



The Marriage Demand

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Category: Romance

Description: Four years ago, Winnie met her husband, Elias Moore. He had stormed a warehouse where she was fighting off multiple attackers and killed them all. He should have killed her. Only, he married her.

Now, she was his wife, and she had to follow his rules.

Elias knew he should have killed Winnie. She had been a witness to murder, but there was no way he was going to allow those fucking animals free. After growing up in the system, he knew shed had a hard life. There was something about her he just couldn't let her go. So he kept her.

Now, as his wife, she could have anything she wanted. What did she want? She had fallen for her husband. Winnie knew there was no chance of him loving her. She was just a girl that he saved. However, she was no longer just a girl, but a woman. A woman intent on showing her husband that she could give him everything he needed.

When Winnie is targeted, there is no telling what he will do. He was a monster before, but now, he is unstoppable. Anyone who hurts his wife, will die. No questions asked.

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Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:44 am

Four years ago, Winnie Moore knew she should have been killed by the man sitting next to her.

Instead, she twirled the ring on her finger like it was any normal Saturday night.

The nightmare of four years ago was long in the past.

It almost felt like it had happened to someone else.

She didn't even want to think about it.

In fact, she rarely thought about that night, which was a mixture of horror and peace at the same time.

Elias Moore, her husband, slapped his hand on the table and presented the cards.

Even though they had been married four years, and he regularly came to the casino, she never paid attention to how the game actually worked.

She had no idea what he was playing, just that he often won, and not because he cheated.

Her husband was many things, but a cheater was not one of them.

At least, not when it came to cards.

When it came to sex, she didn't know if he strayed.

She imagined he did.

They'd been married four years, and Elias was not ugly.

He was very handsome, dangerous, scary, and she had seen all of that in action.

Only, he had never harmed her. Never even squeezed her hand too tightly. He had been the perfect gentleman. She wasn't afraid of him. There was no reason to be.

He never forgot her birthday, or their anniversary, or Christmas.

When it came to the holidays, he was there.

She wanted for nothing, which, considering she had nothing when they met, never failed to surprise her.

Elias taught her how to drive.

He made sure she could go to college.

She had a full wardrobe, even a room to herself.

There were times she even made outlandish requests, like installing a beauty room in his country home, as well as his apartments where they sometimes stayed.

She thought he would deny her request, yet every place they went, there was always a beauty room for her. It had been an off-the-cuff request. Something she had always dreamed of having. It was a stupid dream, but one she still loved.

Growing up in foster care, bouncing from place to place, she never had anything to call her own.

There was never anything for her other than a bed, and she was always told to be grateful for it.

She got used to never asking for anything.

If she got fed, that was a good thing, but not necessarily expected.

“It’s time to go,”

Elias said, and that was the end of their presence.

Like always, he would take hold of her hand, and she stayed silent by his side as they made their way out of the casino.

He had a couple of guards ahead of him, and this was standard, as her husband was not a very nice man.

Actually, that wasn’t quite accurate.

To her, he was the most amazing, kind, caring, and sweetest person she had ever known.

That didn’t change the fact that the first time she ever met him, he killed all the other people in the room.

Yes, she witnessed him murder.

But she was so glad he did.

On the night she first met her husband, there had been a party she didn’t want to go to.

However, her friend Eve claimed it was going to be one hell of a party to celebrate turning eighteen.

She had known Eve for six months.

During her last six months i.

“the system,”

she'd been sent to a small family on a farm in the middle of nowhere.

For a little fun, Eve wanted to go to one of the parties in town, and seeing as she was her friend, she went.

What actually happened that night was that Eve had been playing her.

For six months, she had been acting the part of friend, because it turned out Eve was a party supplier.

It didn't mean she supplied alcohol.

No, she supplied entertainment.

Winnie didn't know how many other foster kids had been used for Eve and her friends' entertainment.

Just that Winnie herself was the last.

They had gone to an abandoned warehouse, and according to Eve that was where all the cool parties were.

Eve didn't know that Winnie never drank the cocktail Eve had given her.

When Winnie first arrived at Eve's family house, she found a small diary, and within it were warnings.

The first, to never trust Eve.

Not to take any food or drink from her, no matter what.

Never to leave her bedroom after dark, because the father liked to take payment.

The only person who was not badly written about was the mother.

Winnie tried to stay close to the mother, or keep her own space. There was also a note stating that when asked if she had plans, to always state that she planned to leave at eighteen. So, when it came to the party, she was more than prepared.

Eve was not a friend.

She sent the foster girls into the devil's den, where all her real friends wanted to play.

"Play" meant a bunch of male friends liked to intimidate, rape, and sometimes beat some of the girls.

Eve was supposed to drug them—not enough to knock them out, but enough to stop them from fighting back.

Winnie hadn't drunk anything.

She was not drugged.

So, that party had quickly turned into a nightmare where she was fighting for her life.

Salvation had come in the form of Elias.

At the time, neither she, nor Eve, nor Eve's friends had known that breaking into Elias's warehouse had been detected.

He'd been standing by, waiting, and what he found had caused a lot of death.

Elias killed the five boys that had attempted to rape and beat Winnie, along with Eve, who had been yelling for them to shut her the fuck up.

In the carnage, she had been covered in blood, looked up at Elias, thanked him, and then asked if he was going to kill her.

He answered by asking her what had happened.

When she told him, she believed her life had changed forever.

His bargain was, he would allow her to live, but she had to agree to be his wife.

In less than twenty-four hours, she had been nearly raped, beaten, seen murder, and married.

She didn't know what he did to Eve's family, if he even did anything.

All she knew was she never had to go back to that farm, and since then, her life had changed forever.

Anyone else might be afraid of Elias.

She wasn't afraid of him.

That had all happened four years ago.

When it came to her husband, she was loyal to him.

He earned it.

The truth was, he could have killed her that night, but he didn't.

Instead, he married her, and in a way, turned her into a fucking princess.

Which was why she followed him to the back of the car, like so many times before, and moved toward the opposite side as Elias climbed in beside her.

She always gave him his space.

So far, it had been a marriage of ... peace and tranquility.

Winnie was happy, there was no reason not to be, but she couldn't help wanting more.

And she knew it was wrong to hope, to want, to even expect.

Elias didn't owe her a damn thing.

She couldn't stand the thought of him being with another woman.

She had never been jealous of anyone in her life.

Sometimes, she might have been a little envious, but that made sense.

She had watched many women and girls experience life, and she had been curious of the what ifs.

What if she hadn't been put into foster care? What if she had parents that loved her? So many what ifs.

The thought of Elias with another woman churned in her stomach.

In the early years of their marriage, she didn't care.

If he wanted to have sex, he could have it with someone else.

Now, she didn't quite feel that way.

She felt ... irritated. She wanted to be the woman he turned to. Was that crazy?

Business was thriving. Business was always thriving.

Hitting the casino was part of his regular routine when it came to taking Winnie out.

It was easier staring at the cards than wondering what she was thinking half the time.

Four years ago, Elias knew if he had killed her, his life would have been so much easier.

He wouldn't have married her, nor would he have to deal with thinking about her.

Women had come and gone throughout his life.

All the women he fucked knew the score.

He was not the kind of man to stick around.

The only reason he was there, was to have fun. Women were there for a purpose—to please him, then fuck off. It had worked for a long time.

Until he met an eighteen-year-old in one of the most fucked-up situations that had even surprised him.

He had set cameras up in his warehouse because he had known some punk-ass kids had been invading his space, and he wanted to get shit moved along.

What he had seen had sickened him.

Winnie had been the intended victim.

He sat and listened for thirty minutes before she arrived, to what the guys wanted to do to her.

They were sick fucks, and it angered him.

He put a stop to it.

Yes, he knew that shit existed.

He also knew there were people that did far worse.

Anyone who attempted to approach him with that kind of shit ended up dead.

He didn't deal in rape, human trafficking, or the perversion of children. He didn't

agree with it, and made sure it didn't happen in his city.

It was why some of the local cops didn't have a problem with him.

For the most part, he ran a tight ship, and nothing affected civilians.

There were times shit got out of hand, but he dealt with it swiftly.

No one messed with Elias Moore.

He looked at Winnie that night, her nose dripping blood from where she had been punched.

One of her eyes was already swollen shut, her clothes torn and disarrayed.

She had asked if he was going to kill her.

The answer should have been yes. Instead, he gave her an ultimatum. She could live, but she was going to have to marry him.

He expected her to refuse.

Winnie had looked at him, and then said yes.

She agreed to marry him.

Her life had been fucked up, and in an odd way, he'd been her savior. Now, he gave her everything.

Four years had passed, and she was the perfect wife.

She never questioned him.

Never complained.

She asked for things, but they were never outlandish. He treated her like the princess she was.

Elias made up for Winnie's years of being tossed aside, treated like trash, and forgotten within the system.

Now, as he looked at her, she had blossomed into a beautiful woman he couldn't stop thinking about.

Her brown hair, short when he met her, was now long, thick, and curly.

He made sure she had regular appointments at the salon.

He had many beauty rooms built for her, and she spent hours learning how to apply makeup.

He also watched this process.

He watched her hesitate.

For many weeks after they were married, Winnie struggled to be free.

She kept expecting someone to come in and take it all away from her. This is what he witnessed and he hated it.

It was hard to stand back and wait for her to flourish, but eventually she did.

She shone brighter than he ever anticipated.

However, he was starting to get the sense she wasn't happy.

She didn't talk to him about it, but he knew something was starting to bother her, and he didn't quite know what to do.

They arrived at their apartment, and he stepped out, waiting for his wife to take his hand.

His men knew not to interfere.

Winnie was to be taken care of, but if he caught anyone looking at her with a lingering eye, there would be hell to pay.

Walking into the building, he placed a hand at her back, and then proceeded to climb onto the elevator.

In the reflection of the elevator doors, he saw her staring off into the corner.

She was the only woman he knew that never gave him a fucking clue as to what she was thinking.

It drove him crazy.

"You look beautiful tonight," he said.

This caught her attention.

She glanced over at him and then looked down at herself, before looking at him again.

She wore a dress that curved around her breasts and flared out, but it hinted at the shape beneath.

He noticed she rarely wore clothes that emphasized her hips, and she had more than a generous handful.

“Thank you.”

“I have a few days, what would you like to do?” he asked.

“What?”

“I’m not needed for the next couple of days, so if there is anything you would like to do, let me know.”

The elevator doors opened up.

“You’re ... staying home?”

“Yes,”

Elias said.

“And you want to do something together?”

“Yes, so if you have anything in mind, let me know.”

It was the first time he had given her any kind of opening. Usually, he was the person to make plans, not her.

“What would you like to do?” he asked.

“Uh ... I have no idea,”

Winnie said.

“What do you like to do?”

They entered their apartment, and the truth was, Elias did everything he wanted to do. He ruled the fucking city, and he kept people in line. This was what he did every day. He made money, and he killed people that dared betray him.

“This is not about what I want to do. What would you like to do?”

He expected her to want to go shopping, or to the beach.

“Well, there’s this ... artisan marketplace that opens every few months. I’ve been wanting to go for the past year, but something always comes up. They’re here this weekend, there are stalls where farmers and artisans showcase their food, their produce, but this has also extended into crafts. There’s always food available, and games and stuff. It’s a family event.”

It sounded like a nightmare. Something he would do everything to avoid.

“This is what you want to do?”

“Yes, I mean, only if you would like to go, but there is a catch. It’s a family event, so your guards might need to blend in.”

She nibbled her lip and she looked so cute. He saw how animated she looked at the possibility of going, to what he considered a nightmare. He couldn’t say no. He didn’t want to say no.

“Then that is what we’re doing tomorrow.”

Her eyes lit up. She had intense dark brown eyes, and she always looked so beautiful to him. Now, they were full of hope and happiness. There was no way he was going to take that away from her. When it came to his wife, it would seem there was nothing he wouldn’t do for her.

In all his forty years, nothing had made him weak. He didn’t have a weakness. He was a deadly killer. Fierce.

No one could ever know his wife was becoming his weakness.

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This was insane.

Winnie had awakened at six in the morning to get ready.

She was wrapped in her robe, her hair pinned in rollers, and sat at her vanity, applying makeup.

The foundation had decided to pill, which was just fucking crazy.

She hadn't struggled with foundation in so long, and today of all days, her makeup decided to take a beating.

The bronzer was sticky, the blush too bright. Her hands shook as her nerves started to get worked up.

She ended up washing her face, repeating the whole skin care routine, and then going simple, with a skin tint and minimal makeup.

Once that was done, she finished her hair and changed into one of her favorite summer dresses.

It was a cute pastel yellow, with thick straps so she could still wear a bra, and this fell to her ankles but had a slit up to her knee, allowing her the space to walk.

It was comfortable, and not figure-hugging.

No matter how many diets she went on, or exercise routines she stuck to, her hips

stayed the same—full, rounded—and were not disappearing.

She decided to stop fighting nature and just love the body she was in.

It did take time.

Years of being called fat and ugly had gotten her to this moment.

She took a deep breath, expelled it, and made her way into the kitchen.

It was already eight o'clock, and it had taken her two hours to get ready.

The scent of coffee told her Elias was already awake.

She had no idea why she felt nervous.

The moment she made her way to the kitchen, she saw her husband was already sitting at the dining room table, sipping his coffee.

Without another word, she went to the kitchen, grabbed a mug, and poured herself a cup.

Next, she went to the fridge, added a splash of milk, no sugar.

She felt nervous, and she knew it was stupid to feel this way.

The first time she met Elias, he'd been killing people.

That hadn't scared her.

In fact, she'd been thankful he'd been there, and she hadn't been alone.

Why did the thought of going out with her husband make her nervous?

Because it is something you want to do and you're nervous he is going to hate it.

Taking a sip of her coffee, she grabbed a bowl and a spoon and made her way to the table.

They had shared many breakfasts throughout the last four years.

This seemed to be hard for some reason.

This was the first time he was taking her out with her own desires in mind.

She didn't know what had inspired this, but she wanted him to enjoy it.

Now she couldn't help but overthink everything.

He didn't say a word as she sat down, poured her cereal, and started to eat.

She didn't look in his general direction, and instead stayed focused on what she was doing.

Time passed, and the moment she finished her food and coffee, they were heading out the door.

It was a little after nine by this point, and already the artisan market was in full swing.

Elias didn't allow his guards to get too close, which she appreciated.

There were so many different stores, and at first, she struggled to take it all in.

Mainly because her husband was by her side, monitoring everything.

Sure, he had told her on more than one occasion that there were always threats to their lives.

He had a lot of enemies, but so far, in the last four years, nothing had happened.

There had been a few times someone had come at them with a gun.

There were always guards at the ready, but nothing had personally happened to her.

She was grateful for that.

Also, Elias had insisted she take some personal defense training.

It was non-negotiable.

She knew how to protect herself in the event of an attack, which she hoped would never happen.

He'd also insisted she learn how to fire a gun—again, something she could now do.

There had been some knife training, and unfortunately, that hadn't gone quite well.

She thought the knife one of the guards had been using to train her was a prop.

It wasn't, and she kind of ... stabbed him.

The guy, bless him, was alive, and he didn't have any resentment toward her for what happened.

Nate was a good guy, but he also insisted to Elias that she didn't need to learn.

So, she was prepared to defend herself.

Right now, with her husband by her side, she was not really prepared for anything.

The market did eventually become a welcome distraction as she looked at the handmade trinkets, bags, and everything from food to clothing.

She even saw several independent makeup companies present as well.

They had been there for at least two hours, and she had encouraged Elias to have a hot dog.

She knew without a shadow of a doubt that he hated it.

A few purchases had been made, and as they stood, finishing their hot dogs, she noticed Elias checking his cell phone.

He always did this.

In the early days of their marriage, she didn't mind.

If she was honest, she didn't mind now.

Only there was the teeniest, tiniest smidge of curiosity that made her wonder if it was a woman who was calling or texting.

She tried not to think about it, because he owed her nothing.

Yes, she was his wife, but they hadn't made any vows to one another.

The priest had been paid to grant a service, and it was done.

A couple of the guards had been witnesses, and then, boom, she was Mrs.

Winnie Moore.

Married to one of the most feared men in the whole city, and she would later hear possibly the whole country, which was terrifying.

Yet, he had never harmed her.

Never hurt a single hair on her head.

He'd been the perfect gentleman.

Which was why she was still a virgin.

They had never consummated their marriage.

For a long time, she didn't care if he was out with other women.

He could live his life, and she could live hers.

They came together when he required it.

Like last night, she was with him during his poker game, or blackjack, or whatever kind of game he was playing.

She didn't do cards, nor did she gamble.

She had been to some foster homes where one of the parents gambled, and it was

never pretty, especially when they were losing.

When they were winning, that was an entirely different story.

Winning was a good thing.

Losing fucking sucked.

And she wanted no part of it.

Winnie had made a vow to never gamble.

This was how she liked it.

“You’re hating it, aren’t you?”

she asked.

Elias looked at her.

“Excuse me?”

“The market. You hate it. Admit it.”

She took a bite out of her hot dog and looked at him, waiting.

Elias just glanced at her.

“Are you enjoying it?”

“Yes, but that is not the question I asked.”

“Then I am enjoying it.”

This made her frown.

“You don’t have to enjoy it just because I am.”

“Once we finish our hot dogs, we’re going back and buying everything you admired during the first walk-through.”

“You don’t have to do that.”

“I insist.”

And with that, it was case closed.

Elias always made the final decisions, and she had to follow his lead, no matter what.

He fucking hated the artisan market.

It was boring to him, but also, he had to be on guard.

There was a threat from one of the rising pimps, who he was after to teach a lesson.

The pimp in question was Bozo Robins.

It was no fucking joke.

The guy had changed his name to Bozo, and at first, he was a small-time pimp.

Now, girls were turning up dead, badly beaten, and in some cases, mauled, like they had been attacked by a dog.

Only, the cops had informed him they were human teeth marks. Freaky fucking shit.

Elias had been on the hunt for this Bozo, who currently was in hiding.

The pimp was trying a play for his power.

He wasn't concerned.

It wouldn't be the first or last time some piece of shit thought they could take him on.

But he wasn't going to take any chances.

When it came to Winnie, he wanted her to have a good time.

During their first meeting, he had seen the darkness that had surrounded her.

Her so-called friend had been using her, and other girls like her, to become popular with a certain group of friends.

After killing all of them and taking Winnie as his wife, he made it his mission to learn everything about her.

She ended up in the system at five years old, after a cop managed to stop the mother from selling her to a different kind of pimp.

Money was exchanged, and Winnie would have been used, abused, and possibly even killed if it weren't for this one cop who overheard the conversation.

He changed everything.

The irony of it was, Winnie's life had been changed in a good way since going into the system.

If she hadn't been caught when she was, there was no telling what would have happened after.

Elias was a piece of shit.

He knew this and accepted it.

He hurt people, exploited them, but there were limits.

Kids and non-consenting females were off limits.

He didn't believe in rape, kidnapping, or human trafficking.

If women wanted to sell themselves willingly, he had ways for that to happen.

He could handle brothels and offering online porn, with a cut of the profits.

He had a lot of women who loved their jobs, and were more than happy to split the profits.

He also wasn't an asshole, and he made sure they got their fair share.

They were loyal to him, made him money, and were rewarded.

This was true for all his businesses, which was why he was one of the best fucking crime lords the city had ever seen.

He didn't take from his employees.

Sure, he scared them; fear was a great motivator, as well as greed.

Money made the world go around.

It helped people overlook uncomfortable alliances and shit.

He understood it.

Which is why his wife was treated like a fucking queen.

Winnie had a hard life.

He had read the police reports and social services reports about Winnie.

Before Winnie was taken into care, she had an abusive mother who loved using her fists, and had put her daughter in the hospital a few times.

She was also a fucking great actress, according to what he had seen.

The woman had cried, screaming that it was some stranger, which would always lead to a dead end.

Either way, it ended with Winnie back in her mother's care.

Until she was five.

Then, she entered the foster system, and her life went from shit to shit, to worse.

Now, she was married to him.

So, he was going to make sure she had everything a young woman should have.

He was not the best fucking husband.

Their first encounter was of him killing her so-called friends.

In fact, the first words she said to him were.

“thank you.”

That was it.

Thank you.

He found that so fucking adorable.

Walking back through the artisan market, they purchased some clothing, trinkets, makeup, and even food.

And after that, they were on their way back home with her goodies.

For now, they were staying at one of his many apartments.

Arriving at the house, Winnie went to her beauty room, and he made his way into his office.

He pulled out his cell phone, and there was a text from Trish, stating she had some information.

Elias made the arrangements to meet her at the club that evening.

Usually, he would go to the brothel where Trish worked, but this time, he wasn't interested.

The woman liked to think she could get him into bed.

She was one of his longest serving prostitutes, and was in her late thirties.

She had been in the industry since she was a teenager.

When he first met Trish, she was being beaten up by her pimp at the time.

Elias didn't like men who hurt women, especially when they were already down on the ground.

Trish wouldn't stay in line.

She didn't take the drugs the guy wanted her hooked on.

Trish was also a mother of three children.

Fathers had come and gone over the years. She had been used by a lot of men.

Sex was the oldest profession in the book, and seeing as men didn't like to keep it in their pants, she was going to make money out of it, which was exactly what she did. Again, he couldn't criticize her.

Leaving his office, he found Winnie in the kitchen.

"We're going out tonight.

I'll pick out some clothes for you."

The dress she wore was cute and sexy, but not what he had in mind for a night at the club.

“We are?”

He rarely took her to the club, and when he did, it was as his trophy.

No one knew anything about her.

Winnie always stumped his enemies, and above all else, it kept the women away.

For the last four years, much to his surprise, he had not touched another woman.

There had been a few moments he had thought about it, but then he would think of Winnie.

His wife.

He never thought of marriage as a real commitment, yet that was exactly what it was to him—a commitment—and one he took seriously.

Winnie was his, and he couldn't deny that she had turned into a very beautiful woman.

He was a selfish bastard.

She could have been safe and happy with anyone else, but he hadn't wanted to give her up.

They could have annulled their marriage, but he didn't want to.

He wanted Winnie all to himself.

This is what made him selfish.

She could be with anyone, but he didn't want her to be with just anyone.

His attraction to her had grown.

He was not into young girls.

He loved women.

And Winnie, with her long, brown hair, innocent eyes, and a past that made him want to fucking kill all the people she came into contact with.

He was falling for her.

And, he'd not even fucked her yet.

Not that it was going to happen.

Winnie didn't know he had made a vow to protect her, and he was going to keep that vow for the rest of their lives.

It also meant he was going to suffer with blue balls.

He was not a good man, but when it came to Winnie, it seemed he was becoming a fucking saint.

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Nightclubs had never been her thing.

The loud music, the people, and the lack of respect that seemed to happen.

Not to mention the drug taking, which she shouldn't see, and also, the close-to-sex experiences some people seemed to enjoy having on the dance floor.

Again, not something she wanted to participate in.

Winnie looked at the scarcely clad women, and then down at her own clothes.

She wore a pair of white slacks that were perfectly pressed, along with a top that had a strap around her neck, leaving the top part of her back and shoulders exposed.

Again, this was white, and it had some kind of floral design.

Even the pants did.

Her hair had been left down.

She had pinned it up, but before they left, Elias had taken out the pins and ran his fingers through her hair.

The sensations that rushed through her body were insane.

She felt that pulse that just scorched her whole body.

The arousal took her completely by surprise.

Her body wouldn't stop reacting to Elias.

She kept trying to tell herself it was pointless, that he was not interested in her.

They were married in name only, so that she could live.

He hadn't killed her.

And yet, she couldn't stop herself from wondering what it would be like for Elias to actually kiss her.

Not to press his lips to her forehead or even her hair, but to actually kiss her.

She tried not to think about it, because yearning for something she couldn't have didn't help at all.

She wanted him.

Did that make her a fool? An idiot?

They arrived at the bar, and she also never drank alcohol.

Again, too many bad memories of people who became entirely different with alcohol inside them.

Elias didn't complain.

He ordered a straight-up juice for her and a whiskey for himself.

They stood at the bar, which was different as he usually took them to his office, or to his VIP section.

This was one of his many nightclubs.

He had several different clubs that catered to different things.

There was one designed for celebrities, and there were in fact big names who ventured into his club.

They paid to be protected, to have fun without the press being alerted.

Elias made that happen.

Then he had sex clubs as well as nightclubs, and she had been to most of them.

When they were at the sex clubs, she tried to spend most of her time staring at the floor.

This was just a standard nightclub—a good one, with heavy music, dancing, and an energy that was thriving, and considering it was a Saturday, that was rare.

“Come on,”

Elias said.

They left their drinks, and before she could complain, they were on the dance floor. She didn’t know how he managed to do it, but people moved out of the way for him. Even people that didn’t know him. It was like they knew there was a predator in their midst.

“Now, this is the kind of fun I like to have,” he said.

She couldn't help but laugh as he pulled her in close. Winnie felt her heart start to race as she looked into his brown eyes. They were a slightly darker brown than hers, almost black in appearance.

She never knew what he was thinking, what was going on in that head of his, and she wanted to know absolutely everything. Words failed her.

They had talked over the years. Odd conversations but nothing concrete. He was a busy man, and she was grateful. He saved her and had given her a life she had never thought was possible.

It was strange, because she knew with all her heart she should fear him. She witnessed him kill people, and not in a nice way, or by accident. He'd been brutal, and in doing so, he saved her.

She loved him. And she wanted to be with him.

In the beginning of their marriage, she was happy she didn't have to have sex. She had heard a lot of mixed views about sex. That it was painful for a woman. That men were pigs and didn't know what to do. She had come to several conclusions. Sex the first time was going to be painful for the woman. Not for the man, but definitely for the woman. After the first time, providing the partner knew what he was doing, it could be very, very, very enjoyable for the woman.

Winnie couldn't stop wondering what it would be like with Elias. She had a feeling he knew his way around women. With his hands on her hips, he pulled her close, as the heavy music had slowed down to a steady pulse, forcing couples to come together.

She was at a loss for words. How did she take that next step with Elias? What if he didn't want to be with her?

“And is this what you find fun?”

Winnie asked.

He leaned in close with his lips almost touching her ear. She closed her eyes because that felt so good. What the hell was wrong with her? There were people all around them, and she was lost in a wave of pleasure.

“This is what I find fun. I love dancing and having fun this way.”

She knew he hated the artisan market, but that hadn't stopped him from taking her. It was moments like this when she found it hard to hate him. He was one of the sweetest men she had ever known.

They danced through multiple songs, and she lost herself in his arms. When it came to upbeat ones, Elias was right there, swinging her around the dance floor, and she couldn't stop laughing. At one point, she didn't have much choice, and had to go to the bathroom.

He kissed the top of her head, and promised to get them some drinks.

Like always, one of his men stayed with him, and the other escorted her to the bathroom.

She cringed as he went straight ahead of the line.

She had no idea why there was always one for the ladies' room.

He stood outside while she went in, quickly used the bathroom, and washed her hands.

She tried to rush, because she didn't want to be seen as a bitch for taking her time when several women could have used the bathroom.

Next time, she made a mental note to go to Elias's office, where he had a private bathroom.

Stepping out, she looked across the dance floor, then stopped. Elias was at the bar, with a woman.

The guard at her side was distracted by a woman, and Winnie found herself just staring at the blonde. There was no denying she was beautiful, with an amazing body, and such a serene smile. Men would walk over broken glass for this woman. Winnie just looked and ... envied.

Winnie couldn't quite see Elias's reaction, but he'd also not sent the woman away. Was this his mistress? His current girlfriend? She had no idea. She was his wife, but that didn't mean he didn't have women all over the country to tend to his needs. He was a wealthy man, a scary man, and above all else, a very sexy man.

This was embarrassing. She felt that awful coiling in her gut.

The blonde reached out and put her polished nails on his arm. It was such a tender touch, a familiar one. One maybe only a lover would make?

She looked toward her guard. There was no way she could interrupt them. What if this woman knew who she was and judged her? What if she didn't ... add up ... to this woman?

“I’m not feeling well. Can you take me home?”

Winnie said.

He went to look in Elias’s direction, but she grabbed his arm.

“Please, you can text Elias when we’re gone. I want to go home. I’m feeling a little sick.”

And then, she started to move toward the back door, which meant he would have no choice but to follow her. This way, no one stopped her on the way out, and she could get home.

She wanted to get home and cry, because there was no way she could ever compete with a woman who looked like the blonde. She had it all, as well as the confidence to back it up.

“You know, you’re looking a little lonely,”

Trish said.

“I can help you with that.”

Elias shrugged her hands off him. He had no doubt Trish wasn’t lonely. She had probably already had enough cocks inside her today.

Even though she was head of one of the brothels he owned, she didn’t need to fuck anymore to earn her place, but it didn’t stop her from doing it anyway. Like she had told him on more than one occasion, she loved cock, and was more than happy to

help the girls out.

“Enough. Bozo, you got word on him?”

“Yes, one of the guys came in. He had a whole lot of cash, and his mouth was more than happy to run away with him. One of the girls is currently keeping him entertained as we speak. They have been taking turns all day long.”

“He brought that much cash?”

“At first, they were all happy to take his cash, but when he started talking about Bozo, they came and got me. I called you.”

Elias got to his feet and looked toward the bathroom with no sign of Winnie. What was taking her so long?

Just as he was about to leave, his cell phone vibrated. Clicking on the text, he saw one from his guard that had been with Winnie. She wasn't feeling well, and he had taken her back to the apartment. Now he was pissed. Why had she gone to the guard? Why hadn't she come to him? He didn't have time to find the answers to his questions. Leaving the nightclub, he climbed into the back of his car, along with Trish. His own guard took the front seat.

“You know, you're looking a little stressed, and I know exactly what to do to help you with that,”

Trish said.

“No.”

He grabbed her hand.

“You’re crossing a line, Trish. You may be loyal to me, and have earned your place, but I can have you out on your ass faster than you can bounce back. Stop throwing yourself at me.”

And with that, he was done. The drive was only twenty minutes, but he felt Trish’s anger. She was happy to be rejected without an audience, but now his guard had been present.

They arrived at the brothel, which from the outside looked like any other kind of house. There was a black door, a knocker, and no sign or insignia of the dark delights that could be found once someone entered. This was how he liked it. It was also how the men who visited liked it. His guard stayed in the car.

He stepped through the door, and the lights were down low, soft music played, and no other sounds could be heard. He followed Trish to the main security desk. Each room had a camera, and this helped the men he employed to keep the women safe to do their jobs. At the first sign of trouble, they were there, protecting the girls.

They had to interfere more than he would have liked. A lot of men liked to use violence to get what they wanted. He didn’t like that, and the men were paid to teach them some respect. The women wanted a safe working environment, and that was what they got.

Trish pointed at the camera in the corner.

He glanced at the man, who had a bald head but a long beard and mustache. He was completely naked and crying out in pleasure, as one of the women distracted him by sucking his cock.

“Turn the camera off,”

Elias said.

With that, he left the room and went straight to the one he needed to be in. As he entered slowly, the man didn't even notice him at first.

"Fuck, yeah, darling, take it to the back of the throat. That's how Daddy likes it. He's going to give you all of his cream."

Elias had heard all kinds of dirty talk, and this was no different. The woman in question started to moan. As for the man, he was actually tied to the wall, spread-eagled with nowhere to go.

The woman gave Elias a thumbs-up, allowing him to know she was aware of his presence. Elias waited.

And then he cleared his throat. The woman stopped sucking the man's cock.

"What the fuck is this?" he asked.

She got to her feet and stepped away. Without another word, she left the room, and Elias looked at the man.

"Bozo Robins,"

he said.

"You're going to tell me where he is."

"Fuck you. I don't have to do shit with you. Bozo owns these streets and if he hears you hurt one of his men, he is going to come and fuck you up."

Elias looked at the tools that lined the walls, and he carefully picked up a cane. It was thin and kind of springy.

“He owns these streets?”

Elias asked.

“Yeah, and if you hurt me, he will come after you.”

“Does the name Elias Moore mean anything to you?” he asked.

The man seemed to pale, and then he drew the cane back and slapped it hard across the man’s thighs. This was not designed for pleasure. The man knew it, and screamed.

“Fuck, fuck, fuck!”

he said.

“Look, man, I mean no disrespect. Bozo is—”

“You’re going to tell me where Bozo is,”

Elias said.

“And while you’re doing that, you can tell me how he is in control of my streets, and yet in hiding.”

“Please let me go,”

the man asked.

“Where did the money come from that you brought in here and flashed around? Paying my girls to give you pleasure?”

He had hit the man once with the cane, not too hard, but he already started to cry. His erection had gone flaccid as well.

“Please, I’ll do anything. Just let me go. I will tell Bozo to leave you alone. That he is fucking lying. Please, please, please.”

His pleas fell flat. Elias wasn’t interested in listening to him anymore. Using some of the sexual instruments, he started to hurt the man, torturing him. Considering the man begged for his life, he wasn’t interested in giving up Bozo’s whereabouts.

Elias’s patience had run thin. Winnie had left the nightclub because she didn’t feel well, and now he had to deal with this lowlife piece of trash, and it was starting to piss him off.

He did no more than remove the man’s cock, using a very blunt knife. Elias had no problem getting his hands dirty, and Bozo needed to be taken off the streets. No more women should be found dumped like trash. He wouldn’t allow that kind of filth on his streets.

The man begged and pleaded, and in the end, he finally revealed one of Bozo’s locations, but with a warning that he moved around a lot.

Elias was done, and finished the man. Stepping away from the carnage, he looked at the mess he made of the room, and then went to the man’s clothing. There was no identification on him, but there was a cell phone. By some miracle, it was not locked, and he checked through the man’s texts. He was a thief. And it looked like Bozo was looking for him. Someone had sent this man a warning that Bozo was on the warpath, had encountered Elias, and saved Bozo the trouble.

Of all the amazing odds.

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Winnie got up early and made her way into her beauty room, hoping Elias would leave by the time she was ready to have breakfast.

She didn't feel like doing her makeup or hair.

The moment she got back to their apartment, she had cried until she fell asleep.

When he arrived at their place, it was after three in the morning.

It had woken her up, and she had to wonder if he had been with that blonde woman.

Jealousy was an ugly feeling. She didn't like it.

For a good hour before she fell asleep, she kept telling herself her feelings were wrong, that they were bad.

She had to stop feeling this way, because she was Elias's wife, and he didn't even have to marry her, but he did.

It didn't stop the ugly feeling of wanting to be more.

She wanted to be his wife in full, but she thought he was cheating on her. But was it really cheating if they didn't have a proper marriage?

She waited until after nine when she knew he would be long gone, before leaving her beauty room.

She was dressed in linen shorts and a white tank top.

Seeing as she was trying to pass the time, she curled her hair and did some makeup, but not too much.

She already felt like she was close to tears.

Emerging from her room, she made her way toward the kitchen, only to find Elias sitting at the dining room table.

A single cup of coffee sat on the table.

His newspaper was gone, and he looked ... distracted.

She couldn't quite read him, so she didn't know what was going on in his mind.

"Elias,"

she said.

"I thought you would be working."

"I know, which is why you waited until now to come out of your beauty room."

He got to his feet and moved closer, perching on the edge of the table.

"What's going on?"

"What?"

"Why did you leave the club last night?"

She felt her cheeks heat, and she hoped the foundation she used hid her blush.

“I ... uh, I wasn’t feeling well.”

She couldn’t stand his scrutiny, and she made her way into the kitchen in the hope of distracting herself.

There was no way she was going to admit she was jealous. That she had lost count of the number of times she thought about having sex with her husband, only to see he had plenty of women that could give him what he wanted. She was never going to match up to that beautiful blonde. Wife or not, that was all she was—a name.

“You’re lying,”

Elias said, and much to her surprise, he followed her into the kitchen.

As she turned to face him, he closed the distance between them. Furthermore, he put his hands either side of the counter, locking her between his hard body and the counter. Unless she pushed against him, there was nowhere for her to go. She was at his mercy.

What should she say? Should she surprise him? She felt her heart start to race as she looked up at him.

“What are you doing?”

she asked.

“Tell me what happened. Did someone stop you at the club? Did someone scare you?”

She frowned.

“What? No.”

“Then tell me, otherwise I am going back there to see what you’re lying about.”

Technically, she was lying, but only to save her own feelings. What if he looked over the security footage and saw her watching him? No, there was no way she could let that happen.

“Did you enjoy your date with the blonde?”

she asked, hating the words the moment they spilled from her lips.

Jealousy was a horrible feeling. It was even worse voicing it out aloud. She hated feeling like this.

“Blonde?”

“Yeah, the blonde that was waiting for you, who was very familiar. If you wanted to spend time with your girlfriend, you didn’t have to take me along to humiliate me.”

She gritted her teeth.

Winnie tried to be strong, but she felt so fucking useless. She had no right to be angry at him, but she couldn’t help it. He was with other women, and this feeling wasn’t going away. He started to laugh, which made it worse.

She clenched her hands into fists. She was not going to punch him, although it would feel good. Elias didn’t deserve her punches.

“You think that is funny?”

she asked.

With every sound of his laughter, it tore her heart out. This was not fun. She wanted to burst into tears.

“Trish is not my girlfriend.”

“Trish? That’s her name. She looked a little too comfortable not to be.”

“Trish is one of the whores I employ. She loves cock and loves making money from riding cock, but I am not fucking Trish.”

He didn’t back away. He didn’t give her any space.

“Is that what you think?”

he asked.

“That I’ve got a line of women at my beck and call?”

“Don’t you?”

“No. I could. All it would take is a snap of my fingers, and there would be a line of women waiting to service me, Winnie, but I don’t.”

“Do you expect me to believe that?”

she asked.

She was so hopeful that he was telling the truth. Elias had never lied to her, at least not that she was aware of. Did he really have no one?

He leaned in close so his lips were against her ear. The closeness shouldn't affect her, but she found herself wanting to sink against him.

“Why would I have other women, Winnie, when I have you waiting for me?” he asked.

This made her pull back, and she opened her eyes to look at him.

“But ... you and I ... it's in name only.”

“For now. But tell me, Winnie, are you curious to know what it would be like between you and me?”

he asked. He didn't pull away.

“Is that why you're jealous? Would you like to be my wife in more than name?”

Every part of Winnie was screaming to run, to hide. This man was a wolf, he was a monster, and she didn't have any clue what kind of game he was playing. She was no master. She was a child in comparison. Only, that jealousy hadn't felt nice. She hated it. Lying to him was not the answer.

“Yes,”

she said, surprising both of them.

Even more so, she didn't know how she felt so bold, but she reached up and cupped his face. Elias didn't move, nor did he move his hands from the counter.

Cupping his face, she stared into his eyes, and then kissed him. She had no idea what she was doing, she followed her intuition. His lips were firm, yet soft, and as she kissed him, the hands that had been trapping her in place wrapped around her.

His touch sent a shockwave of pleasure rushing through her, and she didn't want him to stop. Their kiss deepened, the first real kiss they had shared.

In pulling her close, she felt the hard ridge of his cock pressing against her stomach, and she let out a little moan, which he swallowed down, kissing her harder. She whimpered, not wanting him to stop.

And then, like a bucket of cold water, his cell phone went off, and that brought their kiss, and the possibility of finally consummating their marriage, to a close.

Elias was pissed off.

He had finally kissed his wife. Not the pathetic fucking pecks on the cheek or head he had been giving her, but a real kiss. Admittedly, after she initiated it, but he was taking full advantage. He'd been trying to figure out a way of getting her out of her clothes and into his bed, when his stupid fucking cell phone went off.

It was his informant cop. Another girl had been found, but this one was at the nightclub where he had been last night. Now, he was pissed off. Bozo had done this on purpose. The piece-of-shit pimp seemed to have a few more cards up his sleeve than Elias anticipated, and it was starting to grate on his nerves. It was time to end Bozo, especially as the cops conducted their investigation.

He followed them into the security room and watched the security tape while they checked for signs of the dead female. Elias took the opportunity to see the jealousy on

his wife's face when she caught Trish talking to him. He knew he shouldn't be happy about seeing her jealousy, but it made life a lot more interesting.

There were moments he thought his wife was attracted to him. He had vowed to keep her safe, which meant keeping his distance.

The police reports, social services, and medical records only said so much. At no point was she ever put on birth control pills. There was no sign of rape or abuse in any other report, other than physical. No sexual. There were no complaints of sexual abuse from foster parents, but he also knew some people didn't tell. He had no way of knowing if Winnie was a virgin.

After several hours, the police deemed that the body had been dumped. Bozo had known where the cameras were. She was dumped in a place away from the cameras. Someone in his bar was not loyal to him.

The moment the cops were gone and his staff had been questioned, Elias called his computer guy and asked him to look into suspicious activity of his employees. Romeo, his computer guy, took less than five minutes to find the leak.

Stepping out of his office, he tried to find Bruce, only there was no sign of him. According to one of the waitresses, the moment the cops left, he took off. It would seem Bruce had a little gambling and drug problem. He had debts up to his eyeballs.

He took several of his men, climbed into the car, and drove all the way to Bruce's apartment. The place he lived was a shit show, with diapers in the stairwell, and he was pretty sure human excrement painted along the walls. Used condoms and trash littered the ground, and the stench was overwhelming. Elias ignored it all, and then found Bruce in the throes of packing.

He stepped into the man's apartment, and the stench was even worse. It was a small

place, with a bed, sink, toilet, kitchen all in one unit, and the bed didn't have any sheets on it. There were a lot of stains, though, and Elias was pretty sure he saw something wriggling. The paint was peeling off the walls, and black mold was also apparent.

He was shocked that this piece of shit had been able to work for him, but appearances could be deceiving. The man sunk to his knees, clasped his hands together, and began to beg.

"Please, I'm sorry. I didn't know what I was doing. All he said was I had to move the cameras and that is all I did. They were going to take my legs."

He started to sob.

"Please, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry."

Elias listened to the sobs and pleads, and they echoed off the walls. He didn't give a fuck about all the excuses. His one rule was to be loyal to him, and this man had failed. There would only be one outcome.

Thirty minutes later, Elias stepped out of the apartment building and looked up into the sunshine bearing down. It was turning into a hot, unbearable summer, as sweat trickled down the base of his back.

The cleaning crew had already arrived to take care of the mess he made. There was no reason to prolong the man's suffering. Death had been easy, and in a way a kindness he didn't deserve.

Once he finished giving the instructions, he climbed into the back of his car and just sat for a second. There was a lot he could do. Places he could be, to deal with Bozo. In this latest act, as far as he was concerned, Bozo had initiated war, and he was more

than happy with that. The little fucker wanted to play, then he was happy to play.

However, he couldn't stop thinking about Winnie. He checked his cell phone and knew she was still at their place. Elias made a quick decision and headed back to his apartment.

At least Trish had been good for two things. One, getting a location on Bozo, but he had no doubt it was useless information now, and making his wife jealous. That look on Winnie's face was going to stay with him for quite some time.

Arriving back at his apartment, he entered and found Winnie on her knees, and much to his shock, with a duster in her hand. She spun toward him, and she looked so cute. Her hair was split between two ponytails. She still wore the shorts and tank top.

"You're back early," she said.

Elias removed his jacket, wriggling open his tie.

"Come here," he said.

She opened her mouth, closed it, and then got to her feet. She still held the duster in her hand. He took it off her, and threw it across the room. Winnie didn't have a chance to complain, as he cupped her face, pressed her against the nearest wall, and took possession of her lips, silencing her. She didn't fight him, nor did she stand still. She kissed him back, and he pressed his cock against her stomach.

He heard her soft, subtle moan, and he wanted her, craved her in a way he couldn't even think about. Never had he been so hungry for a woman, but then he remembered that tiny little detail. Pulling away, he looked at her swollen lips and then into her eyes. Round pools of deep brown. They were a slightly lighter brown than his.

“Are you a virgin?”

he asked. He didn't want to bring up any dark memories, but the next hour would depend on her answer.

She nodded her head. It was a simple jerk of the head. That meant he was going to have some fun with his wife and get her to enjoy what was about to happen.

Winnie let out a gasp as he picked her up in his arms and carried her across the apartment. He didn't go to her room, but instead took her to his, where he intended her to stay. The moment they crossed this line and he fucked her, she would be his in every sense of the word, and there was no backing out. Winnie belonged to him.

Dropping her to the bed, he leaned over her, staring into her eyes.

“I'm going to fuck you, Winnie. I'm going to make you my wife in every sense of the word. If you are not ready for what is about to happen, then I suggest you speak up. You tell me now.”

He expected her to refuse, to look a little scared, but she didn't move. There was a fierceness to his wife he had never seen, and looking at her now, she was fucking stunning. Elias didn't know how a monster like him had gotten so fucking lucky.

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Elias pulled down the shorts she had chosen.

Winnie felt ... strange. She was not afraid, but she was nervous. She had never had sex before, but she had read a lot of books. Reading and doing were two completely different things. She was a little afraid. What if she sucked at sex? What if having sex made him realize the mistake he had made, and he wanted to divorce her? So many scary thoughts rushed through her head, but as he removed the tank top, she didn't voice any of them.

He had taken the lead, and within a matter of minutes, she had gone from being fully dressed to just her lingerie. She wore a white lace set that was so soft against the skin, and she loved the feel of it. Also, it made her feel sexy.

"Fuck me," he said.

She didn't quite know why he was saying that, and he didn't tell her. He pulled her to the edge of the bed, and she watched as he sunk to his knees before her.

Winnie had pressed her thighs together. Now, she looked at him and didn't fight him as he spread her legs open. He ran his fingers up and down her thighs, and she had no idea that a simple touch could feel so damn good. She didn't want him to stop, and a moan escaped her.

Within seconds he had torn her panties from her body, and she was a little peeved about that because they were so nice.

"Shh,"

he said.

“I’ll buy you a new pair.”

He didn’t have to buy her anything, if he had the patience to remove them. Not that she said that. It was kind of nice as he pulled them from her body.

Winnie, stop analyzing every little detail.

She looked down at him as he pressed a kiss to her inner thigh, and then slowly started to work his way up toward her pussy.

She had no choice as she laid down and then felt his fingers on her pussy. She felt so wet already and as his fingers stroked down the fine hairs of her sex, she wondered if he would have preferred her waxed.

“Do you want me to remove ... my ... you know?”

Her face was on fire. She had never thought she would have this kind of conversation.

“I don’t want to feel like I’m fucking a child. I’m happy for my woman to feel like a woman.”

She cried out as he slid his fingers between her slit and started to tease her clit. The sensations were more than she ever thought possible, and it rushed through her body like a fever pitch. He didn’t linger on her clit, and he didn’t move down to her cunt either.

Winnie was about to ask him what was going on, when he spread the lips of her pussy, then she felt the tip of his tongue as he glided through her slit. His tongue

pressed to her clit, and he stroked back and forth, shaking her to her core. Elias took her clit into his mouth and sucked hard, making her moan, as the pleasure was intense and unlike anything she had ever felt.

She had not gone without orgasms, as over the years she had taken care of her sexual needs and hadn't needed anyone else to fulfill them. Never did she think it could be better as Elias continued to tease her with his mouth. The pleasure was intense. When she touched herself, she was able to change up the pace, to slow it down in order to prolong it. With Elias in charge, she was at his mercy. He was the boss.

The way he teased her clit, to the point where she didn't think she was going to be able to stand it, and just when she was right there, nearly asking him to stop, he'd pull away. The slow, sensitive torture was relentless. None of it was bad. It all felt amazing. So good.

She didn't want him to stop, and at the same time she didn't know if she could take any more.

His hands sunk beneath her ass and he clutched her in his palms as he started to lick and suck at her cunt. Winnie had never had her ass grabbed in such a primal way.

She didn't know if she could take much more, and then, as if by magic, he flung her right over the edge, into an orgasm that took her completely by surprise. She wasn't ready for it, yet it was the best feeling she had ever experienced.

Elias didn't stop there. He kept going, pushing her harder. Again, she didn't think she would be able to take much more, until he then pushed her over the next edge, hurtling her toward another orgasm. She cried out. The feelings were unlike anything she had ever experienced. His name spilled from her lips, filling the air, echoing off the walls.

There was no denying his mouth was deadly. Not only was it deadly in his commands, but now with the pleasure it wreaked over her body, in all the most amazing ways. She couldn't think or focus. All that mattered were the feelings.

And then, she felt him move up the bed, and she opened her eyes. She hadn't even realized she closed them. Looking up at him, she took a deep breath as he settled between her spread thighs. This was it. She was nervous and yet anticipating. She didn't want it to hurt, but knew that was exactly what was going to happen.

Elias took possession of her lips, and she wrapped her arms around his neck, not wanting to let go. This is what she had been wanting. In that brief second, she truly hoped it wasn't a dream she was going to wake up from.

She prayed, hoped, and then she felt the tip of his cock as he slid it through her wet slit, reaching up, and bumping against her clit. Another cry spilled from her lips, then he moved, and Winnie knew it was going to be painful.

Elias thrust deep, tearing through the veil of her virginity. The pain was instant, shocking. She tried not to make a sound, only tears sprang to her eyes, but she didn't want him to stop. All he had done was thrust in deep, and then he grabbed her hands, locking them together, where she had them squeezed into fists.

"I've got you,"

he said.

"I've got you,"

he repeated himself.

There was nothing more she could do, other than lay there and hope the pain ebbed

away. In all the books, she read it left as fleetingly as it arrived.

Winnie hated it, and she only hoped it got better than this, otherwise, she had just awakened a relationship with her husband she might not be able to stand.

Elias left his wife in bed and made his way to the bathroom, where he took a quick shower, brushed his teeth, and changed while he was still there. He didn't linger, and instead made his way to the kitchen.

One of his men was waiting for him, and he took the paperwork he had requested with all the relevant details of Bozo. The man owned a few properties, which surprised him. He thanked his man, and then he was alone.

The first order of business was coffee. His thoughts kept drifting to last night, and feeling his wife's pussy wrapped around his cock. In all his forty years, he'd never been with a virgin. When he married Winnie, he didn't for a second believe she was a virgin. He'd married her so he wouldn't have to kill her.

Knowing she had been a virgin didn't change anything. Even if she hadn't been, he wouldn't have divorced her. However, there was a small part of him that loved the fact no other man had touched her.

She belonged to him in every essence of the word. He knew that made him a hypocrite, seeing as he loved women long before he'd even met his wife. He'd never been shy of having a few sexual partners, and nothing was going to change that.

Until Winnie.

Then, there had been no one else, but his hand for the last four years. It was fucking

stupid, he knew that. He hadn't promised Winnie fidelity, and yet he granted it to her.

Now, he finally got a taste of his beautiful wife, and knowing what he had at the touch of his fingertips, there was no turning back. Winnie was who he wanted. She was what he craved, and he was not going to look anywhere else.

With the coffee percolator sending out the lovely aroma of beautiful coffee, he decided to go to the fridge.

Winnie rarely slept late. She was often an early riser like him. Most mornings, she would sneak off to her beauty room, only to appear an hour later, which was usually before eight o'clock. Checking the time, he saw it was a little after seven.

With eggs and bacon in his hands, he got started on cooking, which he rarely did. In fact, he often hated having to cook for himself. It was why he hired a chef for his country home where he spent a lot of time.

When it came to Winnie, there were not a lot of people he trusted with her care. His men knew they were to keep her safe and protected. Over the years, he had come to see that Winnie liked to take care of herself. She cooked and cleaned, even though he paid companies to do it. After a while, he simply stopped paying them. He had arrived home to find his wife cleaning, and the woman who was supposed to be doing that job sat, enjoying a cup of tea, talking to his wife.

He put an end to that, simply because he wasn't going to spend money if he didn't have to. Winnie's response at the time was that it was his money to waste, and she was more than capable of cleaning. So, he let her cook, clean, and do the grocery shopping.

And here he was, in his kitchen, cooking breakfast. He was halfway through cooking the scrambled eggs when Winnie appeared.

“I thought I could smell breakfast.”

She had changed into a pair of sweatpants, and one of his shirts, which was not buttoned correctly. Her full brown hair was pinned to the top of her head, and curls seemed to fall around her face. She looked ... well fucked. In the sexiest of ways. She was refreshed.

“Here, let me take over,”

Winnie said, holding her hand out for the spoon he was using to stir the eggs.

He placed it in her hand but couldn't resist stealing a kiss. She moaned and then giggled.

“Morning,” she said.

“Good morning.”

He stepped away, poured her a coffee, then leaned against the far kitchen counter and watched her. She was a natural when it came to cooking, and within a matter of minutes, the breakfast was ready for them to enjoy.

For some odd reason, he never thought sweatpants could be sexy, and yet, the curves of Winnie's ass were driving him crazy.

He carried their cups into the dining room, and Winnie brought in their food. Elias watched her as she took a seat.

He didn't know if he was expecting her to wince. Last night had been intense. He'd licked her pussy, bringing her to orgasm at least twice, yet it hadn't been enough to take the pain away. She had still cried out, and those small fists of hers had been

scrunched up as if to expect more pain.

He hated every last second of it. Only, he'd not pulled out. He hadn't brought a stop to it, even though he probably should have. He waited until she stopped fighting him. She hadn't told him to stop, but the tension within her body had told him all he needed to know.

Slowly, patiently, the pain had ebbed away until there was nothing left, and Winnie had been the one to wriggle on his dick, which had been a fucking miracle. He also didn't know how he could stand to take much more of the pleasure. And then he'd made love to her, bringing her to a third orgasm as he found his first.

Afterward, he'd done the gentlemanly thing by taking her to the bathroom and helping her in the bath. There had been soothing salts, and he'd gone to clean off the bed.

When he pulled out of her as they completed, he had seen the blood that coated the sheet beneath her. He'd felt so fucking weak, yet strong. Possessive.

He made money from willing women selling their bodies, and he got off on the fact his wife was a virgin. He knew that made him sound so many different kinds of asshole, but he couldn't help it. She was amazing.

"How are you feeling?" he asked.

Winnie didn't whimper or hesitate as she sat down.

"I'm good."

She offered him the most adorable smile. "You?"

“I’m not the one that felt pain last night.”

And then he saw her cheeks start to deepen in color.

“It’s fine. I’m fine.”

She tilted her head to the side, and looked so cute as she did, and sexy.

“You snuck out.”

“There was no sneaking. You were out for the count.”

Winnie chuckled.

“Yeah, you did tire me out.”

Elias had intended to be the ultimate gentleman and allow Winnie to rest. Last night, she had teased him, tempted him, and he hadn’t been strong enough. He’d made love to her a second time, and then a third. After that, he refused and pulled her into his arms, where he forced her to go to sleep. By force, he held her hands away from his dick and just hugged her. Never had he hugged his wife, or any other woman.

Winnie was special. He knew that.

“So, I was checking, and today is the last of the artisan market,”

Elias said.

“Yeah, I know.”

She took a bite of some bread and turned to look at him.

“Do you want to go?”

She chewed and he watched as she swallowed.

“But you hate it.”

“You love it, and if there is anything you want, we can pick it up today.”

“You’re sure?”

“Yeah.”

Winnie frowned.

“But you hate it.”

“There are a lot of things in this world that I hate, Winnie. I can’t change them, and I have to put up with them. When it comes to you, you’re my wife, and I want you to be happy. So, I want to make you happy.”

“I’m starting to wonder where you might have put my husband.”

He reached out and put his hand on hers.

“I’m right here.”

And he wasn’t going anywhere.

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One Week Later

Winnie lit the candle and then heard the door open. This was scary. She didn't know if he remembered, but she did, that this was now their "true" fourth anniversary.

This was the day they met and married.

Four years exactly.

After today, they were going to be into their fifth year. She knew it was like three years and so many months, instead of four years, but once she got into the next year, it was pointless.

They never celebrated their anniversary.

She remembered it as it had fundamentally changed her life.

Just like a week ago, since they had started to have sex.

A lot of sex.

After they had gone to the final day of the artisan market, Elias had taken them to one of his restaurants, and she didn't know what led up to it.

They ended up in his office, having sex across his desk.

It had been intense, crazy, and one of the single most erotic moments of her life.

They hadn't stopped there.

The sex just kept happening, and she loved it.

Waking up to him kissing down her back, before rolling her over and licking her pussy.

Watching television, that ended with her naked and riding his cock.

In one week, she figured they had made up for lost time.

There had been a few lunches where Elias had returned to the apartment, and one look in his eyes, and she had known what he wanted.

Without a word, she had gone to him, kissed him, and they made love, and they fucked.

It was like she had entered a completely different life from her own. This was exciting and shocking, and everything in between. She loved it.

She spun around in time to see Elias enter the main dining room.

He was dressed in the same suit he had on that morning when he left.

This was unusual for him, as she had noticed over the years he often came home in different clothes.

In the beginning, she thought it was because he cheated. Now, she knew it was because he was taking care of business.

He stopped and looked at the table and then at her, with a frown.

“Happy Anniversary,”

she said, feeling her cheeks heat.

“I didn’t think you would remember, but this is when we first met.”

At first, he didn’t say anything. Then, he took a step closer, and another. He reached out, gripping the back of her neck, not tightly but firmly. He pulled her close, and within seconds, his lips were on hers.

“I remember, Winnie,”

he said.

“I have three other gifts in my office I intended to give to you, but I didn’t want to remind you of that night.”

“I know,”

Winnie said.

“I kind of ... didn’t want to remind you, in case you regretted not killing me.”

She tried to make a joke of it, only she wondered if he did feel that way.

“I don’t regret a thing.”

And he kissed her again.

How did he do that? She was unable to think, and he had a way with his lips that just made her melt. She had zero control of what she could do or think. He was the master

of her body.

“Happy Anniversary, Winnie.”

He kissed her again, and she truly believed their food was going to be spoiled because if he kept kissing her like that, there was not going to be any chance of her wanting to eat.

“I’m going to go and get your gifts.”

And with that, he kissed the top of her head.

Winnie felt nervous. She had a present for him. The other presents she had gotten were in the wardrobe in the bedroom. She made her escape to go and get them. Like him, she hadn’t known if they should celebrate their anniversary or not.

The memories of that night came flooding back to her as she grabbed the three remaining items. They were not massive items, or even anything of real value. Just little trinkets she had seen over the years that made her think of him.

One was a small wooden figurine of an eagle. The intricate detail struck her and she loved it the moment she had seen it. An eagle was a predator, exactly like Elias. Strong, resilient. The next gift was a chain. A single gold chain—sturdy, strong—and it had felt silly to have gotten it. Each time she passed something that made her think of Elias around their anniversary, she would get it.

Then, last year, she got him a vintage gun. She didn’t know exactly what it was, but it was in a boxed case, the kind you saw in historical movies, that sometimes looked like wood. It looked so real. She also knew he loved historical weapons. There were always things he picked up in each place they lived. In several of his apartments, there were different guns, and in his country home, there was even a set of swords.

This time, she had purchased him a set of whiskey glasses, along with the crystal bottle to match. He had a beverage cabinet, and a set of glasses. Usually, he only had a bottle of whiskey.

She didn't know if he was going to like anything she had gotten him. Carrying them through to the dining room, she found Elias already there and waiting.

He looked down at her gifts.

"I might have gotten you some things over the last few years."

Now the nerves started to set in.

She didn't know what else he liked, and taking the time to potentially make a kill sheet seemed tacky. As it turned out, Elias loved the gifts she had gotten him, and he admired each one. He even put on the gold necklace she had gotten him. It didn't look garish or tacky, it just suited him.

Winnie was shocked to see the gifts he had gotten for her. One of them was a set of jewelry, including a pair of earrings and a necklace, along with a matching bracelet. There was a single diamond in each, and they were breathtakingly beautiful.

The next was a designer handbag, from a limited-edition collection. She had admired it a few Christmases ago, and by the time she tried to order one, it was sold out. Elias had insisted she order it. Once it was sold out, there was no way to find one.

"How did you get this?"

she asked.

"I have my ways."

She knew what that meant, and was not going to complain. Elias did have many ways of getting what he wanted.

The next gift was another set of jewelry, and the last one was a photograph album. This was a surprise.

“You’ve mentioned that you don’t have a lot of memories,”

Elias said.

“I figured it is now time to start creating some.”

She frowned and opened the album to see there were some photographs already inside. There was the one on their wedding day, taken by someone at the chapel. She wore the same clothes she had been in during the attack. Her hair was down, at the time, to her shoulders. Now, she had grown it out so it fell close to her butt. There were other random pictures, ones she didn’t even realize had been taken.

There was a picture of her on a ladder, putting an angel on top of the Christmas tree. It was their first Christmas together at his country home. There was even one of her dressed up as an elf, and then for Halloween, she attempted to dress as a ghost.

It was rare for them to get trick-or-treaters where they lived. In one apartment building, there had been a notice posted that kids would be visiting, which was strange, as the previous year, in the same building, that hadn’t happened. Winnie couldn’t even remember seeing any kids as she came and went.

There were ten pages of pictures. Some taken of the two of them. Others of her, and a couple of him.

“You’re helping me create memories.”

“Yes.”

“You didn’t have to do this,”

she said, but she was so touched.

“Well, if you didn’t like it, I also purchased these.”

He held up lingerie that was very skimpy.

“Lingerie?”

“Yes, after all, it is our anniversary.”

She couldn’t help but laugh, and she took the lingerie from him.

“I’ll be right back.”

If his enemies could see him now, they would all know he had a weakness, and that was his wife. Elias would give anything to her. All she had to do was snap her fingers, and it would be hers. No questions asked. That kind of power a woman had over a man was dangerous.

Winnie was not a dangerous woman. She was sweet and kind. Being married to him hadn’t changed her one bit.

He sat at the head of the table, and the items she had gotten for him were all beautiful. As it happened, he loved artwork, collecting pieces, or seeing something he liked, regardless of the cost. It didn’t need to be expensive for him to like it. It just needed

to be good. If he had to choose a least favorite, it would be the gold necklace, but he wasn't going to upset Winnie by taking it off.

Winnie appeared, and she wasn't just dressed in the lingerie. She had on a very sexy dress. He couldn't quite tell with the low lighting if she was a little embarrassed. The lingerie had been so tempting, as it didn't have a crotch. It was sexy, and he wanted to see his wife in it.

For now, he was going to let her do what she needed to do, by getting their dinner. She had cooked his favorite—steak and potatoes—with some peppercorn sauce. Slicing into the steak, it was perfectly cooked. Just a shot of pink in the center but not dripping blood, and certainly not raw. He liked his food properly cooked. The potatoes were soft and buttery. Everything was delicious, mouthwatering, and he couldn't get enough.

Once food was done, he was more than ready for his dessert.

She cleared the dishes, then she came out with a cake. He could tell this was not purchased from the local bakery. This screamed of Winnie's touch.

"You did all of this?" he asked.

"Yes."

He had wanted his dessert to be Winnie spread across the table so he could lick every inch of her. He'd wait to have his extra dessert until after she had served the cake.

It was rich, moist, filled with chocolate, and with a dollop of whipped cream on the side, it was extravagant. His mouth watered to take a bite.

Once that was finished, he watched as Winnie left, only to come back. The food had

been filling, but not overly so.

“Come here,” he said.

Winnie stepped toward him, and he pushed his chair out far enough so he could grab her hips, spin her around, and sit her on his lap. His dick was already rock-hard, and he wanted to push the skirt of her dress out of the way and thrust balls-deep inside her.

He had one arm banded across her stomach, and with the other, he began to run his fingers up the inside of her thigh, going beneath the skirt, and then he felt her pussy. She let out a gasp.

“How does it feel?” he asked.

“Like I’m not wearing panties.”

He groaned, and then touched her clit. His wife was soaking wet.

“Do you like not wearing panties?”

“I like the thought of what you’re going to do to me more.”

He moved from her clit, slid down, and then pushed a single finger inside her. She cried out, and he added a second finger. She was so tight, and she rocked against his hand, her soft moans driving him crazy.

He didn’t know if he would have the patience to hold back.

Suddenly, he let her go and stood her up.

Grabbing the hem of her skirt, he started to pull it up over her body, and then he threw it across the room.

Now, his wife was naked, except for the panties that had no crotch, along with the bra that was missing pieces as well. Her nipples were on full display.

His cock was getting harder by the second. He had no choice but to grit his teeth, as his wife was a temptation he couldn't deny himself. So beautiful, and so trusting.

With Winnie, he knew there was no game at play. She was open and willing, and all his. It was a heady experience, especially after a lifetime of people attempting to exploit and take advantage.

It was different with her.

Wrapping his fingers around her neck, he noticed that she liked it when he touched her this way. Not to hurt, but just to hold. He was the one in control, and this is what she loved.

Holding her neck, he pulled her close, and to test his theory, he touched her clit, pushing a single finger inside her. She was so wet, and as he kissed her, he felt her grow even more so.

He didn't put pressure on her neck. There was no reason to. This was not designed to hurt or scare her.

And then, breaking from the kiss, he added a second finger to her cunt, as he got to her neck.

Biting down on the pulse at her neck, he heard her soft, subtle moan that echoed around the dining room.

Also, she tightened around his fingers.

Her pussy grew even wetter, and he gritted his teeth, as another wave of temptation struck him, to thrust her over the table and fuck her hard.

He wanted to drive Winnie crazy, and then reward her.

He wanted to feel her tight pussy wrapped around his cock as she came.

There were so many things he wanted to do to her, and he held himself back.

For now, he was going to touch, tease, and play with her body, to see what drove her wild.

Another moan fell from her lips.

He stopped sucking her neck, and he knew he hadn't been light there.

That was going to leave a mark.

Now, he kissed down her body, going straight toward her nipples.

Taking one, and then the other, he flicked his tongue across each budded peak, and another moan left her.

She arched up against him and seemed to grind down on his fingers. He turned his fingers and pressed his thumb against her core.

Another gasp filled the air, and he gritted his teeth, feeling her getting closer to her orgasm.

He moved to the next nipple, and she cried out as he bit down.

This time, he did so just a little too hard, and he soothed out the pain with his tongue.

“Please,” she said.

“Do you want to come?”

“Yes.”

“Good. It is good to want things,” he said.

She let out a growl and it was so cute.

He moved her toward the table, and as it happened, it was screwed to the floor.

He pulled his fingers from her pussy, lifted her up, and placed her on the table.

Within seconds he had the lingerie off her. It looked sexy, but Winnie needed to be naked for him. The moment he had her in that moment, he was lost.

Kissing her, he reached for the buckle of his pants.

Winnie was already there, opening up the button, easing down the zipper, and reaching into his pants to take out his cock.

He pushed her hands out of the way, gripped his cock, and then slid inside her, going balls-deep.

They both cried out, and he felt the ripples of her pussy wrapped around him, and that wasn't even her orgasm.

Once inside, he held her close, just enjoying the feel of her.

He still hadn't used a condom, and he never intended to.

He loved fucking his wife, and the prospect of getting her pregnant was just too enjoyable to stop.

Elias had never thought about having kids.

They hadn't been at the forefront of his mind, but now they were.

He wanted to have a family with Winnie.

He wanted to have it all with his wife, and that had to be one of the scariest prospects of all.

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Once again, they were back in the casino, one of many Elias owned.

She sat, watching the cards play out, and she continued with her role.

Only, this time Elias was different.

Randomly, he'd touch her thigh or her knee, or stroke her arm. The small touches meant everything to her. She loved when he touched her.

A month had passed since their anniversary, and since then, she had been on cloud nine.

She had also gotten her period, just last week.

It had sucked as well.

Much to her surprise, Elias had stayed with her.

Yep, while she was dealing with some bad cramps, he was there with a hot water bottle, company, movies, and ice cream.

Never had he been so attentive, and she loved it.

The truth was, she had already fallen madly, deeply in love with her husband.

But Winnie didn't know if she was ever going to tell her husband how she felt.

He was not a man that did ... feelings.

She had no idea if that was going to change, because he was different with her—more loving, caring, tender.

A lot had changed in a short space of time.

Kind of like the summer months, which were fast turning to fall.

Gone were the dresses she loved, and she was now in thick tights whenever she wore skirts and dresses, jeans, or pants.

Also, sweaters had emerged from her wardrobe. She loved the fall.

They had also moved to the country house for a few weeks, and she had started to decorate.

A fall-inspired wreath hung on the front door.

Not that anyone but themselves and the guards would see it.

It wouldn't be long before she got the pumpkins out and started to decorate for Halloween.

She had set up a hot chocolate station as well.

Elias was not a hot chocolate lover, but he had enjoyed one she made, or at least he had said so.

Winnie glanced around the casino as something didn't quite sit well with her.

She didn't know what it was.

Looking around the room, she felt a sense she'd not felt in over four years.

The danger sense. Something wasn't right. Each time she looked around the room, nothing was out of order. People seemed normal. They were all there to spend money and have fun.

She didn't know why her sense was off.

In the past, she trusted this feeling.

Right now, she had no idea why it was acting up.

If she felt this way in the past, she would find some way of leaving the house. When she did return, it was to find out that the foster mother or father had gotten angry. She would tell some of the kids, but they rarely believed her. This feeling had gotten her out of so many scrapes.

Grabbing Elias's hand, she got his attention and leaned in close.

"Something doesn't feel right."

He pulled back and looked at her, and she tried to convey her concern with a single look. Elias looked doubtful, but she couldn't stop the feeling.

"Gentlemen, that is the end for me this evening,"

Elias said, putting the card on the table, and removing himself.

He took her hand, and his men must have sensed something as well, as they gathered

close. Elias didn't say a word as they started to walk out of the casino. He held her hand tightly, and that was when she saw it. The man with stained clothing suddenly had a gun.

She didn't think, she reacted—by throwing herself in front of Elias. The gun went off, and she felt a burning in her shoulder. It was instant, and she couldn't help but cry out.

A second bullet rang through the air, only she didn't feel any more pain. There was no need to feel more, as she had already been shot.

Elias wrapped his arms around her, and she didn't quite know what happened next. One moment, she was stopping him from getting shot, and then they were in the back of the car. He had pulled her sweater off, and his hand pressed against her shoulder.

"I've been shot."

"It's okay, Winnie," he said.

"I told you,"

Winnie said, and she let out a gasp. This was a lot more painful than even the movies made out.

How did they get away with the hero being shot and still being able to save the day? She'd been shot in her shoulder and it hurt like fucking hell.

She closed her eyes as he pressed something against her shoulder. He shouted directions, and the car suddenly jerked.

"How did you know?"

Elias asked.

“It’s ... something I’ve had being in foster care. Even with my mom. A sixth sense, maybe, where I feel something isn’t quite right. It’s nothing but a defense mechanism, at least according to the books.”

She groaned.

“I’m not a witch with mind-reading abilities, but could you imagine if I was? That would be totally awesome.”

She giggled.

The silence in the car was uncomfortable and making her very aware of the pain in her shoulder.

“It stopped me getting hit, kicked out, or hurt. I tried to tell some of the other kids. Some would listen to me and get out of there. Others thought I was talking shit. I wasn’t. We’d come back to a mess, and the ones that stayed behind often had a few bruises along the way.”

She winced.

“None of them shot me before. Why was he shooting you?”

“I’ve got a lot of enemies.”

“I don’t know why. I think you’re a nice guy.”

“I’m only a nice guy to you.”

She giggled and then moaned.

“Is that because you’re my husband?”

“There are a lot of reasons.”

She gritted her teeth, and then all too soon the car came to a stop and they were out. Winnie saw an older man, who had a door open. He was dressed in a suit, and he didn’t look impressed.

“Winnie, this is Mansell, the doctor. Mansell, this is my wife, Winnie.”

She nodded her head, not interested in making a good impression. They were escorted into the house and taken to a room that looked like a doctor’s office. There was a bed with a single white disposable sheet.

“Is he a good doctor?”

Winnie asked, attempting to whisper.

“Or a bad doctor?”

“I’m a good doctor,”

Mansell said.

“You’re in good hands, Winnie. I would never bring you to anyone that wouldn’t take care of you.”

She offered him a smile, and then she cried out as something jabbed into her arm. She turned to find Mansell had injected her.

“I find it easier if the patient is not looking. You won’t feel pain very soon.”

“I took a bullet for him,”

Winnie said.

“That’s why I’m here. Someone tried to shoot him.”

And everything was getting blurry.

“I don’t want anyone to shoot my husband, because I think I might kind of love him.”

And with that, the world went dark.

“Your wife is taking bullets for you now?”

Mansell asked.

“I have a lot of enemies, and they will be dealt with.”

Elias sat with Winnie as Mansell got to work. The bullet hadn’t hit any major arteries, and the damage was not going to cause further problems. However, the bullet couldn’t stay there. He was in the process of removing it.

Winnie was fast asleep, hooked up to a heart monitoring machine. Once she had passed out from the first medication, Mansell had gotten everything ready to perform the extraction.

“I never thought I would see the day a woman would jump in front of a bullet for

you,”

Mansell said.

Mansell and Elias’s friendship went way back. When Mansell was at the hospital, he had been being blackmailed by one of the cartels to perform surgeries on people. Some of them were to give women bigger breasts, others were to take babies out of girls. It was an ugly mess.

Mansell was at the end and couldn’t stand it. He had simply been in the wrong place at the wrong time, which had resulted in him using his medical skills for evil.

Elias found out, and he gave Mansell a chance. He could work for him, he would never require him to go against his oath, and he would be his personal doctor. No one would ever discover his past, and he would remove the cartel without a problem. A deal was struck, and their friendship had begun.

Mansell had fixed him up on more than one occasion. He had also gotten him to help with some of his men when needed. He was his emergency contact and the only person he trusted. The only man he would ever trust near his wife.

“Winnie is not just any woman.”

“No, she is your wife. You did tell me you were married, but you didn’t exactly say your marriage was real. This is a surprise to me.”

“It was always real, you just failed to see it.”

“I don’t know if this is a good or bad thing for you,”

Mansell said.

“What do you mean?”

“You have never been a man with a weakness, Elias. I don’t need to point out the obvious.”

He ran a hand down his face.

“I’m not giving her up.”

“I’m not telling you to give her up, but I am warning you that you have to face the consequences of what being with a woman does to you. What it will do to your enemies.”

Elias didn’t need the details. Winnie was a risk. For the past four years she had been a risk. He couldn’t kill her and didn’t want to. He loved her.

Holy fucking shit. This was a revelation to him. He loved his wife, and that was not something he ever expected to think or feel.

Love. He had never loved anyone.

“Have you ever heard of a pimp called Bozo Robins?”

Elias asked.

Mansell did a lot of street work after Elias had freed him from the blackmail of the cartel. He left his high-paying job and took to the streets where he helped men and women, even kids that were runaways. He tried to help them in any way possible.

The good doctor let out a growl.

“Yes, I have heard of that piece of shit.”

He let out another growl.

“He’s bad,”

Elias said.

“Yes, he is. He ... one of the girls that worked for him didn’t want to give a customer a blowjob. Do you know what he did to her?”

Mansell asked.

Elias looked at him.

“He removed all her front teeth. Yep, just tore them right out of her mouth, and then forced her to suck the cocks of ten men, with blood pooling out of her mouth, and in pain.”

Mansell took a deep breath.

“She came to see me, and I tried to reason with her. I found out she killed herself a week later.”

“I’m sorry.”

“She was sixteen,”

Mansell said.

“I was trying to reconcile her with her parents. She was just a spoiled kid who got

into the wrong crowd. She never saw her seventeenth birthday.”

Elias hated Bozo, but the man had gone into fucking hiding and disappeared. All his homes were empty. The man had vanished like a ghost.

“He wants your position,”

Mansell said.

This made him look toward Mansell.

“How do you know this?”

“The girls are nervous, and seeing as I do most of my work in silence, they talk. They’re scared. They want to come to you, but the girls that have tried ended up dead.”

“No one has come to me,”

Elias said.

“That’s because someone close to them is a rat. Bozo finds out, makes an example of them.”

“And you didn’t think to come and tell me?” he asked.

“Elias, I have a busy schedule, and if you check your cell phone, you will see a couple of calls. I only found out this past week.”

He didn’t need to pull out his cell phone. Mansell had tried to call, but he figured he would see the doctor when he needed to. Now, he was pissed off.

“Trust me, I have been trying to reach you.”

“I’m going to kill him,”

Elias said.

“The moment he slips up.”

“He is coming for you, Elias, and you have never showed a weakness until now,”

Mansell said.

He looked toward his wife, and he shook his head.

“I am not going to use my wife.”

“You might not have a choice,”

Mansell said.

“You haven’t been able to stop him, and the only way might be to lure him out by using her. He doesn’t know what you’re capable of, or that you wouldn’t let anything happen to her, but it will help you remove the problem quickly, rather than waiting around. Do you think the person who tried to shoot you tonight did so without cause? I would put money down that Bozo is the one who did it.”

Elias had no doubt about it as well.

“I’m not going to hurt her or put her life on the line.”

“Sometimes in life, we have no choice but to do exactly that,”

Mansell said.

He hated that Mansell was right, but he also hated that he was tempted to do so. It was time to bring Bozo in line.

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Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:44 am

Winnie woke up in pain, and in the bed she now shared with Elias. He had stopped allowing her to be in a separate room. They were husband and wife in every sense of the word. She groaned and the bed dipped.

“You’re awake,”

Elias said.

“And I’m home?”

“Yes, Mansell said I could bring you home. You’ll be fine. He has prescribed you some pain medication, as well as antibiotics as a precaution.”

She lifted her arm that hadn’t been shot, and pushed her hair out of her face.

“I must look a mess.”

“You’re fine.”

He held some water, along with the pills for her to take, which she did.

“The movies have it all wrong,”

Winnie said.

“Being shot is not easy.”

“You shouldn’t have stood in their way,”

Elias said.

“I wasn’t going to allow you to get shot when I could take the bullet.”

Last night was a little fuzzy. Especially after getting shot. She had a vague memory of Mansell, but other than that, nothing else made sense.

“I just ... reacted.”

“You did.”

“What happened to that guy?”

“I took care of it.”

“Do you know why he was shooting you?”

Elias looked away.

“Did you even bother to ask?”

she asked.

“Yes.”

She waited. He didn’t say anything.

“Are you going to tell me why?”

“There is a pimp causing trouble on the streets. Rumor has it he is trying to take my job.”

“Your job?”

“Yes. He is trying to kill me. The guy is a ... frequent gambler. He told me he wasn’t bad, but he made a bet with Bozo. It was an off-the-cuff kind of bet that he didn’t put much credit in. Bozo did, now he owes him tens of thousands of dollars. It would seem Bozo went to collect, and instead beat the shit out of the guy’s wife and son. He was going to kill them, but then he made a deal. He would shoot me, and in return, all bets were paid.”

“What did you do?”

Winnie asked.

“The wife and son are in a safe location. As for the man, the arm he used to fire his weapon is broken, but it will heal, and he also has a swollen eye.”

“You didn’t kill him?”

“No. I knew this was something you would ask me, and you wouldn’t be happy if I killed a man that had no choice in doing what he was blackmailed to do.”

Even though it hurt, she couldn’t help but throw her arms around him.

“Thank you,” she said.

There was no way she would be able to live with herself knowing that, and if Elias had killed him. People were put in difficult circumstances.

“What are you going to do about this Bozo?”

she asked, the she frowned.

“Why would he call himself Bozo?”

“I have no idea. I guess it’s a way for him to hurt others. Anyone seen laughing at his name, he punishes.”

“What are you going to do?”

she asked.

“I am going to kill him and everyone associated with him.”

“What’s wrong?”

she asked, sensing there was more to it.

“Nothing. He will suffer for what he has done, and seeing as I couldn’t kill the man that pulled the trigger, he will pay double for it.”

Winnie knew there was something else wrong, but she didn’t know what it was. Staring at him, she waited, but Elias didn’t say anything more. Just then, her stomach interrupted by grumbling.

“I’ll get the food.”

She looked down at herself.

“I need to get washed.”

“Do you need my help?”

“No, no, it’s fine. I won’t take long, just a quick shower. I’ll cover this so I don’t get it wet. It will be fine.”

She just needed a minute. Elias leaned forward and kissed her lips.

Something was off, and she needed a few moments to compose herself. Elias left, and she quickly made her way into the bathroom, and sure enough, she looked a mess. Her mascara was not waterproof, and had left streaks running down her face. Her hair was all over the place, and she looked terrible. Even worse than when he had first met her.

She turned on the shower, found a shower cap, and taped it across her shoulder to keep the dressing dry. Winnie didn’t take long in showering off the night, and the grogginess. Once that had fled her body, she came to realize just how hungry she was.

After her shower, she dried her hair and didn’t bother going to her beauty room. She pulled on a pair of lounge pants and an oversized shirt. She was just in time, as Elias had finished cooking them breakfast. Today, rather than bacon, he had cooked sausage to go with their eggs, along with what looked like a grilled piece of tomato. Her breakfast looked yummy.

Sitting beside him at the breakfast table, it was strange as he seemed quieter than usual. Not that Elias had ever been considered chatty, but there was something different about him.

“You’re angry, aren’t you?”

“If someone finds out I let a guy live, they will think I have gone soft.”

“I won’t tell anyone,”

she said, hoping that would make it better. All it did was make Elias shake his head.

All too soon, he was standing with his breakfast half finished.

“I’ve got to deal with work.”

He kissed the top of her head, and like so many other breakfasts, without a word, he was gone. Winnie looked down at her own food and whatever appetite she had was long gone. She didn’t have the stomach to eat. Elias was angry and she had caused that.

He had tried to help her, and in doing so, it might have made him look weak. She made her way toward the kitchen and started to clean off the plates. She didn’t bother loading up the dishwasher. All she wanted was the distraction of using her hands, and not thinking about everything else. It had been a long time since she saw him that angry. In all the years they had been married, he never stormed out.

After she cleaned the dishes, she didn’t want to be under the guard’s watchful eye. Whenever Elias left the house or the apartment, which is where they were now, one of his guards stepped in to keep an eye.

She escaped to her beauty room, where she sat down at the vanity mirror and just ... breathed. Tears filled her eyes as she thought about Elias. He was angry at her. There was no mistaking the way he felt. Running fingers through her hair, she wasn’t tempted to distract herself from the pain, which as the hours ticked by, began to increase. The makeup that surrounded her didn’t even feel good.

Elias had treated her like a queen. He’d given her a home, comfort, everything she could have hoped for. What had she done? Made him angry and potentially look

weak. All because he cared what she felt.

The hours ticked by.

She didn't leave her beauty room to have lunch. She stayed inside, and instead used it as an excuse to clean up. The pain in her shoulder intensified, and she slowed down.

It had already gotten dark by the time she heard a commotion outside. By commotion, it was simply Elias talking to the guard that had stepped in to take over for him.

She looked at her room, which was already clean. It had been clean when she started, and it was exactly the same now. Just things put in different places, and she would probably change them around in a short time. Waving her hand at them all, she quickly made her way out to find Elias at the dining room table. He had bags filled with Chinese food. She recognized the symbol on the bag, and the scents were amazing. She still didn't feel hungry, but she hadn't eaten since the little she had at breakfast.

"Hey," she said.

"I got dinner."

He wasn't smiling at her. There was no laughter in his eyes. The man she had known the last couple of months seemed to have disappeared, and she hated it. Regardless of what she thought, Elias had a way of doing things.

"Don't think about me,"

Winnie said.

Elias looked up at her.

She took a deep breath.

“When you’re doing business. Don’t think about me or what I think. You have been doing this a long time, and you don’t need to worry about what I think.”

She moved closer to him.

“I don’t want you to think you’re weak or a horrible man. You do what needs to be done, and I can’t stand the thought of someone ... hurting you because they think they can.”

For several seconds he just looked at her and then he nodded.

“I took care of it,” he said.

And he started to hand out the Chinese tubs. Winnie expected to feel something—guilt, remorse, anger—but she felt none of that.

Elias knew what he was doing, and she was never going to allow herself to interfere again.

Elias had weighed his options and decided he couldn’t allow the shooter to live. Not only had he attempted to kill him, the son of a bitch had gotten his wife. She had to have surgery. Only minor surgery to retrieve the bullet, but it was still surgery, nonetheless, and that pissed him off.

If anyone heard that he allowed himself to be shot at and let the shooter go free, his streets would be chaos. He wouldn’t allow that to happen.

He also didn't like what Mansell had said. Winnie was a weakness to him, and he couldn't allow that weakness to spread. He loved her. That scared the shit out of him, because he had not loved anyone before. Love had never entered the equation.

The moment he first saw Winnie four years ago, he had known she was different. The clothes she had on had been well-worn and oversized. Like her size was an afterthought to whoever purchased them. He figured she had them for years, and imagined they hadn't fit her when she first had them. Those clothes had been the first to go.

He purchased her a whole new wardrobe, and in a way a whole new life. Little by little, he found himself enjoying her. In the beginning, it was because he didn't want to kill her. She had been a fighter and forced into a situation not of her making, and he wanted to make it right.

Those early days had been tough, as he had been tempted to just send her away. Each time he did, something held him back.

She watched him kill, and not once did she ask if she could go to the police. She did exactly as he told her, and didn't put up a single fight. There wasn't even any sign that she was afraid of him.

Now, she asked him to not think of her, to just do his job the best way he knew how. He'd already taken care of business and made everyone aware that if they came after his wife, they were going to die.

The man's wife and son were gone, not dead, just out of the way. He wasn't going to kill them when they had nothing to do with the man's actions. He wasn't a total monster.

Mansell's suggestion kept ringing in his head. He was not going to use his wife to get

to Bozo. That fucker was going to get what was coming to him.

Rather than wait for him to make an appearance, his men were scouring the city, looking everywhere. They were leaving no stone unturned. They were going to find him, and anyone associated with him would be taken care of.

After enjoying the food, he went to take a shower as Winnie sat down, enjoying the movie. He didn't take long. Usually, he made his way to his office to do some work, but he needed to have Winnie close to him. Sitting beside her on the sofa, he didn't even have to wait before she closed the distance between them, wrapped her arms around his waist, and snuggled in deep.

"I missed you today," she said.

He stayed silent. The truth was, leaving today had been so fucking hard. He wanted to stay with her, make sure she was safe, that she took the pain medication.

"Did you take your pain meds?"

he asked, just realizing she might not have.

"No."

"Damn it, Winnie," he said.

"I ... it has been a strange day."

He got to his feet and made his way into the bedroom, where he grabbed a couple of her pain pills, and then to the kitchen. With the pills in hand and a glass of water, he handed them to her.

“Take them,” he said.

She sighed.

“I can handle the pain.”

“Babe, you shouldn’t have to handle it. Take them, before I make you.”

She smirked and it was such a cute look. He glared at her, but he was entertained.

She took the pills, stuck her tongue out to show that they were gone. “Happy?”

“Very.”

He sat down, and this time he wrapped his arm around her. Winnie got comfortable against him, and he noticed she did so without putting pressure on her shoulder.

For several moments, he stared at the television, not really paying attention. He just held her. Again, he marveled at the fact he was happy to just hold her. He didn’t know why it fucking mattered to him. All his life he had used women, just as they used him. He didn’t give a shit about holding them, loving them, or doing anything with them. They were a means to an end. Yet, there was nowhere else he wanted to be than with Winnie in his arms.

He kissed the top of her head, and he felt her slowly begin to fall asleep. This had to be the first time today, other than this morning, that she had been pain-free.

Turning off the television, he picked up his wife. She was so out of it, she didn’t even stir. He carried her to their bedroom and tucked her in. He didn’t even attempt to get her changed. She looked so peaceful, he did not want to disturb her.

He also wasn't tired either, so he left her alone to make his way to his office, to get down to some business. It was the same old shit. A combination of legal and illegal businesses. He checked through some of the paperwork.

He saw that one of the mechanic businesses was reporting a loss, which made no sense. Cross-examining the stats he had, something didn't add up. It was one of the places that tended to do really well. None of his usual men went to this shop, as he tended to trust the owner, Carson. Looking over the paperwork, he frowned.

"You know, when you put me to bed, you should stay with me,"

Winnie said.

He'd been so wrapped up in his paperwork, he hadn't heard Winnie enter his office. She had changed out of her lounge pants and sweater, into a sexy lingerie piece. Her breasts were covered in black lace that hinted at her nipples beneath. One look at her, and concentrating on work went right out the window. His cock was hard as rock, and she took a step toward him, then another.

"Would you like me to leave?"

Winnie asked.

"I don't want to disturb you."

"You're not disturbing me, but I am curious, Winnie, are you ready for what you're about to do?"

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Was she ready for what she was about to do? Hell, no.

Winnie didn't even know exactly what she planned to do.

All she knew was that she woke up in bed.

The pain was more than manageable, and it was strange, but she had an undeniable urge to seduce her husband, something she had never done before.

There was a silk negligee she had seen in a shop a few months ago, and she had purchased it on a whim.

She never thought she was going to use it, because she and Elias didn't have that kind of relationship.

Although, she had hoped for it.

Now, she just wanted to be with him.

Winnie looked at him and saw how quickly he put down the work he'd been glaring at.

She didn't know what had him troubled.

For now, she just wanted to be with her husband.

Stepping closer to him, she had no idea what she was doing, and went with instinct.

She was tempted to sit down on his desk, but then she thought about something else, and sunk to her knees before him.

Elias didn't say a word.

He watched her, and she loved that he did.

She reached for the belt buckle and began to loosen it.

Her nerves had increased, but she took her time.

After she did the belt, she went for the button, then the zipper, and wondered why he couldn't have worn some lounge pants.

She had never seen Elias in anything other than suit pants or jeans. Rarely the latter, though.

He lifted up for her, so she could pull his pants down, and next, he had his boxer briefs, which followed suit.

With them around his ankles, she couldn't help but look at the thickness of his cock.

He was already rock-hard, and she hadn't even touched him.

She didn't want to ruin this, so she gripped him in her palm, being careful not to grip too tight.

The tip glistened with pre-cum, and she kissed the very top, then pressed her tongue against him, before taking him into her mouth.

She heard him groan, and she looked up at him.

“I don’t know what I’m doing,” she said.

“Fuck me, Winnie.”

He reached out and gripped her hair into his fists. It wasn’t painful, but sexy.

She waited.

“Don’t use your teeth. Anything else is a go.”

Making sure not to use her teeth, which did feel a little awkward at first, she sucked on his cock, taking him deep into her mouth.

When he hit the back of her throat, she pulled back, circling the tip with her tongue, and then she took more of him into her mouth.

This time, she did moan, as she loved the feel of him.

Each time she tried something new, she looked up to see him.

It was a heady sensation to see him close to losing his composure. She wanted him to be completely mindless with pleasure.

“Fuck, that feels good, Winnie,” he said.

She sucked a little harder, and this time as he hit the back of her throat, she didn’t pull away.

Holding him there, she got used to the feel of him.

Bobbing her head on his length, she was more than content to do what she did.

Elias clearly wasn't as happy as she thought he would be.

He let go of her hair and grabbed her arms at the same time, making sure not to touch her injured shoulder, quickly pulling her up and off his length.

She wanted to pout, that he had stopped her from enjoying him.

Winnie didn't get a chance to complain as he took her lips in a searing kiss that made her forget what she was doing.

He placed her on his desk and shoved her negligee up until it was around her waist.

At the same time, he pulled the straps down, and within seconds had released her breasts from the small elastic and lace that cupped them.

His large hands cupped her tits, each of them, his thumbs rubbing across her nipples.

She cried out.

The pleasure was so intense, that at first she couldn't take it.

Her nipples were incredibly sensitive.

He growled against her lips and broke the kiss, going straight to her neck.

She felt an answering spark between her thighs.

Elias wasn't done yet, as he nibbled at her neck, sending her arousal higher with each touch.

He bit down on her pulse, and then kissed down to her breasts.

Taking one nipple into his mouth, he sucked on the hard bud, followed by the next. Another moan escaped her. His lips were heaven.

When he bit down, she thought the pain would be more than she could take, but it only increased her arousal.

He moved to her second nipple, licking and sucking at the bud, before he went back to kissing her.

He tipped her back on the desk, and she felt the tip of his cock as he ran between her slit.

She was so wet.

He nudged her clit, making her cry out, but then he went to her entrance, and in one hard, deep thrust, he filled her pussy.

Winnie gasped at the sudden onslaught of pleasure.

She grabbed his arms as before she was even accustomed to the feel of him, he was pulling out, and then he slammed back in.

He wasn't too gentle.

He grabbed her hips, and the desk didn't budge as he fucked her hard and fast, then slowed down.

His thrusts became even more of a tease.

She didn't want him to stop.

Elias pulled away, so only his cock was inside her.

She was spread across his desk, open and willing.

She didn't know what he was going to do to her, then he licked his fingers and started to play with her clit.

Winnie loved when he did this, teasing her body, bringing her to the peak, and then spilling her over the edge.

His name spilled from her lips, as the pleasure rushed through her body, and it felt so different to anything else she had felt before.

With his cock balls-deep inside her, it felt different.

She was full, and there was pleasure there as well as he filled her.

“That's it, Winnie,”

he said.

“Come for me.”

She screamed his name, as her body did exactly as he bid. Coming on his cock, she didn't have time to come down from her high before he was fucking her harder, faster, driving in deeper. Staring into his eyes, she felt that connection with him that was so acute. This was her husband, the man she loved, and yet she still had to tell him exactly how she felt.

Winnie didn't look away. She was so enraptured by his gaze, and there was no reason to look away.

When he came, she felt it pulse within her body, and in an odd feeling, she had to wonder if this would be the moment she finally became pregnant.

Elias climbed out of his car and looked toward the building that had caught his attention the other night. After fucking his wife over his desk, he carried her through to the bedroom, where he proceeded to make love to her several more times before she fell asleep.

Sleep wouldn't come to him. He instead got back to work and started to look through the paperwork related to this very mechanic shop. It was in the middle of nowhere, between a few towns, and it was known as one of the last places for several hundred miles, to buy gas. When he purchased this, he had every intention of selling it and perhaps going into real estate. Until he had seen the profit this place turned over. Instead, he invested in the shop, and was shocked each time he got the quarterly figures.

Until last night.

Those figures had been on his desk for a couple of weeks, and it was only now that he had the time to go through them because of the Bozo bullshit.

It was odd, he owned this garage for an entire decade, and during that time never once had it been a loss. Now, it was.

His men had already come on ahead, and his suspicions were confirmed. Bozo had decided to hide within plain sight. From what he could tell, the guy he had managing things had turned up in a ditch, his body found just last week, but evidence of him decaying for a couple of months with his throat cut. The garage had been overrun by Bozo.

The piece of shit had been working the garage, and now it did not look like a garage you wanted to stop for gas. There was trash piled high outside the main shop. The main fillers were empty. No deliveries had been made. The last of the gas had been taken.

And now, he entered the shop. Several dead bodies were on the floor. His men had already come and taken care of them.

He made his way out toward the back, where he found Bozo standing, hands cuffed. A couple of caged dogs were barking, trying to get to Bozo. Elias didn't even want to think about what this piece of shit had done to those dogs.

"You did it, you caught me,"

Bozo said.

"Yeah, I did,"

Elias said.

"Come on then, tell me what gave the game away?"

Bozo asked with a smile. The moment he smiled he revealed several gold teeth.

"The quarterly reports,"

Elias said.

He had never taken the time to really look at Bozo and now that he did, he didn't like him. The man had an attitude problem a mile long. The piece of shit looked cocky, like he thought he was going to find a way to get out of this situation. The few men

that had been working for him were dead.

“Fuck me, are you serious? Those reports? That’s what did this?”

Elias didn’t like this man. He knew he was no one to judge, but this man was cruel. He had no morals. He took and took like he thought it was his right to do so. Anger filled him as he thought about the lives this man had hurt.

Again, it wasn’t his right to judge. He wasn’t here as a good man. But he followed his own code. Hurting young girls crossed the line. He did not force girls to work for him. He had few morals, but he stuck by them, as well as a code. Civilians were not to be harmed.

Now, he looked at the man that had caused so much pain, and it was only a matter of time before he killed him.

“You know you’re going to die today,”

Elias said.

“Yeah, well, you’re a fucking coward. Bringing your men to do the dirty work.”

Elias laughed.

“You’re just not used to having men be loyal without a cost.”

He stepped closer.

“You had to offer your men something tangible that they could feel. Me, I just had to give them a chance. That’s the difference between you and me.”

“How is your wife?”

Bozo asked.

“Is that what you’re doing here? You think you’re going to tell me my wife is in danger?”

“Nah, no one would even touch her. I tried to get contract killers to take her out, but it would seem she is protected up to the fucking stars.”

Bozo started to laugh.

“It did make me wonder if she had a golden pussy. I mean, no whore has a cunt that good.”

Elias didn’t even allow him to finish that laughter as he throat-punched him. No one talked about his woman with such disrespect. Winnie was not some whore.

“Do you think you’re clever for even thinking of leaving my wife alone? You’re wrong. By coming after me, you hit my wife.”

“Yeah, well, even that bullet didn’t get a good enough target,”

Bozo said, choking on air.

“It should have killed at least you or your wife.”

Elias pulled out a knife, and without another word, he plunged it into the man’s guts. Extracting it, he slammed it in again, then again, and again. He didn’t stop until Bozo had taken his last breath, and even then, he wasn’t satisfied.

No one would take a contract that involved his wife. At least the warning he sent out had been good for something. Winnie needed to be protected.

Looking down at his clothes, he was pissed off to see he had gotten that piece of shit's blood on them, and it would require washing them.

Turning to his men, he looked at the garage and weighed his options. He could either burn the whole thing down and start again. Or, he could call his cleaning crew, and that way, he'd find someone to take the manager's place and have the garage turning a profit in no time.

He was a businessman, so he put a call through to his cleaning crew.

“Hi, Dr. Mansell,”

Winnie said, coming toward the apartment door for the good doctor.

It had only been the night before last that she had seen him, but Elias wanted him to check on the wound, which actually didn't feel too bad at the moment. He'd been careful when he made love to her.

“Good morning, Mrs. Moore,” he said.

She couldn't help but smile, as hearing her wedded title made her nervous.

“You don't have to call me that. I prefer Winnie.”

“Winnie it is, then. Don't take this the wrong way, but I prefer Dr. Mansell. The only reason being I spent a lot of time and money learning to be a good doctor.”

“That's fine. I don't mind it.”

“So, do you want to tell me what the problem is?”

“There is no problem. Elias was just worried.”

“Ah, and we do not want him worried at all, do we?”

“Well, it feels fine.”

Dr. Mansell came toward her, and they made their way into the dining room. She took a seat and shrugged off her cardigan. Fall was in full swing now, and any remnants of the summer sun were long gone.

“I think it is fine,”

Winnie said.

“We will check it out anyway. Elias is paying for my involvement and I will make sure his mind is put to rest.”

“Have you known each other long?”

she asked.

“Yes, a long time. He is a good man.”

“You know what he does?”

she asked.

“Yes, I know what he does, but I have also seen what similar men do in his position. I know he is not a good guy, but his heart is in the right place. Like with you, he has opted to make you his wife. Trust me, the man I knew would not just take any woman to be his wife. Elias must care for you.”

She looked at the doctor and hated how hopeful she felt.

“Do you think so?”

Dr. Mansell looked at her and then offered a smile.

“You’re in love with him, aren’t you?”

“Do you think that is a bad thing?”

“No. Love is a good thing, but you see, love also makes us do many stupid things.”

“Elias doesn’t love me,” she said.

There was silence and she looked up to find Dr. Mansell looking at her. He had a strange look on his face.

“What is it? Is it infected?”

“No. Your wound is healing nicely, just as I knew it would. What makes you think your husband doesn’t love you?” he asked.

“It was ... he ... uh, it’s kind of complicated, and besides, Elias isn’t the kind of man to do the whole love thing. You know?”

“Yeah, I do know.”

He sighed.

“And I also know you don’t know what you’re talking about. Did you know that the man who shot you was working for a piece of shit I would like to see completely removed from this planet?”

She didn’t get a chance to respond as Dr. Mansell started to reel off everything he hated about him.

“Bozo Robins is a small-time pimp. He worked the streets, took advantage of women,

and for a long time seemed like a small-time crook. Nothing to write home about. Pimps come and go all the time, and they tend to end up overdosing on the drugs they distribute. Only, Bozo was not just some addict. He was cruel. He knew the way to keep his girls in line was with force. Not only did he take women who were already working the street and force them to work for him, he took ninety-nine percent of the profits they made every single night, leaving them with next to nothing. He'd beat them. He would allow customers to beat them as well. The man was cruel, and I am not even going to paint the right picture."

She felt sick to her stomach. No wonder Elias had been distracted lately.

"But this fucking Bozo had his sights on taking from Elias. So, he attempted to plant one of the drug-overdosed women at the back of one of his bars. Elias dealt with the problem, but it didn't make it go away. Bozo was a problem, and there was a chance he might have been able to catch him sooner. Do you have any idea what that is?"

"No."

"There was a chance that using you as bait might have been too promising for him to not use it. But he didn't. Do you want any clues as to why?"

She opened her mouth and closed it. Winnie didn't know what to say.

"Simple. Elias is in love with you, and he was not going to use you to get to anyone else. Elias is not the kind of man to marry a random woman. You're different. You're unique."

"He saved me four years ago ... it was a situation, and he saved me."

"Yeah, and you know, he could have let you go. He didn't have to marry you, Winnie, but he did. Just like he didn't have to call me to check on you to see if you're

well, and guess what, you are well.”

He changed the bandage.

“Some of my best work.”

“Do you think he knows he has feelings for me?”

“Yes,”

Dr. Mansell said.

“Trust me, Elias knows everything.”

He packed up his kit and she had hoped he would stay a little longer so she could pick over what he had said, but there was no reason to keep him.

“I’ll see you in a couple of days,”

Dr. Mansell said. With that, he was gone.

Winnie looked around the apartment. She ran a hand down her face. She wanted to help her husband, but she had no idea how.

Elias entered his apartment, and he immediately went looking for Winnie. He found her in the kitchen, cooking.

“What the hell are you doing?” he asked.

She turned toward him.

“I’m cooking dinner, why?”

“Your arm.”

“My arm is fine. Dr. Mansell has already said it is healing well, and I don’t have to worry. I’m able to cook dinner.”

She offered him a smile.

“Stop worrying.”

“I could order in,” he said.

“And not get my chicken and cheese spaghetti?”

she asked.

He cupped her cheek.

“You don’t have to cook, not if it hurts.”

“It’s fine. It tingles a little, but it’s fine.”

Elias stroked her cheek. He killed Bozo way too easily and now as he looked at his wife, he wished he’d taken his time. That son of a bitch had sent an amateur to shoot his wife. He should have died even more painfully.

“There’s actually something I want to talk to you about,”

Winnie said.

“What is it?”

“I want to help.”

“Help?”

“I was talking to Dr. Mansell and I want to help you bring Bozo out,”

she said.

“If there is anything I can do—”

“Stop, Winnie. You don’t need to worry.”

“But I—”

“Bozo is dead,”

Elias said.

“He’s not going to hurt anyone. I found out where he was hiding and I took care of it.”

“Oh,”

Winnie said.

“He was never a threat to you.”

“He wasn’t?”

“No, Winnie. I promised you I wouldn’t let anything happen to you, and this is me keeping that promise.”

He looked into her brown eyes. What had started out as him simply protecting this woman had turned into something so much more. Elias knew he should let her go. Let her find a man her own age, who didn’t have enemies waiting to take him out. But he also knew there was no one else out there that would be able to keep her safe. Only he was able to do that.

Also, he wasn’t exactly a nice man, and had a reputation for being a bastard. When it came to Winnie, he tended to be selfish. Whatever she wanted, she could have.

“I love you,”

Winnie said.

Elias stood frozen. “What?”

“I ... I just wanted to tell you I love you, and I love being your wife, and one day, I hope we can have kids and perhaps a dog,”

she said, pressing her lips together.

“You want a dog?”

“Maybe a couple of dogs. Perhaps some cats, but you know, bunnies as well. They’re cute.”

“You love me?”

Elias said.

“Yeah, I love you, and I’m kind of crazy about you. I don’t ... I can’t stand the thought of anything happening to you, Elias. I know you married me out of convenience and felt sorry for me.”

He silenced her with a kiss. His wife loved him. His wife fucking loved him. He was on cloud fucking nine.

“That was then, baby,”

Elias said. He cupped her face.

“Look into my eyes. I love you, Winnie. I have never loved anyone or anything the way I love you. Nothing can ever happen to you. My whole day rides on seeing you, on being near you. Whether it is seeing your sweet smile, or just being with you. I love you.”

“You do?”

“Yeah, I do. I want to have kids with you, and I have a couple of dogs I think you’re going to like.”

He took hold of her hand and led her out toward the main corridor.

“I didn’t know if you would be happy that they’re fully grown.”

He let out the two dogs from the back of the garage, and they had been starving. He fed them, watered them, let them have a good run, and then allowed them in the back of his car. They were good Doberman dogs, and he never thought he would love them, but he did.

“Wow,”

Winnie said.

The two dogs stood to attention and moved toward him. He stroked behind their ears, and Winnie sunk to her knees and fussed over both dogs.

“They’re amazing,”

she said, and that laughter was sweet music to his ears.

There was nothing he wouldn’t do for his woman.

Whatever she wanted would be hers.

Ten Years Later

“Tell me again why I have to wear this thing?”

Elias asked, looking down at the garish Christmas sweater his wife insisted he wear. His had a reindeer on the center, with pom-poms of white balls all around it. There was no way anyone in the world would take him seriously.

He should have known this was coming. Ten years ago, his wife had started this tradition. Each year, she purchased sweaters for him, as well as their children, and they would have to wear them and get their picture taken. The sweaters always had a garish design on them, but his wife loved to do it.

“Come on, Dad, you look hot,”

his son Elliot said. Ten years old with a smart mouth and way too much wit about him.

“I like it. I look like a princess, don’t I, Daddy?”

That was his little girl, Bernice.

And then, he looked toward his youngest son, Simon, who kept pulling at the sweater with a sneer on his face.

“It looks ugly,”

Simon said.

Elliot laughed.

Elias looked at his kids.

Their four dogs were snuggled together at the fireplace. Along with their very old Dobermans, they had a Jack Russell and a cocker spaniel. Again, he didn't know how he ended up with four dogs.

Winnie came out of the kitchen with her camera and a big smile on her face. Also, she was a little red-faced, and one of her hands went to her swollen stomach.

“Are you all right, baby?” he asked.

“Yeah, yeah, our second princess is going to be into soccer. Her kick is the stuff of legends.”

He couldn't help but smile. From the moment he got his wife pregnant, it was one of their many favorite hobbies. He loved getting her pregnant. He loved watching her flourish and glow. She was stunning. Also, his wife was an amazing mother. Loving, supportive, and everything he knew she would be.

Fourteen years ago, he met his wife, as she fought against being raped. He killed all those responsible, took her as his wife, and at the time it had felt like the craziest, stupidest decision he could have ever made.

Instead, it was the best thing he ever did.

The End

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:44 am

Every morning without fail, Isaac Flynn stood within the compound of his mechanic shop and watched as Lucy Rue approached. The young woman was only twenty-four years old, but slowly and surely, she'd been driving him crazy for weeks, if not months.

He couldn't remember the exact moment he started to pay attention to her. It might be the dresses she wore, or the way she wore her hair, or maybe it was even the makeup, which was strange. He'd never been a guy who cared if a woman wore makeup.

Lucy always looked amazing. She rarely wore too much makeup. She was stunning.

From what he knew, she worked at the local care home and was loved by pretty much everyone within the small town of Saint Falls.

Being the local mechanic, he was the guy everyone knew, the good guy they could count on, and he loved his place within the town. It had taken him a long time to get accepted.

Many years ago, he'd bought this old place in the hope of setting it up for retirement. He'd been into some bad shit, but that time was long gone. He took care of all loose ends, walked away from the life, came here, and settled down. Nothing bad had happened in over ten years. Not that anything bad would happen.

A long time ago, when his father was still alive, he'd been a mechanic. All it had taken were a few classes to remind him, and since then, he'd been working on cars, trucks, and bikes.

None of the townsfolk knew who he was. They didn't need to know.

He saw Lucy approaching, and like every other day throughout the week, she stopped at the gate.

"Hey, Flynn," she said.

Never did she call him Isaac.

"You all right, Lucy?" he asked.

"Yeah, I'm doing okay. You know how it is."

Now, this was new, as she stepped up toward him. She rarely came into his shop. Lucy didn't own a car, and because it was a small town, she tended to walk everywhere, or catch the bus. Like him, she didn't have anyone. Her parents had died because of a drunk driver when she was eighteen, and that was six years ago, leaving Lucy all alone in the town.

"Yeah, I know how it is."

Since then, he had become aware of a few people attempting to take advantage. Lucy was not wealthy by any means, but the house her parents had spent their lives in was now hers, and it was fully paid for. After buying the house, they had a small fund saved up, and from what he knew, it all went to Lucy. The funeral didn't put a dent in the funds. For all intents and purposes, Lucy was fairly well-off, although she never showed it.

"What are you working on today?"

Lucy asked.

She wore another dress today. This one seemed to be crossed over the breasts, and her tits looked absolutely glorious in it. It then molded to her waist, before flaring out at the hip, and falling down her body, toward her ankles. She wore a pair of heels, but again, they were not too large or too small. The dress had large flowers printed all over it, and it just seemed to match her smile.

“Just a few cars. You know how it is. They don’t take care of the car, and it breaks down. You’ve got to learn to give your car a little TLC.”

The smile on her face seemed to widen.

“You really do love your cars, don’t you?”

“I’m a mechanic, it kind of comes with the title.”

“So very true.”

“Are you not working today?” he asked.

She glanced down at her dress and shrugged.

“Yeah, I am, but seeing as I change every time I go into work, I don’t see a reason why I shouldn’t wear what I want.”

“You have a uniform.”

“Yep.”

“Tell me, Lucy, do you love working at the care home?”

“It’s ... I love it. What I don’t love is that I make so many amazing friends, and I lose them.”

He hated the cloud that landed over her face. Isaac also saw her eyes glaze over. She looked down at the ground, and he watched her hand clench seconds before she finally looked up.

“Anyway, I better go,”

she said.

“Don’t work too hard.”

“Nor you.”

She made her way toward the gate, and she had already broken the protocol they seemed to have.

Lucy stopped and turned toward him.

“What about a drink after work?”

she asked.

“You’re asking me out?” he asked.

She nodded her head and then shook it.

“Not if you don’t want to go.”

“It’s a date, Lucy,” he said.

Her smile seemed to widen, if not brighten just a little.

“Thank you,”

Lucy said.

“You do know that I am older than you, don’t you?”

“Does that bother you?”

she asked.

“No.”

“Good, because it doesn’t bother me either. Bye, Flynn.”

And with that, she walked out of the gate and he saw the little spring in her step. Every part of his sensible brain was telling him he shouldn’t turn up. Lucy was off limits. She was too young, and she deserved someone her own age, at least that was what he kept trying to tell himself.

Another part of his brain didn’t like the idea of her being with anyone but him. He couldn’t stand the thought of another man even looking in her direction. There was no way he was going to be able to cope with anyone else dating her.

They’d been doing this little dance for well over a year now. There was no one else good enough for Lucy. He was the only one capable of taking care of her.

“And what did he say?”

“Marge, will you stop?”

Lucy asked.

“What? I’m the one who encouraged you to stop waiting outside of the gate. What does a lady have to do to get an update?”

Marge was one of her favorite people in the world. For the last six years that she had been working in the local care home, taking care of patients, or clients, during the end of their lives. There were a lot of different people who lived in the care home. Most of them wanted to go about their own lives. Lucy cleaned for them, kept them company, and in all honesty, was just a friend to all. She had applied for the job a week after losing her parents. It had been a trying time for her.

Many of the patients had unfortunately passed since she arrived. Marge and Harry were two that were still alive. Harry was currently sleeping, though. He had a thick book pressed against his chest, and he looked completely out of it. As for Marge, Lucy had thrown a blanket over her lap, as the cold was starting to get to her, although it was the height of summer.

“We’re going out for drinks tonight,”

Lucy said.

“There, is that what you wanted to know?”

“Drinks? This is amazing news. Will you have time to go home and change? Update your makeup? Curl your hair?”

Lucy laughed.

“Will you stop?”

“Nope, I am not stopping until I know you’re happily married with a baby on the way.”

“A baby?”

Harry asked, yawning.

“Don’t be nosy, you,”

Marge said.

“Me, nosy. You’re the one who’s butting into the kid’s life. If I was twenty years younger, Lucy, I’d take care of you.”

She couldn’t help but blush. Harry had always been a sweet man. He had told her on many occasions that if a man can’t treat her right, then it was no good keeping him around. There might have also been a couple of choice words along the way about what a real man is all about.

She loved both of these people. They made her feel like she was part of their family. Although Marge and Harry’s kids barely visited. They didn’t even make time for a phone call. Lucy made sure to take care of them.

“I know you would, Harry.”

“But, you’re not twenty years younger, Harry, and besides, you’d need to be closer to forty years younger to have a chance. Now, come on, we all know that mechanic fella is a pretty good guy. He fixed our bus up really good and didn’t charge us a fortune for it.”

Harry grumbled, then went back to reading his book. Marge did not look entertained.

But what Lucy also saw was that her friend looked tired.

“I think it is time for you to rest.”

Marge didn't argue with her. She unclicked the lock from the wheelchair and started to take her toward her bedroom. Once she had Marge settled, she did a quick spot of cleaning, then began to do additional work. She moved from room to room, picking up the laundry, stopping to chat with each resident, and then carrying on.

Her job was to work, but to also be friendly, to keep everyone happy. When she arrived here at eighteen, she didn't have the first clue what to do, and Marge had taken her under her wing and helped her out.

The woman that had the job before her and been there over ten years, but left after someone had passed, and it became too much to bear. Lucy got it. She had lost a lot of people, but she kept coming back, because it was important.

"You know Marge is getting tired quickly,"

Harry said when she arrived at the main living area and started to clean it up.

"I know."

"She just wants to see you happy, kid. We all do."

He groaned as he got to his feet.

"We all see that you have a good heart, and none of us want to leave without knowing you're going to be okay."

He moved toward her, placed a hand on her cheek, gave her a smile, and then he left. They were her family, in their own way. She knew they wanted her to settle down, and she got it.

Lucy thought about Isaac Flynn. She started calling him by his last name because he had called her Rue once, and it kind of stuck. She'd been in a bad mood, and he'd

shouted “Rue,”

making her stop. At which point, she called him Flynn, and that was that.

Now, she made sure she walked past the mechanic shop every chance she got. He was often working on cars, or bikes, or the occasional truck. She was the one who asked him if he’d take a look at the bus for their rare trips.

Everyone here loved him. He fixed their bus, and all the trips that had been put on hold came back in full force. He only took minimal payment as well, which was a shock. When they first got the quote for the bus, it had been more than they could have afforded.

She knew he was a good guy, and the way he took care of them all melted her heart. He was a true gentleman, and the truth was, for nearly six years and maybe even a bit longer, she’d had a crush on him. He arrived in town when she was fourteen, and she knew a lot of women were curious about him. Sure, people had their doubts, but slowly and surely he earned his place. Lucy would walk home from school, keeping a careful distance away so he never saw her, but she’d look at him, and yes, her crush had been cemented in her young heart. Now, it was at a fever pitch, and Marge had been encouraging her to ask him out for years.

She just couldn’t believe she had finally done it.

End of sample chapter