



Three Wickedly Bad Neighbors and a Very Grumpy Girl (Three Guys and a Girl Volume 2, #8)

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Category: Romance

Description: Oh my gosh.

The three most obnoxious, unbearable, infuriating men to ever roam the earth now live next door to me. And all these ex-Marines want to do is party. On a Sunday night.

Well, not on my watch. I'm starting a brand-new job on Monday, and I need to bring my A-game, which means I need sleep. Also, our neighborhood has strict rules: no loud music after 9 p.m.

I'm a stickler for rules, so I plan to handle this myself, by any means necessary.

They're as hot as they are stubborn, but they haven't met a bigger killjoy and party-pooper than me.

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? Chapter One

A very

O kay, so I messed up , but I can get back on track. I inhale deeply and try to center myself. I'm a stickler for structure. If I deviate from my daily itinerary, everything will fall apart. There's no in-between.

Mondays are grocery shopping and food prep days.

Tuesdays are gym days. Wednesdays are car wash days.

Thursday evenings, I do volunteer work at the homeless shelter.

Friday nights, I have dinner with my best friend, Veronica Harold.

Saturdays are house-cleaning days, and Sundays are gardening days.

Rinse. Repeat. Yes, my entire life is built around rules and routines. It always has been and always will be.

Except today, which is Sunday. My mind snapped, and I did all of my week's chores in one day.

I gardened, washed my car, grocery shopped and prepped meals, worked out, took a shift at the homeless shelter, and met Veronica for a quick coffee—which will count as our Friday dinner date since we ate cake as well.

I even cleaned my entire house from top to bottom again, so now everything gleams, from the chandeliers hanging from the ceilings to the spoons in the drawers.

I also, among other things, did my taxes in advance, decluttered my phone and laptop of unnecessary apps and photos, updated my calendar, restocked my stationery drawer, and replaced the light in my bathroom, which, by my calculation, was going to go out in one day and thirteen hours.

Why did I do all my chores like a maniac in one day? I start a brand-new job tomorrow morning, and apparently, I'm stress chore-ing. This has never happened to me before. But then again, I've never had so much riding on just one job.

Still, all is fine. Everything is going to be perfect.

I nod into my affirmations as I light a candle and inhale the subtle scent of jasmine that slowly perfumes the air.

This just means I can regain my balance with a clear mind and be in even better shape for my first day.

All I need to do now is acquire ultra-zen.

I'm suitably exhausted from everything I did today, which will help me fall asleep faster, ensuring a full night of slumber so I can wake up grounded, composed, confident, and as sharp as the heel on the stiletto I'll be wearing tomorrow.

I've decided this job will be the one I retire from, my be-all and end-all.

I mean, I didn't make it through a series of six meetings, going up against the industry's best—who have more experience than me—if I wasn't made for this position.

It's going to be enormously demanding. I will barely have time to myself, and there's no room for error. Yep. I was born for this job.

Right. It's 9 p.m. If I start winding down right now, I can be in bed by 10 p.m., fall asleep by 10:30 p.m., and wake up at 6:30 a.m., which is my natural waking time. Perfect.

I do some stretches to work out the kinks from the heavy-duty cleaning I did today, then I fill the tub, adding a couple of bath bombs to the water.

While that's going, I strip off my clothes and hop into the shower for a scrub that makes my skin tingle.

The instant I step into the bathtub and lower myself into the delicious, silky bubbles, I sigh and begin aligning my thoughts.

I was meant to have one more interview where I would meet my possible future billionaire boss, but I got the call this morning that they're hiring me anyway and can I please start on Monday?

I would have preferred to meet the man I'll be working for first; protocol is very important to me, but in this case, I let it slide.

I know I'm going to knock the socks off my billionaire boss despite not meeting him yet.

No one can run someone else's life better than I can.

I've been doing it since I was five years old, actually.

My parents loved me, but they invented the term scatterbrain.

They were treasure hunters—not real career-level treasure hunters, but hobby treasure hunters.

No one can fault their dedication to their avocation, that's for sure.

They divorced when I was twelve, citing irreconcilable differences, which actually meant they got bored of each other after twelve years of marriage.

They're still out there in the world somewhere, seeking secret troves, but with different partners now. The nomadic lifestyle, plus being shuffled between my parents, didn't suit my personality, so when I reached the age of eighteen, I broke away. I don't think either of them noticed much.

I put myself through college and earned a degree in business and communications while I worked part-time for a cranky old rich woman, organizing her life for her.

Unfortunately, or rather fortunately, I hadn't outgrown my need to organize people's lives for them, which explains why I excel at being a personal assistant.

Getting the job at Obsidia Tech is a massive upgrade from working as the PA for a family-owned dry-cleaning company I worked at before which is now closing down, but I'm the ideal person for the role thanks to my parents.

Without me, they'd have set three houses on fire, gotten us eaten by bears, suffered cholesterol problems if they continued eating the way they did, and walked straight off a cliff after following some cockamamie map they got from god knows where, looking for treasure.

I still send them money every month and pay for their private health insurance. At least I know they'll be fed and receive medical attention when needed.

I brush aside all thoughts about my parents and slip into bed, my skin oiled and then nourished with a rich moisturizer.

I settle back against the cool silk sheets, then smooth down the covers on either side of me into place.

There's nothing on my mind, I tell myself.

I've ticked everything off my to-do list, plus I ordered birthday presents for the next six months, and I even have my cart for Christmas shopping started, despite the holidays being five months away.

I close my eyes, breathe deeply in and out, and then count to twenty.

I should fall asleep instantly, given how tired I am.

I also haven't looked at a screen in the last two hours or so, so no blue light, which means zero dopamine.

I should be reaching peak serenity right about now, and then I'll fall right into a tranquil slumber.

My body relaxes. My breathing evens out. I force sheer peace to envelop me. My universe welcomes these eight hours of high-quality sleep just like it welcomes my new job. My thoughts float... hmm...

One hour goes by, and I'm still awake. Dammit. I think I may have drifted off somewhat. I'm sure I did. But then...

It doesn't happen all at once. A few voices here and there. Then it gets louder. Female laughter fills my ears. Then boom. I shoot up straight from my bed at the sound of heavy music thundering through the walls of my house. No, I'm not dreaming.

It's coming from outside. I glance at the time. It's 11:30 p.m. I may have been asleep for about thirty minutes. The people are noisier now, more boisterous, trying to be heard over the pounding music.

We have rules in this neighborhood—excellent rules—that everyone abides by.

Since I live in a village with more retirees than not, rule number one is no loud music after nine at night, and if you don't like it, you can leave. And most people do leave. Not me. I've lived here for six months so far, and I love it.

But seriously? On the one night when all I ask for is peace and quiet so I can nail my first day at my new job tomorrow, I get the direct opposite.

I peer out the window. The raucous is coming from the house next door.

I stick my head out further, and a stream of people are just having a freaking jamboree in the backyard.

Except, plot twist: the house next door has been empty for as long as I've lived here.

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? Chapter Two

A very

What in the trespassing heck is going on next door?

I met the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose—such a lovely couple, by the way—on the day I moved in, and they moved out.

They seemed very attached to each other, finishing each other's sentences and holding hands at every opportunity, which I guess is impressive after fifty years of marriage.

But what do I know? I don't have a romantic bone in my body, and I like it that way.

Apparently, they were leaving to replicate the first year of their marriage when they traveled across Europe with no clear destination in mind. They were so in love that it didn't matter.

If I were the romantic type, I would have oohed and ahed, but all I could think about were the logistics of their endeavor. Nothing is the same after fifty years, and they're now well into their seventies.

I cautiously asked about their itinerary, expecting a detailed plan, only to learn that they had no such thing, as it would defeat the entire purpose of replicating the trip.

I also tentatively inquired if someone else would be traveling with them. Nope. They were going to camp out under the stars or sleep in their RV, going wherever the road took them.

If I say my anxiety turned up a notch, I'd be putting it mildly. The thought of not knowing when, why, or what to do next is enough to give me hives. Did I mention they're in their seventies? What if something happens to them?

I, on the other hand, could have provided them with laminated itineraries, meticulously plotting their trip down to the last minute. It would have been perfect. But no, I can't go around arranging other people's lives unless they hire me to do so. I've learned that the hard way.

I managed to keep my impending system failure in check in front of the Ambroses and insisted they put me in their phone and take my card, urging them to call me day or night if they needed any kind of assistance.

I check in with them—just friendly hellos to make sure they're still alive.

They send me silly photos of the two of them, and then I send care packages with practical items I can think of: Band-Aids, sunscreen, a bottle of Vitamin D, and teas for constipation.

Hey, you never know. Anyway, it makes me feel better, but I still shudder at their impulsiveness.

Right, back to business. The Ambroses mentioned they might let their home out for short spells, but to date, their house has remained empty.

If new tenants were moving in, it would have been announced in our local online social group.

The woman who runs it is also the mayor of Bluey Lane and a real estate agent.

Mayor Shelly Burns shares everything in the group chat—even when her dog has a favorable bowel movement—so this would have been massive news if there were newcomers moving in next door.

All that means is a bunch of wayward teenagers are throwing a party at the Ambroses' beautiful Cape Cod-style home. Don't they know trespassers will be prosecuted? This is private property, and they have no right to just drop in, and for all I know, vandalize the place too.

I debate calling the police. I don't want to be that much of a terror just yet, so I opt to handle the situation myself. It's fine.

I'll tell them to leave, or I'll involve the police.

They'll leave, and I'll recreate my ultra-tranquil night.

I'm excellent at damage control, of course.

Plus, I need to sleep, or I won't be able to function well at my new job.

I slip my feet into a pair of fluffy slippers with cute little kitten heels and toss a thick white terry cloth robe over my silk nightie.

As I make my way next door, I draw up my most serious, no-nonsense expression.

I plan to wag my finger at these teens while delivering a stern lecture about

respecting other people's property.

I'll also ask if they really want a record on their names before they even get started in life. I think not.

Veronica, my best friend, says I have a natural resting bitch face. I don't know what she means by that; it's just my normal face. But she proved her point once.

She took me to a bar, and not one guy hit on me. They hit on Veronica while I sat next to her, but not a single one asked to buy me a drink or for my number.

Her analysis at the end of the night? I ward off guys within a one-mile radius with my ice-maiden grump face.

I love Veronica. We met when we were ten years old, and even though I didn't stay in one place for long, we've always kept in touch, so she probably knows me best. I call that a superpower.

I'm not interested in anyone anyway. Men and dating are just not my thing right now.

My sole focus—let me emphasize that—my sole focus is my career.

Getting this job at Obsidia Tech is everything, and nothing else matters.

I cross into the Ambroses' front garden and go around to the back to the entertainment area, which has been modernized with a giant pool.

Okay, find the unsubs and send them on their merry way.

Easy. Except, if I thought I would find drunken teenagers, I'm wrong.

The people at this party are clearly adults.

And I might add, the kind of adults who fit the golden ratio.

My gosh. How can all the most beautiful people in the world be gathered in the backyard of Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose's house?

Just as well I have no issue being on the average-looking side of the world, or I'd have an existential crisis right now, surrounded by a catwalk of beautiful people.

I didn't miss being invited to parties at school anyway, where every girl could be a cheerleader if they weren't already, and every guy had the ability to win medals in all sorts of sports and model designer underwear in commercials.

Yeah, I choose books over drooling over guys in boxer briefs. No regrets.

The music is so loud that I basically scream my words as I begin my investigation into the identity of the instigators.

"Hello, hi!" I shout at a tall, leggy model in a skimpy dress whose skin gleams like diamonds under the powerful fluorescent lights.

"Can you point me in the direction of the ringleader hosting this party, please?" I really wanted to ask who the hoodlum throwing this illegal rager is. Yes, I'm familiar with the term rager.

"What?" she shouts back, leaning closer. I repeat my words verbatim.

"Oh, the guys? You're going to love them," she says, her smile so perfect that even her teeth shimmer in response.

And nope. I'm not going to love them.

At this moment, I loathe them because I should be in bed, replenishing myself for a big, big day tomorrow, not breaking up a couple of house crashers.

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? Chapter Three

A very

“T here’s Gray Wallace over there,” the supermodel says.

I follow her perfectly manicured nail and nearly jump out of my skin as I take in Gray.

The man is shirtless and performing some crazy feats with his body, like one-arm push-ups and those planche things where he holds his whole body up parallel to the floor.

For a moment, I forget to breathe—not because his body is razor sleek and pumped with an extraordinary amount of muscle, his skin glossy and exuding prime health, but because he is defying gravity with nothing more than the tips of his fingers while the rest of his body rests midair.

The tips of his fingers.

Oh my gosh. Does he want to break his fingers and his wrists, possibly also his shoulders and his nose if he face-plants, just to show off for the women standing around him and visibly swooning?

He's now doing a one-arm handstand, and he can just as well one-arm handstand himself right off this private property, with his groupies following. He lowers himself and springs upright onto his bare feet, barely out of breath.

My gaze clashes with his eight-pack abs, then moves further up to his thick, corded neck, flanked on either side by broad shoulders.

By the time I reach his face, I conclude his visage is as ridiculous as his body. A sharp, chiseled jawline, specked with a well-ignored five o'clock shadow, supports full lips that seem to be in a perpetual grin tinged with lazy arrogance.

His dark, tousled hair is in need of a cut, but his eyebrows and the thickness of his eyelashes gleam as silkily as the waves on his head.

When he turns his hazel-colored eyes my way and winks at the supermodel next to me, she giggles.

I don't even bother rolling my eyes. She could do so much better.

I tuck two fingers into the collar of my robe, pulled high around my throat. Why is it suddenly hot?

I'm just about to march over to him when the supermodel leans down and shouts in my ear again.

"And also Sullivan Crawford, over there, in the kitchen."

Okay, so there are two of them. From where I'm standing, through the open sliding doors, I have a clear view into the kitchen, which has been upgraded with modern appliances and glossy white finishes.

And of course, another shirtless guy. Sullivan is as tall as Gray, well over six feet.

If I had to guess, I'd say they're both six-three.

A lock of dark hair hangs over his forehead, matching the layer of stubble on his structured jawline.

Under the bright fluorescent light, his thick eyelashes are so long they cast shadows on his sculpted cheekbones.

Glimpses of his eight-pack abs dip into his jeans, hung low on his tapered waist. The rest of his abs are concealed by a dish towel draped over one of his insanely broad shoulders.

He's using two fingers to massage the center of a juicy orange, and the women around him are losing their minds.

Hmm, why? He's just making a mess, if you ask me.

Now he's whipping cream by hand with lightning speed before dipping his finger into the fluffy cloud and slowly sucking the cream off.

I have no idea why everyone around him is giggling and sighing when all he did was taste his concoction.

By the way his silky brows draw together, he's decided the cream needs a sprinkling of sugar.

He performs some crazy knife tricks, and within seconds, he's finely chopped a tray of strawberries and pecans, turns to flambé something in a pan, and then spins a dessert bowl on the tip of his finger. Okay, then.

Just like with Gray, his gaze lands on mine and the supermodel's direction, and I catch a glimpse of his midnight blue eyes as he offers her a smile that apparently makes her weak, causing her to balance on me. Gosh, these guys give new meaning to showing off. And no, I'm not impressed.

Also, I don't know what he's on about, but I don't think food should be played with like that. It's... sinful. I fiddle with my gown again. It's very hot. No wonder everyone is shirtless or dressed in barely-there garments.

"Thank you. Now please excuse me while I go and take care of these—"

"And also, Porter Robertson," the supermodel says, catching my arm again before I march away.

"What?"

"Porter, the third ringleader," she says, smiling and pointing to another man. "They're a trio. And the hottest guys you're ever going to see," she adds.

A trio? There are three of them? Well, no wonder. Everything bad comes in threes, so I shouldn't be surprised. My gaze falls on Porter Robertson.

But my god, why is it so very, very, very hot in here? I'm too young for this to be a menopausal hot flush.

Number three is currently solving a Rubik's cube with utter speed while blindfolded.

My gaze remains fixed on his hands as he deftly spins the cubes.

His fingers are long, strong, and anything but pampered and manicured.

A valley of strong veins adorns the back of his hands and travels into his forearms, visible from his rolled-up shirt.

At least this one is wearing a shirt, although the buttons aren't tied, and shocker, his abdomen is filled with four layers of brick-like muscles, so he is barely wearing a shirt. Clearly, they have an aversion to being properly clothed.

Like Gray and Sullivan, Porter is just as tall. His dark hair, though, is cut short and close to his scalp, and with the blindfold covering his eyes, all I can see is the structured slant of his jaw, his full lips, and the scar that runs over his chin.

Seconds have gone by since someone blindfolded him, and now he's tossing the completed cube to red-haired man with a drink in his hand, and everyone cheers.

But it doesn't end there. The same man throws an ax at Porter, and I forget to breathe when Porter catches the ax by the handle and tosses it at a dartboard; the edge of the blade lands right in the middle—bullseye.

More cheers erupt, but Porter is unfazed and barely smiles.

He rips off the blindfold, and I'm met with gray-colored hunter eyes that immediately land on the supermodel beside me.

Go figure. His thick dark brows fall to the center of his forehead as his gaze rakes her up and down, and she nearly passes out.

I don't think the supermodel can stand all the attention from these three bozos.

If there were only one culprit, I could confront him directly, but there are three, and they are all scattered, doing stunts that the people around them clearly think are impressive. Not me. I don't think house crashers are impressive at all.

My best option is a chair. I'm just about to commandeer my stage when the supermodel stops me.

“Oh, you have to tell me where you got your slippers. They're freaking amazing.”

“It's vintage,” I say before I climb onto said chair and clap my hands. That doesn't work, so I place my fingers between my lips and whistle, long and piercing. That gets their attention.

“Would the reprobates Gray Wallace, Sullivan Crawford, and Porter Robertson please come forward?”

? Chapter Four

G ray

There's a strange, tiny woman in a robe, standing on a chair in the middle of our party with her hands on her hips. She just whistled to silence everyone and then yelled at us to come to the front. This is a first for us.

Sullivan Crawford and Porter Robertson, my friends and Marine brothers, slide in next to me. We exchange glances, and by the looks on our faces, none of us know her but we noticed her as soon as she entered our domain.

Trust us, if one of us had taken her to bed, we would remember every detail.

From her long, midnight-black hair shimmering like forbidden treasure under the moonlight to her full, lush lips and delicate jawline.

Her perfect body is currently swathed in a thick robe, which fails to hide her tiny waist, where she has angrily tied the belt a tad too tight, down to her angelic, pink-painted toenails peeking out from her shoes, which have feathers on them.

We might not be able to see the color of her eyes or what she would feel like in our arms from this distance, but yeah, from everything else, we would have remembered

her—and possibly never let her go.

Whoa, where the fuck did that thought come from?

Erase. Erase. Erase. But who is this firecracker?

Certainly not what we expected coming back to civilization after ten years in the Marines, the last three of which were spent deep undercover.

She makes it sound like we're in trouble, so of course, Benny Carter, our friend and self-designated wingman and DJ, shuts the music down.

This whole party is Benny's idea. We wanted to chill. He wanted to book a penthouse and throw the craziest welcome-back party. We said no, so he just brought the party here at 11:00 p.m. Turns out it was nice to see our friends. Maybe this was a good thing after all.

We've known Benny since school, and even though Sullivan, Porter, and I went off to the military while Benny took over his father's law practice and became a bona fide bachelor with only one aim—to get laid—we're still close.

When Benny heard we were coming back for good and taking up positions in society, he decided we needed to get laid.

Multiple times. Which explains the entourage of beautiful women he also brought with him.

Since it's been three years since we last had a woman, according to Benny, we have lost time to make up.

Integrating back into society at this level was not what we thought we'd be doing at

thirty-two. After all the shit and messed-up things we've seen around the world, we figured we'd retire from service in a couple of years and become recluses in a cabin in the woods somewhere.

Porter always wanted to write a book, Sullivan just wants to cook in peace, and me? I just want to do nothing until my mind is clear of everything we've seen. Instead, there's no cabin in the woods in our future.

We're honor-bound to take up our family reins, whether we like it or not. We don't like it, but when we're this loyal to our family, "no" is not an option. We've been trained to fit into any situation, so this should be no different. That's what we keep telling ourselves.

"You know her?" Benny asks as he sidles up to us. We don't get a chance to answer before she speaks again.

"You three," she says in a no-nonsense tone, waving her finger at us before doing a curling motion, summoning us to her throne—a chair. Bossy much?

"I don't have all night," she scolds, and when we don't comply, she continues, "Fine. My name is Avery Stephens. I live next door, and this house belongs to a sweet old couple, Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose, which makes it private property. Therefore, all you people are trespassing. I suggest you skedaddle before I call the cops. I'll give you twenty minutes to clear out. Consider this a friendly warning."

Avery Stephens?

Sullivan, Porter, and I exchange looks again. So this is Avery? Okay then.

And oh, she thinks we're trespassing. Interesting.

“Hmm... ma’am, we own this property. Now please kindly get off our furniture,” I say, lacking conviction. It’s the grin on my face that makes me less intimidating when I want to be.

“You do not own this property. That’s a lie. I know the owners. They’re on a trip across Europe to relive their first year together. You three are not allowed to be here. Please get off the property.”

“Ms. Stephens, is it?” Benny starts using his lawyer voice, ready to slip in and annihilate our opposition.

“We got this, Benny,” Porter says as he walks up to the girl in the robe, places his hands on her waist, lifts her off the chair, and sets her on her feet.

“Do you mind? You’re scaring our guests,” Porter says. Of the three of us, Porter is the most serious and has the driest humor.

“Guests?” she shrieks, stumbling a little when Porter releases her. She recovers quickly, slapping his helping hand away before cinching her waist tighter with another knot in her belt.

“They’re not guests. They’re house crashers. It’s literally a crime.”

“Again, we own this property,” Sullivan says, grinning.

“Oh, you must really think I’m gullible. Do I look stupid to you?”

“No, a little grumpy, maybe. Hey, stay, have a drink. You look like you could loosen up a little.” I can’t help myself. Getting her even more riled up just makes her even more fucking gorgeous.

“I do not need loosening up,” she says, clearly affronted, as if I had just told her puppy was ugly. “I have a very big day tomorrow and I need to get some sleep.”

“Oh, yeah. What’s going on?” I ask cocky as ever.

“That is none of your business.”

“Well, we have a big day tomorrow as well, that’s why we’re having a party tonight,” Sullivan says.

“Do you have no consideration for the elderly people who live around here?”

“You mean Mr. Williams and Aunt Maggie? Trust me, they don’t mind the noise at all. You really should stay; it’s a neighborhood party, and everyone is invited.”

Her eyes, up close, are golden orbs flanked with thick dark eyelashes that widen at the sight of her octogenarian neighbors having shots with a bunch of girls.

“Oh my god. They’re on blood pressure medication, you idiots,” she yells, then makes her way over to them and drags them out against their will.

They didn’t tell us that.

“This isn’t over,” she calls over her shoulder, struggling to hold on to an elderly person on either side of her.

“Are you going to call the cops?” Sullivan shouts. “Because we’re going to party all night, straight into Sunday afternoon.”

“You think I can’t get you to leave on my own? You don’t know who you’re going up against, buddies,” she says.

“We would absolutely love to see you try,” I say, knowing for a fact Sullivan and Porter are thinking the exact same thing.

She huffs her way out, but fuck if those weren’t the truest words we’ve spoken. Actually, we can’t fucking wait to see what she comes up with next. And why the hell does the thought of seeing her again make our cocks hard?

Just how fucked are we?

? Chapter Five

A very

What in the world? I've just met three of the most arrogant, obnoxious, egotistical male specimens of my life, all at once.

I say that after being in their company for less than ten minutes.

I finally get Mr. Williams and Aunt Maggie tucked into their respective beds in their respective houses, and the music is back up again.

Ugh! Insufferable.

Did they really think I was gullible enough to believe they owned the house? The sheer arrogance. Their guests—more like their fellow bandits—might believe them, but I know a scoundrel when I see one, and I saw three.

I glare out the window and curse them again. I'm never going to get any shut-eye. I'd have to be dead to sleep with all this noise. And if I don't, I'm going to look like a raccoon on my first day. Ugh.

I should call the cops. But that's what they're expecting, and for some warped reason,

I don't want them to think I'm a cop-out. No, now is not the time for puns. Yes, I want to prove to a gym bro, a lascivious chef, and a Rubik's Cube psychopath that I can handle them on my own.

But maybe the party will fizzle out on its own if I wait a bit. Ten minutes later, the music seems louder, and the voices are more boisterous, as if they're goading me, mocking me.

I close my eyes and breathe deeply. I can fix this. But how?

I nearly jump out of my skin when a bolt of lightning flashes across the sky, followed by a crack of thunder before a summer storm lashes the earth. Well, that was unexpected. I check the weather every day, and there was no sign of rain. But, oh. This is good. This is excellent.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

I race to the window and see everyone scrambling inside. They're probably just going to wait out the rain in silence and then call cabs, or be picked up, or have designated non-drinking drivers get their friends home. The party is a bust. Thank...

Except no. The party is still going on, but inside the house now. With the sliding doors wide open, I can still hear the blaring music, which seems louder—if that's even possible.

I'm never going to get any sleep. They said they were going to party all night, and now I believe them.

I get into my bed anyway and cover my face with my pillow before I throw it aside, stifling my pent-up scream.

But then I sit up straight as a full-fledged plan takes hold of me.

Oh, it's so diabolical I'm wondering if I should question my mental health. But tough times call for rough measures.

I rummage through my closet and find the skimpiest dress I own. Okay, it's a shift dress that reaches above my knees, is sleeveless, and has a lowish neckline. It'll just have to do. Besides, I'll be showing just enough skin to pull off my plan.

I slip into the dress, then rummage through my miscellaneous drawer and pull out the edible paint kit I got at a bachelorette party for one of my co-workers at the dry-cleaning company.

Twenty minutes later, I admire my handiwork in the mirror. This looks better than I expected.

Next, I apply some makeup and ruffle my hair, so it hangs down my back in big, loose waves. I slip on a pair of red stilettos, then carefully shrug into a big, loose-fitting polyester coat. I give myself a once-over in the mirror. Perfect.

What am I doing? I picked a fight with a couple of vagabonds having a party on private property; that's what I'm doing.

I really should call the cops and be done with it. But no, I don't want them to think I'm weak.

"Why? Avery?" I ask aloud. Why does it matter what three strange men—handsome criminals, to be sure—think of me? Why do I care? I don't freaking know, but I'm ready to go to war with them anyway.

I snatch my umbrella from the cabinet, and I'm just about to leave when I remember

something. I rush back to my bedroom, retrieve a white box from my closet, and then I'm back outside, clutching the box and sprinting next door, my umbrella keeping me completely dry.

Gosh, there seem to be more people now. My heart quivers for no known reason as I seek out my three nemeses. The thought of seeing them again does something strange to my body. It's adrenaline, of course it is. I'm right in enemy territory, so it's expected.

But I come across supermodel one—I call her supermodel one now because all the girls are supermodels as well.

“You're back. And oh wow, you look amazing,” she says. No, I don't. She's being kind, but I'll take it.

“Here you go,” I say, handing her the box I've been carrying. “It's Vintage went out of business last year, but I have two pairs, and I think we're about the same size.” She's very tall, and I'm not by any stretch of anyone's imagination, but her feet are as small as mine.

“You're giving me a pair of vintage slippers? Oh my god.” She leans down and hugs me. “That is the girliest girl's girl thing anyone has ever done for me. Thank you, babe.”

I offer her a smile. She can think of it as a small consolation prize for what I'm about to do next.

I turn around and slam straight into a wall made up of three bodies. At least they're all three wearing shirts now. How nice for me. I can't think; the music is so loud, and their presence just flusters me more.

“You’re back?” Porter asks, leaning toward me so I can hear him.

“Yes,” I say, then clear my throat. I was perfectly fine before, but now I’m dying from the heat in this coat.

“I decided to take you up on your offer and loosen up a bit, as you put it,” I say loud enough for them to hear me.

“Pity about the weather, though. But it’s nice having everyone inside, so close together. It’s cozier, wouldn’t you say?”

They frown at me. Really hard.

? Chapter Six

A very

Well, sexy frowns with narrowed hunter eyes and jawlines for days don't work on me. I keep my face straight. What's happening to my body is not my concern right now.

"What exactly are you up to?" Sullivan asks, not disguising his suspicion.

"Nothing. I just want to have a good time, and you did invite me, remember? You said this was a neighborhood party and everyone was invited," I say sweetly before pushing my way through them, which feels like moving concrete walls. I only succeed in getting away because they let me.

Right. Now I need to mingle and pretend I'm having the time of my life.

My gaze immediately collides with a huge, gigantic air mattress just lying there in the Ambroses' living room.

It's covered with silk and pillows in all shapes.

Ugh. It's probably where they're going to have their orgy later.

Yes, I'm a self-established prude, I have to remind myself.

They don't take their eyes off me as I bump into six people and spill drinks on two of them—the living room and open-plan kitchen area of the Ambroses are filled to capacity, so it's hardly my fault.

I also nearly trip once, and I'm sure my face will remain horribly contorted for the rest of my life after taking a sip of what someone handed me. The blue drink was pure alcohol.

Okay, enough of that. It's time to end this.

I turn on the big house lights that immediately illuminate everything in sight. Better to see me. And since the trio hasn't given me a single moment of reprieve since I stepped into the house, they'll get to see my next move play out in real time. It's ingenious.

I plant myself in between a large group of people and laugh with them, pretending I'm in on the joke.

"Oh, I'm so itchy," I say theatrically as I slip out of my coat.

Then I start scratching lightly at the red and pink spots on my arms and legs.

I don't mind if the coat smudged parts that didn't quite dry enough because it only makes it more believable.

"Chickenpox," I say. "Just got it this morning. Here, look," I add, offering my blotchy arms for inspection. If I say people tripped over themselves to escape me, I would be wrong. They made it an Olympic sport.

My gaze locks with the three main characters, their arms folded as they stare me down with incredulous looks on their stinking handsome faces.

They have no idea how hard it is for me to remain functioning in their company, and they never will.

I make sure my smile is just this side of devious as I continue to scratch at the skin on my arms.

“Oh, the chickenpox,” I say. “It’s just the worst.” Around me, everyone scatters, offering apologies to their hosts as they fly out the door into the rain, overly eager to get away from me and my plague.

I want to feel bad, but this is far better than a criminal record for breaking and entering and then having the audacity to throw a party. They can all thank me later.

I’m so ecstatic I want to fist pump and do that pelvic thrust thing that looks like humping the air in victory. I do neither. I just dust my hands and smirk. I win.

But then my body heats up as all three of them merge and come toward me like three rogue kings. There’s not enough air in here. I need to breathe.

Sullivan curls his fingers around my wrist, scorching me as he does. He lifts my arm for inspection, running his fingers over the smudges, and goosebumps rise on my skin. I totally confuse his clinical touch with a sensual one.

He brings his fingers to his nose, then draws my arm closer and licks my skin while keeping his eyes on me.

He licks my skin.

“Edible paint,” he says, unfazed while my world feels like it’s been toppled.

“You’re kidding,” Gray says, taking my other wrist and running his warm tongue over my skin. I bite my lip hard to stifle the moan lodged in my throat. Sullivan hands me over to Porter, who licks his lips before lapping at my skin.

A blaze erupts inside me. My nipples pebble, and I want to press my thighs together so hard that I’ll lose all feeling.

I also feel dizzy and weak in the knees.

And... no. They’re playing with me, and I’m falling for it.

Guys like them don’t purposely go for girls like me. That sets me straight immediately.

“Eww, you can’t go around licking people. What is wrong with you three?” I say, yanking my hands away from their grasp, for my own sanity more than anything. I gain some balance and straighten my shoulders.

“Not going to be much of a party with just you three, so you might as well leave. And please don’t go around breaking into other people’s houses again and pretending you own them. It’s wrong. Now, good night.”

I don’t expect them to clean up, so I’ve allocated tomorrow evening to give the Ambroses’ house a thorough cleanup. The elderly couple won’t even know that three utter knaves threw a party in their house while they were away.

I can’t wipe the smirk off my face, but I do have to leave. I need sleep, and every minute counts.

But then my gaze shifts to Porter, who looks equally smug. Also, where is he going? Why is he closing the sliding door?

“I hope I never see the three of you again.” I head toward the front door. It’s getting harder to breathe. Something weird is happening. I need air. An ice-cold shower. Antarctica.

Before I can reach for the knob with a shaky hand, Sullivan, as stealthy as an apex predator in the wild, slips his huge body between me and the door, locking it behind him while staring me dead in the face.

“Oh, we’re not going anywhere, sweetheart,” Gray says behind me.

“You didn’t think we were going to let you get away with it, did you? Tit for tat and all that.”

“Hmm, excuse me, but what? You broke the law. Now please open the door right this minute.”

“Oh no. Here we are, minding our own business, when the grumpy girl next door crashes our party and sends our guests flying out of here because she starts scratching these tiny dots on her arms and claims she has chickenpox.”

I take a step back, fully accepting that I’m essentially trapped here inside with them.

Why do I feel so trembly? A million butterflies collide in my stomach; my nipples are aching sore now, my breasts swollen and heavy, too. And no matter how hard I press my thighs together, I can’t quell the throb between my legs. What in the heck is going on with me?

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? Chapter Seven

A very

What is it about these men that makes me so hot? Hot ? I'm analyzing their effect on my temperature when I've been deliberately trapped in here with them. Do I need my head examined?

"What do you think you're doing?" I ask, unable to disguise the quiver in my voice. I hate looking at them. They make me feel crazy, like I'm losing my mind and control over my body. I don't like it.

"Payback time."

"There can't be any payback. You can't break into someone else's house and have a party. It's illegal. Why am I repeating myself? Don't you get it? Now you're lucky I didn't call the cops, so this is your chance to leave and—"

"We own this house," Sullivan says, interrupting my lecture.

"Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose are our adopted grandparents," Porter adds.

"Wait. What?"

“You heard us.” I whip my head up to look at Gray.

“You want to call them up to make sure? Or better yet...” Porter pulls out his phone, and after a few seconds, the bubbly giggles of our mayor, Shelly Burns, echo around the room as she greets Porter.

She knows it’s him without him uttering a word.

Also, she answered her phone after one ring at this hour?

“Mayor Burns, do you mind telling our lovely neighbor that the Ambroses are our adopted grandparents and that we’re allowed to have a party at any time, day or night?”

“Oh, is she giving you a hard time?” Mayor Burns says, her voice full of contrition. “My deepest apologies. I should have warned you about your uptight neighbor. She’s a stickler for rules, that one. Drives me bonkers when she starts quoting laws to me.”

“Yep, we figured that much already. The bonkers part. She scared away all our guests by pretending to have chickenpox.”

“Oh no, she didn’t,” Mayor Burns groans over the phone.

“She did. She thinks we’re trespassing.”

“Oh dear. Please accept my deepest apologies again. I’ll have a talk with her.”

“She’s right here, scowling murder at us.”

“Of course she is,” Mayor Burns sighs. “Avery, Avery? Are you there?” Porter holds the phone out to me. I take it gingerly, my head held high.

“Mayor Burns,” I say a little stiffly.

“Please stop busting their balls, honey. They’re just back from the military, and all they want to do is unwind. They deserve to have a party all night long if they want. Also, the house does belong to them anyway. The Ambroses gave them the house. I’ll speak to you tomorrow, okay?”

“But there wasn’t anything about new owners in the bulletin,” I say lamely.

“Well, of course there wasn’t. If I had put anything in there, these poor men wouldn’t have had a moment’s peace. Everyone would be bringing them baked goods and swooning over their good looks. They’re just back from the military, like I said, and needed to acclimatize and kick back.”

“Well, if you wanted them to be incognito, you should have told them not to throw a party in the middle of the night and wake up the entire neighborhood anyway.”

“Did they, though? Do you know if anyone else complained? No, because no one else complained. Case in point. Avery, love, get yourself a pair of earplugs and leave those deliciously hot men alone.”

“But we have rules. No loud music after 9 p.m.”

“Oh rules, schmules. They’re the exception.”

I gasp aloud. The very purpose of a rule is to be followed. This is literal blasphemy.

“Avery, honey, as the young kids say these days, you need to chill, maybe get laid a bit too. Now be a good neighbor and do whatever you need to do to make it up to them for ruining their party. Please hand the phone back to them.”

Neon pink spheres burn on my cheeks. Ordinarily, I don't care if people think I'm uptight or grumpy, but suddenly I don't want them to know I need to be laid regularly because the truth is, I've never been laid at all.

I don't understand the rules of sex, so until then, the only laying I'll be doing is laying down the rules for everything else.

I barely hear Mayor Burns continuing to gush over them before they hang up, mostly because I'm still in shock that they own this house and because I had a flash thought of all three of them naked while I, too, was naked. I shake my head. Back to business.

"Well, fine. You could have told me you own the house and that the Ambroses are your adopted grandparents," I say haughtily.

"We did," they all chorus together.

"You could have tried harder," I say, my tone accusing.

"What, like wave the title deed in your face?" Gray asks.

"Yes, that would have been acceptable. Still, this neighborhood has rules—"

"Which don't apply to us, apparently. You heard the mayor," Sullivan says.

Argh, why are these men so damn infuriating?

"Also, if you're the Ambroses' grandsons, how can you let them travel around Europe with no itinerary at their age? That's very careless of—"

"You think we don't have eyes on our grandparents? We were in the Marines; trust us, they're very protected," Porter says.

“Well, still. And why did your grandparents give you this house? What’s going to happen when they come back?”

“They’re not coming back. Just yesterday, they decided to stay in Italy, so we got them a villa there, and that’s where they’ll be staying,” Porter says.

“You know, you’re nothing like our grandparents described,” Gray says.

“They told you about me? Why on earth would I be the topic of discussion?”

“Yes. Said you were this sweet, lovely person. Beautiful too. Said we should ask you out on a date. That you were wife material. Turns out, you’re only one of those things—beautiful—and a whole lot of psycho,” Sullivan says, except he’s grinning at me.

What? Wife material? For them? Well, clearly the Ambroses have no idea what they’re talking about.

“So how are you going to rectify the situation?” Porter asks.

“What do you mean?” My heart is going to explode.

“Well, you crashed our party, so you’re going to have to be our entertainment.”

“What do you mean?” I swear my brain only works half as well in their company.

“What we mean is, we expected a night of entertainment, freshly back from the Marines and all, and since you ruined that, we’re going to get a couple of beers and watch you dance for us, because that’s what we would have been doing if you hadn’t shown up with your fake chickenpox,” Gray says.

“In your dreams.” I give a hearty laugh. “I don’t dance.”

“Well, these are your options. As an apology, you can either dance for us or get spanked. Either way, we’re going to be entertained. Those are your only two options,” Sullivan adds.

Spanked? On my bottom? Like a naughty child? Are they insane?

“I would like a third option, please.”

“Yeah? What would that third option be?”

“I just say I’m sorry, and I leave.”

“No. Not an option.”

“What’s it going to be, sweetheart? A dance or a spanking?”

I fold my arms and glare them to death. They don’t die. Ugh.

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? Chapter Eight

A very

The truth is, I can't dance. Forget having two left feet; when I dance, it looks like I have three left feet. It's horrible. I'm so uncoordinated that I resemble what chalk on a blackboard sounds like.

I should be arrested for my bad dance moves.

Music should ban me from listening to it, lest I decide to get into the groove and start jiggling my body.

If I joined a circus, I would have my own act called Hark, Hark, Come See the World's Worst Dancer, and I would sell out performances every single night.

I'm so bad that my bones—my very bones—try to disassociate themselves from my body. Like, oh, my leg is here, but there goes my tibia in the opposite direction. I'm so bad that I—

Oh my goodness. I should totally dance for them. I'm so bad they actually deserve to witness the monstrosity of my body attempting to break a move. They deserve to have their eyes scorched and their brain cells fried. Not even bleach will help them.

“Fine. I’ll dance. Put on the music. Five minutes. That’s it. And then we’re done.”

“Deal,” Gray says as Sullivan queues up a popular dance song. I start to swing my hips.

“Wait, wait, wait. We need to sit down for this,” Gray calls as they all take a seat, their eyes glued to me. I can’t help but feel a smirk growing wider on my face, and then I truly start dancing.

Except I’m also blood red in the face. Normally, I don’t care what people think of me; I’m too busy following the rules to worry about anything else.

But I wish I were like one of those tall girls I’d scared away from their party, who were basically goddesses that could move gracefully while dancing.

But I could never be like them. I’m me. Take it or leave it.

I do some hideous thing with my arms in the air while trying to shimmy my hips, and it’s horrendous, confirmed by the expressions on their faces and the wide grins they exchange. Four more minutes to go.

“Nope,” Sullivan says as I struggle to keep up with the rhythm of the song and fail because I have no rhythm.

He gets up from his chair, closes the distance between us, and sweeps me off my feet. He then tosses me over his shoulder as if I weigh nothing.

“What are you doing? Put me down, you imbecile!”

“We wanted to be entertained, not scarred for life,” Porter says, chuckling at my expense. Sullivan sets me on my feet near a desk, only for Gray to grab both my

wrists, pulling me forward so I'm now bent over the desk.

“What are you doing? You gave me a choice, and I chose to dance as a way of apologizing. It's not my fault you didn't check with me first to see if I could, in fact, dance. Were you not entertained? You were,” I say, answering for them. “So unhand me this instant and let me go.”

“No, no. We plan to get our money's worth out of your apology, sweetheart.”

“Wait, are you going to spank me?”

“Why else do you think you're bent over a desk with your wrists secured to the legs?” Just as Gray's words leave his mouth, Porter and Sullivan quickly and deftly bind my wrists with the curtain ties. The curtain ties . I jerk away with all my might but remain in place.

Okay, this is crazy. They are crazy. I'm sure I would die at the touch of Sullivan and Gray's hands on my skin as they pull my reasonably tight dress up and over my butt, leaving me in my very sensible, comfort-first, full-coverage white cotton panties.

The cool breeze wafting over my bare thighs does nothing to alleviate the furnace my body has become.

How on earth did I get here? Am I dreaming?

And if I am, hmm, what the heck, Avery Stephens?

This is not the kind of dream I should be having.

Except this is real. There is no way I could so vividly combine the fragrances of three completely different men into one and still be able to tell who is who.

That is ridiculous. I just met them, for goodness' sake.

“This is cheating. You can’t have it both ways. You gave me two options. I chose one of them—”

The rest of my sentence gets sucked back into my throat and then escapes from my mouth as just a squeak of a gasp. Shock reverberates through every part of me. Every cell in my body, which I’m sure has been dormant for the last twenty-five years, comes to life in a raging symphony of astonishment.

Someone just spanked me. A man, six-foot-three, with dangerous gray eyes fringed with enviably thick eyelashes, a chiseled jawline, muscles for days, and a palm the size of my entire butt just set fire to my skin.

Porter doesn’t stop with just one strike. He delivers another in quick succession, and before I know it, I’m struggling to accept that he’s just spanked me a total of six times already.

I’m so flustered that words fail me, and I’m left making sounds of outrage.

My butt stings so much that tears gather in my eyes... And my nipples start to ache, and my panties feel wetter than when I saw them again.

I can’t breathe, and it’s not for the reason I think. I can’t breathe because my clothes are suffocating me. No, not only my clothes, but my panties as well.

“You know, you’ve been a pain in our asses from the moment we set our eyes on you. And to think our grandparents thought you were sweet,” Porter says in a low, measured tone that makes my nerves feel shy. Yet he’s also deadpan in his delivery, and I only realize afterward that he’s teasing me.

“That was a pretty mean trick you pulled on us, wasn’t it, princess?” Sullivan asks, and I groan at the sound of his silky smooth but oh-so-masculine voice.

“I think it deserves the full punishment,” Gray adds, filled with mirth, yet there’s an undercurrent of daring roughness to his words.

“You know what happens to naughty girls, Avery?” Porter asks softly. Before I can reply, Porter and Sullivan tuck their fingers into the waistband of my panties. No, I don’t know what happens to naughty girls. I’m a good girl, dammit.

“They get spanked raw, no panties,” Gray offers, educating me.

Oh. No. No. No.

They slowly peel the

fabric off my butt. Will they know I’m wet? Yes, of course they’ll know, I scream at myself on the inside. My panties are properly soaked. As if I want them to touch me. As if I need them to do things to my body.

I don’t. Let’s be very clear. I’m going through a lot right now, and I’m just being strange, that’s all.

But when they start laughing at me for being wet for them, I’m going to wish really hard the embarrassment of it all kills me quickly.

? Chapter Nine

A very

Self-preservation kicks in.

“Wait just a minute,” I shout. “This is wrong. You can’t take my underwear off me. It’s insane.” I’m fighting for my life here, kicking my legs despite my wrists being bound to the legs of the table.

“I’m warning you, if you do, you’ll find them wet, and you’ll think I want you. And yes, you three are very handsome, and of course, every female will feel the same—”

“Did you say you’re wet for us?” Sullivan asks, his voice carrying a hint of gruffness and a growl.

“Yes, and you don’t want to see that,” I respond as Gray steps in front of me. I’m only half aware of what he’s doing. “It’s not nice. You’ll be completely turned off, so just pull my panties back up and—no, no, no,” I continue, but two things happen.

Gray is removing the bindings on my wrists, and Sullivan and Porter are taking off my underwear.

Wetness from the fabric dots my thighs, which I try to squeeze shut, but it's all in vain.

They force my legs apart and drag my underwear off me.

Freed from the material confines, my clit throbs more intensely, and more wetness seeps from me.

I have no authority over my body. I, the quintessential control freak, have lost all control.

I try to stand now that I'm no longer bound, but Sullivan and Porter hold me down.

"Well, I told you, now you can't unsee it, and it's all your fault," I say as I'm bent over the desk again. "Don't blame me if you have to wash your eyes out with bleach. I told—"

"Avery, shut up," Gray says, his tone devoid of humor, rough and husky all at once. He slips in behind me again.

I can't see over my shoulder, but I feel the weight of their gazes on my body. I hear their rough, uneven breaths, which envelop me in heat.

I don't need to see my behind to know that Porter's spanking seared right through the cotton of my panties, and his handprints now mark my skin.

Goosebumps spring from my flesh as three warm, calloused hands brush over my reddened skin, recreating the same intensity I felt during the spanking, but deeper, more visceral, and more intimate. I can't explain it.

Mayhem courses under my skin as their fingers travel to my inner thighs, now slick. I

shut my eyes. Can they feel the blazing heat radiating from my center? I could scald their hands if they touched me there.

I try to shut my legs, which is an illogical move. Do I want them not to feel how wet I am, or do I want to trap them between my thighs forever? I don't know anymore. My defeated whimper soon turns into something that is half gasp, half purr.

Porter's finger slides over the bead of my clit while Sullivan presses the pad of his finger to my entrance, just between my lips.

Dear God. No one has ever touched me there before.

It's too intense, so I simultaneously try to move away and crush myself against their touch.

What am I doing? But that question is answered when Gray's palm lands on my bottom with such striking force that my nerves sizzle.

Fresh wetness seeps from me and coats Sullivan's finger. Porter catches the pulsing in my clit.

"Fuck," Sullivan says as he removes his finger, only for Gray to take his place.

"Fuck is right," Gray replies.

Before my next breath, Porter dips between my soaked folds. A shuddering cold runs down to my bones when they all three withdraw. They're no longer touching me, which is absolutely right. They should be unsettled by my body's reaction to them. It's 100% unsolicited.

I straighten at once, and with my hands shaking, I pull down my dress.

I don't know what I'm doing anymore. I could have booked myself into a hotel for peace and quiet since I so desperately wanted it, but no, I chose this. A complete one-on-three war with my neighbors where I devised a diabolical plan to sabotage their party. Why didn't I stop myself?

From the moment my gaze landed on each of them, I lost my mind. I should leave. Why am I not lecturing them about etiquette and leaving? It's then I look up and see them licking my essence off their fingers. I'm stunned. Why do I feel so funny?

"Avery," I scold myself frantically in my mind. "Avery don't do it. It's insane."

They come toward me. I should run. Get into my car, drive into the city, and book a hotel room. Sleep. Turn around. It's not too late. You're going to do something colossally stupid if you don't leave right now.

The heady scent of their cologne engulfs me. I feel drunk, intoxicated. Oh no, it's too late.

It's Porter who steps into my space first. It's Porter whose neck I throw my arms around, crushing my lips to his.

He immediately takes control of my clumsy kiss and turns it into an explosion of fireworks.

My entire body melts against his as he coaxes my lips apart and slips his tongue into my mouth.

Dear god. The sensation, the scorching heat wherever he touches me, is so exquisite I want more. I need more. I need everything. I kiss him so desperately that I don't recognize this side of me.

Porter releases me, his eyes darken, locking with mine.

“Avery, do you know what you’re doing?” He asks, his voice deep, rough, and thick.

“Yes.”

No.

? Chapter Ten

A very

If I haven't said it enough times, I don't have a freaking clue what I'm doing.

I grab Sullivan by his collar and capture his lips.

He lets me explore his mouth the same way Porter explored mine, except he wraps his arm around my waist and pulls me flush against the rock-hardness of his entire body, including his cock, which presses against me.

I can barely breathe. Still reeling from both Porter and Sullivan's kisses, I throw myself at Gray and attack his mouth without shame.

How can they taste so good and be so addictive that I repeat the cycle, starting with Porter? This time, I can't bear the thought of not touching Sullivan and Gray as well. But then they set me aside, and my frustration grows.

"Avery, do you know what you're doing?" Gray asks, seriousness lining his features.

"Yes," I growl in annoyance.

“Do you only want us to kiss you?”

Again with the questions.

“No. I want you to kiss me, take off my dress, and touch me everywhere—with your hands, your mouths, your...”

“Our what, Avery?” Sullivan presses.

They’re going to make me say it. Out loud. I’ve never said the ‘p’ word to anyone in my life. Suddenly, I’m so embarrassed that the fire in my cheeks threatens to burn my entire body down.

“This,” I say, reaching out to the mind-bogglingly big, hard bulges straining against their jeans. Low, deep roars escape their mouths as I grind against Sullivan’s cock while pressing my hands against Gray and Porter’s hardness.

I have lost my mind. I will never be the same again. Ever.

“Jesus fucking Christ,” Sullivan groans, his huge hand threading through my hair to my nape, where he grabs a handful and pulls me back, staring into my eyes.

“You want us to touch you with our cocks?”

Well, I would have said the ‘p’ word if I were pressed, but oh my god, why does the ‘c’ word sound so ridiculously erotic and sexy and hot?

Who am I? What have I become? How am I doing something so out of character, so impulsive, without a fifty-six-step program to guide me through the process?

I don't know what's going to happen next. My gosh. I don't even know what's

happening right now, except that I need this.

“Yes, your cocks. Touch me with your cocks. Naked. Touch me everywhere with your cocks. Right now, please, before I... before I—”

I’ve never experienced this level of franticness before. My whole world has turned upside down, and I don’t want to set it straight just yet.

“I want to see your cocks. Cocks,” I whisper as I drop to my knees and immediately start to yank at their jeans, my hands moving between the three of them with lightning speed.

I make no progress because I’m trembling so much, but I sigh in relief when they help me unearth the thickness in their jeans and also remove their shirts at the same time.

“You like the word cocks , huh?” Gray says his tone teasing.

“I haven’t said that word before, not in the singular form, and certainly not in the plural form either.

I always said, ‘male appendage.’ Not that male appendages came up in any discussions I’ve had.

But not with you three. I want to say cocks .

I want to see your cocks. I’ve never seen any cocks before.

.. my god,” I breathe, nearly falling over when three gigantic male members look back at me.

They're thick, long, and without touching the skin around each shaft, I know they'll be velvety and deceptively soft, barely able to contain their hardness.

"Is that normal?" I reach out, tentatively, with both my hands. The electric spark that turns my body into lava at the mere sight of them increases a million times over as my fingers stroke down their length.

My explorations are rudely interrupted when all three take a collective step back, leaving my hands hanging midair. I scoot forward, but they move back again.

"Wait. You've never touched a cock before?" Porter asks.

"Never," I say, still trying to close the gap between us.

"Avery, are you still a virgin?"

"Yes. Sex is not on my to-do list for the next three years."

The atmosphere around me changes.

Oh my god.

Humiliation charges through me like a possessed hyena. Just because I wanted them does not mean they wanted me. I'm so embarrassed I want the floor to open up so I can crawl underground back to my house.

Also, this is such a weird feeling for me. I stopped being embarrassed when my parents came to a Bring Your Parents to School Day .

Mine, of course, arrived in a silly mood. When I say a silly mood, I mean they thought they were having breakfast brownies but apparently ate from the wrong

container and consumed an ungodly amount of pot. They could have said they were clowns, and my class would have believed them.

I provided comic relief for nearly the entire school for the two years I attended, which is the amount of time I needed to cure myself of experiencing any kind of ignominy.

I feel sick with indignation now. I'm the last girl they'd ever want to touch.

The girls at their parties were their standard.

I may have been angry with them for making me feel these strange things, thinking all of those girls could do better.

But no. Gray, Sullivan, and Porter are the benchmark.

Men don't come any more handsome than them.

Well, I had a lapse of integrity. I can forgive myself and move on. If I get to bed now, I'll still have... I'll have... I try to calculate how many hours of sleep I'll get, but my brain is mush. So yes, leave before I do the unthinkable and start crying.

? Chapter Eleven

A very

I turn to leave, but they stop me.

“I’ll just take myself off then since you don’t want me. Thank you.”

“Fuck no,” they all roar.

“We want you. All of you, just fine,” Sullivan says.

“But if it’s your first time, you shouldn’t be on your knees for us,” Porter adds.

“We should be on our knees for you,” Gray interjects. “First, though, Avery, listen to us very carefully. You may not realize this just yet, but when you charged onto our property, ready to throw us to the curb, you became ours.”

“We claimed you from that first moment,” Sullivan continues. “And we plan to do whatever it takes to make you ours, no matter how long it takes.”

“So what we’re saying is, when we take your virginity, we’re not using protection. We’re clean. We haven’t had sex in three years, and we have regular medical

checkups. Do you understand?”

“Yes. And I’m not on the pill, but I’m safe; it’s my safe window. I won’t get pregnant. You can trust me.”

“Trust you? We wouldn’t care if you got pregnant; we’d just make you our wife sooner.

You’re ours, Avery. You belong to us now.

We’re going to take your virginity, but we’re also going to stretch the other part of you so we can share you properly—all three of us inside, and we don’t mean using your mouth. ”

“Every part of you, sweetheart.” Porter closes the gap between us.

With one hand, he clutches my chin, forcing me to look up at him.

With his other hand, he touches my center softly, delicately, one finger just at the entrance.

Then he moves his hand to my butt, between my cheeks.

“Every single fucking part of you,” he growls, rubbing two fingers against my bottom hole.

“Please do it now,” I cry. But my words barely leave my mouth before I’m surrounded by them, their lips traveling over my skin as they peel my dress off my body, then my bra, leaving me naked before their eyes. They kneel around me, kissing my thighs before silently instructing me to part my legs.

I'm so hot if they touch me there, I'm going to burn them down with me. Their fingers glide up between my thighs as they shower me with more kisses. I can barely stand and use my hands on their shoulders for support.

They reach my center, now so drenched my inner thighs are slick. Three fingers from three different hands touch me so softly, I feel like a precious flower.

Porter's knuckle skims my clit before he dips between my labia. Gray traces the top of his finger up my thigh before he strokes my clit, then takes one of the lips of my labia between his thumb and index finger, caressing me.

Porter ever so slightly deepens his knuckle inside me. Sullivan does the same to the other lip of my folds, parting my center wider as they tug my lips apart. Porter switches his knuckle for the tip of his finger.

My knees crumble as they each suck my essence from their fingers before wetting them again. The intimate parts of me swell. The blood in my veins courses through me with chaotic speed and heat. My skin is on fire. I get wetter, giving them more of me to taste. How am I still breathing?

Well, I'm not, not really. I'm fighting to get air into my lungs while also dying a million little deaths.

With sleek coordination, Gray lifts one of my legs and tosses it over his shoulder. Sullivan stands behind me, supporting me, while Porter does the same to my other leg until both my legs are draped over Gray's shoulders.

I squeal in fear of being dropped, but Porter and Sullivan hold me up.

Falling is the least of my problems. Gray opens his mouth on me at the same moment he lifts me, carrying me with my legs around his shoulders, my hands gripping the

back of his head for dear life, and my very wet center in his mouth.

His tongue laps at my essence, sliding over my clit. Incoherent sounds spill from my lips. I have no idea what I'm saying.

Porter and Sullivan lower me onto the air mattress and slip in beside me, reaching for my sensitive breasts. Gray is still between my parted legs, my clit in his mouth as he suckles on me.

How is this possible? My body pulls taut; wetness seeps from me into Gray's mouth, my nipples hardening even more in Sullivan and Porter's mouths.

I'm hurled across the universe as an orgasm builds inside me with rapid speed.

Before I can control myself, my body stiffens, and a blinding climax gushes out of me.

That is the quickest I've ever come. Yes, I do schedule self-care times for myself, but usually, it takes me a while to get there.

My limbs tremble as they rotate places, sucking me until I come in their mouths again. I'm delirious with need, my body demanding more and more.

"Your pussy tastes so fucking sweet; we can't get enough of it."

My pussy. My pussy tastes sweet.

Their words unleash something wild and chaotic inside me.

Their cocks inside my pussy. Yes. Yes. Yes. I need to feel them inside me right now.

“Please,” I whimper. “Now.”

Gray moves over me, balancing his strong body on his powerful forearms.

“You ready, beautiful?” Gray asks, staring into my eyes while he runs his fingers between my folds, coating them with my essence.

“Yes, please.”

“Keep your eyes on me, okay?”

I nod impatiently. Gray takes his wet fingers and grips his cock, then guides his enormously broad head to my entrance. My back arches at the contact. It’s strange and amazing at the same time.

Labored breaths leave my mouth as Gray pushes in a little deeper. Out of instinct, I try to scoot away from him, but he’s pinned me down, and I really don’t want to go anywhere anyway. I want this. I want them.

I reach between our bodies and cover my hand over his, pressing down on him to enter me quickly. The waiting is killing me. Gray removes his hand, and I’m touching his naked cock. I have all the control now.

“Avery,” he whispers, and it almost sounds as if he is in pain as he lifts my hips and inches himself further inside me. Holy cow. I take a little more of him until my eyes widen and I become frantic.

Oh boy. Oh. Boy.

? Chapter Twelve

A very

He's too big. I didn't think through the logistics.

This is what happens when I act out of character and haven't planned ahead.

I should have taken measurements. But Gray kisses me, simultaneously calming me down and making me wetter.

He takes charge and penetrates me, stretching my virgin pussy to accommodate his impossible width.

I cling to him, my face buried in the side of his neck, tears stinging my eyes.

"You're fucking amazing, Avery," Gray says as he pushes deeper inside me. I struggle to keep him there, my walls clenching around him just as my arms wrap around his neck. I'm probably strangling him.

"Just breathe, sweetheart."

I take his words seriously and inhale and exhale noisily. He moves a little more inside

me, breaking through whatever resistance I had left. He lies still, bringing my head back down onto the pillow. He kisses my face, then slowly withdraws, and Sullivan immediately takes his place.

But my body still clenches shut, and Sullivan has to inch his way back inside me, reteaching me as he broadens my walls.

Dear god. He thrusts a little harder, sending my body into a spiral of commotion.

It hurts, but I want to feel it again. He does it one more time and then retreats, only for Porter to guide his cock into me.

Desperate, my pussy hugs his cock so tightly he can't move inside me. Porter bends his head and takes my nipple into his mouth. He sucks and bites, corrupting all my thoughts, and just as I gasp when he pinches my nipple between his teeth, he drives home.

Layering kisses and bites on my breasts, neck, jaw, and lips, Porter slips in and out of me, turning my pussy into a dam of liquid pleasure.

My clit soars. Greed takes over, and I want to come.

Porter doesn't let me wait long. He reaches for my clit and strokes, watching for the moment I climax.

When I do, he fills me with his cum, copious amounts that ignite even more heat within me.

The feeling is so addictive that when he slips out, I drag Gray back inside me so quickly I barely catch my breath. He takes me hard, but he teases me too, and finally, he makes me come, forcing me to rub my clit against him to find my release.

I sigh in utter relief when Sullivan penetrates me again.

His strokes are deeper, pushing me further than I thought possible, and just when I think I can't stand it anymore, he increases his rhythm, and I come without any friction against my clit.

The orgasm, which feels as if it comes from my soul, takes everything from me.

I'm dazed and lost in wonder. A delicious kind of fatigue settles over me, and my eyes close as I nestle against their bodies.

My last panicked thoughts before I pass out are, What have I done?

Why did I do this when I know it's only temporary?

I brush it aside because, of course, I understood that going in.

It's all fine. But the outside world still does not exist for me right now.

I don't need to orient myself when my eyes flutter opens sometime later. I realize the outside world still very much does not exist in this realm.

I may have been asleep for thirty minutes at most. After taking my virginity, I was bathed, massaged, fed Sullivan's delectable desserts, and put to bed in their arms. Now I'm awake, and so is my body. I sit on my knees on the air mattress and have free rein over the sights before me.

The male body is so beautiful. I never thought I would say that.

Well, I should clarify—it's Gray, Sullivan, and Porter who are beautiful.

Just perfect. My gaze feasts on their scrumptious nakedness, their cocks huge despite being in a sleepy state.

All that explains why my body heats up at once at the sight of them.

“Like what you’re looking at, beautiful?” Gray asks sleepily, his eyes roaming over my naked breasts. He grips his cock as his eyes darken, and immediately he is rock hard.

I bite my lip, but then I squeal when Sullivan wraps his arm around my waist, topples me over, and kisses me senseless.

He moves to the side of me without releasing my lips, and I don’t even have time to catch my breath before Porter parts my legs, his tongue sweeping over my hot, wet center.

On the other side, Gray takes my hand and guides it to his cock while he opens his mouth on my nipple, sucking until my breasts glisten with wetness.

My body answers to them. An orgasm ricochets through me, unearthing me completely. I’m left breathless, my brain turned to mush, except for one thought that now consumes me.

“I want you to take all of me,” I say breathlessly, my body still spasming, but if I don’t ask for it now, I’ll lose my nerve, and I’ll never experience it again.

“Avery,” Sullivan says with a soft warning in his voice.

“But you said you were going to take every part of me.” I wriggle out from under them and sit on my knees again, facing them.

“I want it now. Everything. Everywhere. Inside me.”

“Right now?” Gray asks, strained. “You need a lot of time to prepare, and we’ve just taken—”

“No, Right now.” I’m adamant.

“It’ll hurt more,” Porter says.

“I don’t mind. I like it when it hurts.”

? Chapter Thirteen

A very

I don't back down. They've unleashed a craving inside me I can't explain, but I know it needs to be fulfilled. I need to be filled.

They stand gloriously naked and powerful while I kneel on the bed.

"Just say the word 'stop,' Avery, at any time, no matter what we're doing, and we'll stop. Do you understand?"

I nod.

"Say it out loud," Porter demands.

"I understand. If I want you to stop, I'll say, 'stop.'"

"Good," Gray says. "Now come over here and wet our cocks with your mouth, pretty girl."

I bounce off the bed, and within moments, I'm kneeling on the floor, surrounded by them. I take their cocks into my hands and lay soft butterfly kisses all over them,

marveling at how they can be so silky-soft on the outside and so rock hard on the inside.

My craving grows, and I open my mouth on them. Slivers of pre-cum coat my tongue, and I swallow it down, but that only makes me want more. And more.

I'm in my own world, sucking and tasting, kissing and pleasuring myself with their cocks. The instant they grow harder, their breathing becomes more erratic, and they lift me up and kiss me senseless.

Gray then carries me to the bed and places me on my hands and knees. From the corner of my eye, I catch Sullivan lifting a black briefcase and placing it on the bed. He flips it open, and I nearly choke on air.

Oh, I know exactly what's inside. At the last bachelorette party I attended, I didn't just come home with edible body paint; I also gained extensive knowledge of sex toys, where they go, and how they work, thanks to an instructor hired by one of the friends of the bride-to-be.

So, yes, I recognize a butt plug when I see one. Or ten, among other things. A heaviness settles in my heart as I realize they bought this for the express purpose of using it on someone else on this bed.

"Who would have thought Benny's welcome home gift would come in handy?" Sullivan says. "Benny is our friend, by the way. You saw him—the guy with the red hair and three-piece suit. And no, we weren't going to use this on anyone else the moment you stepped into our lives, Avery."

Did Sullivan read my mind?

Tears sting my eyes, but I swallow them down. I have to remember what this is: an

education, and nothing more. Who would want to have anything to do with me in a social environment? No one. I get grumpy when rules aren't followed, which makes me no fun at all.

All my thoughts come to a crashing stop when Gray's palm lands on my butt, taking my breath away and immediately arousing my entire body.

All three are behind me now, spanking me, touching me, dipping into the deluge between my pussy lips and sucking it off their fingers.

Then their touch changes. Blood rushes to my face as they part the cheeks of my backside. Their breaths whisper against me, and goosebumps cover my entire body. Their fingers explore softly and gently.

Their growls and the murmurings of words like 'perfect,' 'beautiful,' and 'theirs' lull me into believing they're true.

My eyes snap shut as Sullivan and Gray spread me apart while Porter pours lubricant into my bottom hole. Oh god. This is real. My moment of panic dissolves in the magnitude of my want for this.

Their fingers go deeper, massaging the tender flesh of a place no one should touch, and now three of the most handsome men I've ever seen will take my virginity there too.

They kiss my shoulders, suck on the flesh of my butt, and play with my clit as they deepen their passage into the most forbidden part of me. They guide me to breathe when I clench up too much, when the burn becomes more than I can handle.

My world is set ablaze when the cool head of a butt plug prods the tightness of my bottom hole. My nerves scream in terror. I drop my head onto the bed so that only my

bottom is raised. Then they take turns thrusting the plug inside me.

They establish a rhythm that leaves my heart thundering in chaos.

Pushing the plug a little deeper, only to pull it out and coat it with more lubricant.

Then deeper, out, and more lube. Somehow, I've transformed the pain of being stretched into pleasure, and the result is sublime.

I'm flying amidst the pandemonium of my body, the total meltdown of my mind.

All I feel is them spreading me apart so I can take their cocks inside me.

When the plug is fully embedded deep within me, and I dare not move, Porter comes around and lifts me up so that I'm straddling him.

He kisses me deeply as he guides the tremendous length of his cock into my pussy. I bite his lip, clenching to keep him out. I'm too full. I can't...

Sullivan strokes his finger over the heated flesh of my butt and then slowly removes the plug from my hole. At that same instant, Porter penetrates me fully. But before my next breath, Gray is putting the plug back inside me, only this time, it's a bigger one.

Oh dear god.

I'm going to be splintered apart. Tears fall down my face onto Porter. I overestimated my body's ability. I—

Gray starts to move the plug the same way Porter moves his cock against the walls of my pussy, and they flow and ebb inside me. My pain transforms into elated torment,

and somewhere deep within me, I ache for more. I ache for their cocks sharing me.

Porter takes one of my nipples into his mouth while he reaches down and strokes my clit.

His thrusts grow deeper, bumping into the most erotic parts of me, while Gray does the same.

As my universe explodes with my orgasm, the only thing keeping me grounded is Sullivan's soft, tender touches all over my body.

But my orgasm is not enough to feed my hunger.

I need them. Now.

As if they read my mind, Gray pulls the plug from me. The head of Sullivan's cock taps my opening. Porter is still fully lodged inside me. Sullivan doesn't waste any time. He pushes in, taking advantage of my stretched hole, but it is nowhere, nowhere near open enough to accommodate his cock.

Panic floods me, but all they do is hold me tight, crushing my body between them while I worry, I might implode over their cocks inside me. The pain feels insurmountable, yet something doesn't feel right.

I need Gray. I need them to do what they promised: all three of them inside me.

"Please," I whisper, my voice stained with tears. Again, they know exactly what I want.

I close my eyes, my face buried in the side of Porter's neck, holding on for dear life.

Sullivan slips out, and Gray takes his place, while Porter remains fixed inside me. Sullivan and Gray swap places again and again, driving me mad. I growl my frustration, and then I get what I ask for.

Sullivan and Gray line their cocks up to my well-lubed opening. I brace myself as Porter holds me down and in place. They push through my resistance, and I accept them easily—until the thrust deepens.

My mind blanks. My body screams at me to take them all inside me right now, or it's going to crumble and close up. I know what I want.

Behind my closed eyes, I see their faces. I relive every moment of our encounters, every word. My heart starts to beat differently. My body opens, and I bring Sullivan and Gray inside me, fully.

I can't register the pain without receiving the sheer, deviant, carnal allure of giving myself to Gray, Sullivan, and Porter all at once. They feel the change in me, and that's when they start to move—powerful and dominant.

The cadence is so wickedly erotic that an orgasm takes hold of me and sends me into the stratosphere. My pulsing body clutches against their cocks. Their growls are soft but primal and fierce as they empty themselves inside me.

I don't remember anything else except the sublime feeling of being filled and bathed in their cum.

I don't want to think, so I sleep in their arms.

? Chapter Fourteen

A very

A million memories bombard my sleepy brain all at once. I'm consumed by naked skin and the dizzying scent of male cologne. Muscles. Power. Sexiness.

Yes, I finally understand what sexiness really means. And cock. Oh my god. So much cock. Everywhere on me, inside me. So many times, too. They took me to different realms where unimaginable pleasure was tinged with just a streak of delicious pain.

Oh my god. I gave them my virginity.

We had sex. There's no part of me that's still a virgin now. But then a dark cloud opens up over me.

Wait, what day is it? I can't even remember the year, let alone the month. Until I do.

I shoot up from the bed. Oh crap. Oh crap. Oh crap.

I didn't think I could move that fast, but I scramble off the bed, amidst a series of male bodies. Naked male bodies. For a split second, my eyes have a mind of their own and linger on the ripped, muscle-bound, godlike specimens.

A steamy hot flush coats my body, and a very familiar dewy sensation grows between my legs. What in the hell? I can't be standing here getting turned on again. I grab a watch, which I know is Porter's, from the bedside table and shriek.

"Come back to bed, Avery," they murmur sleepily. What? No. Getting into bed with them got me into this problem in the first place.

Oh god. What have I done?

I slip into my coat, gather my dress, panties, bra, and shoes, and race out of their house and into mine.

I have fifteen minutes to shower and dress so I can get to Obsidia Tech in time, provided there's no traffic. This was not how I imagined my first day.

I catch a glimpse of myself in the mirror as I pass through to my bathroom.

I'm literally glowing. My cheeks are flushed, my eyes glossy, my lips swollen, and I have a sheepish expression on my face, like I can't put words together that make sense.

I open my mouth to say my name, and my voice is husky.

Okay, coffee will sort that out, hopefully.

I run my shower and remove my coat. No, no, no.

The mirror in the bathroom reveals an array of hickeys decorating my neck down to my breasts.

Their mouths were on me for them to leave hickeys on my skin.

The thought turns my cheeks even hotter.

Really? I'm getting all hot and flustered over their mouths being on my neck and breasts when those same mouths were also between my legs. On my pussy. In my pussy.

I can't think about that now. In my defense, it's their fault.

They contributed to my lack of sleep, which exacerbated my stress over my new job, which made me act out of character to the point where I begged them to fill me up.

Everywhere. Even where they should have been forbidden to see with their eyes or touch with their fingers.

But no, I asked them to put their cocks in there too.

"Stop," I shout. Focus.

I'll have to modify my outfit, which sucks considering I spent so much money on a power business suit that was supposed to clinch my first day at the office. I'll deal with that after I shower. Time is moving at warp speed.

It's not helping my panic in any way, which is making me clumsy.

I would just die if I turned up late on my very first day for such a high-powered position.

They'd have every reason to fire me for my tardiness, and I wouldn't fight back.

I've never in my life been late for anything.

Early, yes, sometimes by an hour, but late? Never.

Of course, everything that can go wrong does go wrong.

I stub my toe, spill my coffee, and drop my bottle of perfume.

My hair refuses to cooperate, and okay fine, maybe I'm being unreasonable, but I want it to look like it would have had I spent thirty minutes on it instead of the two minutes I allocated.

Ugh.

I opt for a bun, but I can't find my pomade to tame it down, and it's getting too late, so I have to leave right now.

I don't even have time for a full face of makeup. I'm going to look like a homeless person.

"Great first impression there, Stephens," I say out loud.

Hopefully, I'll be so good at my job that Mr. Anderson, the CEO of Obsidia Tech, my actual billionaire boss, will forgive my less-than-put-together appearance.

Unless I tell him why I look like this. Oh, by the way, I had sex—my first time—with the three guys next door, and they taught me everything I ever needed to know about the deed, so there's no reason for me to have it again.

My heart does a strange flutter. What? Do I want to have more sex? No. I want to have more sex with them. Oh no, no, no. They probably forgot my name already. I have pride; I'll use it to help me forget about them. Why does that leave me with a lump in my throat? I'm focusing on the wrong things.

I answer my hands-free phone with record speed when it rings. I'm so grateful it's Veronica on the other side. I need a massive distraction.

"Hey, girl. Wait, are you still driving? From home?" Veronica's cheerful voice fills my car. I take a deep breath and put a smile on my face.

"Hi, and yes."

"What? What happened? Did something happen?"

"Nothing happened."

"Yes, something did. You would have camped outside the building for your first day at your new job. Where's Avery? What have you done with her?"

I laugh, except it's a little nervous, and Veronica picks up on it.

"You know you've got this, right?"

"I know I do." I want to tell her everything, but I need to prioritize things in my head first.

"Yes, you do. Okay, knock 'em dead, girl. And I'll see you tonight for our celebratory dinner. Woohoo. Love you lots."

"Love you too," I say and disconnect.

The lump in my throat gets bigger. On top of that, traffic is so unkind to me that I want to cry. And then I do. I cry like a baby.

? Chapter Fifteen

A very

O kay, what's happening right now?

"Avery," I say to myself, trying for a strong voice, but I can't hide the tremor. Oh god, I'm crying. I never cry. Not anymore, anyway. Tears slip down my cheeks, and my lips quiver.

Wait, why am I crying? It's not the traffic. Are these happy tears? They're happy tears, right? I'm starting a new job at a prestigious firm, and my salary is triple what I earned before. This is my dream job. So I'm happy I got what I wanted. Except that's not the reason I'm full-on sobbing now.

It's them. They're going to wake up, find me gone, and go about their day. Tonight, there'll be someone else on their gigantic air mattress, which was there solely for an orgy they planned to have if I hadn't interrupted them.

They'll pick someone else, and they'll like her better because I'm too grumpy, bossy, and not pretty enough. Did I really think I was going to be the chosen one? On a scale of one to a hundred of girls they could have, I'm one hundred and one.

I'm crying so much that other drivers are looking at me in confusion while I leave a puddle in my lap.

But they would cry too if they were in my situation.

Why did I think this would be any different?

Did I want them to be my boyfriends? Oh, I'm so pathetic.

Ugh. I sob for a good two minutes nonstop.

Right, I need to woman up. I risk a glance in the mirror at the traffic light and shriek. I jump-scare myself. Now I look like a drowned rat. My eyes are red and puffy, my nose is red, and I just look terrible. Chin up, Stephens.

If I mess up this job on the first day, I'm going to be officially unemployed. The thought of being adrift with no plan doesn't freak me out the way it should. Oh dear.

I make it to the skyscraper with a minute to spare, and I'm out of breath since, between the stairs and elevators, I had to speed-walk once I reached the top floor where the big boss's offices are.

I try to touch up my face, but I need a bathroom and at least an hour for layering on more makeup. I don't have an hour. I have a minute before I start my job and meet my new boss for the first time.

"Oh, Avery, thank god. You're going to be my savior. It's utter chaos. Walk with me. We don't have time. Are you all right?"

Lesley Blake, the human resources manager—the woman who hired me after a series of grueling interviews—gives me a side look as she assesses me.

I know. I know. At the first chance I get, I will dash to the bathroom to salvage my face and redo my hair. The important thing is that I'm not late despite my brain having a meltdown, and I'm just here, trying to keep it together.

"Oh, I'm fine." Once I'm thrown into the job, what I lack in appearance, I'll make up for with skill. "Allergies," I say. "I hope Mr. Anderson will understand. But it does not affect how I do my job."

"Oh, you poor thing. But back to business. Anderson is the least of our problems, apparently. Obsidia is being shaken to its core. No one saw this coming. It all went down in the last hour. One minute everything is fine, the next—poof—everything has changed. Now please, I need you to work your magic so everything can sail a little more smoothly, although that might not be for a while. Ready?"

"Will I be meeting with Sonia first?"

Sonia Mathewson is the PA whose job I'm taking over. She's retiring, her last day at the end of the week, which gives her five days to show me the ropes.

"Oh, no, Sonia just took her bag and left. She said she's too old for this."

"So there's no Sonia?"

What is going on? What is Lesley talking about? It's only then I notice the frenzy around me. People are running as if they're on fire.

Lesley stands at the huge double doors of what can only be the boardroom.

"No, Sonia," she says as she places her hands on the doorknobs.

Am I going to come face-to-face with my new boss?

I smooth down my skirt, as if that will help.

I just need to assure him that how I look is a one-off thing and has nothing to do with how I do my job.

I straighten my shoulders, and I nearly pass out at the sight before me.

“Mr. Wallace, Mr. Crawford, and Mr. Robertson. This is Avery Stephens. She’ll be your new PA, and I can guarantee she’ll make this transition as smooth as possible for you. You’re in good hands.”

This is the part where I confidently march up to the boss, shake his hand, and sing my own praises in the most practical manner, letting him know without saying it that his life is now my life and my life runs like a well-oiled machine, day and night. But I’m too paralyzed to speak.

The three men I’m staring at just happen to be the three Marine guys from next door, whose brains I shamelessly boinked with extreme gusto multiple times last night. There isn’t a spot on my body they haven’t touched with their hands, lips, teeth, or their cocks. Nowhere.

I must be dreaming.

And how on earth do they look the way they do when I look like this?

We had the same amount of sleep, sporadic as it was.

We participated in all the same things. Yet here I am, looking like I’m hungover, with tear-stained eyes, misbehaving hair, and a broken heart, while they’re freshly shaved, their hair meticulously groomed.

They look nothing like before and are dressed in suits that cost thousands of dollars.

They look like billionaires.

? Chapter Sixteen

P orter

N othing else registers in our minds except that the most beautiful girl in the whole fucking world, our girl, is standing in our boardroom, looking as if she's been crying.

We don't need to talk to each other to know that rage fills our veins.

"Avery, why were you crying?" Porter demands, echoing what Gray and I are thinking.

"Did someone say something to you? Hurt you? Fuck, Avery. Why were you crying?" I ask as I reach for her, my hands around her arms, with Sullivan and Gray standing on either side of me.

She's not saying anything. Is she in shock?

"Avery?" we say together again, and this seems to bring her to her senses.

"What?" she finally says. "How are you here? What?" But she's not answering the only question we have.

“Listen to us. Why were you crying? Who hurt you? Just answer the question.”

Heads are going to roll; we just need names. Did it happen here at Obsidia? If so, everyone will regret the day they were born.

A frown falls over her gorgeous face. She opens her mouth, then closes it and tries again, and then the fire in her eyes returns.

“You made me cry, you idiots. You...” She bangs her fists against our chests.

“Us?”

“Yes, you three. You just bombarded my life, and then you touched me, and my world is in turmoil now because my heart keeps saying I need to see you again if I want to breathe, almost as if I’m falling in love with you, which is by far the most ridiculous thing ever.

I’m too practical for stuff like that, so it’s a non-issue.

I don’t believe in love at first sight, period.

“And I know I’m never going to be the girl you want anyway.

So last night was a one-off thing, and I was crying—stupidly—because it made me sad.

But then I pulled myself together because, if nothing else, I’m a realist, and I know pining over three guys who look like you three is the worst thing I could do to myself.

“I’m going to need more time, clearly. A lot more time, but I will get over you. So you know what? It’s got nothing to do with you. So you go ahead and put your orgy

bed to good use—”

“Orgy bed?” Gray asks, grinning at her. She’s so fucking adorable.

“That massive air mattress you bought specifically for your orgies.”

“We didn’t buy it. That was Benny as well,” Sullivan says.

“Well, whatever. I’m sorry if I ruined your plans with other women who look better than me and are less grumpy and bossy and—”

We don’t let her get any further before we take turns to shut her up with our mouths, devouring her taste and knowing it will never be enough to sustain us for long.

Doesn’t she know how perfect she is? It’s everything about her that made us lose our minds and our hearts to her.

Fuck, she’s our wife; it’s just a matter of making it official.

We let her slip out of the house this morning, opting not to stop her just yet. We needed to clear up this Obsidia Tech mess before we claimed her forever.

“But...” she says when we finally let her breathe.

“We said you were ours. Didn’t you hear us?” I ask her. “We’re going to make you our bride, Avery.”

“What? I mean, I did hear you. But isn’t that what all guys say to get what they want?”

“Not us, Avery. We only say what we mean. And we meant every word we said.

You're ours. And we're going to claim you forever."

"And crazy as it may sound, we now do believe in love at first sight," Sullivan says.

"You like me?"

"More like love you."

"And you want to see me again? But I'm so grumpy all the time, and I like rules, and I ruined your party."

"Did you hear us say the words 'our bride'? And 'love'? And 'forever'?"

"But... wait," she says, putting some distance between us. "Okay, this is crazy. What is going on? Why are you here?" she cries. "I was supposed to be meeting my new boss, Mr. Anderson."

"Well, Jake Anderson, our uncle, is no longer the CEO of Obsidia Tech. We fired him, and we're here to take over the running of the company."

"Your uncle?"

"Yes," Gray says.

Without the urge to commit murder when we thought someone had hurt her, it doesn't take us long to assess the situation and the sheer coincidence of it all. The sexy, bossy girl next door is standing in front of us in the boardroom of the company we now run.

"It's a long story. But the short of it is our adopted parents grew Obsidia Tech from the ground up. It was a family business, and before long, it had a net worth of several

hundred billion dollars,” Sullivan says.

“But we went off to the military after college, only to learn Jake, a distant cousin of our parents, exercised a hostile takeover, and our parents lost their pride and joy. They asked us for help. We owed it to them, and here we are.”

“That is insane. This whole time we were coming to the same building?”

“Yeah, the whole time our cocks were filling you up and you were clenching your sweet wet walls around us, we were coming to the same building.” Gray doesn’t waste any time teasing her as Sullivan pulls down the blinds and I lock the door.

A delicious blush settles on her cheeks, and her eyes are tinged with confusion.

“What...?”

We don’t let her escape us, and soon she’s lifted onto the boardroom table, our hands sliding up over her thighs. Fuck, her skin is so soft.

“We had no fucking clue we were going to be running a tech company, but damned if we’re not going to be thinking about our wife, naked on our boardroom table. It’s the only way we’ll get through all those boring meetings, sweetheart.”

She gasps when I take off her panties. Sullivan unbuttons her shirt, and when her breasts spring free from her bra, her nipples go straight into their mouths while I test her wetness.

She’s soaked. Our cocks are going to explode, but this is about her.

We’ll have to wait until we get her back home to be inside her again.

“But... my... job...” she says, struggling to speak as I part her legs fully.

“Lesley says you’re the best. We’re in good hands,” Sullivan says.

“If anyone can boss us into behaving like billionaire executives, it’s you,” Gray says.

“Oh god, that’s so much work,” she says, equally stressed and dreamy at the same time as I take her clit into my mouth and Sullivan and Gray bite down on her nipples.

“No more talking, sweetheart,” I say, and she doesn’t, not for a long time afterward.

Sullivan

Six months later.. .

If we'd known giving up the military meant Avery would be waiting for us, ready to bust our balls for keeping her awake when she was starting a new job the next day at the same company that belongs to us, we'd have left so much sooner.

Of course, she didn't marry us right away. She said she needed time to get to know us better before making any such commitment. We didn't mind; she was ours from the get-go anyway.

At night, she gives herself over to us, demanding her pleasure be our sole priority. During the day, she bosses us around like a pro at the office. If we thought we were entering the unknown with nothing but a business degree and no further clue, we didn't have to worry.

Avery runs our office life with the precision of a ninja. Our entire company bows down to her. She is, after all, ours, and no one would dare look at her wrong, knowing what we're capable of doing. But she's also a force to be reckoned with on her own and backs down from nothing if she's right.

She made us wait six months before she said yes. Now we've moved into the

quintessential billionaire mansion, and our only task is keeping her happy. And pregnant.

THE END