



# Mr and Mrs

**Author:** *Alexa Riley*

**Category:** Romance

**Description:** Welcome to Alexa Riley Promises. This series is dedicated to old romances. It's tropes galore, with all of our usual over-the-top alphas and sweet cheesy goodness.

These short books will focus on traditional and classic tropes while sticking to the Alexa Riley code: no cheating and always with an HEA. That's our Promise to you.

Mr and Mrs

Phillip has been married to Molly for a year. He's beyond obsessed with his new wife, to the point that he has to hold his true feelings back. If she knew how crazy he is for her, she might push him away.

Molly is feeling distance growing between them, and she's worried she's not enough. One night she walks in on Phillip, and it changes everything.

When Phillip discovers Molly was in an accident and now has amnesia, he's going to do all he can to make her fall in love with him again. Holding nothing back this time.

Warning: It's just as crazy as it sounds and just as over-the-top ridiculous. If you want to get silly with us and spend a little time away from reality, grab this one up!

**Total Pages (Source):** 25

# Page 1

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## Chapter One Molly

“Molly, just give it more time. I’m sure you’ll conceive.”

I look up from the tasteless salad I’m just pushing around on my plate, not feeling even the least bit hungry. But a dinner out seemed like a lot more fun than sitting in the penthouse condo alone all night for the fourth time this week. Phillip’s working late. Again. Something that’s becoming a little too normal for my liking.

It’s his place, even though the condo is ‘ours’. I still find it odd calling it home, though we’ve been married and living in it for a year. But I don’t think anything has ever felt like a real home before. Not like the ones I’ve dreamed of, anyway. It still feels like it’s his more than it’s mine. We still haven’t gotten around to finding a house. The house that will be the home I’ve always wanted. Longed for and dreamed about for most of my life. Phillip seems excited about it, but it keeps getting put on the back burner, and I’m starting to think I am, too.

Cindy places her hand on my arm, giving it a comforting squeeze. Everyone knows we’ve been trying to have a baby from the moment we said “I do.” I wasn’t great about hiding how excited I was about starting a family, and Phillip had encouraged me to be more vocal about it, to see it as a reality. He’d started to make these little dreams I had in my head come alive. It was all a part of the fairy-tale dream I’d fallen into the moment I’d met Phillip.

Young girl falls madly in love with her father’s new business partner, and he sweeps her off her feet in a whirlwind marriage. The press ate the story up. Millionaire Phillip Tanner finally tying the knot. Not only that, but with his new business partner

Charles Moore's daughter. Their partnership brought together two of the biggest hedge fund firms in the country, and it was believed they would be unstoppable together. They have been.

I smile at Cindy, giving her a reassuring look. "I know. When I'm supposed to get pregnant, I will." I'm not even sure if having a baby right now is something I want anymore, which feels odd because having a family is all I've ever wanted.

I wanted all of it. The whole white picket fence, two-point-five kids, and a husband who adored me. I had the adoring husband—when he was around, anyway. I could deal with not being the center of his attention, but I didn't want that for our children. I'd been a child with a father like that, and I wouldn't do that to my children. I'd never bring them into a home that never really felt like a home at all.

I can deal with it. I love my husband, and I know he loves me, but it's been crazy lately, and I worry that maybe it isn't just work that's keeping him away. Maybe it's me. What if I don't hold the same appeal I once did? What if the novelty has worn off in the same way it seemed to with my own parents? I grit my teeth, trying to push that insecurity back.

But that just doesn't add up, not with the way Phillip touches me. He makes love to me every night when he crawls into bed, even after a long day at work. He can't go to sleep without having me first.

Except last night. I don't know when he got home, and that was a first. I fell asleep before he got home and woke with him kissing me goodbye early this morning. He said he had a big meeting to prep for and that he'd tell me about everything this weekend.

"Is there something else? You don't seem your normal self." Cindy releases the hand she had on my arm to study me. She's very good at reading people. In fact, she told

me the first time we met that we'd be good friends, and we have been.

And she's right. There is something else. The very thing that's started to plant little seeds of doubt in my mind. The thing that has me thinking a lot more about all those long work hours over the past month.

"He got a new secretary," I finally spit out, knowing Cindy would get it out of me, so there was no use hiding it.

"Oh, I heard Debra retired."

I nod. Yep, Debra left over a month ago and moved to Florida to enjoy her retirement with her husband. I loved that woman. She was always so sweet, and whenever I called or stopped by, she made it seem like the most important thing was my seeing my husband, no matter what he was doing. Everything else would be put on hold and meetings would be interrupted.

The new one, not so much.

"Don't even say it." Cindy leans back in her chair, her auburn hair swaying around her face.

I can't even say it. It's so cliché, I can't let the words pass my lips. She looks the cliché, too. Tall, thin, big blue eyes, and blonde hair that always seems to be utterly perfect. Just like everything about her. Every hair always in place, and she walks around in five-inch heels all day long. I'd break my neck. It's like she doesn't even have to try.

"In fact, I'm not even going to let you say it. I mean, this is Phillip, for Christ's sake." She laughs like I've lost my mind. "The man is in love with you. I know you don't know the pre-Molly Phillip, but I do."

Cindy is one of my only friends in New York, and I'd met her through Phillip. It's really how I met everyone here. I went from living in a boarding school, straight to college and right into Phillip's condo. All my family and friends were thousands of miles away in Seattle.

"He was boring...well, he still kind of is." She smirks like she just gave him a jab that he could really hear. "All work and no play. Until you. Why do you think the press went so wild? They've been trying to catch him with a woman for years, then he's running all over town with one. Trust me, he's not boinking the secretary. I've known him since college, and I'd never even seen him date until he met you."

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I know that's true. I'd done my shameful Google search the first time I'd met him. It had come up with nothing. Never in a million years did I think he'd show interest in me. He is ten years older than me. I was barely twenty at the time we met. Some said he only did it to make his partnership with my father more solid. I never once thought that. He'd made me feel special, something no one had ever made me feel before. To be the center of someone's world was so foreign to me. I ate it up. Now that some of that center had shifted back to his work, things started to feel a little bit lonely again. Loneliness was a feeling he'd taken away from me the moment I'd met him. I don't like it creeping back into the edges of my life again.

We'd dated for two months in secret, until my twenty-first birthday, then we'd come out as a couple and married one month later. He even made us wait until our wedding night before he took me fully. From the very start we both talked about wanting a family, and he said he never wanted anything between us, so we'd wait.

Well, we'd waited to go all the way at least. Phillip spent many nights with his mouth on me. Telling me all the things he'd do when I'd finally say "I do." I can't count how many nights he'd sneak into my room at my father's house after they'd gotten done with some late-night meeting in my father's office. I'd go to bed alone and wake up to Phillip's face between my legs. Some nights he'd go at me like he was starving. Other nights he'd make me promise over and over I was going to marry him before he'd finally give me what I need. He'd never let me return the favor. The closest I'd gotten to his cock before our wedding night was dry-humping, and his pants never came off or undone.

But do men really go months without sex? I push the thoughts away.

“I know. I’m being silly. I know he loves me. She’s just so freaking rude when I call or show up. I swear every time I see her she’s thrusting her giant boobs in his face or doing that stupid high-pitched laugh. Every time I call, she has some reason Phillip can’t take it. Every. Time.” I know all this, together with him working so much and me feeling alone in this giant city has morphed into this giant insecurity I’ve been feeling for the past few months.

“Say something,” Cindy snaps, leaning forward, her blue eyes narrowing like they always do when she’s squaring up for a fight. It’s what she often does in the courtroom.

“I know I should. I’ll speak to him about it. Just sometimes I feel a little out of place. I’m so much younger than everyone, and I know he’s running a company and I don’t want to be the needy, clingy wife who’s insecure.” I sometimes feel a little lost in his world, and it would be a lie if I didn’t think back to times I’d interrupted some of my father’s meetings, only to get snapped at and made to feel unimportant. I have a degree in art history, and I’m proud of that, but sometimes I felt a little lacking. But I know that’s my own doing. Phillip has never talked down to me or tried to exclude me from anything, but old insecurities run deep sometimes.

“Fuck that,” she tosses back, making me smile. One of the reasons I’ve gotten so close to Cindy is she isn’t like a lot of the other women I’ve met in New York. Nor is she like the wives of some of Phillip’s business associates. She always says what she’s thinking, and I want that to rub off on me.

“That man will be pissed if he finds out that his secretary is treating you like shit. In fact, I bet he’d can her ass on the spot if he even got a hint she was doing something like that.”

I know what she’s saying is true. I once told Phillip in passing I didn’t think the doorman at the building we lived at liked me very much. Anytime I’d try and ask him

a question about something, he'd get short with me and tell me that I shouldn't be out without my husband. He would make constant digs about my age, like I didn't belong in this world. He'd amped up the disrespect when he hit on me one morning after Phillip had left early for the office. I'd shot him down quickly. Needless to say, after I told Phillip what had happened, I never saw the man again.

"You're right. I'm making this all out to be bigger than it is and I just keep throwing dirt on it." I grab my purse from the chair, making Cindy smile. "You mind?" I ask. We hadn't even gotten our main entrée yet.

"Hell no."

I stand and lean down to kiss her on the cheek.

"Call me. I want to know all the details."

With that, I head out of the restaurant and onto the busy New York sidewalk. Glancing down at my watch, I see it's already eight. I make my way down to his building, which is only four blocks away.

Red, the security guard, swipes me right in as I make my way into the practically empty building. I hit the elevator button for the top floor and tap my foot as it moves up. When I exit, the hallway is completely clear. I walk to his office, bypassing the empty secretary desk, and pull open the heavy door.

The sight that greets me almost brings me to my knees, and it would have if I hadn't had my hand still on the door to brace me.

There, in the middle of Phillip's office, completely naked, is Cary. The secretary. Phillip is on the sofa, his face turned away, but I can see his tie is undone and his shoes are off. His suit looks worn and wrinkled. Cary just stares at me in shock.



“You can have him.” I’m not even sure how I get the words out. I turn, fleeing the office. I hit the elevator button and luckily it slides open immediately. I take it all the way down in a trance, trying to hold myself together. You will not break like this. I suck in a deep breath, trying to calm myself.

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## Page 3

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“Mrs. Tanner,” Red calls after me, seeing the tears running down my face. I grab the first taxi I see and head straight for our condo. I don’t stop to think about what I’m doing. It feels like I’m in shock.

I pack a bag in record time, scribble a note, and shoot a quick text to Cindy before I drop my phone and ring on the kitchen counter.

Maybe Cindy doesn’t know Phillip as well as she thinks. Maybe everyone thinks he’s boring because he’s good at hiding his true nature. My father’s good at hiding his dirty little secrets, too, but like most things, you just need to look a little closer. That’s when everything becomes clear. “God, you’re so naïve,” I whisper to myself.

I take the subway to the train station, where I buy a ticket on my credit card, then pull out as much cash as my cards will allow. I then grab a cab to the bus station. I want to get away for a little while and get my head on straight before I face him. I know he’ll track me down and find me if I don’t cover my tracks well enough.

I look up at the list of destinations and pick a place I hope he’ll never think of.

### Chapter Two Phillip

I wake up with a start, looking at my watch and seeing I overslept. I stretch my neck, trying to work out the kink from sleeping on this damn couch. I just meant to lie here for a few minutes before I left to go home. I’ve been sleeping so poorly lately that I needed just a quick nap to try to catch up.

The merger last year went smoothly, but the last few months have been hell. I’ve

been working myself to the bone every night. I never get to see Molly, so at night when I go home, all I want to do is make love to her, needing a taste of her to hold me over, hoping to keep at bay the need I have for her. Then, when she passes out, I spend the rest of the night just holding her and watching her sleep. I can't help it. I'm obsessively in love with her. It can't be healthy, but I gave that fight up a long time ago. It is what it is. There's no fighting this need I have for her.

I'd learned that early on. She woke up my whole world the moment I laid eyes on her. Feelings I'd never felt before came to life. I'd never needed another person before. Maybe because I'd never had one be there for me. From very early on in life I was alone, and I'd rather liked it like that. I didn't want to be one of the foster kids begging for attention or clamoring to be adopted. I knew I'd only need myself.

I'd busted my ass through school, then college, saving every extra penny from the underground fighting I'd been doing to pay my bills. Then I starting investing in one thing after another. Seemed I had a good eye for what would be the next big thing. It became like an addiction. It was all I thought about: how could I make my hedge fund firm grow? And that had worked for me until she came strolling into my life.

Now she's my addiction. In my every thought and every action. Making me want and crave things I never thought I wanted. I don't want to waste a minute when I'm with her, least of all waste it sleeping. I keep telling myself I'll sleep when I'm dead, but it's starting to catch up to me.

I've got a big weekend planned, though, and if I can just make it through until then, it will all be perfect. I've been training my replacement the past six months, getting him in here and showing him all that I do. It's taken long hours, and I haven't told Molly. After we were first married, I tried to hold back on my need for her. She's so young and beautiful, and I didn't want to smother her with all that I wanted. She's a blossoming flower, and I felt like the shadows keeping her all to myself. I didn't want her to wilt and resent me for isolating her. So I worked hard and tried to hold myself

back, telling myself that it was for her so that she could be happy. No woman wants her husband to suffocate her. I wanted her to make friends here and have a new life here. If it was up to me, it would be the two of us in our own home away from the city. I selfishly want her all to myself. The thought of being locked up with her in a house by the ocean and never leaving sounds like a dream come true. I never would have wanted something like that before Molly, but she changed all that for me. Made me want something else.

Sitting up from my couch, I try to rub out the wrinkles on my pants. I lay here too long and now I look like a mess. I'm anxious to get home to her, but I know the second I walk in the door I'll be on her. It's not fair how strong my need is for her. I can't expect her to want sex with me every morning and every night. No woman wants it that much. Before, I didn't give two shits about sex. It was always about the next deal or the next move I could make to expand my company. That was what used to get me off. What drove me each day. I would get lost in my work, and now all I want is to get lost in her.

I slip on my shoes and go over to grab my coat and keys and head out of my office. I'm surprised when I see Cary sitting at her desk. I told her to go home hours ago. She's becoming a problem. Ryan, my replacement, hired her. Since he was the one to take over the day-to-day operations, I told him he could replace Debra as whoever he got would be working with him and not with me. I was so sad to see Debra go. She'd been the only mother figure I'd ever had in my life, but I couldn't fault her for wanting to spend time with her husband. I felt the exact same way.

"Cary, why are you here? It's almost eleven." I don't wait for her response, walking past her to the elevator and hitting the button. I plan on calling Ryan on the way home and telling him to get rid of her. I don't care if I have a week left. He's a married man himself, and we don't need that kind of shit happening here. <div class="ad-container">

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“Phillip, I wanted to talk. Maybe we could grab a drink before you head home.”

I hear her behind me as I wait for the elevator to open. It takes everything in me not to turn and yell at her. Her mere presence annoys me, and I’m so fucking tired. I’ve caught her a few times trying to flirt with me. At first I thought maybe I was misreading her, but it has become clear that wasn’t the case. Thankfully, the elevator dings and the doors open. I walk in and turn, looking at her.

“I’ve told you repeatedly not to call me Phillip, and I’m not interested. Nor is it appropriate to get a drink with you. I told you to leave at five o’clock, so I’ll assume your timesheet will reflect that instead of the late hour. This is unprofessional, and I’ll be speaking to Mr. Arrow about this.” Reaching out, I press the button for the first floor and watch her face turn panicky as the doors shut. I don’t have time to try to figure out what that means. I’m beyond ready to get home to my Molly and see her beautiful face.

I end up hailing a cab home, not wanting to use a driver or take the train this late. On the cab ride home, I talk to Ryan and explain to him that Cary is a problem. He assures me that he will speak to her first thing and that she won’t be there after that. It’s the part of the job I hate the most, but it’s a necessary evil. Someone like Cary is looking to bed a rich man, and I didn’t spend years building my company so a piece of ass could drag the new leader of our company through the mud. There are plenty of willing men, and I’m not saying Ryan is a saint, but work isn’t where this needs to go down.

When the cab pulls up outside our building, I throw some money at the cabbie and climb out. My heart is racing already and I try to calm it. If it was up to me, I’d go

barreling into the condo and sweep Molly up in an embrace, leading us to fuck like rabbits on the kitchen counter. I'd spend all night talking to her and telling her how much I love her.

But I can't do that.

She's probably already in bed, trying to get her rest from when I wake her in the night. Sometimes my need for her is so strong it overpowers my good sense and I wake her up, taking her when she's still half asleep. I feel ashamed of myself that I can't control my love for her, and I'm trying to do better. Last night I just sat in the chair by the bed and watched her sleep. I knew if I got into bed, I would want more, and she needs her rest. I don't want her to think it's all about sex.

I keep telling myself that when I quit and we have more time together, that this insatiable need for her will pass. We've been married for a year now, and I'm scared because it's only gotten worse. The longer we're together, the deeper my feelings get. But I've got a plan to stop working and start our marriage in a new way. It may be hard for her to spend so much time with me, but I'm hoping we can do things she likes together so she won't feel like I'm a burden.

When I walk into our penthouse, I place my house keys and phone on the table by the door and feel myself frown. The picture I gave her for her birthday still hasn't been hung. I'd taken a picture of the first place I'd ever kissed her and framed it. It was in the library at her father's house, a room I knew she loved. I didn't explain the reason I took it because she seemed so disappointed when she saw it. I just stumbled over telling her it was because I knew she loved all the books. I thought that maybe giving her something that was hers to place in our home would spur her to put her own things around the house. Touches of her. I'd even told her where I thought the picture would look nice—where we walk into our home every day. She'd given me a tight smile, and the picture remains in a box in the corner of the room.

I told her she could do whatever she wanted to our space here, but she seemed uninterested in that idea. We'd talked about getting a place of our own, and that had excited her. She told me details about what she wanted, and so I hired an architect, relayed what she wanted and had him draw it up for me. I wanted to have a place built as the fairy tale she described, and then I'd surprise her with it.

That's what this coming weekend has been about. Planning everything down to the last detail, all while wrapping up work. For good.

When I walk past the kitchen counter, I notice something there, but I keep on going. I'm too anxious to see Molly to stop and check out something I saw out of the corner of my eye.

Walking into the bedroom, I can tell something is off. I don't feel her in the room. I flip on the overhead light in a slight panic, and when I see the bed is pristine, a nervousness falls over me.

"Molly?" I call, thinking maybe she's in the bathroom. But as I start to search the house, I see that every room is silent and empty of her energy.

"Molly!" This time I shout down the hall, letting my panic set in. It's time for her to stop playing games.

I hurry to the front of the condo, grab my phone, and go to the kitchen. I check my messages but don't see one from her, so I send one, checking in. She must have forgotten to tell me she was out doing something tonight. Maybe I can meet up with her. I miss her so much already, and I don't like the idea of her being out so late without me. I should have been here to go with her. I shake my head at myself.

I wait for just a moment, and my eyes slide over to what caught my eye when I first entered. It's a small piece of paper, and I reach out and slide it toward me.

I feel as if someone has punched me in the gut. I look over to see her wedding rings on the granite next to it, and I fall to my knees. My heart is beating in my ears, and I can't process what's happening. It's like I'm in a tunnel, but I'm falling. My breath comes out fast, and I see black spots in my vision. Just before the blackness takes over, the words flash again in front of me.

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I can't do this. Don't follow me.

### Chapter Three Molly

"Wow, Molly, that's really good." I look over at Oscar. He's holding a white bag that I'm guessing came from Elaine's Diner, the local eatery only two blocks down from the beach. He smiles at me, the sun hitting his dark hair, making all his grays show.

My eyes go back to the painting I've been working on all morning, and for the first time, I see it. It's a moment in my life I could never forget. Branded. I could paint this in my sleep, if I was sleeping that is.

"I'd love to know what he's looking at," he adds, sitting down next to me on the old, white, chipped wooden bench that looks out onto the beach. I've come to feel like it's my bench over the past few months. I spend most of my time on this beach doing this. Painting.

I took up residence on it today before the sun really even started to rise over the endless ocean. Everything around me waking up, coming back to life, leaving me behind in the darkness. I don't sleep anymore. I don't know how someone can be so exhausted and not be able to sleep. I just keep thinking I'll crash, but as soon as I do, I wake moments later. The bittersweet dreams are more than I can bear. Taunting and torturing me.

Who knew sweet memories could cut so deep? Make you not want to close your eyes at night because you know what you'll see? Make you ache for something you can't have? I've even started to question myself as to what I'd really seen in Phillip's office

that night because not once have I dreamed about that night. No. All that ever seem to come are the things that made me fall in love with him. Ache to be with him so deeply I didn't think there was a bottom to it.

The nights he'd hold me close and tell me all the things we were going to do together. The life that we would have. That he wanted that life, too, never having had a family of his own. He'd always make me smile when he'd tell me he'd never wanted one until he met me. That he'd just been waiting for me to come and wake him up. That things had been so lonely before me. That he hadn't even realized he was. That he wasn't really living until me. Once again making me feel like the center of his world.

And maybe I could have that life if I could be that woman who looked the other way. It was pathetic because I'd actually contemplated it. The ache of not having him hurting more than him having an affair.

"Me," I finally say, realizing I hadn't answered Oscar. It's the first time I met Phillip. I'd walked into my father's study, and there he was, waiting for my father to get back. I'll never forget the look on his face. His sharp, deep blue eyes narrowed on me, then lit up his face, a dimple showing that only I could ever seem to get from him. My dimple. I've kissed it hundreds of times. It was instant. I knew in that moment I'd love that man until I took my last breath. No one had ever looked at me like that. He'd made me feel like the world began and ended with me.

Most of all, I loved how I seemed to be so different to him. To others he was hard, cold, and calculating. Intimidating, I think many would say, but that wasn't what I'd seen that first day. He was sweet and charming, and I'd sat talking with him in my father's office for three hours. We didn't even know the time had passed. My father had come rushing in, apologizing, and asking why we hadn't responded to his phone calls or texts. It was like we'd gotten lost in our own little world, something I easily do around him. I could even see the shocked look on Phillip's face when he pulled his phone out of his suit-jacket pocket, surprised that he'd forgotten. My dad even made

a joke that it was normally glued to his hand.

Phillip had leaned over and whispered in my ear, “I would have left hours ago and thrown this deal out the window, but now there isn’t a thing I wouldn’t do for this deal if it means I’ll get to wait in your father’s office for hours just to talk to you.”

Always sweet with me. Telling me about his life, which I knew he didn’t do with others. Even Cindy had said that while they had known each other for years, she didn’t know much about his past. No one seemed to know but me. About the fighting, the foster care, the drive to be the best. The nothingness he’d felt.

It wasn’t until I’d seen him at work or around others did I realize that only I got that. Did he give that to her, too? The thought is like a smack. A reminder of what really happened. What led me to this bench, sitting alone like I do most days.

Those sweet memories are why I believed all those words Cindy had said to me at dinner that night. Phillip would never do something like that. But he did. I’d seen it. Just like I’d seen my father do the same to my mother. It took a while to see it, or maybe my head was in the clouds, but it was there right in front of my face. We like to make ourselves believe things aren’t what they seem. Phillip had told me he had dark parts to him.

How much easier would it have been if I could have acted like my mother? She’d seemed happy until she just wasn’t, but I wonder if she had the ache deep in her, too. Probably. Why else would she just take off and leave? I always wondered if it was because I reminded her of my father. She couldn’t even be bothered to attend any of my graduations or even my wedding. There was always a reason she couldn’t make it.

“Hmm. He your baby’s father?” I look over at Oscar in shock. He turns his big brown warm eyes to me, eyebrows raised with a knowing smirk on his face. He reminds me

so much of my grandfather. Maybe that's why I latched myself to him. He's only person in this little town in the middle of nowhere I really talk to, but in all fairness, he doesn't really give me a choice. Just like today, he normally shows up with something to eat and we take it from there.

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My hand goes to the little baby bump that I didn't think was that noticeable.

"I've known for a while, but you just don't seem to be fessing up."

"I thought I hid it well."

"You're a tiny little thing. Trust me, that bump is just going to keep growing. I'd know, my wife had eight."

I smile at that. It always makes me smile when he talks about his wife. His own smile just takes over his whole face at the mention of her. I love that. I'd wanted what they had. A little life together without the rest of the world pressing in on them, but I knew the responsibilities that sat on Phillip's shoulders. I knew the reality of the man I'd chosen to marry, even if he had promised me that someday we'd have the life I'd dreamed about.

I know Oscar has a lot of kids, all older than me, and I often get them mixed up when he talks about them. But that's what happens when you give all your children names that start with the letter S. It's hard to keep things straight.

I rub my stomach. I want a baby belly. The thought actually makes me excited, maybe because I remember all the times Phillip would talk about wanting to see me round with our baby, but I just don't want people asking questions. Questions I don't want to answer or think about. I'd liked this whole avoiding thing. It might not be working out wonderfully, but I'm getting along for the time being and I still have time. Time to pull myself together.

“So.” Oscar nudges me with his shoulder, then pulls the box out of the white bag, opening it to reveal cinnamon rolls, and offering me one. I take one from the box. The roll is still warm, and I take a giant bite. The hunger comes and goes. Sometimes I feel like I can eat anything, and sometimes I have to make myself.

“He’s the father,” I finally admit.

“I like the way you draw him. He doesn’t look as nice on the television.”

My face jerks back to his as he studies the painting. He knows.

“You know who I am?” He just nods his head like it’s no big deal. “How long have you known?”

“Since I saw you.”

“Oh.” I sit back against the bench. I’m at a loss for words. It’s not like we’re famous really, but every now and then Phillip would make the news for work. Oscar isn’t the first person I’ve heard say Phillip looks mean. He’s a big guy. He’s more than a few inches over six foot, and he’s broad, too. No leanness to him. He’s built like a tank, I often thought, but it always made me feel safe. But then again, I always got the soft Phillip. His eyes never went cold on me. Or they hadn’t. I wouldn’t bet on that now. I know he’s looking for me. I’d even had to put in a call to the New York Police Department to stop him from filing a missing person’s report. Then I got my lawyer to serve him divorce papers. Said I’d agree to whatever he wanted. I wasn’t going to fight him.

I hadn’t heard a word after that and my lawyer said he’d yet to respond. I wasn’t pushing. I just wanted to be left alone for a little bit longer. I was still trying to accept the fact that I was pregnant. I was a little slow on the uptake. I’d only figured it out about a month ago myself.

Time seemed to blur together here with endless days of sadness. It wasn't until I couldn't keep anything down that it finally clicked into place.

"He looks like shit."

"I don't watch the TV or look at the paper." Heck, I don't even own a television in the tiny studio I'm living in above a little print shop. Still, I don't understand how Oscar's words make me feel. Happy that he looks like shit without me, or remorse because I still love him and hate the idea of him hurting, even if he hurt me?

"I can't help myself. Gotta watch my news every night."

"I'm going to tell him," I say defensively. I don't want him to think I'll keep this baby from him, because I won't. I just want to get it together. Get my head on straight. I keep thinking time will make the pain lessen, but I'm starting to think nothing will.

One thing I do know, I won't be like my mother. She ran. Took off and left me behind. This might not have been the life I'd wanted, the family I'd dreamed about having, but I'd make it work. I'd pull myself together. Go back to the city and do what I have to do so we can both be a part of the child's life. This baby will have both of us. I just hope Phillip will be more engaged in this child's life than he had been in our marriage.

It would kill me if the novelty of a child could wear off like what had happened to me. Either way, it would be better than having no father at all. My father might not have been perfect, but he was still there, unlike my mother. That was something.

"Didn't think you would. Just taking your time. You'll get there." With that, he stands and tosses the box in the trash.

I'm not sure I'll ever get there. The time isn't working as I spend my days painting and my nights lying in bed looking up at the ceiling. Letting things eat away at me. I have to go back. The sooner the better.

To get things ready for this child. To work on how Phillip and I are going to be in each other's lives.

Finishing my cinnamon roll, I lick my fingers clean before I start packing up my art supplies. I put everything in my bag, fold the easel, and put it under my arm. I pull out my phone and call a number I know by heart. I'm not sure if I want her to answer.

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## Page 7

*Source Creation Date: June 30, 2025, 7:03 am*

“Cindy Reed speaking.” Cindy’s voice comes through the phone, the sound making my eyes water. I miss her. She’s probably going to kill me.

“Cindy, it’s—”

“Molly!” she barks into the phone, cutting me off. “Where the fuck are you?”

I hear someone gasp in the background. It actually makes me crack a smile. God, I really do miss her.

“I’m coming home. I was wondering if I could stay with you,” I ask, stepping off the sidewalk to cross the street in the direction of my little apartment. I’ll need to start packing things up because I know as soon as I get off this phone, Phillip will find me and show up here. Or worse, he won’t.

I barely hear the sound of the car before I feel someone grab me, slamming me down on the concrete, and everything goes black.

### Chapter Four Phillip

The feel of my fist through the drywall does nothing to ease the anger pulsing through my veins and the sadness weighing heavy in my heart. I’m so fucking angry, I often feel like it consumes me, and I’m so fucking scared, but I don’t know what else to do. It feels hopeless, and then again it feels like any second, she’ll come walking through the door.

“Mr. Tanner, please understand we are doing everything we can to locate Mrs.

Tanner.”

Shaking my fist out, I try to get the feeling back in my hand. It doesn't make me feel better, but it's all I can do. I've got a team of three private investigators on this, and no one has found a trace of her. It's been weeks, and nothing.

She could be dead.

My heart stops at that thought. No, I would feel it shake my soul if she wasn't alive. I would know deep in my bones if she wasn't somewhere on this earth. She is the other half of my heart, and I will find her. No matter how long it takes. She's checked in with the police and some lawyer. Both claimed not to know where she was, just that she was okay.

She ran out on me without so much as a word. She owes me an explanation, a way to make this right. I rub my face with my now beat-up hand and let out a sigh. I was going to make everything okay. I'd had it all worked out. We were going to have it all. We were just hours from getting it, and then poof!

I pace in my home office, not knowing how to respond to that. What do I say? Prove it? I've already yelled at everyone in this room at least once today. I stopped going to work after the night she left, waiting here in case she walked through the door. After the first night, I knew I couldn't sit still, so I hired Carl Major and his team to find my Molly. She may need time to cool off, but she could have done that in the other room. She didn't need to leave the house if she was having second thoughts about our marriage.

“How can there be nothing?” I scream the last word, my voice echoing off the walls.

The two men sitting before me flinch a bit, and I'm sure I'm a ragged mess. I haven't slept in weeks, just walking around like a zombie. My old assistant, Debra, actually

flew back from Florida for a few days when she heard Molly left. She made me lots of food I never really touched and left some in the freezer, too. She went back to her family last week, and her small visit was a comfort for a short time. But now I'm all alone in my grief and I can't take it anymore. Maybe I am a madman, but I'll be goddamned if she can leave me like this.

The investigators asked if we'd had any problems in our marriage. I didn't know how to explain that I loved her beyond all sane reasoning, and I had to keep busy at work to stop the obsession that was growing inside me. They asked if there had been any infidelity and I laughed in their faces. No other existed besides my Molly. I was blind until she came into my life, and after that day, she's the only woman I see. The men seemed skeptical, but I didn't give a shit. They can think whatever the fuck they want as long as they find her.

I find myself falling between being grief-stricken and being mad as hell. I'm so fucking sad she's gone, and I'd give anything to hold her in my arms again. But on the other hand, I'm so fucking angry she left me like this that I don't know if I could look her in the eyes. I finally needed someone, and she was gone.

I know the last part is a lie, even as the thought flits through my jumbled brain. I would never look away from her again if I had her back in my sight. How stupid of me to waste so many nights away from her when I could have had her beneath me as we made love in bed. The thought brings a lump to my throat and I hold back a sob. I spent the last year trying to get shit in order so that I would never have to walk into another office again. I did all that I could to set our lives in motion, and it was to the detriment of our relationship.

Parts of our lives replay over and over in my brain, and I keep trying to pinpoint why she would just leave me like this. Leave us like this. I knew she was unhappy in the penthouse, but I was making strides to change that. To live up to the promises I'd made her, but maybe I took too long.

I didn't think she was so unhappy with me and our marriage that she would just walk out. No explanation, just a note saying I can't do this. Don't follow me. I'd worried that note in my fingers for so many days, I wore a hole in it.

I keep pacing, trying to think of something. Even after the cops said she was okay. Maybe she was kidnapped and forced to write it. Maybe she had a fever and she was hallucinating and thought she had to go.

Both of those scenarios make my palms sweaty with fear. But when I checked the security cameras, she was alone and didn't seem to be under any duress. She moved fast out of the building, but it wasn't as if she was running. Then we traced her credit cards to an ATM from which she withdrew a large amount of cash. Then nothing.

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*Source Creation Date: June 30, 2025, 7:03 am*

I keep thinking that there had to be a reason. Maybe there was another man...

Reaching over, I grab the glass paperweight on my desk and throw it across the room like a baseball. I hear the noise of its collision with the wall, but I ignore it. If I truly took a good look around the room, I'm sure I'd see it's destroyed, but better in here than the rest of the house. I left our home untouched until she returns. Because she will return. There is no other way.

Somewhere in the distance, I hear the office door open. I don't look up to see if the investigators left, I just walk to the window and stare out at the rain. I wonder if my Molly is cold, if she's out in this with no shelter. I wonder for the ten thousandth time if she's safe. I think I could live with anything as long as she was safe.

"Mr. Tanner. We've got something."

I spin around, seeing the youngest of the trio, Jeremy, walk in and hand his phone over to Carl. After he looks at it, he nods and then looks to me. There is hope in his eyes, but I don't dare read too much into it. I want to hear what he has to say first.

"We've been watching all her known associates since you requested our services, and it looks like your friend Cindy received a call from an unknown number. Jeremy traced the call and has a recording."

He lays the phone on my desk and hits play.

Molly's voice fills my ears, and I fall to my knees, clutching my chest. It's the first time in weeks that we've gotten a single scrap of information, and the sound of her

voice is overwhelming.

I was wondering if I could come home and stay with you. Then Molly stops talking. There's the sound of someone screaming, and then I hear the loud noise of screeching brakes. Cindy says her name in a panic, and then the line goes dead.

A deathly chill runs down my spine, and I'm on my feet in a second, ready to take action. I don't even have to ask before Jeremy starts talking.

"I traced her call to a burner phone, but we were able to pinpoint her position to Washington Beach. It's about five hours south—"

"I know where it is." It's two hours away from where they had traced her call to the police station and her lawyer. By the time we'd gotten there, she was gone.

I'm blowing past the men as I make my way through the penthouse and to the front door, grabbing my keys. I don't know what that was on that recording, but I know that's where Molly is and that's where I'm going.

"Sir, wait. We'll escort you," Carl says as they chase after me.

"You're welcome to follow," is all I say as I get in the elevator and push the button for the lobby.

The three men barely slip in before the doors shut, and I feel antsy. Finally, I have a direction. I just need to make sure she's okay, and then I need to talk to her. Find out what the fuck happened. She's okay. She's totally fine. She has to be.

As we exit the building I get behind the wheel of my McLaren F1 and grip the wheel. This was a rash purchase when I was in my early twenties, but now I'm glad to have it. This baby can do two hundred and forty miles an hour. I plan on getting to my

Molly in just under two hours instead of five.

When I make it across the bridge and out of the city, I hit the gas. Hard. Nothing and no one is standing in my way. I don't care what I have to do or who I have to kill. My wife is mine. And I'm bringing her home, whether she wants to come or not.

## Chapter Five Phillip

I'm an hour into the drive and I don't think my knuckles have stopped aching from how hard I've been gripping the wheel. I've kept my focus on getting to Molly, unable to think of anything else. But as the miles are eaten up under my tires, my mind starts to drift. I think about our wedding day, and then my thoughts go to our wedding night. Everyone tells you to try and remember as much as you can because over time the day will fade and all you'll have are pictures. Bullshit. I'll remember every second of that day for the rest of my life. And I don't need any pictures to remind me.

I stand in a peach orchard at the end of a long row, dressed in a suit and tie. It smells like sweet fruit and springtime, but the scent does nothing to calm me. I fiddle with the cuff of my shirt, unable to keep my hands still. I'm waiting for Molly to walk down the aisle to me, and if I don't keep my fingers locked in front of me, I may very well run down the second I see her and pull her to me. I need to try to even my breathing so that when she finally appears, I won't scream like Braveheart and charge after her.

After what feels like an eternity, I see her at the end of the long line of peach trees. White peeks out among the leaves as she makes her way down the grove to where I'm standing. It takes all the power I have inside me not to take a single step. Instead I just watch her as she comes into full view.

She's wearing her hair down and in soft waves past her shoulders. She has one

section pulled back with a cream-colored flower, and she's smiling at me with big excited eyes. I feel myself swallow back a moan of equal parts excitement and overwhelming love. She looks so fucking beautiful.

As my eyes travel lower, I see she's got on a simple cream dress. It's got small straps over her shoulders, and the rest is long and flowing. There's a little lace at the bottom, and I see her toes peep out in the blue sandals she's wearing underneath as she takes each step. Her father is on her arm, but she might as well be alone for all I see. The small crowd drops away, and as she reaches me, I can't be still anymore.

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*Source Creation Date: June 30, 2025, 7:03 am*

Taking three giant steps, I go to her, taking her away from what's holding her and bringing her to where I was standing. There are words being said, but I hear none of it, only speaking when prompted. I spend the entire ceremony smiling at my bride and whispering to her how beautiful she looks. Her cheeks are pink the entire time, embarrassed at being watched by everyone and by my repeated words. I think I say it to her a thousand times, but I just can't stop myself. She's just so incredibly perfect, and I love her more than I ever thought possible.

After the ceremony, I don't let go of her hand. People ask her to dance, but I refuse. It's the one day I can be as selfish as I want, and I won't have her taken an inch from my side. I hold her close as we sway to the music, waiting on the moment when I can take her upstairs. I want her to enjoy her wedding day and have all the moments she's been planning for, but I've had about enough of sharing her.

"Are you ready, my love?" I lean down and place a soft kiss on the bare skin of her shoulder. She leans into me, pressing her soft curves against me. When I feel her nod, I pull us away and drift into the shadows, away from the party.

We'd taken a drive out to the country right after I'd asked Molly to marry me. When she saw the peach farm, she made me pull over so we could take a look. The older couple who owned it were nice enough and allowed us to have a picnic there on the property. By the end of the day, I'd convinced them to let us have our wedding there. He said it should be good luck because he and his wife had been married on this little farm and celebrating their fiftieth wedding anniversary that year. It was all too perfect, and I was thankful I was able to give Molly what she wanted.

Our reception is held in the barn, and I have my car waiting out back for when she's

ready to go. After we sneak out, I drive up to the sound to a house I've rented for the week. I told Molly I would take her anywhere in the world she wanted to go, but all she said was she wanted me and nothing else for as long as possible.

When we get to the house, I make her sit still while I grab our bags out of the back and run them up the stairs into the beach house. I give the place a quick once-over, making sure that everything is in place before I go back outside and open her door.

She smiles up at me like I've hung the moon, and I vow right there and then to try to keep that look on her face every day for the rest of our lives. No one has ever looked at me like that. I'd never thought I'd want someone to. But I like it from her. No, I fucking love it. She's so fucking sweet and innocent. I want to protect that.

Scooping her up in my arms, I kick the car door shut, and carry my bride into the house. The place has been lit with soft lights, and the kitchen is stocked, so we don't have any reason to leave. I walk her to the bedroom. I see that the bed has been turned down and there are rose petals scattered across it. After setting her down gently on the edge of the bed, I kneel in front of her and just look at her.

She's still in her wedding dress, smiling at me. It's her first time, and our first time together, but she doesn't look nervous. Instead she looks radiant, like she's glowing. She didn't want to wait until our wedding night, but I didn't want anything between us. Ever. And if waiting meant getting her down the aisle faster, then all the better. I needed her to be mine the second I met her.

She reaches out, rubbing my face, and I can't help the groan I let out at the contact.

"Let me go change."

I reluctantly do so, and it takes all my will power to leave her.

Molly gets up from the bed and takes her small bag into the bathroom, shutting the door. I strip out of my suit, nervous with anticipation. I pace for a second, then think better of it and get in the bed under the sheets. Try to calm myself a little.

Minutes tick by, feeling like hours, and I'm debating whether to go into the bathroom when the door finally opens.

She's standing there in the doorway with just a soft light on behind her. It's as if she's glowing. I nearly die of a heart attack when she walks towards me, my heart wanting to beat out of my chest, her sexy hips swaying with every step. I thought she would have worn something white, virginal even, but this come-fuck-me seductress at the end of the bed is the least virginal thing I've ever seen. My cock is standing straight up and dripping with need after only ten seconds.

"Holy shit," I whisper.

She's wearing a scrap of black lace that looks like a see-through ribbon. It ties around her neck like a halter top and runs down her chest, barely covering her nipples, to her pussy, but it doesn't cover it. No, it goes right down the middle over her clit, letting her bare pussy lips swell over the sides.

She crawls up the end of the bed, stopping before she gets to me, and kneels. She spreads her legs wide, letting me see her and where the ribbon barely covers her wet clit. I know she's wet because I can see the sticky moisture coating the inside of her thighs.

"Molly, I..." My tongue is hanging out of my mouth and I can't form words.

Running her hands down her body, she doesn't have an ounce of shyness about what she's showing me.

“I didn’t want you to be gentle with me our first time, Phillip. I’ve wanted you and I’ve been begging since the beginning. I’m all yours now, and I want you to take me. Don’t hold back,” she says, making me wonder if she’s seen it. The deep need I have for her, so powerful that I try to hide it, afraid it will scare her because the truth is, it even scares me. <p>(adsbygoogle=window.adsbygoogle||[]).push({});<p>

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I swallow audibly and then nod my head. I'll give her what she wants. Just as soon as blood leaves my dick and goes back to my brain.

Molly crawls closer to me and grabs the edge of the sheet, ripping it away and exposing my cock. The sight of my red, straining dick makes her lick her lips, and I'm somewhat shocked. I've always been the aggressor, but she's right. I was prepared for soft love-making tonight. I wanted to be gentle her first time and treat her like a precious flower. But she's having none of that. I can see the hunger in her eyes, giving me hope that maybe one day she'll need me as much as I need her.

Leaning back against the headboard, I spread my legs wide. If this is what she wants, then I'll give it to her. I want my Molly just as insane for me as I am for her.

"Come and get it, wife."

Reaching down, I give my cock a few hard strokes, showing her what she's done to me from the moment I laid eyes on her—when my body came alive for what felt like the first time in my life—and I see her eyes widen in delight. We are on the same page. She may be a virgin and have no experience other than with me, but she knows what she wants. She's not ashamed of her body. She's not embarrassed to tell me how to use it, and I respect the fuck out of her for it.

"We have years to make love, Phillip," she says, slinking up between my legs. "Right now, I don't want foreplay. I've waited too long for you." I can hear the need in her voice.

She grabs the lacy ribbon in the middle of her tummy and gives it one good jerk. The

material unravels, and I groan, leaking more cum. It lubes up my cock as I give it a few more strokes.

She straddles my legs. I drop my cock and grab her hips, helping her to climb on top of me. I grit my teeth at the sight of her, naked and getting ready to take my dick. Her hand comes between us and she guides me to her opening. I hiss through my teeth at the tightness already hugging the head of it.

“Phillip.” I pull my eyes away from where she’s holding me at her entrance, to her soft green eyes. She smiles at me, and it’s as if we’re sharing a secret. I smile back, and she drops down on my cock in one quick motion.

My groan is loud, and she lets out a little squeak of pain. I hold her to me as we both breathe through the new feeling—her having me inside her and me being strangled by her glorious pussy. It takes me longer than her to recover. She starts to move a little, but I grab her hips and still her, trying to get myself under control.

After I think I have myself together enough to keep from cumming the second she moves, I give her a nod.

“Go slow,” I say, giving her a stern look. She gives me a mischievous one in return, and I know I’m in trouble.

She tests out the length of my cock, slowly moving up and down until she has familiarized herself with him. She’s discovered every inch of him, and I’ve groaned loudly at each pass. Fuck, I’m never going to last.

As I grab her thick hips, her tits start to bounce in my face. I lean forward just a little as the soft flesh hits me with each movement. She’s so soft everywhere, and I can’t take it anymore. She wanted all of me, and I’m going to give it to her.

Rolling up over her, I thrust into her hard. She grips the headboard behind her and moans loudly into the room, her back arching off the bed. Rose petals are stuck to both of us, but I couldn't care less.

“You're taking me so good, baby.” She lets out another curse, loving my dirty talk. “Goddamn, you're a virgin, but you want it rough. Thank God you're my wife. All fucking mine.”

Her legs come around my hips and she grinds into me. There isn't an ounce of hesitation in our love-making. And it is love-making. It may be fierce and strong, but there is so much love between us.

I take her just like she wants it. Her nails dig into my shoulders and back. Our passion has been stemmed back for too long. She's so fucking tight and too goddamn good for me to last any longer.

I'd stroked my cock thinking about this moment so many times, but it wasn't even a tenth as amazing as the reality of it.

Reaching between us, I strum her clit and tell her what she needs to do.

“Cum on me, my love. Give your husband your cherry orgasm. It's mine. It belongs to me.”

She clenches around me and, like a good girl, cums on my cock. It's so beautiful watching her writhe while I'm inside of her. The blush that sweeps across her skin as she lets out her pleasure sends me over the edge. I cum deep in her, unable to hold back. She's too perfect, and she's all mine.

I blink a few times and adjust my erection, putting away thoughts of our wedding night. We spent a week in that house on the sound and never once saw the water. I

hated leaving that house. It felt even then like our bubble was bursting. I knew after that week that things had to change in my life. I couldn't be away from her after having all of her in every way imaginable.

Hitting my fist against the steering wheel, I blame myself for this. I should have acted sooner. Cared less about the stability of the company and said fuck it before it got to this point. She deserved better. She deserved all of me. Now that I'm going to get her back, she will get it. I'll make this right. Just as soon as I turn her over my knee for ever thinking about leaving me. All this need I've been holding back is about to be ripped wide open.

## Chapter Six Molly

A pain shoots through the back of my head as I try to open my eyes, but they don't seem to cooperate no matter how hard I try.

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“Baby,” I try to whisper, not knowing if anyone around me can even make out what I’m saying through the chaos. The sound of sirens bleeds into my head, making the pain start to pound even harder.

“Ma’am, you’re going to be okay. Just try not to move,” I hear someone say. The sound is so far away, but I can feel their breath against my ear like they’re leaning in to talk to me.

“Baby.” I try to say the simple word again, still not knowing if the words are leaving my lips. I try to lift my hand to bring it to my stomach.

“Ma’am, please try not to move,” the man says again. His tone is soft but firm.

I am trying, but it doesn’t seem to be working.

“The truck just came out of nowhere and I just grabbed her to pull her out of the way. I didn’t mean for us to come down on the ground so hard,” I hear another man say. “Is she going to be okay?”

“Sir, just step back.”

Voices start to mesh together, and I try to open my eyes again, but everything seems to be slipping away. The voices and the chaos echo as if far away, until blackness falls.

\* \* \*

“That’s my wife!”

The bellow penetrates the darkness, the voice bringing me back.

“That might be the case, sir, but it’s my understanding—”

“If you want to keep your job, I wouldn’t finish that sentence, Doctor. Don’t think I’m not above buying this hospital and anything else just to fire your ass.”

“Phillip, calm down. This isn’t helping anything,” a stern female voice cuts in. She sounds just as familiar as the man...Phillip. The thought of his name sends a sweet warmth through my body, and I feel myself start to drift into the darkness again.

\* \* \*

“God, I’m going to love doing this every day for the rest of our lives.” The man leans down, taking my mouth in a soft kiss. It’s lazy and sweet, like he has all the time in the world to kiss me. He pulls back, and his dark blue eyes scan my face. His coal-dark hair looks like he’s been running his hands through it, or maybe I have. “Still doesn’t feel real that we’re married.” He moves in a little closer, his bare legs tangling with mine.

His hand comes to my face, and I lean into it while his thumb traces my lips. I feel his other hand move under the blanket, coming to settle on my stomach.

“I’m not going to let you leave this bed all weekend. I’m going to enjoy every second of my new wife.” He takes my mouth again, and this time I push my tongue into his. No, I don’t want to leave this bed either.

There’s something about this man who is calling me his wife. He makes me feel safe, pushing away the darkness and filling it with him. I grip him tighter, wanting him

closer. Needing to feel him against me. I'm lonely.

He can fix that, a voice whispers in my mind.

He pulls back and starts kissing down my neck. It feels like his mouth is everywhere, not leaving any part of me unkissed as he works his way down my body, stopping at my navel and licking around it. I feel myself smile down at him, and his eyes find mine.

A dimple forms in his cheek, the little bit of scruff on his face doing nothing to hide it. It makes my stomach flutter.

"You know." His big hands come to my hips, gripping them firmly and holding me in place. Not that I had any intention of trying to get away from this man. He keeps calling me his wife, and I'm on board with that. It feels right. He's here, pulling me from the darkness. Bringing me back to life. "Maybe I already put my baby inside of you. I lost count how many times I came inside you."

Baby.

The word makes heart jump, my eyes flying open.

Soft darkness fills the room, and I go to bring my hand to my stomach, but I stop when I realize I have someone else's hand in mine. I look down to see a head of dark hair lying next to our joined hands. It's the man from my dream. He's even more massive in person, filling up the chair that he has pushed up to the hospital bed.

I can't remember anything. Just the overwhelming need to know if my baby is okay.

He looks tired. His hair is messy, just like in my dream, but his face looks exhausted even in sleep. Dark circles are under his eyes. I look around the room. It's clear I'm

in a hospital, but it almost looks like a fancy hotel suite. I would think it was one, if not for the monitors beeping beside me.

My eyes snap to one of them, and I feel a lump form in my throat. It's the baby's heartbeat. I watch the green lines go up and down while paper spills out of the machine, keeping track of it all. Suddenly, I feel wetness hit my cheeks. The baby is okay.

I look back to the man holding my hand. The one who's filled my dreams for what feels like forever. Maybe it has been forever, because those dreams are all I remember. And the baby. As if on cue, I feel a little flutter in my stomach, making more tears leak from my eyes.

I place my other hand over the spot where I felt it, wanting to feel it again, but I feel nothing. Rubbing my hand along my belly, I try to remember. What am I, four months or five months along? The bump is noticeable, even with the blanket over me.

I look back to the man still holding my hand and slowly pull mine from his grasp. I bring it to his hair, running my fingers through it. The action seems normal. Like I've done it a thousand times. The silky strands glide through my fingers.

"Molly," he mumbles, a soft smile pulling at his lips, and it makes me wonder if I'm Molly. If he's like the man in my dreams. If he's my adoring husband. That's all I can remember seeing: the perfect man who fills my world and makes the loneliness slip away. <p>(adsbygoogle=window.adsbygoogle||[]).push({});<p>

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Suddenly, he jerks up, making me jump in surprise. His chair falls back, hitting the floor with a loud crash.

“Molly.” The word comes from him like it’s pained. I can’t read the look on his face as he looms over me. Jesus, this man is big. It’s like he keeps getting bigger and bigger.

His hand hits a button next to the bed, then he’s on me. His big hands cup my face as his mouth descends on mine, taking me in a soft yet firm kiss. He just holds himself there. Cupping my face as his lips press to mine like he thinks I might disappear.

He doesn’t pull away as I hear someone enter the room.

“Well, I see someone is finally awake.”

He pulls back, placing his forehead against mine for a moment, then pulling away, making room for the woman in purple scrubs.

“How are you feeling?” she asks as she starts to look over the machines, hitting a few buttons.

“Sleepy.” The word doesn’t come out like I expect it to and I try it again. This time it comes out right. The man next to me grabs my hand like he can’t stop himself from touching me. The woman smiles at the action before shaking her head.

“How about your head? You hit it pretty hard.” She moves in closer, making me lean up to get a look. “You rattled your brain around a little bit, but I think you’ll be okay.

You've been out for a little over twelve hours."

"Is she going to be okay?" the man cuts in, his impatience clear. It's like he's on edge, and I can hear it in his voice.

The woman studies me for a second before pulling a pen out of her breast pocket. I make a note of her name badge. Dr. Josie Dixon.

She starts flashing the light in my eyes. "All the scans were clear. She just knocked herself out real good. Some people take a little longer to wake up sometimes. I think exhaustion had a little to do with hers." She pockets the light. "Molly, do you remember what happened to you today?"

I shake my head, trying to recall, gripping the man's hand tighter. The security of it makes me feel better.

"Do you know where you are?"

"At a hospital," I supply easily.

"In what city?"

I just stare at her, trying to remember. I look to the man like he'll give me an answer, but he just studies me, a look crossing his face and his jaw going hard.

"State?" she tries again.

I just shake my head, unable to make the connection.

"How about this man? Do you know who he is?"

“He’s my husband.” I smile up at him, but he doesn’t return it. He’s still just studying me.

“His name, Molly. Do you know his name?”

“No,” I whisper, turning to look back at the doctor, not wanting to see his face. What look might cross it when he finds out I have no clue who he is. Only a dream man. I want those looks back. The ones he gave me when we were wrapped up in bed together.

“We’ll run a few tests in the morning, but I’m sure it’s fine. You had a good fall. It will come back to you,” she says, sounding so sure.

“You’ll run them now.” The man’s voice is so commanding, my head jerks back to look at him as he glares daggers at the poor doctor.

I squeeze his hand, making him look down at me and his face changes, softens.

“The baby.” I don’t want to do any tests right now. I just want to fall back asleep even after apparently being asleep for twelve hours. But I will for the baby, I will do whatever is necessary.

“He’s doing just fine.”

“He?” I pull my hand from my husband’s, bringing it to my belly, wanting to feel him move again.

“It’s a little boy. You look to be about four-and-a-half months pregnant. He’s actually a little big. I’ll need to get the records from whatever doctor you were seeing just to double-check some things.”

I have no clue who my doctor is. I don't even know where I am. I look up at my husband.

"Can you get them for her?" I ask, knowing he would know where to find them.

"I'll have it handled." His words are flat, and I can't help but feel a coldness to them, making suspicion flare to life.

"All right. Why don't you get a little more rest and I'll be back first thing in the morning?" With that, the doctor leaves.

"I, ah..." I suddenly feel awkward. "I don't know your name," I finally get out, and I peek up at him through my eyelashes.

He picks up the chair that he'd knocked over, righting it and sitting down beside me. Leaning forward, he takes my hand once again and brings it to his lips. The gesture is sweet, making me smile. I can't get a feel of him. He seems to be all over the place, but maybe it's me. I'm not thinking clearly.

"Phillip," he says, dragging his lips across the back of my hand. I think I feel his tongue come out for a second, like he's tasting me, but it's gone before I even realize it's there.

"Phillip." I say his name, leaning back in the bed, my eyes starting to close. "Please don't leave me. It's lonely without you," I mumble as I drift off to sleep, feeling his other hand come to my tummy.

"We'll never be apart again," he responds in a dark tone as I slip under.

Chapter Seven Phillip



I slide my hand under the blanket and then under her hospital gown, placing my palm on her stomach over the small bump. I close my eyes and take a deep breath, trying to reassure myself that everything is okay.

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When I was thirty minutes away from where Molly placed the call to Cindy, I got a call telling me she was in the hospital. From what I'd heard on the phone before the line went dead, something big had happened, but I pushed the thought away, refused to believe that something had happened to her when I'd just finally found her after all these months.

Just when she was about to head back to the city. Maybe not home, but to Cindy, and she had to know she wouldn't have made it one foot into New York without my knowing she was there. I would have been on her instantly.

Everything else happened in a blur. When I came flying into the hospital making my demands, they'd tried to keep her from me. They were lucky she was in the hospital or I would have burned the motherfucker to the ground just to prove how serious I was about getting to her.

It didn't take long before they got the point and attitudes started to change. I don't like to push power and money around on people, but in this case I just couldn't bring myself to care. There wasn't a goddamn thing I wouldn't have done in that moment to get to her.

Then when they'd told me she'd be okay, I felt like something was finally working for me. That I'd gone through enough and the powers that be were finally cutting me a break. Then they dropped the bomb. "And the baby," the doctor had said. The roar in my ears was so loud I didn't even hear what she said after that. I'd had to ask him to repeat himself.

If I hadn't been sitting down, I'm sure I would have hit the floor. And the baby. The

words keep circling through my mind. If something happened to our baby, it would destroy Molly. That's something I could be certain of.

I rub my hand along the bump, feeling her breathe in and out.

I still remember when Molly told me that she wanted a family. At first, I'd just wanted her. The thought of filling her with a baby made the words tumble out of my mouth. I said I wanted one, too. At first, my desire was to tie her to me on every level I could. If we had a baby, I would always be in her life. I would be tied to her forever. The more she talked about it, the way she pictured and dreamed of it, made me want it, too. More than anything. Just another way she'd woken me up to life.

I should have been with her. Laid in bed every night cupping her little round belly and feeling it grow each day. It was what we both wanted and why none of this makes any sense. I can't understand why she ran, and now I can't even ask her. She doesn't remember.

It's a bittersweet thing. She'd been looking at me with so much love when she woke up. Like I was her world again. The trust was clear in her gaze, waiting for me to answer any questions. I didn't have the answers for her. I didn't know where she'd been living, with whom, or even how she'd been getting by.

Rising from my chair, I pull my hand out from under the blanket, then lean over and kiss her belly. "Don't worry, son. I'm not letting your mommy go anywhere," I whisper to him. I don't know if that's a promise or a warning for Molly.

I wouldn't let her go. She'll be back under my roof and in my bed one way or another. She'll be lucky if I don't chain her to me. I should feel shame at the thought, but I don't. Not even a little. She broke me, and all that control, the effort it took not to smother her, is gone. Shattered into a thousand pieces, and there's no way it could ever be put back together again.

Next I take her chin in my hand, tilting her head towards me. She doesn't even stir. Her full lips part a little, and I can't stop myself from putting my lips to them just for a small taste. Her mouth parts fractionally, and I slip my tongue in, cooling some of the tension in my body.

When I pull back, I hear her mumble, "Love you," in that same voice she'd use after I'd come home from a long day of work and make love to her until she passed out. It makes my heart ache with need. I want to make her say it again. Over and over again for all the days I'd missed it.

I reluctantly pull myself away from her bed, stepping out of the room to make a call I'd been dreading. It's a reality I'm going to have to face, even more so with Molly not being able to remember anything.

I clear the thirty missed calls on my screen and go straight for the investigator, Carl, but stop when I hear someone clear their throat. I look up to see him leaning against hallway wall. He straightens, but I put my hand up and walk towards him. I want to be a few more feet from Molly's room. I don't want her hearing this.

"What've you got?"

"What I got was fucking lucky. Your wife had nothing in her purse that showed where she was staying. Just a set of keys to who knows where."

I just stare at him, waiting to get to the lucky part.

"When I got to the scene, there was some man freaking out about her."

A growl leaves my chest, and I feel myself take a step towards Carl as if he's the man in question. He holds his hand up like he's trying to calm me. Carl's a big man himself, a former Marine, but I'm just as big. It isn't often that men match my size.

“He was an old man,” he says. Like I give a fuck how old he is. “An old, married man. Calm down. It wasn’t like that.”

I feel a little tension leave my body and I take a deep breath, dropping my head to look at the ground, trying to calm myself. It isn’t working.

“There isn’t another man. In fact, there was only you.” That has me snapping my head back up. <p>(adsbygoogle=window.adsbygoogle||[]).push({});<p>

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“The old man got to talking. Seemed to know who you were and who she was. Said he was wondering when you’d be coming to get her.”

Fuck. None of this makes any sense.

“Anyway, he showed me her place. Some little studio above a print shop. Place was tiny. Couldn’t imagine the rent being high. Probably how she’d gotten by on just the money she’d taken. Unless she was selling her artwork or something, but I’m guessing not. The place was filled with paintings. Only other things were some clothes, a couple of baby books, and a bed. Even the fridge was pretty bare.”

His words don’t help with any of the confusion, nor supply me with any answers.

“Why do you say I was there?” I find myself asking. It gives me a spark of hope that maybe it won’t be as hard as I think to win my wife back. To piece together what happened all those months ago.

“It was you in all of the paintings. It was like she painted you over and over again.”

I place my hand on the wall to help support myself. She was painting me? Molly hadn’t painted since she’d moved into the condo after we were married. It was something I’d missed.

I remember picking her up to take her out and we’d end up in a make-out session in the car like high school kids. I’d find little smudges of paint in random places on her body. I don’t know why but it turned me on every time I found one. I’d started to look for them.

Then she quit. Said she'd wait until we got the new place and set up a dream studio. That never happened. Shit.

"Clear it out and take it back to New York. I want you to put it in the condo like it's always been there. Everything. All of it."

He just studies me for a second.

"She doesn't remember anything. All she knows is that we made a little trip down here for a few days. She fell and hit her head. Now we're going home, where she's fucking been for the last four months." I yell the last part. It's like if I say it hard enough, loud enough, it will be true. She never left.

"Of course, sir."

"Wrap up any loose ends. Do what you have to do. Pay what you have to pay. I don't care."

He gives me a tight nod. "It will all be taken care of."

"Did you see anything about a doctor she might have been seeing?"

Carl reaches into his front suit pocket and pulls out some folded papers. I take them from him and slip them into my back pocket. I'll have to find a doctor in the city first thing. Have her stuff transferred over. Pull some strings to make it seem like it's the doctor she's been seeing the whole time. It's sneaky and underhanded, but once again I just can't seem to care. I'd held back too long and that didn't work. Now I'm just going to take what's mine.

"Anything else, sir?" he asks.

I don't need to defend myself, but I still do it. "If your wife tried to leave, what would you do to keep her?"

A half smile hits his mouth like he understands. "It'd be real fucking cute if she thought she could leave."

"Exactly. I'll see you back in the city."

Carl turns and leaves, and I know everything will be handled. The hardest part of all of this is going to be Cindy, but I'll make her see reason.

I have to make Molly fall back in love with me so that when she finally remembers why she left to begin with, she'll be in too deep to go. I have to fight back the bit of anger I'm still feeling that she would ever think to leave me.

I make my way back to the room and sit in my chair to watch her. I put my hand back under the blanket and her gown and place it on her stomach, wanting to feel the baby again.

We'd been trying from the beginning to conceive. I'd more than tried. Every time I'd empty myself inside, possessive thoughts filled my mind. Every night I'd crawl into our bed with that looming in my mind. I knew I had her. Well, I thought I did. From the very first moment I'd seen her, my goal had been to make her mine, and I would stop at nothing to make that happen. I was swaying on the edge of the deal with her father and she pushed me right over. Gave me a reason to be around a lot. Work my way as much as I could into her life. And I did.

Marriage didn't cool that need. A baby would bind us together forever, and I wanted that. She's this perfect, sweet angel that lights up my life. A life that I hadn't even realized was dark, and I feared someone would take her from me. Try to lure her away from me.



Did she know when she ran that she was pregnant? Was it part of the reason? Would she have hidden this from me? I discount that thought. No, she was heading back when she'd called Cindy. There would have been no way for me not to have found out when she'd come back.

I also know she wouldn't do that. Not my Molly. She wanted a family so bad. Hers had been lacking and she desired more, and I'd planned to fulfill that for her. I wanted that, too, once she gave me a taste of what it would be like. I wanted it with her and no one else.

This plan had to work. There would be no other way.

## Chapter Eight Molly

Phillip lifts me from the car, easily cradling me into his chest.

"I think I can walk. I was doing it a little at the hospital," I tease him. He hasn't been more than a reach away from me since I woke up in the hospital three days ago. Almost like, if he takes his eyes off me, I might up and disappear.

But I can only imagine how scared he must have been thinking he lost me and our little peanut. He said I stepped out of a shop we were checking out on our little getaway and I was almost hit by a truck. A man pushed me out of the way in the nick of time and I'd hit my head pretty hard on the concrete curb.

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I still couldn't remember it or anything else. Like there was just this hole in my memory. But after the tests the doctors did came back normal, they have faith it will come back to me. I was a little worried, but Phillip makes me feel like everything will be okay. I should be scared or even freaking out, but all I feel is happy.

Happy to be here with this man who seems to think I've hung the moon, and our precious baby who he talks to just as much as he talks to me. I almost melt into a pile of goo every time he leans down to talk right to the baby.

"Rather not take my chances. Besides, I like carrying you." I wrap my arms around his neck, laying my head against him as he walks through the underground parking garage straight to an elevator.

"Back pocket," he tells me. I release one of my hands, reaching into his jeans and pulling out his wallet. "The silver card."

I flip it open and the first thing I see is a picture of me in a wedding dress surrounded by peach trees.

"And where were you in this picture?" I ask, pulling out the silver card and sliding it into the elevator slot. The door immediately opens.

"Again." He nods to another key slot. I slide it in again.

"I don't know." I look up at him, not knowing which floor to hit.

"Top."

“Oh.”

“Between having the penthouse and that fancy car—oh and let’s not forget this.” I wiggle the giant ring on my finger. The second time I’d woken up, I’d noticed it. It was hard not to. “I’m starting to think you’re really rich,” I tease.

“We’re really rich,” he corrects, making me smile. Everything is always we. He corrects me every time. Maybe the lack of my memory is starting to wear on him.

“They were holding me back.”

“Hmm?” I say, looking up at him, and he nods to the wallet still in my hand. I slide the card back inside and flip back to the picture. In the picture, my blonde hair glints in the sunlight, strands of honey and caramel softly ruffled by the breeze. I look nice there, but right now I look like a freaking mess. My husband, however, always seems to look like perfection, except for when I see the worry flash across his face.

“You went down to take pictures in your dress in the peach grove before the ceremony. I tried to go down and make you come back up.”

I laugh. “Why?” I look up at him, puzzled.

“It was taking too long, and I wanted to get married,” he grumbles, like he’s still annoyed at the idea. It makes me smile.

“How long were we together before we got married?”

“Three months.”

Now I really laugh. “You make it sound like it was forever.” My whole body shakes, and the scowl he had on his face moments ago fades into a smile, a dimple on his

cheek coming out. I lean up and kiss it, and I feel his whole body still.

“It’s your dimple, you always say. Only you can make it come out.”

“Maybe I’m remembering. I saw it and I just had to kiss it.”

“You always did.” The smile is gone, and a look I can’t read crosses his face. I’ve caught it a few times now. In that moment I really hate that I can’t remember. Would I know that look?

“Do,” I correct. “I always do kiss it.” Because I will. I want to make it come back now so I can do it again.

“It was forever. Waiting those three months.”

The elevator finally dings and Phillip exits, still keeping me in his arms. He heads right down a long hallway and walks through a set of open double doors. There is a giant bed in the center of the room and Phillip deposits me on it. He starts stripping me of my clothes.

“I didn’t even want to wait a second after the first time I saw you. So three months felt like an eternity,” he says, pulling my sandals off, then going for the loose-fitting pajamas pants I have on. My shirt comes up a little, and he freezes, his eyes going to the little baby bump. I can’t stop myself from touching it.

He leans in, kissing it, then his kisses start to travel lower.

“Phillip.” The word comes out breathy as I feel his mouth over my mound through the thin fabric of my simple white panties. I let my legs drop open more. It feels like the most natural thing in the world to make room for my giant of a husband. His hand comes up, pushing the fabric out of the way, exposing me to him.

“I should let you rest, make you something to eat, but I—”

“Yes.” The word comes out as a moan. The need in his voice makes him sound like he can’t go another minute without tasting me or he might die.

His mouth descends on me, hungry and fierce. There’s no softness or build-up. He goes straight for my clit, sucking it into his mouth. I instantly cum like my body has been sitting on edge for months, and it only makes Phillip wilder, eating at me faster.

“I need another. Give it to me. It’s mine,” he growls, before going back to my clit, consuming every drop of my first orgasm, consuming me. I give him what he demands, coming so hard I have to close my eyes as I jerk against his face.

When I finally open my eyes, I see I’ve been moved to the center of the bed.

“Sleep. I’ll make you something to eat.” He kisses me, and I taste myself on him, but he pulls away far too quickly. I want more. I want the weight of his body on top of mine, but he’s already walking out the bedroom doors, and I’m alone in bed. The sight gives me a stir of something familiar.

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### Chapter Nine Molly

I let out a squeal as I'm grabbed, turned, and pushed softly up against the wall outside our bathroom. Phillip's big body cages me. The morning light floods the bare white walls of the bedroom and my husband's face is illuminated by the golden glow. He looks almost savage, his hair wild. I probably had a hand in that as I'd twisted my fingers in his hair not so long ago. I'd woken with him fully wrapped around me like a second skin, one hand protectively on my belly, the other cupping my sex, his face buried in my neck.

The last thing I remembered was his mouth on me before I passed out. I had a vague recollection of him saying he was going to make me something to eat, but I must have slept through the rest of the day and night, only waking because I had a crazy need to go to the bathroom. The baby was already pushing on my bladder, or maybe it was the fact that I'd slept twelve hours.

But what has me catching my breath is the wild look in his eyes. Almost like he's a predator and I'm his prey. He'd caught me easily, not that I would give him a fight. The look is intense, and I wonder if he always looks like this. I also wonder if he always keeps his facial hair a little long like this or if it's just because of all the time we spent at the hospital, when he refused to leave my side to even shave.

I reach up, running my fingers through it. I like it. He leans into my touch, his eyes falling closed like it's the best thing he's ever felt in his life.

"I thought you were gone," he finally says in a gruff voice.

“I’m right here.” I try to reassure him. “Just had to go to the bathroom.”

His forehead drops to mine, and we just stand there for a few moments until his hands finally drop from the wall, landing on my waist. Then he does something I don’t expect. He falls to his knees in front of me, taking me by surprise.

“Yes, you’re right here. You’ll never leave me.” His big hands slide under the long shirt I have on, and he starts pulling down my underwear. When they reach my ankles, I step out of them.

“Say it,” he commands, all that intensity coming through in his words, coating the air around us.

“I’ll never leave you.” I see the tension visibly leave his body.

“Show me. Show me what belongs to me.”

I bite my lip, feeling a little embarrassed. I know he wants me to lift my shirt, to show him my vagina or my baby bump, I’m not really sure. I know he’s my husband and that we have of course done these things before, but with him on his knees in front of me, demanding it...it’s dirty and hot and I can feel heat reach my cheeks.

I do it. I want to give this to him. I can tell he’s on edge. If there is anything I’ve learned about this man in the past few days, it’s that his world seems to begin and end with me. It’s like I’m his everything and I have this way of calming him down with little touches. It’s an intoxicating feeling.

Slowly I reach down and grab the hem of the shirt and start to raise it. Inch by inch it slides up my thighs, his eyes following the path until I finally reveal my pussy.

“More,” he demands, and I keep going all the way past my little baby bump. “Spread

your legs farther apart.”

Taking a small step, I open myself up to him.

“Say it again. Tell me you belong to me.” His hands come up, pushing my shirt even higher and revealing my breasts to him. He drags his fingers across my nipples, making them even harder. Then they trail down to my stomach as his other hand continues to cup me. “Who does all this belong to, sweet little Molly?”

“It’s yours.” I push myself into his hand between my legs. His making me tell him I belong to him is doing things to me. I can feel the moisture flood between my thighs.

“Show me where you want my mouth. Open it for me.” His eyes land to my pussy, and he has to lean down a little. He’s so tall that even on his knees he almost comes up to my breasts.

Using one hand to hold up my shirt like he asked, I slide the other down my body. When I get to the juncture of my thighs, I spread the lips of my sex for him.

His eyes fill with so much passion and need I almost don’t see him move. His mouth descends, sucking my clit into his mouth, making me moan. I rise up on my toes, wanting him to be able to have as much access as possible.

“That’s it, Molly. Fuck your husband’s face. Take what you want because I’ll always give it to you. I like you just as needy as I am,” he growls against me before going back to sucking and licking. His tongue licking my fingers and my sex simultaneously makes it that much more erotic. I’m holding myself open for him to consume me. And he does.

Both his hands move to my hips, his fingers digging into the flesh in a firm possessive hold. I know he has me and I can let the pleasure take me. This man will



catch me and I will let him.

The orgasm shoots through my body, making me scream out his name. My head falls back, my eyes closing as the sensations flow through my body. I feel him move, but I've lost the power to open my eyes.

He lays me out on the bed, and I manage to open my eyes to see him caging me once again. I'm starting to see a pattern with this man. It makes me smile.

Then I look down and see what he's doing. He has pulled himself out of his boxer briefs and he's stroking himself. It doesn't take but a few strokes and I feel his warm cum hit my mound. I wish I would've looked sooner and gotten to see him stroke himself more.

He moans my name as he continues to cum, more spurting out as his strokes slow down. Then with the head of his cock, he starts rubbing the moisture into my skin. The sight is the hottest thing.

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When he's got me coated to his satisfaction, he crawls up the bed a little and gives me a lazy kiss. I can taste myself on his lips.

"You really need to eat now, baby. Come on." He pulls me from the bed, putting himself back into his underwear, still hard. He walks over to where he dropped my panties, picking them up bringing them over to me. He bends down and I step into them.

"Don't clean that off." He glares at me like I might disobey him, but I just smile and nod.

"I'm going to use the bathroom, then cook you something. Explore if you like, but don't use the elevator."

"And go where?" I tease. I'm not even dressed.

"Away from me."

I try to tell him I'm not going anywhere, but his mouth takes mine, stopping my chance. His tongue pushes into my mouth as he hungrily eats at me like we're saying goodbye forever.

When he finally pulls back, I'm out of breath.

"I like your lips swollen like that," he tells me, placing a chaste kiss on them before heading to the bathroom. He stops at the door, turning to look at me for a second.

“Not going anywhere.” I know that’s what he wants to hear. I don’t know if I should be concerned about how much he’s worrying. It doesn’t bother me, but I just don’t want him to get himself so worked up. Maybe once the accident is behind us, some of his fear will start to fade.

He nods, disappearing into the bathroom, and I watch him go. I can’t help but admire his body. He’s built like a freaking tank compared to me, but where I’m soft, he’s all hard.

Turning, I head out of our room and down the hallway. I pass an office and a spare room. Everything is just white and plain. No real life to it. It doesn’t feel like home.

Until I hit the living room and see painting after painting on the floor, carefully propped up against the wall. They look like they need to be hung. All over them are images of Phillip and me. I wonder if they’re moments in our lives I can’t remember. I just stand and study them. They are stunning.

“They’re yours,” Phillip says, and I look over my shoulder to see him standing behind me.

“I painted them?” I look back at the paintings, hoping to remember something, but nothing comes. They feel right though. Not like this condo. “I must really like you,” I say teasingly, turning to look at him again. His hair is wet from the quick shower he must have taken, and he’s only wearing a pair of jeans.

Something flashes in his eyes as he looks back to the paintings like he’s never seen them before.

## Chapter Ten Phillip

I knew Carl had said all the paintings were of me, but I had no idea. It was like I’d

filled her every thought like she does mine. That cools some of the bitterness that still rides me. When I'd woken this morning and she wasn't in bed, I'd almost lost it.

I was shocked I hadn't felt her leave the bed to begin with, but last night was the best night of sleep I'd had in what felt like an entirety. With her in my arms, I drifted right off to sleep. Knowing she was safe. That I had her back and she would never be leaving me again.

I should've felt guilt that I hadn't woken her when I came back to bed after making her something to eat, but my need to crawl into bed and just hold her won out. I just wanted to wrap around her and forget about all the plans I'd laid.

I was making sure reporters didn't come near her. Making sure Cindy wouldn't blow my cover. It had taken a lot of work and some heavy pull and money to get reporters to back the fuck off, but Cindy was the hardest. I think she could hear the desperation in my voice.

"We're waiting to hang them in the new house," I half lie. I will be hanging them in the new house, I just hadn't really known about them before.

"New house. That's why this place is so blah. You already moved some stuff?" She looks around the condo with a scrunched face like she doesn't like it at all.

I reach out and pull her towards me. She tilts her head back to look at me. One of her bare feet lifts and starts to run along my leg as she settles more into me. She may not remember us, but her body does. A deeper part of her does. We fit together. That comfort has always been there. It's been there from the very beginning.

I knew she didn't love this place, but I didn't think she had such a distaste for it. How had I missed that? I didn't want to miss anything with her. When I made her happy, it made me happy. Just to light up her face seemed to light me up inside.

“You could say that. The new place is almost ready. I promise you’ll love it.”

“How can you be so sure? I’m not even sure I know what I want my dream house to be.”

“If you don’t like it, I’ll rip it down and start all over again,” I tell her, leaning down to place a soft kiss on her mouth. God, how I missed this. I won’t be missing it again.

She starts to deepen the kiss and I pull back, knowing where that’s going. It’s taking everything in me not to take her, but doing that seems wrong on some level. I won’t do it until she remembers or she tells me she loves me.

I just hope I can make her fall back in love with me before she remembers. I still don’t even know why she ran, but this time I’ll make sure I do everything right. No more walls or hiding who I am. She’s going to see how much I need her. How I won’t be giving her any space.

I scoop her up into my arms. “None of that,” I tease her before she can try and go for my mouth again. <p>(adsbygoogle=window.adsbygoogle||[]).push({});<p>

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“Let me feed you. Then I’ll spread your legs open on the dinner room table and have my own breakfast.”

### Chapter Eleven Phillip

It’s been almost a week since I brought Molly back home, and it’s been wonderful. We’ve spent every second together, planning for the baby and indulging her in every way I can think of.

But there’s been a shadow around our time together. It’s the worry in the back of my mind, waiting to see if she remembers. It’s the reason I haven’t taken her fully yet. I’ve been between her legs at least three times each day, making a meal out of her sweet pussy. But every time she asks me for more, I just give her orgasm after orgasm until she passes out.

The guilt of keeping her time away from me a secret is starting to build. Molly is my best friend and my soul mate. I don’t like the idea of keeping anything from her, but I fear that if she knew she left me, she might want to do it again. And that thought outweighs any guilt I could possibly have.

My current plan of action has been to distract her with excitement over the new house. I’ve told her just enough to keep her guessing but not enough that it would ruin the surprise.

Originally, before the accident, I’d had everything in place. I was ending work that week, and I was going to whisk her away to the new place and put the last year of stress behind us. I was finally going to stop holding back my obsession for Molly and

give her all of me. We deserved it, and it was all falling into place.

Until it didn't.

The home has sat empty, waiting for us to join it, and it's the one thing that helps me push away the last of the shadows surrounding us. If I take her to the new home, it's a fresh start. No more memories of the penthouse and no more memories of before. I will spoil her with decades of love, and this little blip will be long forgotten by the time her memory comes back. If it ever does.

Ryan has been blowing up my phone every day since I've been back. I know there are one or two things I need to sign off on. I've just been avoiding it, not wanting to leave Molly by herself.

"I need something from you, my love."

Molly turns around in the closet, small duffel in her hands. She's packing up some of the things she wants to take to the new house. The movers will get most of it; she just wants a bag with a couple of changes of clothes.

"Anything," she says brightly, walking towards me.

"Would it be okay if we stopped by my old office on the way to the new house? I need to sign some final documents, and then we're on our way."

She puts her arms around my waist and smiles up at me. Her warm eyes are the things dreams are made of, and seeing them makes all doubt flit away. I would have done this a thousand times to have her back in my arms. There's nothing that would ever kept me from her. Not even my own conscience.

"As long as we stop for food after. Your son is hungry. Again," she laughs and

presses her body to mine, and I hold her to me.

“I can make you food before we go,” I say, wanting to make sure she has what she wants.

“No, I’d like to go out. We’ve been cooped up in this place for so long. It feels like a cage.”

Her words make my back stiffen, but if she notices, she doesn’t say anything. Maybe it has to do with before. She’s only been here a week, and the comment throws me off. I knew she didn’t like this place when we first moved in, but I had hoped it would be a place we could have made ours. Instead, it sounds like this may have been the opposite for her.

“Then that’s what we’ll do.”

Kissing the top of her head, I take her bag and carry it to the door, placing it beside my own. When she’s ready, we go to the car and make the drive over to the office. I can feel it in my bones. The sooner I get her out of this city, the better.

\* \* \*

I hold Molly’s hand as we exit the elevator on the floor of my former office. I haven’t been here since the night Molly left me, and now this place feels hollow and empty. Not like the place I’d spent years devoting every second of my life to. I’d built a great empire, but for what? I was lonely.

I don’t know how I devoted so many years of my life to this place, especially the last year, knowing I had my Molly waiting on me at home. I’m beyond obsessed with her, and I thought my love would push her away. I thought that my overwhelming need would smother her light, and I didn’t want to do that to her. But now, there is no other



option. I can't hold back anymore. Once this is all taken care of today, never again will I let her out of my sight.

We walk towards my old office and I look over to see Cary sitting behind the desk. It surprises me that Ryan hasn't gotten rid of her, especially after the last time I spoke to him on the issue. As if hearing my thoughts, Cary turns from her computer to greet us with a smile on her face. When she sees Molly and me standing there, her smile drops, her face turning stark white as she stares at Molly.

Suddenly, I feel Molly's hand squeeze my own, and then her palm feels a little cold. I look at her and see she has a vague look of panic on her face.

"Molly, you okay, my love?" I pull her to me, holding her chin so she'll look in my direction. "Molly?"

She shakes her head a little as if clearing a cloud, then smiles at me. "Yes. Sorry. Don't know where I went for a second."

The door to my old office opens and Ryan comes out. We shake hands and he leads us in, closing the door behind us. Before we get to pleasantries, I ask about the situation at the desk. <p>(adsbygoogle=window.adsbygoogle||[]).push({});<p>

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“I thought we discussed the assistant,” I say, giving him a stern look. The last thing I need is a scandal chasing my coattails as I leave the company.

“I know, and I’m sorry. After you left in such a hurry, I didn’t have any back-up. There haven’t been any issues of what we talked about.” He looks over at Molly and then back to me. “I don’t foresee any turmoil, but I’ve got my eye on it in case there need to be changes made.”

I nod, understanding that it’s his decision to make.

Ryan goes to his phone and hits a button. “Cary, can you bring me the file for Mr. Tanner to sign?” He clicks off without waiting for an answer, and I’m glad to be getting this closed up.

“Okay then. Let's get this signed so we can be on our way.”

Moving to take a step forward, I feel Molly’s hand tug behind me. I look back at her and see her staring at the couch. Her eyes narrow, but she won’t look away from it. Before I can ask her what’s wrong, Cary walks in with a folder in her hands.

Molly looks up at Cary, and then to the couch, and all the color drains from her face. It looks as if she’s seen a ghost, and her knees start to buckle.

“Molly!” I shout, bending to catch her before she hits the floor.

Cradling her in my arms, I walk her over to the couch and sit down with her in my lap, looking her over to make sure she’s okay.

She starts to shake a little, and I open my mouth to tell someone to call an ambulance when her hand comes out and slaps me hard across the face.

To say the sting is a shock would be a vast understatement.

“What the hell?” I say, looking down at her.

“You,” she says and glares at me with so much hate and anger. It’s a look I’ve never in my life seen on her sweet face. Then she turns to Cary, who is standing dumbly a few feet from us, and points to her. “With her.”

“It’s not what you think,” Cary says, taking a step towards the two of us.

“Don’t you come near me,” Molly spits at her and tries to scramble from my lap. “Let me go, Phillip. Let me go or I swear to God, I will scream this place down.”

“Scream all you want. I’m not letting you go. Now tell me what’s wrong.” I hold her tighter, showing her how true my words really are. “Be careful, Molly. Think of the baby,” I plead, not wanting to hold her too tightly.

My worry makes her stop moving instantly, the fight going out of her. She’s breathing heavily like she’s been running, and she shoots daggers at me. I can’t remember a time she’s looked at me like this. It’s breaking my heart.

“Molly. Talk to me. What is going on?”

She lets out a laugh that lacks humor. “I saw you that night. I remember everything.”

My stomach tightens at her words. Her memory coming back is not something I want yet. I need more time, but hearing her say she saw me...I’m confused.

“You saw me...what?” I narrow my eyes on her. If she remembers, she can tell me the very thing that’s been driving me crazy. The why. “Why did you leave me?”

Tears fill her eyes as she grits out the words. “I walked in this office and saw the whole thing.”

## Chapter Twelve Molly

The barrage of emotions is almost more than I can stand. It all came tumbling back, flooding my memory. I want to rip myself from Phillip’s arms and the firm hold he has on me, but I equally want to burrow myself into him for comfort. The feeling of loneliness hits me again, worse than ever before. The last week has been... A sob tries to escape my throat, but I swallow it down, not wanting to let that emotion out. That was the whole plan, wasn’t it? To get away? Get myself together so I didn’t come back here a mess and look like some crazy woman, but I can’t seem to control myself with them both standing in the room together. The same room that... I chase away that thought, knowing that if I don’t I won’t be able to stop the next sob.

A pained look crosses Phillip’s face. It’s like he can feel my hurt. Or maybe he just knows he’s been caught. No more faking it. Pretending we’d been together all along. That I’d never left, that he hadn’t just swept this all under the rug, something my father and mother liked to do. I knew about sweeping things under the rug for most of my life, and that wasn’t supposed to happen with us. It was supposed to be so different. Maybe I’m just as naïve as I thought I was. But how could he treat me so sweetly and do these things to me? It just doesn’t add up. I can’t make the pieces fit.

“Why’d you do this to me?” He just stares at me as if he doesn’t know what to say. I push on. “This week. I...” I struggle for the words. “Everything felt so perfect, but it was a lie just like before.” I try to jerk again, but I get nowhere. One of his hands comes to my stomach in a protective hold.

This doesn't make sense. Why did he do all this? He could have been with her. She's clearly still around... Maybe they are still together.

The baby. He hasn't let me out of his sight. Hell, he hasn't even let me out of the condo. He'd said it was because of the reporters. Everyone knew I'd been hurt and they wanted their story, but that was all a lie. They would have asked where I'd been for the last four months, not about some weekend getaway with my loving husband. He would have been busted right there. But no, he took me home and, hell, I don't even know what he was doing.

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The Phillip I'd been with was not the Phillip I knew. Well, he was and he wasn't. No, he just seems more intense now. He was everything he had been when we first got married, only to the extreme, and I'd been eating it up, thinking how I had the perfect husband. Except for the fact that he wouldn't sleep with me.

Guilt about his mistress? That thought makes me want to smack him again. Has this whole week been about making sure I stayed once he found out about the baby? Get me away from everything and trap me in the house he'd been going on and on about? Our dream home.

"You're trying to take my baby from me, aren't you? I won't let you. I'll run. You can't keep me prisoner!" I yell right in his face, not caring how loud I am. Fuck my composure. I'm not losing my husband and my little boy.

"You're not running anywhere, and no one would dare keep that baby from you." Phillip's face is starting to turn red, as if my anger is flowing through me and into him. It always feels like that when we touch. It's like we can feel every emotion in each other.

"Then what was the point, Phillip, if you weren't trying to keep me around so you and your mistress can have our baby? Just let me go. I won't keep you from him, but stop putting me through this. I can't bear it. It feels like you're ripping my heart out again."

Only this time, it's worse. I'm losing so much more than I had before. Before, a family was just an idea, something we wanted, but now it's here at the tips of our fingers and it's slipping right through them.

“I don’t have a mistress,” he says vehemently. The last word trails off and his eyes fly to Cary. I turn my head to follow his gaze.

Cary backs up a step, then another, putting her hands up and letting the files fall to the floor, the papers littering the plush carpet.

“I can explain. I swear I’ll tell the truth. Just don’t ruin me. It was a mistake.” I can see the fear in her face. Don't ruin her? Phillip does have a reputation for such things. I’ve never seen it before, but it seems he’d hidden things well.

I feel Phillip’s hand come to my face, turning me to look at him.

“Baby, I would never do that to you. I didn’t even know women existed before you.” I always loved how his tone would change whenever he spoke to me. His sweet words make a tear slip down my cheek. The pregnancy hormones are wreaking havoc on me. Phillip leans in, kissing it and stopping it in its tracks. His words remind me of all the things Cindy had said to me that night before I’d come to his office. That it was laughable to think of Phillip having an affair.

“I saw it.” My words come out in a whisper that I’m sure only he can hear. My words are filled with doubt. I never understood how he could do this to us. Maybe my own insecurities led me down this path.

“She was here that night. The night you worked late. The last night you came to the office. Until now,” I hear Cary say, but I keep my gaze fixed on Phillip. I wasn’t sure if he’d seen me. I remember being so relieved when the elevator dinged so quickly. I was afraid he was going to chase me.

“No, she wasn’t. I’d talked to Cindy. She told me Molly planned to come here after they had dinner that night, so I immediately asked the security at the front desk the following day if they’d seen her.”

He'd never seen me. Furthermore, I don't think Cindy told him why I was coming to the office. Why, I have no idea. Maybe because she just didn't believe it was possible like she'd said, and from the look on Phillip's face, it ripped him apart that I thought that. Maybe she knew it'd do that. I should have known that. But it seems like we've been keeping little parts hidden from each other.

"I talked the night guard into not telling you." Her words come out with a wobble, and I turn to look back at Cary.

"What?" Phillip yells, rising to his feet, me still in his arms, and making Cary jump back another two feet. Phillip goes to put me on my feet, but I lock my arms around his neck. His fury is coating the room. I've never seen him like this. He's always calm and cool. Tight and controlled.

Except for this last week. He'd seemed to be cracking and a new, more intense Phillip was bleeding out and rising to the surface.

"Don't let me go," I half whisper and feel his grip tighten back on me.

"I'd never let you go." Phillip looks down at me, and I can see a trace of that anger slip away when his eyes come to mine. Like I can cool him. That I have this special power over him. Maybe I do.

"I came to your office. I'd wanted to talk to you about something that was bothering me. I thought you were having an affair..." I trail off because I can't even believe my own words anymore.

"I would never." He repeats his words from moments ago, but I cut him off.

"She was naked in your office." I glance over at Cary, then back to Phillip. "You were on the sofa. Clothes rumpled, shoes off. I thought..." The night flashes back



into my mind. I push hard to remember every detail. I'd been avoiding doing that because it was painful to even think about it, let alone try to remember every part of it.

"Get the fuck out of this building," Phillip says curtly.

"I'm sorry. I just wanted to be with you. I thought we'd be perfect together. I swear, I didn't know your wife would walk in on us like that. I was going to wake you. Show you how it could be. It was stupid. I see that now. Please don't let this get out. I just..." Cary stumbles over her words. "I wanted you. I thought if I offered myself..."

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“What part of get the fuck out of my office are you not getting? Do it yourself, or I’ll have security do it because I’m sure as fuck not touching you. Just like I’ve sure as fuck never touched you before.” He bellows the last part, and I swear the walls of the office rattle.

Cary jumps, running out of the office faster than I thought a person could in heels.

“If I’d known—” Ryan says, but Phillip raises his hand, cutting him off.

“Leave. I’ll deal with you later.” Ryan just nods tightly and follows Cary out the door. Phillip moves to the door and shuts it. Then I hear the lock click, the sound echoing around in the room.

He turns, leaning up against the locked office door.

I just stand there staring at him, guilt eating at me.

I go to step towards him, wanting to touch him, but he holds his hand up and I stop. Guilt tugs at my heart even more.

“I didn’t see her that night in my office. I’d passed out on the sofa and came to later. I’d actually told Ryan to fire her because I thought she’d been flirting with me, which was unacceptable. I’d murder anyone who flirted with you.” He takes a deep breath. “I need a second to get myself under control. I’m not mad at you. I’m just feeling a lot of things right now and I’m not sure what I’ll do.” He reaches up, running his hands through his midnight-black hair like he’s trying to calm himself. I can see the tension in every line of his body.

“You’d never hurt me,” I counter, knowing he’d never lay a hand on me. Hell, I’d just smacked him and he took it.

“I don’t know about that. I’d really like to spank your ass right now, then bend you over that couch and fuck the shit out of you just to show you that you’re the only woman I’ve ever fucked in this office. Ever.”

It’s like every emotion I’m feeling goes straight to my core. Phillip has never talked to me like that. But he’s been doing a lot of things differently this past week. He hasn’t slept with me since I’ve been back. It’s been over four months, a record for us. We barely went twenty-four hours without making love before I ran. Even when he worked late, he’d crawl into bed and climb right on top of me.

“I’m okay with that.” I start to slip off my dress. Wanting that. Wanting us skin on skin. To let his warmth fill me up. Ease this ache.

“Don’t,” he growls, stopping me. “First we’re going to clear up some things.”

I drop my hand and shake my head.

“You thought I was having an affair before you even came here that night?” he asks, studying me, recalling my words to him. I had, but I’d discounted those thoughts. I’d come here to tell him how I’d been feeling for those past few months.

“I...” God, I feel terrible. How could I have let this get this far? “You’d started coming home later and later. I felt like there were secrets. Then the way she’d treat me,” I nod towards the door, out to where Cary’s desk sits, “when I called or stopped by. It pissed me off. Then Cindy said I was crazy, and to come and talk to you. So I did, but when I got here and saw her naked, I...”

“Your dad,” he finishes for me. I was going to say I freaked out and ran, but yeah, a

big part of that was my dad. Phillip went right to the root of it. I drop my head, looking at my feet, feeling shame that I let that get between us.

Then Phillip is picking me up, placing me in his lap as he sits down on the couch.

“This isn’t your fault, sweet Molly.” God, I love when he calls me that. I look up into his dark blue eyes that are all soft and sweet now. His big hands cup my face. “I should have known what you’d think, but I was too worried about myself. What I might do to you. You’re so young, and it’s almost like I forget that in some areas but not in others.”

His thumb brushes my lips and I can’t stop my tongue from peeking out, trying to get a taste of him, making a half smile pull at his lips.

“I don’t get it,” I admit.

“I should have known you were going to think that. Hell, we’d laid in bed many nights, you telling me about how he was and how you’d never want a family like that. That it messed with your mom, and I knew that shit messed with you, too. Even he messed with you. I see it. His little side jabs, like you were too young to participate in some conversations. Always going on about how you had to get a silly art degree. It’s why I didn’t care when I moved you away from him to another city. It’s also why I gave him a piece of my mind that very night after we said ‘I do.’”

I stare at him. I shouldn't be surprised he'd say something to my father, but I guess I never thought he noticed the things my dad did. All my experiences had been shaped and influenced by my insecurities. Never had Phillip treated me like I was less than.

“You’re young and I knew that. I should have taken better care of you.”

“You do. I was silly. I should have stayed and fought. I should have—”

“Fought for a husband who even let an idea like that pop into your head? Fight for a husband who told you he’d give you one thing but hadn’t followed through?”

“We would have gotten there,” I tell him, because we would have. I know that now. He was letting go of the reins at work. Moving us out of the city. He’s been talking about it all week.

“We would have—we are,” he corrects. “But all this goes back to my insecurities, too. I was afraid you wouldn’t love me if you knew.”

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I feel my eyebrows pull together, not understanding what he means.

“Whatever it is, we’ll get through it.” I try to reassure him. I don’t want these little doubts between us anymore either. Maybe it was a product of my age and of rushing down the aisle so hastily. It didn’t matter. It still got us here, no matter the path. It got me where I wanted to be: in his lap, our baby in my belly cradled between us.

“I know we will because it’s too late. I fought it too long and now I can’t hold back.”

I try and wiggle a little closer to him while straddling his lap. My baby bump rubs up against his hard stomach. His hands drop from my face, going to my thighs where my dress ends. Then they slide just a little underneath, the tips of his fingers disappearing under my dress.

“I’ve been trying to hold back with you. Yeah, I was working a lot to get things wrapped up, but I was also doing it because I kept sinking deeper and deeper into you. My every thought began and ended with you. I wanted you by my side always. I was afraid I was going to crush you with my need.”

“I happen to like your need, if it’s anything like what you’ve shown me this past week,” I reply, eating up the look he has on his face. So much hunger and passion. It’s intense and I love it. I want that from him as deeply as he wants me.

Phillip leans forward, his hands sliding farther up my dress, his fingers digging into my thighs in a firm, possessive hold.

“I still haven’t let it all out.” His mouth is but a breath from mine. “I still want to

consume every part of you.” Then his mouth takes mine.

I feel the heat pool between my legs, my panties dampening as his fingers trace the cotton. I’m desperate for our connection. I feel the pull between us, and it needs to be mended. I want him to possess me as intimately as possible so that whatever darkness fell around us can be washed away.

“Please,” I moan when his lips find my neck and his fingers plunge inside of me. The thick digits stretch my tight opening as his tongue goes to my collarbone.

If he asks me what I’m begging for, I couldn’t begin to tell him. Desire has overtaken my body, and I can’t explain what it will take to sate it. All I can do is beg and pray that he gives me what I can’t go another second without.

Suddenly, I’m on my knees on the edge of the couch and Phillip is moving behind me. I feel my dress flip up in the back, and the cool air hits my damp pussy as he tears away my panties. I grip the back of the couch and lean forward, spreading my legs for him.

“You thought I fucked someone else on this couch?” I hear the sound of flesh being spanked and then the sting follows. “I’ll show you the only woman who gets fucked on this couch.”

The second slap comes just as fast, and I shock us both when I moan and lean back into it.

“I think we both know you deserve that.” Even she knows it. “Because you’re mine.”

His hand goes between my legs and feels how soaked I am.

“Phillip,” I moan, and wiggle my ass a little.

“I know what we both need.”

The sound of his belt clinking and his slacks coming undone is my lifeline. When I feel the head of his cock at my entrance, and his big hand grips my hip, it's as if we are becoming one again. He thrusts all the way inside in one hard stroke, the root of his cock pressing against my wet folds. He's as deep as he's ever been and I'm filled with him.

“Phillip!” My shout echoes in the office, and I should probably be embarrassed that someone could hear us through the doors. But instead, I'm lost to pleasure, moaning louder and louder.

“That's it, my love. Let this whole goddamn building hear how much I want you.”

He slides his cock out, and then fills me again. His grip is tight and his thrusts are frantic. He needs this as much as I do.

“I want everyone to see how crazy obsessive I am about my wife. I can't control it anymore. You're going to get all of me, all the time.” He drags his thick cock out of my wetness, then grunts as he pushes back in. “Every inch.”

He talks through gritted teeth, and the dirty words send my already heightened senses through the roof.

“I need you so much, Molly. It's all-consuming. I close my eyes and you're all I see. Everything reminds me of you, and all I can think about is being inside your sweet pussy. I want to tie you to me so you can never get away.”

I moan again at his words, shocked by how much I love them. And strangely, it comforts me to know that my man is this crazy about me. Who wouldn't want to be desired beyond rational behavior? What woman wouldn't want to be worshiped by



her husband?

I'm pushing back against him as he thrusts forward. I lean back and reach up, pulling his mouth to my neck. His hands move from my hips to the front of my dress and my sensitive breasts. He plays with my hard nipples, never missing a thrust. The perfect tempo has me squeezing around his cock, and both of our moans fill the room.

"I'm cumming," I say, but he knows I'm already there. I feel his smile against my neck right as I hit my peak and cum all over his hard, thick cock. I can feel my warm release coating his shaft, the slick sounds of our love the backdrop to my orgasm. I cum hard, relishing wave after wave of pleasure. My body is on fire in the most delicious way, and I give it over to him.

"I love you," he grunts as his hot cum pulses into my pussy, coating me.

I can feel each throb of his cock as every wave of cum fills me. It may have been months since we made love, but this feels like we never missed a minute. The way he cums inside me, how we lose ourselves together is the physical expression of the love that was formed the day we met. It's something only we share. Something no one else has or will ever have. Something that we will always find, even when I forget.

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“I love you, too, Phillip.”

My words are breathy and a little thick with sleep. I don’t realize how tired I am until my orgasm washes away and I realize Phillip is holding me up. I could collapse on this very couch right now and sleep for days, but instead, he helps me to my feet and pulls his cock from me.

I make a cry of complaint, and he smiles, righting my dress and kissing me on my nose.

“Me, too, my love. But the sooner we get out of here, the sooner I can have you all to myself.”

I lean into his warmth and nod as he scoops me up in his arms.

“I like the sound of that,” I mumble, and then I’m drifting off to sleep.

Epilogue Molly

A little over a year later...

“Happy birthday, Noah!” Phillip and I say together as I place the small cake in front of him. Noah looks at us with bright eyes and then immediately sinks his little hands in, grabbing fistfuls of the cake and stuffing them into his mouth.

I feel Phillip’s arms come around my waist as he pulls me close to him. When he lifts his hand to wipe away the tear, it’s then I realize I’m crying.

“You okay, baby?” he whispers in my ear as our one-year-old laughs maniacally while he makes a mess.

I don’t know if I can answer without sobbing, so I just nod my head.

“He’s still our baby,” Phillip says, and I feel the smile in his voice.

Taking a deep breath, I try to enjoy the moment “I’m being ridiculous. I know.”

“Never. He’s getting so big so fast.”

Looking around the room, I see our friends helping celebrate our baby’s first birthday. There are a lot of parents with their kids who are running around and having a good time. This is a happy occasion and I’m spending it crying. I didn’t realize how emotional this was going to be, but I guess seeing my little man turning one has hit me harder than I expected.

Noah’s happy face makes me smile, and feeling the warm security of Phillip’s arms helps me relax. I know we’ll have more children, but he’ll always be our first. And he’ll always be my baby. No matter how old he gets.

\* \* \*

“Molly?”

I turn my head and remove the toothbrush from my mouth. Phillip is standing in the bathroom entrance, looking at me nervously.

“What is it, baby?” I ask, rinsing my toothbrush and putting it back in the holder.

He comes into the bathroom, meeting me halfway, and puts something in my hand.

Before I look down at what it is, he's kissing me, and I'm lost to his warm lips and tongue. I always forget myself when his mouth is on me and this is no exception. When he pulls away, I lean up, trying to get more, but he puts his hands on either side of my face.

"You're almost a week late. I think you should take that."

I'm confused for a second and then look down at the pregnancy test in my hand. I want to laugh at the absurdity. Phillip always knows about my cycles better than I do, but this would be impossible.

"I think you're mistaken. I just stopped nursing Noah a week ago. I doubt it happened that fast."

"You can conceive even when breast-feeding. You're still producing milk, but your cycles have been pretty regular, even when nursing."

Rolling my eyes, I take the test from him and go over to the private toilet in the bathroom, shutting the door behind me. There's no way I'm pregnant. I know Phillip would be ecstatic if we had another baby, and I would, too. But I think I would know if I was. Although, he's been trying his best to knock me up since the day we met. It took so long with Noah that I'm sure it will be a while before I'm able to conceive again.

I've been so emotional the past couple of weeks and I just chalked it up to no longer nursing Noah. As I sit down and pee on the stick, I start to run through things in my head. I don't want to get my hopes up because I know being pregnant right now is a near impossibility.

But as I finish up and walk out of the room, I'm in a fog of hope. What if this is it?

Phillip is standing by the sink with his arms out, waiting on me. I go to him, placing the test on the counter in front of us. His warm arms engulf me, and suddenly, I'm completely safe. Nothing can touch our family and all's right with the world. All my worries wash away as I feel him hug me close and place a kiss on the top of my head.

Closing my eyes, I don't think about what could be. I only think about what is. How perfect our life is and how lucky we are that Noah is a healthy baby. The thoughts of what could have been, how off-track we could have gone, start to flit through my mind, but they are easily dispelled by all the love that surrounds us. There's no room for dark thoughts about what could have been when we are exactly in the right place. What led us to this moment doesn't matter. All that matters is that we are together.

"Come to bed, my love," Phillip says, pulling me from the bathroom.

"What about the test?"

He doesn't say a word as he turns off the light and takes me out to our bedroom. He picks me up and places me in the middle of the bed. He slowly strips me out of my sleep shirt, which used to be one of his, and my panties. He kisses up my thighs and back down to my feet, loving every inch of me. Thoughts of the test are in the back of my mind, but he's doing an excellent job of distracting me.

I feel him everywhere, kissing my toes and running his fingers slowly across my naked skin. I feel his warm chest move over my body, and I realize that is also naked. I'm in a sensual fog of lust and only focusing on the here and now.

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When his mouth moves to my hip and his tongue softly traces the lines there, I try not to get shy. Instead, I just focus on how good it feels. When I was pregnant with Noah, I got a lot of very noticeable stretch marks. I'd never had them before, but the ones from carrying such a big baby were so red and deep. I was worried Phillip wouldn't think I was pretty like I used to be, but I was wrong. He tells me how I'm more beautiful now than before and how they show him what I went through to give us a family. Every time we make love, he pays reverence to them and to me.

When his tongue moves lower, between my legs, my thighs fall open without a hint of hesitation. He has had every inch of me, and he can continue to have it if that's what he wants.

His mouth licks me in the places he knows so well, in the exact rhythm that I love. There's no finesse and no teasing. Just his mouth on my pussy, taking an orgasm from my body. I hardly move. I just lie there while he sucks on me until I'm close. And when I'm there, my back stiffens and I cry out, feeling the bone-deep pleasure run through me. It's exactly what I need and I didn't even know it.

"How do you always do that?"

"Do what?" he mumbles, kissing his way up my body.

When he gets between my legs, he doesn't make a move to push his cock into me. Instead, he just hovers over me, looking down into my eyes.

"Always give me what I need before I even know I need it?"

His smile is a little cocky, and it makes me smile, too. Though I can feel that mine is lazy and a bit dazed after the climax he just gave me.

He doesn't answer. He leans down and takes my mouth, letting me taste myself. His kiss is as possessive on my lips as it was on my pussy. He consumes me and I just lie there and take it. His body moves and his cock presses against my opening. With one full thrust he's inside me, filling me up. This is what we both need. Coming together as one to reconnect our bodies and souls. As silly as it sounds, he's my soul mate. I know without a doubt that I waited my whole life for him. And I'm glad I did because he was worth the wait.

Our love-making is slow and easy, without any rush. Phillip takes the lead as he gives me endless amounts of pleasure. I cum so many times I lose count, but he demands more and more. Finally, when I've nearly passed out from all the orgasms, he floods my pussy with his cum and allows himself the release.

We lie there quietly, wrapped around one another, and I'm about to drift off when Phillip whispers into the dark.

“If it's a girl, I'd like to name her after you.”

“Hmm?” I've nearly drifted off when his words reach my ears.

“I saw the test before I brought you to bed. I was right. As always.”

Epilogue Phillip

Six years later...

“One, two, three, four...”

“Dad, why are you counting?”

I grit my teeth because Noah is sitting beside me and I don't want to cause a scene. We're at MJ's soccer game and I don't want to embarrass her.

“Nothing, son,” I say to Noah through a clenched jaw. Instead, I watch carefully as MJ's coach talks to Molly on the sidelines, leaning in a little too closely for my liking. He's always smiling at her, acting all friendly, but today it's getting obnoxious. He's leaning in and laughing at everything she says, and it's pissing me the fuck off.

MJ's our almost-five-year-old daughter, named after Molly. We started calling her Molly Junior when she was born, and MJ just sort of stuck. She's currently on the field deciding between picking flowers and tackling the other kids, but she's having a blast.

The only problem seems to be coming from her over-friendly coach.

Molly mentioned in passing the other day that the coach sends a lot of emails and it was a little annoying to her. When I logged on to see Molly's emails, I noticed that she was the only recipient of the emails. Molly kept blowing it off, saying he was just trying to help MJ focus.

I started watching him around her and making an effort to always be by Molly's side whenever the games were going on. I trust my wife, and I know that she would never cross a line, but this motherfucker needs to watch himself.

He reaches out and places his hand on her upper arm, giving it a squeeze, and I glare at them when I see it happen. I'm up off the bench before I know it.

I see Molly take a step back at the contact, and that enrages me further. She doesn't



like anyone touching her but me. And neither do I. I'm the only one who gets to touch her, even in the most casual way. She's mine. In every fucking sense of the word.

"Touch my wife again and you'll be writing letters to your mom with your toes."

His look of shock on his face should be comical, but I'm seeing too much red to appreciate it. I feel Molly put her hand on my lower back, and I relax a little, but the anger is still boiling inside of me.

"Excuse me, Mr. Tanner. I didn't mean to offend—"

"Keep your hands, and your email, to yourself."

Another man comes up from the sidelines and steps in front of the coach, getting between us.

"I'd appreciate it if you'd step back from my husband before there's a scene these children don't need to witness," the man says.

I look over his shoulder to the coach, who's now blushing violently.

"Phillip," Molly says from behind me, "this is Brad and his husband, Ron. They invited us over for a cookout this weekend. I was just telling him that we'd love to attend." <p>(adsbygoogle=window.adsbygoogle||[]).push({});<p>

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I'm unable to say anything, so I just nod. I feel Molly peek around me and wave to Brad and Ron.

"We'd love to get the kids together if you're still interested. Let us know."

Before I can apologize or say a single word, Molly is pulling me back into the stands with Noah.

"Well, that went great," she says, letting out a little sigh.

"He shouldn't touch you," is all I'm able to grumble as Noah and Molly fall into fits of laughter.

She leans over and gives me a kiss on the cheek and all's right with my world. How is it that this woman can give me exactly what I need, exactly when I need it?

Wrapping my arms around her, we watch the rest of MJ's game and I offer a wave of apology to her coach after the game. He may not have wanted my Molly, but I'm not taking any chances. She's mine until the end of time, and I'll make sure no one and nothing stands in my way.

THE END