



Run for Us (Masked Men #6)

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Category: LGBT+

Description: Sometimes life hands you a fork in the road. Mine feels more like a tidal wave crashing down on me, just as I'm about to turn thirty. Until now, I've been trying to live up to my mother's impossible standards while drowning in deadlines, but I've finally had enough.

Bluebell Bay is my escape plan. It's a chance to figure out what I want from life, a place I don't have to pretend. Two weeks to relax and decide on my next steps.

Three masked men, one game of chase, and a night that awakens some things inside me I didn't know I'd buried—desire, freedom, and the need for something real. These strangers make me feel powerful, worshipped, and sexy.

But when the masks come off, so does the illusion that this was just for fun. These men see me, flaws and all. They're not just offering me pleasure; they're offering something real.

I know I can't have them—that life is only a fantasy. They're too young and don't need my drama added to their lives. But then they make an offer too good to refuse... Can I have everything I've ever wanted?

EACH NOVELLA CAN BE READ AS A STANDALONE>

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Chapter One

Kinsley

Leaving my entire life behind wasn't my original plan to celebrate turning thirty.

But my so-called friends wanted to throw a "death to my twenties" party, and panic clawed its way forward.

I suffered my first ever panic attack at the most important meeting of my career.

Being a designer for the socialites of Sterling Crest was never my dream job, but it fit my family's social status.

Even though I was considered a disappointment because I was expected to have a rock on my finger by now, married to some pompous asshole who couldn't care less about me beyond giving him a namesake while he screws his secretary.

My mother refused to understand why I never wanted to date.

I never wanted this life, and now, nearing thirty, the reality of everything I truly wanted—but could never have—has slammed into me full force.

I ease onto Bluebell Bay's main road. Tiny beachside shops with coral shutters line the street, white sand spills between boardwalk planks, and swaying trees frame my view.

Jace's teasing voice comes from where my phone is wedged between my shoulder and ear. "Give small-town life a go, Kins. What could go wrong?"

I scoff, eyeing the dunes ahead. "Oh, I don't know—I could get fired and end up a lonely old woman with lots of cats."

Jace laughs. "If your boss fires you, she's an asshole. And there is nothing wrong with cats."

I snort. My mom is my boss. "I'm allergic, for starters, and it's the lonely part I fear."

Jace sighs. He has been my best friend since we were kids. I'm a bit older than him, but we have been tight for so long.

"You might think thirty is old, Kins, but your life is only beginning. Money and status aren't everything. I never imagined my life would have ended up here."

The lucky son of a bitch has found his epic loves.

Willow is such a beautiful soul, and so accepting of Jace, Micah, and Zac.

I was always worried the three of them might scare away any sane woman, but she completes them.

Ignoring the ick factor that Jace is my cousin, I'll admit Willow is lucky to have all those men doting on her all the time.

My tires crunch on the gravel as I pull into the driveway and kill the engine.

"Just got here, so I've got to run. I'll call you later tonight."

“Give small-town life a try and stop listening to your mother’s voice in your head. You deserve a break. You need to re-center before it all becomes too much. I love you.”

“Love you too. Now get back to work.”

He snorts. “Talk to you later.”

We say our goodbyes, and I step out of the rental car. In the city, I have a driver and have never needed my own car. After pulling my suitcase out of the trunk, I haul it onto the porch, internally crying that I packed so much as it hits each step on the way up.

The smell of salt lingers in the air, a vast difference to the city fumes I’m used to inhaling.

The front door creaks open before I can knock and a man steps outside.

My mouth falls open. I didn’t know small-town men looked like this—dark shaved hair, intense brown eyes, muscles visible through his crisp white button-up, and leather shoes dusted with sand.

“You must be Kinsley,” he says, offering a hand. “I’m Kasen Prescott. Welcome to Bluebell Bay.”

My hand instinctively closes around his, but I can’t stop staring. He’s tall, easily over six feet, with broad shoulders beneath his white shirt that is rolled up to the elbows, revealing arms corded with muscle.

I notice faint scars on his knuckles, and I wonder what he did to get them. I release his hand, shaking off the thought of getting to know this man. My internal freak-out

over turning thirty has me all up in my head about figuring out what I want from life.

“This place is so cute,” I say to distract myself. “The pictures you emailed didn’t do it justice.”

“Thank you. Let me give you a quick tour.”

He gestures for me to walk inside, and when I struggle with my suitcase, he smirks and holds out his hand. “Let me.”

I release the handle and push open the weathered, white-painted timber door and step into a sunlit living room, the walls washed in light moss green.

The wide-plank floors creak softly under my feet, and a pair of woven rattan chairs flank a driftwood coffee table.

The man’s phone rings, so I don’t wait for him to show me around.

The space is small, and I am capable of finding everything.

Exposed beams in the same, white-washed timber give the space a beach cabin feel.

To my left, the small number of kitchen cabinets have a matching moss-green hue, their brass knobs a beautiful touch.

A narrow breakfast bar holds two mismatched stools, perfect for early morning coffee while looking through a louvered window.

Down the short hallway are two bedrooms, one with a queen bed, the other a twin, with a hammock chair in the corner. Everywhere I look is accented with pale driftwood and soft seafoam tones. It’s so different from what I am used to, it’s

refreshing.

“Sorry about that. My friend is having a crisis, and I need to help him. If you need anything, here is my number, or you have my email,” he says, handing me a business card.

“If you are interested in self-defense classes, I hold them down at the community hall each afternoon. We also have the July festival set up along the main road. It will go all week long and end on the Fourth of July weekend. The keys are on the table. I hope you enjoy your stay.”

“Thank you. I might go down and have a look.”

He nods and leaves, closing the door.

My phone buzzes with a message, and I see it’s from Jace.

So how would you feel about dick for your 30th? I know it’s a sensitive subject, but dick always makes me feel better.

I dial his number, and he answers with a laugh. “You did not hire me a prostitute for my birthday, or any type of stripper, did you?”

His soft laughter turns into full-blown, stomach-shaking laughter.

“Jace . . .” I warn.

“What? I stand by the fact that dicks make everything better.”

I snort. “That’s because your boyfriends are hot. Knowing my luck, I would get Hobo Joe, who sleeps under the Sterling Crest bridge.”

“Don’t rule him out. With a good shower and shave, he might scrub up all right.”

“Could you imagine my mother’s face if I brought home a homeless man? She would disown me.”

“It would be worth it to see Aunt Vivienne’s face.

Check your emails and don’t rule it out.

Your thirtieth might go off with a bang after all, then you can cry and have your midlife crisis the day afterward.

You need to live your life for you. Besides, you complain to Willow all the time that you wish you had three dicks.

I would offer Micah and Zac, but Willow might hurt you. ”

“It’s okay. I would prefer not to have your sloppy seconds.”

“Just promise you’ll think about what I sent you and free yourself while you’re there.

Take a few weeks to find yourself. Who is Kinsley Ellsworth?

Not who you have to be for your mother or those snobby clients.

And stop being scared to live. Because you did fucking live, Kins.

I know you don’t want to hear it, but none of it was your fault. ”

Tears well in my eyes, and I run my finger along the scar tucked beneath my hair.

“I’ll think about it,” I whisper, the grief clawing its way underneath my skin.

“Your scars tell the story of your past, but you are still stuck there with them. Anyway, I love you, but Willow is getting naked, and I need to beat those assholes to her.”

I laugh. “Go get your girl and give her a hug for me. Tell her to call me later. We need to talk about that damn book she made me read.”

Jace laughs. “If she isn’t full of cocks, I’m sure she will. I can send you pics so you can see what you’re missing out on.”

“I really don’t need to think about your dick. That is gross on so many levels. I’ll read the email but I make no promises.”

“Good.”

We say our goodbyes, and I decide to turn off all my electronics for now.

The email can wait. Jace has tried to convince me Wild Steps would be a good way to wash out my cobwebs, but taking that first step is hard.

Every time I close my eyes, I can still see him and hear his voice.

We were only eighteen and had our whole lives ahead of us.

Until that night.

I tried to escape from my life with a boy from the wrong side of the tracks. I was angry at my mom for trying to drag me to yet another event to meet boys I had no interest in. All I wanted was to be free, but my actions landed me right back where I started—under my mother’s thumb.

If I had simply accepted my life, Teddy would still be here.

It's my fault, even if it was ruled an accident. Teddy wouldn't have been out that night if it wasn't for me. He is gone and for what? Because of a poor little rich girl who couldn't stand her privileged life.

Wiping my eyes, I look around the cute little cabin. This is what I wanted back when I dreamed of another life: simplicity. Designing the interior for seaside cottages, not creating high-end dresses for people more concerned about perception than actually being a decent human being.

Teddy always pushed me to do whatever made me happy, and we'd dreamed of a simple life, but I ruined it all in the blink of an eye.

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Chapter Two

Kinsley

Leaving the comfort of the cottage had to happen eventually.

As I glance out my bedroom window, eager to feel the sun warming my skin, I'm happy I indulged in some clothes shopping before I left.

Working in the city during the summer, I can still wear pantsuits since I never actually go outside and everywhere is temperature controlled.

I pull on a lightweight white linen midi dress; its elbow-length sleeves and high neckline hide the scars on my arms. The fabric cinches at my waist before fanning out into an A-line skirt that falls to just below my knees.

I buckle the ankle straps on my white leather sandals, then grab my woven straw tote, which is big enough to hold sunscreen and my sketchbook.

Finally, I put on a wide-brimmed straw hat to shade my shoulders from the sun, then tuck sunglasses into the dress's narrow belt.

Perfect for a June day by the sea, while revealing nothing I'm not ready to show.

Making my way out onto the porch, I breathe in the salty air and feel content. Something I have not experienced in a long time.

An older man waves as I walk out onto the path, and the ocean is right there, ten steps away.

I wave back with a smile that matches his.

With no destination in mind, I walk toward the main street, wanting to see what small-town life is like.

I'm used to the city—a concrete jungle of headlights and sirens stuck on repeat in my skull.

Sidewalks are crammed with strangers who never meet your eye, each footstep counting down to the next appointment.

Everyone is always busy, never stopping to appreciate what is around them.

I reach the main street, which is marked as: The Promenade. They've blocked off the road, with street vendors on one side, set up on the grass, and storefront shops on the other.

A neon sign dazzles me with the words: Ebb & Ink. I have always wanted a tattoo, but my mother's voice rings through my head. Classy women don't have tattoos. The thought has me moving toward the store.

Pushing through the door, I step into the small room, and the soft sound of music is inviting, making the space feel safe.

“Shore, I swear to fuck, if you are here to annoy me... I don't want to see how good your dick looks. Oh shit, I'm so sorry,” a gorgeous specimen of a man says as he walks out from the back room.

He's at least six feet tall and lean, with dark hair that has a slight curl framing his face. He is shirtless, showing off his tattoos. His sleeves are of an ocean—sea creatures, octopus tentacles twisting, a shipwreck, and crashing waves curling around his skin.

Deep hazel eyes meet mine, flecks of gold catching the shop lights. "I thought you were my friend. He discovered underwear this week and likes to show me how good his package looks."

A laugh escapes me. How I wish I could be so carefree, to be excited over underwear.

"I'm Ripley, but my friends call me Rip," he says with a lopsided grin.

"It's nice to meet you, Rip. I'm Kinsley."

Normally I would have convinced myself to walk out by now, especially with how young he looks. He barely looks legal with his baby face.

"Before we go any further, I should let you know getting ink here is different. I pick the design, and my customers roll with it. It's what I'm known for."

I stare at the man and wonder if I trust him enough to put something on my body that I didn't pick.

"What if I promise to just do a small quote? You seem like a woman who would like something small and hidden from the world—something only for you." He smiles wide at me, and I blink again.

"Shit, okay. Let's do this."

I'm never impulsive. I always make sure something fits my image, the one my

mother created for me after Teddy. But right now, there is nothing stopping me and I can do what I want. I don't need to let her get her way all the time.

Not even twenty minutes later, I'm lying on his table on my side, a sheet draped over my breasts. My dress is pulled down around my waist while he sets everything up.

He starts up the machine. "So what brings you to town—business or pleasure?"

"I suppose pleasure. I needed a break from the city."

He laughs lightly. The slight sting of the needle hitting my skin makes me hiss, but it's nothing overly painful, just unexpected.

"We see a lot of city people come and leave really fast. Small-town life isn't for them. Our stores close early, so we spend a lot of time with others in the community."

"Your stores shut early?" I ask, probably sounding like a snob.

"They do. Most shut at around five or six. Some restaurants stay open, but as a whole, the town is closed by six."

"Wow. I don't remember what it's like to finish work that early. Some nights I don't get home until midnight."

He stops tattooing and wipes my skin. "I couldn't imagine spending my entire life working. When do you have time to do anything else? To enjoy life?"

I snort. "Enjoying life is an option? I guess that's why I'm here. Turning thirty next week has made me put a hold on my life. I want to see what else is out there. And, well, finding out what I want from life is where I start."

“It’s a good place,” he agrees.

For the rest of the tattoo, we remain silent. It’s nice to not have to fill the void with meaningless chatter. When he is done, he tells me to have a look in the mirror. I try to get up without losing the sheet or my dress and he smirks, turning around when I motion for him to do so.

Sliding off the table, I secure my dress higher while keeping the small sheet across my breasts.

“It’s safe to turn around now,” I say as I walk toward the mirror and smile when I see the words across my ribs, just under my bra line, written in cursive. Love yourself first.

Rip comes to stand behind me.

“I love it,” I whisper, tears forming in my eyes.

“I’m not sure what you’re going through.

Losing yourself is easy. Finding yourself is hard.

But the journey is worth it. I hope you find your light, Kinsley, ” he whispers, and my heart thumps against my ribs as I look up into his eyes in the mirror.

There doesn’t seem to be any ulterior motive, and why would there be? He doesn’t know me.

Once he finishes putting a small, clear bandage over the tattoo, he turns around so I can pull my dress up.

“Thank you, Rip. It’s been a pleasure meeting you.”

“The pleasure’s all mine,” he says as he walks me back out to the front room.

“How much do I owe you?”

He smiles. “No payment required. Sometimes people come into your life for a reason, and I have a feeling we were meant to meet.”

“Are you sure?” I ask. No one does anything for free.

He nods, and his unruly hair flops around his face. “Very. I hope you find whatever it is you’re looking for in Bluebell.”

The bell on the door chimes, and a young man—about eighteen—flies through the door.

“You need to hide me, Rip. Shore is going to murder me... Oh, hello. You’re new.”

I smile at him. “Hi.”

“Tyde, what did you do this time? I can’t save you from your brother every time you do something stupid.”

“Dad made me take him the crabs this morning. And I may have locked him inside with them—alive.”

Rip snorts. “You know he hates crabs.”

Tyde looks at me. “What sort of seafood cook is afraid of crabs? Mom babies him by pre-cooking them. Can you believe that?”

“Sounds like you have a nice mom. It was wonderful meeting you both.”

I give them a small wave and leave before the angry brother shows up to start a potential brawl in the small store.

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Chapter Three

Shore

Having a large family has its good days and bad.

Growing up, there was never a shortage of people around, so there was no time to be lonely.

Mom and Dad have fostered kids for as long as I can remember, plus add in five kids of their own.

I have three brothers and a sister. We all have ocean-themed names, which we all hated when we were younger, but my parents were born in Bluebell, and so were their parents.

They love the town, the ocean, and having a large family.

My older brother, Harbor, is one of the six local cops, and Cove is always out at sea working on his boat. Next there is me, then Tyde, and finally our sister, Sailor. Most of the foster kids come and go—except Ripley.

He came to live with us when he was fourteen and was in a bad way.

I have never seen a boy so scared in my life, and I still don't know why they thought putting him with a large family was a great idea.

At first, he barely spoke or even came out of his room.

Being such a large personality, I made it my mission to be his friend.

Day one, it got me a punch in the nose, but I slowly wore him down.

After a few months, he asked my parents if they could give him a new name.

He wanted nothing to do with his old life, and that is how he became Ripley—or Rip, as we now call him.

All of us still live at home, but not for much longer.

Rip, Kasen, and I have been saving, and we purchased the old lighthouse and the surrounding land from my grandpa.

He and Mimi wanted to retire, and Bluebell has a great assisted-living community.

I'm jealous; they have planned activities, little cottage-style houses, and meals delivered every day. Where do I sign up?

Today the festival activities start, and I organized for Dad to get me some fresh crabs from Cove, and all Tyde had to do was take them to Mom.

Instead, the asshole locked me in my van with them.

I started Shore Bites the day after I graduated from high school.

Folks around here rarely go to college, and those who do never return.

They are the kind who have dreams of leaving small-town life behind.

But not my family—we live and breathe this town.

All except Sailor. At fifteen she wants nothing to do with small-town life or small-town men, which I am kind of grateful for because I know all the little dickheads, and not one is good enough for my baby sister.

I also think our foster sister, Lulu, might have something to do with it.

She's sixteen and wants to be an actress.

She is dramatic enough to pull it off too.

Kasen Prescott, the swoon-worthy asshole, attracts all the women in town to his self-defense classes.

I don't know if the man is straight, gay, or even bi like Ripley and me.

He insists it doesn't matter, and I suppose he is right.

He goes out of town to get laid at least once a week, but refuses to let me tag along, telling me to stay home and suck my brother's dick.

Kasen might think it's hilarious, but Rip is not my brother.

It was clear from day one I felt differently toward him—my parents could even see it.

The thing about Ripley is he's complicated.

He's a free spirit who can instantly tell you a lot about someone you only just met.

It's a fucking superpower, if you ask me.

“Thanks for coming to save me,” I say dryly.

Kasen looks me up and down and smirks. “Where are your clothes?” he asks as I stand here in my newfound underwear.

Never in my life had I worn any; I never saw the need. Board shorts covered the good bits, and Mom said as long as my dick was covered, it was okay.

It wasn’t until the other day when my Mimi came to visit, and she brought some things for us kids. I got boxer briefs, and what a game changer. I tried them on to be nice, but who would have thought they would look this good? My dick looks even better in them, and the ball support? Best gift ever.

“In the van. Tyde locked me in with the crabs. I covered them with my clothes and made an escape when Wren took pity on me. She was following Tyde, hoping he would fall in love with her or something. Did you meet the newbie?”

Kasen nods. I don’t even know how we became friends because he really isn’t all that friendly. It was probably my awesome personality that sucked him in. Everyone loves me.

“And?” I ask when he doesn’t respond. “Is she hot?”

He shrugs. “She isn’t ugly. I didn’t really stare at her since you were calling me in a panic and making no sense.”

“And yet it took you this long to find me. I don’t even know how we are friends.”

Kasen smiles. “Because you inserted yourself into my life. And it took so long because I got a very interesting call from a friend.”

I raise a brow—since when does he have friends outside of Ripley and me? He shakes his head.

“Kennedy called. I was just coming to find you and then Ripley. This conversation is one we need to have together.”

I met Kennedy once, and he seems nice enough. Kasen used to work for him, and he has been hush-hush on what that involved.

“Let’s go see Rip,” I suggest, and Kasen looks me over again.

“What?! Harbor and Mom said as long as my dick is covered, I can wear whatever I want. My dick’s covered,” I say, motioning to my black boxer briefs.

Kasen shakes his head. “Remind me why we are friends again?”

I snort as we walk. “Because I’m amazing, and your life would be boring without me.”

“Boring, normal—same, same, right?”

I bump him with my shoulder, and he laughs. As we get close to Ripley’s shop, I see Tyde take off down The Promenade, and I grin. He thinks I’m after him—and I kinda am—but he won’t see my payback coming. I like the long game and will get him when he least expects it.

The sound of Rip playing guitar fills my ears. I listen closely to the melody, as the music he plays can reflect his mood, and I hate when he gets depressed. This song doesn’t sound promising, which means he has talked to people today and it has sent him into a spiral.

I push through the door and Rip looks up as we walk inside, but continues to strum his guitar.

“Sup, fucker. Thanks for the save today.”

Rip smirks and finally stops, placing his guitar by his side. “You’re welcome. I had a client this morning. A newbie.”

“Please tell me she wanted something where you could see her boobs. It’s been so long since I have seen titties,” I lament. “I’m jealous.”

Rip shakes his head. “You know that’s not how I roll. They get what I feel they need.”

Don’t I know it? That’s how I’ve gotten all my tattoos.

My leg sleeve is the best—a memory of our first adventure, when I was an idiot and took my brother’s old rowboat out after being told not to.

Rip had only been with us for a week at that point.

We ended up on Crescent Key, a low, half-moon-shaped islet sitting just off the bay with a single weathered dock and easily reached by rowboat.

He first kissed me there, and the memory is forever inked onto my skin.

It’s also our home now—or will be as soon as we can afford the last of the build. It’s where the old lighthouse is located. We have spent every cent we make fixing it up so we can live there, but this time we won’t use a rotting old rowboat to reach it.

“I have found a way for us to get the money we need for the dock,” Kasen reveals.

Just the mention of our dream has me on edge. The hoops we've had to jump through to get approval to live there are insane. The code officer, Jason Banks, has made our life hell. It may or may not be my fault because of our feud since high school.

"How?" I ask, knowing at least one of us will not like what Kasen has to say.

"My friend Kennedy has a job offer for us."

Ripley glances over at Kasen. "The guy you used to work with at the sex club?"

Kasen nods.

"Hold on, you used to be a sex worker? Mr. Straight and Narrow? Mr. I Have to Follow All the Rules? You used to fuck for money? Oh, this is good—so, so good."

Kasen sighs. "Now you understand why I didn't say anything. This idiot couldn't handle it."

"I'm just in shock. You can't spring something like that on me and not expect me to have a reaction. Sex worker—wow. You are definitely hot enough."

"I was technically an escort, but Kennedy now owns a business called Wild Steps, and he just called. It seems our latest visitor is turning thirty, and a friend wants to get her a gift."

"A gift?" Rip asks, and Kasen nods.

"In the form of masked men. Before anyone says no, hear me out. The pay is good, and we need the money. And imagine Jason's face when we stick it to him. He knows every cent we have is already tied up in the build. We barely have any money left to eat, let alone build a new dock."

“So, what? We chase her a little in masks, fuck her, and get paid? I’m not seeing a downside here. You said she isn’t ugly. What’s the catch?” I ask, raising an eyebrow.

Kasen sighs. “It has to be three masked men.”

Both Kasen and I look at Ripley. He doesn’t like to talk to strangers unless they want ink—it’s the only exception.

Even then, all negotiations are done via email, and they sign a form stating they understand he might not talk to them.

He hates people outside of his art. Even then, once he does a piece, he will sometimes spiral for days.

Touching him without his consent doesn’t end well for anyone, something I know from personal experience.

“Do you think you could do this?” Kasen asks.

“What if he just wears a mask and chases her? I can stick my dick in her twice. We could just blindfold her, and she would never know.”

“I can do it,” Rip says. “I spoke with her today.”

Both Kasen and I blink at him.

“Like with your words?”

Kasen whacks the back of my head. “How else would he talk to her, you idiot? If we agree, we need to sign some paperwork. We have to abide by the contract and her limits. There is still a chance she may not sign, but this way we could finish the dock

in weeks, not months.”

The thought of finally having our own space is exciting.

I love my family, but our house is always full, and Mom could use the bedroom for her new foster kids.

I know she loves having us at home, and I will miss her cooking and doing my laundry—but it’s time to take the next step in life. And for that reason alone, I’m in.

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Chapter Four

Kinsley

“What do you mean, she’s locked in the bathroom? Jace, what did you do to that poor woman? And if you say nothing , I will sack-whack you the next time I see you.”

Jace chuckles as I look out over the water, pausing my sketch of the boat in the distance.

“I swear on my life, I didn’t do anything. She...” He clears his throat and lowers his voice. “Farted from the front. It was funny.”

I gasp. “You did not laugh at her, you idiot. Not the first time! Slide the phone under the door and put me on speaker.”

“Baby, Kins wants to talk to you.”

Willow groans.

“Hey, I just wanted to tell you that my cousin is a dickhead. He needs to remember that one time he farted in the bath and shat himself, or the time he got so blackout drunk he woke up in my mom’s bathtub on the morning she had important guests.

There is nothing you can do that would outshine the embarrassment that man has brought upon himself. ”

She sniffles. “Thanks, Kinsley. I’m just mortified.”

“The first time is always the worst, but men are disgusting creatures and don’t care about that. Now, if he farts, punch him in the nuts for me.”

That makes her chuckle.

“Ask her if she has thought anymore about the dicks,” I hear Jace yell.

“I take it you heard that?” Willow chuckles. “I can vouch for his idea. Wild Steps opened me up to a world I never imagined was possible.”

I sigh. “I’m considering it, but paying for sex?”

“Tell my cousin she isn’t paying for sex. I’m paying for it.”

Both Willow and I laugh. Sometimes I swear Jace and I hear each other’s thoughts.

“Don’t overthink it. Have one fuck-it moment while you are still in your twenties.

Maybe it will give you some clarity. I know I have said it so many times, Kins, but your future can look however you want it to.

Just because an ex is having a baby shower, and your friends are getting married, doesn’t mean you have to.

There is nothing wrong with not wanting children, or even marriage, and if you want to stay in a small town and paint pictures of the ocean, do it. Only you can decide what you want.”

“Thanks, Willow, and I stand by the fact that you are way too good for Jace.”

She snorts. “I wish that were true, but he treats me like a queen.”

“He is a good man. Don’t tell him I said that, or I will deny it.”

We end the call, and I pack my sketch pad back in my bag. A man running toward me catches my eye. It’s the same young guy from the tattoo shop.

“Hey, new girl,” he says with laughter in his tone as he rushes past me.

That’s when I notice there’s another man chasing after him in nothing but boxer briefs. I smirk as he gets closer. Back in Sterling Crest, seeing someone half-dressed wasn’t always a pleasure. Normally, they were homeless or on some sort of drugs, but this man doesn’t seem like either type.

“I’m going to kill you when I catch you, Tyde,” he yells, but slows as he gets closer and plops down on the bench seat beside me.

“Hi,” he gets out between huffing breaths.

Everyone in this town is so friendly. Every person I have come across says hello or has stopped to talk to me. Maybe they don’t get new people around here very often.

“Hi. Did he steal your clothes?”

The man laughs. “No, this is a new wardrobe choice. The asshole delivered live crabs to my food van.”

“What do you have against crabs?” I ask, tilting my head.

His eyes go wide. “Crabs are demon creatures. Pure propaganda has brainwashed the masses. People think they’re fine, but how else do they know how to burst from the

sand and sprint at you unless they're trained commandos?

Seriously, have you ever met anyone who isn't terrified of spiders?

Crabs are basically armored spiders with knives for hands, but people just shrug, like, 'Nah, they're harmless.

' No, they're not harmless. They can't even walk in a straight line.

Those freaky little fuckers deserve to die. ”

“Well,” I say with a chuckle, “you seem very passionate about your hatred of crabs.”

“Damn right I am, but my love of potatoes makes up for it. I could talk about potatoes all day.” He grins, waving his hand in the air.

“Did you know there are over five thousand types out there? Russets for that perfect, fluffy mash, Yukon Golds for creamy scalloped layers, and those little fingerlings—tiny, buttery nuggets you roast with rosemary until they're crisp.

And don't even get me started on purple potatoes.

Seriously, a world without potatoes is like a beach without sand—just unthinkable. I'm Shore, by the way.”

“Kinsley. Nice to meet you,” I say as he leans back on the seat, his legs slightly spread and his arms draped along the backrest as he soaks up the sun's rays.

His golden-kissed skin is that of a local—someone who spends a lot of time outdoors—and his blonde hair has a natural roughness you could only get from the sea.

“Are you hungry? I’m about to open my food van and I would love to cook you a welcome-to-town lunch.”

I open my mouth to say no, but then remember why I’m here. This guy is way too young for me, but I need to step outside my tightly locked box and experience the world. After Teddy died, life scared me, and all I did was work.

“I would love that, actually.”

He jumps from the chair and holds his hand out to help me up. His large hand swallows mine.

I straighten out my dress, and we walk side by side.

“So, Kinsley, where are you from and what brings you to Bluebell Bay? Few travelers stop in here.”

“Sterling Crest, and honestly, I just needed to slow down and find myself. Turning thirty is a big deal to my mother and the socialites there. To them, I am past my prime, too old to find a husband and trap him with children.”

Shore throws his head back and laughs. “I mean, thirty seems old, but who needs a husband if you’re a strong, independent woman? Any man would be crazy not to see how stunning you are, though.”

I blush at his words. “And how old are you, exactly?”

“Twenty-one, but don’t let my good looks and age fool you. I already own a food truck that sells the best crab tacos you have ever tasted. And do you see the lighthouse out there? I also partly own it.”

“It sounds like you do well for yourself.”

I shouldn't be jealous of how carefree he seems, and how animated he is about his life. I know the dreaded question is coming next.

“So, what do you do in Sterling Crest? To my knowledge, the town is full of the filthy rich.”

He isn't wrong, and it's sad that people know that without ever stepping foot in the place. “I mainly design high-end dresses.”

“Nice. How much was the last dress you designed worth?”

Embarrassment hits me. I hate the price associated with the Ellsworth name; it's why I wanted to run away at eighteen and never look back. Some people struggle to put food on the table, and yet a single dress can cost over four times the average yearly wage.

“Close to half a million.”

Shore coughs. “That is a lot of money.”

I nod. “Not all of it goes to me, obviously. I only design them. But yes, it is a lot of money. Not that I ever wanted that life.” I whisper the last part as we arrive at a food truck with “Shore Bites” painted across the front.

Shore opens the side—no lock in sight—and pops his head in, then his shoulders relax.

“No crabs,” he announces. “So, what is it you wanted to do—if you could have picked anything?”

“I wanted to draw, maybe even paint. The plan after college was to travel the world and do just that, but life has a funny way of getting in the way.”

He doesn't reply, instead offering me his hand and pulling me inside the van. “I don't open for another hour or so, and my mom should be here soon with the cooked crabs.”

He hands me an apron, and he wraps the other one around his half-naked body. I'm slightly disappointed he is covering up his skin. He might be too young for me, but he is nice to look at.

Shore shows me how he gets ready for the day, and I'm shocked at how much food he prepares.

He tells me that with the festival on, there are a lot more tourists and people from neighboring towns.

When his mom arrives, she is everything you could imagine a mom from a small town to be, and the polar opposite of my mother, the ice queen.

My first day here, and I already have a standing invitation to dinner at her house. Shore is an open book and tells me stories of his siblings who all have ocean-themed names, and he explains his parents also foster kids.

Is it wrong to wish you were born into a family like that—where money, while necessary, isn't so important?

Rather, it's about love and family. I know I have Jace, and I will forever be grateful; I'm not certain I would have survived without him.

He is the closest person I have to a sibling, but hearing Shore talk about his brothers

and sister warms my heart and makes me realize what I have missed.

Maybe Jace is right, and I need to live a little.

Not that I need masked men to chase me to live, but what can it hurt?

At the very least, it can be something I look back on and remember when I'm old and working eighty-hour weeks while living with a husband who wishes he traded up while he still could.

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Chapter Five

Kasen

We all signed the Wild Steps paperwork last night.

It was all fairly straightforward, stating that we are to do whatever the client wants.

We also had to fill out any of our own hard limits.

Shore clearly has none. I draw the line at any bodily fluids that belong in a toilet, and Rip will follow our lead.

He also has a safe word, so if he needs to, he can walk away.

Kennedy emailed me this morning, as Kinsley signed off on her forms and attached her limits. It seems our new arrival has taken very little off the table, though she agrees she is not into being pissed on, thank god. If someone is into that kind of thing, more power to them, but it's not for me.

I laugh when I read that her safe word is potato.

Clearly, her run-in with Shore yesterday was memorable.

The guy is obsessed with potatoes—if there is a lull in conversation, the idiot will fill the void with facts about them.

If I hear one more, I might poke my own eardrums out just so I don't have to listen.

A package containing masks was sent to us overnight. The client apparently gets to choose, and I roll my eyes at the thought of wearing a glowing mask. I would much prefer something cool, like a Michael Myers mask or even a gas mask, but for what we're being paid, I'll wear whatever she wants.

"What about Sea Pine Grove? It's always deserted out there, and the old lifeguard station is spooky at night," Shore suggests.

The town isn't lacking for forsaken locations. Everyone has lived here long enough that they don't go looking for abandoned spots in town to explore. And if we get arrested, Shore's brother will understand. The town is pretty relaxed, and we have almost zero crime.

"How do we get her there?" Ripley asks. "We can't exactly kidnap her. This only works if she is willing."

"Kennedy has passed on her number. He said the best way is to drop her the location."

"Are we sure we want to do this?" Ripley asks. "What if she finds out it's us and gets weird about it?"

Shore laughs—he knows what Rip is getting at. I once had a fling with a woman who was visiting town, and she got attached. I have a one-and-done rule for me and women in this town, even visitors.

"She has only booked for two weeks, and from what I know, she has a very well-paying job in the city. Women like her don't stick around places like this."

Kennedy sent me everything we need to know about her.

Kinsley Ellsworth, twenty-nine. She works for Ellsworth Couture Collective, a company started by her great-grandfather.

She has no known spouse and lives a fairly low-profile life for someone with her net worth, which has more zeros than we could ever hope for.

Not to mention she is stunning and carries herself with a grace that most women could only dream of possessing.

Her light-brown hair shines when the sun hits it just right, and her green eyes are full of depth—a wise soul, if I ever saw one.

“There is something about her. She seems lost.”

Rip’s ability to read people can be freaky. If she is lost, maybe this will spark some life into her. I can’t imagine wanting to be chased by strangers, but I’m not here to judge.

Shore shifts from his reclined position on the sofa in the foyer of the community hall to lay his head in Rip’s lap, where he’s kicked back on the other end of it.

Rip absentmindedly runs his tattooed fingers through Shore’s hair, and I don’t even try to understand their dynamic anymore.

Shore is the only person stupid enough to touch Rip without asking.

I have witnessed Rip put grown men on their asses.

He goes blank, almost void, like his soul is sucked from his body and he is just a

shell.

I don't know much about his life before Bluebell, as it was long before I moved here. Shore has mentioned it was bad, but not his story to tell.

"We have to conceal our identity," I remind them. "It's part of the contract that the client doesn't see any markings that can identify us or hear our voices. This heat is going to suck covered in clothes, but I have ordered some which are lightweight. Once everything arrives, we are good to go."

"I can't wait to be in our own place. Imagine all the naked time we can have."

I groan. I have known Shore long enough to not be bothered by his nakedness , but I prefer when he keeps his cock away . He once got me to admit he has a nice dick, and I have not lived it down. I thought if I agreed, he would stop harassing me. I was wrong—very, very wrong.

As far as dicks go, I'm not attracted to them. I sure as fuck don't want to touch them, but I can appreciate he is above average. Though he is the worst person in the fucking world to have been so blessed because he isn't afraid to let it out.

"We won't be having family naked time. That's weird," I reply, shaking my head.

"Not for us. I see Rip naked all the time."

Rip smirks and tightens his grip on Shore's hair, pulling it back so he is forced to look up at him. "Not everyone enjoys being naked."

The door to the community hall opens, and we look over and see Kinsley nervously walk through. Her eyes roam over Shore and Rip, then move to me.

“Hi,” she whispers, as if she is intruding on a personal moment.

Shore jumps up and smiles widely at her. “We meet again, pretty lady.”

“It’s nice to see you with clothes on,” she says.

“Don’t get used to it, unfortunately—it doesn’t happen all that often,” I joke. “Are you here for the self-defense lessons?”

She nods. “I am. Sorry I’m early. It didn’t take long to walk here.”

“How’s your tattoo?” Rip asks, standing from the couch.

Both Shore and I stare at each other in shock. Who is this guy, and what did he do with our best friend?

“Great so far.”

He walks over to her, and when she lifts her loose shirt to show him, he runs a finger below the script.

Shore moves to my side. “What the fuck is happening right now?” he whispers.

My eyes widen when she laughs at something he says, and in slow motion I see her hand move to his arm. Shore must see it, too, because he is moving in a flash toward Rip, whose body tenses, but he makes no move to remove her hand.

My usual attendees roll in, and while some are more advanced than others, today we are going to work on basic defense skills for women. Not that they would ever need that skill here in Bluebell, but it doesn’t hurt to have the knowledge.

“Welcome, everyone. Find a spot on the mats,” I announce.

Kinsley moves closer to the front while Rip and Shore move off to the side.

“This class is about giving you the tools. Simple moves you can use anywhere, anytime. Nothing fancy tonight, I’m afraid. Just real-world defenses.” I scan the room. Mrs. Martin always complains I don’t smile enough, but I grin when I find myself looking at the newcomer.

“Let’s start with awareness. Keep your heads up, shoulders back, hands free. Notice exits, people around you. Confidence is your first layer of protection.”

I step forward and raise my palm. “Palm heel strike—your secret weapon. If someone grabs you, plunge your palm into their nose or chin. You want to drive through with your body weight, not just your arm. Feel the impact, then pivot away and create distance. I want you to partner up so we can run through some of these drills.”

Everyone pairs off, and Kinsley looks around the room. I move closer to her, and she looks up at me.

“You can partner with me.”

I tell everyone to practice without making contact; we don’t need anyone getting hurt.

We run through the drill before moving on to a wrist grab. I talk Kinsley through grabbing my wrist, then slide my thumb up and twist my wrist toward her thumb gently until she lets go.

“It’s not about strength, it’s about leverage. Use your whole body—step, twist, pull. Don’t freeze. Act fast.”

I let Kinsley practice on me, and everyone practices with their partners. Her touch is soft, and surprisingly, I want her hands on my body. I'm not a touchy-feely guy at the best of times, and I hope she doesn't notice the goosebumps that line my skin from the contact.

Shore and Rip don't normally stay, but neither have left the room. Interesting.

The lessons don't go for long, and I hope Kinsley comes back.

I would love to show her how to get an attacker on the ground.

My body over hers, sweaty and on the mats, plays like a reel in my mind.

I know it has been a while since I've been laid, but my cock needs a reminder that it's not okay to get hard in public.

I end the lesson before anyone catches the semi in my workout pants, discreetly turning and tucking myself away.

Shore catches my eye and winks. Of course he had to witness it. He should know I'm not immune to being touched by a beautiful woman, but I bet once everyone leaves, he is going to have a lot to say.

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Chapter Six

Kinsley

Nerves punch me straight in my gut—I can’t do this. I’m almost thirty; I’m too old to be signing up for sex websites. My phone vibrates, and Jace’s name flashes on the screen.

“I can’t do this,” I snap instead of hello. He bellows out a laugh.

“I knew you would want to chicken out. What are you so scared of? This is a birthday gift. It would be rude not to accept.”

“I’m too old for this.”

“Bullshit, you are up in your head. The pressure your mother puts on you is making you second-guess your life choices, as always. You have two weeks, and then you will be back in the city, people-pleasing once again. I know you, Kins. Ever since Teddy died, you have been too afraid to live your life how you want. If you don’t want to get married or have kids—then don’t.

If you want to paint landscapes and become a health nut—then do that. What is stopping you besides fear?”

“Ugh, you’re right,” I say with a sigh.

“I’m always right,” he quips. “And there is so much more out there than pompous

assholes who just want to bend you over and get their rocks off. When was the last time you had sex and had your needs met?”

I honestly can’t remember.

“See? You don’t even know. It’s time to dust off the cobwebs, and what better way than to do it anonymously? There is no awkward morning after, it’s all about you, and maybe—just maybe—you will unlock your freaky side.”

“There is nothing wrong with vanilla sex, Jace. We don’t all need to be choked and punched in the face to get off.”

“Of course there isn’t when you are making love. But fucking should be fun. And if I want my girl to wrap her hand around my neck and punch me, then you bet your ass she will do it. Not that Willow punches me in the face—it would be a shame to ruin this masterpiece.”

“Hah! Fine. I have to admit, the thought of being spanked and having my hair pulled is a turn-on. Why masked men, anyway ?”

Jace clears his throat. “You know how we got together with Willow, and it was the most exciting sex I’ve ever had in my life. It was freeing, and I want that for you. With how often Willow makes us wear our masks, maybe you will like it as well.”

I’m skeptical of the masks. Not knowing what someone looks like scares me, but that’s clearly a result of my mother whispering in my ear.

I constantly hear how I need to find a handsome, wealthy man to stand by my side, one who can provide for me while I pop out babies.

I wouldn’t say I’m opposed to children altogether, but I don’t feel like I need to

marry with the sole intention of having a child.

“Just try it. If you hate the masks or the whole thing, you have a safe word. Use it, and everything goes away. If you love it, I paid for the complete experience. They could pop up anytime over the course of your stay. Enjoy yourself—be free like you once dreamed of. If I have to drive down there myself to talk some sense into you, I will.”

“Okay, okay. You have convinced me. I’ll talk to you tomorrow.”

“Not if you are in a sex coma, you won’t. Bye.”

He hangs up on me before I can respond, and I take one last look at myself in the mirror.

What will the masked men think if they see my scars?

Would they even care? I shake off the annoying voice in my head.

Quite a number of times my mother has mentioned plastic surgery to make them less noticeable, but I won’t.

They are a reminder of what happens when you try to step outside of the life you were born into.

She even booked me in for Botox for my birthday, telling me I need to start on my wrinkles before they get any worse.

What fucking wrinkles? My face looks fine.

My text message alert pings, and my heart thumps wildly in my chest. Opening the

message from the unknown sender, I find a set of coordinates.

Taking a deep breath in, I say aloud, “You can do this, Kinsley Elise Ellsworth. You can give up control for one night.”

An epiphany hits me. I am becoming my mother.

She has molded me into her. I’m a workaholic control freak who, deep down, just wants her mother’s approval, but won’t ever get it.

She forever likes to remind me of the one time I tried to rebel—aka running away with Teddy—and the consequences of my actions.

I don’t want to become her: in my fifties with no real friends. And a husband who spends most of his time abroad with his current fling—that she knows about, mind you, but doesn’t have the time or energy to deal with.

My father died in a plane crash before I was born. My mom married Brian fifteen years ago, but I don’t think she ever loved him. It simply looks good for her image to have a wealthy man on her arm at events.

Pulling up the location on my maps app, I see it’s only a small walk from here, in the opposite direction from The Promenade.

Before I can talk myself out of it, I rush out the door, slipping the key under the welcome mat.

Here goes nothing.

I step down the wooden stairs and onto the concrete path beside the beach.

The evening air is cooler than during the day, and it's a welcome relief.

A breeze drifts off the water, tugging at my floral dress and ruffling my hair.

It's not cold, just cool enough to make me question if I need a light cardigan.

I pause, phone in hand, to make sure I'm headed in the right direction when it lights up with a new text.

Follow the path to the old boardwalk. We will be waiting.

Is it wrong to feel excitement?

There hasn't been a time in the last decade I have wanted to be excited about something. Yet, after my talk with Jace, I want to embrace the two weeks I have here, perhaps pretend I'm still that carefree eighteen-year-old with nothing but a promising future.

When I reach the old boardwalk, everything is shrouded in darkness, and I can barely make out the silhouettes of trees. My dress flutters against my legs, causing a chill to run up my spine; not because of the cold, but at the anticipation of the unknown.

The old boardwalk creaks under my weight, and I walk ahead, not knowing where I am going or who is waiting for me. A creak from behind has me spinning around, and my breath catches as my eyes adjust to the dim light.

There, crouched between two old fallen tree trunks, the masked men wait. Red-and-blue glowing masks turn on, illuminating the space surrounding them.

My heart hammers. There's no turning back now.

“Hello, Kinsley. We have been waiting for you,” a masked man says, his voice low and distorted. All three men step onto the boardwalk, and I remain still.

“I don’t know what to do,” I say meekly, wondering if I’m supposed to talk.

“All you need to do is run for us, pretty girl,” the second masked man says, stepping toward me.

As each man takes a step toward me, the boardwalk creaks loudly beneath their feet.

All common sense left me the second I decided to do this. I take off running further down the boardwalk, my phone flashlight lighting the way, illuminating any hazards that could trip me over. Adrenaline courses through my veins, and I have never felt more alive.

One foot in front of the other, I run down the old boardwalk, heart hammering loud enough it could wake the town. My dress tangles around my knees as I skid toward the railing. Behind me, their footsteps thud in unison.

“You can run, but you can’t hide!” one hisses.

I jump off the weathered planks and onto the sand below, my knees buckling under me for a moment before I’m up and sprinting down the beach.

“We are coming for you, pretty girl!” another growls.

I spot the lifeguard building ahead. It looks deserted, with peeling white paint and broken windows.

I barrel through the thick, dry sand, and skid across the wooden ramp, my palms sliding over splintered handrails. My chest sears with every breath, and I glance over

my shoulder. Two masked figures vault over the driftwood benches, while the third is already halfway up the stairs.

I fling open the door of the tower, and it's dark inside.

After a split-second of hesitation, I hurry over the threshold and press my back against the wall, my fingertips grazing over the cracked plaster as I wait for them to follow.

There is nowhere left to run. I'm out of breath, and if I'm being honest with myself, a small pulse between my legs signals to my brain that I actually like this.

I want to get caught—to feel a stranger's hands on me.

My pulse spikes as the first masked silhouette slips inside, red and blue lighting up the derelict room. He pauses, causing my breath to hitch. Surprisingly, I realize I want this to happen.

The second man steps over the threshold, and I lick my lips, tasting the faint hint of salt clinging to them from my mad dash through the evening ocean air. The third man follows, and suddenly I'm surrounded, my body flooding with warmth.

One of my pursuers steps forward. "I want you to tell me you want this."

"I want this," I whisper, though there is no real reason for the lowered tone. Maybe because it feels like we are doing something we shouldn't, and while something like this would normally scare me, it doesn't.

"Good. Now I want you to remove your dress, slowly."

I freeze. What if they see my scars? Will they care? Surely in the dark they won't be

easily seen.

I grab the hem of my dress with shaky fingers and drag it up my body and over my head, then drop it at my feet. My skin prickles under their silent gazes as I step over the fabric, my heart hammering in my throat. I stand there in my thong and white tennis shoes as my nipples pebble.

Another of the masked men motions me to step further forward, and I do as he asks, then each one moves to surround me.

My eyes flutter closed as a single finger trails down my neck, starting from just below my ear.

Goosebumps rise on my skin, and I focus on the sensation as it moves down to the nape of my neck.

The man it belongs to stands behind me, our bodies close enough I can feel the heat radiating off him, but not close enough that he is touching me.

“God, the way your skin feels under my fingertip is driving me insane.”

He feathers his touch over my shoulder and down between my breasts, a small moan slipping from my lips as his finger reaches my navel and my stomach dips.

“So fucking hot,” the man in front of me says. Even through his mask, I can feel his eyes on me—watching, waiting for his turn to touch me. The night air might be cool, but it’s like an inferno is burning under my skin in the wake of being touched.

The third man is off to the side. I can’t see him, but I feel his reluctance to step forward. The first man’s hand dips beneath my thong, and I suck in a breath. It has been a long time since someone touched me, and I hadn’t realized how much my

body has been craving it.

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Chapter Seven

Ripley

I lean against the plastered wall, my heart in my throat as I watch Kasen's fingertip graze Kinsley's stomach. Shore stands in front of her, and I know he is grinning behind his mask. This situation is made just for him.

My palms sweat beneath my gloves; the memory of her hand on my arm yesterday ricochets through me still. It shouldn't have felt safe. Every other brush of skin sends me spiraling, my PTSD clawing at the edges of my mind, a warning of the memories I've buried so deep I barely remember.

But with her, it was different. Her touch didn't spark panic. Instead, it sent a flicker of something warm to wind its way through my chest.

I don't like to think about the past. Once I became part of Shore's family, I locked it all away.

I was finally safe from the monsters of my previous life, and Shore promised I would never have to return.

My ribs tighten. I swallow past the lump in my throat and straighten, determined not to let my past win.

"Oh my god," Kinsley moans out as Kasen circles her clit.

Shore has no chill; he undoes the zip on his pants, and her eyes widen. She watches with fascination as Kasen slows his movements, drawing out her pleasure.

Shore pulls out his thick cock—one I’ve had my lips around so many times—and wraps his hand around his shaft, stroking himself slowly.

“Do you enjoy watching how turned on he is just for you?”

My own words surprise me. When someone in town talks to me, I grunt in response; the words get stuck in my throat as anxiety winds its way around my vocal cords.

But I felt the connection when she walked into my shop.

She looked lost, a little broken, and sad.

Not obviously, but I could see it in her walk and the way she talked, in how her spirit was restrained.

My soul felt it. Some people might think I’m crazy, but I’m not.

It comes from years of abuse at the hands of those who should love you the most, having to read their mood and watch for danger that shouldn’t exist.

She nods as her knees buckle a little, but something comes over her. The pure bliss morphs into something closer to pain, as if she is stopping herself from going further.

“No holding back, just feel,” I say, and her eyes find me.

Shore must also realize and releases his cock, though he doesn’t tuck it away. He moves forward and rips her thong straight off her body so now we can see Kasen’s fingers working their magic.

Shore traps her between his and Kasen's body. I watch as he slides his fingers inside her too, and the hesitancy she just experienced is gone as ecstasy washes over her.

Fuck, I wish I could be there, yet I don't trust myself to get close. Just because she touched me once doesn't mean I won't lash out.

"Once you come, you're going to get on your hands and knees with your ass high in the air," Kasen instructs. "You will be fucked from behind. Use your safe word if you need it, because we all want that pretty little pussy, and we don't plan to stop until you are leaking our cum."

"Oh fuck," she whimpers, "I'm . . ."

She doesn't finish her sentence before her body convulses, and I smirk behind my mask. The guys won't be happy that she came so quietly, but they won't stop until she screams in pleasure. Kinsley's chest rises and falls rapidly as Kasen helps her to her knees.

Shore turns to me, and now that Kinsley's back is to us, he lifts his mask. "You're first," he mouths.

My chest tightens as I move behind Kinsley, every nerve screaming. My palms sweat against the gloves. I move onto my knees and Shore stands behind me, his hands resting gently on my shoulders, grounding me.

"Eyes on me," Kasen says, drawing her attention to him and away from us.

Kinsley's head arches up to look at him.

I pull off my gloves and remove my cock from my dark sweats, where it's already hard as a rock.

Gripping her hips, I close my eyes and breathe.

My focus should be on her warmth and the softness of her skin, but instead I remember nights I swore I'd buried forever.

Touch for me is a warning, a siren in the night.

Yet when Kinsley's hand brushed my arm yesterday, something inside me stilled.

I remember the press of her fingers and waiting for the sharp twist of fear that never came.

That memory fights the panic rising in my throat.

I swallow hard, my fingertips trembling, as I fight the urge to retreat.

Shore drops beside me, his hand taking my length and guiding me to her. Kasen and Shore know my safe word; I can leave any time I want .

Kinsley pushes back against my cock, the tip presses into her warmth, and something in me snaps. Removing one of my hands from her hips, I reach forward and delve my fingers into her beautiful golden-brown hair, then fist a handful and tug her head back as I thrust deep inside her.

"Fuck!" she screams, and it's like music to my ears.

I roll my hips back and then fuck her like a starved man.

Tears prick my eyes behind the mask. Every interaction I have ever had with a woman has been unpleasant.

Yet right now, I feel like my dick has died and gone to heaven.

Her pussy wraps around me like a tight, warm glove, and I thrust into her to the beat of my heart.

Together we make an unspoken melody, and I know as soon as I get home, I will put pen to paper and create magic for my ears.

I grip her left hip harder and dig my fingers into her flesh, needing to push every inch of me inside her. My balls draw up tight, and her moans grow louder and louder, tipping me over the edge.

As soon as I recover enough and move aside, Shore wastes no time sliding himself inside her. The cheeky asshole fucks her at a speed no normal human could keep up with. His hips piston into her, and her head lolls forward as her body trembles.

I fall back onto my ass and pull my gloves back on, wrapping my arms around my legs as I work on controlling my breathing before it turns panicked.

I'm safe here. Shore and Kasen have my back, and Kinsley is not here to hurt me.

"You're so wet, filled with his cum. If only you could see how pretty you look from this angle."

"Oh god, oh god, oh shit," Kinsley pants. The sound of skin slapping against skin fills my ears, and I memorize the way it sounds. "I'm coming!"

She falls apart, and her body shudders, her arms struggling to hold her up.

"You're not finished yet," Kasen says, and she looks up at him.

“I can’t come again,” she whimpers as Shore roars behind her, grabbing her hips on his last thrust as he stills, his head thrown back.

“You can, and you will. On your feet,” Kasen orders, offering her a hand as Shore pulls out of her.

He leads her over to an old table and lifts her up, pulling her forward so that her ass is almost off the table, and he spreads her legs wide.

“Keep your legs open for me. I’m not stopping until you scream one last time.”

He steps between her legs, and Shore sits beside me, wrapping his arm around my shoulders, then we turn our masks off.

Kasen is normally a private man, and neither Shore nor I have ever been in the room while he has hooked up with a woman before. We watch silently—there is just enough light from his mask to see his cock push inside Kinsley .

She arches her back off the table as he thrusts in slowly. He is a man with so much restraint. He likes to take his time and apparently draw out his pleasure.

I never imagined I’d be so turned on watching my friend claim her this way. Heat settles low in my belly, and my pulse hammers in my throat. Shore nudges my arm, but I can’t look away. Every inch of Kinsley’s skin is creamy white—pure perfection—and it’s a stark difference to Kasen’s deep tan.

Shore’s hand dips beneath the waistband of my sweats and my half erection comes to life as he squeezes. I slide my palms down behind me, lifting my hips and leaning back so my arms bear my weight.

My head falls back, and I close my eyes.

The sound of Kasen's thrusts and Kinsley's soft moans float through the air while Shore strokes my cock .

Fuck, it almost feels wrong to make money from this.

For the first time in longer than I can remember, I feel content.

My anxiety is at a two out of ten, and no panic is waiting to rear its ugly head.

"That's it, you're doing perfect. Sit up a little. Now watch my cock and how well you're taking me."

"Oh wow!" Kinsley gasps. "That's so hot... FUCK!"

I open my eyes and see Kasen has moved Kinsley's legs so they are straight up in the air, his torso holding them up.

His hips pull back, and he pistons forward, his speed picking up as her moans grow louder.

Shore matches Kasen's pace, and I know I won't last long.

The sensory overload has me coming in his hand, and seconds later, Kinsley screams.

When the spots clear from my vision and I glance over, Kasen has stepped back and is tucking himself away.

I jump to my feet, turning my mask back on to help me find her dress.

Until right now, I didn't even realize she still had her white tennis shoes on.

I shove her shredded thong into my pocket and walk over to hand her the dress.

“We need to do that again,” she says with a chuckle, taking the clothing from me. She looks spent, lying on the table with the dress clutched tightly to her chest.

“Don’t worry,” Shore says, moving to her side. “There are so many filthy things I still want to do to you.”

On the floor by the wall, her phone vibrates. She sits up, slides off the table, and gingerly makes her way over to it. She looks down as she pulls her dress on.

“Be ready, anytime, anywhere,” Kasen adds. She looks over at us and nods.

I hear her answer her phone and greet someone named Jace, but none of us stop or turn around as we walk out of the building and hurry over to the boardwalk.

Hiding ourselves behind the first cluster of trees, we turn our masks off and wait.

None of us will let her walk home alone.

While the town is safe, we are gentlemen, and it wouldn’t be right if we left her here.

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Chapter Eight

Kinsley

The girls at work have gossiped about how sore their muscles were after a night of fun.

I always figured it was an exaggeration because I'd experienced nothing like that until today.

Now I have new muscles I never knew existed.

I'd planned to get up at sunrise and sit by the ocean to draw whatever came to mind, but I couldn't drag myself out of bed.

Strolling down to The Promenade on the hunt for coffee, I smell the delicious scent of food wafting through the air.

I follow my nose until it leads me to Shore Bites, and Shore smiles brightly at me as I join the line.

While I wait for him to serve two women close to his age, I watch as one tries to flirt with him—not that he seems to notice.

“I didn't expect to see you with so many clothes,” I say when it's my turn.

“Don't get used to it. My shirt will be gone by lunchtime. What can I get for you?”

“Tell me you have coffee. I’m so tired my eyes burn.”

Shore smiles at me. “I do. Late night?”

I nod but don’t share why. Last night opened my mind, but it has left me even more confused. Shore makes my coffee while he continues to talk.

“I was up late last night as well. So many questions run through my mind when I stay up late. Like, why is it called ‘after dark’ when it’s really ‘after light’? And why do we press harder on remote-control buttons when the batteries are low?”

I snort. “I do not envy you having a brain that thinks like that—I close my eyes and fall asleep.”

He hands me my coffee, and I take a sip. It’s perfect, and he didn’t even ask how I like it.

He leaves the inside of his truck and pops out the side. We both take a seat at the wooden tables facing the ocean.

“How are you liking Bluebell so far?”

I smile at the thought. I was hesitant to come here, as taking a break meant falling behind at work and disapproval from my mother when I return.

Then add in the fact that I’m almost thirty, hate my life, and don’t know what I want for my future.

Yet, after a few days here, I already feel more relaxed.

At work, there was a time when I enjoyed creating my own designs, not just the

clients' visions, and last night was a liberating reminder of that. I did something solely for myself.

"I love it here," I admit. "It's quiet and relaxed. Everyone goes with the flow, and I don't think I have ever felt so free in my life."

"I feel like there is a but coming."

Staring out at the horizon, I take a deep breath. "Not so much a but and more that I just know there is an end date. My life will go back to how it was, and this will all be a distant memory."

Shore scoots closer to me and throws his arm around my shoulders. I go stiff. A complete stranger consoling me feels odd, and yet Shore either doesn't pick up on my body language or doesn't care.

"Why do you have to go back?"

"Because I have a job."

He moves his arm and turns to face me. "So? People leave their jobs all the time. Why not start a new life? What is stopping you? I'm not saying you must move here or even out of the city, but you're an adult.

You can choose the life you want, and anyone not willing to support you shouldn't have a place in your life. "

He doesn't understand. I tried once, and Teddy died. Living the life I was born into is how it has been since then, how it needs to be.

"I can see your brain ticking. Just think about it. Life is too short to be stuck doing

something you don't have to.

I understand why some people have no choice, but I googled you, Kinsley.

You are wealthy, intelligent, and have only yourself to support.

Or at least I'm guessing so, since no cum trophies are running around. ”

“I like you, Shore,” I say. He is refreshing. He lives his life how he wants and says whatever he is thinking.

“Go on a date with me, then?”

I snort. “God, no. I mean, you are way too young for me. You are barely twenty-one, and I'm almost thirty.”

Shore shrugs. “If everyone is legal, age doesn't matter. And it's only a date, Kinsley, not a marriage proposal. I will take you for a nice meal, and maybe even a walk along the pier. Then, like a gentleman, I will walk you back to your place and say goodnight.”

His eyes shine, and I can see the sincerity.

I'm not used to this. For me, a date symbolizes a few things.

Either a fancy meal that costs more than some people make in a day, which he would pay for, meaning sex afterward—normally a one-night stand, because that is all we have time to maintain.

Or if it's with someone my mother has set me up with, it's a business connection, intending to force us together with the hope it goes further.

“I’ll think about it. Shore, I love how free-spirited you are, but my life is not like yours. I wish it was, and that it was so easy to just let it go.”

Shore smiles. “Thinking about it is good enough. I’m persistent without being creepy, and I’ll wear you down. It really is that easy, but I think you’re a little scared. I have time to make you see the light.”

A group of older women walk up to the van, and Shore jumps up when one calls out to him. I decide to stay here and sketch the small boats coming and going, and the birds that follow in hopes of their next meal.

I don’t know how long I sit there before a shadow falls over me. Looking over my shoulder, I see Rip standing behind me, glancing down at my picture, and I snap my sketchbook closed.

“It’s not very good,” I say.

I plan to get some art supplies later today. I want to turn my sketches into paintings so I can hang them in my apartment as reminders of what freedom felt like.

“Can I draw you?” he asks and points to my sketch pad. I hesitate as he sits beside me. “No hand can write your story but your own. Sometimes you just have to pick up the pen and leap.”

I slide the sketchbook toward him, and he smiles.

“How do you do that? Say what someone needs to hear.”

He shrugs as he opens the book, and I look out toward the small waves that break along the shore. “Honestly? Past trauma. I had to be able to read people. It was the difference between being beaten or not.”

“You learned to protect yourself in a way most people never have to. I admire your strength.”

“It is what it is; I can’t change the past. But I now have an amazing support system here, and I’m happy. Being miserable every day isn’t living—it’s existing—and what a waste of life if you don’t live. Dwelling on the past won’t change it, so I choose to be free.”

“Is it that easy?” I ask, sneaking a look at him as the pencil moves across the page. He moves his arm to shield the picture.

“No peeking. And no, it’s the hardest thing I’ve ever had to do, but it’s worth it. Believe it or not, Shore helps me, just by being him.”

“I can see why you keep him around. His energy is contagious. Can I ask you something semi-personal?”

Rip’s hand pauses mid stroke when I place my hand on his arm. He relaxes quickly, then turns to face me with a nod.

“You and Shore . . . are you a couple?”

His lips pull up into a grin. “He asked you out? And you’re smart enough to have seen our interactions.”

“Something like that,” I say, followed by a nervous laugh. I don’t know why Rip makes me nervous, but he does.

“It’s not something we put a label on. He saved my life.

When I was sent to live with the Eastons, I was scared and felt so alone.

I trusted no one, but Shore didn't give up on me.

If I had nightmares, he would stay up with me and tell me outlandish stories of his adventures.

He made sure I lived every day until I was no longer empty. He even picked my name."

My mouth falls open. "That could have ended so badly."

He laughs, and the sound has my gut twisted in knots. What the fuck? This salty air has me going crazy.

"I thought of Barnacle first. We could have called him Barney for short," Shore says, making himself known. "But a rip is powerful. It can pull swimmers out beyond the surf. I could see how strong he was, and I knew it was his name."

A fucking tear leaks from my eye, and I quickly wipe it away. "That is beautiful, Shore. You are an amazing friend."

"Don't tell him that. His ego is already massive. If it gets any bigger, he won't be able to fit through doorways," Kasen says, appearing out of nowhere.

Shore leans his head back and smiles widely at Kasen. "You're just jealous that my ego is as big as my cock. If you want me, just tell me. We all know there is enough of me to go around."

Kasen flips him off. "I'm good, thanks. Your junk doesn't appeal to me at all. I like women."

"You don't know what you're missing out on," Shore says, and Rip grunts in

agreement.

My sketch pad is closed, and he slides it across to me. I place it in my tote bag and stand from my chair.

“It was nice to see you again, boys.”

“I’m not a boy. I’m all man.”

Kasen slaps Shore on the back of the head, and Rip shakes his.

I laugh and say goodbye again. This little town is rubbing off on me, and I run Rip’s words through my head—that the only hand that can write my story is my own.

I now need to decide what I want. Each choice has consequences that make my stomach churn.

But for now, I head toward the art supply store I saw on one of my walks.

I need to get some paint and canvases. At the very least, I will have them as reminders.

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Chapter Nine

Shore

The tide has just gone out, so I've made my way into the caves to lay out a soft, thick blanket.

Tonight, we plan to chase Kinsley again, but it's difficult to find places we won't be seen.

No one ventures into this cave, not since my older brother put the fear of god into the town after a tourist accidentally drowned.

They came here at the wrong time, and when the tide comes in, the cave fills with water.

Unless you're an exceptionally strong swimmer, there is nowhere for you to go.

Tonight is a low tide, making it the perfect place to chase her toward. But it means we will have to split up.

Kasen has messaged her a location link, where we will all be waiting. Or rather, only Rip and Kasen will be if I don't move my ass and get back there fast enough. It took longer than I expected to find the right place to set up the blanket.

It takes ten minutes to find my way back, even though I know this place like the back of my hand.

Being born in Bluebell, there is no place I haven't explored, and I'm sure my parents would have a stroke if they knew some of the adventures I have been on when explicitly told not to—this being one of them.

"I made it," I whisper-shout as I near the others, just as Kinsley comes into view in the distance.

We take our places, knowing what we need to do. We each need to chase her, herding her toward the cave.

When she gets closer, I step out. "Ready to run for us?"

She jumps at my appearance, and I smirk beneath my mask.

Kinsley doesn't wait for me to say anything else; she takes off running down the sand toward the dunes.

It's really the only place to go. All three of us take off after her.

I keep behind her, Rip takes her right, and Kasen her left, making sure she doesn't veer off course.

I skid through the tall grass, sand spraying beneath my feet, and Ripley's laughter echoes behind me.

"Run faster," Kasen calls as he gains on her, pushing her to the right.

My lungs burn, but I lean into it. Kinsley's silhouette bobs ahead, her feet slapping against soft sand. The wind whips her hair that hangs loose past her shoulders. A large piece of driftwood appears in my path and I vault straight over it, not wanting to lose my momentum.

We cross the boardwalk, the old planks groaning under our weight. Kinsley jumps off the side and into the shallows. I follow, my shoes slipping against damp rocks. Rip and Kasen fall in behind me, their feet splashing in the water. I wade through knee-high pools, careful not to fall.

“Into the caves!” Rip shouts.

Kinsley turns, her eyes bright with excitement—a look she never wears in the light of day. She doesn’t slow, just grins and bolts. I push forward as she reaches the cave mouth. Kasen flanks her right, Ripley her left, and together we herd her right where we want her.

Giant stones loom at the cave entrance, the walls dripping with water. Kinsley steps in first, her breath misting in the cool air.

Kasen blocks the exit as Rip and I move behind her, our masks glowing in the dark.

She turns, her chest heaving, and her eyes shifting between us. She knows she has nowhere left to run. We have her trapped.

The glow of our masks creates shadows that bounce off the sandstone walls. Kinsley pauses wide-eyed, watching our every move. Kasen says we have to tread carefully with her. She comes from a life where people demand a lot of her, but I think in the right environment she wants to hand over control.

“I want you to strip naked,” I demand. “So I can see all of you.”

I know this will push her boundaries. Rip said he noticed the way she always covered certain parts of her body.

She hesitates just as we expected, but surprisingly, she lifts the hem of her loose

cotton shirt and pulls it up over her head, dropping it to the sandy floor.

I lick my lips behind the mask. She wears a bralette, and damn, the light-pink material looks good against her milky-white skin.

Next, she kicks off her white tennis shoes and slides her jeans down her legs. I swallow hard when I see her standing there in a matching pink thong, a set she picked just for us. Even though she doesn't know it's me behind the mask, I can still appreciate the thought behind her actions.

She wraps her hands around her waist and turns slightly to the side.

"Don't hide from us," Kasen says. "Drop your hands and sink to your knees."

She slowly drops her arms, and I see the shake in her hands. Rip must as well, because he moves closer to my side.

"I'm going to fuck that pretty mouth and cum on your face to mark what is ours for the next week."

They have paid us to keep returning throughout her stay.

If I'm being honest, after the last time I would have come back for free.

Unlocking a new kink is always fun and exciting for me.

I've found having power over someone in such an intimate way to be a turn-on.

Rip holds all the power when we fuck; he needs it so he doesn't lose control.

It's his way of managing his emotions after the abuse he endured and making himself

feel safe.

But Kinsley is different; she feels out of control right now. Turning thirty has her running scared. She lives a life she hates, and she has no interest in the life her mother wants for her. She needs this to stop spiraling—or at least that’s what Rip told me last night.

Both Rip and I watch Kasen step up to Kinsley and lift her chin so she is looking up at him.

“Why do you want to hide your body from us?” Kasen asks.

She shakes her head and tries to look away. I’m worried he is pushing her too far, and she will run.

“I’m ashamed of my scars and what they represent. Please don’t ask me about them.”

Kasen nods. “You won’t hide yourself from us. Your past is your own, but for the time being, your body is ours. You will submit for your pleasure. Everything we do will be for you.”

“Thank you,” she whispers.

“Now I want you to open your mouth and enjoy taking my cock. Do you like to be told what to do, baby?”

“Yes,” she whimpers, and that is when it hits me.

Kinsley gets controlled in her life, yet she has given that power to the wrong people: those who take advantage of her because of what happened in her past. That shit is going to change.

By the end of our time, she will see how she can hand over control to the right person—or people—and still live her life however the fuck she wants.

Kasen pulls his cock from his sweats. It's a choice we all made after the last chase, as we can take them on and off easier. Rip and I can't get fully naked because we need to keep our tattoos hidden.

Kinsley opens her mouth wide, allowing Kasen to slide himself between her plump pink lips. I can imagine how warm and soft she feels. She looks beautiful on her knees, so willing to do as we ask.

Rip's hand slides beneath my hoodie, then down into my sweats, his palm wrapping around my cock. My eyes flutter closed. Fuck, he knows exactly how I like to be touched. He strokes me softly, and I open my eyes, watching as Kasen threads his fingers in Kinsley's hair.

“Hold my thighs. If you want to stop, dig your nails into my skin. I'm going to fuck your mouth, and once I'm done, we might tick off the anal box. I wonder how stunning you will look with two cocks filling your holes. Do you want that, baby?”

She nods, and her excitement has my cock hardening even more beneath Rip's slow strokes. Lifting my mask a little while Kasen blocks her view, I lean closer to Rip.

“Do you want her ass ?”

He gives me a swift nod.

“Look at how stunning you are, baby, taking my cock almost all the way down the back of your throat. What a nice surprise that is.”

We stand back and watch as he thrusts into her, keeping his pace even as he

compliments her—how well she is doing and how beautiful she looks.

I wish Rip was like that with me. I would be a puddle of fucking goo at his feet if he did.

Rip likes it rough, but he is quiet and doesn't like to talk.

I might have been a little jealous after the last time, realizing I need that from him.

“Look at your eyes watering for me. You've worked me so well I'm going to come.”

“Come in her mouth. I want to use it as lube for her ass,” Rip says, stepping forward.

Goddamn, I can't fucking wait until he and I are alone. I'm going to make him tell me I'm a good boy, come in my mouth, and use it as lube. Shit—I shouldn't be jealous. Instead, I should be happy the mask is giving him a confidence I've never seen before.

I move closer as Kasen holds Kinsley's head still while he comes in her mouth. When he steps back, tucking himself away, I offer her a hand and pull her to her feet. Rip also holds his hand out.

“Spit,” he demands, and she does as he asks. Kasen's cum falls into his hand, then he circles around behind her.

“I'm going to lift you up. Wrap your legs around my waist and don't touch the mask.”

I don't want her to know it's me. I love that I can give her this experience and let her be who she wants to be. If she knew it was me, she wouldn't be here because someone younger doesn't fit the rules her life expects her to follow.

As I lift her by the waist, she wraps her legs around me.

“Now I want you to reach down and take my cock out, then pull your pretty pink thong to the side and slide down my cock. Can you do that for me, beautiful?”

She nods. Reaching between us, she wraps her hand around my cock and pulls it from my sweats, her feminine touch much softer than Rip’s calloused hands. Though each feels just as good when wrapped around my length.

I bite down on my lip when she uses my tip to move her thong aside. Lifting herself a little higher in my arms, she sinks down on my cock. My eyes roll back in my head as her wet warmth clamps around me. I have died and gone to heaven.

“Fuck,” I hiss.

“This might hurt,” Kasen says from behind me. “If you need us to stop, use your words.”

I watch as Rip steps up behind Kinsley. Her eyes widen, and her mouth forms an O.

“That feels so good,” she gasps out.

“You like his fingers in your ass. Good girl,” Kasen praises. “Let him stuff my cum inside you. Has anyone ever stretched out your ass before?”

“No,” she whimpers, “but I want to try it.”

“Is there anything else you want to try?” Kasen asks.

She nods and bites her lip, then blurts, “I think I want you to be rougher with me. Pull my hair, spank me.”

“Whatever you need,” I say.

Of course, when we finally meet someone so perfect, the universe says fuck no—you can have her, but only at arm’s length.

I’m a selfish person. I don’t mean to be, but I know what I want, and I go for it.

It’s how I ended up here. And it gets me what I want—my own house with my best friends, living the life we have always dreamed about.

It’s why I have to make sure I don’t ruin everything by revealing myself, no matter how much I want her to know it’s me.

Women like her don’t stay in places like Bluebell with men like us.

Chapter Ten

Kinsley

Anal? My pulse thunders. Okay, so I may have lied a little. Have I done it? Yes, but it wasn't my favorite experience. From the way Jace talks about it, he makes it sound great, so why not try it again now while I have a safe word?

I grind myself onto the masked man holding me, as the one behind me pushes his fingers into my ass, using the third man's cum as lube.

I feel so fucking free. It's invigorating, maybe because I'm not doing something because someone else expects me to.

While it may have started with a push from Jace, he would never want me to do anything I don't enjoy.

My hair is pulled back roughly, and a mask presses against my cheek.

"There is no way my thick, hard cock will fit inside your ass without breaking you. Maybe you need my handprint on you. We don't want to hurt you."

"Not even if I want to be hurt?"

"Let her down. If she wants to have a cock in her ass and for it to hurt, she can."

My body trembles with anticipation. The masked man doesn't remove his dick yet.

First he walks us over to the other side of the cave and then gently lifts me off him, placing me down on a blanket and maneuvering me onto my hands and knees after helping me out of my bra and thong .

“We don’t have any lube, so we are all going to cum on your ass first . You’re going to play with your clit slowly, and not orgasm. If you feel yourself get close, stop.”

Two of the masked men stand in front of me and they close their hands around their cocks.

I lick my lips, wishing one would kneel and let me wrap my lips around them, but they don’t.

The third man is behind me, and his fingers find my ass.

He gently pushes two back inside me, and I feel myself clench around him.

“Play with yourself, make yourself so wet your pussy is dripping.”

I do as he asks and slide my hand between my legs, running my fingers through the wetness that is already there. I carefully rub circles on the sensitive area of my clit, making sure not to push myself toward an orgasm.

A hand comes down on my ass, and I whimper, moving my fingers a little faster.

“You should see how stunning you look with my fingers in your ass and your cheeks all red for me.”

My head drops, and my hair frames my face as his hand comes down on my ass once again.

“Eyes up here.”

Looking up, I see the two masked men stroking themselves above me.

“I’m going to cum on your ass and then slide underneath you so you can sit on my face,” one of them says. “Then I want to tongue fuck you while your ass gets fucked.”

“Yes, please,” I whisper, easing off my clit.

Just the thought of him beneath me has me ready to explode.

He moves out of my line of sight, and I sense him leaning over me, then feel his cum landing on my ass.

The second man does the same, more warm liquid splashing onto me.

I close my eyes momentarily until the man behind me shifts his body and pulls his fingers out.

“Open your eyes.” I obey, and one of the masked men is standing in front of me again. “I want to see how you look when your ass is full.”

Someone lifts my hips and slides beneath me. They slide their legs between my arms and urge me back down, their hands pressing on my back. A shock of pleasure zaps straight to my core as a tongue swipes through my pussy. I doubt it’s owner can breathe, but I’m in ecstasy and don’t care.

The man beneath me grips my hips and rocks me against his face. Just when my orgasm builds again, I feel the man behind me swipe the cum covering my skin and spread some around my hole, then the tip of his cock nudges it.

“Relax and keep your eyes on me,” says the man in front. “Focus on how good you feel.”

“I want him inside me,” I groan out, barely recognizing my own voice.

The masked man behind me brings his hand down hard on my ass, and the one beneath me hums against my pussy.

A nervous flutter hits me deep in my belly as he pushes his cockhead against me. My breath catches, and when he gently eases inside me, it’s a slow, stretching kind of fullness, and unlike anything I’ve ever felt before. There’s a slight burn as my tight muscles push back, and I consciously relax.

I’m struck by how different it feels. My entire body tingles, my skin growing hypersensitive.

I focus on the pleasure. The man beneath me does something magical with his tongue, and my body relaxes fully as the man behind me slowly pushes forward.

The initial tightness has gone, and while I can feel every inch of him entering me, it’s welcomed.

“Oh god, that feels so good,” I say, my words ending on a moan.

“Look at how well you’re taking his cock.”

I keep my eyes on the man in front of me, and my entire body flushes. A tidal wave of pleasure hits me hard and fast. I scream out a string of unintelligible words. The man behind me thrusts harder. The pain has evaporated, and all I feel is pleasure.

I’m not usually one who takes control in sexual situations.

I have always liked a man who can do that for me, though most have fallen short.

But I do something out of character: I lean forward and slide the sweatpants down the set of hips on the ground near my face just enough that his cock springs out .

Licking my lips, I lower my head further and wrap my mouth around him. A strangled moan comes from behind me.

The man beneath me reaches out and pats around on the blanket, and moments later, the distorted voice below me has me smiling.

“Fuck, your mouth is heaven.”

Hands grip my waist tightly as the man behind me pumps into me, harder and faster, forcing me to take more length into my mouth, making me gag.

I don't stop. Another set of hands grips my ass and spreads my cheeks apart wider.

My pussy clenches, and in my periphery the third man moves and somehow reaches beneath me, sliding fingers inside me and massaging my G-spot. Stars dance behind my closed eyes.

The man behind me thrusts in deep, his fingers digging into my hips, as I feel each pulse of his release.

“FUCK!”

He pulls back slowly, and I instantly feel the loss. It's quickly replaced when the man pulls his fingers from me and positions himself behind me.

“One more orgasm, and we will let you rest for now.”

I hum in response, my throat vibrating against the dick in my mouth. A hard length thrusts inside me, and I hear how wet I am. My face heats in embarrassment. I'm glad I don't know who they are.

"I'm going to come," the man beneath me warns a few seconds before salty liquid hits the back of my throat.

He slides out from beneath me and squats in front of me, taking my face between his hands while the masked man behind me fucks me with a rhythm that is slowly drawing out another orgasm.

"I have to go, but mark my words, this isn't over yet."

With that, he stands to his full height and leaves.

I don't have time to respond because the man behind me wraps my hair in his fist and pulls me up, straightening my body against his.

With one hand twisted in my hair, he uses the other to explore my body—from my hip, up the curve of my waist, and to my breast. A hot trail of electricity flickers in his wake, and it settles low in my belly.

He slides his hand down to my stomach and around my waist, his thumb pressing into my hipbone, drawing out a soft gasp.

My pulse drums in my ears, and every inch of me feels alive. The pull on my hair, the hand exploring my body, the heat of him on my skin, and the slow thrusts build until I topple over, clamping around him with a gasp. His hand wraps around my stomach as I feel his length pulsate.

"You're perfection."

My sweat-coated body slumps to the blanket when he lets go of me, and I catch my breath.

My eyes fall closed for just a moment. When the blanket is wrapped around me and my body lifted, I feel like nothing matters.

I'm going to hate leaving Bluebell Bay, and not because of the masked men—even though they have been amazing—but because this is where I feel like I finally belong.

Maybe staying here wouldn't be a bad thing after all.

Here, I feel free, and for the first time in my adult life, I feel like myself.

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Chapter Eleven

Ripley

Is it possible to spiral because I'm not spiraling?

I don't know what came over me, but I couldn't handle all the emotions I felt at once, so I freaked out and left.

What makes her different? Why can I touch her and fuck her?

Why does she make all the noise in my head quiet?

I want to talk to her, unlike with anyone other than Shore.

How can a stranger make me feel this way?

I didn't want to pull Shore away from her.

It's not fair that he has to follow me around when I get like this.

I know he will be pissed that I didn't tell him where I went, but I need to clear my head, and this is one of the best ways I know how to do it.

I need to get lost in my music; it clears my head and helps me think clearly again.

Swimming over to the lighthouse isn't the smartest idea, especially at night, but that

asshole Jason would love to have a reason to stop us from moving in.

I'm soaking by the time I pull myself up onto the shore.

We have left the trees overgrown and have tried to keep it as natural as possible, so at dusk it looks magical.

There are multiple levels to the lighthouse.

The ground level is the living area and kitchen, then floor one is Kasen's room and floor two is Shore's.

They opted for the bigger spaces, while I got floor three and four.

My studio is at the top, surrounded by windows overlooking the ocean and Bluebell Bay. It's the perfect space.

Stripping off my clothes at the front door, I wring them out. We have a space out the back that has been converted into a laundry room. I walk around and dump my clothes in the washer and turn it on.

After a dash in my birthday suit back to the front of the building, I open the large red doors.

We don't even lock them, which is probably stupid, considering the guitars I have stored in the studio.

I head straight for my bedroom where I know I left a pair of sweats when we were here painting last.

The stairs in this place are killer, but it is one hell of a workout.

My bedroom still smells of fresh paint, and the sweats are right where I left them at the end of the bed.

I pull them on and pick up the guitar I keep in my bedroom.

It's older than me and the one thing that links me to my past. The only thing I couldn't bear to leave behind.

My father gave it to me before he died, and it belonged to his brother—my uncle.

I don't know what happened to him, as my mom never spoke of my father or his family after he was gone.

I'm still surprised she didn't sell it. It is my most prized possession.

My haven through the abuse, whether it was verbal, physical, or sexual.

I strum the guitar softly, humming a tune that hasn't left my head since the day Kinsley walked into my shop.

Tears fall down my cheeks. Why is she so different? The tears are from mixed emotions: happiness and frustration. I have become used to the fact that no one can touch me without an unsettling feeling crawling under my skin. Even Shore, at times, has experienced my adverse reaction to touch.

I pour my soul into the music.

It could be five minutes or five hours after I arrive when the doors to the lighthouse slam shut. I know it's Shore, and that he is furious I didn't tell him where I was going.

Getting to my feet, I place my guitar back into its stand, then my bedroom door flies open, smashing against the wall.

Shore is dripping wet and water pools around his feet, dampening the carpet.

His hazel eyes lock with mine as anger and fear radiate off his skin.

I can feel it in spades. His shoulders relax once he gives me a once-over and sees I'm okay.

"I just needed a minute," I reassure him.

"You just needed a minute?!" He scoffs. "And what about what I need, Rip? You ran off after fucking Kinsley and I freaked out. You could have texted me and let me know where you were going," he whisper-shouts.

He is always good about not raising his voice.

I don't like fights involving yelling. My body checks out as my trauma response kicks in, and Shore is the only one who can bring me back.

"I left my phone at home."

He steps further into the room. "Then you should have waited. It's not fair you ran away. We had a deal. You use your safe word and go to the shop so I would know where to find you. Do you know how it made me feel when you weren't there?"

Closing the distance between us, I swipe his wet blonde hair from his face and cup his jaw.

"I'm so fucking sorry. I'm so confused. Why doesn't it hurt when she touches me, or

when I fuck her? I don't understand. Then thinking about the why makes me remember all the awful shit that happened. I thought I had control over it."

"Maybe your soul knows her on a deeper level, and you know she is no threat to you. And you have control, Rip. You are the strongest person I know."

I slam my lips against his, hard enough to steal his breath.

He's the one who steadies me when everything else is unraveling.

My hands twist into his soaking-wet shirt, yanking him flush against me as I taste the salt on his tongue.

Shore's frame is solid beneath my palms, and I relax.

He is my rock, my anchor, and once again I need him to feel steady.

He doesn't believe in soul-deep feelings. Shore hasn't had to experience the things I have, and I'm fucking grateful. As he wraps his arms around my waist, I feel the slight tremor in his chest and his fingers dig in, not to control me, but to hold himself together. I know I fucked up.

I pull back just enough to see his eyes, and he whispers, "You're safe with me.

" The words hit straight in my heart, cracking open the walls I've built.

I know why I'm dominant in the bedroom—not to hurt anyone, but to reclaim the power stolen from me.

My mom's cracked-up best friend raped me, and her boyfriend touched me.

.. then I never wanted to be touched again.

Shore changed that, and yet I can't easily rid myself of the feelings that lie just below the surface, ready to rise at any trigger.

I help rid Shore of his sodden clothes and lower him to my bed.

His legs fall open, and I let my body fall over him.

Kissing my way down his jaw, I marvel at how his sun-kissed skin glows beneath my hands.

I don't know how I got so lucky to have met him.

He may not believe in soulmates, but I know without a shadow of doubt he is mine.

The week before I was moved to the Easton's home, I tried to kill myself.

I swallowed an entire handful of sleeping tablets, enough that I was convinced I'd never wake up.

I carefully collected them over many weeks, hiding each one somewhere around the house, so if my mother found them, she wouldn't know it was me.

That night, I lay in the dark and swallowed them all, certain they would silence everything for good.

Instead, I passed out, and that crack whore came into my room as she normally did, and she called 9-1-1. Much to my disgust, I survived. When I asked the nurse if I was in heaven and she told me no, I cried.

My suicide attempt triggered a call to CPS.

They'd never known how bad things had been at home, and within days, I was placed with the Eastons.

From then on, I was no longer ignored, and for the first time, I felt like I was part of a family that loved me.

They saved me, and Shore proved there was someone who would fight for me, even when I had stopped fighting for myself.

"Oh fuck," he grunts as I lick the salt water from his skin.

I hover over his hips, pressing soft kisses to the hollow of his stomach and trailing a path around his navel. His breath hitches when I move lower and my lips reach the top of his thigh.

Shore spreads his legs further, his muscles trembling beneath my touch as I cup his balls and lift them, placing a final kiss on the sensitive skin above his hole. Then I wet my lips and drag my tongue in a slow, deliberate circle around his rim, feeling the taut muscle respond under my probing.

A low groan rumbles through his chest, and I increase the pressure, flicking my tongue around the tender spot, needing him ready for me.

Reaching over with one hand, I slide the bedside table open and pull out the lube, flick the bottle open, and coat my fingers.

Coming up for a breath, I run my fingers down his crack and push them inside.

He fists the sheets, hips lifting at each pump of my hand, urging me deeper.

When I feel him soften and open beneath me, I pull back and roll him onto his front in one smooth motion.

He presses his cheek into the pillow, legs still parted.

I waste no time sinking into him from behind, driving forward with slow, deep thrusts until his body quakes beneath me.

This moment doesn't require words. It's me pouring my emotions into him, showing him how sorry I am and how much he means to me. I'm not normally this soft and tender with him. I love how he likes it rough, so when I get lost in my head, I know he can take it. He is safe if I lose control.

Driving my hips harder against his warm skin, I murmur, "God, Shore, you take me so well." My hands grip his hips, guiding each thrust as I plunge deeper and faster, until his moans vibrate through me to my core.

I lean close, my lips brushing his ear. "You feel so fucking good. You make me want to stay inside you like this forever," I whisper.

My vision tunnels and pressure coils in my belly until it snaps, sending waves of my release into him. My muscles clench, the world tilts, and I gasp for air.

His name rips from my throat, and for a moment, there is only the thunder of my heartbeat in my ears.

Once my brain comes back online, I pull out and collapse next to him, totally spent.

He rolls onto his back and I shift to rest my head on his chest. His arms wrap around me, his heart hammering against my ear.

Chapter Twelve

Kinsley

Today is the dreaded day. I wallow as long as I can, but when I pull myself from my bed, I see the canvases I painted and the sketch that Ripley did, and a feeling of happiness sweeps over me.

My phone goes nuts on the bedside table, and I pick it up to see it's Jace.

As I answer, his face fills my screen, along with Willow's and their boyfriends', and they all sing "Happy Birthday ."

A smile blooms on my face. For a day I thought would be a dark spot in my life, I don't feel any different.

If anything, I feel better than I did before.

I have more clarity, and I'm almost certain I'm going to stay here in Bluebell Bay—maybe not permanently, but I am not ready to leave in a few days.

Originally the plan was to leave after the festival, and now I'm dreading the thought.

Something Shore said has been replaying in my mind: I'm an adult, a wealthy one at that, and if I don't want to go back, I don't have to.

It's a reminder that I'm no longer an eighteen-year-old child sneaking out in the

middle of the night, leaving for a college my mother doesn't want me to go to because it isn't Sterling Crest School of Design.

I'd chosen a small college in a small town with an amazing art program. Not that it mattered; I never made it.

I drove to my boyfriend Teddy's house with my car packed. We switched everything into his car and left my keys with his mom because I knew my mother would track my car. We were happy, blaring sappy love songs, but I wasn't watching my surroundings. He drove through a red light and swerved...

Tears run down my face at the memory.

We collided with a small truck. Teddy didn't seem as hurt as me, though there was a lot of blood—mostly mine.

When the paramedics arrived and took us to the hospital, he seemed okay.

We were separated so I could get stitched up, then the police came to talk to me.

I heard someone screaming, and the sound of nurses and doctors running.

They couldn't save him, and it was all my fault.

If I had stayed and gone to the school my mother wanted, it never would have happened.

Teddy was only following me; he didn't care about college.

He would have happily gotten a job with one of his uncles, but I had to have a dream.

While I can't change what happened, I think maybe today I finally feel like I can breathe.

Teddy wouldn't have wanted me to hold on to my grief, and I owe it to him to live my life.

Jace finally finishes a second verse of the birthday song, the one about me smelling like a monkey.

"Do you have any plans today?" he asks.

"Not really. I was just thinking about going to the real estate office and seeing if there are any permanent rentals."

A huge smile pulls at Jace's lips. "Good for you. Well, make sure you at least buy a cake and call me tonight. These idiots are still naked, and I can feel Micah's cock on my ass."

I snort. "Why do you always call me when you're naked? It's weird, Jace. When I call you later, you better have underwear on, at the very least."

"I make no promises."

I shake my head and say goodbye to them all.

Thankfully, I didn't see anything a cousin has no business seeing.

I shower and get dressed, putting on a blue sundress that buttons down the front.

The sundress is sleeveless, so my scars remain visible, and I study myself in the full-length mirror.

Even though they've faded, the skin still shows an uneven texture up close from the marks of dozens and dozens of stitches.

A knock at the front door pulls me out of the spiral I was about to go down. When I reach the door and open it, Kasen is standing there with a cake box in his hand.

"Happy birthday," he says, and I raise my brow.

"How did you know today's my birthday?" I ask and gesture for him to come inside.

"Mrs. Easton—Shore's mom—does my bookkeeping, and she insisted I bring you a cake she baked you. I told her it might be strange if I show up with cake, but she wouldn't take no for an answer."

I chuckle. After meeting her once, he doesn't need to explain. "Tell her I said thank you."

He grimaces. "Actually, you could tell her yourself at dinner. Her exact words were, 'Boy, a beautiful woman like Kinsley deserves to be celebrated, and tonight we will show her how the Eastons celebrate.'" He smiles and then looks at my outfit.

His eyes take me in, inch by inch, and I don't hate how it makes me feel.

"If you plan to decline, I tap out, because while that woman is a saint, she scares the pants off me."

I chuckle. "I would love to have dinner with her and her family. Actually, while you are here, I wanted to ask what my chances are of extending my stay. I'm thinking I might like to remain a while longer and see what rentals there are."

Kasen puts the cake box down on the kitchen counter. "We can certainly extend your

stay here, but I know of a rental that is available in two weeks. I can show you if you like.”

I nod eagerly. “That would be amazing. When suits you?”

“If you’re free now, I can drive you.”

“I can do now.”

Kasen holds his hand out for me to lead the way. I grab my handbag and walk outside to where his car sits. It’s nothing flashy, but it’s still nice—a sleek black. It suits him.

We make small talk as Kasen drives us toward The Promenade. He tells me that most of the year you can drive from one end of the town to the other, but with the festival, they close the main street off so that vendors can set up and people can enjoy the nighttime activities.

We pull up out the front of a cute two-story cottage. The bottom level has large glass windows on each side of the front door, covered with white lace curtains.

“Mrs. Baker owns this house. She moved out a few years ago, but she used to run a pottery class downstairs and lived upstairs.”

“Why did she move out?” I ask as we both get out of the car.

“She was too old to maintain the property, so she rented it to me.”

I stop as we walk up the stone path. “You live here?”

“I do, for at least two more weeks. The last of the renovations for the lighthouse will be done, and then I will be moving.”

This place is magical. It is at the end of a cul-de-sac, with the beach directly across from it, and I can see the lighthouse from the corner of my eye.

“Oh, well, that’s nice that you get to move.”

Kasen leads us to the door and unlocks it. My mind goes wild with ideas the second we step inside. The space would make an amazing art gallery.

“Let me show you around. This is where Mrs. Baker had her pottery classes. I have never needed the space, so that’s why there is no furniture, but it could be used as a living area if you have guests—or maybe a new job venture.

It’s sectioned off, so behind these curtains is a second room.

It’s a little smaller, but the light is amazing. ”

He then leads me upstairs to a small one-bedroom apartment. It’s smaller than what I’m used to, but something in my gut tells me this is where I belong.

“It’s perfect.”

“I thought it might be. I can call Mrs. Baker today and get her to send over the paperwork. Rent is twelve hundred a month, and utilities are included. You’ll need first and last month’s rent upfront before you move in.”

“Twelve hundred?”

“Is that too much?” he asks, and I shake my head.

“I expected more. I guess small-town living is a lot cheaper than where I come from. You don’t want to know how much my apartment is worth.”

Kasen laughs. "I can only imagine. I think you'll really like it here, Kinsley."

Why the heck am I nervous? It's a simple birthday dinner a lovely woman has invited me to attend.

I even went shopping today and found a cute floral-printed chiffon dress.

It's off-white with pale-pink flowers, and the second I saw it, I knew my mom would hate the design.

She would tell me it looks like her grandmother's tablecloth, so that's part of the reason I bought it.

I knock on the door, and Tyde pulls it open and beams at me. "Hey, new girl, you look amazing."

"Thank you."

He reaches out and grabs my hand, dragging me through the house so fast that I barely get to take in my surroundings. The house is older, but it's massive. No wonder they have room for everyone to live here.

"Mom!" Tyde shouts. "The birthday girl is here."

He pulls me into the kitchen where Shore's mom, Beth, is standing, stirring something on the stove. She turns, placing the wooden spoon over the pan, and wipes her hands on her apron.

"Happy birthday. Dinner will be ready shortly. Tyde, find your brothers and set the table."

Tyde lets go of my hand and leaves the kitchen.

“Is there anything you need help with?” I immediately offer.

“Don’t be silly, it’s your birthday. If you go up those stairs, the second door on the left is Shore’s room. I forced him to put on clothes for dinner.”

Beth shoos me out of the kitchen, and I head upstairs.

I find Shore’s door, and when I knock, the door drifts open ajar.

I blink a few times after getting an unexpected eyeful of Shore and Rip kissing.

Rip has his hand fastened tight around Shore’s throat, and my knees almost go weak.

They pull apart quickly, and Shore smiles widely at me.

“Sorry for interrupting, but your mom sent me upstairs—well, she practically forced me up here. I think I may have offended her by asking if she needed help.”

“You’re not interrupting. Rip was helping me choose clothes, but I look fantastic half naked and he couldn’t keep his mouth off me.”

Rip scoffs. “His ego is huge and distracting him helps get his clothes on. He is like an unruly toddler.”

Rip throws Shore a button-up shirt, which he catches in one hand, then pulls it on. I swallow the lump in my throat as I watch and remind myself that he is way too young for me.

“Kasen tells us you’re going to rent his place once he moves out.”

I move my gaze to Ripley, who looks like sin in his dark jeans that are torn at the knees. His button-up shirt has the top couple of buttons left undone, and a silver chain fills the open space.

“I am. I finally decided to live my life for myself, though I’m dreading the call with my mother. But there is no reason I can’t work remotely, since I can do video calls with clients and send my mom my sketches for approval.”

“I’m so fucking happy for you,” Shore says. “And now you can go on that date with me.”

I look at Rip, and he smiles. “You can go on a date with him. He doesn’t need my approval. Not that I understand why you would want to date this man-child. Be warned, he’s a lot of work.”

“Who’s dating who?” Kasen asks, walking into the room and standing beside me. The man smells good enough to eat.

“Why do you have to come in here looking and smelling like that?” Shore says. “Any chance I had with Kinsley has gone out the window.”

Kasen chuckles. “You snooze, you lose, because I would love to take Kinsley on a date.”

“What about a group date?” Rip suggests. “That way, she can decide which one of us she likes the most.”

I smile like an idiot. “Fine, I agree to one group date, with no promises of a second date for anyone.”

“Excellent! We will get back to you with the details, because we are going to date the

fuck out of you, and you won't be able to say no to round two," Shore announces with a grin.

I laugh as his mom calls out that dinner is ready. Shore moves in front of me, turns around, and bends his knees. I stare in utter confusion for a moment, then look at Kasen and Ripley for help. They both just smirk.

"Get on, birthday girl, you don't walk to the Easton table on your birthday."

"He's telling the truth, new girl. I made him carry me bridal style on my birthday," Tyde says as he momentarily pauses at Shore's door, then continues without waiting for a reply.

I wrap my arms around his neck, and as he stands, I secure my legs around his waist. My pussy throbs against his back, the tiny scrap of my thong not covering much. But the last thing I need is to be wet sitting at his parents' table.

We head into their dining room, and all eyes fall to me.

Their table is massive, and a birthday cake sits in the center with the candles lit.

Everyone sings "Happy Birthday" as we awkwardly stand there.

New faces I've never met are seated at the table.

Once they stop singing, Beth stands from her chair.

"Blow out your candles and make your birthday wish."

Shore slides me down his back, and I nervously walk over to the table.

“She doesn’t need a birthday wish. She has a date with me,” Shore announces.

“Shit! Quick, new girl, wish for a new date. It’s not too late,” Tyde says, and I laugh, then blow out the candles.

My heart pounds from a surge of emotions.

My mother hasn’t celebrated my birthday in many years.

I highly doubt she has even messaged me today, and I don’t feel the need to check.

None of my so-called friends have bothered to call me either, which I expected, since I’ve come to realize our friendships are only about what I can do for them.

“I will pop the cake back into the kitchen until after dinner,” Beth says. “Cove, come and help me bring out the meal.”

An older replica of Shore stands from the table and follows his mom.

I have to blink back tears as I take a seat beside Shore. He introduces me to everyone I haven’t met yet, and I immediately feel like I’m part of their family. I can see why foster kids love living here. Somehow it feels like home.

I am happy I came here tonight, and it cements the fact that staying here longer is the best choice for me. This is the life I always wanted, a life that is carefree. With my days spent doing what I love, surrounded by people who will welcome me into their home, and are genuine and caring.

This has officially been my best birthday yet.

Chapter Thirteen

Kasen

The Fourth of July festival is a huge deal in Bluebell.

I think every resident is in attendance—except for us.

Instead of watching the fireworks from Shore's truck, we plan to chase Kinsley.

We've given her the coordinates of where to meet, and she arrives right on time, wearing the same cute dress as on her birthday dinner.

We watch as she wanders down the sandy path, all three of us waiting perched on the boulders lining the edges.

"Are you ready to run for us one last time?"

She turns and smirks before taking off. I give her a brief head start, then launch myself onto the damp sand. Ripley's boots pound behind me, and Shore's steps close in from the other side. The hidden stairwell, half-buried in the drifting sand ahead, is where we are leading her.

Once I reach it, the first three treads feel like quicksand under my feet. My boots skid twice before I yank myself up. Ripley vaults over a half-collapsed barricade, his blue-lit grin tilting sideways.

Tonight is the last night we plan to stay the masked men in Kinsley's life. We signed a contract stating we would stay anonymous. But now that she plans to stay, we each have our sights set on her, so we decided it's best not to drag this out any longer.

I continue my chase. Kinsley looks fucking stunning in her dress, and I can't wait to rip it off her once we catch her.

As I duck sideways beneath a rusted scaffold beam, so close my mask's mouth grazes the metal, Shore's red "X" eyes flick past me, and he overtakes me.

The asshole made this a competition. The first one to catch her gets to fuck her overlooking the cliff.

It's beautiful, with the waves crashing against the side.

As we get higher, the narrow ledge forces me to lean into the sandstone face as the handrail vanishes. My palm presses against the grainy cliff, and my heartbeat thunders in my chest. Maybe this wasn't a good idea—the fall would seriously injure us.

Kinsley keeps a steady pace ahead of us. She loves the chase, but I know she wants to get caught. It's what makes this fun and not illegal.

At the top, two poles have yellow caution tape pulled tight between them. Kinsley ducks beneath the tape, and I push forward, beating the others to the top. I run straight through the tape, grabbing it and tearing some off because I have the perfect plan.

Kinsley stumbles to a stop at the wooden barrier of the cliff's edge. Her body stills as I step up beside her, my chest heaving.

I hold up the tape. “Hands behind your back.”

She does as I ask, putting her hands where I need them, and I tie her wrists together.

Pushing between her shoulder blades, I guide her to lean forward on the barrier, then pull her dress up over her ass and snap the flimsy material of her thong.

“Fu ck, your pussy looks good overlooking the ocean.”

I press my body close to hers, sliding one hand between her thighs, and my fingertips graze the dampness already pooling there. The gasp that escapes her is all the invitation I need.

I curl a finger through her pussy lips, spreading her apart. “God, Kinsley,” I murmur, “you’re so wet for me.”

She shivers and pushes back against my fingers. Once they’re thoroughly coated in her wetness, I slide them out, and she whimpers.

“Taste yourself.”

I bring my fingers to her mouth, and she opens those perfect lips, then sucks on me with a hum.

Shore whines behind me, but I don’t care. He can wait for his turn. Things with Kinsley might not progress into anything more than friendship, so I want to savor this moment. To draw it out as long as I can.

She releases my fingers, and I push in closer as I remove my cock from my sweats, then run the tip along her pussy, making sure her juices coat me. She pushes back at just the right time, and the head slips inside. I thrust up hard, entering her in one swift

movement.

She screams, “Oh fuck!” and her head drops.

I wrap my hand around her throat, using my knuckles to push her head up before lightly applying pressure.

I press my hips into her, each slow, undulating thrust drawing a low moan from her as the fireworks burst overhead. Her back arches against me, and I lean closer, my cock hitting deeper.

“You move so perfectly for me.”

Feeling her pulse tremble with each thrust draws me closer to coming. But I don’t want to come before she does, so I squeeze her throat a little harder, and she clamps around me. I increase my pace, needing to feel her come one last time.

Her rasped scream and the way her body shudders has me losing control. She rests her body against the barrier, using it to support her weight as I step back and tuck myself away. Shore and Ripley step forward and take my place.

They close in on Kinsley, her wrists still bound with thick yellow caution tape. Ripley’s mask hovers at her shoulder as he trails a finger along the curve of her spine. His other hand cups the swell of her hip, pulling her back until her chest presses into him.

Shore’s arms wrap around her from the front, one hand sliding beneath the hem of her dress while the other pins her waist against his hardness, their bodies trapping Kinsley between the two of them.

Kinsley’s shoulders roll with a soft moan as Shore’s thumb brushes her nipple, and

Ripley's fingertips trace along the small of her back.

"We are both going to take you tonight. Do you think you're ready?"

"Yes, please," she pants. "I want you both at the same time."

Fuck , I just filled her with my cum, and yet I'm hard again.

Watching Shore and Ripley together was not something I ever wanted.

Have I been curious? Of course. But seeing Kinsley between them and knowing she wants to take them both has me wanting to add my cock to her mouth, so she is taking us all at the same time.

Shock hits me when I realize Rip is lifting her into his arms and sliding her down onto his cock while Shore unties her wrists.

Shore reaches into the pocket of his pants and slips out a small bottle of lube. He squeezes some into his hand before dropping the bottle to the ground. He steps in closer and slowly pushes his fingers inside her ass. She moans out a whimper.

"Look how perfect you are. Tell me you want my cock in your tight little ass."

Rip turns his head, and I see him motion for Shore to look my way.

There is a small gazebo behind me, with a picnic table.

Ripley walks toward me with Kinsley impaled on his cock, holding onto him.

I'm still partly in shock that he is letting her cling to him that way, so I stand watch in case he needs help—I know how huge this is for him.

Shore follows, and when Rip sits, he positions Kinsley better with her dress bunched up around her waist. Shore leans over them, using the table to hold himself up with one hand, and I watch as he pulls out his dick and runs it along her crack, slowly pushing the tip inside.

“Go slow,” Kinsley whimpers, her nails digging into Rip’s shoulders.

Rip stays still while Shore slowly eases himself inside her. It feels like an eternity before he is in far enough to start slowly thrusting. With that, Rip finally moves.

“I feel you everywhere,” she whispers.

“Look at you, taking both their cocks. Do you think you could take one more in your mouth?”

She looks over at me and nods. I move closer and step up onto the bench seat beside them and bend, sliding my sweats down enough that I can pull my cock out.

“Open that pretty mouth for me.”

She parts her lips, and I slide between them. She hums around my length as we all move slowly but in time with each other.

“Ride his cock while your ass gets pounded. Show me how good that feels.”

She sucks my cock harder, and I slide my fingers into her hair and fuck her mouth.

It’s not long before my balls go tight and I cum down her throat, pulling out quickly so she can breathe.

Rip must cum as well, as his thrusts stop, but Shore moves faster until she screams,

the sound echoing around us.

“Fuck!” Shore grits out. “Your ass is so fucking tight I can’t hold on any longer.”

He finishes inside her, then slowly pulls out, stumbling back a little. I help Kinsley off Rip and scoop her into my arms, cradling her body to mine as I sit. She curls into me.

“You did a great job.”

“I’m sad it’s over,” she whispers.

Me too, Kinsley. Me too.

A high-pitched squeal has Kinsley startling in my arms. We both look over, and my eyes widen behind my mask.

Shore rips his mask from his face and throws it toward the ground.

“Holy fuck! Get that thing away from me! Fucking armored freak that can swim and crawl at the same time. Ahhhh!”

He runs toward the stairs, and Rip takes off after him.

Kinsley jumps from my lap like her ass is on fire and starts shaking her head.

Before I can explain, there’s a commotion and Shore trips. I rush toward the stairs, but he and Rip have disappeared from sight.

When I reach the top, I see Shore has fallen pretty far, and he groans.

“I think I broke my arm. But I don’t think it was a crab after all,” he says with a pained grin, trying to lighten the situation.

It’s highly unlikely a crab would have ventured up this far, and was maybe an overreaction from Shore, but that’s how much he hates crabs.

Rip has removed his mask now, and I do the same. I pull my phone from my pocket and dial Dax, one of the handful of paramedics in town.

“Kasen, what’s up?” he asks. I know he is on call tonight for the festival. There’s normally some dumbass teenager that lets off fireworks and something goes wrong.

“We are at the lookout. Shore has fallen down the stairs,” I say with a slight panic in my voice.

“Be there soon. Tell the idiot not to move. I don’t need to tell you how stupid it is to be there at night.”

“Fuck, I know. Just come quickly.”

I end the call, but a sniffle behind me has me turning to see Kinsley standing there with her arms wrapped around her body.

“I... I need to go,” she says and pushes past me, descending the stairs and edging her way around Shore and Rip.

“Kinsley, please don’t go. We can explain,” Shore says, reaching toward her as she tries to bypass them, but then he hisses out in pain.

“I can’t stay. This was a terrible idea,” she blurts.

Then she races down the rest of the stairs and disappears. I should chase her, but she isn't an idiot. She knows she willingly agreed to this. We also deceived her, and in her position, I would be pissed. We can get Shore looked at and then hopefully tomorrow she will let us explain ourselves.

Dax and his partner arrive ten minutes later and take Shore to the hospital. After a bunch of exams and x-rays, he ends up having to stay overnight with a suspected concussion, along with some bruised ribs and a fractured wrist.

Kinsley didn't show up at the hospital, not that I expected her to. I just hope that in the light of day, she forgives us.

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Chapter Fourteen

Kinsley

Two weeks have passed since I left Bluebell Bay.

I don't know why I thought I could leave my life in Sterling Crest behind.

While I should have been upset it was Shore, Rip, and Kasen behind the masks, if I'm being truthful with myself, I had an inkling it was them all along and I didn't care.

The feeling of being free was like a drug, the same way it was when I was eighteen, but I should have known better. Look what happened the first time.

The morning of the Fourth of July, before I went out for the day, I called my mom and told her I was moving. How I had signed and paid for a lease for six months, so she could let me work remotely or I would quit.

The conversation didn't go well. She reminded me of what happened to Teddy and told me bad things happen when I try to leave.

Beth called me that night, and I found out Shore had a concussion, bruised ribs, and a fractured wrist. She tried to tell me it wasn't my fault, but I know it was.

Once again, I had run from the life I was born into, and someone was injured.

Shore would be out of work, and for what?

For me to get my rocks off. I needed to face facts—this is my life and where I belong.

While I would forever have the memories of Bluebell Bay, my mom was right.

I'm an adult, and I can't run from that reality.

Caden opens my office door and strolls in without knocking, walking over and perching himself on the corner of my desk. He is my mother's latest suitor for me: extremely good-looking, with an ex-husband arrogance. He exudes an 'I'm doing you a favor since you're past your prime' vibe.

“Why are you drawing a crab with knives as claws?”

I snort and look down at my sketch pad. Is it weird that I actually miss them?

I liked my morning walks down to the food truck, where Shore would make me coffee.

Rip would sit beside me and say nothing, and Kasen would stop past for his breakfast burrito that Shore made off menu, just for him.

I miss the small town and how easy it was to fit in.

“Do you not like it?” I ask, and he laughs.

“It's childish, and you're thirty. Maybe you should stick to doing your work.”

I grind my teeth. What does he know anyway?

It's almost time to leave for the day, so it's obvious why Caden is here. My mom will force him to take me to dinner, and he will do it to stay in her good books—maybe

hoping at the very least he will get an easy fuck.

“Are you ready to go?” Caden asks, and I nod. I may as well get this over with.

I rip the picture from the sketchbook and tuck it in my bag to add to the collection of drawings I have sketched since I left Bluebell. My work phone rings, and I pick it up, knowing it’s probably my mom—she never uses my personal number.

“Miss Ellsworth, there are some young men in the foyer claiming they know you and are refusing to leave. Did you want me to call security and have them removed?”

My heart gives a resounding thump in my chest, then speeds up.

“No, Robert, it’s fine. I will come down.”

There is no way it’s them—it couldn’t be. I emailed Kasen today, telling him that Beth is sending Tyde over to pack my things and that he’ll take them to the cottage until I can organize a mover to bring everything back. I left that night with only the rental car.

Standing from my chair, I don’t even bother addressing Caden. I grab my bag and walk straight past him to the lift, and we both step inside. For once, he keeps his smug mouth closed.

When we reach the ground floor and the doors slide open, I see them first. I smile.

Shore is wearing a shirt that has a tuxedo print on it, with board shorts and flip-flops.

Rip is in his usual black ripped jeans and a black shirt that clings to him like a second skin, and Kasen is in slacks with a business shirt rolled up to his elbows.

They all turn and look at me. Shore holds up a painting, and I know which one it is. It's the lighthouse I painted for them. I hadn't yet given it to them; I was waiting to offer it as a housewarming gift.

"You know those degenerates?" Caden says loud enough that they can hear as we cross the foyer from the elevator.

I pause and turn to face Caden. "I think you should go. This was never going to work between us. You just want my family name, and I know you're fucking Cindy on the third floor."

Caden scoffs. "You're too old for me anyway."

I laugh. "You're older than me. Just go before you make a fool of yourself."

Caden shrugs and looks over at the guys with disgust.

"It's okay, Robert," I tell the concierge. "These guys are no threat. They're my friends."

"Friends," Rip scoffs. "Friends don't leave."

Shore elbows him in the ribs. "What he means to say is we understand why you left, but you still owe us a date."

I smile at him.

"We are so sorry for hiding behind the masks."

They think that's why I left. "That's not why I left, Kasen. Why don't we go upstairs and talk?"

“Nope. No can do,” Shore says. “I put nice clothes on for this date. You can talk later. First, we plan to woo you.”

“Woo me, huh?”

Shore nods. “Yup. We have it all planned out.”

“Okay, let’s go on this date,” I relent, and Shore whoops and almost drops the painting. “How did you get that?”

“Tyde,” Kasen says. “He went to pack up your things and brought this back to the house. Then he told us we were all idiots for not at least taking you on a date and begging for your forgiveness. Mrs. Easton also told us she has been calling you every other day.”

I laugh. She has been checking in regularly. At first I thought it was weird because I never gave her my number, but then I remembered she did Kasen’s books and would have my number from my inquiry form.

“Yeah, she does,” I say as we leave the building.

When we step outside, Kasen’s car is parked right out the front. “I wanted a horse-drawn carriage, but apparently the city is too busy,” Shore says. “I don’t see the appeal. Give me the ocean any day.”

Kasen opens the passenger-side door for me, and I get in, while Shore and Rip get into the back. Rip has been awfully quiet, but I don’t want to force him to talk to me if he doesn’t feel comfortable.

Kasen pulls out into the busy city traffic, and I feel my phone buzzing in my handbag. I slip it out and see for the first time in forever my mom is calling me. I send her to

voicemail.

We drive to the outskirts of the city until Kasen pulls into the parking lot for a small brick building. We exit the car, and Shore links his arm with mine as we follow Kasen, with Rip trailing behind us.

“Where are we going?” I ask, because this looks like the perfect location to murder someone and leave their body to rot.

“All in good time,” Shore says.

Kasen unlocks the door and leads us into the darkened room. Turning on the flashlight on his phone, he leads us up a set of stairs. When we reach the top, there is a door. He pushes on it and holds it open.

My mouth falls open when I see they have set up a rooftop picnic overlooking the entire city. There are fairy lights strung up around old wooden beams that once might have been a shelter, but it no longer has a ceiling.

“This is beautiful.”

Shore leads me to the picnic blanket, and we sit, with Kasen and Rip joining us. Kasen opens the basket and pulls out a bottle of wine, sandwiches, fresh fruit, meats, and cheeses. There is also a Tupperware container that looks to have some kind of pasta salad in it.

“I owe you all an explanation. I freaked out and left, and I know I should have let you explain and not let you think it was because you were the masked men. Honestly, I was a little relieved it was you.”

Kasen hands me a plastic glass full of wine.

I take a big sip and a deep breath. “When I was eighteen, I was in love with my boyfriend Teddy. We decided to run away to college, away from this life. We had it all planned. The day we left, he was driving, and I was singing. I remember he looked over at me and smiled, then he drove through a red light. We hit a small truck, and he seemed fine, but when we got to the hospital, he didn’t make it. ”

Rip’s reaction surprises me. He wraps an arm around me and pulls me into his side, placing a gentle kiss on the top of my head. “You know it wasn’t your fault, right?”

I shrug. “If I wasn’t trying to run from my life, it would never have happened. Just like Shore wouldn’t have been hurt if I wasn’t in Bluebell.”

“Kinsley, no. Please don’t say that. I would have jumped down those stairs willingly just to have met you.

I get hurt all the time. Last year I broke my nose when I crashed my Jet Ski into the dock.

And I once chopped the tip of my thumb off because I told Rip I could cut a cucumber with my eyes closed.

I also broke my collarbone by jumping from my dad’s boat to my brother’s.

I do stupid things all the time and get hurt.

That night was not your fault. I overreacted seeing that death creature. ”

“So you don’t blame me?”

“Of course we don’t. We blame Shore,” Kasen says, and I feel Rip’s chuckle vibrate in his chest.

“We want you to come back,” Shore says. “You belong in Bluebell. My mom misses you, and even Tyde is on my ass about running you off.”

I smile, but sigh. “It’s not that easy.”

“Why?” he presses. “You have a rental you have paid for, and I know Mom has been dropping hints about your paintings and selling them. It’s your life, Kinsley. You should live your dreams and not let anyone stop you. Plus, living close to us is a bonus.”

“Stop laying it on so thick,” Kasen says with a laugh. “I agree with him, though. Do whatever you want. But whether you stay or come back, you are stuck with us now.”

“We don’t let our friends run away, Kinsley,” Rip whispers in my ear. “You need to love yourself first.”

My heart thunders wildly in my chest. Rip is right—I need to love myself first, or even learn to put myself first. I have spent the last twelve years prioritizing everyone else’s needs before my own, so much so that I lost myself.

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Kinsley

One year later

It's been one year to the day that I chose me, and what I wanted in life.

My mom wasn't happy and told me if I left, I wouldn't have a job to come back to.

I handed in my resignation letter the same day.

I spent so much time worrying about the bad things that could happen if I left that I never stopped to consider the good things that may come my way.

Since being back in Bluebell, I've kept painting, displaying my pieces in the studio downstairs and opening an online store.

The money I make isn't a lot, but it's enough to keep me busy thanks to some old clients who found my store.

Some have even commissioned custom paintings. I have never been happier.

As for the three men who changed my life, they have been my biggest support team, along with Beth and her family. Cove had me paint a mural on his boat. When I refused to accept payment, he started bringing me seafood from his time out at sea. Beth cooks it up, and Cove delivers it.

Small towns and a sense of community are exactly what I'd been yearning for, and I

feel complete—well, almost. Kasen, Shore, and Rip have taken me on dates but have given me the space and time I need to enjoy life and rebuild my sense of self.

Everyone in town knows we are dating, and not one person has had an issue with me seeing three men. They just accept it.

The guys have been itching to make things official, but first I needed to make sure it was really what I wanted.

I had doubts because they are so much younger than I am.

I thought we would be at different stages in life, and I didn't want to hold them back.

Beth made me realize that every single one of them is exactly where they want to be—happy.

That's all they want. Material things don't matter to them, as long as we have each other.

So tonight, I plan to show them how I feel and that I'm ready.

Tyde is like the little brother I never had.

While he works for his dad most days, when he is off, he is always at the shop helping me.

Last week, I asked him for ideas on how I could tell them I was ready to take the next step.

Now, because small-town gossip travels fast, he knows about our masked chases.

Dax, the paramedic, had told his wife, who told someone, and word traveled fast. So Tyde suggested I go to the lighthouse and leave the box of masks at their door and knock, with a note that says: Come catch me . So that is what I have planned.

It was perfect timing. Kasen had his self-defense class and a family arriving at the house he had to check in, Rip had a client at the tattoo shop, and Shore was working at the food truck, so I pretended I needed today to relax since I stayed at the lighthouse last night. They all promised to be back by nine.

By eight, I had set everything up in case they returned early.

The note and the box of masks are now on the doorstep, so all I need is to hear the boat mooring at the dock and then I'll slip out the back door.

The small slice of land the lighthouse is on isn't overly big, but it's large enough for a chase.

I don't plan to be outside long; I plan for them to chase me, and then I will lead them back to the lighthouse.

The sound of the small boat engine alerts me they are back—early as I expected.

I jump up off the sofa and head out the back door, slipping around the side of the lighthouse.

I use the overgrown trees to conceal my body so I can watch them read the note.

Kasen pulls it down from the door, then they open the box and pull out the masks, each man slipping one on.

“Come catch me!” I call out from my hiding spot.

Three glowing masks look my way, and I take off running toward the sandy shore, the terrain easier to navigate. I don't wait to see if they follow because I know they will.

I rush through the trees and down the worn path—one I know Shore keeps clear so he can pull his Jet Ski down easily. The sound of footsteps behind me has me smiling like an idiot.

“Run for us, baby. We're coming for you!”

Branches whip at my arms as I burst through the trees, my heart pounding in my ears. Moonlight shines through enough that if I squint, I can see the clearing ahead.

I dare a glance over my shoulder and spot a glowing mask weaving between tree trunks.

I skid out of the trees and onto the cool sand.

My bare feet sink deeper with every step, sand spraying up behind me.

They fan out to my right, gaining ground, each of them more skilled at running along the beach from years of living here and enjoying the ocean.

Heavy boots thud behind me, and I pivot, sprinting back toward the lighthouse, leading them exactly where I need them to be.

One of them lunges for my elbow, trying to take me down. I squeal and dart around a large piece of driftwood, laughter echoing behind me. The safety of the lighthouse comes into view, and I push myself harder, knowing I just need to get to the large red doors.

I make it, ripping one of the doors open, and it bangs against the outside wall.

Running into the living area, I sprint up the stairs—past Kasen’s floor, then Shore’s, through Ripley’s room, and up to the studio, where the flicker of candles greets me.

I quickly strip out of my clothes and stand naked in the center of the room.

Shore is the first inside. I know by the board shorts and lack of shoes. He rips the mask off his face, and I pout.

“Nope, I have waited twelve long months for this moment. I want to enjoy every second, not trapped behind a mask.”

Though I feel bad I’ve made them wait so long, I needed to work on myself first and get to a point where I was confident in the decisions I made.

Now I know for sure that I want to date them all openly, and I need to see them every day.

These men make me happy, and they want to be in my life for me , not for what my name can do for them.

Rip and Kasen step into the room, both removing their masks when they see Shore has taken his off. All three of them drink in my nakedness like men dying of thirst, and it doesn’t make me nervous or want to hide from them. I want them to see it all: my scars, my past, and even my future.

“It seems like you’re running the show, pretty girl. Tell us what you want.”

I bite my lip at Rip’s words. We have been talking a lot recently about whether Rip and Shore’s relationship will be intertwined with my relationship with them.

Kasen is fine with them being together in front of him, and they have no issues.

Rip voiced he may need one-on-one time with Shore so they can maintain their own relationship, and I understand that, because I think I would like one-on-one time with them all too.

It will allow us to build more intimacy and stronger bonds.

“I know we have spoken a lot about how our dynamic would work, but tonight I want Kasen to edge me while I watch Rip and Shore together. Oh, I also want Kasen’s cock in my throat while Shore fucks me and Rip fucks him. I want it all.”

Kasen chuckles. “You can have whatever you want. Guys, the lady has spoken, and you are both wearing too many clothes.”

You don’t have to tell Shore twice to get naked.

His clothes are off faster than I can blink, and Rip just smirks.

He still has a safe word. That conversation between us was hard for him to have, and he didn’t go into every detail of his past—just enough for me to understand.

Even then I tried to reassure him he didn’t have to tell me, that I respect his boundaries, and all he needs to say is stop.

But Rip likes the power of a safe word. He doesn’t think he will need it, but he is also scared he could hurt me if he isn’t in control.

“Kneel for me, Shore,” Rip commands. “I want to watch you worship every inch of my cock, pretty boy.”

Shore drops to his knees, looking up at Rip like his world starts and ends with him. It makes my stomach flutter, and I hope one day someone loves me like that.

Kasen removes his shirt and steps up behind me, feathering his fingers along my skin as we watch Rip pull his shirt over his head and kick off his boots.

“Now strip my jeans off me. Our girl wants to watch how well you take my cock.”

A shiver shoots down my spine as Kasen walks us backward to the built-in bench seat. He sits and pulls me back into his lap, maneuvering my legs so they're spread open and hooked over his thighs. His hand comes around and he strokes his fingers through my pussy lips, ever so softly.

Shore wraps his hand around Rip's cock and guides it to his mouth. I whimper quietly from a combination of the way Kasen's fingers move, and how Shore looks on his knees.

It's erotic knowing they have positioned themselves so they can see how wet I am for them.

“Be a good boy and take my cock down your throat, then as a reward, you can lick our girl's weeping pussy. Can you see how wet she is?”

Shore bobs his head as Rip tangles his hands in his hair.

I watch in awe as Rip thrusts his hips, his cock pushing further into Shore's throat until his entire length is swallowed.

Rip fucks him, and it isn't gentle. “I'm going to come, but you will not swallow it.

Take it to her and claim her pussy for both of us.

Show her we are not leaving here until she agrees she is ours. ”

Biting my lip to not ruin the moment—which is made harder when Kasen pinches my clit—I let out a muffled moan, right as Rip pulls his cock from Shore’s throat and comes on his tongue.

“Now crawl to her.”

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Rip steps back, and Shore drops to his hands and knees, crawling to me.

His beautiful blue eyes meet mine, and my chest rises and falls rapidly.

He crawls between my spread legs, pushes up, and pulls my legs forward so my ass is no longer pressed against Kasen's hard-on.

I can still feel it against my back, but my legs are now thrown over Shore's shoulders and his head is buried between my thighs, his flattened tongue pressing against my core as he licks me with Rip's cum on it.

"Oh shit , Shore, that feels so fucking good. I need you to be inside me."

Shore growls against my pussy, sending waves of pleasure to my core. I'm so desperate to be fucked by him I squirm against his face.

"You heard our girl. Move her onto her knees so she can get Kasen's cock out. You will wait until she has him nice and wet before you sink balls-deep into her."

I shiver once again at Rip's words. For someone so quiet, this side of him turns me on, and I grow wetter at his dominance.

Shore does as he is told, helping me down onto my knees, his back pressing against mine as his mouth brushes against the shell of my ear with a whispered, "Take his cock out, please. I need to feel you."

As I pull Kasen's cock out, I finally get to see how nice it really is—or at least how

nice a dick can be.

Sex has always been a means to an end, something I had to do.

With these men, it's different—I don't want it to end.

I want their hands all over my body, and for them to tell me how much they want and need me.

Shore gathers my hair in his hands as I wrap my lips around the tip, licking and making sure Kasen is wet enough. Shore guides my head, starting slowly until I fall into a rhythm.

“Now see how wet she is.”

Shore releases my hair, and his fingers search out the wetness between my thighs. This would normally have been a moment of embarrassment for me in the past, but Shore groans in appreciation and obvious desire.

“She is so wet, Rip. Please let me feel how warm she is.”

Kasen has been awfully quiet. I think he is letting Rip have this moment.

Though I don't expect it to always be like this, it makes my heart happy that he loves and respects his friend enough to give him control.

When the masks were on it was fine, but this is a big step for Rip, and we all know it.

“Slide your fingers into that perfect little cunt. Stroke her G-spot and make her see stars.”

Shore does as he is told, pumping his fingers in and out a few times, making them as

wet as he can. I push my ass back, needing more.

“Don’t let her fuck your fingers. You’re in charge.”

I refrain from pushing back, focusing on Kasen. My hand wraps around his base, as his cock is too big to fit down my throat.

Shore’s fingertips dip and curl inside me.

My breath catches, and my heart pounds in my throat as a tight ache unravels, making my vision blur at the edges.

My back arches and my other hand snakes back around Shore’s neck.

I’m unable to stop the soft moans bubbling up around Kasen’s cock, and every tiny brush against that spot sends tremors through my pelvis until it feels like my entire body is shaking as I teeter on the edge of release.

“Good boy. Now remove your fingers before she comes, and you can finally sink inside her.”

Shore pulls back and scoots closer, swiping his cock along my pussy, parting my lips with his tip until he finds my warmth and pushes inside.

My entire body shudders. My orgasm has been building and taken away too many times.

I need to come, but I won’t until Rip lets me. I want to show him I can do it.

“Look how beautiful you are, taking both of their cocks. You were made for us, Kinsley. Just answer me one question and you can come whenever you’re ready... Do you love yourself first?”

I pull back and let Kasen's cock fall from my mouth. "Yes, I love myself."

"Good. Now I'm going to take Shore's ass, and we will all fuck together."

I keep my hand moving up and down Kasen's length and look over my shoulder, watching Rip kneel, spread Shore's ass cheeks, and spit right between them. It's primal and raw and so fucking hot that my pussy clamps tight around Shore's length.

"Holy fucking fuck," Shore gasps out, his fingers digging into my hips as Rip pushes into him. Once Rip moves, I feel his thrusts pushing Shore into me, and it's something I never imagined I would experience.

"His cock will not suck itself, pretty girl," Rip murmurs.

He winks at me, and I turn back around, taking Kasen into my mouth and moving at the same rhythm as the men.

Knowing that Rip's movements are setting off a chain reaction of how we are all moving has my orgasm tearing through my body so fast I see stars.

Every ounce of my essence feels like it's projected outside my body, causing invisible fireworks to erupt around us.

Kasen is the first to come after me, and I swallow down everything he gives me. He pulls back and tilts my chin, making me look up at him. His deep-brown eyes are intense. Holding my stare, he swipes his thumb across my lips as I maintain my grip on his thighs to steady myself.

Shore is next. He begs Rip to fuck him harder, and he holds me tight to his body as he comes. And as if knowing everyone else is now sated and happy, Rip bucks his hips—one, two, three times—before a strangled noise rips from his throat.

“You want us now, right?” Shore asks, and I chuckle.

“I always wanted you, Shore. I just had to work on myself first. But yes, this means I’m ready for there to be an us . I don’t know how it will work, but I’m ready to see where life takes me.”

“We have a girlfriend!” Shore whoops, and we all laugh.

Reaching out my hand to Rip, I smile as he takes it in his. “Are you okay?”

He nods. “More than okay, pretty girl.”

Kasen stands and helps me to my feet, picking me up and throwing me over his shoulder. “I call dibs tonight. You snooze, you lose.”

He doesn’t wait to hear any arguments. He takes off running with my naked ass over his shoulder, and I laugh the entire way.

My scars might be a reminder of my past—one I never want to forget—but they are also a reminder that we only live once. I want to live my life and be happy. Right now, I’m doing exactly that, living a simple life in Bluebell with three men who see me and want me just the way I am.

The End