



Unsuspecting Valentine (The Wicked Meet Cute #7)

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Category: Dark Erotica

Description: Waverly has found an amazing friend in the online book community.

Her passion for books overflowed into her small, indie bookstore Lovelorn Books.

Now she finally gets to meet her favorite dark romance author in person.

Nothing can prepare her for the shock that is coming.

Ex-government agent G. Barlowe is usually a calm man.

Since the owner of LoveLorn Books popped up in his newsfeed he has become obsessed.

The persona he has created has enabled him inside information to the way her mind works.

He's managed to gain her trust, but will that all slip away when he gives her the shock of her life?

Total Pages (Source): 11

Page 1

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 2:19 am

“ So, come out and join us at the Grand Opening event for LoveLorn Books next weekend! Myself and Sara will be ready to greet all of our guests. We look forward to seeing you! Waverly, signing out!”

I couldn't keep my eyes off of her.

Waverly Cross, owner and social media content creator of LoveLorn Books.

Single – never married – with one estranged living parent, her mother.

Rents an apartment by herself in New York City, New York. One best friend – married to Cole Larson – Sara Larson nee Williams.

Other than that, the subject seems introverted and more comfortable socializing online than in-person unless it's not in her bookstore. I have such a problem .

This woman popped up in my feed weeks ago and since then my powers have been used for evil. I knew things about Waverly Cross that she probably didn't even know about herself at this point.

Being a retired government operative had its perks. Finding things out about people was as easy as a few clicks of a button when you were trained with the right set of skills.

The problem was no one had ever screamed to the very core of my soul the way this woman did.

I needed to meet her. I had to create an instance where there was some sort of...fuck. What did the feral book community call it? Some sort of fucking meet-cute?

The book community.

That was my in. What was tied to the book community? Different subcategories of online personas fought for dominance over the literary population. Bikers, masked cosplayers, and even uniformed figures in the public service industry.

Glancing down at myself and raising an eyebrow, I contemplated. I could be a masked cosplayer. I was ripped, tattooed from the neck down, and pierced in places the typical man wouldn't dream of being.

Or you could write a book.

Both eyebrows raised this time. That could be a way of finding out what she liked. The things that weren't accessible in my web searches. Her bookstore catered to the darker side of romance and that sang to me like a siren song.

I could write a book .

Message her and get her insight. Find out what women like her wanted. A gender neutral pen name would also help to keep her relaxed.

Do both.

Write a book and be the masked man?

I was going to be very busy.

But I was going to do it. I'm going to do it all for Waverly.

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Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 2:19 am

“Waverly! The new delivery is here.”

Sara’s heeled shoes click-clacked down the hallway to my office in the small bookstore I owned in New York City.

“Just a sec.”

I smiled at my part-time employee and friend standing in my small office doorway.

“I’m just finalizing some things for the signing tomorrow,” I explained, clicking print on a couple of documents and shutting my laptop.

Sara quirked her pale blonde eyebrow at me and smirked. We’d been friends for most of our lives but she had only been working for me part-time the last few months to make ends meet. She was a tall, willowy blonde with sparkling blue eyes, and a chic sense of style.

Wearing a floor-length pink maxi dress with her hair a cascade of beach waves down her back, she definitely belonged somewhere on a runway, not working in my small, dark-romance bookstore, but I was grateful for her help and friendship.

“How bad are you fangirling right now?”

“Stop. I’m nervous enough to finally meet her in-person. I cannot believe my favorite author is coming to my tiny, indie bookstore for her debut signing. This may actually be an enjoyable Valentine’s Day.”

Valentine's Day was such a joke. I stuck to the bitter thought process that it was a holiday that had been created by candy and jewelry companies to continue to drive sales after Christmas. Real love didn't need some store bought card and an expensive box of chocolates that tasted like cardboard. Real romance was found in the day-to-day moments.

I brushed my brown hair out of my eyes, tucking the shoulder length tresses behind my ear. Glancing at my reflection in the small mirror I shook my head. Sara and I didn't look like we'd be friends. While she was nearly six foot I was standing at a solid five-foot-four. I was curvy, brown-eyed, and easily passed over in a crowd. I tugged my black shirt down further, trying to hide the curve of my stomach, and pushed my glasses up my nose.

"I may actually have to dress up to impress her tomorrow," I continued nervously.

"Oh, please. She sees your videos on your social media and responds all the time. No other author supports you like G. Barlowe does."

I grinned at her as we walked out of my cozy office and back down the short hall into the main part of the bookstore. I was going with cozy vibes and everything was done in black and gray with splashes of red here and there. I had gotten involved in the book community online four years ago and gravitated towards dark-romances with obsessed, stalker, red-flag, and/or masked men – thanks to them trending on all the social media apps I frequented. When I'd opened my store last year it had been a shot in the dark.

Lovelorn Books was a risk, but with the way people were feral for dark-romance nowadays I didn't regret it. I offered shirts for different seasons throughout the year but the primary focus was the plethora of dark-romance books from traditionally published authors and indie authors alike. They filled the black bookshelves and tables, creating a library feel to the area. The gothic chandeliers I'd chosen provided

lighting that was soft yet still allowed people to read the pages in the comfy chairs I had scattered around the store.

“Waverly, everything looks perfect,” Sara breathed looking around contentedly as she met the delivery man to sign for the boxes of books G. Barlowe had sent ahead. The author and I had become close friends a year ago even though she remained a mystery to me.

She never shared her full name, pictures, or anything of the sort. We talked daily on social media and had even started texting recently. It often felt like a competition to see who could like the other’s content more each day. I often thought I got flirty vibes from her, even though I was fairly certain she was a woman. As a debut indie author, I’d been shocked when she’d reached out to me to help her with her debut novel. Being able to Alpha read an unpublished book and help her create stories had been a thrill. I was even helping her with the inner workings of a social media bookish account and it had been a blast.

“I hope she’s as impressed when she gets here,” I worried out loud, thanking the delivery man and locking the door behind him. We were closing early tonight for the Valentine’s Day signing tomorrow.

“Why don’t you go home, Sar?” I encouraged her. “I am just going to finish setting these books up at the signing table and then I’ll head out myself.”

“Are you sure?” she asked, although I could tell she was excited at the prospect of an early reprieve. Her husband had planned an anniversary trip for them this weekend, long before this signing was scheduled.

“Yes. I’m positive, babe. Enjoy yourselves. Don’t worry about anything here.” I promised with a wave.

“Okay, good luck tomorrow. Send me pictures. I still hate that I’m missing this meeting,” she pouted.

“I plan on doing some live streaming and taking a ton of pictures for the both of us. I’m sure G. will as well.” I assured her.

Hugging my friend and seeing her off, I took a deep breath. The shop was probably going to be swamped tomorrow.

Organizing the regular editions of the debut novel and the special, signing exclusives into aesthetically pleasing stacks on the black, cloth-covered table I’d set up near the front windows was a painstaking task.

I really was nervous about this. Manning the store alone was manageable on most days, but I was positive G. Barlowe was going to draw in a crowd. BETA and ARC readers had been raving about this book for months.

As I broke down the boxes and carried them back to the storage room just past my office, I ducked inside quickly to sit back at my desk. Pulling my phone out I saw I’d missed a text from the author in question.

G. Barlow:

Did everything show up okay? I decided to fly in early tonight to get some extra sleep. If I’d been thinking I could’ve just brought them by tonight myself.

Me:

LOL. Anxious about tomorrow...? That’s fine, I didn’t mind unboxing and setting everything up. I’m just getting ready to close for the evening. Everything is all set! I’m so excited.

G. Barlowe:

I'm not anxious at all. Just very ready to finally meet you in person. I'm not sure I'll ever be able to thank you for all the support and love you have shown myself and my book.

Me:

I still wish you could've brought GhostX along with you for this. That would've made everything even more epic.

I waited a few minutes but the phone didn't go off again. She always stopped talking when I brought up the masked influencer that highlighted her novel. The man was supposed to be indicative of the main male character in her book, and the man was HOT. No one had seen his face of course, that was part of the magic of the masked community. CallSign GhostX was six-foot-four, heavily tattooed from the neck down, with piercings in his eyebrow, nipples, and ears. Sometimes I even let myself daydream that he might have piercings in other places too. I shivered at the thought. Fuck, that man was sexy.

In my free time from creating content for myself, reading, and running Lovelorn Books I found myself on social media and my news feeds were swamped with masked men and dark-romance videos. I tried to tune into GhostX's lives as much as I could. Engaging in that side of social media was such an ego boost for someone like me. I could practice my flirting and know there would never be any expectations. I'd been single for two years now and been in just as long of a dry spell, sexually.

Frequenting, the chats and lives with my internet friends gave me an amazing, safe outlet. It was a community that made me feel less lonely and bonded to something other than Sara and my bookstore. I didn't have many friends outside of Sara in my real life. I'd always been a little shy and socially awkward, but G. Barlowe, GhostX,

and their community never made me feel that way.

Opening my inbox on my more used social media platform, I saw that I'd had a message from the masked man himself.

CallSignGhostX:

Having a good evening, sweet girl? Ready for the big signing tomorrow?

Yes, the man even called me a sweet girl. I knew he probably treated all his followers like that, but it was good for my confidence. Sue me.

LoveLornDark:

I'm ready and anxious! Just sorry you couldn't make it! That would've been epic. To meet my two favorite people from the internet all in one day.

CallSignGhostX:

Ah, well, perhaps next time. I know G. Barlowe will treat you well and be more than enough for you.

LoveLornDark:

Well, as long as you promise a future event at my bookstore sometime yourself. The women (and men) would flock.

CallSignGhostX:

We'll see. Have sweet dreams of me. No staying up late looking at all these other masked men on here.

LoveLornDark:

Possessive, are we? Wink wink.

CallSignGhostX: That's the understatement of the decade. The things that I would do to you.

I fanned my face, grinning like an idiot at my phone while shaking my head. These men on this app . Standing from my office chair, I grabbed my tote bag and checked to make sure I had everything before tossing my phone in as well. I had a three-block walk to my apartment from the store, and it was best not to be distracted at night in this city.

Trekking back to the front of the store in my tennis shoes I shut and locked the door behind me, tugging on it to be sure it was secure. I took a deep breath and started my journey home to get ready for the big day.

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My eyes followed Waverly across the busy New York street as she locked her store's front door and pulled on it to double-check it was secure. I really needed to have a long talk with her about walking these city streets alone at night. I guess she really hadn't been doing it alone for a little less than a year now.

As soon as I'd created my personas online, I'd picked up and moved across the damn country. My friends thought I had lost my mind. All for a woman I'd never met.

I knew she was the one.

Watching over her this last year had been enlightening. My little hermit of a bookworm. She was amazing though. Beautiful and gorgeous too. She spent most of her time at her little bookstore, her apartment, or her friend Sara's place.

Men watched her though, and she was completely oblivious to it. Especially the scumbag that frequented her store, sniffing after her. I swear to God my fingers itched to end him, but I held myself back. There were still a few lines I wasn't ready to cross yet. But it was coming.

Making people disappear was mine and my friends' speciality. If anyone was worth doing that for it was my little muse.

Following her from across the street, I wove through the throngs of people as she made her way home. At least she knew to put her phone in her bag and pay attention to her surroundings. Although, I knew she had nothing in it for safety.

I'd learned that when I'd followed her to a coffee shop one day and peeked inside her

bag when she'd been distracted by a conversation some stranger had struck up with her.

The thought of ending him had also passed my mind briefly.

I watched as her curvy figure approached the building she lived in and she made it safely inside. Fingers clenching, I turned and walked into my own apartment building across the street.

We both needed to get some sleep.

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Jesus Christ. Nothing was looking right.

I tugged the calf-length black, lacey dress down further, trying to suck my stomach in. Maybe I should've bought some shapewear? Shaking my head, I leaned forward into the mirror. I didn't know what I was panicking about. It was going to be a store full of rabid women today with a female author. No one will be examining what I'm wearing.

I had taken the time to put earrings in all six holes in my ears and even straightened my hair today. I thought I looked nice, nothing spectacular of course, as I adjusted my black glasses on my face. My make-up was usually neutral but today I'd gone dramatic around my eyes. I'd chosen my black frames because they made the color pop. Even my boring brown eyes looked sparkling today. My ivory skin was set off against the black of my dress and the tattoos I had covering my own body. I glanced down at my smartwatch and cursed. I had thirty minutes to get to the store to meet G. Barlowe before opening.

Jogging out of my slightly messy bedroom, I knew I'd hate myself later when I had to clean up all the haphazardly tossed clothes that hadn't passed the vibe check this morning. I grabbed my tote bag and tossed my phone in it, stepping into my black ballet flats that I kept by the door with my other two pairs of shoes.

I was not one of those girls with a hundred different pairs of shoes and I couldn't even fathom wearing heels as much as most women, much to Sara's dismay. I used my money on Lovelorn and my personal library here at home.

I walked over to my bookshelf grabbing the physical Advanced Reader Copy I'd

been sent from G. Barlowe. I was going to see if she'd personally sign it for me with a message. I'd already read it three times.

My fingers traced over the gorgeous cover. She even got CallSign GhostX to model for her debut novel, coming out of a fog-like smoke, wearing that mask that only showed his green eyes with his blonde hair that occasionally fell into his eyes. His gun was tucked into the waistband of his pants, making him look like a predator that was coming right for you.

The gun and hair did it for me .

I probably needed therapy.

Barlowe was going to specialize in masked, dark romances and I was excited to see where her books went after this. Hugging the book to my chest – because hello, who wanted bent edges from being tossed into my tote? – I jogged back to the door, shutting and locking my apartment behind me.

This was it. I was going to meet one of my favorite people in the world. Was it weird one of my favorite people in the world was a dark romance author that I'd never met? Maybe, but weird was kind of my thing.

I hurried on my way, nerves ratcheting up with every step I took. Stepping out onto the busy New York sidewalk, I turned to follow the stream of pedestrians going in the direction of LoveLorn and tried to calm my breathing.

I really hoped I could make it there with enough time before G. Barlowe, so I could try to decompress. Even though I had a whole three blocks to trek and the pedestrian traffic was insane this morning, it felt like it went quickly. No one was standing outside the doors so I'd managed to beat her here. I unlocked the door and shut it behind me, resealing it. I gave the space a onceover and smiled as I hurried to my

office to drop my bag and book on the desk. I drew my phone out and checked it.

G. Barlowe:

I'm about a half a block away. Just giving you a heads up.

She'd sent that two minutes ago. She was going to be here any minute. Placing my hand on my lower stomach, I let out a shaky breath. Hopefully I didn't do something embarrassing, like pass out or hyperventilate. I couldn't believe this was happening. Hearing a knock from the front of the store, I jumped, nearly dropping my phone.

She was here.

Sliding my phone into my dress pocket, I rushed out of my office towards the front of the store. My eyebrows drew down noticing a tall, broad man outside the door. Surely customers weren't lining up already?

Walking closer to the door, I noticed that the man was extremely attractive. The jeans he was wearing were dark and form fitting, encasing his thick thighs down to the combat boots he was wearing on his feet. My eyes trailed up through the glass taking in the equally form-fitting black shirt he was wearing under a suit coat. I could also see tattoos peeking out where there was exposed skin, everywhere except for his face.

Good God. Whoever this man was shopping for was a lucky woman.

I was nice by nature so planned on opening the door to let him wait inside if he was here to buy a book, although disheartened I couldn't meet G. Barlowe alone. Unlocking the door, I opened it leaving a small space.

"Hi, we're not quite open yet. Are you here for the signing?"

The man smiled at me, his teeth gleaming. His face looked like it belonged on the front of a magazine. Chiseled and covered with bearded scruff. I found myself biting my lower lip as his green eyes ran up and down my body slowly. He quirked his pierced eyebrow at me and slid his hands in his pockets.

“Yes. I’m here for the signing, Waverly.”

I jerked back, eyes widening.

That voice sounded some sort of alarm in my brain, but I shook my head.

His eyes drew slowly down my body in a way that heated the blood in my veins and I found myself caught between opening the door wider and slamming it shut in his face. There was something predatorial about the way he was taking my body in and it caused shivers to run down my spine.

His eyes flicked back up, meeting mine, before he softened his expression again.

“I’m G. Barlowe.”

My brain short-circuited. Excuse the fuck out of me?

“I’m sorry” I began, opening the door wider and gesturing for him to step inside. “You’re G. Barlowe?” I repeated, shutting and locking the door behind him.

Stepping inside my store, he gave it a glance, before facing me, his eyebrows drawing in with some concern.

“Yes, and you’re Waverly. We’ve been talking for the last year.” He slid his tattooed hands into his pockets, looking down at me from his height.

My hands drifted up nervously to my cheeks, overwhelmed, gazing at this man with confusion.

I laughed nervously.

“Are you okay?” he asked, smirking at me.

“I just thought you...”

“You thought I...?”

“Were a woman.” I finished.

G. Barlowe, the man, barked out a laugh.

“I’m sorry for the misunderstanding,” he spoke softly, his green eyes meeting mine. “I don’t think I ever explicitly stated my gender in our discussions or on my online platforms to protect my identity. Is that going to be a problem?”

“Oh, no!” I answered instantly. “I’m just surprised. I guess I’ve learned my lesson about assuming things.” I tucked my hair behind an ear nervously, deciding to change the subject as quickly as possible.

Turning, I walked towards the table I had set up for the signing, gesturing towards the display of his book that I’d set up the evening before.

“Just let me know if you’d like me to change anything,” I said with a shaky voice full of nerves. “I have drinks and food for you, as well as some small snacks for the patrons.”

He towered over me, standing close to my side, hands in his pockets as his eyes

scanned everything I'd done.

Shit, was it too feminine? I was panicking.

"It all looks great, Waverly. You aren't going shy on me now, are you? We've gotten to know each other well throughout the past year. I'm the person you were talking to the whole time" His tattooed hand reached out touching my elbow gently, sending sparks shooting through my body.

I nodded, trying to pull myself together.

"You're right," I stated, taking a deep breath, and smiling up at him. "I'm sorry."

"I think we need to erase that word from your vocabulary," he spoke gruffly. "You have nothing to apologize for. It's a mistake anyone could've made, and now we know, and can move on."

"Of course," I scoffed at myself, turning and guiding him through the bookstore towards the back where my office was.

"I did bring the ARC copy you sent me with GhostX on the cover," I began. "I was wondering if you'd be able to sign it for me before we open and you get overwhelmed."

"For my favorite fan?" he laughed, "Anything."

"So...are you and GhostX friends in real life?" my fingers picked up the book from my desk and I turned, presenting it to him.

His eyes snapped up to mine as he reached out to take it.

“You could say that,” he smiled down at me. “Jesus. How many times have you read this?” he laughed again, looking at the already worn spine.

“Don’t judge me,” I sniffed, sassily. “It’s your fault for writing an amazing book and making women like me obsessed.”

“Obsessed, huh?” he asked, something flashing in his eyes as they met mine again.

My stomach twisted suddenly at something in his tone and expression, and my breath caught.

“Yes?” I said, though, it came out as more of an unsure question.

Suddenly, he leaned towards me, crowding my space. I moved backwards bumping into my desk behind me, hands gripping the edge tightly. He huffed a breath as he reached behind me and stood to his full height again, holding a pen .

He had only been reaching for a pen. Pull yourself together, Waverly . I thought to myself. My body was irrationally heated from his proximity and this was not how I needed to act as a professional. Opening the book to the title page he started writing as I caught myself still staring at his bearded jawline.

“What are you writing?” I asked, curiously.

“It’s a surprise,” he answered before clicking the pen shut. “You’re not allowed to read it until the signing is over,” he demanded, catching me off guard, “And believe me, I’ll know if you have,” he finished with a wicked grin.

My blood heated at the authoritative tone in his voice.

“Ok,” I squeaked.

I needed to breathe.

“I’ve got to go finish up some things in the store. Just make yourself comfortable,” I suggested, gesturing to the mini fridge. “Snacks and drinks are in there or I can have something delivered.”

G. Barlowe smiled down at me, like he knew what he was doing to me. Like, not only did he know what he was doing to me, but he also seemed to be enjoying it.

“I can fend for myself, I think,” he finally said softly.

“Of course you can,” I replied, moving around him and exiting the room.

Stepping into the hallway, I took a minute to lean back against the wall, breathing hard.

What the fuck is going on ?

My palms pressed against my cheeks trying to cool them as I shook my head. You have a store to get ready, Waverly .

I stood, shaking my hands out and moving down the hall into my much more familiar territory.

Get your act together .

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Well, this is going splendidly .

My tattooed hands come up to scrub across my face, brushing my hair out of my eyes. I watch the small, curvy woman leave the room and try to relax my shoulders.

She was even more beautiful in person, well...up close. I'd seen her several times without her knowing over the past year.

When the owner of LoveLorn Books had contacted me a year ago, gushing about how excited she'd be to work on a debut novel with a brand-new indie author, I'd been elated that my plan was set into motion.

I became even more obsessed with her.

I was entirely consumed by her. I'd fucking moved across the United States just to breathe the same air she did, to a closer degree. She didn't walk home alone at night anymore. Not that she knew that . I was always watching from the shadows with my gun tucked into the waistband of my jeans, at my back.

Walking around her desk, breathing in her scent, I smiled at the little things that made Waverly who she was. I was finally in her space, with her permission this time. My fucking hands were shaking. I'd set all this in motion and everything was going so fucking perfectly.

I'd been trying to convince myself over the last year to tell her the truth. Knowing I was misleading her into thinking I was a woman, getting to know her, but I was unable to stop myself.

I'm going to hell .

As a retired agent for the government, I know how to find people and keep tabs on them. I should probably be using my powers for good, not evil, but I was in too deep. I peeked up at the corner of the room where the small camera sat in the vent of the bookstore. I had eyes on her everywhere . My little muse was well-protected. Never alone.

My fingers glided over her tote laying on her desk where she'd carelessly tossed it. I really needed to teach her to be more guarded and less trusting. This was the second time she'd left her bag unattended around me. Glancing at the doorway to make sure she wasn't returning, I tilted my head listening.

Pulling my phone out of my pocket, I pulled up my surveillance app, clicking on the box where she was moving around the front of the store and smiled.

Taking the small tracker out of my other pocket, I placed it in a small pocket in her tote, obviously not used often. Tonight, I'd find out exactly which apartment was hers in that building she lived in.

She was mine. Waverly didn't know it yet but from that first message she'd sent me in reply, she'd sealed her fate.

Glancing at the camera on my phone again, I watched her move around the store, turning on the lights and unlocking the front door. I didn't like the fact she was here alone today. Anything could happen. Sara was off on some damn anniversary weekend trip, though I understood Waverly had to let her go on the trip with her husband. They were decent people, and I was glad Waverly had them, but she was going to have me now, too.

Thinking about my woman closing the store alone at nights and walking back to her

apartment in the city, before I moved here, made my skin crawl. There still wasn't even pepper spray or any other weapon for protection, in her tote bag. We were going to have to have a talk about these things.

I'd sent one of my friends, Liam, to her store under the guise of an inspection. He'd noticed a few faulty wires in her ceilings in different places and given her the card to a reputable electrician.

Sam the electrician, who is also a friend, had then arrived in a timely manner and placed cameras all over her store. Waverly was completely unaware and trusting to a fault. My friends thought I was insane, but still did as I had requested. We'd been through enough together that they knew we owed one another plenty of favors that we would complete, no questions asked.

Everything was working out and falling into place. I could almost do a giddy dance to myself, if I knew Sam and Liam didn't have emergency access to these cameras and were probably watching our first official meeting. I'd definitely have to disconnect the cameras later. Nosy bastards.

I sat in her desk chair, just relishing in the fact that my body was pressed against a place where hers was daily. Her laptop was open, blinking at me with an incoming message.

Well, why not? It wasn't like I hadn't been getting them anyway.

Peering closer I saw it was from a different account than I'd ever seen. Brows furrowed in confusion, I read and reread the message again.

This wasn't this slime bag's first message to my little muse.

Opening my phone I checked my program for monitoring her incoming e-mails and

messages and found they'd been going to her spam folder. My head jerked up, eyeing the message again. Apparently, he was messaging her so frequently now, that they weren't going through the spam folder. I hadn't been checking there.

Rookie move .

This guy seemed to be even more obsessed with her than me, and not in a nice way. My entire body tensed reading through the message again, plotting my next move. Glancing at the doorway I tapped at Waverly's keyboard quickly disposing of and hiding the message, my brain frantically thinking of a plan.

This wasn't going to fuck up mine and my girl's day. I'd handle this asshole later.

I heard footsteps coming down the hallway and shut the laptop down quickly, leaning back in the chair and appearing busy on my phone.

"G, are you ready?" Waverly's voice crossed the room to me and I glanced up at her.

"Garrett." I supplied. "You don't have to call me G or Mr. Barlowe today," I said, smiling warmly at her.

"Garrett," she repeated softly, nodding.

Waverly Barlowe had a nice ring to it.

Standing up and placing my phone in my pocket I came around the desk towards her.

"I'm ready if you are, Waverly."

Following Waverly out to the front of the shop, I watched her flit over to the store entrance and unlock the door for the surprising line that was waiting at the entrance.

Making my way behind the signing table, I took my seat while keeping my eye on my girl. She was too damn friendly. Okay, okay. I know that running a bookstore is a customer service job, but did she have to smile at every fucking person like they'd hung the moon? I only wanted her to look at me like that. What the hell?

I watched the first few women that entered giggle as they approached me and I turned on my own million-dollar-smile. I had an author's image to uphold after all. I kept it comfortably distant though. I didn't want my little muse to think that any of these people had a chance. She was it for me.

I watched her finish greeting the first round of the customers and then start flying around the room to make sure everyone was finding everything okay, checking that the snacks and drinks were still fully-stocked, and that I was okay.

After her fourth or fifth rotation by me I finally spoke again, "Sweetheart."

Her eyes flew up to mine at the term of endearment, "Uh... yeah?"

"You don't have to keep checking on me. You've got enough work cut out for you handling today alone. I'm a big boy and can take care of myself."

I watched her pale skin flush and she nodded rapidly. I loved that she was so agreeable. It would make the surprise later so much sweeter.

I scowled then before greeting the next person in line, when I realized there were far too many men in this store. Yes, I knew that women could be an issue too. My girl could like both. Who knew? But the way she acted definitely spoke differently.

She gravitated towards the men without knowing the effect she was having on them. I watched one man ask for her help putting together something called a book bouquet for his anniversary.

Why did he think that entailed checking out the ass of the store owner?

I was going to kill someone.

“Uh...Mr. Barlowe?”

Shit. Right. I was here to sign books.

“Sorry, what would you like me to write?” I asked, smiling at the next person in line.

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I was having trouble keeping my mind on running the store. I could feel Garrett's eyes on me the entire time. No matter where I was or who I was talking to my body felt heated and when I'd glance over, he was looking.

There was no way a man that looked like that was attracted to me. I must have something on my face.

Sara would kick my ass if she heard me thinking about myself that way .

I chuckled out loud as I restocked the tea bags on the snack table.

I still couldn't believe that G. Barlowe was a man. All this time I'd been thinking I was spilling secrets to a woman friend I'd met online. Serves me right to be that blindly trusting. I had an unfortunate history of doing that.

"Excuse me, ma'am?"

Spinning around with a smile, it quickly dropped off my face at the sight before me.

Seth.

Seth was a man who lived within a couple of blocks of LoveLorn Books and we'd had issues. He had been almost stalker-esque with me. I hadn't had to file a police report or anything, but he kept crossing the smaller lines and boundaries.

"Hello, Seth." I answered curtly, trying to deflect from any further conversation, moving past him.

“Wait. I wanted to ask you something,” he insisted, following right behind like a puppy dog.

“Walk and keep up then. I have a store full of people and I’m the only one working today.”

“I wanted to see if you’d want to go out tonight?” he asked.

Seth was a man of average height, although still taller than me. About five-foot-eleven and more a jock type. The kind of guy that hadn’t grown out of his glory days in high school. He’d peaked as the star quarterback and never went anywhere afterwards.

“Seth. We’ve talked about this. You and I have nothing in common. I’m not interested in you that way. You don’t even read books. There’s no reason for you to even be here today.”

“You don’t have to be such a bitch,” he said to me, “I thought we were becoming friends.”

“Seth. Seriously. You ruined any chances of friendship when you started randomly sending me nudes without my permission, or insinuation I even wanted them.” I blew out a breath exasperated as I turned and looked at him.

His face was flushed red as he glared at me.

“You just think you’re too good for me because you read and shit.” he said, growing louder now.

Glancing around the store at the attention he was attracting, I spoke tersely.

“Listen. I’m not getting into this with you today. I don’t owe you my time or an explanation. I’ve made my feelings clear. If you keep texting or coming by I’m going to get the police involved.”

He moved before I could react, grabbing my arm painfully.

“Listen, you stuck up cunt...”

“I’d think about what you’re saying really thoroughly before continuing.”

A voice like ice spoke from behind me and I glanced up over my shoulder meeting Garret’s green eyes. They’d been so welcoming when I’d come to the door and all day long, but now they looked dark enough to be fathomless pools of anger. His jaw was clenched beneath his trimmed beard and there was a predatory stance to his body frame.

“Or what, asshole?” spoke the smaller man, still not letting me go, and obviously not taking a hint.

Garrett stepped closer, coming around my side to glower down at him.

“Or I’ll have to educate you. Remove your hand. Now.”

Seth scoffed again, sneering up at him.

Apparently the man had a death wish .

Everyone in the store was watching now. How utterly embarrassing and bad for business?

“Okay, gentlemen,” I try to intervene, “Seth, you’re not welcome here. You need to

get your hands off me and leave or I will call the police. Garrett, please go back to signing books. I'll handle this."

"Are you fucking this tool?"

Oh for fucks sake. Seth definitely wasn't the brightest crayon in the box.

Garrett looked like he'd won the lottery. His eyes gleamed like Seth had just given him all the permission in the world he needed. Snapping his hand out he grabbed the stupid man by the front of the shirt. Seth's hold immediately fell off my arm to grab at Garrett's arm, in protest.

Being too fast for him, Garrett had already released the front of his shirt and grabbed him by the back of the neck pushing him in front of him and out the store door. Women turned and pressed their faces to the glass to watch it unfold with their eyes wide.

"It's just like a book." I heard one murmur.

I was going to die of mortification, but also...it kind of was.

Hesitantly stepping up to the window myself, I watched the tattooed, green-eyed dark hero speaking sternly down to the now quivering Seth.

Whatever he said had an effect because Seth finally began nodding abruptly, went pale, and turned, practically sprinting up the sidewalk and into the city crowd.

Several of the women stepped back and eyed me, one was fanning herself.

"You should do more book signings," the redheaded woman spoke, "With him." Her eyes trailed over Garrett's form as he came back into the store still glowering and

straightening his suit jacket.

“Are you okay, Waverly?” he asked, through gritted teeth, still clearly perturbed and giving me a thorough appraisal.

“Uh...yes.” I answered quickly. “Thank you.”

“You won’t be worrying about him any more,” his deep voice assured me as he reclaimed his seat behind the signing table. “Now, where were we ladies?”

Giggles erupted as I watched him, feeling like my brain had short circuited for the second time today. Had that really just happened? A total touch her and die moment right in my own bookstore. Involving me. Apparently I didn’t have to worry about it being too bad for business with the way these women were eating it up.

I should’ve known it would be okay.

Dark romance girls are a different breed.

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When the store closed that night, Waverly was more herself. Her confident online presence was shining through. She was gleeful and bubbly about the success of the Valentine's Day signing event.

We'd sold out of my books and several others throughout the day. She'd been overwhelmed but seemed to thrive in the chaos. She had immediately started a pre-order for signed copies that I could send her at a later date.

As she closed and locked the door behind the last customer she turned grinning at me, eyes sparkling, as I looked down at her with affection.

"That was the best event I've ever had. Thank you so much for agreeing to this." she stepped into me, wrapping her arms around me in a hug and my body froze, finally feeling her curves pressing into me, stealing my breath for a moment.

And I'd been so proud of myself. I'd not killed anyone for touching her today.

My arms wrapped around her drawing her closer to me, pressing her tighter against me before she could back away.

"I'm glad I could help, sweetheart." I couldn't stop myself from murmuring the endearment.

"You probably have big plans for the evening in the city, huh?" she asked, backing up, gazing up at me with those eyes of hers.

"No, actually. I'm a pretty low-key guy. What about yourself?" I asked, trying to hide

the fact that her moving away from me didn't rock me to my core. I needed her against me again, immediately.

Her head moved as she took in the store adoringly, still basking in the success of the day.

"I'll probably save restocking and reorganizing until tomorrow morning," she informed me. "I may go home, reread your book, and have a glass of wine. Maybe a bubble bath."

My body tensed. Fuck . Waverly in a bathtub. Wish I'd had access to get cameras into her apartment.

Fucking hell, Garrett . I thought to myself. That was crossing some boundaries. I may be an obsessed stalker at this point, but apparently I drew the line at observing her naked without her knowledge.

See, I was perfectly sane. This was fine.

"So..." I began, my voice lower, knowing the next steps in my plan. I was actually nervous, but it was now or never. She hadn't been able to hide her attraction to me all day. Still oblivious to my little secret. She was about to get the second shock of the day.

I knew what this woman liked. I had inside knowledge of things she'd told me about loving and added them to the book I'd written. Some of the scenes I'd written were explicitly to get a reaction from her, seeing what she'd craved.

Waverly had admitted so many things to me. We'd discussed what she fantasized about sexually, her wildest dreams written in my books, and I'd encouraged her detailing the confessions.

Never guessing the person she was telling was a living embodiment of the men in the books she loved.

“Well, I can let you out now...” she trailed off, seeming reluctant to say goodbye. I smirked at the hesitation, thankful she was as drawn to me as I was to her. “Or I could grab my things and we could walk some of the way? If the hotel is close?”

Hotel. I lived across the street from her. My naive little muse.

“I’ll walk with you.” I answered immediately, needing to get her away from me for a few moments. “Take your time, wrap things up.”

“I do need to send a couple of emails. I’ll just be a few minutes.” Then she turned, disappearing down the small hall to her office.

It was time.

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Reaching behind me to grab my shirt, I yanked it over my head leaving my tattooed body on display.

Covered in tattoos from my neck to my feet, I flexed, the anticipation of what I was doing settling in. I needed to keep my head to play a little bit. At this rate I was going to shove her back onto one of her pretty displays and fuck her senseless. That was a part of the plan though.

Taking the mask from my bag that I'd placed by the signing table, I pulled it over my head, making sure it was in place.

Waverly was going to be in for the shock of her life when she realized G. Barlowe wasn't just the dark romance author she'd come to know and love, but also the masked content creator, Callsign GhostX as well.

Tucking my gun back into the waistband of my pants, for aesthetic purposes of course, I swiped on my phone to watch her in her office, typing out some emails, oblivious to what was happening in her store. Smirking under the cloth covering my face, thrill raced through me.

She'd fight it at first. Deny she wanted this. But I knew her. I was in her head. I had created her darkest fantasies on paper to gauge what she wanted and desired. Now I was going to give it to her.

I watched her close her laptop, rubbing her hands over her face before she glanced at the book I'd signed earlier today. She'd been a good girl. She hadn't read what I'd written. I would've definitely known if she had.

She was done waiting though.

And so was I.

I watched her eyes find the doorway to her office as she grabbed the book, my pulse suddenly thundering in my ears at the anticipation as she opened it. Flipping the few pages to where I'd signed it, I watched her start reading. I saw the second she got to the revelation. Her body tensing, her eyes scanning the words, reading them again and again.

I watched her stand, pushing her chair back as she flipped a few pages ahead and behind. But nothing else was written. Waverly read the words I'd written three more times, tracing the words with her fingers like it would change what laid on the page.

"Come on, little muse." I growled out loud to myself, my body tense and ready to play. "Make the right decision."

Watching her chest rise and fall with a deep breath, her shaky hands placed the book back on the desk. She seemed to be muttering something to herself. Probably psyching herself up. Trying to take in the second surprise of the day.

Little muse, I'd written.

Finally meeting you in person is amazing. I know it was surprising to find G. Barlowe was a man, but I feel like we've connected this last year. You, Waverly, inspire me. You are the muse for my book from the time we first spoke onward. I know what you want. I know what you need. And if you make the right decision, I can give it all to you. I knew it from the first time I saw you that we were meant to be together.

Come out, come out, wherever you are, little muse.

G. Barlowe/GhostX

My girl knew I wasn't just G. Barlowe now. I was GhostX as well. I was the man she flirted with every single day. Brave behind her keyboard she would say the naughtiest things to me.

Now it was time to back it up.

Moving into a darkened corner of the store where she couldn't see me, I watched her exiting the office. Being a good girl and making the right choice, coming to me, answering my unspoken call. Turning the phone off and sliding it in my pocket, I stood against the wall, my body wrought with need and anticipation. The thrill of the chase.

I heard her footsteps nearing the store front, and saw the minute she came into view. The way her breath came in pants. Sure, she was a little scared, caught off guard, but I knew she wanted this. Craved and needed it. I watched her eyes scan the store, brows furrowing at my disappearance as she let out a shaky breath.

Her eyes closed, hands clenching at her sides, and I growled softly. She was my prey, walking right into my trap, hesitant but willing.

"Garrett..." she whispered softly, shakily. But her voice was huskier than it had been all day. This was turning her on. I tilted my head, trying to decide how I wanted to play this. Moving behind the bookshelves close to the corner I was hiding in, I knew she still couldn't see me in the darkened room.

"Little muse..." I taunted, watching her body tense at the sound, head jerking to where my voice was coming from.

"What are you doing? Is this some kind of joke? Are you filming this?" she huffed

out a laugh, trying to play this off, even as her eyes darted around searching. I watched them catch on the door, watched her contemplate running, then saw the moment she fucking gave in to the game we were playing. My body roared in triumph.

“I think you know what I’m doing, Waverly.” I growled again. “I’m giving you what you crave. What you need. What you inspire me to provide you. Each page of that book I wrote was you and me.” I’m practically panting with need, trying to keep my voice steady. “I’m going to bring it to life for you, little muse. If I get my hands on you...”

I watch her breathing pick up as I walk around the end of the bookshelf and she finally takes me in as GhostX. Live in the flesh. Not on screen. Not able to hide behind her keyboard, sassing, talking a big game.

Her eyes drank me in like I was water and she was in a desert, her pulse was pounding in her throat.

“If I get my hands on you...I’m going to fuck you.” I finish, tilting my head predatorily.

She scoffed, like I was joking.

The brat .

“Garrett...”

“Ghost...” I interrupted.

Her eyes flashed to mine and I briefly saw defiance in them. Craved her to push it.

“Ghost,” she corrected herself, rolling her eyes.

She’d be rolling them for an entirely different reason in a minute.

“We just met.” She finished, like that ended everything here and now. I barked out a laugh.

“We’ve known each other for over a year and I know the things that make you wet.” I snapped, my control breaking. “I know your darkest fantasies. I know what you crave. Things that I know no one has ever given you. I’ve created this for you. I won’t stop until I show you it’s real. This is real. I want you, little muse. And I’m going to have you. You’re going to try to fight it, but you want it. You and I both know that.”

Her breathing was audible now, as I took a step forward and she automatically stepped back. I smirked although she couldn’t see it. I watched her eyes scan me from top to bottom, taking every inch of me in, as they darkened with a heat she couldn’t deny.

“Are you going to play nice?” I growled.

“Are you?” she quipped, cocking her head sassily with her hand on her hip.

“No.”

Her pupils dilated and I saw her move before she thought about it. Turning to duck away and take off towards the back of the store.

My strides were longer, and I covered the distance before she’d taken a handful, my tattooed hand shot out, grabbing the back of her dress and yanking her back into me as she gasped. Her back hit my chest as my arm banded around her waist in a firm,

unyielding grip.

Reaching behind me, I pulled my gun out, making sure she saw it as I laid it on the display table behind her. She knew I wasn't going to hurt her, but she did know that I knew that the thought of it, the uncertainty, turned her on. I felt her breathing pick up under my arm and she started shaking.

I moved my cloth covered face up her neck to her jaw, deeply breathing in her scent. Her arousal and the slight trepidation. The curvy body I held in my hands was trembling, but my girl wasn't scared.

My other hand found her neck, tilting her head up until her eyes found mine, her pupils blown wide.

“You look so pretty when you're trying to tell yourself you don't want this.” I growled. “I had to spend my day watching you flit around this store talking to everyone, even other fucking men. All I wanted to do was kick everyone the fuck out and throw you on that signing table. Fuck signing and marking your book. I wanted to mark you. Permanently. Mine.”

Waverly whimpered at my words as I continued teasing her skin with my lips through the mask, my hand flexing on her throat as my other one drifted lower, seeking the heat between her legs. Even through her dress and panties I could feel her heat.

“Don't act like you don't want this.” I spoke against her neck. “You and I both know what makes you wet.”

Watching her cheeks and neck flush with a combination of desire and embarrassment was intoxicating. Tugging her dress up and kicking her legs apart, my hand finally met her with less barrier.

Fucking soaked. Even through her panties, she was dripping. Pressing in I used the damp fabric as friction rubbing as her hips jerked to meet my touch.

“We just met,” I growled mockingly against her ear as my other hand still held her throat, “but your body knows me. Wants me. Needs me.” I pressed my fingers harder, rubbing her clit in fast circles.

“Fuck,” her voice was shaking as her eyes fluttered shut and I tightened my grip on her throat.

“Open those pretty fucking eyes and look at me when I’m touching you.” I ordered.

Her brown eyes opened, meeting mine, begging.

“Tell me what you want,” I panted as I continued my assault on her clit, where she was throbbing for me. I was going to make her say it, even if I knew what she fucking liked.

I watched Waverly fight it, even as her hips were rocking against my fingers, and I stilled my motions. Simply pressing into her with a firm grip instead of providing the friction she needed.

I jerked her head up at a sharper angle and squeezed her neck harder.

“Tell. Me. What. You. Fucking. Want .” I ordered her.

“I want you to fuck me.” she admitted, before her mind caught up to the words, her eyes widening.

“Yeah, you fucking do.” I said, pulling at the wet fabric between her legs until it gave, ripping open and exposing her flesh to my fingers. The calloused tips of them

finally met her soaked center and I groaned at the contact. The evidence of how much she wanted this.

I zeroed in on her swollen clit again, pinching it as she cried out and bucked against me.

Turning her to face me as she whimpered in protest, I picked her up under her thighs, slamming her down onto the display table, the metal sound of my gun rattling, books rustling and merchandise flying, everything crashing to the floor in the silence of the store. I yanked the top of her dress down exposing her heaving chest.

Sliding my mask up beneath my nose I bent forward placing open-mouthed kisses down her neck to her cleavage, biting and sucking, marking and claiming. I reached up, yanking the lace covering her breasts down below them using the cups to keep them lifted.

My lips found one of her hardened nipples, my teeth clamping down as she bucked up into me.

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“Waverly, what are you doing?” I thought frantically as my body heated, his lips circling my nipple, teeth clamping down, causing my body to bow under him.

“Letting a masked man fuck you in your bookstore, duh!” my darker side answered gleefully.

So fucking unhelpful.

My brain was racing with too many revelations for one day.

G. Barlowe was in fact Garrett Barlowe who is clearly a man.

Garrett Barlowe was GhostX.

G. Barlowe – who is a man and also GhostX – had written his debut novel about me .

This must’ve been the dangers of social media my generation grew up hearing about and tossed out the window without a second thought.

My brain flashed back to this dark god between my legs, grinding against me in the middle of the bookstore I owned. Thanking myself for shutting the lights off, I was torn between fighting him off and putting a much saner end to things, and saying fuck it and pulling him closer.

His calloused fingers were bruising in their hold on me and his kisses were claiming and thorough. I felt my lace dress, my favorite lace dress , tear under his hands as he completely removed my bra.

This man had completely ruined my favorite underwear and my favorite dress in the span of five minutes.

“Could you at least stop ruining my clothes?” I snapped without thinking. He barked out a laugh against my skin, rising up over me in the nearly black room.

“There she is,” his voice rumbled. “Finally going to play?”

I sat up straight again, my naked chest coming against his bare one, staring into those green eyes I should’ve known were familiar for a reason.

“You led me on for a year doing this.” I finally state, hands shoving him, distracted and furious suddenly.

Garrett was quick, hands grabbing my wrists and pinning them behind my back.

“Don’t even pretend to be mad at me, little muse. You want this so badly you’re dripping on your display table in the middle of your bookstore. You have no idea the things I’ve done for you. I’ve been watching you. Protecting you. Following you.”

My breath caught and I felt my cheeks flush, torn between being infuriated and embarrassed and...

“Wait. What?!” I gasped realizing what he’d just said.

Garrett...Ghost? Fuck. He grinned at me, as the next revelation he’d spilled that rocked my world. He’d been following me? I took a shuddering breath.

“I can’t help my body’s natural reaction to stimuli.” I snapped, sounding a lot braver than I felt. I at least had to put up some kind of a fight.

He growled behind the mask, his eyes narrowing on me.

“This isn’t your body’s natural reaction to stimuli though, is it, Waverly?” he rumbled into my ear causing chills to race down my spine. “You’re only ever this desperate when you read the pages of your romance books.”

I opened my mouth to argue but a free hand shot up, wrapping around my throat and choking off what I was about to say.

“No man has ever made you feel the way I’m making you feel. So, we can do this with you pretending to fight me, because, baby girl, I’d love the chase. Or you can lay here and take it like the good little girl I know you can be.”

Fuck this man and his words. All traces of feminism had left my body. I craved, literally was panting, to submit under him. I wanted to lay there and take it like a good girl.

I’d started today as a simple bookstore owner and was ending it as the main character in one of the books I read.

Garrett must’ve felt my body relaxing against his, under his. Because his head tilted as he leaned back. I could almost feel the smirk he had on his face.

His huge, tattooed hand released my neck and while he hadn’t been completely closing off my air supply, I took a huge gulp of oxygen, overwhelmed. Before I could gather myself he was trailing that hand down between my thighs, two thick, long fingers sliding inside me easily to the knuckle.

My hands squirmed in his other hand’s grip behind my back as I bit back a moan and fuck if my thighs weren’t already trembling for him.

Sliding the digits out of me to the tip and then thrusting them back in hard, he drew a cry from my parted lips turning his wrist, twisting them inside of me. My thighs relaxed, opening wider for him and he praised me.

“That a girl, little muse.” he rumbled, sounding a little out of breath himself. His eyes tracked down my body to watch where his fingers played inside of me. “Look at you, taking these fingers so fucking well, even though you wish it were my dick.”

My eyes narrowed even as I moaned louder as he found that elusive spot inside me that had me jerking my hips against his hand.

“Don’t worry,” he continued. “You’ll be coming around my cock tonight, too.” he promised, darkly before starting to move his fingers in a rhythm against my inner walls that had my eyes fluttering shut.

His grip on my wrists loosened but I didn’t shove him away, my hands came up around his broad neck, holding on as he finger fucked me into oblivion. I probably should’ve been embarrassed by the noises that indicated how wet I was for him, but they seemed to goad him onward harder and faster, and I wasn’t in the frame of mind to fight this anymore.

“Garrett...” I gasped, voice sounding broken and desperate, so unlike its usual tone.

“That’s it,” he praised, “You’re going to come all over my fingers, aren’t you, Waverly?” he panted behind the mask. Obviously not as detached from this scenario and as in control as he wanted me to think.

I couldn’t stop myself. I flipped his mask up, just over his lips, where it had fallen back down. The ones my brown eyes had been drawn to over and over all day long as he smiled and laughed and flirted with other people, and kissed him hard. He froze momentarily, seemingly shocked at my sudden onslaught of affection then he was

kissing me back harder and deeper.

My nails dug into the back of his neck as his thumb found my clit, working together to bring me to the edge of an orgasm so intense I felt like I couldn't take a full breath.

“Be a good girl and come for me,” he spoke low against my mouth, panting, before kissing me messily. All teeth and tongue as he swallowed my cries and I let go, shuddering and rocking desperately against his fingers.

He groaned along with me, the wet sounds growing even louder as my orgasm went on and on, and he kept moving his thumb pressing against my swollen clit until I was trying to back away on the display table, my entire body quivering as my moans turned into broken sobs at the sensitivity.

“We're not done until I say we're done,” he snapped, withdrawing his fingers from me and shoving me down against the table again.

Throwing my curvy legs over his broad shoulders before I could argue, he was ducking and pressing his mouth against my drenched core. His mask still covered everything except his mouth as my hips bucked up against his lips at the first open-mouthed suck against my core.

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F uck.

Waverly was absolutely drenched. She tasted like nirvana. I wanted to die here in between her thighs. Suffocate me and take me now, death. Her orgasm had rocked through her, her pussy clamping down like a vice around my fingers. I'd barely been able to keep moving them in and out of her.

If she thought I was anywhere near done making her come after that kind of reaction, she was delusional. Her pants were frantic as she shook on the table, still trying to get away from the stimulation. Fucking adorable she thought she could win.

Her heels kicked my back, pressing down, and it only brought her core harder and tighter against my mouth. I reached up the sides of her and grabbed her flailing arms at the elbows firmly, holding them tight, and yanking her down more securely against me to where she couldn't back away.

Her beautiful eyes met mine trying to glare at me but they were too busy rolling back in her head. Her whimpers and moans were completely frantic. I pulled back slightly, knowing I probably cast a deranged image. My mask up over my nose, my lips and chin covered in her.

"Gonna be a good little slut and come for me, little muse?" I breathed.

"I'm too sensitive," she cried.

"You'll be fine. You can take it. Apparently, you haven't been with a real man before if you're trying to tap out after one orgasm." I chuckled, dipping my head and

driving my tongue back inside her as her breath shuddered out in a long moan.

“Fuck you, Garrett.”

I pulled back again, “When I’m in the mask, I’m Ghost. Where’s that feral little queen that was always so brave during my live streams?” I growled against her wet core. “In over your head, princess?” My tongue licked up her pussy finding her clit before sucking it into my mouth hard as she practically screamed, cursing me.

My teeth found their way into the mix, nibbling at it, causing just a bite of pain, and there it was. She shattered and I’ll be damned if she didn’t scream Ghost into her darkened bookstore.

My cock was so hard it was standing up out of my open pants, the head far over the waistband of my boxers. Its pierced tip glinting in the security lighting.

Fuck. The cameras were still on. Oh well. I’d kick the guys asses if they watched it. At least we’d have a recording of our first time. See, I could be sentimental. Romantic even. It was Valentine’s Day, after all.

Releasing her when she finally stopped writhing on the table, she rose up on her elbows glaring at me and panting.

“You’re such an asshole,” she muttered, between gasps of air, looking beautifully destroyed. Waverly hadn’t seen anything yet.

Dropping my pants and boxers, her eyes widened to the point that I thought they were going to roll out of her head and onto the shop floor.

“Like what you see, little muse?” I asked, gripping my cock at its base and squeezing.

“I don’t know where you think you’re going to put that, but it’s not going to fit anywhere in me,” she laughed softly, if not a bit hysterically.

Fucking brat.

“Oh. It’ll fit. You’ll take every single inch. Every single fucking piercing and you’ll like it. You’ll even thank me for it.” I growled, reaching out and grabbing her neck, yanking her more upright. “You going to do this the easy way or the hard way? We both know you want it, so even if you try to deny this, I’m not listening. Your pussy is crying for me, baby girl, and I’m taking what’s mine.”

“You’re fucking insane,” she breathed, even as her hips scooted closer to the edge of the display table, her legs wrapping around my waist.

Smirking, I slammed her down onto her back again, her head making a thud against the table and my hand tightened. She fucking moaned. Such a fucking good girl.

“This is insane. You’re insane. I’m insane.” Waverly was muttering under me as I guided my pierced dick to her soaked entrance.

I ignored her, focusing on the feel of her against me where I wanted her most and groaned.

“I need you to count for me,” I demanded, finally yanking my mask all the way off and flinging it down on the display table beside my gun.

“Excuse me?” she asked, caught off guard.

“Count my piercings, little muse” I repeated, “Or we’re going to have to start this process all over.”

“Piercings?” she repeated, eyes wide, breathless.

“Happy Valentine’s Day,” I grinned at her, even though I was being driven mad, sliding in just a bit to the first one.

“Count.” I demanded again.

“One,” Waverly obeyed me perfectly. I was so proud.

“Good girl, little muse. Jesus, you’re so fucking tight. It really has been a while hasn’t it?” I asked my thumb sliding against her clit, stroking it to get her to relax for me.

She leaned up suddenly on her elbows to look down where I was sliding into her.

“You have got to be kidding me...” she breathed taking in my Jacob’s Ladder piercing. Five straight barbells lined the bottom of my length spaced evenly apart, the first already inside her.

Placing my large tattooed hand on her chest, I guided her back down on the table before sliding further inside her, raising my eyebrow at her.

“Two...three...four...” she groaned, somehow managing to be sassy at the same time. Gripping her by the throat again, I smirked then laughed out loud.

“Two more and then some” I reassured her, cocky myself, no pun intended. “I know you can take it, you’re doing so well.” I lowered my voice causing her eyes to heat, enjoying the praise.

Slamming home, her eyes fluttered closed as I clenched my hand around her throat tighter, silently making my demand.

“Focus, little muse.” I murmured.

“Five and six, asshole,” she breathed, arching under me beautifully.

“That’s my good, perfect little muse.” I growled, before releasing her throat. Grabbing her waist with my large hands I started a relentless pace, sliding out to the tip before slamming home again just to watch her gasp.

“Do I have to count every time?” she asked, choking on a moan.

“Brat,” I growled, continuing the pace, relentlessly.

“You like it.” she panted, wrapping her legs around me tightly.

“Just hold on.” I rasped, snapping my hips against hers furiously. Her hands scrambled to find purchase on the edge of the display table as I took her roughly, looking down at where I slid in and out of her, my piercings glistening with her. She was beautiful like this.

“You’re so pretty stretched out around me, little muse.” I praised as her dark brown eyes met mine in the dim light. Waverly could be mad, she could be upset all she wanted, but she wanted this. She needed this. This wasn’t some scene reenactment, it fucking meant something, we were forever.

“You going to be a good girl and come on my cock for me?” I panted as she writhed under me. I ran my hands down her smooth thighs, gripping her under the knees and pushing her legs back nearly to her ears, picking up the pace.

The display table’s legs screeched across the store’s floor as I followed, not letting the pace end for a moment as my girl’s cries grew more desperate.

“Garrett!” she cried, and fuck if I was going to correct her this time.

“That’s it, baby. Let everyone know whose little muse you are.” I demanded.
“Fucking scream the store down and give it to me. Let go for me, and scream.”

Her thighs were trembling and her knuckles were white on the edge of the table and she had the audacity to shake her head no at me.

“It's okay! I’ve already come twice, it's too much,” she mewled.

That wasn’t going to do. Tapping out after two measly little orgasms. We had some training to do, my muse and I.

I leaned over her, breath hot against her face, bending her in half, and growled against her ear.

“I’m not stopping until you come again. I want to feel you squeeze my dick so tight inside this pretty little pussy I can hardly move, angel. So be a good girl and come for me, Waverly. I know you can do it.”

My girl clenched, seizing before shuddering as another orgasm wracked her body from head to toe, but I kept going, groaning at the sensation of her wet heat clenching rhythmically around my pierced length.

“You’re such a good girl, fuck, you feel perfect coming around me like this, little muse” I affirmed before slamming home and following her over the edge.

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What. The fuck. Just happened? I lay under this six-foot-six menace, pinned to the display table in my bookstore, my entire world upside down.

Trembling still with the force of my orgasms, my hands found the expanse of his back, almost soothingly as he panted by my ear, letting my legs fall back down to the sides of his hips. My core still spasmed around him with aftershocks and he growled, it rumbling low in his throat at the feel.

“We really need to talk about you stalking me.” I muttered, dazed.

Barking out a laugh, he raised up to look down at me with those piercing green eyes. His blonde hair was tousled and falling into his eyes.

“Listen, while this started off in an unorthodox way, I never actually lied to you. I just omitted some of the information.”

My eyes narrowed at him. He wasn’t wrong, the smug asshole.

“Following me home?” I questioned, pushing him up while he pulled out and I sat up, my world still slightly spinning. I felt exposed, my only clothing not ruined was my bra, flung somewhere on the store floor.

Garrett pulled up his pants tighter, fastening them, seeming to notice.

“For the record, you’re beautiful and you have nothing to hide,” he spoke, walking over to his bag beside the signing table and pulling out a bundle of clothing. “But I refuse to let you walk home in New York City naked,” he continued, walking back

and handing them to me.

“You packed me clothes?” I scowled up at him. “You have a lot of nerve, assuming this is where we’d end up.”

Quirking his eyebrow, his hand snapped out, clasping around my throat again.

A girl could get used to this. Dammit, Waverly, you’re supposed to be upset.

“Looks like we ended up right where I planned.” he growled.

“Following me home?” I asked standing and slipping into the leggings. They fit. Of course he obviously stalked me long enough to find out my clothing size. I really should be more mad about this.

“I live right across the street from you, for now.” he said, simply. Like this was inevitable and not up for discussion.

“You are literally insane.” I stated, yanking the long-sleeved shirt over my head. I swam in it and glanced down. It was obviously his. Asshole was practically peeing on me.

“Listen,” he began. “I know this is a lot. Today, tonight, the hot sex.”

I glared while he laughed again.

“But it is inevitable. You know me. You may not have known I was a man and you may have thought I was a woman, but we’re friends, and I think we just became lovers,” he smirked again.

“Or we did the friends, to lovers, to enemies,” I snapped, moving to stand toe to toe with him. Glaring up at him from my five-foot-four height, and he glowered right

back at me, a towering giant.

“I’ll agree to date you, court you, woo you,” he conceded, “For society’s sake. To ease your troubled little mind. But we both know this is happening. We both know that you dream about this, want it, and wished for it. So. We do this the easy way or the hard way.”

“Date me? Woo me?” I laughed. “Now you’re being chivalrous?”

“I’ll be anything you want me to be, Waverly.” he said, his tone more serious now, leaving no room for argument. “I’ll be your lover, your fantasy, your friend, and your family. Whatever you need me to be, baby girl.”

This man was serious. I should call a therapist. Was I actually going to agree to this? Was I going to let this insanity slide?

“Three dates, to see if we fit.” I finally conceded, unnerved by my easy acceptance of something that should be a giant red flag.

“Oh, we fit.” he argued, crossing his thick, tattooed arms.

“Never know.” I shot back. “By this time next Valentine’s Day I could have a whole new boy toy.”

Something inside of him snapped as he took a few steps closer to me, causing me to back up against the display table where he’d thoroughly claimed me.

“Consider yourself off the fucking market.” He seethed, green eyes meeting mine. “For this Valentine’s Day until forever, Waverly.”

“Okay.” I squeaked.

I guess I could let it slide. Why shouldn't I live out my fantasy?

Happy Valentine's Day!