



Size Game

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Category: Erotic, Romance, Adult

Description: She's pregnant with my baby, and I'm not letting her get away.

Alex: Claire is exactly the kind of girl I'm looking for. She's sassy and curvy, with a sharp wit, a big personality, and an even bigger mouth. But we're on different pages when it comes to life. After all, I'm a single dad and Claire's still young. She wants to go out and party, and isn't ready to commit. But when the curvy girl gets pregnant with my baby, suddenly everything changes. After all, there's no way I'm letting her go now. I'm going to use everything in my arsenal to make her stay. And that includes putting more babies in her belly until the curvy girl's begging for more. Game. Set. Match. WIN.

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Alex

It's been a long time now since my wife, Mary, passed on. It was devastating when it happened. She had just brought our little girl, Sadie, into the world, and thenboom! The doctors told me that a blood clot had formed in her brain. They told me that she went peacefully and without any pain, but that knowledge offered no comfort at the time. I was absolutely devastated, and could hardly pick myself up from the ground.

But I had to get my act together because Mary left me with a tiny baby to care for, our precious girl Sadie. Luckily, Sadie was healthy, and seemed not to know what she was missing. Some of the women working for my company with children of their own offered to help out. It was awkward, but I would bring Sadie to work, and one of the ladies would come and take her off my hands those first six months.

Despite the patchwork childcare, my daughter thrived and is now four years old. She's the cutest thing with bright blonde curls and big blue eyes. My concern was, and always will be, my baby girl.

Lately though, my buddy Phil has been pestering me to join him at the various strip clubs and titty bars here in Manhattan. I keep telling him no. I'm a single dad, and I'm all Sadie has. It would be inappropriate for me to go, but Phil won't let up.

"What's wrong with you?" he asks. "Live a little, buddy."

I glare at him.

"As if you could understand, asshole. I'm a dad, and my daughter needs me."

Phil merely shrugs.

“But not all day, every day. And certainly not at night, when she’s asleep. Live a little, buddy. You’ve been a hermit for four years now, and a guy needs to get out sometimes. Why not enjoy yourself?”

I merely sighed, and shut the door in his face.

But today, Phil’s on a mission. He waltzes into my office and lets the door swing shut with a smirk on his face.

“Can I help you, Phil?”

“There’s a two-for-one special down at the Tabby Cat Club. You can’t beat that.”

“Really? The Tabby Cat Club? What a classy name.”

He snorts.

“Come on! Just one night. Give me one night, my friend.”

I pause and ponder my options. I know that Imelda, the older woman that has been my live-in nanny for the past three years, would have no problem taking care of Sadie. Phil seems to sense my resistance crumbling.

“One night.” Phil is leaning closer to me on my desk, practically breathing in my face.

I roll my eyes and shake my head.

“I’m just not ready to get back out there, man.”

Phil scoffs and whines over-dramatically, “Really? When will you be ready? When you’re in the grave?”

I turn my chair away from him and look out over the landscape through the floor-to-ceiling windows.

Phil comes around and spins me to face him with his hands on the edges of the armrests. This guy is in my personal space, but he doesn’t seem to care.

“Give me one night. You don’t have to take anyone home, remember anyone’s name, nothing. Just enjoy a woman taking off her clothes and maybe a lap dance. Think of it as a bachelor party.”

“A bachelor party?”

“Yeah,” he says with a snicker. Then he walks back over to the door. Just before he leaves, he leans back in with a big grin. “We’re celebrating the end of your dry spell.”

He laughs and quickly ducks as I throw a pen at him. Unfortunately it just hits the door, and not his head.

It’s not that I don’t want to go out and enjoy life, but every time I think about going out I feel a pit in my stomach. I don’t want to forget Mary, and I don’t want Sadie thinking that I will. Maybe Phil has a point, though. I can go out and not do anything just for one night. That couldn’t hurt, right?

I decide to do a bit of research on my own and get on my computer. I search for various clubs in the area, not really sure what I’m looking for. I see ads for all their crazy get-in-the-door specials and happy hours. A few of them have pictures and bios of some of the headlining dancers. Some have lists of other services offered, like lap dances, personal rooms, and bachelor party specials.

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After a while my browsing leads me to the dark web of online-dating sites. There are so many options for apparently all kinds of people: kinky sites, Asian sites, larger-women sites, larger-men sites, large tits, large dicks, even specific interests like anime, photography, or games.

I keep scrolling and scrolling through the sea of sites, a bit scared to ever actually click on one. I sit back in my chair and press my palms against my forehead. I let out a deep sigh, then grab my mouse and click on a random link.

When I look back at the screen I see a giant eggplant. Eggplant? What is the eggplant for? Then I look at the rest of the screen and realize the vegetable is supposed to stand in for the Lin the word FLICK. I ponder this term for a moment and continue to peruse the site. It says it's the most popular dating site for hookups and flings, and even has a phone app.

With a shrug, I pull out my phone and download the app. I start to make my profile and answer a few questions because apparently that's what you do. After putting in information for a while, I'm able to begin my search.

Some of the women on the app are definitely not for me. I don't think I could bring home a woman with more metal on her face than a robot. I'm sure she'll find someone, but not me. After denying a few women, it starts showing me women that may be more my style.

I take my time looking over their pictures and profiles and reading about the mysterious women of FLICK. After sifting through a few profiles, I end up on a page about this woman who plans parties. If someone can plan a party, she must be fun,

right?

I peruse her pictures, and I can't help but find myself attracted to her. She seems tall and a bit curvier than I thought I would like. After all the stories from Phil about how gorgeous all those thin, bendy strippers are, I guess I figured that thin women were the pretty ones. Really, I hadn't given it much thought since I was never looking around for myself.

This woman looks great, though. Her smile is fantastic. She has gorgeous long curly hair that drapes over her shoulders. Her eyes draw me in, and I feel like I could get lost in them. I thought I'd be scared of getting lost in someone else's eyes, but I'm not. I flip through her pictures a few more times before finally getting the courage to send her a message. It's a quick message, but it's a start.

I don't expect much to come of this. I've been out of the dating scene for so long that I can't even remember what courtship is like. Do women even like getting flowers and chocolates anymore? Can I take them on trips out to upstate New York where we can hike and cuddle in a tent? I hope so, because that's all I can think of to do.

Although, I could take Phil's route and throw singles at them when they remove articles of clothing. Despite Phil's storytelling, I don't think he's actually taking home as many as he says. So, I'll stick with the old-timey romance and not throw dollars at them.

I get back to work, typing away on a report about some gadget set to be released in a few months overseas. When Phil and I started this company, we never thought it would get this big. We thought it would be a cool idea to play video games all day, and back in college that was our life.

Then we started putting together a system that allowed you to view your game screen in first person. It made first-person shooters even more realistic, and people loved it.

We had people over at our frat house all the time just to play the shooters. It wasn't long after that we went into business together and made our first big score.

Now, we're here. We're billionaires living in Manhattan, expanding our products to other countries and watching it all from skyscrapers. Sometimes I miss being down in the workshops, actually putting the gadgets together. But Phil says it's better for us to be the brains of the business and hire others to be the workforce.

About an hour goes by and my phone buzzes. I almost jump out of my seat as it vibrates on my desk. No one calls me, let alone texts me excepts Phil and Imelda, and Phil is down the hall. It must be Imelda. My face goes white as I reach for my phone. Something must be wrong.

As soon as I look at the screen and see that it's a reply from the girl on FLICK, I allow myself to breathe.

Hey. Thanks for messaging me. My name's Claire, btw.

B-T-W? What does that mean? It takes me a second to realize it means "by the way" and respond back.

Hi, I'm Alex.

So, are you going to send me a dick pic or just tell me that you wanna see my tits?

What??

That's all you want, right?

No. No. Not at all. Is that really how men act on these things?

If you have to ask, you can't be that bad.

Thank you, I think.

Ok, this woman is definitely a bit testy, but I like her sassiness. Our messaging continues and I ask her about her experiences on FLICK. Honestly, I am a bit surprised that anyone would dare start a conversation with a picture of their genitalia. That just seems downright disgusting.

She sends a virtual laugh when I tell her that, and it makes me smile. Who knew that something so simple as an "LOL" could make me smile.

We continue talking and I tell her that I'm not looking for anything serious. She tells me that that's just perfect; she too is only looking for a quick fling. I don't know what it is, but I want to meet her. Maybe it's just that this is something new and exciting, but I want to do it.

Would you be willing to meet up sometime soon?

There's a dance club over on 7th that just opened a few weeks ago.

I'll meet you there. Friday?

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She replies with a resounding yes, and I get even more excited. Then she does something that I am completely unprepared for. She sends me a picture of her chest, with her blouse unbuttoned so that the top of her bra is showing. She has amazing cleavage, and I find myself getting a little uncomfortable in my seat.

What do you think?

I honestly don't even know how to respond. I want to tell her that they look amazing and I want to caress them, touch them, lick them. But, I imagine she gets that often, and I know I'm better than that. She did ask my thoughts though.

After a few minutes of staring at my phone, she messages again.

We're still meeting Friday. Just tell me.

I want to caress your pearlescent skin and touch it softly with my lips.

So poetic. Tell me more.

Tell me what you will be wearing on Friday.

A tight top, low-cut. Maybe a miniskirt and some boots.

Bra? Panties?

No bra.

At this point I don't know what to do with myself. She seems to want me to talk dirty to her. I'm honestly out of practice with this. She doesn't seem to mind, though. She texts me again, asking me to describe what I want to do with her. It seems that she will want me to do naughty things to her while at the club and not even wait until we find a more suitable location.

Come on. If we were at the club and I wasn't wearing any underwear, just the top and skirt, what would you do with me?

Pull you close to me and hold you tight.

You can do better.

What would you do?

I'd hold you close and dance right up against you so I could slip my hand between us and rub you 'til you're hard just so I could feel you against me.

She hasn't even touched me and I feel flushed. I want to feel her hand upon me and her breasts against my chest. I bet just being near her would be amazing.

If you weren't wearing anything underneath, I guess that would give me easy access to slipping my hand under your skirt to caress whatever I please. I don't think I could stop myself from taking you off the dance floor.

Oh? Tell me more.

I'm sure we could find somewhere in the back where no one could find us. Somewhere that I could press you up against the wall, kiss your neck, touch your body, hear you moan.

Would you make me suck your dick?

Honestly, I don't think I could make her do anything. That's not right. Would I want her to do it? Sure. It's been so long since I've felt anything like that.

We text like this for a while longer, and I don't know what to with myself. I'm sitting in my office with pants that fit well this morning but are now rather tight. I can't just walk through the building pitching a tent like a Boy Scout, and I surely can't do anything about it right here.

As luck would have it, there is always one thing that will destroy such a moment in an instant.

My phone rings and the screen says one word: Mom. The second I pick up the phone, my mind clears, and all thoughts of anything even remotely sexual are gone. It's not uncommon for my mother to call, but this time it's a bit more unexpected than usual.

She starts going on about something in her knitting club. It takes me a few minutes to get her on the actual reason why she called. She asks if she can come pick up Sadie Friday morning and keep her for the weekend. I tell her that this is perfect timing because I have a work thing to do over the weekend.

She seems excited and tells me that she'll pick up Sadie from Imelda early on Friday. I tell her that works and that I'll already be at work. After a few more minutes, I finally get her off the phone.

I apologize to Claire via text and tell her that my weekend just opened up. She tells me that we can start with one night. I laugh and tell her that it took me a second to realize how that sounded. I tell her I look forward to Friday, and she agrees.

It seems odd to find a woman so quickly that just wants a fling. I thought women

wanted that whole “American Dream” thing. A home, a husband, and two and a half kids, or something like that. I suppose as long as she doesn’t want a relationship, I don’t have to worry about anything past Friday.

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Claire

I've ordered my coffee and haven't yet found Hailey. She's supposed to meet me today so we can do some work. She's been my best friend since moving to New York. I came here to make it big, but that hardly ever happens. So, I got a job as a waitress for a private party company and worked hard.

I served drinks and food. I dealt with the drunken uncles hitting on me and trying to grope me. I dealt with the flirtatious thirteen-year-old boys who suddenly became men at their bar mitzvahs. I dealt with all of that, all with a big smile on my face and a chipper attitude.

After about a year, my boss asked if I'd like to take the next step in my career and lead the parties instead of working them. I jumped at the opportunity within seconds. He told me to show up at some old building the next day and take the interview. I showed up and was one of about thirty people trying to get this job.

I knew this was a competitive business, but I thought when my boss approached me that I was just going to get a promotion, not have to interview all over again. I had served at enough parties that planning one shouldn't be a big deal.

Hailey was one of my competitors. We had to pitch a party idea to this group of people who would rate us, and whoever got the highest rating got the job. Well, Hailey started talking to me about this idea she had, and I told her my idea. Then, we got the great idea to pitch it as a team, to combine our ideas.

We were the only ones who pitched it as a team, and the raters loved it. They had never once seen a pair of competitors team up to propose an idea together. We both walked out of there with high-end jobs and our own teams of caterers, decorators, and waitstaff. Honestly, I think the fact we teamed up is what got us the job. Since then we have joined a company that employs about twenty planners who each have their own teams. So, we work together and in competition at the same time. It's odd, but it works for us.

The company allows the planners to take jobs they want and not take the ones they don't want. Some of us bid and compete for certain jobs; others just have their portfolio on display and let the clients come to them.

After a few minutes, I manage to find a table and wipe a few crumbs off it while I wait for Hailey. She's fashionably late as usual. Finally, she struts through the door holding a few giant portfolios in her arms. She comes to the table, sets her things down, and goes to order her coffee.

I open my laptop and pull up the details on the next party while I wait for her. Once she sits, she lets out a huge sigh.

"Oh. My. God. Claire, you would not believe my clients. They literally walked into my office with all of these drawings of everything they want. Like, who does that?"

"Looks like you have your hands full with those clients. What do they want?"

"Some jungle-themed sweet sixteen party for their snooty daughter who just got a modeling job clearly because Daddy bought her a couple of tits."

We have a good laugh about that and drink our coffee while comparing parties. She's got her sweet sixteen, and I have a thirtieth anniversary of some strip club. We start talking about the jobs and bounce ideas off one another. She seems a little more

excited about my party than hers.

Hailey enjoys working the more public parties where the publicity is over-the-top. She was born and raised here, so she knows how it goes. Any chance she gets to be in the limelight, she takes. She likes to tell me that there is no bad publicity. Pretty much everyone, myself included, thinks she's wrong. But whatever makes her happy.

After the first coffee, we settle down and chat about everyday stuff. She tells me about some of her dates, and I tell her about the guy from FLICK.

"Claire, you got a date tomorrow? Ahh!"

"I know, I know. He seems like a decent guy. He actually didn't send me a dick pic."

"Really? Is there something wrong with him?"

I laugh and pull out my phone to show her the conversation we had. It's not uncommon for me to show her my conversations with the random guys that message me on dating sites. Usually I try to see if she knows who they are first. Only because she goes on so many dates that I honestly don't want to jump in the same pool as her. Nothing against her, just... ew.

"Oh. He's cute. Sounds like a decent guy too."

"Yeah, but it's been so long since I've been on a date with a decent guy. I mean, he was confused when I asked him if he wanted to see my tits."

"You sent him a pic, right?"

"Yeah."

“So, you’ll take your shirt off for him over the phone but not in person?”

I laugh at her, and she laughs in return.

“C’mon, girl. It’ll be fun. Go out, have a few drinks, dance with him, and if he’s not your type, no big deal. You’ll be at a club—go home with someone else.”

“You’re a terrible person, Hailey.”

“But you love me for it.”

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“Yeah.”

We laugh again and continue our conversation about him. We start looking over his profile. He’s got some cute pictures. One has him on a beach, lounging on a towel in the sand. Clearly it is a staged picture, but who cares? You can see his perfectly toned chest and arms. We’re both a little surprised that he has no tattoos. Another has him at the gym working on his arms, and you can see every bulging muscle.

His profile also says he owns a business. It doesn’t say what kind of business, but there are at least two pictures of him with some tech stuff: one of him at a computer playing some game and another where he’s actually building something. Hailey is racking her brain trying to figure out who he is. She swears she’s seen him before, but the name doesn’t ring a bell and none of his pictures have struck anything either.

“So, he owns a business. Whatcha think? Like a little artisan soap store or like one of those skyscrapers? Clearly he’s got a hobby, but that could mean anything.”

“I don’t know. Out here, anyone can do anything. Hand-painted collector’s plates by day, robot builder by night.”

“He wants you for one night, right?”

“Yeah, and I’m fine with that. I don’t think I could do another committed thing again.”

The last time I was in a committed relationship was right before I moved to New York. We were really serious—engaged, in fact. I thought it was going to be a fairy-

tale ending where we would get married and I would bear his children, the whole nine. We had been together for two years before he proposed, and we were engaged for another year after that.

But I found out he had been screwing around behind my back with an intern from his work. She got her internship solely because she was screwing him and wasn't qualified in the least. I only found out everything when she showed up at my door four months pregnant with his kid.

He was in for a surprise when he got home that night. I already had everything packed and in my car. Most of his stuff was either in shambles or strewn about the yard—mostly her doing. I kept the ring and any valuables I deemed mine; after all he bought the ring forme.

From there I decided to chase my dreams and packed up my stuff. I flew to New York to try and get my big break in theater only to find out that it's not what you do but who you know. I'm glad my first boss believed in me and helped me out. He really turned the tables for me. I may not have gotten my big break in theater, but I think it's for the best.

"It's one night and you know it's one night. Dress to the nines, wear your best panties, go out and get a mani-pedi, get your hair did, everything. Make the night about you."

"And if he wants to start things in the club or somewhere else?"

"Pack some condoms. It's better to have them and not need them than need them and not have them. Why do you think I always have condoms and tampons in my purse?" She laughs.

"Can I call you just in case?"

“Always girl, you know that.”

We finish having coffee and bouncing ideas off one another, then kiss each other’s cheeks and head off in our own cabs. I head right back to my apartment to drop off my stuff and get myself ready for tomorrow. She’s right—I need a few hours to myself.

I find a nearby spa and get there ASAP. I know that I need to relax and enjoy. Once I get there, the ladies at the desk ask what I want. I tell them I have a hot date tomorrow evening. They exchange a glance and seem to know exactly what to do. One takes my things and finds a locker for it all. The other grabs a fluffy bathrobe and shows me to the first room.

I undress and lie on the table, awaiting a massage. A large dark, handsome man with a wonderful Italian accent comes into the room, and once he puts his hands on me, I swear I drift off into the ether. He has me turned me to putty within seconds. The smell of the lavender oil sends my mind wandering, and I don’t want to come back.

After that he gives me a salt scrub, one of those fancy cucumber-on-the-eye green facials, and a quick hand-and-foot soak. Once he leaves, a pair of tiny Asian women come in to work on my hands and feet. They scrub and file and shine until my nails are glistening and perfect. I couldn’t have asked for better.

After the few hours in heaven, I leave feeling like a million dollars. On my way home, I start to think about my date tomorrow night. I wonder what he’ll be like. Will he be stuck-up and prudish? Will he be nerdy and nervous? What about sensitive and caring? One can only hope he’s good in bed.

I've been at the club for about twenty minutes. I showed up early, scoped out the area, and got myself one quick drink. I know exactly where the best table is and have claimed it with my jacket. I don't know what she likes, so I haven't ordered anything for her.

I'm nervous and probably look like a creep, wandering around a club alone. I sip my drink and try not to look as creepy. I sit at the table and wait until I don't feel any more eyes on my back, then I look around a bit more. There are quite a few people here, and the music is loud. I can feel the beats of the music reverberating through my chest.

A little while later, I see her coming through the door. I stand at the table and flag her down. She approaches, and she is gorgeous. Just like she said, she has a tight top that shows off her wonderful cleavage and a short skirt that barely hangs half an inch below her buttocks. She has cute suede ankle boots and a small jacket. Each and every curve is hugged by a stretched piece of fabric. I swear her top could burst at any minute, and wouldn't that be a shame?

I pull out a chair for her, and she seems surprised. She sits, sets her purse down, and removes her jacket. Her arms are bare and beautiful. I just want to feel how soft her skin must be. I mouth a question, asking her if she wants a drink. She nods, so I go to the bar to get some drinks. I hand her a mai tai, and she sips it happily. I chose well.

We attempt to talk about our jobs over the loud music, and I feel the tip of her foot brush against my leg. I smile and scoot my chair closer to her. She immediately places her hand on my thigh and caresses it gently. I wrap my arm around her shoulder and pull her close. I may not know much about courting a woman, but I do know that if a woman flips her hair and tilts her head just enough to show you her neck, you kiss it.

The second my lips touch her skin, there is a spark. We both take notice. Her skin is

soft and warm. Our drinks are gone within seconds, and instead of heading to the dance floor we leave and find the nearest hotel. Along the way she is hooked on my arm with her breasts pressed against me. I can't help but glance down at her cleavage.

We're barely in the lobby and she has a hand up under my jacket, gently raking her nails against my side. I'm shivering and trying very hard not to stumble through my words as I pay for a room at the front desk. We get the key and make it to the elevator.

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I take a chance and pin her against the back wall as soon as the doors shut. I look deep into her beautiful brown eyes, then plant a gentle kiss on her lips. I feel her melt in my grasp, and I want more. I kiss down her neck and find that sweet spot that makes her gasp, right where the neck ends and the shoulder begins. I kiss there again and again, making her squirm in my grasp.

The elevator dings and opens onto our floor. We make it to the room and throw open the door. Our jackets are on the floor, and our shoes are thrown off into the corners. She has her hands up my shirt, then rips it open, sending buttons flying across the room. I have my hands down the back of her skirt, pulling it down so she can step out, and I feel the telltale signs of sexy panties—a lace thong that leaves most of her ass bare.

Our lips and tongues are locked together as we stumble toward the bed. She slides her hands down to my pants and undoes them so I can step out. I lift my hands to her top and pull it up over her head to reveal her wonderfully plump breasts with perky pink nipples—no bra in the least, which is just perfect. I grasp her breast and quickly bring my lips down to kiss her nipple.

We step back from each other and take a brief moment to admire the wonderful bodies before us. She is standing just in a black thong, and I want to touch every inch of her. I watch her eyes move across my body until they meet mine. I step forward and lift her off the ground, something that has clearly not been done to her before.

I throw her down on the bed and pull her panties off, then remove my boxers. Within moments I am on top of her, kissing her neck and her lips. She pulls me against her, and without thinking, I plunge my cock inside her. Her warm, wet pussy engulfs my

cock. It's so tight and slick. She feels so amazing, and I have to keep going.

She moans softly in my ear. I reach one hand up to caress her breast softly. I gently roll her perky nipple between my forefinger and thumb while I kiss her neck and thrust into her again and again. She moans louder.

I dig my fingers into her breast until I hear a twinge of pain in her moaning, then release it slowly. I pull her nipple between my lips and roll it lightly. Then I go to her other nipple and suckle until she moans. I lift myself up so I can watch her breasts bounce with every powerful thrust.

Her moaning is out of this world. I love it. I fuck her harder and harder, and her eyes shut tight as she screams out in pleasure. Her body shivers and her tight pussy clamps around my cock.

She bucks up under me, her legs wrapped tight around my hips. She pulls me down into a tongue-filled kiss. Then she wraps her arms around me and digs her nails into my back. I can feel her scratching, and it makes me thrust harder. My cock is as deep as it can be, and her moaning intensifies with each thrust.

I feel my limit approaching fast, but I don't want to stop feeling her pussy around my cock. I have to make the most of this night. It's only one night. I bite my lip and fuck her hard as I feel her cum again around me. Every muscle in her body tightens and ripples in pleasure.

I moan out, trying hard to hold myself back. I thrust again and again, with as much force as I can muster. It isn't soon after that I feel myself reach the limit. My cock throbs hard, and I thrust deep inside her and fill her full.

I keep myself on top of her for a few moments longer. We kiss each other softly, then harder before I slowly roll off her and look over at her beautiful body. She looks at

me with a smile, kisses me on the cheek, then jumps up off the bed and grabs for her clothes. I watch her get dressed, and after a few minutes she comes back, kisses me once more on the lips, and is out the door.

This night was only supposed to be a one-night-stand kind of thing, I know that. But watching her leave like it all meant nothing actually hurt. I start to think that maybe I really wasn't ready to jump into it. I don't think I was ready to do something so passionate and yet so meaningless.

It has been many years that I have slept alone, but tonight the bed I lie in feels cold. It feels emptier than usual. To have someone leave makes it feel worse than not having anyone there at all.

After a long while of watching the ceiling, I manage to fall asleep.

4

Claire

Hailey should be here soon, and I can't wait to tell her about my night. It was absolutely amazing! She will want every detail, for sure. I know it was a one-night stand, but damn! It was way better than pretty much any of my previous encounters.

The second I hear the knock at the door, I jump up and open it for her. We embrace and head to the couch, and she drops her jacket and purse on the way. There's no time to place things when there's a juicy story to be had. She pours herself a glass of red wine and tops mine off. Before jumping into the conversation, she takes a long sip off her glass.

"Okay, don't spare any details. How was he?"

I tell her everything. All of the flirting at the club and then the flirting in the elevator at the hotel and how he just pulled out the card and paid for the entire evening without even a blink. I tell her how we undressed, and she leans in closer when I give her the description of his amazing body. Then I tell her every hot, steamy detail of the incredible sex we had.

Hailey squeals and pats my shoulder. “Oh. My. God. That sounds ah-mazing.”

“I know. It was just so...” I can’t even finish my sentence.

“Did you find out more about the mysterious Alex?”

“Oh yeah! So, you are going to flip. That business he owns, it’s not a little tiny thing.”

“Tell me. Tell me!”

“He’s a CEO!”

We squeal together. Bagging a CEO for a fling is like a monumental occasion.

“No wonder he paid for the night. What is he CEO of?”

“AleAnt or something like that.”

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“Shut up! Seriously?”

“Why?”

“That’s the big tech gaming company! The one that does the VR first-person shooters and the drones with the built-in night-vision cameras.”

“How do you know all that?”

“I did a party for them about a year ago. You remember that crazy Asian-themed party where all the waiters had to wear sexy kimonos? They were celebrating selling some new VR game.”

We talk for a little while longer about Alex and his company until there is a knock at my door. We pause and stare at the door. Neither of us are expecting anyone, and I live in a secure building. No one buzzed from outside. Is it a neighbor? I don’t think my walls are that thin.

I get up and open the door to find the tall, blue-eyed beauty that I left in the hotel last night. I am shocked and can’t form words. He is smiling at me with his hands tucked behind his back.

“Um, Hi. What—what are you doing here?”

“Oh, I’m sorry. You left this at the hotel last night. Thought you might want it back.” He holds out my wallet, and I am almost too stunned to take it from him.

I take it and invite him inside. He has a long wool trench coat over a nice suit, and he looks amazing. I know what's under the clothes, but this guy cleans up well. He steps by me and thanks me, then greets Hailey, who has her jaw on the floor.

She grabs her purse, finishes her wine, and comes up to me. "I forgot that I have a project to do." As she leaves she gives me a look that says "Get him!" and nudges me with her hip.

I shut the door and join Alex in the living room. He looks all clean-cut and sexy, and I'm here in a pair of sweatpants and a tank top. I'm sure I look like a mess.

"Thank you for returning it, but you didn't have to come to my apartment. You could've had the front desk send it to me or put it in my mailbox."

"I wouldn't have wanted you to worry about missing your wallet. That's kind of important."

"Well, thank you."

"You're welcome."

He comes close to me, and I expect him to want to kiss me. We agreed to one night, just one. Then he surprises me by grabbing my hand and bringing it to his lips. His eyes are locked with mine as he kisses the back of my hand. Then he leaves, and I am just beside myself.

I head to my window to watch him leave my building. There's a nice-looking black car sitting out by the curb. Alex leaves the building and gets into the back of the car. A few moments later my phone buzzes, and I run over to read it.

You look just as beautiful in your pajamas as you do in nothing.

My cheeks go red. I can't believe the text I just got from him.

Was that your car?

Mine as in I own it. Perhaps someday I can take you for a ride. And then show you the car.

LOL. Could you take me for a ride in the car?

Only if you promise to wear another thong.

How about a miniskirt and no panties?

Even better. I'll even let you sit on my lap if you're good.

He sounds so sexy right now. He's got my blood pumping and my panties hot. How can he do this? He's just a one-night stand. No other guy has done this. No other guy has got me so hooked.

5

Alex

I haven't stopped thinking about Claire. Sure, there have been other women that have messaged me from FLICK, but none of them have kept my interest like her. We've been texting each other back and forth almost constantly. She's got me hot and bothered. I want to see her again.

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Just a fling, a one-night stand—that’s all that was supposed to happen. But how could I leave it at that when she left her wallet behind? I couldn’t just hand it over to someone else. I did the right thing in returning it to her personally.

There was something there, though; when I looked into her eyes, I could see it. She wanted me to stay, but that couldn’t happen. Even her friend noticed right before she excused herself. I’d like to get to know this woman more, but maybe I’m just acting a fool. This is the first date I’ve been on in years. Something couldn’t possibly come out of something as simple and meaningless as a fling with a woman off the internet.

“Daddy!” I hear my little girl running down the stairs into the kitchen where I have her waffles and juice all ready for her.

“Sadie! How are you, Princess?”

I scoop her up and give her a big hug and a kiss before sitting her down to eat breakfast. Imelda comes wandering in, holding her first cup of coffee. She smiles at me, and I smile back.

“So, I heard someone’s birthday is coming up. Do you know who that might be?”

Sadie gets the biggest smile across her face. “My birthday!”

“What do you want for your birthday?”

She starts going on and on about toys she wants and the theme. Imelda snickers on the other side of the island. Our eyes meet and we have a silent conversation.

“Really? All of this?”

“You asked her.”

Sadie tells me that she wants a big princess party with pink and glitter and balloons. She says she wants a pony; that, however, is where I draw the line. A pony does not make for an indoor pet. Then she proceeds to tell me what kind of dress she wants to wear, with bows, frills, and sparkles.

Imelda finally stops her. “You’re going to be late for school, *reinita*.”

With that, Sadie stuffs the last bit of her waffle into her mouth, hops off the stool, and runs back upstairs to find her backpack.

“You’re gonna do all that?”

I’m at a loss for words, trying to organize all the ideas she had.

“Invitations, princess cake, decorations, the dress. You can’t forget about the dress,” Imelda jokingly scolds.

“And the pony?”

She scoffs and waves her hands at me. “You’ll find a way to make *reinita*’s birthday *fantastico*. You always do.”

Sadie runs back down, and Imelda gets her together, coat and all. They head to the door. Imelda wags her finger at my girl, who runs back to give me a big hug and kiss.

“Love you, Daddy!”

I wave them out. “Love you too, sweetheart. Imelda, you’re a goddess.”

“Lo se pues,” she laughs.

After getting myself ready, I head out to work. It’s not a bad commute, but I still hate the Manhattan traffic. Granted, I’m not the one driving, so it makes the trip better. The driver parks, and I head up to my office.

Once there I take a moment to review the tasks for the day, then decide to put it off until later. I pull up the internet on my computer and start searching for party planners that can do a fifth-birthday party. It seems like a lot of planners choose to either specialize in only kids or absolutely no kids.

Then I remember that our company hosted a party somewhere, and we had a really good planner for that event. I grab my cell and call up Phil, even though he’s just down the hall.

“Dude!”

“Hey, Phil. Do you happen to remember the company we went through to do that big party for the Z-moto?”

“Uh... Premiere Party Planning? Perfect Party Planning? Precious? Something with aP. I do remember the tripleP, though. Lots of good laughs about that one.”

“That’s what the internet is for.”

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“Haha! Totally.”

“Later, man.”

“Later.”

I take to the internet again to find this company and am quite surprised when it comes right up. I find the number and give it a call. A pleasant woman picks up with a thick Brooklyn accent. I ask her if they do kids’ parties, and she tells me that they do all sorts of parties, fromAtoZ.

She starts to tell me about the rates for different things, and I interrupt her. “Who do you have that would be able to plan this? Do have someone specific or what?”

“Nah. All our plannahs can do any pahty. You should come by today and pick one. You can tawk to ’em and find one that fits you.”

“Thank you. I’ll be by around one.”

“We’ll see yah then.”

I continue through my day, getting all of the reports out that need to be done. The floor coffee wench, as she is so lovingly referred to, comes by to get everyone their coffee. She knows that’s what we call her, and she seems to enjoy it. Unlike most companies, she is not one of our interns. She works in accounting but has to get up to stretch every now and then. Plus, she’s a bit older and seems to enjoy flirting with the young men when she brings them coffee.

She comes into my office and brings me a cup, filled to the brim. I thank her and she smiles, then winks. I look down at my latte to find a little heart drawn in the foam. I smile at her and blow her a kiss before she walks out to give the next person their cup. Sweet lady.

The hours are long and go by slowly, but they pass nonetheless. Once the clock strikes 12:20 p.m., I rise and head to the elevator. I've planned a little extra time, knowing that I'm going to have to answer at least five questions on my way across the floor.

The car is already waiting for me downstairs and takes me straight to the planner's building. It's in a more artsy neighborhood with paintings on the sides of most of the buildings. Theirs seems to have been drawn up by a group of people and has all sorts of party-related things on it. There are cakes, balloons, piñatas, doves, banners. It looks like all of the parties in a four-block radius exploded here on the wall.

I walk in the door, and there's a woman standing at a desk shuffling papers. She turns to me immediately and welcomes me; from her accent, I recognize her as the woman I spoke to on the phone. She takes me into a large meeting room with a few planners sitting around a large table. They seem to be ready to let me look through their portfolios.

The second I walk in the room, my eyes are drawn to a gorgeous woman with thoughtful brown eyes and a mane of brown hair—Claire. I pause for a second, as does she. I keep my eyes locked with hers as I sit at the head of the table.

The Brooklyn woman gives a short spiel, the same one I gave her over the phone. She asks when the party is supposed to be. I tell her a week from Saturday. She looks over the room and about a third of the planners leave; apparently they are already booked.

“Okay, hon, you can look through their portfolios and tawk with 'em. They'll getcha

all settled.”

“Thank you. But I have already made my decision.”

“Who’s it gonna be?”

“Claire.”

The rest of the planners leave the room. None of them seem offended. I imagine they all get quite a bit of work all around the city. The Brooklyn woman follows them out and leaves myself and Claire in the room.

“So, you’re a party planner?”

“I told you I work parties.”

“I thought you meant as a waitress or bartender or something. Not as the head honcho.”

We sit together and talk for a while. Claire has a large portfolio out in front of her with pictures of parties she has done before. Right now, it is open to a few pages of children’s parties. She also has a large sketchbook where she is jotting down notes and drawing out ideas.

I tell her that I’ll have to find a seamstress to make my girl a princess dress. She tells me that she knows of a few in the area that can have it done by the date of the party. She seems to have the answers to all of my questions.

After a while our conversation is back on each other and not the party at all. I don’t mind. She is such an enthralling person that I can’t help but be drawn in. I want to drown in her eyes, in her mind.

“You never mentioned you’re a dad.”

“Yeah. She’s about to be five.”

“Where’s Mom?”

I go silent for a moment, then compose myself. “She’s passed on.”

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“Oh, I’m so sorry,” she says while reaching out to hold my hand.

I look at our hands for a moment and give a weak smile. “Don’t be. She gave me my little girl, which in a way is like having her with me every day.”

We sit together in silence for a few moments with her hand grasping mine.

“Listen,” I begin, “what would you say if I asked you out for a drink tomorrow night? Sadie has a ballet class, so I have some time free.”

“If you were asking, I’d say yes.”

I smile at her, and she smiles coyly back. “Then I guess I’ll ask. Would you like to go have a drink with me tomorrow night?”

“Yes.”

6

Claire

I get to the bar, and just like last time, he’s already there. This time he has a mai tai at the table for me. Usually, I make sure to see my drink get made, especially in this city. But I trust him.

There is music here, but it’s very posh and not for dirty dancing. This is the type of place you sip wine and dance the Charleston. I’ve been to places like this. I’ve

planned parties for the type of people that frequent these kinds of places. Not bad people, but very persnickety.

We start to talk with one another about how weird it was that he just happened to walk into my work. When he laughs, it makes me smile. He sounds so calm, collected, and sexy. I make some lame joke about how he needed me and voilà, I was there.

We down the first drinks, then the second. He looks at his watch and seems to be thinking about something very carefully. Then he looks up at me with a smile. His glorious blue eyes are almost too distracting.

“I have about forty-five minutes before I have to get Sadie.”

I smile and hold my hand out. He takes it and plants a small kiss on my knuckles. I giggle, and then he leads me out to the parking lot where his limousine is sitting. Oh my God, he has a limousine. He opens the door and bows with a hand across his chest and a sly smile across his lips.

We get inside the limousine, and he knocks on the dividing window. A man with white gloves opens it.

“I recommend turning up the music. Also, make sure I can pick up my daughter.”

The driver’s face is absolutely priceless. He’s simultaneously happy, nervous, and perturbed. He quickly shuts the little window and turns on some music.

Alex pulls me against him in a deep, passionate kiss. I moan softly just from kissing him. I start to undress myself, and he undresses too. We kiss again and again. Our tongues touch and caress one another.

I lie back on the seat, and he crawls on top of me. He kisses my neck, my shoulders, my breasts. Then there is a shift in weight as we roll off the seat. There is a slight panic as we fall, but when we land he is lying on his back on the floor and I am straddling him. I lean down to kiss him and press my breasts against him.

He places his hands on my hips and gently massages them. I ease myself onto his rock-hard cock. Just him slipping inside of me is enough to make me moan. I start to rock my hips slowly on his cock. He lets out a pleased sigh.

My lips find his again, and our tongues entwine for a few seconds. Then I place my hands on his chest and lift myself up. He keeps one hand on my hip and brings the other to gently hold one of my hands to his chest.

I rock and grind against him. He groans softly, and it isn't long before I start to feel my body shiver—his cock just feels so amazing inside me. He slides his hand from my hips around until his thumb is hovering over my clit.

The second he touches me, I cry out loudly. He starts to rub in small circles, and I can no longer control my moaning. I rock my hips harder against him. Harder and harder. He rubs faster and presses down. Within minutes I am screaming and shaking. My arms can barely hold me up.

He senses my impending fall and brings his hand up to cup my breast firmly. He holds tight, keeping me up. My hands come up to caress his arm. I can feel the tension in his muscles as he holds me. Knowing just how strong he is makes me even hotter.

My wet pussy throbs around his hard cock, and I love every second of it. He starts to thrust into my rocking, and the very tip of his cock brushes against my cervix.

He then pulls me down against him and holds me tight. His thick arms are wrapped

around me, and I feel secure, happy. I moan softly in his ear, and he does the same in mine. He slides one hand down to grab hold of my ass.

He bucks up under me harder and harder, and I feel myself start to cum. My body is shivering, and I can't control myself any longer. His cock throbs and he lets out a hearty groan. He fills my pussy, and it sends shivers up my spine.

I kiss his lips softly, and he brings one hand up to caress the back of my head. His fingers are wrapped in my hair and make my scalp tingle. We kiss again and again until there is a knock on the tiny divider window.

The driver cracks it open just a smidge and calls through, "We're about two blocks from the studio, sir. I believe some pants may be in order."

7

Alex

“Dude, come on. Come on. Dude. Come on, dude.”

“Really, Phil?”

“Yeah. Come on. C’mon.”

I stare at him for a moment.

“You know you wanna go get a beer with me.”

“I promised Sadie that we would order a pizza, watch her new pony movie, then have ice cream sundaes. You wouldn’t want to disappoint Sadie, would you?” I look him right in the eye with a brow cocked.

He bites his lip and stomps his foot like a grade-schooler. “You know Uncle Phil can’t disappoint that little angel.”

“That’s what I thought.”

He laughs and gives me a brotherly punch in the arm. I promise him that we’ll get a beer some other time, and that seems to placate him.

It is true that I have a night planned with my baby girl, but there’s something

else—someone else. I can't seem to get Claire out of my mind. It bothers me some but also fills me with joy. I went into this knowing and believing this would be a one-night stand. Clearly, I was wrong.

I'm not even checking the messages I get from FLICK anymore. I don't care. I haven't told Phil that I've seen her again, but he seems to know that something is going on. That's probably why he wanted to go get a beer tonight. Getting a beer always means a deep, meaningful talk like we used to do at the frat house.

Claire is stuck in my mind all day. I shouldn't like it as much as I do.

Phil sits down across from me. "Talk to me now, bro."

"About what?"

He looks at me, straight in the eye. He knows that I know he knows what he wants to talk about. I start to tell him about the first night, then about going to her place to drop off the wallet. He is on the edge of his seat, listening intently. I tell him about the party-planning incident. He knows there's more and prods until I tell him that we had sex in the limousine.

Phil laughs. "You fucking dog!"

"What? It was just a quick fuck."

"You met this girl for a one-night stand a week ago, man. Nah, there's something else going on here."

"Not even."

Phil starts to say something when my phone rings. I cut him off and look at my

phone. He must have noticed the slight twinge in the corners of my lips.

“It’s her, isn’t it?”

“Shush.” I answer my phone. “Hello?”

“Alex!” She seems very happy. Then she starts going over party details and says that she’s found a few possible places where the party can be held that aren’t too bad. She lists off a few names, some of which I have heard of, but there are a few I haven’t.

She continues on and Phil sits across from me making kissy faces. Then he turns around, wraps his arms around himself, and starts mocking me. “Oh, Alex. Oh, Alex!”

I grab a nearby pad of sticky notes and throw it at him. It hits him square in the back of the head, and he spins around. He silently chuckles, and I give him the finger while still trying to listen to Claire on the phone. He just shrugs with a smug look.

Claire talks about how she wants to meet Sadie, which surprises me a little at first as I have sort of lost track of the fact that we were talking about the party. I was just entranced by her voice and stopped processing words. Then she tells me that she always tries to meet the client first, unless of course it’s a surprise party.

I laugh at the little joke, and Phil waggles his eyebrows at me. He then gets up and sits on the corner of my desk, then lies across it as though modeling for a bikini catalog. He looks at me and runs a finger down his chest and whispers, “Oh, Alex. Paint me like one of your French girls.”

I grab a nearby magazine and start swatting him like a bad dog. He laughs and blocks a few of the hits as he rolls off the desk.

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“Do you have any days open so I can meet with the birthday girl?”

“How does tomorrow sound?”

Phil stands behind the chair in front of my desk, grabs either side of the back, and starts thrusting at it. Then he playfully smacks the top of it. “Oh, yes Claire,” he whispers.

“Sorry, I’m doing a party for another client tomorrow. It’s her grandma’s eightieth birthday, and I’ve been doing parties for them since I started here. She was my first client, so I really can’t ditch it.”

I grab for something heavier than a pad of sticky notes. A wire cup of pens—that should work. I throw it across the room at Phil and it hits him in the chest, scattering pens all over the floor.

I know he’s doing all of this just to get a rise out of me. We used to do this all the time to each other in college, especially when parents would call. It was a game of ours. Try to embarrass the hell out of the person on the phone until they slipped up. He’s doing a good job. If I slip up, he wins.

“No worries, Claire. How about Sunday?”

“Sure!”

“Cool, I’ll text you later about it. See you then.”

I finally get the chance to hang up the phone. Phil is laughing his ass off while picking up pens from the floor and placing them back in the cup.

“Fucking, really?”

“Love you, dude.”

“Asshole.”

We laugh together and I get up to help him grab the pens and find my sticky notes. We talk a little more on the way down to our cars. He knows that there’s something there between Claire and me, but I won’t admit to it, not yet.

When I get home, Sadie greets me with a big hug. I get myself into some comfortable pajamas, and Imelda dresses Sadie in her princess nightgown, unicorn slippers, and tiara. I order her favorite pizza and go into the living room.

Sadie is sitting on the floor with a few movies in a row in front of her.

“What do you want to watch?”

“Uh...” She looks from one movie to another, then back again.

I point to one. “How about this one?”

“No.”

“This one?”

“No.”

I point to each one in turn, and each time I am met with a small no. A few minutes later, she chooses the first movie I pointed to and hands it to me. I put it on just as the pizza arrives. She gets up on the couch and waits patiently as I plate it up.

I grab her fluffy unicorn blanket and return with pizza in hand. She wraps herself up in the blanket and takes her pizza. The movie starts, and we sit huddled together, watching and eating. This is the first time we've watched this movie, but it feels like I've watched it a hundred times.

They're all the same really. A princess who happens to also be a pony has a social problem and she has to do some weird, meaningless task. There's a song. There's always a song. Then the bad guy does something dastardly. Another song happens and friendship was the answer all along.

Sadie loves them, so I watch them with her. Finally the torture is over, and we head into the kitchen to put away the dishes and the rest of the pizza. I get out all the fixings for ice cream sundaes and watch her face light up.

"Remember when I asked you what you wanted for your birthday?"

"Yeah."

"Would you like to meet someone that plans parties?"

"Yeah!"

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“You can tell her everything you want. Okay, Princess?”

“Everything?”

“Of course. We’re going to see her on Sunday.”

“I want to be a princess! I want a pony!” She bounces up and down telling me everything that she’s already told me. I smile and scoop her ice cream into a bowl for her.

She takes her bowl and starts making a mess on the counter. Some of the toppings actually make it onto the ice cream, but not everything. I decide that I’ll clean it up after she’s gone to bed, and we go back to the living room to watch yet another pony princess movie.

8

Claire

I get to the venue early to make sure that everything is set up for the walk-through. I managed to find a decent-sized hall that has a ballroom, perfect for a princess party. The room is large with a big dance floor. The venue has options for pedestal stands for flowers, ceiling drapes, and colored ceiling lighting.

After I walk through the room alone, I find the coordinator and ask if she’d show me some of the color options. She shows me some drape options and a few of the light colors. I ask her if I can show them to my client, and she agrees. She is nice enough

to also give me the linen options.

I get everything as ready as I can and wait for them to arrive. I'm a little nervous. We hooked up once and then again in his car, and now I'm meeting his daughter. I know this is for work, but still. It's a little odd and actually kind of sudden. I thought we'd never see each other again, and now he's hired me on to do his daughter's birthday.

The world works in weird ways sometimes, and it can't be avoided. I know Hailey warned me early on about the horrors of using FLICK, but I never thought something would happen. Not that this is horrible; it's actually rather nice. I know he likes me. I'm pretty sure that's why he hired me without even looking through anyone's portfolio.

A few minutes later, a little girl wearing a tiara, butterfly wings, and a ruffled pink-and-purple dress comes running in. She runs right past me onto the dance floor and starts twirling around. I smile and look back toward the entrance where Alex is standing wearing a plain button-up shirt and nice slacks. Even out of the office he looks good.

I can't help but admire him. His shirt isn't fully buttoned, so I can see just a little of his toned chest behind the fabric. His slacks are well fitting, and my eyes just barely glance down at his package.

"Daddy! It's a princess room!" Sadie yells from the dance floor.

Alex walks up to me with his hands in his pockets and smiles. "Is that what it's listed as in their brochure?"

I giggle. "Not quite."

He and I sit at a table with a bunch of fabric swatches laid out. Sadie runs over and

jumps up on his lap. He holds her and pats her head. Watching how he looks at her is so sweet. You can tell he really loves his daughter and would do anything for her.

I start to go over the different linen options. Whenever I ask a question, he asks Sadie what she thinks, until soon she is just answering by herself. She tells me what she wants, and it's clear that this is the fourth, fifth, and sixth time that he has heard this speech of hers. He just sits there with a smile.

Sadie starts to pick up some of the swatches as though trying to match them together. She really likes pink and wants everything to be pink. I can see the headache starting in Alex's face. An entire room of pink is enough to give anyone a migraine for days.

I gently suggest white tablecloths with pink runners, the sparkly light pink ceiling accents, and pink ceiling lights. She gets really excited and starts talking about balloons. I tell her she can have balloons and flowers and even a piñata.

She tells me she wants lavender balloons. Well, she said "pretty purple," but Alex's expression and mouthed words said "lavender." Then I ask her about flowers. She tries to explain to me some extravagant, completely made-up flower. So, I pull out my sketch pad and hand it and a pen to her and ask her to draw it for me.

She is quickly distracted, drawing a bunch of flowers all over the page. I look up at Alex, who is now smiling at me. We lock eyes and I smile back. There is a calm between us that makes this almost seem like a date. It's clear that he loves his daughter, and I think it's clear to him that I like her too.

After a few minutes, Sadie has finished her drawings and hands me back the sketch pad. I look at the very vaguely flower-shaped scribbles on my paper and smile.

"Do you like butterflies, Sadie?" I ask.

“Yeah!”

I quickly draw a little butterfly on the paper, and she is very happy about it. There is a softness in Alex’s smile as he watches me interact with his daughter.

“Where do you want the table for your cake and presents?”

Sadie hops off Alex’s lap and runs around the room, checking out different viewpoints. She stops at one corner of the dance floor and waves for us to come over. We approach and she tells us that they should be right there. Then I ask a few more questions about where she wants certain things, and we follow her around the room.

After we are finish designing the room, Sadie seems fairly wiped out. She’s had a long day. Alex picks her up and turns to me.

“You wouldn’t want to... maybe come over for dinner, would you?”

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“Yeah! Yeah! Come have dinner, Claire!” Sadie exclaims with her newfound energy.

“I guess that’s a yes.”

Alex smiles at me. “Do you need a ride?”

“Yes,” I smile with a subtle smirk that makes him blush a little.

We get into his car, and his driver takes us right to his home. It’s a lovely ride around the city. The houses start getting more and more extravagant until the car finally stops in front of a lovely three-story brownstone.

I look at him in disbelief. He just shrugs and gets out of the car with Sadie in tow. I follow him up the steps into the house. There is an immediate smell of a home-cooked meal, and I get a sick feeling in my stomach. Maybe he found someone else.

Sadie runs right in, and we dawdle after her. I feel immediately better after we round the corner and see an older Hispanic woman in the kitchen.

“Nanny Melda!” Sadie exclaims, giving the woman a big hug.

“Reinita!” She exclaims back, scooping up the young girl and kissing her cheek. Then she looks up at us. “Ay, señor, you didn’t tell me you were bringing home apareja.”

“Imelda,” Alex says in a clearly embarrassed tone. He goes to her and gives her the kind of hug you would give your mother. Then he tells her something that I can’t

hear.

I look around his home. Although extravagant, it's surprisingly simple. It's clear he cares for his nanny and his daughter. He has a few photos of the three of them out and about in the city. There are a few pictures of just Imelda's family hanging on his walls.

Without thinking I wander into his living room off the kitchen and look around at the décor and pictures. There is a lovely-looking fireplace with a bunch of pictures, knick-knacks, and an urn on the mantle. I admire the photo of his late wife sitting next to the urn. He really did love her.

Imelda sets the table and serves food for everyone, then hugs Alex and Sadie. She smiles at me and gives me a smaller hug. Then she grabs her purse and happily leaves. Alex pulls out a chair for me and then for Sadie before sitting down himself.

"Where did Imelda go?"

"I told her to go have a nice evening on me," he says without even a hint of hesitation.

We eat and Sadie tells us all about her day at the park yesterday with Imelda. Then she goes on and on about the pony that Daddy is going to get her someday. Alex and I exchange a glance at that one. He's clearly told her "someday" on the pony and not "no."

Then she starts telling me about her Uncle Phil and how he takes her to the movies and they play video games together. From the conversation I gather that she likes the shooting games. Alex keeps pretty quiet and lets Sadie and I talk with one another.

After dinner, Alex gathers the dishes and heads into the kitchen to wash everything.

Sadie grabs my hand and pulls me upstairs to go see her room, and I willingly follow. She shows me her favorite pony toy and her favorite princess dress. She shows me something else, followed by another toy, again and again. She's adorable.

I don't know how long this has been going on, but now I'm having a tea party with Sadie, her pony, a doll, and a teddy bear. She pours the imaginary tea and starts a conversation with the teddy bear. So, I play along and start talking with the doll. The ear-to-ear smile on her face is just priceless.

Alex taps me on the shoulder and I almost jump out of my skin. I had kind of forgotten he was even here.

"Sadie, it's time for bed."

Without a second thought, she drops what she's doing and heads to the bathroom to brush her teeth and get her pajamas on with a cute little "Yes, Daddy."

I get up off the floor and stretch. He chuckles at me and leans against the wall.

"Do you do this with all your clients?"

"I'm sorry. This was an important business meeting. Trotters and I were having a very serious conversation about cake flavors," I say, motioning to the toy pony sitting at the little plastic table.

Alex laughs. Sadie comes running back into the room in her nightgown. Alex scoops her up and gives her a big kiss. Then he tucks her into bed and gives her another kiss.

"Good night, Sadie."

"G'night, Daddy. G'night, Claire!"

“Night.”

We leave the room, and he shuts off the light and closes the door most of the way. We head back downstairs, and he offers me a glass of wine. I accept, and he pulls out a rather expensive bottle of rosé. He pops it open and pours us each a glass. We retire to a couch in the living room and get comfortable.

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I spend a few minutes thanking him for the job, dinner, and everything up to this point. He tries to brush it off as no big deal, but I can see he's a little embarrassed. Then I start to talk with him about Sadie, asking him about preschool and all that.

That little girl is just so cute. She's incredibly smart too. I ask him if she's in one of the nearby private schools, and he tells me that she's in a public school. I ask him why and he tells me that that's how he grew up and that's what Mary, his late wife, would have wanted.

We continue to talk and connect. I know that I have sexual desire for him, even right now, but this is more than enough. We are getting to know each other. This seems to be what we both want. We're talking like old friends. What more could I ask for?

9

Alex

She seems too good to be true. I haven't had a deep, meaningful conversation like this with anyone in a very long time. I haven't seen Sadie so happy in a long while too. She seems to really like Claire, and I don't blame her.

We finish our first glass of wine, and I refill our glasses. We continue to talk about life and work. I tell her about some new deals about to go through with other major gaming companies. She tells me that her manager has been threatening to retire for the past four years. She seems to fear when that becomes reality because she might be next in line to be manager, which would take her out of the field.

She asks me about Sadie's "Uncle Phil," and I laugh a little and tell her almost everything about my frat brother. I tell her about his love of strip clubs and other places where you can mix alcohol with pretty ladies. She asks if I've ever accompanied him to these places. I tell her no, but not because of a lack of invitation.

"So, Phil got you onto FLICK?"

"Pretty much."

We enjoy the hilarity of it all. Then I take a leap of faith and try to pull off as sly a move as I can muster.

"Well, you saw Sadie's room. It's only fair that I show you mine."

She smiles. "Are you going to show me your favorite toys too?"

I chuckle and stand, offering my hand to her. She takes it and I lead her up to my bedroom. I haven't shared my own bed with another person in so long. I feel like I'm back in college as a freshman, finally bringing a girl back to my dorm.

We get to the bedroom, and she smiles as she takes in the ambiance. I walk over to the bed and sit down, placing my empty glass on the nightstand.

"But Sadie's at the end of the hall," she says while sauntering over to me after shutting the door.

She sets her glass down and straddles my lap. I grab hold of her wonderful ass with both hands and smile.

"Then I guess you better be quiet."

She wraps her arms around my neck, and I stand, lifting her right off the bed. Her grip tightens at the sudden movement. I turn around and lie her gently back on the bed. She looks up at me as I slip my hands up her shirt to gently caress her breasts while kissing her thighs.

I hear a small gasp escape her lips, and I know I'm doing it right. Then I undo her pants and pull them off to reveal a lovely pair of black, lacy panties. My hands slide back to gently touch her rear and thighs. I plant a small kiss on her right knee, then her left. Then I kiss her lower thigh, then midthigh, then upper thigh, then hip.

Each time my lips touch her skin, I can feel her shiver. I kiss down her other thigh, starting at the hip and ending on the knee. I lie on my belly and gently nuzzle my head against her inner thigh, gently easing her legs open for me. I can hear her breathing getting faster. Just this amount of sensual touching seems to be enough to get her going.

I look up at her, and she has her eyes closed and her head back. Her hands are clutching the bedspread. I kiss her inner thigh from the knee to right before the edge of her panties, each kiss being planted right after the other, so close together, edging closer and closer. She is panting now, and I want her to continue.

Once I place that final kiss, I hear a small gasp escape her lips. I look up to see her watching me with a dreamy look on her face, begging me not to stop. I smile and turn my head to plant a kiss on her other thigh. I kiss all the way down just like before until right before her panties. Again she gasps, this time longer. She is begging me silently to keep going.

I hook my fingers in the top of her panties and slowly pull them down. She lets me without any hesitation. I slowly come back to between her legs and place a few more small gentle kisses right on her inner thighs, just next to her lower lips so that my cheeks brush against them. She gasps again.

I kiss her lower lips from the bottom to the top. She moans softly with each kiss. I stick my tongue out and gently glide it up her slit, then repeat the motion. She lets out a slightly louder moan that I just love.

I press the tip of my tongue right against her clitoris and circle it slowly one way, then the other. She gets louder and louder, and I stop suddenly and look up at her.

“Why’d you stop?”

I reach over and hand her one of the pillows lying nearby. She looks at it, then at me. I nod my head toward the doorway, signaling that my daughter is just down the hall like she had said. She giggles and takes the pillow from me.

As soon as she does, I return my tongue to its station, and she places the pillow over her mouth. I start to suckle her clitoris, which makes her quiver. I press my tongue flat against her clit and rub slowly. She moans against the pillow and quivers around my head. I keep going until her legs are shaking.

Then I remember Phil mentioning something that sounded rather silly, but he claimed that it works every time. I press the tip of my tongue firmly against her clitoris and start to write the alphabet right against it.

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A... B... C...

She keens softly. Her legs quiver against my head.

D... E... F... G...

I can hear her breathing getting faster, heavier.

H... I... J...

Each flick makes her shake, makes her moan. I can hear her nails on the pillow.

K... L... M... N...

Her breathing is faster, and she is getting louder.

O... P... Q... R... S...

Each little breath that escapes her mouth comes out in a surprised gasp.

T... U... V...

Her legs start to hold my head in place. Her chest is bouncing quickly up and down with each tiny breath. The pillow is barely muffling her moans.

W... X... Y...

Her back arches, pressing her clit right into my lips.

Z...

Her entire body quakes, and she is screaming into the pillow, only barely muffled. I start to worry that Sadie will wake, but I can't think about that now. My lips are pressed against her clit, and my tongue is flicking, keeping her orgasm going strong.

After a short while, she places a hand on my head, slightly pushing me away. I sit up and pull off my shirt, wiping my mouth off. I look over her gorgeous body. She is only barely covered by her shirt, and she has her legs writhing together, savoring the feeling. She is breathing heavily with the pillow next to her, barely clutched in her hand.

She looks at me with a smile and mouths, "Wow."

I remove the rest of my clothing, then slowly remove the rest of hers. I climb on top of her and kiss her gently on the lips. She pulls me into a deep kiss, holding me there for a few seconds. I lie on top of her, enjoying the feeling of our warm skin against each other.

She runs her nails over my back, and it makes me shiver. I reach down to gently caress her womanhood, and she moans softly in my ear. Then I grab my cock and tease her with the very tip, sliding up and down her slit. She smiles and pulls me into another kiss.

I take the hint and ease my cock inside her. I keep her lips pressed against mine as I slowly begin to thrust into her, my cock feeling every inch she has to offer. Then she slips her tongue into my mouth and lets it dance with mine.

I pull my cock back until just the tip is inside her, then slowly ease in until our

pelvises are flush together. Again and again I do it, making her moan each and every time. Then I slowly quicken the pace while planting small kisses on her neck. The sound of her in my ear is heavenly music coaxing a few small moans from my own mouth.

Her tight, wet pussy feels so warm around my cock. I quicken my pace again until I am slamming my cock right inside her with a smack every time our pelvises clash.

Smack! Smack! Smack!

She cries out loudly. I try to cover her mouth with my hand, but she just pushes it away.

Smack! Smack! Smack!

I press my lips against hers and feel her moans echoing in my open maw. Then I moan against it, and we create a sexual cacophony, just barely muffled between our cheeks.

Smack! Smack! Smack!

Her body shivers beneath me. I can feel her pussy tightening around me, pulsating. Each thrust sends a wave through her body that crashes back against me and sends it back.

Smack! Smack! Smack!

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Her nails are digging into my back, and I don't want her to stop, but I don't know how much longer I can handle it. She kisses me and holds me close. I want her to cum for me. I love how she feels.

Smack! Smack!

“Cum for me,” I whisper in her ear.

Just those few little words send her over the edge. She screams out in pleasure as her body shakes and quivers again. This time she is bucking up under me. I keep thrusting into her, harder than ever, making her scream. She keeps going, shivering and moaning. It's almost too much to bear. Finally, her body goes limp beneath me except for the small twitches that occur when I thrust back into her.

I smile and pull myself away from her. I lie next to her and hold her close until she stops shaking. I kiss her on the head, and she snuggles into me. Just lying here with her in my arms makes my heart soar. I want more of this.

After a few minutes, she lifts herself and smiles at me. I smile back, happy as can be, but I can see a spark left in her eye. She's, by far, not done.

She straddles my lap with her pussy right over my cock. I lie back and enjoy the view as she lowers herself onto me. I groan softly as I feel my cock enter her slowly. Every inch tingles, still a bit sensitive from her orgasm. As soon as my entire length is within her, she pauses, just enjoying that fact.

She places her hands on my chest and begins to slowly rock back and forth. Every

time she rocks I moan—I can't help it. She rocks harder, pressing herself down as far as she can on my cock. She forces the sound out of me. I place a hand over hers, and her nails start to dig in.

I place my other hand right on her ass with a soft smack. She moans at the slap and picks up her pace. My eyes roll back, and I start to breathe heavily through my nose. She rocks harder until I can barely contain myself.

My cock throbs within her. She pants softly, and I hold her hand tight and her ass firmly. I let out a few grunts, then bring my hands up to cup her face, bringing it down to mine. I press my lips firmly against her and start to buck up under her.

I keep one hand on her head and bring the other back to her rear, holding her firmly against me. I buck again and again as she rides me until I feel her body starting to quake. Her body shivers and her pussy clamps down tight. My cock starts to throb, and I moan against her lips.

She holds me close, keeping herself as close as possible. She breathes heavily through her nose while she kisses me. I hold her close as my cock pumps hard inside her, filling her completely. Slowly our bodies become one, holding each other in that instant. We are as close as possible, and for a moment it feels like it will go on forever.

Sadly, all good things must come to an end. She finally breaks the kiss and slowly slides off me. Without saying another word, she gets up and starts to get dressed. I watch her collect her clothing and feel an immense sadness fill my heart. I don't want her to go. Honestly, I'm not even sure she wants to go.

She pulls up her pants and puts on her shirt, then looks back at me as I get up, grab my robe, and tie it closed. She follows me downstairs and to the front door.

I pull her into a kiss, holding the back of her head. We melt once more, but only for a moment before she pulls away. I plant one last small kiss on her lips before she opens the door and is once again out of my life.

I head back up to bed and throw myself under the covers, not even caring that I'm still buck naked. I lie there thinking about her. I think about everything—her laugh, her smile, her body, her mind. I want her here, right here. I want her snuggled up against me under the covers.

I just want her.

10

Claire

It's been a few days since I've seen Hailey, and boy, do we have a lot to catch up on. Ultimately not a lot has happened, but in our little edge of the universe, it seems like it has. I never expected to go home with Alex after meeting with his daughter. I hadn't realized how late it was when I left.

It was such an amazing night. His little girl is just so cute. She is creative and smart. She knows exactly what she wants for her birthday, which makes my job pretty simple. I thought maybe we might go out to eat somewhere, but to get invited to his house to have dinner with him and his daughter? That threw me right off.

I was a little scared when we got there and there was someone cooking in the kitchen. I thought for sure he'd met someone else, but no. It was just his nanny, who is a wonderful lady. She truly cares for that little girl and for him. She's definitely one of the family to them.

After dinner I was sure I was going to go home. But how can you say no to a little

girl asking you to go see her room? And then how can you deny an impromptu tea party? I didn't know that something so simple and innocent could turn into something more. I don't know how long Alex had been watching us, but I'm pretty sure it was enough time for him to know I was going to sleep with him.

Oh my God, he's great in bed. I thought I was done when he whispered in my ear, and it seemed that he would have been happy being done then too. But it's just not like me to leave a man unfinished after something like that. I just had to climb back on and finish the job—and finish the job I did.

I see Hailey come through the doors and right into my office. She sets a tray down on the desk with two large shake-like coffees topped with mounds of whipped cream. She sets her things down and doesn't say a word, first handing me one of the cups, then pulling the other out for herself. She pulls a chair up close to the desk, sits down, takes a long sip of her drink, and looks me right in the eye.

“Tell. Me. Everything.”

She sits back in the chair with her drink in her hands, looking at me like a three-year-old waiting to hear a tall tale from Mom. I smile and take a sip of my drink. Then I wave one hand with a flourish.

“You wouldn't believe it if I told you.”

She knew there was some sort of thing between me and Alex when he came to drop off my wallet. She knew it right away. I know she was kind of hoping that he and I would do it right after she left, but we didn't.

I told her everything about meeting his daughter and the party, and she volunteered to help me out with the party. She loves all things glittery and pink. I start to tell her about the night in his car, and how he'd told his driver to put on some tunes and put

in some ear plugs.

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“Are you serious?” Hailey laughs.

“Like the plague. We had some great sex in his limo.”

“It was a limo? He has a limo. He has a limo?”

“Oh yeah. It was hot. But wait, there’s more.”

Then I tell her the best part. Okay, not the best part. But it’s the part that leads to the best part.

“So, after talking everything over with Sadie, he asks me over to his place.” I pause dramatically. “For dinner.”

“Oh. My. God. Did you go? Tell me you went.”

“Oh, I went. He had a car pick us all up. We went to his place, which is amazing by the way.”

“How amazing?”

“Brownstone.”

Her eyes light up when I say that. She’s always wanted to live in a brownstone. She loves the sort of old-timey architecture about the city. She waves her hand for me to continue the story, and she takes sip like a Great Dane drinking out of a bowl. Her drink is nearly gone.

I tell her a little about Imelda, and she “aww”s at that. She thinks it’s sweet that he has a nanny for his girl and that he’s a real family man. I tell her that Sadie invited me up to her room and about the little tea party.

“Okay, so you’ve seen this guy multiple times, you have great sex, he’s hired you, and you’ve met his daughter.”

I nod.

“So, when’s the wedding?” Hailey jokes.

“It’s not like that, Hailey.”

“You had a tea party with his daughter. How is it not?”

“Because neither of us are looking for commitment. It’s all just a... series... of one-night stands. That’s all.” I start to doubt myself even as I tell her. I’ve never continued to sleep with a one-night stand before. We did make it clear that this was a onetime thing, just a fling from the internet.

“A series. At the rate you two are going, it’s gonna be church bells in a matter of weeks.”

“You really think so?”

She gives me a look. “You both laid it out from the beginning. Just a fling. Neither of you are looking for a relationship, and he doesn’t want any more kids, right?”

“He’s hinted at that.”

“Just don’t dive in too deep. He’s a charmer, for sure. But he’s a big fish in this place,

and you have to throw him back at some point.”

I know that she’s right, but I honestly don’t want to believe it. I’ve been enjoying my time with Alex, and I really think he has too. I know what we said, but we also said it was just one night. Clearly, we were wrong then. Why can’t we be wrong now?

Hailey pulls a sketch pad from her bag and plops it on the desk. She asks a few basic questions about the venue and theme. Where is it? What room? What are the lighting options?

She knows most of the more common venues and pretty much has all their rooms committed to memory. She draws out a basic sketch of the room with linens, lights, and all. She asks where things are supposed to go: cake, flowers, etc. I point out where Sadie wants these things, and she quickly adds them to the sketches.

I pull out my sketch pad where Sadie drew the flowers and show her. “She wants these flowers.”

Hailey looks over them and giggles. “Oh my God. These are so cute. She drew these?”

“I asked her to.”

“You started bonding even before dinner, didn’t you?”

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“I was doing my job.”

“Did he make eye contact with you?”

I nod.

“Was he smiling with a little sparkle in his eye?”

I thought about it for a second, then nodded.

“And he encouraged Sadie’s playfulness?”

I nodded again, and she put up her hands, effectively saying, “Well, there ya go.”

“You really think he would change his mind about this whole thing just being a fling?”

“Haven’t you?”

I hadn’t really thought that hard about it, but I guess I kind of have. Normally I don’t see my flings afterward. Ever. I mean, I’d still take a job from them, but if they made it weird, like say going to their house for dinner, I’d probably leave. I haven’t left him. Do I feel something for him?

We talk about the job for a short while until it’s clear she has something else to say. I watch her squirm a little trying not to say it but clearly wanting to. I sigh and put my pen down, signaling that she just needs to spit it out.

She lays her hands flat on the desk and looks at me.

“He seems like a really nice guy and I know you can make decisions for yourself, but I don’t want to see you get hurt. You told me everything that happened with...” She gestures with her eyes, not daring to say my ex’s name. She honestly treats him like an evil wizard that gains power by any mention of him.

“I just want you to be careful and not jump in too deep. It may seem nice now, and well, he’s loaded. That’s for sure. But, you know, for your sake, and a little for his... be careful.”

I know she means well. I really appreciate it. I know I shouldn’t just dive in, but in a way, we both kind of have. I mean he invited me to his house. How much more diving can there really be?

We continue working on the party and make a few phone calls. I ask her to call up one of her old friends who knows a good seamstress for children’s costumes. Once we get her on the line, I go over the details and get everything squared away for Sadie’s dress.

Hailey makes faces at me all the while I’m on the phone. I know she’s questioning why I took the job for him, why I stayed later to interact with Sadie, and why I’m now arguing with an old Italian woman about how many ruffles should be on a five-year-old’s princess gown.

My personal phone buzzes on my desk, and I wave to let Hailey grab it. I’m stuck on the phone with the dressmaker. She’s not going to stop talking, so I hope whoever is trying to reach me isn’t important.

Hailey grabs my phone and looks at the screen. Her eyes get wide, and then she looks up at me with a grin. I mouth, “Who is it?” to her, and she laughs quietly. I lean over

the table to snatch the phone from her, and she leans away, gets out of her seat, and walks far enough away that the cord on this phone won't reach her.

"I had a really great time on Sunday," Hailey reads.

Oh no. Please stop reading, I think.

"Sadie hasn't stopped talking about you."

Oh God, there's more.

"I'd really like it if we could meet up for final payments."

Finally, the lady on the other end of the phone is finished. She says she has a dress that's close enough to what I'm looking for if I want to come pick it up later. I agree and quickly hang up the phone. Then I leap over the desk and snatch the phone from Hailey, who is standing there laughing.

Yeah, we can meet up. I'll be picking up Sadie's dress later today too.

Perfect. Want to come by my place to show her?

Sounds good. Are you going to give me another "grand tour"?

Damn it!

Hailey is standing there across from me, watching me text him. She cocks her brow. I know she saw the smile come across my face when I texted him that last bit. She comes closer to me and pats my shoulder.

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“Should I give you two a moment?” she says, half-jokingly.

I sort of chuckle, and she nods.

“Just let me know when you’re done.” She pats my shoulder again and exits the room with a small laugh.

I go back to my phone. He’s responded.

Only if you beg for it.

And if I don’t?

Then I’ll make you wish you did.

How?

I know I want to be back in his bedroom, but like Hailey said, I have to be careful of jumping in too deep. But I really want to know. What a conundrum I’ve gotten myself into.

You’re not the only one that knows how to dress to the nines.

Tell me more.

All I need to do is slick back my hair and put on the suit that makes my package look like I’m in spandex. Maybe I can skip a shave and put on the cologne that all the

ladies love. I suppose I could also show up in the limo again.

Limo's been done. What else ya got?

My kitchen.

Those two words send shivers up my spine. How, where—would he do me in his kitchen? I want to, have to know!

Your kitchen?

I'd lift you by your magnificent ass and set you on the counter so you can wrap your legs around me. You'd be wearing a skirt of course.

You bet I would.

Then all I'd have to do is unzip my fly and move your panties aside. We wouldn't even have to get undressed. Just right there, on the counter, in the middle of the day.

Middle of the day?

What? Are you afraid someone might walk in?

What if they did?

What if they did? Would you want me to stop?

Lock the door. Don't stop.

I have you on the counter with my cock buried inside you. You'd like that, wouldn't you?

Oh yes.

Would you like it if I bit your neck again?

Please.

I'll see you tonight, Claire.

I lean against my desk with my phone clutched against my chest. That was more intense than I thought it could be, and I am so turned on. But I can't be. Back to the shallows with you, Claire.

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Hailey knocks on the door after a few minutes, and I let her in.

“So, what’s the verdict?”

“I’m going to his place tonight.”

I’ve got the dress, and I’m on my way over to Alex’s. I promised Hailey, and myself, that I wouldn’t sleep with him again. This is a professional job. He’s my client; I am just planning his party. We are going over the final payment and getting his daughter in a dress, and that’s it.

I pull up to the house and take a deep breath. I head up the path with dress in hand and ring the bell. I hear Sadie run up to the door.

“Daddy, Daddy! It’s Claire!”

Then I hear Imelda behind her, approaching the door. “Close your eyes, reinita. She has a surprise for you.”

The door opens and Imelda is there with Sadie obediently holding her hands over her eyes behind her. I step in and Imelda grabs Sadie’s shoulders to guide her back into the living room. I follow them closely.

Alex is in the living room, lounging on the couch in a lovely gray suit with a red tie. He seems to have a bit of a five-o’clock shadow going, and it really works for him. He has a glass of red wine in one hand that he sets down before standing and straightening his lapels.

This must be the suit he was talking about because my eyes are immediately drawn to his bulge. These pants look amazing on him. I want to jump over the couch and tear that suit off him with my teeth. I resist, but I want to so badly.

“Can I open them yet?” Sadie asks impatiently.

I hold out the dress in front of her and say, “Open them!”

She does and immediately grabs the dress and screams in happiness.

“Daddy! Look! My princess dress!” She screams again.

“Go put it on,” he says calmly.

She runs upstairs, and we all share a kindly laugh about her joy. Imelda returns to the kitchen where she is making something for dinner. Alex approaches with one hand in his pocket and the other outstretched. I’m not sure if he’s going for a handshake or a hug. I guess he’s not sure which I would prefer either.

I do my best to keep it professional and start with a handshake, but it feels a little awkward, so I go in for a hug. He seems to appreciate that and wraps his arms around me. I take a whiff of him; he smells fantastic. I get a little turned on just smelling him.

We back up a little, and he has a smug smile on his face. He pours me a glass of wine and grabs his to continue sipping.

“Did you get my message?” he asks, as though this was something we weren’t just talking about earlier today.

I look back at the kitchen with quite the obvious glance. “Seems we have company

tonight. Another time perhaps.”

He chuckles and it sounds so wonderful. He has such a smooth, deep voice that it’s like a wave of silk that embraces you and won’t let go until you beg. Granted, I don’t want it to ever stop.

Sadie comes running back downstairs in her new dress and a smile from ear to ear. She runs into the living room, does a lap, then twirls around in the center of the room.

“Daddy, look! Daddy, look!”

“I see you, Princess. Do you like it?”

She twirls and runs around some more until she ends up in the kitchen with Imelda and gets a lovely compliment from her. Then she runs back over to us and gives me a big hug. I stumble from the unexpected force of the little girl running full on into me.

I get a warm feeling inside from her hug. I pat her on the shoulder and hear her whisper a thank-you to me. I smile and my cheeks flush a little. This is new to me. I Alex watches us, simultaneously surprised and at ease. Then I look over at Imelda, who has a similar look on her face.

Sadie then runs over to her dad and gives him a hug. He bends down to kiss her forehead, and she runs off back to her room to grab matching accessories for dinner.

“Would you care to stay for dinner?”

“Sure,” I say with less hesitation than I thought.

He chuckles and leads me to a dining room with a table that is actually used for dining, which amazes me. I mean, mine is tiny with two chairs, and right now there’s

just piles of work stuff on it.

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Sadie comes back downstairs holding a plush unicorn. She has on a pair of pink shoes and a little pink tiara. She finds her seat at the table and sits down. Imelda signals that the food is almost ready. Alex tells Sadie to go wash her hands, and she does so while he retrieves the silverware and plates.

Without a second thought, I help him set the table. We set it together, glancing at each other shyly every so often. Sadie returns, and Imelda brings the food to the table. We all take our seats and have a nice meal together.

For a young child, Sadie is rather well-behaved at the table. We enjoy our meal and listen to Sadie talk about how this party is going to be the “bestest party ever.” Alex agrees that it will be, as does Imelda. I just smile and nod.

After dinner, Imelda takes Sadie upstairs for a bath, then bedtime. Alex gathers the dishes and runs water for them in the sink. I help him get everything together. He shuts off the water and turns around to look at me. We’re both thinking the same thing. The kitchen is open.

“I’m sorry. I have a really early day tomorrow. I think I’ll have to call it a night.”

“Of course,” he says with a calm smile.

Then he walks me to the door and opens it for me. I start to leave, then turn around to face him.

“I had a nice night. Thank you.”

“You’re welcome.”

I go in to hug him, and he hugs me close. It is warm and safe and just pure bliss. The embrace slowly ends, and he places a warm hand on my cheek. I look up at him, and he gently touches his lips to mine. We stand in his doorway for a few seconds with our lips together.

Then I step closer and press myself against him and wrap my arms around his neck. He wraps one arm around my waist and keeps the other hand on my cheek. I get lost in this simple, tender kiss. It just feels right to be kissing him.

After a moment we pull away from each other and say good night. I get in my car, and he shuts the door behind me. That was not planned. I don’t think he thought he was going to do that. I’m glad he did though.

11

Alex

It’s early in the morning, and I doubt I have much time before Sadie wakes up and the chaos begins. Her party is today, and I know she’s going to be a handful, regardless of how well-behaved she normally is.

Earlier in the week I talked with Imelda and gave her the option to have the weekend off. She decided to take the time off but will, of course, show up at Sadie’s party. She wouldn’t miss it for the world. I know she loves my little girl and sees us both as family. I’ve helped her a great deal as well as some of her family.

She said she would be bringing her grandson along. He’s a few years older than my Sadie and a nice boy. His parents are a little worse for wear, but that’s where a lot of Imelda’s money goes. She cares for the boy, and I helped her open a savings account

for him that he will be able to access when he's older.

I head downstairs in my robe to get the coffee going, then grab the paper and start flipping through the articles. There's a stock crash in something plant related, and another stock is up in something entertainment related. I flip to the funny pages, because let's face it, these are really the only pages worth reading.

I get my first cup of coffee just right and drink while reading through the comics. By the time I finish my second comic strip, I can hear Sadie getting up. I hear the little pitter-patter of her feet as she runs through the hall and down the stairs. Finally, she runs right into the kitchen and leaps into my arms.

"Good morning, Princess!"

"Daddy! Guess what day it is?"

"Hm... Monday."

"No."

"Pancake Day."

"No," she says, pondering the idea.

"What day is it?"

"My birthday!"

"Is it? Wow! You must be turning ten already, right?"

"No, Daddy. I'm five!"

I tickle her and kiss her forehead. She giggles and gives me a big hug. Then she hops off my lap and heads to the cupboard to find her favorite cup.

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“Daddy?”

“Yes?”

“Can I have pancakes even though it’s not Pancake Day?”

“Yes, Princess.”

I chuckle and get up to start making pancakes. It’s the little things like this that really make me miss Mary. But I’m so lucky she left me with Sadie. I know in my heart that she is never truly gone because of my daughter.

I get the first stack made up and slide them down the table for Sadie. She is still struggling with the bottle of juice and her cup. I watch her carefully, but I know that she’s been trying to accomplish this for some time now. Imelda has told me all about it. Oh, the stories of milk and juice going all over the floor and Sadie having to help Imelda mop it all up, then go to the store and get a new bottle.

She unscrews the cap on the juice and sets her cup on the floor. Then she places the bottle on her hip and tilts her entire body, trying to carefully pour. I watch her out of the corner of my eye. She keeps tilting, and I worry that she will topple over. After a few sweat-breaking moments, she manages to start pouring the juice into her cup. She pours and pours until I fear the cup will overflow. But she tilts back at the last second and places the cap back on the juice.

She manages to pour a glass, and I manage to burn a pancake. I quickly pull the pan from the burner with a clang. Sadie laughs at me and puts the bottle back in the

fridge. Then she tries to get her glass up on the table next to her pancakes and only spills a little. I throw the burnt pancake away and make myself some new ones.

I sit with her and eat. She tells me how excited she is and who she hopes will show up. I just sit there and smile, knowing that this will be a great party even if she doesn't remember it later on in life. Perhaps one day when she's an adult she will have fond memories of being a princess on her birthday. That's all I can hope for.

There is a knock on the door, and I know exactly who it is. Sadie looks at the door, then at me.

"Who is it, Daddy?"

"Go check," I encourage.

She slides off the chair and runs over to the door. When she pulls it open, my mother stands on the stoop with a big smile and a few large bags hanging on her arms.

Sadie leaps into her arms with a big hug and a squeal of happiness. "Grammy!"

"Hi, sweetie! Happy Birthday!"

There is much embracing before Sadie runs back inside and up onto her chair to eat more pancakes. My mother comes in and sets her things down in the foyer, then comes in to join us.

"Still in your robe? At this hour?"

"Nice to see you too, Mother," I chuckle.

I hand her a plate with a few pancakes, and she takes it. She sits next to Sadie, who is

most happy to be sitting with her grandmother on her birthday.

After the meal, I gather the dishes and tell Sadie to run upstairs and get into her birthday dress. She happily obliges. My mother helps me with the dishes.

“Go get yourself ready. You have a party to go to.”

“I’m not about to let my mother wash dishes in my house.”

She gives me a stern look, like she’s about to whack me over the head with a spoon. I dip my head and go upstairs to get changed. There’s no use arguing with this woman. She knows what’s what and will take no shit.

Sadie runs downstairs, and my mother helps her get her hair exactly how she wants it. I get myself ready, which is actually more arduous than I expected. I know I’ll be looking good today, but how good shall I look?

There are various suits hanging inside my closet in different shades of blues, grays, and blacks. Eventually, I pull a nice black tailcoat from the closet with a light pink shirt, darker pink tie, and a top hat with a matching band. I get myself in the suit and take one last look in the mirror before heading downstairs.

Sadie twirls around in her dress with her hair all done up and a tiara atop her head. She is very excited to be all dolled up. My mother offers to put makeup on her, to which she screams in excitement and sits as still as she can on a chair in front of Grandma. She starts with eye shadow, then a little blush, and finishes with a nice lipstick.

“Come on. You don’t want to be late.”

Sadie runs outside to the car with my mother following close behind. I grab a few of

the bags she brought in, clearly filled with gifts, then head out to the car as well. I've given my driver the day off, so I get in the front and drive us to the venue.

The drive is quick but not quick enough for Sadie. She bounces up and down with excitement. Once we arrive she is the first out of the car. I sternly tell her to wait, to which she stops in her tracks and impatiently waits.

Mother and I exit the car and grab the bags from the trunk, and then the three of us head inside. Claire is already there when we arrive. She has everything all set up and quickly approaches to take the bags from us.

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“Mother, this is Claire. She’s our party planner for the evening. Claire, this is my mother, Agatha.”

They shake hands and say hello. Mother tells Claire not to worry about the bags as she takes them to the gifts table herself. Sadie is still running around the room, and I start to wonder if she really needs cake and ice cream. She’s high-strung as it is.

“Is everything okay?”

“This is wonderful. Thank you, Claire.”

I give her a hug that lasts a little longer than intended, but neither of us really seem to mind. A few moments later the first of the guests arrive. In about twenty minutes, everyone and then some have arrived. The children run around the building in a variety of princess-themed costumes.

Claire takes control of the room and asks everyone to be seated for dinner. I’m actually quite surprised that everyone listens and sits at their tables. Then a few moments later, waiters come through serving plates of rather fancy-looking macaroni and cheese with hot dogs. It’s a simple dish, but it looks five-star.

About halfway through dinner, the music starts up and people get onto the dance floor. I keep an eye on Sadie to make sure she’s happy, but as long as she is, I don’t really care if she’s running about. More and more people get on the dance floor, and Claire makes her rounds.

I stand against a wall near the cake and can’t help but watch as she moves gracefully

around the room. She has a cute black dress on that is tight up top and flowing below. There's a large hot pink ribbon tied around the waist in a large bow and a matching ribbon in her hair. The dress is nothing spectacular, but on her it's a wondrous sight to behold.

Sadie runs up to me begging for the cake to be next. I can't say no to her. I motion to Claire, who smiles and nods. She announces the cake cutting, and children start lining up to get a piece of cake. I cut Sadie the first slice and hand her the plate. She runs off to her seat and eats it happily.

Claire comes over to help me serve the children as they bounce impatiently for their plate. There are a few moments when I swear she glances at me, but I can't exactly do anything about it right now. I want to say something, but that would be inappropriate.

I hand out my last slice and look over to see her finishing up too. She looks so comfortable and happy interacting with the kids. I can't help but smile at her. She stands with a big grin on her lips. Then she looks over at me, and I quickly turn away, afraid that I may have been staring too long.

She takes a slice for herself and goes to chat with the DJ. I slowly savor my own piece of cake, and my mother comes over to stand beside me.

"Tell me, Alex. What's uh... what's going on between you and this party planner, Claire?"

I nearly choke on my cake. "What do you mean?"

"Really? You're going there? All right." She takes in a deep breath. "Your eyes have been glued to her like a lion on the prowl. What's going on?"

I cough, actually choking this time. “There’s nothing going on. She’s just—I just hired her.”

“You’re a terrible liar. Don’t lie to your mother.”

I try and try to tell her that there’s nothing going on between us but to no avail. She thwarts my every attempt.

“I know it was hard on you, losing Mary, but I think it would be good for you to get back out there. You’re doing well. Sadie is growing up and almost in kindergarten. You’ll have some more free time.

“And that girl there, she’s a good-looking one. She clearly has a way with kids. She’s successful and seems to have her eye on you too.”

“Mother...”

“What? I’m just telling it like it is.”

I’m saved by Sadie running over to the large table overflowing with presents with her hands outstretched ready to snatch the first thing her fingers touch. I excuse myself and go to the table to act as servant, handing my girl her presents. Claire and a waiter help gather any wrapping paper, ribbons, and packaging.

My mother sits with Sadie and helps her with the stubborn bows and boxes. Sadie rips through all the paper and tears open any boxes in her way. Each present that is revealed is met with a wide-eyed smile, a big hug, and a genuine thank-you.

Claire looks up at me from her post with a soft smile, and I smile back. Our eyes meet and her cheeks turn as pink as her ribbon. I chuckle to myself, knowing full well that my cheeks have done the same. I don’t think Mother noticed, but I can’t be sure.

After a while, the presents are all opened and any toys that were received have been removed from their packaging. Sadie and the other children are now playing with everything and having a grand old time. The parents and other adults lounge at the tables while waiters bring them glasses of wine and other mixed drinks.

I do my best to avoid another awkward conversation with Mother, but she's a sly one and manages to corner me.

"How'd you meet her?"

"I hired her. She's a party planner."

"I mean before that."

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Do I tell my mother that I met her on a random hookup website, we had sex, and then just kind of kept doing it? That seems like the wrong thing to say to one's mother. "We hooked up once."

She looks at me with a cocked eyebrow, and I can hear her voice ringing in my head: "Don't lie to your mother."

"We met on a dating site a few weeks ago and hooked up a few times with no strings attached. Just a few flings. I happened to walk into her office, without knowing she was there. And now we're here. Happy?"

She chuckles and pats my arm. "That explains why you haven't taken your eyes off her. Don't be afraid of your feelings, Alex."

"I don't have feelings for her, Mother."

She pats my arm again, then wanders off to play a board game with Sadie at one of the tables.

I stand there for a moment pondering what I just said. I don't think I have feelings for her. Do I? I know I didn't really mean to kiss her on Wednesday, but it felt right. It's felt right every time I've kissed her. But we agreed—nothing serious.

The party continues for quite a while longer than any of us were really expecting until the first few children start to yawn. Their parents start rounding them up to take them home and thank us for the wonderful party. There are many hugs and goodbyes and thank-yous to be had.

My mother, Claire, and a few waiters help pack all of the leftovers and presents into my car. I pick up Sadie and carry her. A few seconds off the ground and she is asleep on my shoulder, completely tuckered out after her big day.

The last of us head outside. I buckle Sadie into her car seat, careful not to wake her. Mother gets into the car and waits patiently. I thank Claire with a sturdy handshake and can't help but open my mouth.

“Thank you so much for everything tonight. Would you like to come back to my place for a nightcap?”

She agrees, and I kick myself internally. I didn't think I was going to invite her—not that I don't want her to come home with me. But I will need to talk to her. Maybe talking with her will get everything straightened out.

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Claire

When we arrive at Alex's place, his mom helps us get everything inside. She helps get Sadie ready for bed and kisses her good night before kissing Alex on the cheek and thanking me again for the party. She takes her leave and tells Alex she'll be back in a few days to take Sadie to the zoo. She's a sweet woman.

I help Alex get a partially asleep Sadie upstairs and into bed. She gives me a very tired hug and whispers to me that she had a really fun night and that this was the best party ever. Just hearing her little voice tell me that almost brings tears to my eyes. It's one thing for a hoity-toity executive to say it, it's another for a five-year-old to do it.

Alex kisses her forehead, and she instantly falls asleep again. He offers me some wine when we head back downstairs, and we sit down on the couch to open the

bottle.

Our conversation starts out a little more serious than before. I start to wonder if he is just trying to view this as a business transaction. After the first glass, things start getting a little more friendly. We share stories about work and some of the games and pranks we've played in our office buildings when we weren't supposed to.

I tell him about the time one of my coworkers got really drunk at a Christmas party and found her way to the copy room. She lifted her shirt and pressed her humongous bosom right onto the glass and had hundreds of copies of her pressed nipples printed out. Then she took them all and headed to the top of the building and threw them all off the roof. They went fluttering down the street, carried away by the wind. It wasn't until a few days later that a potential client brought one of the copies in that she even knew what had happened.

We share a good laugh about the fiasco, and he shares a story of his. He tells me that he and his buddy Phil were really into sports in college. So, when they first started in an office setting they would play games with one another. One such game they played he described as a game of hockey played with balled up papers and yard sticks. They would write notes or dirty jokes on the papers, crumple them up, then use the yard sticks to hit them as far as possible. They worked on opposite ends of the floor, so the goal was to get the note to the other side of the floor. They got in trouble more than once for this game.

A few more stories later and we both take notice that the coffee table has three empty bottles sitting on it along with our half-empty wineglasses. I didn't even realized we had drank so much. He clearly didn't notice either.

We sit for a moment, contemplating exactly how drunk we both are. Then we throw caution to the wind. I kick off my shoes and slide closer to him on the couch. He wraps a strong arm around my shoulders and holds me close. I lean my head down on

his chest, and we sit there for a few moments just enjoying the closeness.

I think we're both trying to figure things out with our feelings, but I don't think either of us are in a place to really consider things.

He shifts, and I lift my head in his direction. Then he places a gentle palm on my cheek and brings me into a loving, passionate kiss. There's a spark between us, and I place my hand over his. My cheeks are hot, and I don't want him to stop.

We kiss again, then again with more tongue. I throw my arms around his neck and press my breasts against his chest. He wraps his arms around my waist. Our lips are glued together, and our tongues dance the mambo between our teeth.

I notice his breathing becoming faster. I want him. I lean into him, forcing him against the back of the couch so that I can whip my leg over his lap to straddle him. We continue to kiss, and he places his hands firmly on my ass. He digs his fingers into my skin, and all I want is for him to pull me closer.

He pulls back for a moment to catch his breath. "Bedroom?" he asks.

I nod and jump up off his lap. He gets up and grasps my hand. We head upstairs to his bedroom with much haste. Once there he presses me up against the bedroom door, closing it shut in the process. He kisses me again with more power than I thought he had.

My legs become jelly underneath me. He wraps his thick arms around me and hugs me tight. Then he grabs the zipper on my dress and unzips it with a quickness I've only seen in movies. I let the dress fall to the floor and start to unbutton his shirt.

He pulls away from me, grabs either side of his shirt, and rips it open, causing almost all of the buttons to go flying across the room. For a moment I freeze with my mouth

open and my eyes wide. It seems to happen in slow motion, and I swear I can see exactly where each button falls. I watch the fabric reveal his marvelous chest and then those firm, glorious, toned abs.

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He tosses the shirt aside and embraces me again. Whilst in the middle of a kiss, I feel my bra pop open and drop to the floor. I am utterly impressed. I reach down and undo his pants, which fall to the floor as well.

I push against him, and he backs up until he is lying on the bed. I pull his boxers away and admire his length standing tall before me. I crawl toward him and place my lips on the tip of his hard cock. He leans his head back and enjoys the sensation.

Slowly I slide my lips around the head, then down the shaft as far as I can take. I let my tongue slide down slowly, then I wrap it around to the other side and slide up. I grasp the base of his cock firmly with my hand and start to stroke. I suckle on the tip, making his leg twitch.

Down his shaft, up to the head, down his shaft, up to the head. I bob my head while pressing the tip of my tongue against the underside of his cock, and I stroke my hand in time.

I can hear him breathing heavily, fully enjoying his cock in my mouth. I bob a little faster. The tip of his cock almost hits my throat. I want to know if I can take it, but I'm not sure. I stroke his cock faster, and I can hear a faint moan escape his lips.

I swirl my tongue around the head a few times before putting my mouth down as far as it will go. Then back up, then all the way down. Again and again I bob my head, putting his entire length into my mouth. He places his hand on my head and gently grasps my hair.

I moan softly onto his cock. He gently pushes me away, and I sit up and wipe my

mouth. He sits up and brings me into a kiss. Then he pulls away and smiles at me. I wonder what he has in mind.

He kisses my neck, which makes me moan softly. Then he gently nibbles my earlobe before whispering, “Get on all fours.”

A shiver pulses through my body, and I gladly obey. He kneels behind me and presses the tip of his cock against my wet slit. He rubs it there slowly, making me moan. I want him inside me. He teases me with just the tip a few times before I look back at him with a pleading look in my eyes.

He places both hands firmly on my hips and thrusts his cock deep inside my tight, wet pussy. I moan, and he thrusts again. I can feel every inch of this thick cock as he slams against my ass.

He thrusts a few more times, making me moan each time. Then he slides one hand down between my legs and flanks my clit with the tips of his index finger and middle finger. He rubs gently, and shivers go up and down my spine.

My arms give out, and I lie there with my face in a pillow and my ass up in the air. He slams into me again and again. I moan louder and louder as he rubs my clit. I breathe heavily and think I’m getting close. Then he stops.

He stops thrusting, stops rubbing—just stops. I look back at him, and he has a sinister smile on his face. I wonder what exactly he’s playing at. He starts to rub my clit again gently, and I gasp. He thrusts into me, letting me feel each and every inch of his cock before pulling back and doing it again.

He rubs in slow circles, and I feel his lips on my back. Each thrust ends in a gentle kiss along my spine. I smile and moan softly, loving this gentle touch. He starts to thrust a little faster, and I can feel him breathing on my back. I push myself back

against his cock, making my ass smack against his pelvis.

He moans, and it urges me to keep going. His fingers slide away from my clit, and I almost beg him not to leave. But then his hands grasp my hips, his fingers digging into me. He thrusts harder and faster.

With every thrust he pulls me against him, ramming his cock as deep inside me as he can. I moan loudly, almost screaming in pleasure. I can feel him throbbing inside me with a few grunting moans. In the heat of the moment, he smacks my ass hard, which makes me moan. I'm a little surprised by my response, but I don't mind it really.

After a few more powerful thrusts, he pushes me down so that he is lying flat on top of me with his cock still within. He kisses my neck and reaches forward to interlace his fingers with mine. We stay like that for a short while until he pulls away, and I roll over beneath him.

He kisses me gently at first, then more passionately. He slowly eases his cock inside me. Our bodies are pressed up against one another. My breasts are flat against his toned chest. I have my fingers in his hair, kissing him over and over. I can feel every muscle in his back and legs working to push me over the edge.

I bring one hand down to caress his tight muscular rear. The other is grasping his soft, dark hair. I can feel his muscles tense as he thrusts. Every inch of my pussy tingles as his cock slides in and out.

He nibbles my neck and kisses me softly. Then he places his lips on my breast and suckles. I moan softly, hoping that he might leave just a bit of a reminder of this night. He bites down, and I surprise myself again when I find I enjoy it. He releases the flesh and leaves behind a wonderfully purple mark.

I pull his hair until he places his lips against mine. He groans and thrusts harder, our

pelvises crashing together. We moan into tongue-filled kisses. I dig my nails into his ass—there'll be marks left for sure.

He lifts himself up with his powerful arms, and I bring both hands to his back, scratching lightly. He thrusts powerfully, and we watch each other in all our glory. I moan with every thrust and arch my back, pushing my bouncing breasts up into the air toward him.

He comes back down on top of me and locks his lips with mine. I can feel myself getting closer. I hold him tight, with my nails digging into his skin. I gasp as my body begins to shiver, and his cock inside my pussy starts to push me over the edge.

I lean my head back and scream his name as my pussy clamps down around his warm, throbbing cock. I can feel him filling me as he moans my name softly against my neck. Our bodies shake and quiver. He keeps thrusting as long as he can before it becomes too much.

We kiss each other a few more times before he rolls off me. I lie there staring at his ceiling and panting hard. I can smell the sweat on both of us and smile. I can hear him breathing just as heavily.

When I look over at him, he has his eyes closed and the biggest smile across his lips. I snuggle close to him, and he wraps an arm around me. I feel safe against his chest, hearing him breathing. We hold each other close and catch our breaths. Before I know it, we're both sound asleep in each other's arms.

13

Alex

Morning comes all too quickly. The sun is seeping through my curtains, and Claire's

warm body is still snuggled up next to mine. With my eyes closed, I lie there and just bask in the feeling of waking up next to someone again.

I feel her start to wake, and I roll over to hug her. She makes a small sound of happiness before gasping and quickly pulling out of my grasp.

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“What’s wrong?” I ask, sitting up.

“Oh, no, no, no.”

She is clearly panicking. She is sitting up with her hands on either side of her head, shaking it and repeating herself. She quickly jumps off the bed, and I get a little distracted by the gorgeous, naked woman standing before me.

Claire frantically reaches for her clothes and starts to get dressed. I get up and grab my robe. She gets her panties and bra on by the time I stop her with my hands on her shoulders.

“Claire, what’s wrong?”

“I’m sorry, Alex,” she starts. Which is of course what every man wants to hear the morning after amazing sex. “I didn’t mean to stay the night.”

“It’s not the worst thing that could’ve happened.” I brush some hair from her face and lift her chin to look me in the eye. “I can make up some coffee and breakfast and we can just talk things over, okay?”

“Alex, I have to go.”

She pulls away from me, and I watch her pull on her dress. I remember the last time I watched her get dressed. I remember how I felt lying alone in that hotel bed, feeling cold and alone. I don’t want to feel that again. Not after last night.

She is dressed and heads for the door. Right before she opens it, I grab her by the wrist. She looks back at me with sad eyes.

“Please?” I beg.

She just shakes her head and heads downstairs. I stand there in my room listening to her leave my house. Once the front door shuts, I sit down on the edge of my bed. I sit there for a long moment wondering if it all was a big mistake. It surely didn’t seem like one then.

I finally muster enough energy to get up, put on some pajama pants, and head downstairs. Sadie isn’t awake yet, which is probably for the best. I get down into the living room where the wine bottles are sitting on the table.

I rub my head and suck my lips in, thinking that maybe it really was a mistake. I clean up the living room and head into the kitchen to make breakfast. The day after my little girl’s birthday is not a day to disappoint, so I make waffles with scrambled eggs and sausage.

By the time the second waffle is made, I hear her stirring upstairs. A flash of last night pops into my head, and I breathe a heavy sigh of relief. It’s a wonderful thing that Sadie is such a heavy sleeper. I hadn’t even thought of what could’ve happened if Claire’s moaning and screaming had woken Sadie up. Even worse, if Sadie had wandered into my bedroom to find us wrapped together.

I hear her little feet pattering down the stairs, and soon she is up in her chair. “Good morning, Daddy!”

“Good morning. How does it feel to be five?”

“Am I big enough to ride the big-kid rides at the fair?”

I smile and laugh. “You can ride the big-kid rides, but not the teen rides.”

She pouts at first, then smiles with a nod. “I can live with that.”

I chuckle and hand her a plate with a waffle, on which I drew a happy face in whipped cream and chocolate sauce. Then I hand her a plate of eggs and sausage, which is all laid out in another happy face. Sadie laughs and digs into her waffle.

We sit together and eat in harmony. I ask her about her party and how she liked it. She tells me all sorts of stories about the various presents she got and who showed up and what fun they all had playing together. Then she tells me how amazing Claire is for putting it all together.

I nod, knowing entirely well that Claire is amazing. But that’s not a conversation one has with their five-year-old.

We finish our breakfast, and I let her bring down a few toys to play with in the living room. First, she brings down a new dollhouse complete with kitchen, walk-in closet, and Jacuzzi. I’m impressed with these dolls. They’re living the life. Then she goes back upstairs and brings down a few new dolls and stuffed animals.

We sit together on the floor playing with her new dolls. Somehow these dolls, although only a day old in Sadie time, have immensely complicated backstories. One doll has recently gone through a major surgery and only has days to live. Another is a world-renowned wildlife expert on unicorns and has done extensive studies. Her new flamingo plush is just small enough to fit into the doll clothes, and although his name is Jimmy, he looks fabulous in the dresses and all of the other flamingos are jealous.

I am astounded by the stories she can come up with.

There is a knock at the door, and I excuse myself to answer it. There is a small piece

of me that really wants it to be Claire, but with how she left this morning, I doubt it very much.

I open the door, and there is Phil with an armful of brightly wrapped presents for Sadie. I invite him in, and he goes straight over to the living room. Sadie jumps up and runs over to hug him, which really wasn't the best option.

Phil stumbles and does his best not to drop the packages on my daughter, which I greatly appreciate. I grab a few from him, and he safely sets the rest down. Then he picks up Sadie in a twirling hug.

“How's the birthday girl this fine, cheery morning?”

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Sadie laughs and kisses his cheek before he puts her down. “Uncle Phil! Uncle Phil! Look what I got!”

She runs back to her toys and starts to show him her new things. Phil kneels down to talk with her about her new toys, and I think back to last night when Claire was handing out the cake to the other children. She was so calm and happy and caring. She really clicked with them, and I know she’s taken a liking to Sadie.

Phil comes back over to me, and we give each other a hug with a hearty pat on the back.

“Sorry I couldn’t make it, man. There was a snag with a shipment, so I had to be at the office.”

I assure him that it’s perfectly acceptable and that Sadie is happy that he’s here now. Phil smiles and hands Sadie the presents he got for her. She happily rips open the paper and the packages. Phil helps her with the stubborn tape and stuck knots in ribbons. She gives him big hugs after every present and thanks him thoroughly.

After the last present is opened, she plays with everything in the living room. Phil and I head to the kitchen and sit at the island. I pour us each a drink, and we sip them as we talk.

“How was the party?”

“It went really well. Everyone that Sadie really wanted to see was there.”

“Was everyone you really wanted to see there?”

He bounces his eyebrows at me, and I look at him with playful disgust. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Bullshit,” he whispers.

I sip my drink as coyly as possible.

“You hired her because you fucked her, didn’t you?”

“That—that is not why I hired her.”

We chat a little more about the matter. Well, mostly he just teases me about her. I tell him about our encounters with each other, careful not to say certain things too loudly. He listens to my stories rather intently and really seems to be getting into them. I end my tales with last night and how she seemed to be thoroughly pleased before falling asleep in my arms. He gets excited, and then I let him down with how she abruptly left this morning.

He sits there stunned for a moment before sipping his drink. He ruminates on the stories I’ve told him, then looks up at me and smirks.

“So, you like her?”

“What?” I nearly spit out my drink.

“Come on. You like her. You brought her back here after the party, and she helped you put Sadie to bed. Then she—” He snickers. “—helps you to bed. She stayed the night.”

“And then she left.”

“Okay, how do you feel about her? Tell me honestly, bro.”

I sit there for a while. I have my lips on the rim of my glass, and I look over at Sadie playing in the living room. There are feelings there, I can't deny it. But do I really want them on the surface? Can I handle putting myself out there just to watch her leave again?

“You're right. I do really like her. I want her to come back and not leave. Not in a creepy way, but I want her to come to bed and stay the next morning.”

Phil nods, then sets his glass down and shrugs. “You gotta tell her, dude.”

“How can I?”

“Call her up. If you don't you'll regret it. At least if you get a no you can move on.”

“And if I get a no?”

“Then you'll know. But you're playing with an if. Call her and find out before you start worrying about what may be.”

We finish our drinks, then help Sadie get some of her toys back up to her room. Phil stays for a while longer, long enough to have at least one tea party and one makeover from Sadie. I thank him for coming by and assure him that I will call Claire. He tells me to call him later if I need a friend, and I thank him for the sentiment.

I get Sadie ready for a bath and into the tub. I know that I have at least an hour before I should get her dried off and in pajamas. It doesn't take her that long to wash up, but she has those weird bath crayons and a small basket of bath toys, so I know I have

some time.

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I sit on my bed so that I can hear Sadie, just in case. I have my phone in my hand, but I have to figure out what I want to say before I can even make the call. Over and over I think of my options, and at least in my head, none of them have a good outcome.

I have feelings for Claire—I know I do. I didn't think I would. I thought that this was going to be just a fling, like we'd agreed. I thought that I would never feel something like this again after Mary.

But I was wrong.

Claire came into my life and knocked me off balance. I sit there looking down at my phone, and I can't help but feel simultaneously sad and happy. I want to call her, to hear her voice. But I know if she says no, I would be devastated.

I contemplate my feelings a while longer and finally muster up the courage to push the Call button. The phone rings and rings. Each time I hear it ring, I want to hang up. Finally, she answers.

“Hello?”

“Hi, Claire. It's Alex.”

“Yeah, caller ID.”

“Right. Look I wanted to know if we could... maybe talk about things a little.”

“Now is not a good time, Alex.”

“What about tomorrow? Or Tuesday?”

“Alex... I don’t have time right now. Sorry.”

I can hear that there’s something wrong. I start to wonder if it’s me.

“Wednesday?”

“It’s not a good idea. We’ve already overstayed our one night.”

“I just want to talk, I swear. We can get a coffee or lunch or...”

“I’m not feeling very well right now. I have to go.”

“Claire—”

“Bye, Alex.”

The phone goes dead. My heart drops. My hands fall between my knees, and the phone clanks onto the floor. I don’t really know what I’m feeling, but it’s terrible. I feel sick to my stomach, my heart aches, my mind is foggy, and all I want to do is be near Claire.

14

Claire

I’ve gotten no less than a dozen phone calls from Alex within the last forty-eight hours. I haven’t answered a single one of them. I want to, but at the same time I know I can’t. It’s not that he’s done something wrong or that he’s a bad person or anything like that. I really do like him, but I know it’s over. It’s more than over.

I wasn't expecting to stay over at Alex's place after the party. It was great that he invited me over, and I'd felt like I should at least help him get all of Sadie's gifts home safe. It was really nice to get to know him a little better, even if it was over a few bottles of wine. I honestly can't say that the sex that night was bad. It was more than amazing.

Waking up next to him was wonderful, but that was not supposed to be on the table. It took me by surprise and I think I may have hurt Alex when I left like that, but I had to. I couldn't risk Sadie waking up to me and her father either in bed or having breakfast as disheveled as we were.

Once I got home, I immediately took a shower and just relaxed for a few minutes until it dawned on me that I was late. I'd thought I was just nervous or stressed or whatever, and one or two days isn't that big of a deal usually. Things happen and hormones and cycles get wonky. But I've never been this late.

I went back into the bathroom and took a pregnancy test. That's when I found out. Mere seconds after reading the dipstick, I got the call from Alex. I both wanted to burst into tears and tell him the exciting news, but I couldn't muster either.

When I finally got him off the phone, I took another one, just to be sure. That little plus sign came up again, bright as day. I sat in my living room most of the day, wondering what I could do. Alex already told me that he doesn't think he'd want more kids, and we had already agreed this was a fling. I certainly don't think I could handle this whole thing on my own, but it would be wrong to go through the final option without talking to him first, wouldn't it?

I took the day off on Monday to sit with my thoughts and gather any information I could from any help website I could find. I was quite surprised by the sheer amount of information there is out there about this kind of stuff: blogs and videos and message boards all about flings gone wrong. I reached out to a few women who each

had their own take on the matter.

Today I've been quiet at work and no one has really bothered me, which is just what I was hoping for. I know that I have the time to meet with Alex, but I don't know what I'd say.

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“Hey, I know you didn’t want kids, but I’m knocked up now.”

That’s not quite what one-night stands want to hear. In fact, most would become really defensive and start blaming you for being a slut. Clearly, it couldn’t be theirs.

I start to think about all of our various encounters, and my heart sinks. I sit back in my chair and slap my palms against my forehead. Hailey warned me to take condoms with me, and I did have them stashed in my purse, but it didn’t actually occur to me until now that we never used them.

I mentally punish myself and imagine myself sitting in the corner like when I was a little girl and stole the last cookie out of the jar.

“Stupid. Stupid. Stupid,” I chant at myself.

My phone rings, and I ignore it. I certainly can’t face him now. This is entirely my fault, and I know he won’t want anything to do with me now. Maybe one of the women on the message boards will have some advice.

I want a coffee. Can I even have a coffee?

I get up and leave the office with my purse on my shoulder. I hail a taxi and take it to a coffee shop within walking distance from my apartment. I stand in line for the seemingly mandatory ten to fifteen minutes before getting to order. Then I wait at least twenty minutes for my fancy sugar-loaded, chocolate-strewn, iced coffee drink. I decide to take my time and sit at one of the nearby tables, sipping my drink slowly through a straw.

I watch the people come and go. A mother comes in with a toddler on her hip and a grade-schooler behind her. She goes up to the counter and hands the child a cookie, orders a tea for herself, and a cup of milk for the toddler. I smile as I watch them. Her juggling skills impress me as she manages to keep an eye on the wandering grade-schooler while also ensuring the toddler isn't fussing.

A few customers later, a young couple walks in with their arms linked. The woman has her head on the man's shoulder, and they're both smiling happily. The man kisses her forehead softly before asking her what she wants. They order and seem in such bliss together.

I think about how Alex has treated me up until this point. He has been a true gentleman, even in the bedroom. I think about the couple and imagine what it would be like if it were us. I know that Alex would buy our coffees, and I could hold his arm and put my head on his chest. We could be happy, smiling, together.

Eventually, I walk home alone. Once I get home I plop down on the couch, not even bothering to kick off my shoes or take off my jacket. My phone rings again, and I ignore it. I know it's him. I'm not ready. I know what I want. Or at least I think I do. I want to be happy. I want him to be happy. Do I want to be happy with him?

I flip on the TV and find a romantic comedy to watch. It doesn't necessarily help the situation, but it at least allows me to yell at the made-up character Roger and his dastardly deeds. Otherwise, I'd just be sitting here thinking about Alex and multiplying cells in my uterus.

After the first ten minutes, I kick off my shoes, change into some sweatpants, and plop back onto the couch with a large bowl of ice cream and a comfy blanket. I watch the movie until it gets dark, then find another to watch.

My phone buzzes. It buzzes again, and again. I stretch my foot out onto the table next

to it and slide my foot quickly across it, knocking the phone clear across the room. I shrug and continue watching my movie.

About halfway through, there's a knock at my door. I look at it, then back at my TV screen. I'm not home, and no one can change that.

There's another knock. I turn up the volume just a little. I'm still not home.

"Claire? I know you're home."

I look up at the door in shock. I consider not opening it for a moment, and then he knocks again.

I get up off the couch and wrap myself up in the blanket, then open the door to find Alex there. He's in a nice button-up shirt, a pair of slacks, and a long wool trench coat. He looks good while I look like a mess.

"May I come in?"

I stand there pondering the idea that he's really a vampire and if I don't invite him in, then he can't come in. And if he can't come in, then we don't have to have a conversation. I wonder if I can really pull that off, but I figure it's a long shot.

"Sure."

He enters and I shut the door behind him. I grab the remote and turn off the sappy movie. Then I move to the couch, and he sits down next to me.

"I know you've been ignoring my calls and my texts. What's going on, Claire?"

He looks deeply into my eyes, and I can see the sorrow building inside. "I've just not

been feeling well. That's all."

He reaches forward and gently holds my hand in his. "I know that's not it."

I sniffle and pull my blanket closer around myself.

"Did I do something wrong?"

I bite my lip. I know that I should tell him, I really should. He deserves to know. It would be mean to hide something like this from him. But I don't know how to tell him. "Not really..."

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He furrows his brow in confusion. “What do you mean?”

“Nothing to worry about,” I say with the fakest smile I can muster. Inside I regret my statement.

“Okay,” he says. He just accepts it so easily. He doesn’t seem pleased to have to accept it, but he does.

We sit there in silence for a bit. Eventually I pull my hand away from his. I do my best not to look at him because I know that if our eyes meet, then I’ll burst into tears.

“Claire, I’ve been meaning to talk to you, and up until now I didn’t really know how to go about it.”

“Alex...”

“Please, just hear me out and listen to what I have to say.”

I sigh uncertainly at his request. I turn away slightly so he can’t see the pain I feel inside. I know it’s showing through my eyes, and I don’t want him to see.

“Claire...” he begins. “I’ve been thinking about this for quite a while now, and honestly I never thought I’d be saying this. It’s been quite a wild ride, and I don’t know if this is the right thing to say but...”

He pauses, and I can’t help but look over at him. He locks eyes with me.

“I’m falling in love with you, Claire.”

My eyes go wide, and I am utterly speechless. I can’t believe he just said that. That is not the talk I was expecting. With everything that’s gone on recently, it’s becoming increasingly difficult to process it all.

I know he’s expecting an answer, but there’s nothing I can say. Well, really there’s plenty I can say, but nothing I can form into words. I want to tell him everything. I want to tell him there’s the possibility he’s a father again. I want to tell him that I have feelings for him too. I want to tell him that I want to be with him. But I can’t.

“I need some time to process this.”

I can see the disappointment in his eyes, and he nods. Then he gets up and shows himself out. I close the door behind him and lean against the door with my forehead just below the peephole. I watched the color and hope leech from him, and inside I just feel broken.

My eyes start to tear up, and I hear him slowly walk down the hall. The tears slide to the tip of my nose and drip down onto the carpet. I lightly smack the door in frustration, then knock my head against it.

“I’m pregnant.”

15

Alex

I know Phil said that once I heard a no I could be free to move on to bigger and better things. But after hearing what was effectively a no, I can’t bring myself to move anywhere at all. I hardly even want to go downstairs to get a cup of coffee. Imelda

has been a big help this week, and I can't thank her enough. She's kept Sadie happy, fed, and entertained. Really that's all I can hope for.

I start to think that maybe I should never have joined that online-dating app. That maybe I shouldn't have brought Claire to my home, any of the times I did. I shouldn't have let her so close to me and Sadie.

I went into something I wasn't ready for. I'd told Phil I wasn't ready for it, but he urged me to go for it. I guess I should be angry at him. He was just trying to help. And I certainly can't be upset with Sadie; she was just an innocent bystander in this whole thing.

How Claire had looked at me when I told her I was falling for her felt like a thousand knives stabbing into my guts and twisting. I was hoping for something more than just being shoved out. I would have settled for a silent hug. That would have been thousands of times better than what I got.

The second I left her apartment and got in my car, I couldn't stop the tears. I sat there for far too long watching the tears drip onto my lap before heading home. Once I got home, I hugged my little girl and sat in the living room watching a movie with her. But all I could think about was Claire.

My mother calls, breaking me away from this fog. I answer the phone and listen to her talk about something meaningless. She says that she will be by in an hour to pick up Sadie, then talks about something else that I'm not paying attention to. Hopefully, she doesn't realize I'm not paying attention. Granted, she's my mother. Of course she knows.

I get myself up off the bed and down into the living room where Imelda is singing a song with Sadie. I tell them that my mother will arrive soon and that Sadie needs to get ready for her day with Grandma. Sadie quickly bounds up the stairs to get herself

ready.

I plop down on the couch, and Imelda looks over at me.

“¡Señor! ¡Ay, dios mio!” She dramatically shields her eyes and turns her head away while tapping her chest with her hand, mimicking a racing heart.

I chuckle and close my knees. I am wearing shorts and boxers underneath my robe, but Imelda enjoys the joke nonetheless. She looks at me with a big smile, then comes to sit next to me on the couch.

“¿Que paso?”

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I look at her and try to put the thoughts out of my mind. “Nothing.”

“I know that’s not true. You know that’s not true.”

“How do you know?”

“You’ve been distant. When you play with Sadie, the smile on your face is as fake as a hooker’s tits.”

I laugh at her description, then shrug again. “There’s just a lot going on.”

“Like what?”

I look at her, and she looks at me.

“I may not be your mother, but I am a mother. I know when you’re lying, señor. I know when you are down and upset. It’s better to just get it out in the open.”

I take a deep breath and start to tell her everything about Claire. I mean everything. I tell her all about the sex, the website, the hookups. She sits there and listens, nodding along with my stories. Then I get to our final meeting and how distant she has been. I tell Imelda much more than I think she really needs to know, but she asked and I apparently need to get it out.

She sits there and nods for a while, pondering everything I said. She looks at me and pats my shoulder. “You love her, don’t you?”

I nod.

“And you told her?”

I nod again, looking down at my hands in my lap.

“And she just said she had stuff to figure out?”

Again, a nod is all I can muster.

“Give her time. She’ll come around, and when she’s ready, you best be too. You can’t have her ready to give some big speech about love to you looking like a bum.” She motions to me, all of me.

I rub my hand through my disheveled hair and chuckle. “Thank you, Imelda.”

“Now go take a shower. Reinita will go out with abuela for the day. Go find your friend Filipe.”

Imelda never calls Phil, “Phil.” She calls him “Filipe,” which Phil has taken as a term of endearment. I give her a big hug and head upstairs to take a shower.

While in the hot water, I hear a knock on the door. Then I hear Sadie run downstairs to greet her grandmother. Imelda and my mother talk to each other for a short while, and then I hear the door close.

There are footsteps coming up the stairs. I listen to Imelda go into Sadie’s room and do some cleaning. Then, after a while, I get out of the shower and try to find something nice to wear. I’m going to listen to Imelda and go out for some drinks or something with Phil.

I decide on a dark green button-up, which I only button halfway up. I have to look good after all, and I've been told I have a nice chest. Then I grab a pair of dark jeans. I don't own many pairs of jeans and I don't really get to wear them often, but tonight I feel I should. I trot downstairs, and Imelda is down there putting some laundry in the washer.

She gives me a hug and tells me that she'll be back late. I tell her that I don't expect to be back until the wee hours of the morning. She agrees that that might be a good idea, and then she leaves. I stand in the kitchen, leaning against the island and staring down at my phone sitting on the counter.

I really want to call Claire, but Imelda said I should wait. She hasn't steered me wrong before, so I decide to listen and shove my phone in my pocket. I head over to the small coat closet by the front door and find a light leather jacket. I throw it over my shoulder, grab my keys, and open the front door.

Standing there on my stoop, her hand up in a fist poised to knock, is Claire. She looks gorgeous with her flowing locks of chocolate hair and deep coffee eyes that you could get lost in if you aren't careful. She's dressed simply, but each piece of clothing hugs her curves perfectly. She has a short-sleeved shirt with a flowy overshirt wrapped around her shoulders, and a pair of jeans that leaves little to the imagination.

And now, she is frozen and staring at me like a deer in the headlights.

"Claire?"

"Is now a good time to talk?"

I stand there, just as frozen, with my hand still on the door. Then I nod and step back to let her in. She walks past me timidly and heads to the living room. I close the door and stare at it for a second, gathering my thoughts. I take a deep breath and head to

the living room after her.

We sit on opposite ends of the couch, turned to face each other. She is picking at the edges of her sleeves, clearly nervous. I start to feel sick. If she is this nervous, it can't be good news for me.

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“Alex, I’ve really enjoyed our time together these past few weeks.”

I nod, though it’s not what I want to hear. No conversation that ends well starts with something like that.

“I know it took a lot for you to tell me that you’re falling for me. And I admire that courage.”

I glance up at her, wanting so badly for this conversation to just end with an “I love you too” so we can go on with our day.

“That courage actually spurred me to come here today to talk with you.”

I sit a little straighter. Her demeanor has changed. There is the semblance of a nervous smile twitching at the edges of her lips. That is not a sign of a bad conversation—quite the opposite.

“On Sunday after I left, I went home and did a lot of thinking. I know that I left rather quickly, and I’m sure that upset you. I’m sorry for that, but there was a lot on my mind at the time.”

I watch her nervously looking around, trying not to make eye contact with me out of fear that she won’t be able to complete her sentences.

“I uh... I had a suspicion... So, I...”

She pauses, and I can hear my heart thumping right up against my ear drums. I’m

kind of worried but in a different way now.

“I took a test.” She smiles nervously but still doesn’t dare make eye contact.

Test? What kind of test? Like something to do with parties? Do party planners have a certification test like electricians and such? What was she suspicious about that needed a—

Oh...

“I’m pregnant.”

My heart stops, my eyes go blank, and I can’t express anything. There’s nothing there. Her words echo in my head over and over again. It tries to sink in, but I must have heard her wrong. That can’t be.

“I haven’t slept with anyone other than you while we’ve been, um... doing our thing. So, it’s yours.”

The words echo and echo. They ring through my ears, and I don’t know what to do.

She keeps talking, but I don’t know what she’s saying. I can hear the sounds of her voice, but I can’t comprehend any syllables or words. To me it sounds like white noise. Like when you’re sitting in the woods and just listening to the wind in the leaves, and the brook trickling over the rocks, and the birds chirping away.

After a few minutes, I start to hear her again. I can make out the words now. I still don’t know what to do or say, but I can hear her.

“I never thought about getting pregnant, but it’s happened and it happened to be with you. I don’t know what to do. I know you said you don’t want to expand your family,

so I'm left with..."

I immediately lunge across the couch and pull her into a big hug. I know what I said, but that doesn't matter. I want her to be here, to wake up next to me, to play with Sadie. I don't want to see her leave again.

I kiss her deeply, and she seems surprised by the kiss. I kiss her again, and I can feel her cheeks getting warm and a tear sliding down her cheek. I can feel her body tremble against my chest, and I just want to hold her close.

Our lips meet again and again until I manage to bring the words I have to the surface.

"I love you, Claire. I don't care what I said then. This is something that involves both of us, and I want to be here for you. We will get through it all together."

I kiss her again and hold her hand in mine. She grips my hand tight and nuzzles her forehead into my neck, letting the tears fall down her cheeks. I rock slowly and stroke her hair. Then I kiss her head and gently pat her on the back.

"You won't be alone. If you'll have me, I want you to stay, and together we can care for our child."

I kiss her head again, and she wraps her other arm around me, holding tight.

"It hurts that you didn't tell me earlier, but that's okay. You said you needed time. That's more than fair."

We sit together for quite a while. On the one hand, I don't expect her to respond to me yet. On the other I want her to tell me what I want to hear. We hug and kiss again. She pulls back and wipes her cheeks.

“I love you too, Alex.”

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I smile and nervously chuckle before embracing her again. We sit there holding each other for quite a while. We whisper little “I love you”s again and again. Then we kiss each other more passionately than ever before.

The second our lips meet, it’s like kissing each other for the first time. There’s an immense spark of passion. Our tongues slide together and embrace. I grab her ass firmly and pull her onto my lap. She moves with ease until she is straddling me with a smile in her kiss.

I slide my hand up her back and neck, entwining my fingers with her hair and holding her close against my body. She starts rocking her hips against my lap, waking up the beast within.

She caresses my bare chest and slides her hands down to unbutton the front of my shirt. I let her take her time; I already have a few shirts to take to the tailor for new buttons. I bring my free hand around to her stomach and hold it there for a few seconds.

She stops kissing me and places both her hands over mine. I look down at our hands with a smile, and she leans in, touching her forehead to mine. I keep my hand steady and gently caress her with my thumb. She sighs happily.

I kiss her again and slide my hand up her shirt so that our skin is touching. Her skin is soft and warm. I caress her belly softly, then slide my hand farther up until the tips of my fingers are touching her bra. She pulls my head close, shoving my face between her breasts.

I breathe in deeply and inch my hand up to caress her breast. I rub my thumb lightly right where her nipple is beneath the fabric. She moans softly, so I bring my hands behind her to unclasp her bra. I pull it away and throw it to the floor.

My hands find their way to her breasts, and I caress her bosom gently at first. I roll my thumbs around her nipples, making her sigh happily. Then I pull her shirt up over her head and toss it away as well. I gaze upon her plump bosom and really take in the sight. She caresses my head, and I bring my lips to one of her perky nipples.

I suckle her nipple gently and roll it playfully between my lips. I grasp her other breast with my hand and firmly dig my fingertips into her flesh. When she moans again, I bring my lips to the skin above her areola and gently bite. Her moan turns into a shocked gasp, but not in a bad way. I keep my teeth on her skin and press deeper so that my teeth and my fingers are holding each breast equally.

She makes a faint sound of pain, and I stop. I look down at the bite mark on her breast and kiss it gently. Then I kiss each breast in turn, swirling my tongue around her nipples. She moans softly again, and I bring my hands up to grab her breasts. I plant a kiss on her chest, then the very bottom of her throat.

A soft moan escapes her lips and I kiss her neck, slowly rising until I plant a tiny peck on her chin. She looks down at me, and we kiss again. I buck under her, and she rocks against me. My hands hold firm to her breasts as our bodies writhe together.

I keep one hand fixed in position and slide the other around to her back. Then I caress down her body until my hand is just above her waistband. I slip my fingers underneath her jeans and panties and slide them down to hold her ass. We kiss again with a shared sigh of pleasure.

She has my shirt undone and pulls it away from me, tossing it somewhere behind. She places her hands on the zipper of my jeans and slowly pulls it down until she can

reach her hand inside to caress my rather hard cock. I let out a slight moan, then bring her head close to me so that I can whisper in her ear.

“Get on your knees,” I whisper in the most commanding voice I can.

She seems a little taken aback but slinks off my lap nonetheless and kneels before me. I undo my pants enough to make them comfortable and reveal my cock from beneath my boxers. I stroke it once to make it stand on end for her. Her eyes are drawn to it and stuck on my shaft. I widen my knees to allow her access.

She pounces like a feral cat, her mouth open and ready to accept me. I gasp in pleasure as she sucks the tip of my cock between her lips. She swirls her tongue around and around, and I place my hand on the back of her head, more out of habit I guess than actual control.

Her tongue feels amazing on my cock, wrapping around it and stroking up and down the shaft. She places her hand at the base of my cock and begins to stroke it firmly. At that point, I grab hold of a fistful of her hair to control the bobbing of her head. I can feel her melting in my grasp.

I force her down, then up, again and again. She strokes my cock as I bob her head, and I can feel wave after wave of pleasure coursing through my body. Her mouth doesn't go all the way down my cock, but I don't care. Just the feeling of her tongue, her lips against my shaft, is amazing.

She moans softly around my cock. I bob her head a bit faster, and she tightens her grip. Waves of pleasure course through me, and it's almost too much. I stop her abruptly by pulling her hair back. She moans, her head getting pulled away with a bit of saliva dripping down her chin.

I smirk and force her to look me in the eye. “So, we have the entire house to

ourselves. Any fantasies?”

She laughs. I watch her glance over at the kitchen. We share a laugh, and I release her. I nod toward the kitchen, and she stands and saunters away. When she's at arm's length, I reach out and smack her firmly on the ass. She jumps with a shocked grin, and I grin back.

As she walks toward the kitchen, she steps out of her jeans and panties. Then she turns around and leans against the island, her body fully nude for my pleasure. I stand and turn to gaze at her magnificent glory. I drop my pants and boxers before walking over to her.

I approach and let my hands fall against her hips. I caress her skin from her lower thigh all the way up her side. She shivers and goose bumps rise on her skin as my fingertips graze her ever so gently. My hands come up around her breasts to her cheeks, and I pull her into another loving kiss. Then I trace down her arms to her wrists and grab them firmly.

I twist her around so she is facing the counter and slam her palms on the countertop. She keeps her palms flat and widens her stance, hefting her breasts up onto the cold tile and lifting herself up on her toes.

She looks back at me with a devious grin and a spark in her eye. I press my body against her and kiss the back of her shoulder before plunging my hard cock into her begging pussy. She moans out loudly, and I take the opportunity to bite down on that sweet spot at the base of the neck. Her screams become more pleasurable by the second.

I thrust harder than I have before, keeping her pressed firmly against the counter. Harder and harder I fuck her, whispering sweet nothings into her ear. She lets herself go buck wild and screams out my name amidst howling moans of sheer pleasure.

My cock throbs within her, hot and wanting. Her tight pussy welcomes my every thrust as deep as I can go. I can feel the tip of my cock pressing up against her cervix with each thrust. She moans loudly, and I moan along with her.

I wrap one arm around her breasts, grasping on firmly. I wrap the other down around her waist, pulling her against me as I thrust. She moans at my touch, and I moan against her neck as I kiss it and nibble lightly.

Then I slide my hand down between her legs and start rubbing her sensitive little clitoris with my fingers while thrusting as hard as I can behind her. Her moaning gets louder; I didn't think it was possible. I moan along with her, feeling her pussy ripple and contract around my cock.

Only mere moments later, she is screaming my name and cumming harder than ever. I try so hard to keep from ending, but I can't. I hug her close to my body, moaning her name as my cock throbs and fills her. I can feel my seed dripping down my cock, her tight pussy unable to hold it all.

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We continue to moan softly for a short while, our bodies still pressed together. I kiss her neck and hug her close, placing a hand over her belly.

“I love you,” I whisper.

Epilogue

Claire

One year later.

It's been so wonderful. I don't think I could've imagined a life any better than the one I have now. I've been living in Alex's brownstone since I was six months pregnant, and he's been a doll. Imelda has been a tremendous help too, enough so that I made sure she got a raise for putting up with me.

Our little baby boy, Noah, is only four months old, and it seems like just yesterday that we brought him home. Sadie is ecstatic to be a big sister. She's been great. She brought me snacks while I was pregnant, and we would snuggle up and watch movies all day while Alex was at work.

She started kindergarten not that long ago and has been loving it. She's met all sorts of new friends and is really coming along with her studies. I never thought that I would be a stay-at-home mom with two kids and a house and all of that stuff. But here we are, and I couldn't be happier.

Imelda has just gotten home from picking up Sadie, who bursts through the door to

give me a big hug and to kiss her little brother on the head. Imelda comes in and gives me a hug, then lightly pinches Noah's cheek, her normal greeting to him.

"Mi principito," Imelda whispers, giving him a kiss on the forehead.

I sit on the couch and help Sadie with her homework. We're on numbers this week. Noah is in a cradle next to us, and Imelda is in the kitchen cooking something up for dinner.

Sadie has really been improving with her numbers, letters, and colors. We sit on the couch together singing the ABCs and counting things around the living room. I have her run around and describe things so she can learn. She's been really good at the game.

Less than an hour later, the front door opens and there is Alex, holding an armful of roses and a small box. Sadie immediately darts toward him and gives him a big hug. He smiles and kisses her forehead. Then he whispers something in her ear, and she gets really excited. She runs over to Imelda.

I get up and approach him. We kiss each other lovingly.

"What're all these for?" I ask.

He chuckles. "You forgot?"

I stare at him blankly. What did I forget? Clearly something important. Otherwise, he wouldn't be standing before me with roses.

He smiles and kisses me again. "We started dating a year ago."

I gasp and place my hands over my mouth. I totally forgot. So much has been happening that it skipped my mind entirely. It's not that it doesn't mean anything to

me, but having a baby, moving, and starting a family are a lot to keep track of.

He smiles at me and give me a big hug, then hands me the bouquet of roses. I watch him bend down on one knee, and I almost burst into tears of happiness right then and there.

The little box in his hands is raised toward me. He opens it to reveal a magnificent ring. “Claire Daniels, will you do me the honor of becoming Mrs. Claire Bryant?”

I can’t hold back the tears. They come bursting forth, and I drop down to hug him while screaming “Yes!” at the top of my lungs. Sadie runs over shouting that she gets to be a flower girl and jumps on top of us.

I kiss Alex and embrace him tenderly, then pull Sadie between us for a group hug. This is exactly where I want to be.

THE END