



The Beast's Obsession

(Obsessed #1)

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Category: Action&Adventure

Description: Lily Hart is sweet, untouched, and completely unprepared for the storm that is Grayson Wolfe. She only wanted a temp job—something to help her struggling family. Instead, she walked straight into the lair of a man who doesn't ask. He takes.

Grayson has locked himself away in his sprawling estate, a beast among his riches, until the moment she appears—wide-eyed, innocent, and too damn tempting. One look, and he knows. She belongs to him.

He'll do whatever it takes to keep her. Even if it means trapping her in his world with an offer she can't refuse—one month under his roof in exchange for her family's salvation.

But one month will never be enough.

Lily is soft and perfect, made for him in ways she doesn't yet understand. And Grayson? He's not letting her go. Ever. Even if she fights. Even if she runs. Even if she says she's not his.

Because she is.

And if she won't accept it willingly? Well.

He'll just have to convince her.

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one

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Lily

My hands shake as I clutch my worn leather bag, knuckles white against the faded material. Deep breath. I can do this. For Mom. For Danny. The massive doors of the Wolfe Estate loom before me, gleaming mahogany that probably costs more than our entire house.

I force myself to reach for the polished brass knocker, my reflection distorted in its surface. God, I look so out of place already in my simple blouse and skirt. But it's the nicest outfit I own, carefully pressed this morning while trying not to wake my little brother.

The door swings open silently and I step inside, immediately overwhelmed by the sheer opulence surrounding me. Marble floors stretch endlessly, punctuated by priceless art and furniture that belongs in a museum. The scent of leather and wood polish tickles my nose.

"Oh wow," I breathe, unable to stop myself.

A stoic-faced man in an impeccable suit regards me impassively. "Miss Hart, I presume? Follow me."

I trail after him down endless hallways, trying desperately to take mental notes so I

don't get lost. Left, right, up a sweeping staircase that makes me dizzy. How does anyone live like this?

"Your assignment details," the man intones, handing me a thick folder. "Mr. Wolfe expects perfection."

I nod, clutching the folder like a lifeline. "Of course. I won't let him down."

I don't know much about Grayson Wolfe other than they call him "the Beast." Apparently because he's so mean and cold and calculating.

That's probably why he can't keep a housemaid. Apparently, he yells at all of them and scares them away.

I don't have any intention of quitting, though. No matter how big and bad this wolf is. I need this job. For mom. For my little brother.

It's life or death. Literally.

The man's lips thin slightly. "See that you don't."

And then I'm alone, pulse racing as I flip through the pages. So many tasks, so many rules. I can do this. I have to.

Squaring my shoulders, I start down the hall, heels clicking softly on the marble. Ornate paintings line the walls and I can't help but slow, captivated by their beauty.

A flash of movement catches my eye and I turn, realizing too late that I've wandered into an unfamiliar wing. Panic flares hot in my chest as I spin, trying to retrace my steps. The identical corridors mock me, a labyrinth of wealth I was never meant to navigate.

"Focus, Lily," I mutter, pressing a hand to my thundering heart. "You can't screw this up on the first day."

I stumble through an open doorway, my heart in my throat. The room beyond is dim, masculine—all dark wood and leather.

"And who might you be?"

The voice cuts through the silence like a blade, deep and commanding. I freeze, eyes widening as they land on the man before me. He has to be Grayson Wolfe. Even in the low light, his presence fills the room, broad shoulders blocking my escape. His eyes narrow, raking over me with predatory intensity.

"I-I'm so sorry," I stammer, face burning. "I got lost and?—"

"Lost?" He arches a brow, stepping closer. "In my home?"

God, he's tall. I have to crane my neck to meet his gaze, pulse racing. "It won't happen again, sir. I was just trying to?—"

My hands are shaking so badly that the tray I'm clutching wobbles. Before I can steady it, one of the wine glasses tips. I watch in horror as dark liquid splashes across Grayson's crisp white shirt.

Time slows. The stain spreads, a crimson bloom against stark perfection. My stomach plummets.

"Oh no," I breathe. "I'm so sorry, I didn't mean?—"

I reach out instinctively, as if I could somehow undo my colossal mistake. But Grayson catches my wrist, his grip firm. Electric .

I can't breathe.

"Careful," he murmurs, voice low. "You'll cut yourself."

I realize belatedly that I was about to grab broken glass. God, could this get any worse? I want to sink through the floor, disappear completely. But Grayson's touch anchors me here, his thumb brushing my pulse point.

"What's your name?" he asks softly.

"Lily," I whisper. "Lily Hart."

His eyes never leave mine. "Well, Lily Hart. It seems we have a situation on our hands."

His fingers ghost over my skin as he takes the tray, setting it aside with practiced ease. My hands feel empty, vulnerable. I can't look away from the intensity in his dark eyes.

"I...I can pay for the dry cleaning," I offer weakly, knowing it's a pathetic solution. As if I could afford to replace a shirt that probably costs more than I make in a month.

Grayson's lips quirk, not quite a smile. "That won't be necessary."

He reaches for my hand again, and I hold my breath as he turns it palm-up. There's a smear of wine across my skin, stark against my pale flesh. With deliberate slowness, he begins to wipe it away.

The pad of his thumb traces delicate patterns, and something molten pools low in my belly. This is beyond inappropriate, but I can't bring myself to pull away. My breath catches audibly.

"You're trembling," Grayson observes, voice pitched low. It's not a question.

I swallow hard. "I...I should go. This is your private?—"

"Stay." The command is soft but unyielding.

My mind races. I should leave. I need to leave. But there's an inexplicable magnetism drawing me closer, even as alarm bells scream in the back of my head.

What am I doing? He's my boss. He's dangerous. He's...mesmerizing.

"Tell me, Lily," Grayson murmurs, still stroking my palm. "What brought you to my home?"

I can't tear my eyes away from his face, my heart hammering so hard I'm sure he can hear it. "I...I needed the work," I manage, my voice barely above a whisper. "My family?—"

"Ah." His thumb stills, but he doesn't release my hand. "And you'd do anything for them, wouldn't you?"

There's a weight to his words that makes me shiver. I should be offended, should yank my hand away and storm out. But I'm rooted to the spot, caught in the intensity of his gaze.

"I should go," I repeat, but it sounds weak even to my own ears.

Grayson finally releases me, and I stumble back a step, off-balance in more ways than one. "Of course," he says, his voice deceptively mild. "You have duties to attend to."

I nod jerkily, fumbling for words. "I'm so sorry again about the...the wine, Mr. Wolfe.

It won't happen again."

His eyes narrow slightly, and for a moment I think I see a flicker of...disappointment? But it's gone so quickly I must have imagined it.

"See that it doesn't," he says, his tone clipped and businesslike once more. "You're dismissed."

I practically flee the room, my legs shaky as I hurry down the corridor. What the hell just happened? My skin still tingles where he touched me, and I can't shake the feeling that something fundamental has shifted.

God, I'm in so much trouble.

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two

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Grayson

I watch Lily's slim figure retreat down the manicured path, my fists clenching at my sides. Damn her. How dare she make me feel this way—this maddening cocktail of rage and desire churning in my gut.

I turn from the window, pacing across my study like a caged animal. The plush carpet muffles my footsteps, but can't silence the turmoil in my head. This is just a momentary lapse, I tell myself. A fleeting distraction. Nothing more.

But even as I form the thought, I know it's a lie. The intensity thrumming through me is like nothing I've felt before. I want to possess her, to claim every inch of that soft skin as my own. To make her yielding body bend to my will.

I force myself to take a steadying breath, smoothing my features into their usual mask of cool indifference. This is nothing. She is nothing. Just another disposable employee.

A discreet cough breaks through my spiraling thoughts. "Sir?" my butler inquires from the doorway. "I have some information you may find...interesting."

I arch an eyebrow, silently prompting him to continue.

"It seems Miss Hart's family is facing some rather severe financial difficulties," he says, his tone carefully neutral. "Medical bills, I believe. For her mother."

My pulse quickens as possibilities begin to unfold. "Indeed," I murmur, mind already racing ahead. "That will be all, Jenkins."

As he bows out, I settle behind my desk, fingers steeped in thought. Having her here, under my roof...it's risky. This growing obsession is a weakness I can ill afford. And yet...

The benefits are undeniable. To have her at my beck and call, day and night. To slowly peel back her layers, learning every secret. Until she belongs to me completely.

A plan begins to crystallize. A way to keep her close while maintaining the upper hand. My lips curve into a predatory smile.

Lily Hart won't know what hit her.

I press the intercom. "Send Miss Hart to my office. Immediately." My voice brooks no argument.

The wait is interminable. I pace behind my desk, a caged predator scenting its prey. When the door finally opens, I freeze, drinking her in.

Lily steps inside, all hesitant grace. Her eyes dart around, never quite meeting mine. God, she's exquisite. Soft curves barely contained by her simple uniform. A stray tendril of hair curls against her neck, begging for my touch.

I want to devour her whole.

"Miss Hart," I growl, hating how my voice betrays me. "Please, sit."

She perches on the edge of the chair, hands folded primly in her lap. So demure. So utterly fuckable.

I clear my throat. "I have a proposition for you."

Her eyes widen, confusion evident. Good. Keep her off-balance.

"Your family is in need of financial assistance, correct?" I don't wait for confirmation. "I'm prepared to offer you a position. Live-in personal assistant. The salary would more than cover your mother's medical expenses."

Shock flits across her face, followed by a flicker of...hope? My chest tightens. No. I can't let her gentleness affect me.

"I...I don't understand," she stammers. "Why me?"

I lean forward, pinning her with my gaze. "Because I want you here, Lily. Under my roof."

Her breath catches. I can see the war raging behind those innocent eyes. Desire. Fear. Desperation.

"What do you say?"

I can't stop myself. I lean closer, invading her space. Her scent hits me—vanilla and something uniquely Lily. It makes my head spin.

"What's wrong, little one?" I murmur. "Cat got your tongue?"

She swallows hard, her pulse fluttering visibly at her throat. I want to taste it.

"Mr. Wolfe, I..." she starts, voice barely above a whisper.

I reach out, brushing a stray lock of hair behind her ear. My fingers graze her cheek, impossibly soft. Lily's breath hitches, her eyes going wide.

"Shh," I soothe, even as every cell in my body screams to claim her. "Don't overthink it."

My touch lingers, tracing the delicate curve of her jaw. She trembles beneath my hand, lips parting on a silent gasp.

Fuck. I'm losing control.

I jerk back, clenching my fists to keep from reaching for her again. What the hell is wrong with me? She's just a girl. A pawn. Nothing more.

But my body disagrees. My cock strains against my zipper, aching to bury itself in her warmth. To mark her as mine .

Lily's cheeks are flushed, her chest rising and falling rapidly. I can see the pulse pounding in her neck. She looks...aroused. Frightened. Confused.

"I...I need time to think," she whispers.

I want to roar my frustration. To grab her and show her exactly why she belongs to me. Instead, I force myself to nod.

"Of course," I say, my voice rough with suppressed hunger. "Take all the time you need."

But we both know it's a lie. She's already mine. She just doesn't know it yet.

I lean back in my chair, fingers steeped under my chin. Every muscle in my body is coiled tight, ready to spring. To pounce. To possess .

"But let me be crystal clear, Lily." My voice comes out as a low growl. "This offer won't be on the table forever."

Her eyes dart to mine, then away. Like a frightened doe sensing a predator. It makes something primal stir in my gut.

"I...I understand," she murmurs.

"Do you?" I press, leaning forward. The air between us crackles with tension. "Because once you say yes, there's no going back. You'll be mine. Completely."

A shiver runs through her slender frame. I can almost taste her indecision, her fear...and underneath it all, a hint of desire that makes my blood sing.

"Your family's debts. Your future. It all rests on this decision." My gaze bores into hers, willing her to submit. "What's it going to be, little one?"

Lily takes a shaky breath. Her voice is barely audible when she finally speaks. "Yes. I...I accept."

Triumph surges through me, hot and heady. Mine . She's finally mine.

I stand, circling my desk. Lily shrinks back in her chair, but I cup her chin, forcing her to meet my eyes.

"Smart girl," I purr. "You won't regret this."

I watch Lily rise on trembling legs, her eyes downcast as she backs toward the door. Every fiber of my being screams to yank her back, to crush her soft body against mine and claim those tempting lips. But I force myself to remain still, gripping the edge of my desk until my knuckles turn white.

She fumbles with the doorknob, her delicate hands shaking. The sight of her vulnerability sets my blood on fire. I want to soothe her fears, to wrap her in my arms and promise that I'll take care of everything. But that's not who I am. I'm the wolf, and she's my prey.

As she slips out into the hallway, I catch a final glimpse of her face. There's fear there, yes, but also a flicker of something else. Excitement? Anticipation? The thought makes my cock throb painfully against my zipper.

The door clicks shut, and I let out a ragged breath I didn't realize I'd been holding. The air feels charged, electric, as if Lily's presence has left some tangible mark on the room. Her scent lingers—a maddening mix of vanilla and warm skin that makes my head spin.

I stalk to the window, watching her hurry down the path toward the staff entrance. Even from this distance, I can see the tension in her shoulders, the way she keeps glancing back as if she expects me to come after her. Smart girl. She has no idea how close I came to doing just that.

The countdown has begun of having her under my roof, at my mercy. The possibilities are endless, and my mind races with all the ways I plan to break down her defenses. To mold her into the perfect companion. The perfect possession.

I press my forehead against the cool glass, willing my racing pulse to slow. This obsession is dangerous. Lily Hart is nothing but a temporary distraction, a plaything to amuse myself with for a few weeks. I can't afford to let her become anything more.

But even as I form the thought, I know it's a lie. The way she affects me—it's like nothing I've ever experienced. She's awakened something primal in me, a hunger that won't be satisfied until I've claimed every inch of her.

I turn from the window, pacing the length of my office like a caged animal. The ticking of the antique grandfather clock in the corner seems to mock me, each second an eternity until I can have her back in my presence.

My phone buzzes, and I snatch it up, hoping for some distraction from my spiraling thoughts. It's a message from my head of security, confirming that Lily's background check is complete. No red flags, nothing to indicate she's anything other than what she seems—a desperate young woman willing to do whatever it takes to save her family.

The knowledge should reassure me, but it only fuels my possessive instincts. I want to shelter her, protect her.

And then stuff her full of my cock until she whimpers and begs and afterwards spoil her rotten.

I pour myself a stiff drink, hoping the burn of whiskey will dull this maddening ache. But as the amber liquid slides down my throat, all I can think about is how Lily's lips would taste. Sweet and innocent, untouched by the darkness that consumes me.

Growling in frustration, I hurl the crystal tumbler against the wall. It shatters, shards glittering in the fading sunlight. The violence does nothing to quell the storm raging inside me.

I sink into my leather chair, my body thrumming with restless energy. Closing my eyes, I try to center myself, to regain the icy control that's served me so well. But all I can see is Lily—her wide, innocent eyes, the soft curve of her neck, the way she

trembled under my touch.

Fuck. I'm in trouble.

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three

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Lily

The grand entrance of Grayson's estate looms before me, its polished marble and gleaming gold fittings making my heart race. I step inside, my worn flats barely making a sound on the immaculate floor. Everything screams wealth and power—from the crystal chandeliers to the priceless art adorning the walls. I still feel so out of place.

A stern-faced housekeeper appears, her crisp uniform a stark contrast to my simple sundress. Without a word, she turns on her heel and strides down the hallway. I follow, my footsteps echoing in the cavernous space.

My mind drifts to Mom and Danny back home, their faces drawn with worry. "It's just for a little while," I'd promised. "Until we get back on our feet." God, I hope I'm right.

The housekeeper stops abruptly at an ornate door. "Your room, Miss Hart," she says, her voice clipped. Then she's gone, leaving me alone in this gilded cage.

I step inside, overwhelmed by the sheer luxury. The bed alone is bigger than my entire apartment back home. I perch on the edge, running my fingers over the silky bedspread. Its intricate pattern blurs as tears fill my eyes.

"What am I doing here?" I whisper to the empty room. "Why does he want me living under his roof?"

Grayson's face flashes in my mind—those dark eyes burning with intensity, looking at me like I'm something to be consumed. Heat floods my body, settling low in my belly. I bite my lip, squeezing my thighs together as an unfamiliar ache builds.

Stop it, Lily, I scold myself. He's dangerous. Off-limits.

But my traitorous body doesn't listen. All I can think about is the way Grayson's gaze roamed over me, possessive and hungry. Like he could see right through me to all my hidden desires.

I flop back on the bed, covering my face with my hands. What have I gotten myself into?

I can't sit still. The walls of this lavish room feel like they're closing in, suffocating me with their opulence. I need to move, to explore, to try and make sense of this sprawling mansion that's now my...home? Prison? I'm not sure which.

My bare feet pad silently across cool marble as I wander the halls. Each room I peek into is a testament to obscene wealth—priceless art adorning walls, antiques that belong in museums. It's beautiful, but cold. Unlived in. Like everything's on display, waiting for admirers who never come.

A flash of movement catches my eye. Through a doorway, I glimpse a tall figure striding purposefully down a distant corridor. Grayson. My heart leaps into my throat, pulse racing. I press myself against the wall, praying he hasn't seen me.

His voice carries, low and commanding. "...want those reports on my desk by morning. No excuses."

I shiver, that deep timbre sending tingles down my spine. God, what is wrong with me? He terrifies me, and yet...

I creep closer, drawn by a curiosity I can't explain. Grayson's in his study, looming over a nervous-looking man in a suit. Even from here, his presence is overwhelming. He radiates power, danger.

But then I see it—a flicker of something else. Exhaustion? Loneliness? It's gone in an instant, replaced by that mask of cold authority. But it was there.

You don't know him, I remind myself. Stop trying to see good where there might not be any.

The sky outside darkens. I should go back to my room, but restlessness gnaws at me. Grayson's intense gaze haunts my thoughts, the unspoken tension between us a living thing.

My stomach growls. Food. That's what I need. A midnight snack to settle my nerves.

I creep towards where I think the kitchen might be, trying to shake the feeling that I'm trespassing in my own...home? The word still feels wrong.

"What are you doing here?" The voice freezes me in place.

The kitchen is bathed in shadows, moonlight slanting through the windows and painting everything in shades of silver and black. My fingers trail along the cool marble countertop as I rummage through unfamiliar cabinets, searching for something— anything —to quiet the growling in my stomach.

A floorboard creaks behind me.

I whirl around, heart leaping into my throat. Grayson's massive silhouette fills the doorway, blocking any escape. How can someone so large move so silently?

"I asked you a question." His voice is a low rumble that sends shivers racing down my spine.

I swallow hard. "I...I was just looking for a snack."

He stalks towards me, each deliberate step screaming predator. I back up until I hit the counter, trapped. His eyes lock onto mine, dark and unreadable in the dim light. There's challenge there, and something else...something that makes heat pool low in my belly despite my fear.

"You shouldn't wander at night," Grayson murmurs, closing the distance between us until I can feel the heat radiating from his body. "It's dangerous."

"Dangerous?" I whisper, pulse racing. "Why?"

His hand comes up, fingertips barely grazing my cheek. I can't help but lean into the touch, even as alarm bells scream in my head.

"Because," he growls, "if you keep tempting me like this, I might lose control."

I gasp, caught between the urge to flee and the magnetic pull I feel towards him. "What...what do you mean?"

Grayson's eyes narrow. "Stay out of my way, little one. For both our sakes."

The weight of his words settles over me like a physical thing. It's a warning, yes, but also...a promise? My breath catches as I process the dual nature of what he's saying.

I should be terrified. I am terrified. But there's an undeniable thrill coursing through me too, a pull towards this dangerous man that I can't explain or resist.

"I..." I start to say, but Grayson presses a finger to my lips.

"Shh," he whispers. "Don't make this harder than it already is."

I can't breathe while he's touching me like this. Just when I think I'm about to pass out, he takes a step back.

The moment Grayson steps back, it's like all the air rushes back into the room. I suck in a shaky breath, my skin tingling where his finger touched my lips. His gaze lingers, dark and hungry, as I stumble past him towards the door.

My legs are jelly as I make my way down the endless hallway. Every shadow seems to hold Grayson's presence, making me jump at nothing. When I finally reach my room, I slam the door and lean against it, heart pounding.

What the hell just happened?

I slide down to the floor, hugging my knees to my chest. This man...he terrifies me. Excites me. Makes me feel things I've never felt before. It's like he flipped some switch inside me I didn't even know existed.

Crawling into bed, I try to calm my racing thoughts. But every time I close my eyes, I see Grayson's intense stare. Feel the heat of his body. Hear that low, dangerous voice.

"Dammit," I mutter, punching my pillow in frustration. There's no way I can pretend this...whatever it is...doesn't exist. The tension between us is a living, breathing thing.

I roll onto my back, staring at the ceiling. My pussy is still throbbing, but I bite my

lip.

I have no idea what to do, but I let my hand roam lower to between my thighs, following some blind instinct.

I shouldn't be doing this. But my fingers slip beneath the waistband of my panties anyway, seeking out that aching center of need. I'm embarrassingly wet already, just from that brief encounter.

My eyes flutter closed as I start to touch myself, imagining it's Grayson's large hand instead of my own. Those dark eyes watching me, his voice rough with desire. "That's it, little one. Show me how much you want me."

A soft moan escapes my lips before I can stifle it. I work my fingers faster, hips rising to meet each stroke

My breath comes in short gasps as something...incredible...builds inside me. It's like nothing I've ever felt before, so I keep chasing the sensation. The tension coils tighter and tighter, Grayson's imagined touch driving me wild. And then...any explosion of white light.

My back arches off the bed, and I gasp as I feel muscles I didn't even know I had contracting around thin air.

Afterwards, I lay there, my body sticky with a sheen of sweat, still in shock over what I can assume was my first orgasm.

When I finally drift off to sleep, I dream of him ...

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four

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Grayson

My eyes are locked on the screen, muscles coiled tight as I watch her. Lily. So innocent, so tempting as she undresses for bed, unaware of my gaze. I know it's wrong, but I can't look away.

My cock strains against my slacks as she slips off her bra, perfect breasts spilling free. Fuck. I'm painfully hard, desperate to touch her soft skin.

"You're mine," I growl, palming myself roughly through the fabric. "All mine."

My breath comes in harsh pants as I watch her climb into bed, long legs on display. The sight of her nearly nude body sprawled across the sheets is my undoing. With a strangled groan, I unzip my pants and take myself in hand.

I stroke furiously, imagining it's her small hand wrapped around me instead. In my mind, I'm there in her room, pinning her to the mattress as I fuck into her tight heat.

"Lily," I moan, teetering on the edge. On screen, she shifts in her sleep and I lose it, especially when I call to mind the image of her pleasuring herself last night. The sight shook me so much that I stayed away from her all day yesterday.

A whole day wasted, but I was afraid that the image of her flushed body flicking her

little clit was going to be too much for me to handle.

One look at her and I probably would have pounced like a lion.

Fuck, just look at me now. Can't control myself even from another room. Sitting here jacking off to her like a crazed lunatic.

Hot ropes of cum spurt over my fist as I climax with a roar. For a moment, blissful release washes over me. Then shame and self-loathing follow close behind.

What the fuck am I doing? She's so young, so pure. I have no right to violate her privacy like this, to taint her with my darkness. And yet...I can't stay away. She's awakened something primal in me, this overwhelming need to possess her completely.

I clean myself up mechanically, mind racing. Tomorrow. Tomorrow I've got to do something.

The next morning, I'm buried in paperwork when a truck's rumble breaks my concentration. I glance out the window to see a delivery van pull up.

Then I see her. Lily, greeting the driver with a sunny smile that makes my chest ache. She's so beautiful it hurts to look at her sometimes.

But as I watch their interaction, jealousy flares hot and ugly in my gut. The driver is young, handsome. He's leaning in too close, smiling too wide as he hands her a package. And Lily...she's laughing at something he said, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear.

Before I realize what I'm doing, I'm on my feet and striding for the door. Red clouds my vision as possessiveness surges through me. Mine . She's mine, dammit!

I'll make her understand that, one way or another.

I storm through the mansion, my footsteps echoing off marble floors. The beast inside me roars, demanding I claim what's mine. Lily. Sweet, innocent Lily who has no idea the effect she has on me.

I find her in the hallway, that package clutched to her chest. Her eyes go wide when she sees me, confusion and something else—something heated—flickering across her face.

Without a word, I pin her against the wall. My body cages hers, one hand braced by her head. I breathe her in—vanilla and sunshine—as my other hand grips her hip.

"Did you enjoy that little show?" I growl, voice low and dangerous. "Flirting with the delivery boy?"

Lily gasps, indignation flashing in those big doe eyes. "I wasn't?—"

"Don't lie to me." My fingers dig into her soft flesh. God, I want to devour her. "I saw you laughing, preening for him."

"That's ridiculous," she snaps, pushing against my chest. But I don't budge. "I was just being polite. You're acting crazy!"

The tension crackles between us, electric. Her chest heaves, brushing mine with each breath. I'm drowning in her scent, her warmth.

"You're mine," I snarl, and crush my mouth to hers.

It's not gentle. It's possession, pure and raw. I pour every ounce of my obsession into the kiss, claiming her lips, her breath, her very essence.

For a moment, she resists. Then, as if unable to help herself, she melts into me. Her soft, pliant body molds against mine, yielding to my dominance.

My control snaps.

I haul her against, molding her body to mine. Jesus Christ, I feel every sweet curve of her body. She's so motherfucking soft against me.

Fuuck .

I'm so hard I could break. Somehow, I latch onto one thread of control.

I release her, abruptly. Staggering back, chest heaving as I gasp for air. My pulse thunders in my ears, each beat a reminder of what I've just done.

I see the shock in her eyes—and something else. Desire? Confusion? Fear?

"You're mine," I growl again, as if saying it aloud will make it true. She belongs to me, heart and soul, and I'll never let her go.

Without another word, I turn and stride away, leaving her trembling against the wall.

As I walk away, I can still feel her eyes boring into my back.

Damn her, she's not going to leave me.

Never.

Mine.

The words echo in my mind, drowning out the chaos in my head.

Mine .

I will never let her go.

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five

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Lily

I storm down the hallway, my bare feet slapping against the cold marble. The kiss burns on my lips, confusion and anger warring in my chest. What game is Grayson playing?

I reach his study and burst through the heavy oak door without knocking. My heart pounds so hard I'm sure he can hear it.

Grayson looks up from his desk, face impassive. But there's a flicker in those dark eyes. Anticipation?

"What the hell is going on?" I demand, hating how my voice shakes. "I'm done with these games, Grayson. Why am I here? What do you want from me?"

He rises slowly, deliberate as a predator. "Lily," he says, my name a caress. "You want answers?"

"Yes, dammit!" The words explode out of me. "You drag me here, keep me isolated. That kiss..." I trail off, face hot.

Grayson steps around the desk. His movements are careful, like I'm a spooked animal he's trying not to startle. "It's...complicated."

I snort. "Try me."

He runs a hand through his hair, mussing the perfect style. For a moment, he looks almost vulnerable. Then his jaw tightens.

"I grew up with nothing," he says, voice low. "Fought and clawed my way to the top. Trust doesn't come easy."

I cross my arms, waiting. What does his past have to do with me?

Grayson's eyes bore into mine. "But you, Lily...You make me feel. And that terrifies me."

My breath catches. What is he saying?

He steps closer. I can feel the heat radiating off his body. "I need you," he whispers. "Here. With me."

My mind reels. The ruthless billionaire...needs me? It doesn't make sense. And yet, as I search his face, I see something I've never noticed before: a flicker of raw vulnerability beneath that iron control.

"I don't understand," I breathe, my anger giving way to confusion.

Grayson's hand trembles slightly as he reaches for me. "I don't understand it myself. All I know is from the moment I laid my eyes on you, you were mine."

His words hit me like a punch to the gut. I've always prided myself on seeing the good in people, but this? This is different. Dangerous.

"I can't lose you," he continues, voice rough. "The thought of you leaving...it

consumes me."

I should be terrified. I should run. But there's a pull between us, electric and undeniable.

"Grayson, I?—"

Before I can finish, he closes the distance between us. His hands cup my face with surprising gentleness, those dark eyes searching mine. "Tell me you feel it too," he whispers.

And God help me, I do. This connection, this spark—it both thrills and terrifies me.

In one fluid motion, he pulls me onto his lap. I should resist, but my body betrays me, melting against his solid warmth.

"What are we doing?" I ask, my voice barely audible.

His fingers trace my cheek. "Living, Lily. For the first time in years, I feel alive."

Grayson buries his face in my neck, his stubble grazing my sensitive skin. I gasp at the sensation, electric tingles radiating through my body. His breath is hot against my throat, each exhale sending shivers down my spine.

"You smell like sunshine," he murmurs, nuzzling deeper. His hands roam my back, fingertips tracing patterns that set my nerves alight. I'm torn between pulling away and sinking further into his embrace.

My fingers tangle in his hair of their own accord. It's softer than I expected, silky strands sliding between my fingers. Grayson groans, the sound vibrating through me.

"Lily," he breathes against my skin. "My sweet, innocent Lily."

His hands slide lower, cupping my ass and pulling me flush against him. I can feel how hard he is, the thick length of him pressing insistently against my core. Heat pools low in my belly, a molten ache I've never felt before.

His lips brush my throat, feather-light at first, then with increasing pressure. I whimper, my head falling back to give him better access. Grayson takes full advantage, trailing open-mouthed kisses along the column of my neck.

"So responsive," he murmurs against my skin. "So perfect."

His teeth graze my pulse point and I jerk in his lap, a needy moan escaping me. I feel his lips curve into a smile.

"That's it, sweetheart. Let me hear you."

One large hand slides up to tangle in my hair, tugging gently to expose more of my throat. His other hand slips under my shirt, calloused fingers tracing patterns on my bare skin. I shiver, overwhelmed by the sensations.

"Grayson," I gasp, not sure if I'm asking him to stop or begging for more.

He pulls back slightly, dark eyes searching mine. "Tell me you want this," he growls. "Tell me you want me."

My breath catches. This is madness. I barely know him. And yet...

"I want you," I whisper, the words tumbling out before I can stop them.

A low, satisfied rumble emanates from his chest. In one fluid motion, he stands,

lifting me with him. My legs wrap instinctively around his waist as he carries me to the massive desk. He sets me on the edge, hands sliding up my thighs as he steps between my legs.

"I'm going to ruin you for anyone else," he murmurs, fingers toying with the hem of my shirt. "You're mine now, Lily. Only mine."

He tugs my shirt over my head, tossing it aside. His eyes darken as they roam over my exposed skin. I fight the urge to cover myself, heart pounding.

Grayson's hands cup my breasts, thumbs brushing over my nipples. I arch into his touch, a breathy moan escaping me.

"So sensitive," he murmurs approvingly. "I bet I could make you come just from this."

Before I can process his words, he lowers his head, taking one peaked nipple into his mouth. The wet heat of his tongue sends sparks of pleasure shooting through me. I cry out, fingers tangling in his hair.

He lavishes attention on my breasts, alternating between gentle licks and sharp nips that have me squirming. All the while, his hands roam my body, leaving trails of fire in their wake.

"Please," I whimper, not even sure what I'm begging for.

Grayson pulls back, a predatory gleam in his eyes. "Oh sweetheart, I'm just getting started."

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six

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Grayson

Cherries. She tastes like motherfucking cherries.

My cock is so hard it's leaking, but I ignore it, intent on pleasuring her.

I lick and suck on her perfect little titties, savoring the sweet moans that leave her lips.

And I can't stop the nonsense that's spewing from my lips.

"Perfect little angel. All I want is to take care of you. Spank you and spoil you rotten. Fill you up with you cock until you can't take anymore."

Her gasp is innocent and confirms my suspicions that she's never been with a man before.

That's about to change.

I slide my hand down her trembling body, relishing the silky softness of her skin. When I reach the junction between her thighs, I find her soaking wet. Fuck. The knowledge that I've done this to her, made her this aroused, nearly drives me insane with lust.

"So wet for me already, little one," I growl against her neck. "Has anyone ever touched you here before?"

She shakes her head, biting her lip. The sight makes my cock throb painfully.

"Use your words," I command, circling her clit with my thumb.

"N-no," she whimpers. "Never."

A possessive growl rumbles in my chest. "Good. This tight little pussy is all mine."

I slide a finger inside her, groaning at how incredibly tight she is. She cries out, her back arching off the bed. I pump my finger in and out slowly, watching her face contort with pleasure.

"That's it, sweetheart. Let go for me. Show me how good I make you feel."

Her innocence is intoxicating. Every moan, every shudder of her body feeds the primal need inside me. I want to corrupt her, to ruin her for any other man.

And I will. By the time I'm done with her, she'll never want anyone else.

I curl my finger inside her, seeking that special spot that'll make her see stars. When I find it, her reaction is instant and breathtaking. She cries out, her back arching off the bed like a bowstring pulled taut.

"That's it, little one. Let me hear you," I growl, my voice rough with need.

I add a second finger, stretching her tight little pussy. She's so wet, so responsive to my touch. I pump my fingers in and out, curling them on each stroke to hit that sweet spot inside her. My thumb circles her clit, alternating between light teasing touches

and firm pressure.

Lily writhes beneath me, her hips rocking against my hand. Her breathy moans fill the room, driving me wild. I'm aching hard, my cock straining against my zipper, but I ignore my own need. This is all about her.

"G-Grayson," she whimpers, her voice high and needy. "I feel...oh god..."

"That's it, sweetheart. Let it build. Don't fight it."

I increase the pace of my fingers, watching in awe as she climbs higher and higher. Her chest heaves, those perfect tits bouncing with each ragged breath. A light sheen of sweat covers her flushed skin, making her glow in the dim light.

"Look at me," I command, and those big innocent eyes lock onto mine. The trust and vulnerability I see there nearly undoes me. "Good girl. Now come for me. Show me how good I make you feel."

With a keening cry, she shatters. Her pussy clenches around my fingers as waves of pleasure wrack her body. I work her through it, drawing out her orgasm until she's trembling and oversensitive.

The sight of her coming on my fingers is the most erotic thing I've ever seen. My cock throbs painfully, and I have to grit my teeth to keep from losing it in my pants like a horny teenager.

When the aftershocks subside, I gently withdraw my fingers. Unable to resist, I bring them to my mouth and suck them clean, groaning at her sweet taste.

Lily watches me with heavy-lidded eyes, her chest still heaving. She looks thoroughly debauched—hair mussed, lips swollen, skin flushed. And I'm the one who did this to

her. The possessive pride that surges through me is almost overwhelming.

"Beautiful," I murmur, brushing a strand of hair from her face. "So fucking beautiful when you come for me like a good little girl."

She gives me a shy, sated smile that makes my heart clench. Fuck. I'm in way over my head with this girl.

But as I look down at her, I know there's no going back. She's mine now, and I'll move heaven and earth to keep her.

Lily's eyes flicker downward, landing on the obvious bulge in my pants. Her teeth worry at her lower lip, a gesture so innocent yet maddeningly erotic. Hesitantly, she reaches out, her small hand hovering just above my straining zipper.

"Can I...?" she whispers, her voice barely audible.

I nod, not trusting myself to speak. Her palm presses against my cock, and I have to stifle a groan. Even through the fabric, her touch is electric.

"It's so hard," she murmurs, exploring the shape of me with tentative fingers. Her eyes widen. "And big."

Pride surges through me at her words. I want to show her just how big, want to watch those pretty lips stretch around me. But I hold back, letting her explore at her own pace.

"Grayson?" Her voice is soft, uncertain. "Can I...can I see it? I've never..."

The admission shatters what remains of my control. With a growl, I capture her lips in a bruising kiss, swallowing her surprised gasp. My hands fumble with my belt,

desperate to free myself from the confines of my pants.

When I finally spring free, Lily's eyes go wide. She stares, transfixed, as I wrap a hand around my shaft and give it a slow stroke.

"Touch me," I rasp, guiding her small hand to my cock. "Wrap those pretty little fingers around me."

She obeys, her grip tentative at first. I show her how to stroke me, guiding her movements until she finds a rhythm. The sight of her delicate hand on my cock is almost more than I can take.

"That's it, sweetheart," I groan. "Just like that."

Lily grows bolder, exploring every inch of me with wide-eyed curiosity. When her thumb brushes over the sensitive head, collecting the bead of pre-cum there, I nearly lose it.

"You're leaking," she observes, fascinated.

"That's what you do to me, little one," I growl. "You make me so fucking hard. I'm leaking for you. All this cum boiling up in my balls is just for you, baby."

Her cheeks flush at my words, but she doesn't look away. Instead, she leans closer, studying my cock with rapt attention. The warmth of her breath ghosts over my sensitive skin, making me twitch in her grasp.

"It's...beautiful," she whispers, and the awe in her voice nearly undoes me.

I can't take it anymore. With a growl, I pull her into my lap, grinding my bare cock against her soaked panties. She gasps, her hips instinctively rocking against me.

"Feel that?" I rasp in her ear. "Feel how hard you make me? This is all for you, sweetheart. All because of you."

Lily whimpers, clinging to my shoulders as she grinds herself down on me. Her movements are jerky and inexperienced and all the more hotter for it.

Goddamn .

I can't take it anymore. With a growl, I flip us over, pinning Lily beneath me. Her eyes widen, a mix of excitement and nervousness flickering across her face. I capture her lips in a searing kiss, swallowing her soft moan as I grind my cock against her soaked panties.

"Grayson," she whimpers when I release her mouth. "I want...I need..."

"What do you need, little one?" I rasp, nipping at her neck. "Tell me."

Her cheeks flush crimson, but she meets my gaze. "You. Inside me. I think. Please."

Those innocent words nearly shatter my control. With shaking hands, I hook my fingers in the waistband of her panties and slowly drag them down her legs. She lifts her hips to help, and I groan at the sight of her bare pussy, glistening with arousal.

"So fucking beautiful," I murmur, running a finger through her folds. She gasps, hips bucking. "Are you sure about this, sweetheart? Once I'm inside you, there's no going back. You'll be mine."

Lily nods, biting her lip. "I'm sure. I want you, Grayson. Only you."

That's all I need to hear. I position myself at her entrance, the head of my cock nudging her slick folds. "This might hurt at first," I warn her. "But I promise I'll make

it good for you."

She nods again, wrapping her arms around my neck. I push forward slowly, groaning as her tight heat envelops me inch by agonizing inch. Lily whimpers, her nails digging into my shoulders. I pause, letting her adjust, peppering her face with gentle kisses.

"You're doing so well, little one," I murmur. "So perfect for me. Just relax."

When I feel her tension ease, I push forward again, finally hilding myself inside her. We both moan at the sensation. She's so fucking tight, like a velvet vise gripping my cock. It takes every ounce of willpower not to start pounding into her.

"You okay?" I pant, searching her face.

Lily nods, a dazed smile curving her lips. "I feel so full," she whispers. "It's...amazing."

Pride and possessiveness surge through me. I start to move, setting a slow, gentle rhythm. Each thrust draws breathy moans from her lips, stoking the fire in my veins. Her hips rise to meet mine, instinctively chasing more pleasure.

"That's it, sweetheart," I growl. "Take my cock. You were made for this. Made for me."

My words seem to ignite something in Lily. She arches her back, pressing her soft breasts against my chest as she wraps her legs around my waist. The new angle lets me sink even deeper, and we both groan at the sensation.

"Grayson," she whimpers, her nails raking down my back. "More. Please."

I'm powerless to resist her plea. My hips snap forward harder, faster, driving into her tight heat again and again. The room fills with the sounds of our pleasure—skin slapping against skin, breathless moans, and filthy words I can't seem to hold back.

"So fucking perfect," I growl, nipping at her neck. "Your tight little pussy was made for my cock. You're mine now, Lily. All mine."

She cries out, her inner walls fluttering around me. "Yours," she gasps. "Only yours."

Those words push me dangerously close to the edge. I slip a hand between us, finding her swollen clit with practiced ease. Her whole body jerks at the contact.

"Come for me again, little one," I command, circling the sensitive bud. "Let me feel you fall apart on my cock."

It only takes a few more thrusts before she shatters, crying out my name as waves of pleasure wrack her body. The sight of her coming undone, combined with the vice-like grip of her pussy, sends me hurtling over the edge right after her.

I bury myself deep inside her with a roar, my cock pulsing as I fill her with my cum.

Mine, mine, mine , chants a primal voice in my head.

She's motherfucking mine now.

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seven

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Lily

I spend the next few days wrapped up in Grayson's arms. I don't know how long I've been here. I've lost track of time.

I wake up and go to sleep with Grayson's cock inside me. He fucks me, he feeds me, he washes me, and then he fucks me again.

I'm not doing any of the cleaning work I was supposedly hired to do. In fact, Grayson acts like me lifting a finger to do anything is a travesty.

And as wonderful as my time with him is, I can't forget that I have a responsibility.

To Mom. To Danny.

I finally broach the subject of leaving with Grayson.

"Grayson," I whisper, my fingers tracing the hard planes of his chest. "I need to go home for a day or two."

The change is instant. His body, moments ago languid and sated, goes rigid beneath my touch. Those dark eyes, usually smoldering with desire, now flash with something dangerous.

"Leave?" he growls, the word rumbling through his chest. "Why would you want to leave?"

I swallow hard, suddenly aware of how vulnerable I am, naked in his arms. "It's not that I want to, it's just?—"

"Don't I make you happy?" He grips my chin, forcing me to meet his gaze. "Haven't I given you everything?"

My heart races. I've never seen him like this—primal, almost feral. "Of course you do, Grayson. You've been incredible. It's just that I have responsibilities?—"

"Responsibilities?" He barks out a harsh laugh. "What could be more important than this? Than us?"

Before I can explain, he rolls on top of me, pinning me to the mattress. His cock, already hard again, presses insistently against my thigh.

"I'll show you responsibility," he snarls, and then he's inside me, claiming me with savage thrusts that leave me gasping. "Your only job is to be here, with me. To take my cock. To let me care for you."

I whimper, overwhelmed by the intensity of his possession. Part of me wants to give in, to lose myself in the exquisite pleasure only Grayson can provide. But I can't forget the world outside these gilded walls, no matter how hard he tries to make me.

I gasp, my body trembling as Grayson's punishing rhythm slows. His words penetrate the haze of lust, reminding me why I need to leave. I cup his face, forcing him to meet my eyes.

"Grayson, please," I whisper, my voice raw. "I just need to check on my mom and

little brother. Then I'll be back, I promise."

He stills inside me, his massive body deflating as if all the fight has left him. His forehead drops to rest against mine, and I feel the shudder that runs through him.

"That's right," he murmurs, his voice thick with emotion. "Your mother is sick, isn't she?"

The vulnerability in his tone makes my heart clench. I stroke his hair, marveling at how this powerful man can seem so lost in this moment.

"Yes," I confirm softly. "And Danny...he's only eight. They need me."

Grayson rolls off me with a heavy sigh, pulling me against his chest. His fingers trail along my spine, sending shivers through me despite the seriousness of our conversation.

"I forgot," he admits, sounding almost ashamed. "I've been so caught up in having you here, in making you mine, that I forgot about your family. On why you agreed to all this in the first place."

I prop myself up on an elbow, studying his face. There's a war of emotions playing out in those dark eyes—possessiveness, guilt, fear.

"I'll come back," I promise again, pressing a gentle kiss to his jaw. "You've given me so much, Grayson. But they're my family. I can't abandon them."

He's quiet for a long moment, his chest rising and falling beneath my palm. When he speaks, his voice is rough with an emotion I can't quite name.

"What if..." he starts, then pauses. "What if I came with you?"

The suggestion catches me off guard. I blink at him, trying to imagine Grayson in my tiny, run-down apartment. His pristine suits among the secondhand furniture. His commanding presence filling our cramped living room.

"You...you'd want to?" I ask, unable to keep the surprise from my voice.

His arms tighten around me. "I want to do anything for you, Lily." His lips brush my forehead. "And I don't want to let you out of my sight."

I should protest. Should insist on some independence. But the thought of facing my family's struggles alone after days in Grayson's protective bubble makes me shudder.

"Okay," I whisper, snuggling closer. "We'll go together."

Grayson

I feel like a regular cad. I've been fucking her day in and day out and forgot to even check on her family for her.

So, when we have my driver drive us to her tiny, run-down apartment and get the news that her mom has been rushed to the hospital and her brother has been placed in temporary state custody, I'm cursing myself.

The look of heartbreak on my girl's face is going to haunt me for a long time, and the fact that I allowed this to happen is unacceptable.

We're at her mom's bedside in a flash, and my chest physically aches seeing the tears flow down Lily's face as she grips her mom's hand.

My jaw hardens as I step out of the hospital room and demand to speak to the doctor.

I don't have a ton of wealth and resources at my disposal for nothing.

I will fix this.

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eight

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Lily

This is all my fault. I should have been here for her. Now, my mom is in the hospital, and my brother is with some foster parents who I swear to God better not harm a hair on his precious head.

If I hadn't gotten so caught up in Grayson. Once he touched me, it's like I forgot my whole reason for being at his mansion in the first place.

To get the money to help pay for Mom's medical care.

My mom has breast cancer, and we couldn't afford the bills for any more treatments.

And I was too late.

And now look what's happened.

The tears continue to roll down my face.

"I'm so sorry, Mom," I tell her as I kiss her hand. I don't know if she can hear me or not. "I'm sorry I wasn't there when you needed me."

I'm vaguely aware of Grayson trying to pull me away. He says something about me

needing to eat, needing to rest, but I jerk away from him like a feral animal.

“Just leave me alone,” I snarl at him.

I barely register the hurt on his face, but I feel a slight sting of remorse at it before I bury my face in my arm again.

I’m not leaving my mom’s side again.

Grayson says something else to me, and I snap. I throw myself at him in a blind rage and pummel my fists against his chest. “This is your fault! If I hadn’t been with you..!” I break off on a sob, and then a nurse is shushing me as she pulls me off him. They make Grayson leave, and I feel an odd mixture of relief and panic.

But then I collapse next to my mom again and go back to stroking her hand.

I’ve never been the praying type. I don’t even know if I believe there’s a god out there, but I’m praying to every one that might be here right now.

Please let my mom be okay .

Grayson

I pace outside Lily's mother's room like a caged animal, my jaw clenched so tight I can feel a muscle twitching. Every time I glance through the small window in the door, I see her hunched over the hospital bed, her shoulders shaking with silent sobs. It's killing me not to go to her, but I know she needs space right now.

Couple that with the fact that I’ve been kicked out the room by the staff and am supposedly not allowed back in so I don’t upset Lily or the patient.

A nurse approaches, clipboard in hand, and I practically snarl at her. "Make sure she eats something. Anything. I don't care what it costs."

The nurse's eyes widen, but she nods. "Of course, Mr. Wolfe. We'll take care of her."

I run a hand through my hair, messing up the usually perfect style. I don't give a damn about appearances right now. All I can think about is Lily's tear-streaked face, the way she lashed out at me. Her words echo in my head: "This is your fault!"

Maybe she's right. I've been so caught up in my need to possess her, to keep her close, that I lost sight of everything else.

Another nurse walks by, and I grab her arm. "Has she eaten anything yet?"

The nurse gently extracts herself from my grip. "Sir, we're doing our best. Miss Hart is...resistant to leaving her mother's side."

I growl in frustration, running both hands over my face. This isn't a problem I can solve by throwing money at it or intimidating people into submission. For the first time in years, I feel utterly helpless.

A doctor emerges from the room, and I'm on him in an instant. "How is she? The mother?"

He looks at me warily. "I'm sorry, but I can only discuss that with family members."

"I'm paying for her care," I snap. "Tell me."

The doctor sighs. "Her condition is stable, but critical. The next 24 hours will be crucial."

I nod curtly, dismissing him. My mind races, trying to figure out what to do next. I can't leave Lily alone like this, but I'm not sure she wants me here either.

I pull out my phone, barking orders at my assistant to cancel all my meetings for the next week. Then I settle into an uncomfortable plastic chair outside the room, prepared to wait as long as it takes.

Hours pass. Nurses come and go. I hear muffled sobs from inside the room. Each time the door opens, I catch a glimpse of Lily's small form, curled up in the chair next to her mother's bed. She looks so fragile, so broken. It takes every ounce of self-control not to rush in and gather her in my arms.

As night falls, I'm still here, my suit wrinkled, my tie long since discarded. I lean forward, elbows on my knees, and scrub my hands over my face. The hospital corridor is quiet now, just the occasional squeak of nurses' shoes on linoleum.

A soft click makes my head snap up. Lily emerges from her mother's room, looking like a ghost. Her face is pale, eyes red-rimmed and vacant. She doesn't even seem to register my presence as she stumbles towards the vending machines.

I'm on my feet in an instant, reaching for her. "Lily?—"

She flinches away from my touch, wrapping her arms around herself. "Don't."

The single word is a knife to my gut. I drop my hand, watching helplessly as she fumbles with change, trying to get a bottle of water from the machine. Her hands are shaking so badly she can barely get the coins in the slot.

"Let me," I murmur, gently nudging her aside. I feed a bill into the machine, getting her water and a granola bar. When I turn to hand them to her, she's slumped against the wall, silent tears tracking down her cheeks.

"Sweetheart..." The endearment slips out before I can stop it.

Her eyes flash, a spark of anger cutting through the haze of exhaustion and grief.

"Don't call me that. You don't get to comfort me, Grayson. Not now."

I swallow hard, nodding. "Okay. But please, eat something. Drink this." I hold out the water and granola bar, careful not to touch her as she takes them.

Lily slides down the wall until she's sitting on the floor, knees pulled up to her chest. She sips the water mechanically, not looking at me. The silence stretches between us, thick and uncomfortable.

Finally, she speaks, her voice barely above a whisper. "I can't lose her."

My chest aches. I want nothing more than to wrap her in my arms, to promise her everything will be okay. But I can't. So I do the only thing I can—I sit down next to her, careful to leave space between us, as much as it fucking kills me.

"I know," I say softly. "I'm sorry, Lily. I'm so fucking sorry."

She turns her head, really looking at me for the first time. Her eyes are full of pain and confusion. "Why are you still here?"

The question catches me off guard. Why am I here? Because the thought of leaving her alone in this sterile hellhole makes me want to put my fist through a wall. Because seeing her in pain is slowly killing me. Because...

"Because I care about you," I admit, the words feeling foreign on my tongue.

"Because I can't fucking leave you, Lily. Ever."

Lily's breath catches. For a moment, I think she might reach for me. But then her face

crumples, and she buries it in her hands, her shoulders shaking with silent sobs.

Fuck. I can't take this.

I shift closer, not quite touching her, but close enough that she can feel my presence. "Lily," I murmur, "I know you're angry with me. You have every right to be. But please, let me help you. Tell me what you need."

She lifts her head, eyes red and swollen. "I need my mom to be okay," she whispers brokenly. "I need to go back in time and never leave her. I need—" Her voice cracks, and she presses her fist to her mouth, stifling another sob.

Without thinking, I reach out and gently pry her hand away from her face, lacing our fingers together. She doesn't pull away this time, and I count it as a small victory.

"I can't give you that," I admit, my throat tight. "But I can make sure she gets the best care possible. I can handle everything else so you can focus on being here with her. Just...let me do this for you, Lily."

She stares at our joined hands for a long moment, then looks up at me. The raw vulnerability in her eyes makes my chest ache. "Why?" she asks softly. "Why do you care so much?"

I swallow hard, searching for the right words. How do I explain this all-consuming need I have for her? This urge to protect her, to possess her, to make her mine in every way possible?

"Because you're everything," I finally say, my voice rough with emotion. "You've gotten under my skin, Lily. Into my blood. I can't...I can't imagine my life without you in it anymore."

Her eyes widen, and for a moment, I see a flicker of something—hope? desire?—before exhaustion overtakes her again. She slumps against me, her head coming to rest on my shoulder.

"I'm so tired, Grayson," she mumbles.

I press a kiss to the top of her head, inhaling the scent of her hair. "I know, sweetheart. Why don't you try to get some sleep? I'll wake you if anything changes with your mom."

She nods weakly, and I help her to her feet. We make our way back into her mother's room, where I settle her into the recliner next to the bed. I drape my suit jacket over her like a blanket, then pull up a chair next to her.

As Lily drifts off to sleep, her hand finds mine again. I squeeze it gently, a silent promise.

I'm not going anywhere.

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One year later

Lily

I wake to the weight of Grayson's arm draped possessively over my waist, his warmth seeping into my skin. My eyes flutter open, adjusting to the soft morning light filtering through the smoky glass windows. Carefully, I slide out from under his grip, my feet touching the cool marble floor.

My hand instinctively goes to my slightly rounded belly. There's a life growing inside me. Grayson's child. Our child. The thought still feels surreal.

I pad quietly through the cavernous hallways of the mansion, my steps echoing softly. The scent of coffee and bacon guides me to the kitchen, where I find Mom and Danny already bustling about.

"Lily!" Danny's face lights up when he sees me. He rushes over, wrapping his arms around my waist. "Can we go to the park later? Grayson said there's one nearby with a huge playground!"

I ruffle his hair, smiling despite the pang in my chest. It's been so long since I've seen him this excited. "We'll see, buddy. How about you help Mom with breakfast first?"

As Danny scampers off to assist Mom, I lean against the marble countertop, watching them work in tandem. The kitchen, usually so sterile and imposing, feels alive with their presence. For a moment, I can almost forget we're in a billionaire's mansion and not our tiny apartment back home.

"You okay, sweetie?" Mom's concerned voice breaks through my reverie. "You look a little pale."

Before I can respond, a deep voice rumbles from behind me. "Is everything alright?"

Grayson. His presence fills the room instantly, commanding attention even in this domestic setting. I turn to see my husband striding towards us, his eyes scanning me from head to toe.

"I'm fine," I insist, but Grayson's already at my side, his large hand splaying protectively across my lower back.

"Good morning, Grayson!" Danny chirps, momentarily forgetting his shyness around the imposing man.

Grayson's lips quirk into a small smile. "Good morning, Danny. Did you sleep well?"

As I watch Grayson interact with my family, a warm mix of emotions swirls within me. If it wasn't for Grayson, Mom might not even be here. Thanks to his insistence on getting her the best doctors, her breast cancer is in remission, and he had Danny back from foster care sooner than I ever thought would be possible.

"Lily should be resting," Grayson states, his tone brooking no argument. Before I can protest, he scoops me into his arms.

"Grayson!" I yelp, my cheeks burning. "I can walk to the table myself."

He ignores my protests, carrying me effortlessly to the breakfast nook. As he sets me down gently, his eyes lock with mine, dark and intense. "I won't risk anything happening to you or our child," he murmurs, his voice low enough for only me to hear.

I bite my lip, torn between melting at his concern and asserting my independence. But as I look around at my family—Mom setting out plates, Danny chattering excitedly, and Grayson's steady presence beside me—I can't help but feel a warmth spreading through my chest.

Grayson's hand rests possessively on my lower back as he slides into the seat beside me. His fingers trail along my spine, sending little shivers through me despite my irritation at his fussing.

"You need to eat more," he insists, piling my plate with eggs and toast. "The baby needs nutrients."

I roll my eyes, but can't quite hide my smile. "I'm pretty sure one skipped meal won't doom our child to malnutrition, Grayson."

His brow furrows. "We can't take chances."

Mom beams at us from across the table. "It's so wonderful to see how attentive you are, Grayson. Lily's lucky to have such a caring partner."

I send a look of annoyance at my mother, but it's all in good fun. I'm thrilled she and Grayson get along so well.

"I'm the lucky one," Grayson rumbles, his eyes never leaving my face. The intensity of his gaze makes my breath catch.

After breakfast, I slip away to the gardens, craving a breath of fresh air. The meticulously manicured paths wind between carefully pruned topiaries and bubbling fountains. It's beautiful, but so controlled—just like everything in Grayson's world.

I've barely made it to the rose garden when I hear footsteps behind me. Of course. I

turn to see Grayson striding towards me, his broad shoulders blocking out the sun.

"You shouldn't be alone," he says, reaching for my hand.

I let him take it, torn between frustration and amusement. "I'm pregnant, not made of glass."

His fingers tighten around mine. "I can't lose you," he whispers, vulnerability flashing across his face. "Either of you."

My heart melts at the look in his eyes, and I definitely can't stay mad at him.

Later, I'm nestled against Grayson on the plush leather couch, the warmth of his body seeping into mine as the opening credits roll across the massive screen. Danny bounces excitedly beside us, a bowl of popcorn balanced precariously on his lap.

"This is so cool, Grayson!" he chirps. "I've never seen a movie this big before!"

I feel Grayson's chest rumble with a low chuckle. "Wait till you see the surround sound kick in."

My heart swells watching them together. Who would've thought the ruthless billionaire could be so...sweet?

Mom settles into an armchair, smiling softly at our little family tableau. The movie starts, but I'm barely paying attention. Instead, I'm hyper-aware of Grayson's fingers tracing lazy patterns on my arm, his breath tickling my ear.

"Comfortable, little one?" he murmurs, and I shiver at the possessive edge in his voice.

I nod, snuggling closer. "Perfect," I whisper back.

As the movie plays, I can't help marveling at how much has changed. Months ago, I was struggling to make ends meet. Now I'm carrying the child of one of the most powerful men in the country, surrounded by luxury I never dreamed of.

But it's not the material things that matter. It's the way Grayson's arms tighten protectively around me. The sound of Danny's laughter. The contentment on Mom's face. For the first time in forever, I feel...safe. Cherished. Home.

The credits roll, and Danny yawns widely. "Time for bed, munchkin," Mom says, ruffling his hair.

"Aww, do I have to?" he whines, but his drooping eyelids betray him.

"I've got Lily," Grayson says, scooping me up before I can protest. His arms cradle me effortlessly as he carries me towards our bedroom.

"I can walk, you know," I tease, even as I loop my arms around his neck.

He smirks down at me. "Indulge me."

The bedroom door closes behind us with a soft click, and suddenly the air feels charged. Grayson lays me gently on the bed, his dark eyes roaming hungrily over my body.

"You're so beautiful," he breathes, trailing reverent fingers along my cheek. "My Lily. My wife. Mine."

A shiver of desire races down my spine. "Yours," I whisper back.

His lips claim mine in a searing kiss, and I'm lost. Lost in the heat of his touch, the intensity of his gaze, the overwhelming rightness of being in his arms.

Grayson's body covers mine, his weight a delicious pressure. His fingers trail fire along my skin, igniting sparks everywhere they touch. I arch into him, craving more.

"Lily," he growls, voice rough with need. "You're everything. My whole world."

My heart swells, threatening to burst. I've never felt so cherished, so desired. So...complete.

"Grayson," I breathe, my body arching into his touch. His fingers trail lower, caressing the slight swell of my belly with infinite tenderness before dipping between my thighs. I gasp at the sensation, heat blooming through me.

"Always so responsive," he murmurs approvingly. "So perfect."

His lips find my neck, trailing hot kisses down to my collarbone. I writhe beneath him, desperate for more. My hands fumble with the buttons of his shirt, needing to feel his skin against mine.

Grayson chuckles darkly, catching my wrists in one large hand. "Patience, little one," he growls. "Let me take care of you."

He takes his time, worshipping every inch of my body with reverent touches and heated kisses. By the time he finally enters me, I'm trembling with need.

"Mine," he growls, his thrusts deep but gentle. "All mine."

"Yours," I gasp in agreement, clinging to his broad shoulders. "Always yours."

We move together, finding our perfect rhythm. Grayson's touch is possessive yet achingly tender, mindful of our growing child. When release finally washes over us, it's with a burst of blinding pleasure and whispered words of devotion.

Afterward, we lie tangled in the sheets, my head pillowed on Grayson's chest, one hand splayed protectively over my belly, the other tracing lazy patterns on my back. I feel boneless, sated.

"I love you," he murmurs, pressing a tender kiss to my temple. "You're the missing piece I never knew I needed. The light in my darkness."

Tears prick my eyes. "I love you too," I whisper. "So much."

I nestle closer, inhaling his scent—crisp cologne and something uniquely Grayson. My eyelids grow heavy, but I fight sleep, wanting to savor this perfect moment.

"Rest, sweetheart," Grayson says softly. "I've got you. Always."

As I drift off, I see flashes of our future—a laughing toddler with Grayson's eyes, family dinners filled with warmth, quiet nights just like this one. For the first time in my life, I'm not afraid of what tomorrow might bring. Because whatever comes, I know I'm exactly where I belong.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 12:34 am

I shiver as the cold permeates through my thin tee. It's long sleeves, but it's also an oversized, slouchy, off-the-shoulder top meant for lounging—not creeping around cold back alleys to see what mess my father has gotten himself into this time.

The irony of the situation doesn't fail to strike me. I'm sneaking out to follow my dad and find out what shady stuff he's up to rather than the other way around. Isn't it the dad who's supposed to worry about where his daughter is sneaking out to late at night?

I stay just far enough back that he can't see or hear me. I know it's dangerous for me to be following him. My dad is a terrible drunk and gambling addict. He's always meeting up with shady characters in alleys to pay back money and conduct other unsavory deals.

He hardly manages to work a week at a time. He usually has to take off a day or two each week to recuperate from hangovers. Every time he gets sober for a day, he promises me that he's done with the drinking. Done with the gambling. That's he's going to be the dad I deserve.

He really tries. His heart is in the right place.

He just can't do it, though.

Ever since my mom died when I was eight years old, he's been a shell of the man he once was, drowning himself in drink and then gambling in desperation to try to come up with enough money to make ends meet.

It's a sad, endless cycle.

I suppose some daughters would hate their dads for being that way.

But I can't because I know he's still heartbroken over Mom. By the time they found out what was wrong with her, the cancer had all but eaten away at her body. She only survived for six months, leaving my dad a young widow and me motherless.

My dad turned to drinking to dull the pain. Me? I was just a kid who tried to take care of herself and be as little of a bother to her dad as possible so as not to cause him more pain. When I got older, I started doing the best I could to take care of him, keeping the house clean, cooking dinner from whatever I could scrape up around the house, doing the laundry.

I got a job as soon as someone would give me one so I could help put food on the table. I don't make much waiting tables, but sometimes the tips are good enough that I have enough to pay the light bill when Dad comes up short.

Even though I'm eighteen and could move out and get my own place now, I choose to stay with Dad to help him out. Who would take care of him if I wasn't there? Besides, he's the only parent I've got left.

Despite everything, I love my dad.

He's not a mean drunk. He never yells at me or throws stuff. Instead, he drowns his sorrows in his beer, or when he's really looking to get wasted, vodka. I realize he's drinking to try to forget.

It doesn't work, though. He always ends up sobbing into his beer, looking at pictures of Mom. Ten years later, and he's still mourning her like the day she died. They had a love that was special.

I remember how happy we used to be when Mom was alive. The walks we used to take in the park, the trips to the beach, movies on the couch. We were the perfect little family. I was a child borne of love.

And I knew my father loved me. I could see it in his eyes when he looked at me with such regret and how he apologized to me over and over again for not being the type of dad I deserve. I always tell him it's okay. That I understand and that I love him too.

But I also see the pain in his eyes when he tells me I look just like my mother. The woman he still can't get over losing. I have her same chestnut hair and green eyes.

He tells me I'm beautiful just like her.

No wonder he drinks all the time. I'm a walking reminder of everything he lost.

I know he'd be angry with me if he knew I was following him, but he held me just a little too tight tonight when he gave me a hug and told me that he'd always love me no matter what. An ominous tingle had gone up my spine at his words, and something just hadn't felt right.

So here I am, peeking around the corner and watching as my dad stands there wringing his hands in obvious nervousness.

"You're late," a deep voice speaks from the shadows, and my heart jumps in my throat as my father jumps and then turns toward the shadows where the voice is coming from.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Davenport, sir." My father shuffles from foot to foot.

"Well?" the voice prompts.

“What?” my Dad asks, his eyes squinting into the darkness as if he’s trying to spot the voice.

“Do you have the money?” The voice is obviously irritated now.

My heart plummets. Why? Why does my dad keep borrowing money from these back alley loan sharks? I wonder how many hundreds he’ll be set back this time. It’s crazy. He’ll borrow a small amount and have to pay double—sometimes triple—back in interest. Sometimes he actually has good luck with his gambling and can afford to do it and still have some left over. More often than not, though, he ends up broke rather than before he ever borrowed.

“Uh, well, see, uh, Davenport,” my dad stutters, and my heart goes out to him, “I don’t have it right this moment, but I’ll?”

Dad is cut off when the voice growls, “Do you know what happens to people who don’t pay me back on time, Hackman?”

“Uh, yes, well,” Dad runs a hand along the back of his neck, “I’m aware of the policy. I just need a little bit more time to, uh, to come up with that kind of cash.”

“I don’t do extensions,” the hard voice says. “You know that, Hackman.”

Dad drops his head, and his shoulders slump in defeat.

I hear a gun being cocked, and my heart skips a beat. No! Not Dad! He’s the only parent I’ve got left!

I act on instinct and jump out from behind the corner where I’ve been hiding and run in front of my father, screaming, “No! Don’t shoot! I’ll pay it! Whatever it is, I’ll pay it!”

“Lily!” I see the shock on my father’s face and ignore it, my chest heaving, my heart beating a thousand miles a minute in fear.

Dad grabs my arm. “Get out of here now!” he orders me, his voice frightened for me.

“You,” the voice quips. “Who are you?” I look toward where my father has been looking, where the voice is coming from. I can barely make out a form, much less a face.

“His daughter,” I answer as bravely as I can, raising my chin. “Whatever he owes you, I’ll pay it. How much is it?”

Another deep rumble from the corner as the shadow speaks, and my jaw drops at the sum. How in the world did my dad accrue that much debt? It’s not hundreds—it’s thousands. “It’ll take me years to pay that off,” I don’t mean to speak my thought out loud, but I do.

“I’m not running a charity,” the voice spats. “Payment is due now—in cash or blood. Seeing as how he doesn’t have cash...”

I try to think quickly before blurting, “Take me instead!”

“Lily!” my father protests with an anguished cry.

“You would take his place?” the voice asks slowly, almost curiously.

“Yes,” I nod, though I can’t keep myself from trembling. “As—as collateral,” I add, thinking quickly. “You can keep me as collateral until he pays it off.”

“Lily, no!” my father is adamant. “I won’t let you do this!”

“This will give you time,” I speak to my father lowly where only he can hear. “You can do it. I know you can. It’s the only way, Dad.”

I sound more confident than I feel. Dad will come through if it’s me, his daughter, on the line. Won’t he?

“Done,” the voice rumbles.

A form materializes from the shadows, and I have to bend my head back to look up at him as he steps into the dim light of the alley.

He’s huge and hulking, the muscles bunching underneath his shirt. His face is hard like he’s made of granite, and a jagged scar runs down the right side of his face from his hairline clean down to his jaw, twisting his lips and puckering some of his skin. The other side of his face is smooth, flawless, and arguably handsome. He’s like an angel and demon all in one, and I feel my heart pounding in my chest.

His hand comes out to wrap around my upper arm, and he hauls me to him, my dad still protesting, begging him to let me go.

He snarls at my father like a beast, “You’ll get her back when you’ve paid your debt. Until then, she’s mine.”

Then, he’s dragging me away.

I hazard one last glance back at my dad, his tormented face the last thing I see before everything goes black.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 12:34 am

She's too sweet to resist. And she's mine. All mine.

Ace

Three things are for sure:

One: She's the most stunning little thing I've ever laid eyes on.

Two: She doesn't belong on that stage, shaking it for men who don't deserve to breathe her air.

Three: She's already mine—even if she doesn't know it yet.

And I don't care what I have to do to prove it.

Candy

Only two things in life are for sure:

One: Nothing in life comes without a price.

Two: Men only ever want one thing.

But Ace? He's not like the others. He's dangerous, possessive, and makes promises I've never heard before. I should run... but every instinct in me tells me to stay.

Sex and Candy is a steamy-as-sin romance featuring an obsessive billionaire alpha

who will do anything— anything —to claim his woman. He's intense, over-the-top, and completely irresistible. Protective? Yes. Possessive? Hell yes. HEA? Always.

Keep reading for a preview of Sex and Candy :

I take a sip of the subpar whiskey in front of me and grimace at the taste as I glance down at my Rolex. Fucker's late.

I drum my fingers on the table in irritation, keenly reminded of why I never let anyone pick meeting locations. You never know what kind of seedy joint they're going to want to meet up in or if they'll even show up at all.

I knew better than to let MacHay dictate the terms of this meeting, but I went against my better instincts and did it anyway. Simply because the man has proven so difficult to get in touch with. I'm regretting ever shaking his hand in the first place, and if I wasn't beholden to hold up my end of the bargain, I'd say fuck it and bail on this here and now.

Oh, well. You live and learn, right?

I'm tempted to do it anyway and am actually moving to slip out of my booth when the stage lights up and a hush falls over the audience.

I don't know what causes me to pause and sit back down. It's probably just going to be another subpar dancer like all the other ones that have been staggering around on the stage all night.

Maybe it's the pregnant pause of anticipation that seems to fall over the entire room.

I don't know.

But when the tiniest little angel I've ever seen steps on stage, time itself seems to

stop.

Her skin glows ivory under the stage light. She has on a lacy white number, some sort of bustier, lacy panties, and white stockings. The look is topped off with fire engine red heels that match the paint on her lips. Long lashes frame light brown eyes that look too big and luminous for her little heart-shaped face. Long blonde hair like spun gold falls in glorious waves all the way down to an impossibly tiny waist that I know I could cup in my two hands. My breath catches in my throat. My god, she looks like a porcelain doll come to life.

But what most arrests me is the look in her eyes. For a split second when she first steps out on stage, her wide eyes are soulfully sad, so much so that they seem to take my breath away.

They seem to mirror all the tragedy in the world in their depths.

But then it's gone in the blink of an eye as she smiles, a dazzling, heart-wrenching smile that makes me instantly jealous. I'm irrationally upset that she's gracing this roomful of men with that smile—that smile that I suddenly know deep down in my soul is meant to be only mine.

Mine.

Sultry music begins to play, and she begins to dance, gently swaying her hips as she flirts with the strip pole.

I'm gripping the edge of the table so tightly I'm surprised the wood doesn't break underneath my palms. I swear to God if one piece of clothing comes off her body I won't be able to stop myself from rushing up on that stage and covering her from prying eyes.

I'm aware that my reaction is insane. I don't know anything about this girl, but I can't

stop the surge of possessive protectiveness that rages inside me at the thought of all these men seeing her so scantily clad like this.

What the fuck is she doing? Doesn't she know she's an angel? Doesn't she know she doesn't belong in here with all these devils?

I grit my teeth when she suddenly flings herself on the pole and begins to do a series of complicated flips and turns. The men roar and whistle and cheer, and I'd bet my last million half the fuckers in this place have a boner right now imagining her little body writhing on their laps like she is on that pole.

The thought fills me with murderous rage.

I'm so distracted by it that I don't even notice when MacHay finally takes his seat across from me until he chuckles and comments, "It's your first time witnessing the wonder that is Candy, huh?"

"What?" I bark at him, never tearing my eyes away from the beauty up on the stage. I feel like I won't be able to rest until her set is over and she's safely back behind that stage curtain where she belongs out of sight of lascivious male eyes.

He juts his chin out at the stage. "Candy. She's the feature dancer here." I spare a sideways glance at him out of the corner of my eye. He takes a sip of his drink and motions toward the stage with it, "And you can see why. Not only is she the prettiest one out of the bunch, but she's also the youngest and the one with the most skill. Consequently, she's the one Dan hoards to himself like the finest treasure. You can pay for a little extra with the other dancers, if you know what I mean, but Dan won't let anyone near Candy for no amount of money."

I frown, though I can't help feeling some sort of relief at the thought that Candy isn't being prostituted out. I can barely stomach the thought of all these men's eyes on her, much less their hands.

"So," MacHay rubs his hands together eagerly as Candy's show ends and she leaves the stage. I notice how she doesn't scramble to pick up any of the money thrown on the stage for her like all the dancers before her did. She walks coolly off the stage without even a backward glance at all the men she now holds in her thrall. "You really to get down to business?" MacHay interrupts my thoughts.

I scowl at him. The fucker keeps me waiting all the time, and then he shows up and expects me to cater to him. He can fucking wait now.

I level him with a cool stare before I stand from the booth and pull out my phone. "I have something to attend to first. If you want to see any part of this partnership go forward, you'll be sitting right here waiting for me when I get back."

He frowns and looks like he wants to say something, but one look at my tight jawline and he obviously thinks better of it, giving a curt nod of understanding instead. Yeah, he knows he fucked up.

I step out of earshot and call my head of security.

"Yeah, James? Get me everything you can on a dancer at the club on Sixth. Pronto. I want everything within the next thirty minutes. Goes by the name of Candy..."