes, you did. I didn’t think you were setting out to torment me, though.”

He goes back to whistling some haunting Christmas carol—haunting because he’s the one whistling it as he hangs ornament after ornament on the lights he’s weaved through my strings and around my body .

“You’re the perfect little Christmas tree,” he says, standing back and wiping excess glitter onto his pants.

“Do you often fuck trees?” I ask him teasingly.

He deadpans at me, shaking his head. “You couldn’t behave if your life was on the line.”

“That’s not true. Behaving got me here in the first place.”

A smile beams on his face as he crosses the room in a few steps and leans over to kiss

me.

“It did, didn’t it?”

I nod as his lips come down on mine, moving sweetly. I know it won’t be real sweet; it’s not who he is.

It’s not who we are.

We’ve been moved into Grimrose House for a few months now, and though I don’t wear my strings as often as I did at the beginning of our relationship, there are times Cain hooks me up and makes me dance for him.

I have to admit I enjoy being his perfect little puppet. Leaving the world at the door and becoming he and I at the end of the day is what gets me through sometimes. Sure, how we met was unorthodox, even short of landing us on a true crime documentary, but I love him and can’t see myself without him.

The way he worships and cares for me is something I didn’t know I was missing until he ran me off the road and towed me into the woods.

Fucking psychopath.

It’s our first Christmas together in Grimrose House, and the town of Dunhaven doesn’t need to hide anymore. Cain’s not reformed by any stretch of the imagination, but he’s found his perfect puppet in me, and I’ve found love in him.

Sometimes—and the times are few and far between—I think about my old life and what became of my apartment or my mother, but if I think about it too hard, I realize that I wasn’t living then.

Sure, I loved her like a child should love a mother, but there was always a disconnect

with us.

The life I lead with Cain isn't one of circumstance and requirement, like my previous life. I live this life because I want to—because I love to.

Cain pricks his blade against my throat, and I feel the trickle of blood as it travels out and follows the pull of gravity over the side. “You’re not paying attention, darling.”

“Sorry, love. I was thinking...” I sigh as I watch his eyes narrow and the darker part of him rise to the surface, coming to collect his Christmas gift.

“Thinking about what? Care to share with the class?”

I laugh, and the movement tugs me against the hooks looped through my piercings and suspending my body from the ceiling.

“About how you were right,” I tell him, words cutting off with a hiss as he pricks my breast, blood welling and sliding over the mound of flesh as he watches with glee.

“I’m right quite a lot. To which instance do you refer?” he asks, taunting me with the tip of his blade, twirling it over my nipple near the bar pierced there .

I shake my head in exasperation with him. “When you first took me, and I woke up on my strings, do you remember what you said to me when I asked what you did to me?”

He thinks, brows furrowing and eyes narrowing. “Enlighten me, darling.”

“You said you freed me.”

He smiles. “I did, didn’t I?”

I nod the best I can. “You did, love. You really did.”

He leans over and kisses me, his tongue tangling with mine as he gobbles up my breathy moans.

“It’s playtime, little puppet,” he says, his voice gruff with arousal.

“It is.”

“Merry Christmas, darling.”

“Merry Christmas, psychopath.”

The End.