



Sold to the Titan (High Rollers Club #1)

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Category: Action&Adventure

Description: Aria

All I've ever wanted is to walk the runway, though I'd settle for just being able to pay my rent. But when a modeling gig turns into something much worse, I find myself on a different kind of stage—and suddenly my virginity is for sale to the highest bidder.

I'm surrounded by men who would harm me, but when I spot his ocean-blue eyes through the crowd I somehow feel...calm.

And once I'm bought and paid for...I know I'm saved. It doesn't make any sense, but I find myself wanting to be owned by this man, despite his darkness.

Cillian

My single-minded hunt for the man who killed my sister has brought me to this disgusting place, where sick men buy and sell women like objects. I try to stay focused on my goal, my revenge, but when I see her on that stage, everything changes.

Aria is a distraction, but a welcome one. I can't let her go home with anyone but me.

Next to her sweet innocence, I've never felt like more of a monster. She deserves better than me, but now that I've bought her I don't want to let her go...

I've built myself from the ground up, into the powerful man I am today. But can I make myself into the man she deserves?

Triggers: public steamy scene, some violence (mostly implied), and betrayal.

Total Pages (Source): 10

Page 1

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 12:20 am

Aria

Everything hurts.

I lean heavily against the wall in the locker room with a tired sigh. My legs are sore from walking all night in four-inch stiletto heels and an uncomfortably tight leather skirt.

Not like I have a choice.

Every server at Rose Club has the misfortune of wearing the infamous “little red skirt.”

It’s a full house tonight. I can still hear the rowdy music all the way back here. I will never understand how people can party all night and still manage to function the next day. I feel like crap, and all I want to do right now is go home and sleep.

Home. Will I even still have a home when I get back to my shabby one-room apartment? My landlord was very clear—and loud—this morning when she appeared at my door. Pay up your rent tonight or get thrown out.

I let out another sigh and slowly start to unbutton my shirt. If I could just get another modeling gig like the last one, I wouldn’t have to worry about rent for the next three months. But getting gigs has become impossibly hard with so many fresh faces coming into the industry these days. You have to know important people to get hired. Nobody wants to work with a struggling, broke waitress.

“Hey, Ary!”

I look up as Vivian enters the locker room, looking fabulous as always with her bright red lipstick and large hoop earrings. Vivian is unapologetically pretty and she carries herself with a loud confidence—the kind I wish I had. The patrons love her, and our manager loves her even more because she keeps the customers coming.

“Hi, Vivian.” I muster a tired smile, hoping she doesn’t try to chat because I’m tired as hell.

“Got a minute?”

No, not really.

“Sure, what’s up?” I ask, keeping my smile plastered on my face. I just want to sleep.

Vivian’s face brightens. “Well...you’re a virgin, aren’t you?”

My eyes widen, my face heating up with embarrassment. Stupid me. I drank one glass of beer at the last employees’ hangout and then I went ahead to inform the whole staff about my lack of experience. I’ll never live that moment down.

“W-why do you ask?” I ask, shuffling uncomfortably on my feet.

“Chill, it’s not a big deal,” Vivian says with a dismissive wave of her perfectly manicured fingers. “I have a job for you.”

“A job?”

“Yeah. I know some VIPs willing to pay good money for a modeling gig. I think you’re perfect for the job.”

“What does being a virgin have to do with a modeling gig?” I ask, blinking at her in surprise.

Vivian shrugs. “I don’t know...I think it’s for a high-end campaign or something exclusive. You know how these rich guys are—always obsessed with purity and all that weird crap. I think they just want someone with an innocent look.”

I narrow my eyes. Modeling gigs don’t usually come with personal questions about my sex life.

“Look, it’s fine if you don’t want to do it, but I heard the pay is really good,” Vivian says. “Two grand for just tonight.”

My heart skips a beat. Two thousand dollars is a lot of money for one night. I wouldn’t have to worry about rent for the next couple of months.

“But, what—”

“Look, it’s fine. I understand,” Vivian says, though her eyes flash with irritation. “I’ll just find someone else to—”

“Wait!” I say quickly, awkwardly clearing my throat. “I—I’ll do it.”

She beams, her pearly white teeth gleaming in the semi-dark locker room. “Great decision, Ary! Come on, I’ll introduce you.”

I nod and follow her out the door that leads to the back of the building. She stops by a black car parked on the edge of the street and raps her knuckles three times on the driver’s side window. The window slides down halfway, revealing a pudgy-faced man in dark clothes and shades that cover half his face.

Vivian gestures for me to stay while she leans through the window to talk to the man. I watch them exchange hushed whispers, my resolve crumbling with every passing second. Just when I'm starting to consider what a bad idea this whole thing is, Vivian straightens and flashes me a bright smile.

"Go on in, Ary," she says, pulling open the passenger door. "He'll take you to the venue and bring you back right after."

I look at the man in the driver's seat. He's staring straight ahead, his expression set in stone. He looks downright scary, like a hitman from one of those action movies my dad used to love.

"Vivian...are you sure about this?" I ask, nervously biting down on my lip.

She looks hesitant for a moment, but then she smiles and I think I must have imagined it. "I'm sure. I think this will be a great gig for you. But if you want to back out, do it now."

I shake my head. "No, I'll do it."

Not like I have a choice. I need to survive and would be a fool not to take this chance. Taking a deep breath, I slide into the passenger seat of the car, immediately fixing my seat belt. Vivian flashes me another quick smile before pushing the door closed. She waves at me as the car starts to pull away and I return the gesture.

Soon, the car is driving down the busy streets of Seattle. Again, I wonder how people are out so late at night, drinking and partying, but what's Seattle without its nightlife?

I lean back against the headrest with a soft sigh. I trust Vivian, but I'm still not sure about this. I don't even know where the driver is taking me. I try to pay attention to each turn, each landmark we pass, but I quickly get turned around. The next thing I

know, the car is pulling up in front of a huge building in the middle of nowhere. The buildings on either side are dark, maybe abandoned, and I can't see any street signs.

"Where are we?" I ask quietly, trying not to sound panicked.

The driver doesn't respond as he gets out of the car, walks over to my side and pulls open the door, gesturing for me to get out. I oblige, ignoring the anxious feeling in the pit of my stomach. Another man joins us by the car, adding to my growing fear. He seemed to have materialized from the shadows. He's tall, with fierce features and a thin scar that runs from beneath his left eye to his chin.

"She's all yours," the driver says quietly. His voice is shockingly high-pitched for a man with his build.

Maybe that's why he didn't say a word the whole way.

"Did you confirm she's a virgin?" Scarface asks. He has a deep, cold voice, perfectly appropriate for his scary visage.

"Yes," the driver replies curtly.

"Great." Scarface turns to face me. "Come with me."

He starts to walk away, toward the ominous-looking building. A steeple casts a shadow over us, and I realize the building is an old stone chapel.

A church? I guess that fits with the "innocent look" Vivian said they wanted. What kind of photo shoot is this?

I follow after him, half running to match his long strides, my feet crunching in the gravel. I glance back in time to see the black SUV driving away.

Didn't Vivian promise he was going to take me back?

Inside the building, Scarface ignores the main sanctuary in front of us and turns to the right, into a dimly lit corridor that leads to a flight of stairs that seems to go down endlessly. Before we get to the stairs, a door is suddenly pushed open and I almost run into a tall, suited figure.

He pauses abruptly, like he wasn't expecting anyone to be in the corridors. The stranger's vivid blue eyes search mine with a hint of curiosity—and something else. Everything about him, from his neatly groomed dark hair to his tailored suit and shiny shoes, speaks of his authority. Somehow, even in this scary situation, his presence makes me feel calm and safe. Like it wasn't a mistake for me to come here.

I blush when I realize my eyes have been trailing up and down his body, and I return my gaze to his face, where I see something like...is that pity?

"Keep up," Scarface snaps, pausing at the top of the stairs to give me a death stare. "We don't have all night."

The stranger's blue eyes flare, a dangerous glint that disappears quickly, replaced by a shutter of indifference. He turns around and walks away toward the door of the chapel, as if he's leaving.

My heart sinks to my stomach, disappointment clawing at my chest. Why do I suddenly feel...bereft?

"Walk faster!" Scarface snaps again, and I increase my pace to catch up with him, trying to put the handsome blue-eyed stranger out of my mind.

By the time we get to the bottom of the stairs, my legs feel like they're about to give way beneath me. It doesn't help that I'm still wearing the killer heels and tight skirt

from work. We're deep underground by now, and I tell myself it's the chill that causes goose bumps to break out along my arms, rather than fear.

Scarface turns to look at me, his eyes roaming my face and body for a blood-chilling moment. "What you have on will do," he says, more to himself than me. "You're up next. We don't have time to get you changed." He hands me a tag with the number six. "Pin that on your chest and go in through that door when you hear your number."

He gestures to an iron door to my left and then starts to walk away, but I grab his arm without thinking. He gives me a dirty look and I quickly drop my hand. "I'm sorry...I was just...I was supposed to be here for a modeling gig, but I don't really understand what's going on. Can you tell me where I am and what I'm expected to do?"

His mouth tilts up in a small smile that sends chills running down my spine. "You'll see, little bird," he says cryptically, then walks away.

I'm still trying to make sense of everything when a loud voice from a speaker directly above me calls out the number six. Taking in a deep breath, I push open the heavy iron door and step inside.

I stop in my tracks as I'm suddenly blinded by bright lights and a roaring applause. Blinking against the harsh light, I try to make sense of my surroundings. I seem to be on some sort of stage in front of an audience of rowdy men, mostly middle-aged and dressed in dark suits.

I spot a few women in the crowd as well, but not many, all of them scantily dressed and seemingly attached to a man, either clutched tightly in a male embrace or... In the shadows, I catch sight of a head of long black hair bobbing over a man's lap while he leans back in his chair, a predatory grin on his face.

My head starts to swim, my stomach revolting against the strong male stench in the

large room.

Where is this place?

“Now, calm yourselves, gentlemen,” a voice says from beside me. I turn to see a middle-aged man on the stage with me, also dressed in a suit, a slick smile plastered on his face. “I can see why you’re all excited. Item number six is a beauty—and a virgin! Now, who’s ready to go home with this innocent little flower? Bidding starts at ten thousand dollars.”

The air grows thick with excitement and anticipation. My stomach tightens with dread, my heart thumping violently in my chest.

“Twelve thousand!” a man calls out, raising a numbered paddle.

My legs wobble as the reality of my situation starts to dawn on me. I’m not here for a modeling gig—I’m being auctioned off for money.

The events that led up to this moment flash through my mind in rapid succession. Was Vivian in on this?

“Fifteen thousand dollars,” another voice counters.

Oh god. What have I done?

“Seventeen!”

I gape in shock as the numbers keep flying around, ridiculously higher with each bid.

“Twenty-five thousand dollars!”

I can't believe my ears. None of this seems real. I can't believe that this many men are willing to pay such an immense amount to own me. Who are these people? Where is this place?

I have so many questions.

"Fifty thousand dollars," a voice calls out from the end of the room. This voice is different. Calm, yet authoritative. The type that keeps powerful men grounded. I snap my gaze in his direction, and brilliant blue eyes meet mine. Dark. Possessive. My heart slams hard against my chest, and this time it's not from fear. It's something else...something potent. I can't seem to look away.

It's the man from the hallway. He came back.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 12:20 am

Cillian

What the fuck am I doing?

It's been a long, frustrating night, and the last thing I want to do is participate in an auction of young, innocent girls. But something about this particular girl has me acting out of character. Up on that damn stage, she looks as lost and clueless as she did back in the hallway. I shouldn't care. Hell, I should have gotten the heck out of here and never looked back, but something made me turn around and come back inside—a long-buried protective instinct that makes me want to save her.

You can't save her. Just like you couldn't save Lily.

I clench my fist, ignoring the jeering voice in my head and the gnawing guilt in my chest. Now's not the time for that.

"Seventy thousand," a raspy voice calls out, cutting through the thick silence that's settled in the room. It's a voice I recognize.

I keep my gaze locked on the girl, watching her every expression. She seems to flinch each time a new number is called, her eyes shimmering with unshed tears. Rage simmers inside of me at the thought of that sick bastard owning her. Not on my watch.

"One hundred thousand," I counter calmly.

The room falls silent and I can feel the tension climbing higher. None of the other

girls even came close to half that price. It's a competition and she's become the prize.

"Five hundred thousand," that same voice calls out with deliberate smugness.

I keep my expression flat. I can't let them sense my inner turmoil. In a place like this, emotions are a weakness. This is a game I can't afford to lose.

The auctioneer's voice cuts sharply through the silence. "Number six going once for—"

"One million dollars," I say without taking my eyes off her, hoping my gaze will somehow help her stay grounded. She doesn't need to see any of these bastards' faces. Especially not his.

The silence stretches, heavy and suffocating until the auctioneer finally breaks it. "Sold!"

I let out an inaudible breath of relief, glad the ordeal is over. She's safe now, and that's all that matters. I just need to get her out of here and—

"Number six, please make your way to your buyer," the auctioneer instructs, his tone dripping with anticipation. "We'll all get a front-row seat to watch number six pleasure her new owner."

Fuck. How could I have forgotten about this part?

I came here tonight to gather intel, and I've observed enough to know what they expect to happen next. Each of the previous girls has been forced into engaging in some sort of public display. Some of the men are still going at it with their purchases, in the shadows around the edge of the room.

“That won’t be necessary,” I growl, my voice low and lethal.

“If you refuse, your payment will be refunded,” the auctioneer replies in a perfunctory tone. “And number six will be passed along to the next highest bidder.”

I clench my fists at that. Over my dead body.

“Also, if the commodity’s performance appears unsatisfactory in any way, she will be returned and replaced.”

Commodity? Fucking animals.

I manage to keep my expression impassive. “I see.”

“To indicate satisfaction, please press the green button on the right arm of your chair, and the red button if you’ll be needing a refund.” The auctioneer pauses slightly for dramatic effect. “Now...number six, make your way to your buyer. Make it worthwhile!”

Her heels click loudly against the hard floor. I can tell from the hesitant, uneven rhythm of her footsteps that she’s scared shitless. I wonder how she ended up in this hellhole.

But none of that matters now. I just need to get her out.

Soon, she’s standing right in front of me. I let my eyes rest on her face, taking in her dainty features and innocent green eyes. She’s a stunner for sure, but she doesn’t belong in this world.

“W-what do I do?” she asks me hesitantly, shuffling awkwardly from one foot to the other.

My chest constricts as I watch her lower lip tremble, like she's barely holding herself back from crying. I find myself wanting to hold her, to shield her from the gaze of every bastard in this fucking room.

"Come," I say, holding out my hand to her.

She hesitates for a second and then quietly takes my hand. I close my palm around hers and gently tug her onto my lap. She gasps softly, her body strung tight, like she's ready to flee at any second.

"What's your name?" I ask gently, quietly so no one around us can hear.

"Aria." Her voice is a breathy whisper.

"Okay, Aria, I'm Cillian," I say, keeping my tone soft. "I'm not going to hurt you, I promise. I'll get you out of here."

"Really?" she asks, her eyes flaring with hope.

"Yes, love. But...we do need to put on a little show first. Just trust me and follow my lead."

She nods, her body relaxing slightly against mine. "Okay."

My chest clenches tightly at the complete trust in her beautiful green eyes. How could she be so...innocent?

What if I fail her? Like I failed Lily?

I raise my hand to her face, gently caressing her cheek, her skin soft and smooth beneath my fingertips. I let my gaze linger on her plump lips, and I can't resist—I run

my thumb over her lower lip, unprepared for the wave of lust that washes over me. Her face grows redder under the intensity of my gaze, eyes opened wide and lips slightly parted.

She has no fucking idea how alluring she looks right now.

“I’m going to kiss you now, and then hopefully we can get the hell out of here, alright?”

She nods, running her tongue over her lips as if to prepare herself for what’s coming. A searing lust shoots straight to my cock at the gesture. Fucking hell, what is this girl doing to me?

I lean forward and capture her mouth with mine, molding my lips to hers. She tastes heavenly, a heady mixture of mint and berries, and I find myself craving more.

Her lips part, her arms going around my neck as she presses her body closer to mine. I graze my tongue over her lower lip and she lets out a breathy moan. I take the chance to slide my tongue into the warmth of her mouth, placing a hand on the small of her back to press her closer as I deepen the kiss. I’m suddenly overwhelmed by a sense of urgency, a gripping need that threatens to push me beyond the confines of control.

I pull back abruptly, slamming my hand down on the green button with more force than necessary. Aria flinches, and I want to punch myself in the gut for startling her. She looks rattled, confused, yet there’s no mistaking the unbridled hunger in her eyes. My cock hardens at the thought that she felt what I felt while kissing her. But this is not the place or time to exploit these feelings.

I need to get her the hell out of here.

“That won’t cut it,” the raspy voice from earlier says. “We didn’t come all the way here to watch a sloppy kiss.”

“It’s my fucking money,” I say with a loud scoff. “Why do I have to give you bastards a show?”

“It is policy, sir,” the auctioneer says, his voice veiled with an unmistakable threat. “The commodity can’t leave here until she pleasures you for all to see.”

I clench my fist, muttering a long string of curses underneath my breath. I am seconds away from whipping out the Glock 42 concealed in my suit jacket and blowing the scumbag’s head off, but the thought of frightening Aria any further stops me. And I know the security here is too tight. I’d have to go through at least ten guards, and Aria could get hurt in the process. No, the only way to get out of here is to give these bastards what they want.

“I’ll do anything,” Aria says quietly, her eyes pleading with mine. “I just want to leave.”

I shake my head at her. “You don’t know what they’re asking of you, love.”

“Please...”

My gut clenches at the desperation in her eyes, and in that moment, I realize I’ll do anything to protect her.

“I want you to focus on me,” I say, guiding her hand over the bulge in my pants. “Forget every other bastard in this room and touch me like you own me.”

She nods nervously, her face growing even redder under the dim lighting. I widen my knees to accommodate her as she slides off my lap and kneels in front of me.

She starts to fumble with my zipper. I raise my voice slightly, hoping to add to the show and distract attention from her trembling hands. “Yeah, that’s it, get your hands on my cock.” I allow my voice to come out rougher. “I want to feel that sweet mouth on me.”

I gently place my hand over hers and help her tug down the zipper, letting out a harsh curse when her hand comes in contact with my cock. The feeling is beyond electrifying. Pleasure courses through my veins, intensifying the hunger that I’ve been trying to ignore ever since I saw her.

A low moan slips from my throat as she starts to slide her palm up and down my cock, slowly as if accustoming herself to the size. I shouldn’t be enjoying this so much, especially given the place and circumstance, but I can’t help myself. I don’t even need to act anymore. My cock grows harder under her clumsy ministrations, pulsing hard and fast. Then she lowers her head and I almost lose it.

“Oh, fuck,” I murmur through gritted teeth. I can barely breathe as I watch her slowly take my tip into her mouth. Pleasure jolts through me in hot waves as she moves her tongue along my length, her mouth working with a dedicated focus. I weave my hands into her golden curls, gently guiding her head.

I’m teetering on the edge, pleasure coursing through me with each innocent movement of her hand and mouth. She’s inexperienced, but there’s a hunger in her that matches my own, pushing me to the brink. I want to devour her, to pull her closer and drown out the rest of the world, but this is hardly the place to give in to such desires.

Right now, I’m going to focus on this moment. On her.

I close my eyes as every muscle in my body strains, and I know what’s coming. She keeps bobbing her head over my cock, running her tongue along my length in clumsy

but persistent strokes. A guttural groan escapes my lips as an intense ache builds up inside of me. I don't hold back, knowing that the sooner I let go the sooner I can get her out of here. I need her to be safe.

My fists tighten in her hair, my body going taut as I spurt into her mouth. I expect her to jerk back, but she surprises me by swallowing. She coughs a little but keeps going, eagerly lapping it all up. As I watch her, my chest fills up with something strange and warm...something that I can't afford to feel.

I glance around to realize that the auction has continued without us, and girl number eight is on stage now. No one is paying us much attention anymore. I pull her into my arms and kiss her, long and hard, until we're both short of breath. When we pull apart, she angles her head slightly, searching my face.

"Can we go home now?" she asks quietly.

My chest tightens at the word "home." She probably doesn't mean anything by it, but the thought of Aria in my home, safe and away from this crazy hellhole, makes my heart swell with emotions I don't want to explore right now.

I cup her face in my palm, giving her what I hope is a reassuring smile. "Yes, love. We can go home now."

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 12:20 am

Aria

I imagined a man like Cillian living in some cold stone mansion on the outskirts of town, so I'm surprised when he pulls up in front of a modern condo tucked in a calm suburban neighborhood. The inside of the house is just as nice, with cool furniture and abstract art. On a normal day, I'd want to look around and take it all in. But right now, I can barely keep my eyes open, every muscle in my body aching with exhaustion.

Cillian seems to notice. "Let's get you to the guest room," he says softly, his hand brushing my arm as he leads me through a hallway lined with doors. His touch is warm, grounding, and something in the way he moves—so deliberate, so sure—makes me feel oddly safe, like I've known him for a while. I know I have no reason to trust him—he just bought me at an auction, after all—but I can't help it.

We stop at the end of the hall, and he opens a door to a cozy room with a large bed that cures my fatigue as soon as I look at it. I glance up to see Cillian watching me with that intensity that makes tingles shoot all over my body. Up close and in normal lighting, he's somehow even more striking—broad shoulders filling out his perfectly tailored suit, his dark hair just slightly tousled, framing sharp, chiseled features. His eyes are the color of the sea, cold and deep, and I'm drowning in their depths.

He breaks our eye contact, disappearing into another room and returning with a stack of soft-looking clothes. "Here—something more comfortable to wear. Is there anything else you need?" His low baritone voice gently caresses my skin. I like the way he talks to me in soft tones, like he's scared I might break or something.

I shake my head, managing a small, tired smile. “No, I’m fine. Thank you.”

Cillian nods. He gestures to the telephone on the nightstand. “If you need anything, just dial one. The maid will come, or I’ll check on you in a bit.” He hesitates, his hand lingering on the doorframe. For a moment, it’s as if he wants to say something else, but can’t find the words.

“Thank you,” I say, the words barely a whisper.

He nods, his gaze softening just a little. “Rest, love. You’ve had a long day.”

My heart skips a beat at the word “love.” Memories of the auction house flood my head, his big manhood pulsing violently in my palms, his deep erotic grunts as I ran my tongue along his length. It’d felt so good knowing that I could make him respond like that. I felt...powerful. Heat floods my cheeks at the thought. I never thought the day would come when I’d do something like that, and in front of all those people. But I only saw Cillian, the hard planes of his handsome face as he struggled to stay in control.

I look up to see Cillian watching me as if trying to figure out what’s going on in my head. His eyes have gone dark with a staggering hunger that sends a surprising thrill down my spine. I blush even harder, nervously biting my lower lip. His eyes drop to my lips, lingering meaningfully before returning his gaze to my eyes.

“Goodnight, Aria.” With a small nod, he turns and leaves, closing the door gently behind him.

As soon as the door clicks shut, I let out a deep sigh, immediately changing into the soft T-shirt and boxers Cillian provided and inhaling his scent that clings to the fabric. I kick the little red skirt away, hoping I never have to see it again, before collapsing onto the bed. I turn on my side and let the memory of the day wash over

me again.

Everything that's happened today—no, tonight—feels surreal, like a fantasy wrapped in a nightmare. Just yesterday, my life was ordinary, almost painfully mundane. I spent my days barely scraping by, chasing a dream that seemed more and more unrealistic. And now, here I am, in the guest room of a handsome stranger, wearing his clothes, after a night I never imagined living, let alone surviving.

I can still hear the voices of those men, shielded by that terrifying darkness, watching me. But Cillian was there at the auction too...and he paid a million dollars to own me. I should be terrified of him like I am of those other faceless men, but I'm not. Instead, thoughts of him invade my mind, slicing through the horrifying memories that threaten to pull me under.

I shiver, my cheeks heating as I remember the way his large hand guided mine over the bulge in his pants, how he looked at me, his face tight with restrained hunger. His deep, almost pained groans as he came...the way his body shuddered under my touch, that soft, possessive growl of pleasure. The thought alone makes a strange heat pool between my legs. I rub my thighs together in an effort to ease the ache building in my core.

What's happening to me? I shouldn't want to remember what happened tonight. But I do. Every last detail.

I sigh softly, burrowing deeper into the bed. It's soft and luxurious, just like everything else in this house. I close my eyes again, letting my mind wander aimlessly, and of course all my thoughts are centered around Cillian.

I wonder what he does for a living.

He must be wealthy if he can afford to spend a million dollars on a whim.

I should try to find some information about him online.

He's not the leader of some underground crime syndicate, is he?

I wouldn't be surprised, though...he kinda fits the bill—a sexy crime lord.

The thoughts drift in and out of my mind, straying in and out of focus as I slowly give in to my exhaustion. I drift off to sleep, and I'm suddenly thrown back to the most horrifying part of the night.

I'm standing alone in the chapel, surrounded by a terrifying darkness. Faceless men leer at me, their voices echoing mockingly in my head. I try to scream, to run, but my body won't move, trapped under the crushing weight of those stares. I look around desperately, murmuring Cillian's name under my breath, but he's nowhere to be found. He's not coming to save me this time.

I open my eyes with a start, and find myself staring into Cillian's endless blue eyes. He's crouched beside the bed, his face inches from mine, his hand placed lightly on my shoulder.

"It's alright," he murmurs, his voice a steady, soothing rumble that makes my heart race for entirely different reasons. "You were having a nightmare."

I give him a small nod, trying to regulate my thudding heartbeat. Tears slip down my cheeks before I can stop them. Cillian sits beside me on the bed and pulls me to his chest, wrapping his arms around me. I cling to him, words tumbling out in between sobs. "I was...at the chapel, and couldn't escape...they were—"

"Shh...I've got you, love," he says, his voice low, steady. He pulls me closer, his hand running over my back, each touch steadying me. "You're safe now," he whispers. "No one's touching you again. Not while I'm around."

He eases me back into bed, pulling the blankets up around me with surprising gentleness. And then he leans in, his lips brushing my forehead, then my nose. He stops just inches from my mouth, his gaze locking onto mine with a heat that makes my heart race erratically.

“Sleep well, love,” he murmurs in a rough whisper that sends a shiver coursing through me.

He starts to pull away, but I don’t let go. I tighten my arms around his neck, surprising both of us. I just know that I don’t want him to leave. Not yet.

“Stay,” I say softly, barely more than a whisper.

He freezes. His gaze darkens, his jaw clenching as his eyes burn into mine. Something tells me he’s holding on to control by a thread. “You’re testing me, love,” he warns, voice tight. “If I stay, I can’t promise to keep my hands to myself.”

My cheeks heat, but I don’t back down. “Maybe I want you to touch me,” I say, voice shaking.

His fist tightens in the blankets, his body tense with that same wild energy as in that auction hall. For a split second, I think he’s going to kiss me. But then he lets go of the blanket, his expression hardening. He straightens, takes a step back, and walks around to the other side of the bed. I sink back against the pillows, delighted at first, but then confused when he lies down above the blankets.

He gently rolls me over onto my side, facing away from him, and curls his arm around my body.

“Sleep, love,” he whispers.

I bite my lip to stop my tears from falling. Was I not clear that I wanted him to touch me? This isn't exactly what I had in mind.

I feel so stupid. What did I expect? I should have known that a man like Cillian wouldn't want a girl like me under normal circumstances. He's way above my league. His arm is a comforting weight, but I wanted so much more. Cillian's face, his touch, his voice—all of it keeps looping in my head.

I finally drift off, only to wake up again in what feels like no time. The bed behind me is cold and empty, and I sit up with a sigh. Of course he didn't want to stay in bed with me all night. I must have seemed so needy to him, crying about a nightmare when he already saved me. What more can I ask of him?

I get out of bed with another sigh and head out the door barefoot. I try to be quiet as I walk through the hallway, careful not to make any noise that'll wake Cillian up. I would probably die from embarrassment if I had to face him now, after he rejected me. I head toward what seems to be the kitchen and as I reach the doorway, I freeze in my tracks.

Cillian is leaning against the counter, drinking water from a plastic bottle. He's shirtless, his broad shoulders and sculpted chest illuminated softly by the dim kitchen lights. His muscles flex slightly as he lifts the bottle to his lips. My throat goes dry at the sight, my eyes roaming down his chiseled chest to the lean muscles of his stomach. Every inch of him radiates a raw, masculine energy. My pulse quickens, my body heating up with a now-familiar ache. I start to back away quietly, hoping he doesn't see me.

But his gaze snaps to mine, brows raised slightly in amusement. "You're just gonna leave like that?" he asks quietly, his lips curving upward in an amused smile.

Heat floods my cheeks and I wish the ground would just open up and swallow me.

“I thought...I just...” I drop my gaze, unable to handle the smoldering heat in his gorgeous blue eyes. “I wanted a glass of milk, but I could come back.”

Still smiling, he grabs a glass, and a bottle of milk from the fridge. He pours some milk into the glass and walks over to me.

“Here you go.”

I take the glass from him, his fingers lightly brushing mine, sending jolts of electricity zapping through my body. “Thank you,” I manage, my voice almost a whisper. I raise the glass to my lips, my hand trembling slightly. I can barely think or function with Cillian standing so close, his eyes roaming my body with deliberate slowness, leaving a trail of fire in their wake. I gulp the rest of the milk, almost choking from swallowing too fast.

“I-I should get back to bed,” I stutter, clearing my throat awkwardly.

I start to turn away but his voice stops me. “Don’t go, Aria.”

My heart skips a beat. I like way he says my name, the way it rolls off his tongue like a caress.

“Why?” I ask quietly, thinking back to his rejection earlier. It hurts. “I didn’t think you wanted me around you.”

“I do, love,” he responds in a tight voice. “I want more than you can possibly imagine. Look at me.” I raise my eyes to his face and he steps closer, gently caressing my jaw. “I’m only trying to protect you.”

My heart is beating so loudly I wonder if he can hear it. “From what?”

“Myself.”

“Why? Because I’m younger?”

“How old are you, love?”

“I’ll be twenty in two months.”

His mouth curves upward in an amused smile. “You’re indeed young, but that isn’t why. I think you should be with someone as good and pure as you are.”

“What about you?” I ask, searching his face. “Or do you think you’re a monster because you buy girls as playthings for your amusement?”

I regret the words the moment they leave my mouth. Cillian’s expression has gone cold, a muscle ticking in his temple.

“I don’t buy girls,” he says quietly, his tone deathly silent and dark with something that’s as terrifying as it is exciting. “I bought you, my love, to free you—it had nothing to do with my amusement.”

“I’m sorry, I didn’t mean—”

He cuts me off. “I need you to know that you’re not a prisoner here. I don’t expect any kind of payment from you, and I don’t own you.” My heart shrivels in disappointment, but then comes to life again with his next words. “I want you to be safe, and happy—preferably safe and happy here. In my bed. With me. But you are free to leave.”

“I don’t want to leave,” I say quickly. “I—I was so afraid, at the chapel, but then when you bought me I knew I’d be safe. I know it’s probably sick of me to enjoy

what happened, but...in that moment, I was so glad to be yours . And I still want to belong to you. If...if you want me.”

The words die in my throat as he pulls me roughly against his chest, claiming me in a fierce, almost punishing kiss. His mouth against mine is hard, unyielding, and I feel the shock of it deep in my bones. His hand slides into my hair, pulling me closer, and I gasp against his lips, completely overwhelmed. Every inch of me responds to him, my pulse hammering as his other hand grips my waist, his fingers digging into my skin. I don't even think—I just melt into him, my hands slipping up to his shoulders as he presses his body firmly against mine.

In one smooth motion, he lifts me off the ground. My legs instinctively wrap around him as he carries me up the stairs and down the hallway to his room without missing a beat. He lays me down on the bed, and for a moment, he just hovers over me, his intense gaze roaming over my face. His lips curl into a dark smile as he leans down, his mouth brushing against my ear, sending shivers up my spine.

“I want you, Aria. So much.”

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 12:20 am

Cillian

She nods, biting her lip in a way that makes me go crazy with want.

“I’m yours, Cillian,” she says.

I lower my mouth to hers again, gentler this time, taking her tongue with mine, sucking it into my mouth and biting down. She whimpers, kissing me back, meeting the strokes of my tongue with her own. Her hands slide up my chest and neck, her fingers burrowing into my hair.

With a groan, I draw her beneath me, my blood roaring wildly in my veins. I lower my mouth to her throat, pressing my lips against the rapid beating of her pulse. I kiss a path over soft, sweet skin, tasting her, nibbling her earlobe. Aria whimpers softly, turning her head to the side and surrendering her throat to me. I nip the soft skin of her neck and swipe my tongue over the sting. Her body trembles in response, and when I slide my hand beneath her shirt, she lets out a shaky breath, her hands sliding to my shoulders.

I cup her left breast, flicking my tongue over her nipple through the fabric. She gasps, her nails digging into my skin.

“Do you like that?” I ask, looking down at her beautiful face. Her breathing is ragged, her big green eyes burning with an unpretentious hunger. I continue to tease her breast, tracing lazy circles over her budding nipple. “Answer me, love. Do you like when I touch you like this?”

She nods, her cheeks turning a bright shade of pink.

“Say it,” I command in a low voice, applying gentle pressure on her nipples.

“Yessss,” she moans, her eyes drifting closed. “Yes, please.”

I push her shirt up, baring her chest to my hungry gaze. My cock stirs at the sight of her perfectly round breasts. Her nipples are a deep pink, puckered, and begging to be sucked. I trail my eyes down her body, taking in all of her. She’s beautiful, perfectly proportioned with subtle, sensuous curves.

Slowly, I lower my mouth to her left breast, my moan mingling with hers as I draw the hard nipple into my mouth.

“ Cillian ,” Aria gasps, her body arching off the bed. She buries her hands into my hair as I continue to suckle her nipples, one then the other, tugging and teasing. She arches her back, pressing further my mouth, restlessly rubbing her hips against my erection.

I groan, settling my weight between her thighs, and start to grind my erection against her core, creating a torturous rhythm that’s aimed at pleasuring her and driving myself crazy. My body is strung so tightly it feels like it’ll snap at any second. I clench my teeth against the need to plunge inside of her, to throw caution in the wind and just take what I crave—hard, fast, and mercilessly like I want to.

I keep reminding myself that I have to take things slowly since it’s her first time, but how can I when Aria is coming apart in my arms, each response to my touch burning me up? Her little mewls and whimpers are driving me out of my damn mind, her deep pink areolas drawn into tight buds that beg for my mouth, her hips moving in that clumsy yet maddingly erotic rhythm. I don’t want to go slow—hell, I want to fuck her hard and fast. I want to make her come again and again. I want to forget myself

inside her.

I take my mouth off her breast, quickly removing all of her clothing and then kissing my way down her ribs to her stomach until I get to the sensitive area between her thighs. Gently, I slide my tongue over her folds before slowly slipping it between the lips and over her clit. She cries softly, trying to push me away and press me closer at the same time. The smell of her arousal fills my nostrils, fueling my own hunger, the overwhelming need to drive my cock into her heat, to shield myself in her, and feel the warmth of her body tight against mine. Without taking my mouth off her, I slide a finger into her. She's already so wet for me. I curl my finger as I swipe my tongue over her clit, and she lets out a strangled cry, her body bucking violently as she comes undone.

I stretch above her, the urge to be inside her almost unbearable now. In one swift motion, I tug down my flannel pants, kicking them to the ground, and then adjust my body so the tip of my cock is nestling against her folds.

"This might hurt, love," I say, gently cupping her face.

She nods, sliding her hands up my chest. "I know."

I lock my gaze to hers and slowly nudge the tip of my cock into her slippery heat. She groans softly, her body resisting my intrusion at first. I pause to brush my lips over her forehead, then push deeper, breaking through the thin veil of her virginity. She gasps, squeezing her eyes shut and biting down on her lower lip.

My chest tightens at the sight. I know it's inevitable, but I feel like a jerk for causing her pain.

"Easy, love," I murmur, brushing away the stray strands of hair that have fallen over her face. I pause, giving her time to adjust to the intrusion. It's not easy staying still,

not when she's so wet and so damn tight. Every instinct urges me to drive deeper, to bury myself in her snug warmth.

"I'm sorry." I stroke her hair, brushing my lips over her forehead, her cheeks, her eyelids, her lips, her jaw, trying to kiss away her discomfort.

"It's not so bad, really," she says with a tender smile.

And that is all I needed to hear.

Slowly, I slide out of her, gently pushing back in again. Watching her face, I repeatedly withdraw, then nudge myself inside her again, going deeper each time, gradually stretching her past the pain until I fill her completely. And then I start to move a little faster, with long, deliberate thrusts aimed at intensifying her pleasure. She clings to me, her head buried deep in my neck as I continue to plunge in and out of her until she cries out my name. Her body trembles uncontrollably, her teeth sinking into my skin as the orgasm goes on and on.

But I'm not done yet.

Taking both of her hands in mine, I pin them above her head and lower my mouth to hers in a long, deep kiss, sliding my tongue over her tongue, her teeth, her lips, swallowing her sweet little moans. Still holding her arms pinned and my mouth locked onto hers, I slide my cock inside her again, moving in long, slow strokes.

Warmth encases me with each thrust, her walls tightening around me, pulling me deeper. The feeling is indescribable. She grabs my hips, her nails digging into my flesh. Our bodies have found a rhythm and we rock together in a perfect synchrony.

My mouth drowns her moans as I plunge deeper and with increasing fervor until I'm submerged in a consuming wave of orgasm. I thrust harder, faster, driven by her lusty

cries and my own insatiable urge. Pleasure surges through my veins, from my cock to every last nerve ending. Tremors erupt within, my body shuddering from the powerful force of the most exhilarating orgasm I've had in a long time.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 12:20 am

Aria

I wake up surrounded by the scent of Cillian, a heady mixture of leather, wood, and something else, something warm. I blink slowly, trying to adjust to the bright beams of sunlight filtering into the room. The small digital clock on the nightstand tells me it's past eleven. I slept in. That must be why he left me in bed to go about his business. I look around, taking in the large master bedroom. It's very different from the guest bedroom, darker and enigmatic, just like him.

I'm in Cillian's bedroom. In his bed... My heart skips a beat at the thought. Being with Cillian makes me feel...powerful, somehow. Like I'm the one who owns him, even after he bought me. It's inexplicable.

I'm drawn to everything about him, the way he looks at me and talks to me, the way he's sometimes hard and sometimes soft... I like him more than I've ever liked anyone, and I've only known him for a few long hours. It feels like a lifetime. And oh, the way he touches my body, like it was made just for him. I run my hands over the soft sheets as memories of last night flood my mind, and I'm suddenly breathless and hot all over again.

I bury my face in my palms for a second, a stupid grin creeping onto my face. Without thinking, I jump out of bed naked and stand in front of the full-length mirror, striking a playful pose, then start strutting across the room like it's my runway. I make it to the other side, whirl around, and freeze, a surprised gasp bursting out of my lips.

Cillian is standing in the doorway, leaning against the frame, arms crossed, eyes

locked on me with that dark, hungry gaze—like a predator sizing up its prey.

“That was fantastic,” he says, his eyes roaming over my bare skin with a look that has me blushing from the root of my hair to my toes.

“You think so?” I ask, biting my lip self-consciously.

“Yes,” he says simply. I can tell he’s being genuine. Cillian doesn’t seem like the type to butter anyone up. “If you ever decide to take up modeling, you’d do really well.”

My heart skips at his words. “I do model on the side,” I say with an excited smile.

He raises an eyebrow. “That makes sense,” he says with that faint smirk of his. Then he pauses, his brows furrowing thoughtfully. “Your walk feels familiar. Like I’ve seen it before.”

“Maybe you knew my mom?” I say with a small shrug. “She was kind of a big deal back in the late nineties. She’s my role model. Fiona Martins?”

His eyes light up with recognition. “Fiona Martins. Yes! That’s it. I can’t believe you’re Fiona’s daughter. I should have known. I met her once at a fundraiser—she was stunning. I see you inherited her beauty and fire.”

His words leave me a bit breathless. I never talk about my mom much, but sharing this with him feels surprisingly easy. Thinking about it now, I realize he’s probably around the same age my mom would be if she and my dad hadn’t been in that car accident. Not like it matters. With Cillian, age feels insignificant. He makes me feel things no one else has ever or will ever make me feel.

He steps toward the bed and sits down, looking up at me with a mischievous glint in

his eyes. “Do it again,” he says, leaning back, his gaze challenging.

I laugh, crossing my arms. “You want me to walk for you?” I gesture down my naked body. “Like this?”

“Yes, love.” His voice is low and smooth, with that hint of something wicked. “I’ll have it no other way.”

My cheeks heat up all over again, but I hold his gaze and strike a pose, then I walk to the other end of the room, turn around, and continue to walk toward him. All the while, his eyes are on me, feasting shamelessly, and when I finally stop in front of him, he nods and claps.

“It’s like watching Fiona on stage again...but you’ve also got your own style,” he says, his mouth curling up in an appreciative smile. “I can picture you on the big stage someday.”

“Maybe,” I murmur, looking away. After being auctioned off on that stage last night, I’m not sure how I feel about trying modeling again.

Cillian reaches out, tugging me gently onto his lap. His eyes are soft, apologetic, as if he knows what I’m thinking. “You have everything it takes, Aria. It’s only a matter of time.”

“Thank you,” I whisper, drowning in the endless pool of his eyes. Suddenly, I feel something hard pressing against my thigh. I shift slightly, thinking it’s his belt buckle at first, but then he lets out a tight hiss. I look at his face, taking in the deep hunger in his eyes tinged with a hint of amusement, and it slowly dawns on me...

“It’s...you’re...” I let my words trail off, my cheeks flaming with embarrassment.

Cillian chuckles softly. “That’s what you do to me, love.” He runs his hand up my thigh, and the look in his eyes tells me he wants nothing more than to pull me closer, but then he glances at the clock and sighs. “I have to leave for a meeting in five minutes.”

I hesitate, then look up at him with a small, shy smile. “Maybe...there’s something we can do in that time?”

His eyes darken with intrigue. He raises an eyebrow. “Is there?”

I nod, clearing my throat awkwardly. “I...I could...make you feel good.”

“Make me feel good how?” he asks with a smirk that suggests he knows exactly what I’m talking about.

He likes to tease me. The thought is thrilling.

Instead of answering, I drop to my knees in front of him, then push his legs apart and position myself between them. I lower his zipper and reach in to pull him out, my heart thrumming violently in my chest.

“Like this...” I murmur, looking up at him, his length cradled in my palm. “I could touch you, and taste you...just like last night.”

Cillian is watching my face, his expression unreadable. “You really liked that, huh?”

“Yes. Maybe I shouldn’t have, but...I did.” I didn’t exactly like our audience, but I’ve thought a lot about the feeling of him coming undone in my mouth, and the thrill of knowing I can make him lose control. I find myself wanting to do it again, and again.

Cillian's expression softens with something unreadable. "I'm all yours, love."

Keeping my eyes locked on his, I carefully lower my mouth, swallowing just his tip. My lips burn, stretching around his length. Drops of pre-cum pool on the cap of his cock, trickling over my tongue. I like the taste of him—it's addictive.

I lick my way down from the head, evoking a deep moan from him, and then I make my way back up, taking his tip in my mouth again, going deeper this time. Cillian lets out another moan, weaving his hand through my hair. I kiss my way down to his root again, sucking one of his balls into my mouth.

"Oh, Aria," he moans, his hand tightening in my hair.

Oh, he likes that...

I take the other ball into my mouth, sucking it with as much devotion as the first, rolling it around with my tongue before licking a line back up his pulsing length. By the time I reach the slit on the head of his cock, another pool of pre-cum has gathered and is starting to drip down the sides. I eagerly lick at each drop, covering my tongue with his flavor before I take him into my mouth again. My mouth is full, my throat tight, and my eyes are burning with tears but I keep taking him in, pausing halfway to draw in a deep breath through my nose. Once I have more air in my lungs, I continue.

Encouraged by Cillian's deep groan of pleasure, I swallow him down until the tip of his cock is pushing precariously against my throat. Good thing I haven't had breakfast, or I'd be making a fool of myself. I slowly start to bob my head, sucking in my cheeks as I move my lips up his thick cock. I want to savor every last inch as he moves through my mouth. Once I get the hang of things, I start to move faster. His hand on my head pushes me further down, his hips rocking into my mouth in a wicked rhythm. I can still feel drops of his luscious pre-cum splattering over my tongue every time I swallow, and god, it's fantastic.

His balls start to pull up tight to his body, his moans becoming more unrestrained. I increase the speed of my movements, sucking him down my throat and then hollowing my cheeks out as I move back up to the tip. I see girls do this all the time at Rose Club and now I'm glad I secretly watched sometimes. The knowledge that I can pleasure Cillian is heady, powerful... It makes me want to be bolder, and more daring.

I can feel him getting close. His cock grows even bigger in my mouth and I gag, my eyes growing wider, burning with hot tears. Cillian holds my head in place, his palm pressing me down. I can't breathe, or move, my vision swimming in front of me, my chest burning with the need for air, but even if I die now, I have no regrets.

Cillian growls my name as loads of his cum shoot into my throat, hot and thick, filling my mouth. I swallow as fast as I can but drops of it slide out of the edges of my mouth. The pressure of his hand on my head eases and I lift up, wrapping my hand around him and lapping up every bit of his cum. When he's all cleaned up, I carefully put him back in his pants and zip him up. I glance up to see Cillian looking at me with a tender expression that makes my heart swell with happiness.

He pulls me into his lap and captures my mouth in a long, passionate kiss.

"I like the taste of you," I say shyly after he pulls back, blushing to my roots.

He laughs, shaking his head at me. "I'm glad you do. It's too bad I have to go now," he says regretfully, glancing at the clock then back at me. "We'll pick this up after I get back."

My heart skips at the sinful promise in his voice. With one last kiss on my lips, he heads out, leaving me with a wide grin.

I glance at the clock—it's almost noon, so going back to sleep isn't appealing. I

decide to look around the house. I grab a shirt from Cillian's closet, throw it on, and walk out of the room barefoot, making a mental note to buy some clothes as soon as I can.

Although, I can't say I mind wearing his clothes.

I wander through the condo, peeking into rooms, taking in the splendor of his beautiful home. There are three bedrooms—Cillian's, the guest room where I'm staying, and a third one, directly opposite Cillian's.

What's behind that door? A gym? His home office?

My curiosity gets the best of me and before I know it, I turn the knob and push the door open. I freeze, blinking in surprise at the pink-themed bedroom. I would never imagine a room like this in Cillian's house. I walk further inside, staring at the lush, pink, center rug and the comfy-looking couch by the window. The bed is neatly made and the smell of lavender hangs in the air.

I'm still looking around when the door suddenly opens behind me. I jump, my heart almost flying out of my chest. Cillian is standing in the doorway, his expression unreadable.

I clear my throat, my cheeks burning up with embarrassment. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to trespass. I was just..."

"It's fine, love, you don't have to apologize." He stuffs his hands into his pockets, slowly looking around like he's seeing the place for the first time. "I haven't been in here in a while," he says quietly.

"Why?" I ask, still a little shaken by how he sneaked up on me.

He remains quiet for a long moment, and just as I'm starting to think he didn't hear me, he turns his gaze to me. "It used to be my little sister's room."

"Used to be? Does that mean—"

"Yes, she died," he interrupts, his tone flat.

My heart drops. I was going to ask if she moved out. "I'm so sorry," I murmur, unsure of how to comfort him. His eyes are so uncharacteristically sad and my heart hurts just watching him.

"It's been three years," he says, a bitter smile tugging at his lips as he grazes his fingers over the soft pink fur blanket covering the lower half of the bed. He glances up at me. "Seeing you in her room reminds me of her. Her name was Lily. She was sweet and witty, just like you."

"What happened?" I ask softly, searching his face. "It's okay if you don't want to talk about it," I add quickly, realizing I might be opening up old wounds.

But Cillian shakes his head. "It's fine, you can ask me anything," he says, then looks away from me, his expression hardening. "She was murdered. It was all my fault."

"What?" I breathe in disbelief. "What do you mean it was your fault?"

"We had a fight over something stupid that I can't even remember now." His gaze turns inward as if he's reliving the memory. "She was dressed to go to the club with her friends, so she grabbed her purse and stalked out of the house. She was missing for days after that. About a week later, the cops found her body in a hotel room. They said the cause of death was drug overdose, even though there were signs of assault." He scoffs. "Lily never did drugs. Our parents were users, and even as young as she was when they died, she saw what that did to us. She hated drugs with her every fiber

of her being, but some motherfucker overdosed her and framed it as suicide.”

He pauses, as if trying to gather himself. “Two days after she was found, I noticed her Facebook page had been deactivated. I revived it and found a blurry photo of some strange man in her deleted files. I knew it was the bastard that killed her.”

My heart twists painfully. I try to think of something to say to ease his pain, but nothing seems appropriate so I just stand there, listening.

“I swore to find the bastard, but it’s been three years of chasing a fucking shadow.”

“Wait...” I murmur, thinking back to the first time I saw him in that dark hallway in the chapel. “Was that why you were at the auction house?”

“Yeah. I finally figured out who he is, and I thought I might see him there. I was right, but the security there was too tight. There was nothing I could do to reach him at the auction, but I’ll find another way.” He clenches his fists, his eyes growing deathly cold. “I’ll chase him to the fiery pits of hell if I have to.”

I walk up to him slowly, gently unfisting his hands and intertwining his fingers with mine. “It’s not your fault, Cillian.” He looks at me but doesn’t say anything, so I continue. “Lily didn’t die because of you.”

His expression remains stoic for a moment, then softens gradually. He raises our joined hands to his lips without taking his eyes off mine. “Thanks for saying that, love,” he says with a small but genuine smile.

I return his smile and then, without thinking, lean in and press my lips to his. It’s meant to be a brief kiss to comfort him, but then his hand slides up my back, pressing my body hard against his as he deepens the kiss, his tongue sliding into my mouth, twirling around my tongue in slow, erotic strokes.

“What was that for?” I ask breathlessly after we pull apart.

“For everything,” he replies cryptically, then places a soft kiss on my forehead.

“Why are you back so early?” I ask, searching his face. “Was your meeting canceled?”

“Yes, love. I canceled it.”

“Why?”

“Because I missed you,” he says with a straight face.

“What?” I laugh, blinking at him in surprise. It hasn’t even been thirty minutes.

“You’re serious.”

“I am,” he replies, sliding his hands down my back, his palms cupping my buttocks and squeezing roughly. “I have a fundraiser tonight. Come with me. Be my date.”

I blush, pleasantly surprised by his request. He doesn’t mind being seen with me in public? What does that mean? I want to ask him, but I can’t seem to find the right words to express myself. The last thing I want to do is sound needy or presumptuous and ruin whatever it is we have going on.

“It’s okay if you don’t want to,” he says, pushing a stray strand of hair away from my face.

“Of course, I’d love to,” I say quickly. “But...I don’t really have anything to wear.”

“Don’t worry about that, kitten,” he says, his lips curving upward in a sexy smile that has me swooning internally. “I got you.”

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 12:20 am

Cillian

“Paul!” Aria exclaims excitedly the moment Paul Laurent walks through the front door.

Paul gasps dramatically, his eyes widening in surprise. “Ma belle! What a pleasant surprise,” he says with a big smile, setting down his shopping bags as he air-kisses Aria’s cheeks. “It’s nice to see you again.”

“Same,” Aria says, returning his smile.

I watch the exchange, surprised. Paul Laurent is one of the top stylists in Seattle. His services are exclusive to elites ranging from politicians to business moguls and drug barons, anyone willing to pay handsomely for his services.

I arch a brow, looking between them. “You two know each other?”

Aria smiles up at me. “He’s a VIP in the club I worked at.”

“You look as beautiful as always, mademoiselle,” Paul says with a proud smile. “But much more radiant than when I last saw you.”

Aria beams. “Thanks, Paul.” She gestures to the shopping bags in his hand. “What are those?”

“Dresses, shoes, jewelry...” Paul replies. “Monsieur Wolfe was very particular about you getting the best of the best.”

“When did you have the time to prepare all of this?” Aria asks, blinking at me in surprise.

“I made a quick stop on the way back from my canceled meeting,” I reply with a teasing smile.

Aria chuckles, an adorable blush spreading across her cheeks. “Thank you,” she murmurs shyly.

“Anything for you, kitten,” I say, pasting a quick kiss on her forehead.

“Well, I need to get set up,” Paul says.

“I’ll help you,” Aria says, going over to his side.

I watch the two as they chatter excitedly while Paul sets up his makeshift studio. He says something and Aria laughs. I’m mesmerized all over again by the sheer beauty of her existence. There is so much light in her, so much life and innocence that I don’t deserve. The past twenty-four hours, ever since I first saw her at the chapel, I’ve avoided thinking about my feelings for her, but it’s no longer avoidable. I want her for more than just a passing moment, possibly forever. With her, I’m a different person—I’m lighter, softer. She makes me feel things I never thought myself capable of.

But that’s the problem.

I shouldn’t entertain these feelings. If she’s light, then I’m darkness, there’s no sugarcoating it.

I wonder how Aria would react if she learned that my company deals with some of the lowest lowlifes in the world. Like Paul Laurent, my services are sold to the

highest bidder. I've built my company into a leader in the tech sector by shaking hands with the worst scum on earth.

I'm aware of some of the unspeakable things my innovations are being used for, but I've always turned a blind eye. I could use my poor background and unfortunate childhood as an excuse, but that's just bullshit. I'm no better than my druggie parents who brought kids they couldn't raise into the world.

If Aria knew all of this, would she want to be with me? Most likely not.

I could shield her from the truth of who I really am, but what would that make me? A bastard through and through. In the end, I'd only snuff out her light and make her miserable. I hate that the most—the thought of her being miserable.

Damn, I look in the mirror sometimes and I still don't know who I want to be... until Aria, that is. I only have to look into her eyes to see an idolized version of myself. The only one who ever looked at me that way was Lily, and I let her down.

The thought of Lily strikes up familiar feelings of rage and bitterness within me. Yet again, I'm faced with another reason I can't be with Aria. She doesn't deserve to be stuck with a man like me who's driven by revenge. Sometimes, I'm so consumed in my quest to find my sister's murderer that I forget about everything else. What happens to Aria then?

But it's not like I can stop before I get to the bastard that killed my sister. To stop searching for her murderer would mean that I failed Lily to the end. Even the thought is inconceivable.

"Hey..." a soft voice says beside me.

I look up to see Aria standing in front of me, wearing a concerned expression. I was

so lost in my thoughts that I didn't notice her.

"Hey, love," I say, managing a small smile.

"Penny for your thoughts?" she says in a light tone that contradicts the worry in her beautiful green eyes.

I pull her into my arms, loving how easily her body melts into mine. "I'd rather have a kiss," I murmur, brushing my lips over hers. She chuckles, pressing closer to me. I tighten my arms around her. My girl. So warm and gentle.

"Time to sit on my chair, mademoiselle Aria," Paul says, clapping his hands to get our attention. I want to tell him to fuck off and leave me to my woman, but that would only ruin my plans for the evening. I reluctantly step back, letting Aria go.

"I should go get ready for the night." I give her one last lingering kiss, then leave them to their business.

I don't take long to get ready, putting on a tailored suit with a dark green pocket square to match her dress. I try to imagine what she'll look like in the dress I picked for her, but nothing prepares me for actually seeing her in it.

She's stunning. She looks like a literal goddess draped in a long, shimmering dress, her fair skin glistening lethally behind the long slit that runs up her thigh. Paul has done something with her hair—her golden curls are tied up in some kind of fancy bun with delicate strands framing her face like strips of liquid fire. When she sees me her face brightens up, a soft smile tugging at her lips. My breath catches, my heart skipping unexpectedly in my chest.

She walks over to me and does a quick twirl, a soft blush spreading across her face as she looks up at me with a curious smile. "What do you think?"

“You look gorgeous, Aria,” I say, keeping my voice level. I don’t want to scare her away with the depth of my feelings right now. It’s too much, too soon.

“Thank you,” she says, her blush deepening.

I reach out, taking her hand, enjoying the warmth of her skin against mine. “I don’t think you know what you do to me, love.” I slowly raise her hand to my lips without taking my eyes off her. “It’s dangerous, how perfect you look.”

She lets out a breathy laugh, and for a moment we just stand there, lost in each other’s eyes. I suddenly want to cancel the night, just let go of everything and be with her. The urge is so intense, so overwhelming it feels like a physical ache.

“You alright?” she asks softly, searching my face.

It’s amazing how she’s so attuned to my feelings...so quick to spot a change in my mood. How does she do that?

I smile, giving her hands a gentle squeeze. “I’m good, love. Shall we, then?” I ask, offering her my arm.

The entire ride, I can’t keep my eyes off her reflection in the mirror, the way her gown catches the city lights as we drive by.

We soon arrive at Warren Osla’s house—a sprawling estate that’s been transformed for the night into a glimmering spectacle of wealth and influence. Warren is a huge deal in Seattle, a business tycoon and philanthropist with an influence that goes further than the border of America. Everyone loves Warren, including the media, and he’s even been nominated several times for public office but never accepted it. Once a year, he holds these exclusive fundraisers and every top socialite in Seattle will do anything to attend. Not like I care at all for the shit show. I’ve had the invitation for

weeks, but I had no intention of attending until the auction.

In the photo I printed off Lily's Facebook, the bastard was wearing a watch—a rare, vintage watch. There are only two pieces like it in the world, and I've gone through every resource to find their owners. One belongs to an Arab prince, deep in the heart of Saudi Arabia, and the other? Right here on Warren Osla's wrist. I wasn't sure until I saw it on him at the auction.

Even though I couldn't slit his throat right then and there, I still managed to win the bid against him for Aria. He won't touch her while I live. I smirk. If tonight goes the way I plan, he won't touch anyone ever again.

The valet opens her door, and I take Aria's hand in mine, leading her inside. Heads turn the moment we step in, all eyes on her. She commands attention effortlessly, with a grace that feels entirely unintentional. It's no surprise, though. After all, she's the daughter of the great Fiona Martins who was once a national sensation for her beauty and poise. Aria is so oblivious to her charms, the striking effect of her looks, and that's what makes her all the more endearing.

I lean down to murmur in her ear, "They're all looking at you, kitten."

Aria's grip tightens on my arm, her gaze skimming the crowd nervously. "Maybe they can tell I've never been to something like this," she murmurs. Her tone is light but I can tell she's a bit self-conscious.

I glance down at her with a reassuring smile. "You fit right in," I say, brushing a stray curl from her face. At that moment, with her looking up at me, her eyes wide and trusting, I can't help myself. I lean down and press a kiss to her lips.

She blushes, looking up at me with that shy, curious look that I'm quickly becoming addicted to. "What was that for?" she asks softly, her voice barely above a whisper.

A smirk tugs at my lips. “So everyone in this room will know you’re mine,” I reply, not bothering to hide the possessiveness in my voice.

“Ary!”

We both turn in the direction of the sound. The owner of the shrill voice is a rail-thin redhead in an ill-fitting black evening dress. I don’t have time to ask any questions before the redhead has reached where we’re standing and is peering at Aria with an expression of disbelief.

“It’s you!” she says, her thin lips spreading into a tight smile. “I thought I was mistaken.”

“Vivian.” Aria’s voice is quiet, too quiet. I glance at her face to see she’s gone deathly pale, her body rigid like she’s trying to keep herself from bolting.

Who the hell is this, and why does she have such an effect on Aria?

I slide her hand into mine and pull her closer against my body. She seems to sag with her relief even though she doesn’t spare me a glance.

“You look well,” the woman—Vivian—says, looking from Aria to me with a malicious smile.

“How could you do that to me, Vivian?” Aria asks, her voice shaking slightly. “How could you betray me like that?”

“Betray you?” Vivian scoffs with a humorless laugh. “We were never friends, Aria.”

“Was that why you sold me off to strangers?” Aria asks, and I can hear the anger in her voice this time. “You made me go with a stranger to be sold off at an auction.

What gave you the right to mess with me like that?”

“I didn’t make you do anything,” Vivian says, shrugging her thin shoulders. “Blame yourself for being gullible enough to trust strangers. Besides, it looks like things turned out well, after all.” She looks at me, her eyes taking in my face with a suggestive smile. “Maybe you should thank me instead.”

I’ve heard enough. Clenching my teeth against the rage surging through my veins, I step in front of Aria, pinning Vivian with a cold glare.

“Fuck off,” I say quietly, not bothering to hide the threat in my voice.

Vivian scoffs and sputters, an ugly shade of red spreading across her heavily made-up face. Then she huffs and stalks off.

“God, she’s right. I’m so gullible,” Aria says in a shaky voice, tilting her chin upward to contain the tears gathering in her eyes. “How could I be so stupid?”

“Look at me, Aria,” I say firmly, taking her face in my hand. I wait for her to raise her eyes to mine before I continue. “You’re not stupid or gullible for trusting her, she’s a terrible person for betraying you. Don’t you dare blame yourself, do you hear me?”

She nods, a tear sliding down her cheek. “Thank you,” she murmurs, resting her head on my chest with a soft sigh.

I wrap my arms around her, pulling her closer against my body. “Let’s get you out of here,” I say, already steering her toward the entrance, Warren Osla and his watch long forgotten.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 12:20 am

Aria

“I’m so sorry for ruining the night,” I say quietly as I watch Cillian take a bottle of water from the refrigerator. He’d assured me that he was okay with leaving early on the drive home, but for some reason, I feel the need to apologize, like I’ve disrupted an important plan of his.

Cillian pours some of the water into a glass and brings it over to me. “Here you go,” he says, gently pressing the glass into my hand. “Drink up.”

I raise the glass to my lips, letting the coolness of the water take some of the heat off my chest. Seeing Vivian tonight triggered memories that I’ve worked hard to repress in the past few days. I wasn’t ready. I never thought I’d run into her soon, or ever again. Thinking about the encounter all over again, I realize Cillian was right—Vivian is a horrible person, and maybe I shouldn’t have trusted her, but I did nothing wrong. Why do I have to take the blame when I’m the victim here?

“Penny for your thoughts?” Cillian says quietly from beside me.

I set the now empty glass on the counter beside me, then turn to face him, wrapping my arms loosely around his waist. “I’d rather have a kiss.”

Cillian chuckles, his hand sliding around my waist to press me closer. He lowers his head, his lips brushing lightly against mine. “I thought you’d never ask.”

And before I can say anything, his mouth claims mine in a hot, possessive kiss that has me curling my toes and purring like a kitten in heat.

He pulls back, looking at me with a cheeky smile that makes him all the more irresistible. "I've been wanting to do that all night," he says, his hands sliding down my back to my ass, squeezing gently. "Do you know what else I've been wanting to do?" He slides his hand into the slit in my dress and up my leg and thigh, sending tingles across my skin.

"What?" I manage with a soft moan as he gradually works his fingers between my thighs. My legs instinctively part for him, giving him access.

"As much as I love that dress on you," Cillian drawls, his mouth finding my neck. "I've been dreaming of peeling it off you all night. I imagined teasing you and making you wet for me," he says, then drops to his knees in front of me.

I gasp, my eyes growing wide with shock. "W-what are you doing?"

"Grab onto the counter, love," Cillian warns, his voice dark. I do as he says and watch with a mixture of shock and excitement as he lifts my right leg and throws it over his shoulder. My dress rides up to my waist, baring the lower part of my body. My heart is beating wildly in my chest, my grip tightening painfully on the countertop as anticipation builds in my veins.

Cillian starts to rub his thumb over my pussy through the material of my panties in slow, skillful strokes. A needy moan falls from my lips, my breaths coming out in short pants. I close my eyes, throwing my head back as he continues to caress me. Switching from his thumb to his middle finger, he starts to rub harder across the crotch of my panties, stroking back and forth until my underwear is soaked through with my wetness.

"Oh god, Cillian," I moan, unable to help myself. "That feels so good."

He doesn't say anything, just keeps massaging my clit through my soaked panties.

My knees are getting weaker, threatening to buckle. With one finger, he pushes the silky material between my folds, drawing a loud cry from me. Gently, he drops my leg to the ground and pulls my panties down, lifting my legs so he can pull them off completely.

Then he rises to his feet and lifts me onto the counter, his powerful, lean body pressing deliciously against me. His deep blue eyes meet mine with a staggering intensity, and without taking his eyes off mine, he slides a finger into me.

I moan his name, my body buckling from the sudden wave of pleasure. He spreads my legs wider with his other hand and continues sliding his finger in and out of me in slow, torturous strokes. Suddenly he leans down, his mouth closing over my hard, aching clit. I gasp, almost falling off the counter as my body trembles at the sensation. Cillian repositions me, then pulls his finger from my pussy and shocks me by sliding it into my asshole, while his thumb gently presses down on my clit.

“Oh my god!” I gasp. I didn’t think a finger in my ass could feel so good—I’d never even imagined it. It feels like my body and all of my senses are overwhelmed with pleasure.

“Do you like that, kitten?” he asks, pushing his finger in deeper, his thumb relentlessly stroking my clit.

I let out a helpless moan, suddenly incapable of speaking or even forming a coherent thought. Cillian chuckles wickedly and continues to drive me crazy with his hand, his erection pulsing wildly against my thighs.

“How do you feel, Aria?” he asks, pushing his finger deeper until it’s completely buried inside me. Then he starts to wiggle his finger around in circles. “Tell me how this makes you feel.”

Of course, I'm unable to speak, almost out of my mind with need. "P-please..." I manage after a while, begging for relief only he can grant. "Please, Cillian."

"Why are you begging me, kitten?" His gentle voice contradicts the ruthless strokes of his fingers. "What do you want?"

"You," I breathe.

A slow smile of satisfaction spreads across Cillian's handsome face.

"My pleasure," he says, removing his finger from my ass and stepping in between my legs. He drops his trousers and underwear to the floor, then grabs his stiff cock and gives it a few pumps. There's something so intimate and erotic about watching him touch himself, and I would love to watch him longer, but then he pushes his tip against my entrance and every thought flies out of my head.

"Now tell me what you want," he says, his voice huskier, less controlled.

I put my arms around his neck, leaning forward. "Fuck me, Cillian," I whisper into his ear.

He inches forward, slowly sliding into me. "Again, my pleasure," he says, nipping at my lower lip. I moan, and he slides his tongue between my lips, groaning into my mouth as he thrusts deeper into me. He pulls out all the way and pushes back in, harder. Deeper. Slowly but surely, he continues to fuck me, driving me to the brink of ecstasy, bringing me back only to push me over the edge again.

My body, my pussy, everything within me feels like it's on fire, ready to combust at any moment. And just when I start to think the pleasure can't build any higher, Cillian eases out of me and positions his tip against my asshole.

“Hold on tight, love,” he says gruffly, placing his hands over mine on the counter. “I’m about to fuck you senseless. In your ass,” he adds, slowly rubbing his tip against my hole, holding my gaze. “Tell me if it feels uncomfortable. I’ll stop.”

But I don’t want him to stop. I want him to fill me in every way possible, fuck every hole in my body... Without saying a word, I push gently against him, taking his head in. Cillian grunts, muttering a curse under his breath as he pushes deeper into me. Though he’s slick from my pussy, it still feels uncomfortable at first. My asshole strains around his huge shaft, stretching to accommodate him, then suddenly it gives way, opening up a whole new world of sensations.

Cillian smashes his mouth against mine in a deep, hard kiss, sucking my tongue into his mouth, thrusting into my ass with loud, feral grunts. I hold on tight, kissing him back, taking all he’s willing to give and giving as much as I take.

This is different from the other times we’ve been together. There’s something special about this moment, something that drives the connection between us beyond what it was, to unimaginable depths. He’s fucking me harder now, every movement frantic.

My moans have grown weaker, hoarse. I can’t take anymore. I feel like I’ll drop dead from an overload of pleasure any second now. I let go, leaving my body to succumb to a nerve-racking, body-racking soul-jerking orgasm. The feeling of my body clenching around him pushes Cillian over the edge as well, and he drives into my ass in one last powerful stroke before he comes apart, spurting deep inside of me.

We cling tightly to each other for a long time, until our bodies are calm and our breathing regulated, until it doesn’t feel like the world is a spinning abyss anymore. Then Cillian drops his head onto my shoulder and whispers in my ear—

“I love you, Aria.”

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 12:20 am

Cillian

“Listen, Daniel, I’ve already told you—I’m not selling it to him.” I turn away from the splendid view outside the window of my home office with an irritated sigh. This conversation has dragged on too long, and I’m running out of patience.

Daniel Riggs is my business partner and longtime friend. We met while I was sourcing funds to start my company. He was working as a bartender in a club I used to frequent, fresh out of business school. After one too many bottles one Friday night, I told him about my plans and he swore to secure investors if I gave him thirty percent of the company’s shares. Two years later, Cypher Co. came into existence, and we’ve been a great team since then.

Until now.

“I just don’t understand why you’re turning down Vincent Leone?” Daniel says, his frustration evident even though we’re miles apart. I can imagine him scowling at the phone like he does at me whenever he’s trying to get a point across.

“Leone is an asshole,” I say simply. The bastard is worse than an asshole—he controls the production and distribution of drugs in all of Mexico and is on the FBI’s most wanted list. He abducts kids and women off the streets and takes them to his production site where they test all sorts of drugs on them. The feds are closing in on him, and now the bastard wants to protect his production site with my software.

“You had no problem taking money from assholes before,” Daniel says. “What the hell changed?”

Everything . Everything has changed since Aria came into my life. I know I can't erase all the shit I did in the past, but I can do better moving forward. I want to be better for her, I want to deserve her.

Not like I can say any of that to Daniel—he'd never understand.

"Do you realize how much money he's willing to put up for that software?" he asks.

"Don't care," I say, my voice ringing with finality. "I'm not selling it to him."

There's a pause on the other end of the line, followed by a deep sigh. "I don't understand." My friend's voice is a mixture of resignation and disappointment. "I don't understand any of this at all. I flew all the way to Mexico. I waited four fucking weeks before I could secure a meeting, and another two to convince him we're his best bet, and now you don't want to sell to him? This is fucking unbelievable."

I listen quietly while Daniel vents his frustration. He has the right to be mad, but he won't change my mind. He'll get over it and start looking for the next big client. I make a mental note to tell him not to approach criminals like Leone again. We're going a hundred percent legit.

A gentle knock sounds at the door, and I glance up as Aria walks in. A grin breaks out on my face. It's only been a few minutes since I left her all tangled up in my sheets to receive Daniel's call, but it feels like hours and seeing her now makes me realize how much I've missed her in those few minutes.

God, I've got it bad.

"Daniel," I say, cutting through his rant, "we'll talk later."

A slight pause. "Alright, Wolfe, but this isn't over."

“Yeah, yeah.” I end the call and set my phone down, focusing on my Aria. “Hey, love.”

Aria doesn't return my smile, and I instantly know something isn't right. Her face is pale and her usually sparkling green eyes look haunted with guilt. I reach for her, trying to pull her close, to console her, but she flinches—just barely, but enough for me to notice. I drop my hands, keeping a straight face despite the painful jab that her rejection drives through my heart.

“What's wrong, love?”

“Vivian is missing,” she says quietly, searching my face as if it holds answers to the questions in her head. “I was chatting on the phone with a colleague from work and she told me. She went missing on the night of the fundraiser.”

“And?”

Aria shrugs nervously. “I don't know, I just feel like...” She lets her voice trail off, dropping her gaze with a guilty blush. “I wanted to ask if you had anything to do with it, but I realize now how ridiculous and insulting that sounds. I'm sorry, I shouldn't have...”

“You're right. I do have something to do with it,” I cut in quietly. “I was pissed at the way she treated you that night after what she did, so I leaked her information to some bad guys that she owes money.”

Aria doesn't say anything. She's looking at me with a blank expression. For the first time, I can't tell what she's thinking. I tell myself I've done what's right, that I'm protecting her in ways she can't understand. But there's no relief in her eyes, no gratitude, no blame or disgust...nothing.

“Say something, Aria.”

“Why would you do that?” she asks. She’s shaking her head like she’s trying to wrap her mind around my actions.

I want to tell her that there’s nothing strange about what I did. In my world, an action calls for a reaction—when someone stabs you in the back, you turn around and stab them back, deeper. You stand by and watch them bleed to death. That’s the natural order of things...but I can tell she won’t understand any of it no matter how hard I try to explain. My world and hers are different.

She’ll only realize what kind of monster I am, and that look of adoration in her eyes will change to disgust. The thought sends a stake through my heart, twisting painfully.

I sit behind my desk, a feeble attempt at maintaining some semblance of control. It won’t do any good to let her see how torn I am. “I was only looking out for you,” I say simply, keeping my voice level. “She’ll never hurt you again.”

Aria scoffs loudly, blinking at me in disbelief. “You were looking out for me? By putting Vivian in danger?”

I shrug in response. “She hurt you first.”

“Like that’s any defense,” Aria counters. “How are you different from her?”

“Aria, I—”

“You have no excuse, Cillian,” Aria cuts in, holding my gaze with a stubborn tilt of her jaw. “How are you any different from Vivian, or the monster who hurt your sister?”

“What?” My voice is quiet despite my blood roaring in my veins. “What did you say?”

Aria swallows hard, her gaze flicking away but not before I catch the guilt in her dazzling green eyes. “I’m sorry,” she says quietly. “I shouldn’t have come here. I...I shouldn’t be here.”

Without another word, she heads for the door, her movements stiff, like she’s holding herself together by sheer will. At the entrance, she turns around, her expression bland, emotionless. “I’ll pack my things and go back to my place. I’ll work and pay back the price you bought me for. Thank you...for everything.”

And with that, she walks out of the door, and out of my life.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 12:20 am

Aria

I storm out of Cillian's home, the cool night air slapping me in the face as I walk down the long, lonely road. My heart feels like lead, weighing heavily on my emotions. I'm feeling a lot of things after that confrontation with Cillian, but mostly guilt...for the hurtful words I said to him.

I shouldn't have compared him to that monster who killed his sister. It was not my place. What's wrong with me?

A dark SUV with tinted windows glides past me. I frown slightly, wondering why it's going so slowly when the road is obviously clear.

Something doesn't feel right.

I quicken my pace, my skin prickling with unease, glancing over my shoulder every few steps. My heart starts to beat faster, my instincts screaming at me to get out of sight. I take the next corner, ready to bolt if the car follows me, but it doesn't. I stop walking, letting out a breath of relief while mentally berating myself for being paranoid.

Someone clears their throat in front of me and I look up to see a tall, beady-eyed man with thinning brown hair and an unkempt beard standing a few feet from me, lips stretched slightly in a humorless smirk.

"Hey, missy...lose your way?" he asks in a mocking tone.

My heartbeat picks up again, hard and fast against the walls of my chest. I glance back to see the SUV parked a close distance from us, waiting...

“E-excuse me,” I stutter, trying to sidestep. He moves with me, mirroring every step I take, his smirk growing wider, mocking me. I swerve in an attempt to run, but the man is faster. He grabs me by the collar of my shirt and pulls me against his sweaty, smelly body. I scream, struggling to get away, and suddenly I feel a sharp prick against my neck. My hand flies up to the spot as my vision blurs. I stumble, my legs giving way beneath me. The last thing I feel is the man lifting me into his arms.

When I open my eyes, I’m lying in an unfamiliar room, my wrists bound to a bed. Panic claws at me, every nerve screaming as I struggle against the restraints. My head is throbbing, and I blink away the fog, trying to take in my surroundings. The room is lavishly decorated, with polished wood and elegant drapes.

Then the door creaks open, and a man steps inside. He’s old, maybe mid to late sixties, tall and lean, agile-looking for his age, with sleek handsome features. He looks vaguely familiar, yet I can’t place where I’ve seen him before.

“Wh-who’re you?” I ask. My voice is hoarse, barely coming out above a whisper.

He chuckles like I’ve just said something hilarious. He walks further into the room, coming to sit beside me on the bed.

“Warren,” he says quietly. His voice is raspy and deep, the voice of a man used to getting his way. “Warren Osla. I’m sure you’ve heard about me.”

I stare at him in disbelief. I’ve glimpsed him quite a few times on the news, and of course at the party the other night. A wealthy businessman and philanthropist loved by all.

But that isn't why he seemed familiar.

He was at the auction—I'd remember that voice anywhere. He bid against Cillian to try to buy me. What does he want with me?

"You poor little thing, you must be wondering why you're here," he says as if reading my mind. I nod and his lips tug up in a cynical smile.

"Y-yes, sir," I squeak.

"I'm simply taking back what's mine," Warren says, his smile morphing into a twisted smirk. "I had my eyes set on you at the chapel. You were supposed to be mine, girl." His gaze travels over me with a chilling gleam that makes my skin crawl. "Now, you're sullied...but I'll take what's left of you." He reaches out to skim his fingers over my face.

A shiver of terror courses through me. I throw my head to the side in a blatant show of defiance, and he lands a sharp smack on the side of my head. I let out a strangled cry, tears blurring my vision.

"You need to learn to be obedient, little lady," Warren continues without missing a beat, trailing his fingers down my neck to my chest. His hand lingers above my breast. "You're such an exquisite little thing. I can see why Wolfe wanted to have you to himself."

My heart breaks at the mention of Cillian. He has no idea where I am, and he probably doesn't care. I don't blame him, though. Nobody in their right mind would want anything to do with me after everything I said. The reason for my anger now seems so intangible, so small...

God, I feel so stupid.

“Please don’t hurt me,” I whisper, tears spilling from my eyes. I wish I could go back in time and take back everything I said. I wish I’d stayed and apologized to Cillian instead of running away like a coward. “Please, please...”

Warren chuckles dryly. “I don’t intend to hurt you, my lady. If you are obedient, you might even like what I do to you.”

He tries to kiss me and I throw my head aside again, pressing my lips together so hard it hurts. I squeeze my eyes shut, bracing for the impact of another slap.

The door suddenly crashes open.

I open my eyes and there’s Cillian, standing by the door, the broken knob clenched tightly in his right hand, a pistol in his left. Every muscle in his body is taut, his gaze blazing. At that moment, Cillian Wolfe seems like a whole different person from the man I’ve known in the past few days. He seems like a beast, an angry vengeful beast that’s barely held back by a leash.

But then he glances my way and his gaze softens, that terrifying edge melting into something tender. “Are you hurt?” he asks, voice low, steady.

I shake my head, trying to breathe. “No.”

He nods once, then returns his attention to Warren, his expression going cold once again. He doesn’t speak for a while, his attention focused on something below Warren’s face. “That watch...” he murmurs, then slowly glances up at Warren. “You killed my sister, didn’t you?”

Warren smirks, a cruel glint in his eyes. “Who is your sister?” he asks in a mocking tone. “I’ve killed quite a number of people.”

Cillian's fist tightens visibly around the gun he's holding until his knuckles go white. "You bastard," he says through gritted teeth. "Lily Wolfe. Did you kill her?"

Warren chuckles, unfazed. "Oh, Lily. She was a pretty little thing, just like this one." He reaches down and starts loosening the ropes at my wrists with a deliberate slowness. "I found her amusing, and she was fun to be around. So I slipped a little something in her drink and took her home with me. Unfortunately, she woke up earlier than intended and even sneaked pictures."

He scoffs, tugging the final knot on the rope with more force than necessary. "Maybe if she wasn't so defiant, I'd have let her live." I tense as he loosens the last knot, ready to run over to Cillian, but Warren is quick. He yanks me off the bed by my shoulder, shielding himself with my body.

I gasp when I feel a cold metal object pressed against my temple. Cillian's jaw tightens, a single muscle flexing near his temple. But his expression remains disturbingly calm. He raises his gun, leveling it with a deadly precision I've only ever seen in movies. And then, without a moment's hesitation, he fires.

I scream. Warren howls. But his grip on my arm loosens. He stumbles backward, his gun falling to the ground with a dull thud. In the blink of an eye, Cillian is on him, grabbing him by the collar. With a raw, unrestrained fury, he slams his fist into Warren's face over and over, his eyes blazing with rage.

I stand there, heart racing, unable to look away as I watch him lose control. It dawns on me how much pain, anger, and guilt he had to bottle up in the years since he lost his sister. I thought I had an idea, but I couldn't even have imagined.

I realize in that moment how hard I've fallen for him. I love him, his flaws, his demons, his darkness—everything.

“Cillian, stop!” I scream as sirens blare in the distance. I reach for him, wrapping my arms around him from behind. “Please, stop.”

He stops, breathing hard, his fists stained with Warren’s blood. Slowly, he turns to me, his beautiful blue eyes swirling with raw emotions. He pulls me into a hug, holding me so tightly I feel every beat of his heart against mine. I cling to him just as fiercely, feeling the weight of everything—his loss, his anger, his pain—pouring out in this single, crushing embrace.

The cops arrive, and I barely register the ruckus as they take Warren away, all my attention focused on the feeling of Cillian’s erratic heartbeat beneath my ear.

“Let’s get you home,” he murmurs, his voice thick with relief. Without waiting for an answer, he scoops me up, holding my body against his chest like I’m the last thing keeping him grounded. I wrap my legs around his waist, resting my head against his neck, letting his warmth seep into me as he strides out of the room, unbothered by the stares of the police officers. He takes me to his car and sets me gently in the passenger seat before buckling me in. His hands linger on the seat belt for a moment, as if reluctant to pull away, then he closes the door and circles around to the driver’s side.

The drive home is steeped in silence. I watch him from the corner of my eye, trying to read his expression, but his face is as inscrutable as it always is when he’s hiding from the world. Even when we step inside the house, an awkward silence hangs between us. I take a breath, determined to break it.

“I’m sorry,” I say timidly, keeping my eyes trained to the ground. “For earlier. I shouldn’t have said the things I did when you were only trying to protect me.”

“Look at me, Aria.” His voice is a soft command, gentle yet firm. I look up into his piercing blue eyes and my breath catches at the vulnerability in them. He reaches out,

pulling me into his arms. “I’m just glad you aren’t hurt,” he says, his arms tightening around me. “If anything had happened to you...” He trails off, as if he’s unable to imagine the possibility. “You don’t have to apologize. You were right. I looked into Vivian—turns out the men she owed money to were threatening to sell her little sister at the auctions. She was scared, and that’s why she offered you to them instead. I still want to kill her for hurting you, but hurting her would make me as much of a bad person as her. I’ll pull some strings to find her, I promise.”

Gratitude washes over me. I pull back slightly to look at his face. “Thank you, Cillian.” After a pause, I ask, “How did you find me?”

“I went after you and saw your bag on the roadside,” he replies, and I can feel some of the tension returning to his body. “I knew something was wrong, so I tracked your phone and it led me to Osla’s house. I called the cops on the way.”

“You tracked my phone?” I ask, blinking at him in surprise. “How? When?”

“The night you arrived at my house,” he says with a sheepish shrug. “I installed a software on your phone...just in case you were ever in danger...like today.” He caresses my face, his expression firm. “I can’t say I’m sorry.”

I smile and shake my head. Why would I be angry at a man who’s done nothing but protect me from the very first time we met? “It’s fine. I’m glad you did. Thank you,” I say softly. “For rescuing me from the auction house, for coming for me today. Everything.”

I pause, slowly meeting his gaze, my heart pounding like crazy in my chest. “While Warren had me tied up, all I could think is that I wanted to belong to you again, be yours again. I love you, Cillian,” I whisper, my heart swelling with euphoria the moment the words slip out of my lips. I laugh, feeling silly. “I love you so much.”

Cillian doesn't say anything for a while, his eyes boring into mine with an intensity that makes butterflies flutter wildly in my stomach. Then he lowers his head to mine and captures my mouth in a long, passionate kiss. When he pulls back, he drops his forehead to mine, a soft smile tugging at his lips.

"I love you too, my Aria. I have loved you from the very moment I laid eyes on you in that damned chapel."

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 12:20 am

Cillian

Four Years Later...

Time is ticking away.

Four years of watching Aria flourish, of seeing her carve her own path and prove to everyone that her success isn't just linked to her husband's title as CEO of Cypher Co. Despite the gossip that she's only risen because of who I am, she's silenced every critic with her own skill, her own drive and style. I love her more with every passing day—her ambition, her strength, her never-dimming light. She fills every dark, hollow corner in me, and makes me whole.

I stand in the crowd as she finishes her walk on the biggest runway in Seattle. And she owns it. As usual. Pride surges through me as roaring applause ripples through the crowd of spectators.

“That’s your mommy,” I say to Lilian, our thirteen-month-old daughter, bouncing her playfully in my arms. “Aren’t you proud of Mommy?” Lilian beams, her gorgeous green eyes sparkling with mirth. I laugh, my heart filling up with a familiar rush of euphoria.

Lilian came as a beautiful surprise for us. We weren’t exactly planning for a child, but were very excited when we found out. With Aria, I felt complete. I didn’t think it was possible to be any happier, but Lilian’s birth proved me wrong. We named her Lilian after my sister, and sometimes when she smiles, I see Lily’s carefree spirit...just like now.

I still miss Lily, but I can now think of her without pain and bitterness, especially with Warren Osla rotting in jail. With his crime counts piled up to the sky, he's going to be in there for a long time, possibly forever. I made sure of that.

I've made sure that the darkness of Aria's past will no longer touch her. And in return, she's made me the kind of man who wants to use my power to help others. The auctions and the sick men who run them are much more deeply entrenched in this city than I even imagined, protected by powerful politicians and elite security. But, I've begun to gather evidence against these powerful men in the hopes that one day their organization will fall.

"Let's go get Mommy," I say, juggling Lilian in my arms as I head backstage.

Aria's eyes light up the moment we enter her private dressing room. She practically jumps out of her chair and runs toward us, excitement radiating from her as she throws her arms around my neck.

"You were amazing, love," I murmur, my lips brushing against her ear before I kiss her, slow and deep, letting her feel just how damn proud I am.

She smiles, cheeks flushed. "Thanks, darling. Hey, baby..." she coos, opening her arms to Lilian who eagerly jumps into them. Aria laughs and hold our daughter close. "Oh, my baby..." She looks up at me over Lilian's shiny black curls. "Thanks so much for coming. I didn't think you'd be able to make it in time from Texas. How was your meeting?"

"Boring," I reply with a roll of my eyes. "I don't know why Daniel keeps insisting that I meet with the investors personally—something about solidifying our authenticity. I told him I won't participate in those kinds of games again. I missed my girls too much."

"I'm glad you're back," Aria says, her eyes glinting with amusement and that sweet

look of adoration that's only grown deeper over the years. "I missed you too."

"I love that dress on you by the way," I say, running my eyes over the exquisite red dress she walked the runway in. I lean in close, lowering my voice. "Can't wait to get you home and show you how much I love it."

She blushes, a deep crimson spreading adorably across her cheeks, and I chuckle, letting my hand drift to her lower back. "Red suits you, kitten," I tease, enjoying watching her squirm under my gaze. "Let's get out of here so I can tear that dress off you."

"Cillian!" she berates halfheartedly. "Not in front of Lily!"

"She doesn't mind," I say, taking the giggling child from her arms. "Now, let's get your sexy ass home."

Forty minutes later, I get back from putting Lilian to bed to see Aria exiting the bathroom, a short towel knotted over her breasts, her hair tied up in a loose bun. I cross the space between us in two long strides, slide my fingers into her hair, and undo the knot, spilling those beautiful golden curls down her back and around her shoulders.

"Much better," I murmur, brushing my knuckles over her cheek. "I wanted to take the dress off you, but I guess I'll have to make do with this." With one tug, her towel comes undone. I let it slide to the floor, and then move back a little to take in the wonder of her body.

"God, love, you're so beautiful," I say, not bothering to hide the awe in my voice. Even after bearing our daughter, Aria still has the most beautiful body I've ever seen.

As expected, her face turns a beautiful shade of red. I like how, after three years and four months of marriage, I can still make her blush so easily. She steps closer and

tugs at the hem of my shirt, slowly lifting it. I raise my arms, laughing when she has to stand on her tiptoes to slide the shirt over my head. She glares at me, but I only laugh harder, and because I can't resist, I lower my mouth to hers.

She eagerly opens her mouth beneath mine, her hands gliding sensuously over the lean muscles of my stomach to my chest, over my nipples to lock around my neck, setting my whole body on fire for her. My muscles quiver instinctively under her touch, my cock growing bigger in my pants.

She takes hold of the button that fastens my jeans, but her hands are so unsteady that I have to reach down to place my hand over hers. "Easy, love," I purr, pulling the zipper with my hand over hers. I'm not wearing underwear beneath my pants. My cock springs free, my hand guiding hers as she pulls my jeans over my hips, down my buttocks until they fall to the ground in a pile beside her towel.

Once we're both naked, I let my gaze rake over her again, hungry for the sight of her. The scent of honey and herbs from her damp skin, one taut nipple peeking out from between strands of golden hair, her luscious breasts rising with each rapid breath.

Before Aria, I never thought it was possible to crave one woman over and over again. No matter how many times I make love to Aria, no matter how hard I orgasm, I'm always hungry for more. I want her with a vigor I can't control, and it's only grown stronger with time.

"Come here," I say, pulling her closer to my body. Tucking a finger beneath her chin, I duck down, brushing my lips over hers. I groan, immensely pleased by the slight shiver that passes through her body. I let my mouth wander, tasting the honey-sweet skin of her throat, teasing her earlobes between my lips until her body is shaking helplessly in my arms, her breaths coming out in short pants.

I bring my lips back to hers, inhaling her soft moan as our tongues meet. She melts in my arms, her body pressed against mine, kissing me back, matching me stroke for

stroke. I let myself get lost in her, lost in the scent and feel of her, the need for her thrumming in my veins.

When I can't take it anymore, I drag my mouth from hers and scoop her into my arms, carrying her to the bed. I stretch out beside her, my mouth reclaiming hers in a slow, deep, passionate kiss that leaves us both breathless.

I lift my head, pin her arms above her head with one hand, then reach down with the other to cup her breasts, teasing her nipples into tight buds, tugging them with my fingers and flicking them with my thumb. She gasps, letting out a loud moan. I know that her breasts are extra sensitive because she weaned Lilian only two months ago, so the merest flick of my thumb makes her shiver. And when I flick my tongue over one beaded nipple, she sucks in a sharp breath. I close my mouth over the puckered bud and suck. She cries out my name, arching her back and pushing her breast further into my mouth. I continue to tease her, sucking on one breast and cupping her other with my free hand, my thumb tracing circles on the sensitive underside.

Her breathing comes in shudders, her body trembling, her eyes squeezed shut, a look of torment on her gorgeous face. Brain buzzing with lust, I shift my mouth to her other nipple, grazing her with the edge of my teeth, then sucking hard until she begs for me to stop, squirming against me, her hips lifting off the bed, seeking relief.

Sliding a hand between her thighs, I lift her right leg and drape it over my hip, spreading her wide. I glide my hand over her inner thighs, teasing her, slowly working my way upward. She whimpers my name, her nails digging into my scalp, the smell of her arousal teasing my senses, slowly driving me over the edge. I slide a finger inside her and she lets out a breathy moan, her hot, slick walls clenching tightly around my finger.

I let out a low growl, my hips flexing as if my cock is buried deep inside her instead of thrusting against her thigh. I want to fuck her so badly right now, but I also want to take my time pleasuring her, loving her. I continue to stroke her, then slide a second

finger inside her, stretching her.

“In a few minutes, my cock is going to be inside you, kitten...” I murmur into her ear, sliding my fingers out and pushing them in again. “...stroking you just like this.”

She shivers, tense, and I know she’s picturing it in her head—my cock in her pussy, slamming into her hard and fast. Gathering her body’s juice on my finger, I slide it out and rub the silky wetness over her clit, the little pink bud swelling at my touch. I continue to finger-fuck her, watching her face. Her rosy lips are slightly parted, her face all red and her eyes squeezed tightly shut, and she looks so fucking beautiful. The most beautiful woman in the world.

Her body is tight with tension that seems to arc through her and into me, shooting straight to my cock. “I can’t believe how lucky I am that you’re mine.” My words came out in urgent whispers as I flick her nipples with my tongue, unable to keep my mouth off her, my cock so hard it throbs. “I want you so bad it fucking hurts.”

Then she gasps, seeming to hold her breath as the tension inside her peaks and shatters. She lets out a shaky sigh, her inner muscles clenching around my fingers, her gorgeous face contorted as pleasure wracks her body. I continue to move my fingers in and out, keeping my rhythm steady, trying to make her pleasure last, raining kisses on her breasts, her throat, and her lips, until the quaking inside her slowly fades.

When her climax has passed, she lies there, in my arms, eyes closed, lips slightly parted, her breathing soft and spent. Her hair is a tangled mess around her face, her lips curved in the faintest of smiles.

She opens her eyes, smiling lazily as she turns on her side to face me and leans over to give me a quick kiss on the mouth. I wrap my arms around her and deepen the kiss, the two of us twisting and rolling on the bed in a tangle of limbs, hands, and bodies.

I finally pin her beneath me, both of us breathless. She chuckles, trying to overturn me again, her eyes glinting with a playful defiance. “You think I’m yours, huh?” she says playfully. “Are you sure you can afford me?”

“Oh, kitten,” I whisper, stretching myself above her. “You know I would pay so much more for you. I would give anything and everything to keep you. You are mine . I’m barely hanging on to my last shred of control. Don’t test me.”

“And what if I do?” she asks, her expression a deliberate challenge.

Lifting her left leg, I wrap it around my waist and with the slightest thrust of my hips, I’m buried deep inside of her. I remain still, holding my body rigid even when she starts to grind against me.

“W-what are you doing?” she asks, her voice laced with an almost comical frustration.

“Answering your question,” I reply with a smirk.

She stares at me. “What?”

“You asked what would happen if you challenged me. I’m showing you. Now, what do you do?”

“I’m sorry,” she says in a contrite tone that contradicts the mirth in her eyes.

“For?” I tease further, holding back my laughter when she shoots me a warning glare.

“For challenging you. I’m yours. Only yours, forever. Now, please move your ass. Literally,” she adds, and this time I can’t hold back my laughter.

“God, I love you,” I murmur, leaning forward to kiss the tip of her nose. “I love you

so much.”

Then I start to move inside of her, slowly, keeping my eyes locked on hers. She’s so incredibly tight and wet for me. I pull out all the way to the tip and slowly push back in, groaning with pleasure at the sweet sensation of being buried inside of her.

Everything in me urges me to go faster, plunge deeper, to greedily exploit her warmth. I can feel the first stirrings of orgasm tugging at my belly, but I remind myself that we have all night. So I go even slower, grinding my hips against hers, pushing deeper until I’m completely buried in her.

Aria’s breathless little moans are like music to my ears. Her hands are everywhere...my shoulders, my neck, buried in my hair, clawing down my back to my buttocks. I continue to move inside her in deep, slow thrusts, the slippery friction making me ache for release.

She slides her hands up my chest and over my shoulders to lock around my neck, her hips rising to meet mine, taking everything I’m giving and more. “I’m yours, Cillian,” she rasps breathlessly. “Yours...all yours!”

The words spill out of her lips in a rush, carrying the intensity of her feelings, her vulnerability...

I start to move faster, fueled by my own emotions that mirror hers, plunging harder, deeper, like a man driven by demons. Aria screams, burying her head in my neck as a powerful orgasm begins to shake her body. Her teeth clamp down on my shoulder, her nails digging into my back as her inner muscles clench around me. Pain and pleasure have become indistinguishable.

“That’s right, love—come for me!” I groan, capturing her mouth in a deep kiss, swallowing her moans and cries. I quicken my pace, striking her G-spot over and over again while she comes apart beneath me. My bones grow heavy and I’m almost

paralyzed with the overwhelming pleasure coursing through my veins. I grab the sheets, bracing myself on my arms as the deep ache in my core pulls together in a tight, shimmering knot.

“ Mine ,” I growl as my load shoots into her, filling her as I continue to move over her, against her, inside her, our hot breaths mingling, our skin slick with sweat.

She clings to me, grounding me even as I lose myself in her, kissing my face, my neck, reassuring me of her presence. She’s right here with me. I close my eyes and let myself go, coming apart in her arms.

And when we’re done, we lie there for a long time, our breathing coming out in short, uneven pants. Aria turns in my arms, placing her palms on my chest.

“I love you, Cillian,” she says with a radiant smile that lights up her whole face.

I lean in to place a tender kiss on her forehead, then her nose and lips. “I love you too, kitten.” I move back a little to glance down at her stomach, then back up at her face with a teasing smile. “Do you think we just made another baby?”

Aria chuckles, a soft blush spreading across her cheeks. “Maybe,” she replies, her eyes twinkling. “I’m not sure.”

“That’s not good enough,” I say, rolling over her and pinning her body beneath mine. “We have to be very sure.” I lower my head to hers.

Aria laughs, making a half-assed attempt at protesting. “Cillian! Lilian will be awake in five minutes!”

“That’s plenty of time,” I say, sealing my mouth over hers.

~The End