



Wild Match

Author: Amy Bellows

Category: LGBT+

Description: Leo is constantly getting photographed doing things he shouldn't. Like multiple alphas at the same time, for instance. In a room full of other people.

The scandals are adding up, and his agent isn't happy.

When he almost loses the lead role in a high budget film because of his wild behavior, he's given an ultimatum: settle down with a boring alpha to clean up his image, or his agent won't represent him anymore.

The problem is finding a respectable alpha who will have him. That's where the Perfect Match Agency comes in. They promise to match him with an upstanding member of society in exchange for a little publicity.

Leo doesn't expect to like the guy. He certainly doesn't expect to be so drawn in by him that he goes into heat early.

But Leo has always been a little wild...

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I approach my agent's secretary with the brightest smile I can manage.

“Linus! It's so good to see you. I brought you coffee. Dark roast with oat milk and no sugar, right?”

He takes the paper cup from me warily. “Yes. Greg is currently with another client. Please take a seat.”

“Okay. I have coffee for him too. Would you mind telling him? I wouldn't want it to get cold,” I say.

Linus nods. “Of course. But it might be a while. His meeting just started.”

He double-booked me. I can't believe it. I heard the photos that were leaked from the party last weekend were bad, but I'm an actor. Lots of actors do wild things. Besides, he's the one who suggested I go to that party in the first place.

I take a seat on one of the plastic chairs in the reception area. The coffee cup in my hand gets progressively cooler as I wait. I try not to shake my leg or fidget. If I project calmness, I will feel calm. That's what my life coach keeps telling me. But I'm not calm, goddamn it. I'm nervous that I fucked up the one good thing I have in my life. Moving from place to place every few months to shoot films has completely destroyed my friendships, and I've never had good luck with men. If those photos make it harder for me to act, I have nothing except for the money I earned in the process. And I've learned the hard way that money isn't all it's cracked up to be.

I throw away the coffee once it's luke-warm. Greg must be truly upset with me.

At noon, a young omega in a suit emerges from Greg's office. He walks with the easy confidence of someone who knows he's beautiful. His face is fresh and his eyes bright with excitement. He can't be older than eighteen. I remember visiting this office when I was his age. Greg is one of the best agents in the business, and I felt incredibly lucky to meet with him.

Now all I feel is dread as Greg waves at me from his office door.

"Hey." I plaster on a smile again. Greg doesn't smile back. He simply walks into his office without a word.

I rush across the lobby and try to ignore the way Linus doesn't bother to look at me. When I was booking high-budget rom-coms back-to-back he was friendly and encouraging. Other actors warned me that this industry turns its back on people, but I didn't expect it to happen so soon. I mean, sure, I've been doing TV shows instead of movies for two years now, and those TV shows haven't taken off the way we hoped they would, but that doesn't mean my career is over. I was offered a role in a superhero movie last week. Greg was thrilled.

The way he sits at his desk with his focus on his computer instead of me makes me think he isn't thrilled anymore.

"Sit down." His tone is low and clipped.

I do as he says. The sleek leather couch is new, just like the rest of the modern décor in his office. Greg is always up-to-date with the times. That's why he's such a good agent.

I wonder if the boy I saw leaving is his new version of me.

"You were photographed having an orgy last weekend," he says, still staring at his

computer screen.

“Um, yes. It was at that party you told me to go to. The one with all the industry professionals. I was trying to network—”

“You were naked in the photo and sucking two cocks at the same time.” He picks up his phone and swipes the screen a few times before handing it to me. There I am, naked and kneeling in front of two alphas, both of their dicks in my mouth.

I wince. The photos are worse than I thought.

Greg takes the phone back. “It looks like a porn shoot.”

“The party devolved into an orgy. I got caught up in the moment. I’m sorry.”

Greg swipes to another photo of me. In this one I’m standing at the helm of a sailboat, completely nude.

“I was really drunk. The house was on a private beach—”

He flips to the next photo. I’m naked again and sitting on an alpha’s lap, his cock visibly penetrating my ass. The alpha is snorting white powder from my shoulder with a rolled-up dollar bill.

I don’t remember that. I must have gotten so drunk, I blacked out.

“I promise I wasn’t doing cocaine,” I say. “There were a lot of drugs at that party, but I stuck to alcohol.”

Greg rolls his eyes, which is fair. “I don’t care what you were on, Leo. All that matters is that you’re clickbait now. X-rated, graphic clickbait.”

“I didn’t know someone was taking photos. We were required to surrender our phones when we got to the party. They had a security team and everything.”

Greg sets his phone down and sighs. “That superhero movie you were cast in is a family film. I got a call from the casting director yesterday. They’re thinking about going with someone else.”

My heart sinks. “Oh.”

“Yeah. Oh. What were you thinking? Six months ago there was that sex tape of you and your ex-boyfriend, but at least I could tell producers that it was a private moment he exploited for money. And then there was that possession charge. But again, I could say the drugs weren’t yours because the cops were able to prove that was your ex’s fault, too. But these photos are too much. I can’t make any more excuses for you. Either you clean up your image, or I can’t represent you anymore.”

I swallow hard. My ex-boyfriend, Dave, was a huge mistake. But I was so lonely from the constant moving, I didn’t see it at first. I even believed him when he said someone hacked his phone after a video of us having sex ended up online. I believed the drugs weren’t his at first, too. But after a while, the lies piled up, and it was impossible to deny what kind of alpha he really was.

“I’m sorry,” I say. As if that matters.

“Don’t be sorry, be smarter. You can’t have sex with people who will sell photos of you to the highest bidder.”

That means I can’t have sex with anyone then. The only time I’ve gotten laid since Dave was at that party. I was trying to get over him.

“Okay. I’ll be more careful. I promise. I can even call the casting director and tell her

I'm sorry."

Greg shakes his head. "That won't do any good. You need to do something more than that." He picks up a stack of papers on his desk and hands them to me. The title on the top page reads, "Perfect Match Agency."

"What is this?" I ask.

"Damage control. Perfect Match Agency is looking for a celebrity to use their services and post about their experience on social media. It's a paying gig, but more importantly, it's a way to publicly settle down with an alpha."

I scan the first page. They're a matchmaking company that finds a perfect biological match for their clients through scientific testing. There's an interview as well to ensure the match is compatible personality-wise too.

"You want me to get married to a stranger?" That seems like a worse idea than dating Dave.

"Of course not. You don't have to get married to the guy. Just meet him and live together for a while until the bad publicity dies down."

My stomach twinges at the idea of that. "Don't people who sign up for this service want to meet someone they can marry?"

"Technically, you could marry the guy if you're worried about that. From what I've read, the agency is really good at what they do. They've assured me that they can pair you with someone who has an impeccable reputation. In other words, someone with enough money and status that they won't be tempted to sell you out to the tabloids. It will be a win-win for both your reputation and your love life."

Greg's really laying it on thick. Over the last few years, I've noticed that he does this sometimes when he's trying to sell me on a role I don't want. Is that what this matchmaking scheme is to him? Just another role?

"What alpha with an impeccable reputation would want to be paired with me?" I ask.

"You're a handsome movie star. I'm sure they won't have any trouble finding a boring guy who wants to be with you."

So Greg's plan is to find a guy who wants me because of my appearance and my fame.

I might as well go back to Dave.

"What if I don't want to do this?" I ask.

"Then you need to find new representation. This is the final straw for me. If you won't stop doing stupid shit that gets posted online, and you won't clean up your image, I won't be able to find you work anyway."

If Greg can't find me work, a different agent won't be able to either.

I have to do this or my career is dead.

"Fine," I agree.

I've dated men who only wanted me for my appearance and fame before. I guess there's no reason why I can't do it again. At least this time, I'll get something more than a broken heart out of it.

Greg finally smiles. "Great. I'll call the agency and get you booked for your first

appointment. A camera crew will be there to film everything. I'll send a stylist to dress you before you go. Be sure to keep your phone on you. We want to get the ball rolling on this as soon as possible."

I force myself to thank him. He's just trying to help me. If it wasn't for him, I never would have had a career in the first place. But when the meeting is over, and I'm finally alone in the elevator, I cry.

Hopefully no one got a video of that.

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Julius peers at me from his perch atop the cat tower.

“You have to come down here! I have a treat for you. Look.” I hold up the can of tuna I opened for him. He considers it skeptically, but doesn’t come down.

“Damn you. We have to go to the vet. If you won’t come down on your own, I’ll make you come down.”

His silver tail swishes back and forth, as if the idea of me trying such a thing amuses him.

I pull out my phone and call my omega dad.

He answers on the second ring. “Good morning. How is my favorite son?”

I’m his only son, so being his favorite doesn’t mean much.

“Julius won’t come down from his cat tower, and we have an appointment with the vet in less than thirty minutes.”

Dad laughs. “Why are you calling me about this?”

“Because he likes you. He rarely comes down from his cat tower unless you’re here.”

It’s very annoying. Julius will sit on Dad’s lap and purr while he pets him. If I try to pet Julius, he hisses at me, and that’s on the rare occasion he gets close enough for me to touch him.

“Open a can of tuna. That will do the trick,” Dad suggests.

“I did open a can of tuna. He won’t come down to eat it.”

Dad sighs. “I’m sorry, Steve. I got you a cat because I worried about you being alone now that you work remotely half of the week. But if you want me to take him off your hands, I will. Bruce Wayne and Clark Kent won’t mind.”

Bruce Wayne and Clark Kent are my dads’ cats.

“No. I’m sorry, Dad. I don’t want to get rid of him, I just...” Don’t like cats? I can’t say that.

“Is that Steve?” My alpha dad’s voice says.

“Yes. He’s having trouble with Julius again.”

“Let me talk to him.”

There are a few shuffling noises before I hear my alpha dad again. “This is why you need to name your cat after a superhero. It appeals to their arrogance.”

I hold back a smile. My alpha dad is an even bigger nerd than I am, which is saying something. But he’s a comic book nerd, while I’m a gamer nerd. Those two communities are very different.

“I named him after a Roman dictator. That fits his personality better. If someone was crying for help, Julius would not save them. He would watch them be robbed with a cold indifference that only someone who single-handedly destroyed the democracy of Rome would understand.”

My alpha dad laughs on the other end. He always gets my stupid jokes. Truth be told, I miss working with him during my remote days. We agreed that the employees at our accounting firm would benefit from the freedom to work from home, but I never minded coming into the office. It gave me more time with him.

“Technically, Rome was a Republic, not a Democracy,” My alpha dad says.

“How does that have anything to do with Steve’s cat? Did the two of you get distracted by obscure historical references again? Give me my phone back.”

My omega dad always reins us in. He acts annoyed about it, but I can hear the smile in his voice, even over the phone.

“I would like to clarify that we didn’t name you after a superhero because we thought you were arrogant,” my omega dad says.

“Oh, he knows that. Captain America is the opposite of arrogance. He’s nothing like Bruce Wayne up in his tower. And with a butler, for Christ’s sake.” He goes on about how snooty Batman and Superman are for a full minute before my omega dad stops him.

“We really don’t mind taking Julius, if that would help. But maybe it would be good to get out more, you know? Make more friends.”

“Tim, that’s none of our business. He’ll make new friends when he’s ready,” My alpha dad says.

“No. He’s right. I need to get out and talk to people more,” I admit. The problem is, I like my apartment and small group of friends. I don’t want to go out and meet other people. “I, um, signed up for that matchmaking service you recommended.” I was planning to tell them at dinner on Sunday, but maybe telling them now will help my

omega dad feel better.

“Really? That’s great! Did you hear that? He signed up for the matchmaking thing.” The excitement in my omega dad’s voice is over the top. He’s a nerd too, in his own right. But instead of comic books, he reads the regular kind of books. When I was a kid, it was always self-help or parenting books sprinkled with the occasional romance. They were scattered all over our house and stuffed into his three meager bookshelves. After I moved out, my alpha dad converted my room into a library for him, complete with a cushy window seat and floor-to-ceiling bookshelves. He spent months getting it perfect for my omega dad, keeping the door locked at all times so it would be a surprise.

I want to do something like that for my omega someday. The little things they do for each other and the way they look at each other, even after all these years, is the real reason I signed up for the agency. I’ve always wanted a love like my dads’.

“How long does it take to get a match?” my alpha dad asks.

“It depends. They said it could be anywhere from a few weeks to a few months.” I did my testing and the questionnaire last Friday. I probably won’t get a match for at least another week or so.

“I hope it works out,” my alpha dad says. “You deserve a good man in your life.”

“You know you can call if you ever need to talk about it,” my omega dad reminds me.

“Yeah, of course.” They’ve always been my rock. That might be why I’ve never been particularly social. I have a good group of close friends and amazing dads. I don’t need anybody else. “I love you guys, but I should probably get going to the vet.”

“That’s right. Good luck with Julius. We love you!”

They end the call, leaving me alone with my difficult cat. I lift the tuna can up to the top of the cat tower and wave it around, hoping the scent will lure him in. Julius sniffs at the air, but is unmoved.

I briefly consider calling the vet and cancelling the appointment, but what would I say? I can’t get my cat to come down from the expensive tower I bought him in a futile effort to get him to like me?

My phone dings. It’s the sound of a new email, which I would normally ignore. I get new emails all the time from my clients. It’s part of managing an accountant firm. But after checking my email constantly for three days in hopes of news from the matchmaking agency, I’m on high alert for that sound. I press the new message, and an email opens on my screen.

It’s just a message from a client asking me to add a new employee to their payroll. I sigh. It’s officially time to stop obsessing about the matchmaking thing.

I take a desperate swipe at the top tier of the cat tower in a last-ditch effort to grab Julius. He darts to the back corner, narrowly missing my hand.

Hopefully my future match will like me better than my cat.

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I stand in front of the reception desk at the Perfect Match Agency, acutely aware of the three other people in the waiting room who are staring at me. The alpha behind the desk types away at his computer for a full thirty seconds before turning his attention to me. His eyes widen in recognition.

“Oh! Leo Sanders. That’s right. You have an appointment.” He rustles through the stacks of papers on his desk, narrowly avoiding knocking over the cup of coffee next to his keyboard. “Right here. You’re in room 308. The elevator is around the corner and to the right.” He holds out a few papers to me, then pulls them back before I get the chance to grab them. “I should show you in person. Sorry. I’m not used to talking to famous people.”

I hold back a smile. “It’s no problem at all. Thank you for your help.”

The man gets up from his desk and leads me around the corner. A single elevator is on the other side. He pushes the button several times in succession.

“It’s okay. I don’t mind waiting for an elevator,” I say.

“Of course. Sorry.”

I glance down at his left hand where a gold band gleams on his fourth finger. “I see you’re married. Did you meet your husband through this agency?” Sometimes if I can get someone who is starstruck talking about themselves, they forget to be nervous around me.

The man looks at his own ring, like he forgot it was there. “Yes. I mean, no. I didn’t.

We met at this beach party where everyone was in a relationship except for us. We ended up talking, and one thing led to another.”

The elevator slides open. We both step inside. This time when he pushes the button for the third floor, he only does it once. That’s progress.

“How long have you been together?” I ask.

“A year. We just had our anniversary last week.”

“Congratulations. That’s exciting.”

The elevator opens to a hallway of rooms. I follow the alpha to the end where a man in a black suit is sitting at an empty table with a stack of papers in front of him.

He stands and holds out his hand to me. “Good morning, Leo. It’s nice to finally speak with you in person. I’m Terry, the coordinator who’s been emailing you.”

This is the man behind the mountains of paperwork I’ve filled out online during the last few days. The agency knows everything about me from my earliest childhood memory to how many sexual partners I’ve had. Or the estimate of how many sexual partners I’ve had. I’m not sure at this point.

“It’s nice to meet you too, Terry. My agent mentioned that someone would be filming today?”

“Yes. After I iron out some holes in your paperwork, I’ll take you down to the lab where the film crew is ready to document our medical testing process.” He pulls out a chair, gesturing for me to sit down.

Holes in my paperwork? I thought I answered every question. Maybe there was a

problem with the file upload or something.

The receptionist waves goodbye and heads back down the hall. I watch him just long enough to see him pull his phone out of his back pocket. He's probably going to text someone about meeting me. Hopefully he'll say something nice, rather than dragging me on Reddit or in some anonymous tip on Buzzfeed.

I shouldn't be this wary of strangers. Most of the people I meet are nice to me. But I've been burned so many times, it's hard to trust anyone. Unless I have to work, I stay inside my house and don't talk to anyone at all.

Terry closes the door and sits in the chair next to me. "Even though we're financially compensating you for posting on social media about your experience with our matchmaking services, we still want this to be a personal endeavor for you. The man we pair you with will be looking for someone to fall in love with, and I want to make sure that you're genuinely looking for that as well."

"Yes, of course," I say, even though it makes my stomach twist with guilt.

"A few of your answers concerned me a little bit. For instance, this one." He slides a piece of paper in front of me and points to the second question. "Here we ask for a close friend or family member who we can contact to learn more about you, and you listed your agent."

I squirm in my chair. "I'm sorry."

"It's okay. But the personality assessment portion of our matchmaking process is just as important as the biological element. All the physical chemistry in the world can't overcome social and emotional incompatibilities." Terry slides a pen out of the inner pocket of his suit jacket. "Here. You can write down a different name and number."

I take the pen from him, still unsure what I should write.

“The thing is, I travel a lot for work, so I haven’t gotten close with any friends recently,” I try to explain. When I filled out the form, I scoured my brain for a single person who I was close enough to put down for this question, but all the friends I’ve made on set would find it weird to get a call from the Perfect Match Agency on my behalf. It would be embarrassing.

“What about family?” Terry asks.

I open my mouth, then close it again. “It’s... complicated.”

My dads and I have never been close. After I moved to LA, the distance between us was even worse. We talked on the phone at Christmas and birthdays, but that was it. The first time I did a nude scene in a film, my alpha dad sent me a text message saying he “didn’t like it.” I figured it would blow over. They didn’t threaten to disown me or anything. But they haven’t called me since, and they haven’t answered my calls or texts.

I guess they don’t like me anymore, either.

Up until a few months ago, I’d gotten close to Dave’s dads. They’re the reason I moved to Sutton City. They’re also the reason I stayed with him as long as I did. I loved the family dinners they hosted out on their deck and the stocking they embroidered with my name for Christmas. They made me feel like I was a part of a family again.

I miss them a lot more than I miss Dave.

“Let’s leave that answer the way it is.” Terry goes on to a few other questions I left blank by mistake, and I try to pay attention, but I can’t help wondering what my

future match's dads will think of me. How would I feel if my son was dating a man with such an embarrassing reputation? There's no way they'll welcome me with open arms the way Dave's dads did. They'll be worried, at best. Maybe overtly judgmental.

The sex tape and scandalous photos didn't just ruin my career, they probably ruined my chance at being a part of a family.

Terry picks up his stack of papers. "That should do it. I'll take you to the lab now. Once we get down there, everything will be filmed except for the sperm and slick collection. Do you have any questions for me?"

"How many people who meet through your agency actually stay together?" I ask. Maybe I should keep my mouth shut. I'm working with this agency. I should be supportive, not skeptical.

He smiles warmly. "Most of them. Our matchmaking process really works."

"What about people who are... high profile? Do you have success with those kinds of matches?"

"Yes. We have to handle them with more finesse, but the process still works. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised, Mr. Sanders."

With that, he stands and opens the door.

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Friday nights are the best nights. I get to relax, eat food that's bad for me, and listen to my friends argue about ridiculous things like how many experience points they should get for slaying a purple wildebeest who can breathe fire.

In other words, it's the night I play Dungeons and Dragons.

I park in front of Henry's ridiculous mansion. He was tacky enough to build a custom house with medieval turrets and a water feature that's basically a suburban version of a moat. He isn't married, so there wasn't anyone to talk him out of it.

I park behind two sports cars and a minivan. The sports cars belong to James and Griff. They're not married either, and they built Henry's software empire alongside him, so they have plenty of money to burn. The minivan belongs to Cooper. He's the only one of us who can have a full conversation with an omega without making a complete fool of himself, so naturally, he has a husband and three kids. Hence, the minivan. He also helped build Henry's software empire, which is why it's a nice minivan. He manages the HR department. I do the accounting, but as a contractor. When they all started a company together, I wanted to continue working for my alpha dad's accounting firm. We were able to find a happy medium that allowed me to support them, while still taking over my dad's business the way I've wanted to since I was a kid.

Most days, I think working with my dad is worth the money I gave up by not going into business with my best friends. Other days, I look at Griff's car, and I wonder what it would be like to not carry around jumper cables.

I walk up the cobblestone pathway to Henry's front door. It has an ornate metal door

knocker that we're expected to use every Friday night. I grasp the cold metal and slam it down three times.

"Who goes there!?" Henry calls out in a fake British accent.

I clear my throat. "It is I, Sir Lance Shiningword."

It's not the most original name, but in my defense, I'm an accountant, not a writer.

The door swings open dramatically. Henry stands in the entryway wearing full suit of armor, including a helmet and a long red cape that James frequently reminds him is historically inaccurate. James, Griff, and Cooper stand behind him in their T-shirts and jeans. James rolls his eyes, but he's smiling.

Henry is always too much. That's why we like him.

"If thou wishes to cross the threshold, thou must answer three questions," Henry says in his deep, resonating voice that's perfect for all his theatrics.

"You should feel special," Cooper says. "He didn't make us answer any questions."

"Silence!" Henry booms.

Cooper mimes zipping his mouth shut and throwing away the key.

"I will answer the questions," I offer.

Henry puffs out his chest. "What is your name?"

"Sir Lancelot Shiningword, as I just mentioned."

“What is your quest?” he asks.

“Um, to find the holy grail?”

Henry hunches forward and a hissing sound comes from his armor. I think he’s laughing in there. “Sorry,” he whispers in his regular voice, and he stands straight again. “What is your favorite color?”

Cooper and Griff roar with laughter. Henry tries to laugh with them too, but laughing is usually a full-body thing for him with lots of rocking back and forth, and his movement is severely hindered by the armor.

James sighs dramatically. “The Monty Python references are getting out of control, Henry. Last week was all about shrubberies, and the week before we got turned into newts.”

“Well, we got better,” Griff says, before he and Cooper dissolve into peals of laughter all over again.

This is why only one of us is married. This. Right here.

I step inside Henry’s house. The main foyer is more like a museum than a home with displays of the very first Rubik’s Cube, a first edition copy of the players manual for Dungeons and Dragons, plus a few original paintings that ended up on cards in the game Magic, the Gathering.

He pulls off his helmet to reveal his ruddy, round face. “Welcome, Sir Lance Shiningsword. We have mead and sustenance in the dining hall.”

“Which means there’s beer and wings in the kitchen,” James says.

Henry places a hand covered in a metal glove on James's shoulder. "Doest thou have to destroy the vibe?"

"I don't think that's possible. You have vibes oozing out of your ears. I got mac and cheese for you. If you eat too many wings you'll get heartburn."

"But it will be worth it," Henry insists.

James eyes him warily. I think the reason Henry's been so successful is because he's had James to hold him back or turn him in a different direction when necessary. Henry gives his whole heart and soul into whatever he does. James makes sure that effort is funneled into the right places and properly compensated. He also prevents Henry's gastric reflux from getting out of control.

"If you eat the wings, your stomach will be too upset to enjoy the campaign," James says.

Henry lowers his hand and sighs. "Alas, methinks thou art correct."

My phone chimes. Even though I've been trying to not jump at every email like it's a message from my soul mate, I still pull it out of my pocket with my heart in my throat.

It's the agency. After a full week of waiting, they finally contacted me.

A match with a 92% compatibility has been found for you. Please visit our office in person to sign a nondisclosure agreement for more information.

They found someone for me. This is really happening.

"What is it?" James asks. "You look like you just won the lottery or something."

“Do you remember how I signed up for that matchmaking agency? The one that does all those tests for biological compatibility?”

He nods.

“They found a match for me. We have a 92% compatibility.” I show them the screen of my phone.

Henry claps me on the back, the metal encasing his hand connecting with my body a little too forcefully. “Congratulations!”

“That’s great,” Cooper says. “What’s his name? Did they give you any information about him?”

James points at the screen of my phone. “They’re making him sign a nondisclosure agreement before he gets to learn anything about the guy. Do they always do that?”

“I don’t know,” I admit. “They didn’t mention anything about a nondisclosure agreement when I signed up.”

“Maybe your guy is high profile,” Henry says. “There’s nothing wrong with wanting to keep things private.”

Henry is high profile too. His success forced his company, and by extension, himself, into the public eye. He’s been mocked in the media for his idiosyncratic interests and dramatic personality. If my mate has had a similar experience, I don’t blame him for being cautious during the matchmaking process.

“I guess I’ll find out soon enough. And with a compatibility like 92%, he’ll probably give me a real chance, right?” I ask.

If I was anywhere else, I'd worry about how pathetic I sounded, but I've never had to worry about that with Henry and the guys. Because he refuses to be anyone but his weird self, it makes me feel comfortable doing the same.

“An omega who signs up for a matchmaking agency is probably ready for a serious relationship, and you're the kind of guy who'd make a great husband,” Cooper reassures me. This is why he's so great at HR. He always knows exactly what to say.

“You mean I'm boring,” I joke.

“Boring is just another word for reliable,” James says. “There isn't anything wrong with being reliable. Speaking of reliable, we should get started. Henry will probably keep us here for hours, and Cooper needs to get home before midnight.”

James ushers us all back to the kitchen. I guess he's right. There isn't anything wrong with being reliable. That's what I like about my friends, isn't it? That's why it's so hard to meet new people. No one else in the world will be as wonderfully theatric as Henry or as tactfully honest as James. No one else will know exactly what to say to make me feel better like Cooper or laugh at all my jokes like Griff.

I just need a guy who can appreciate me the way I appreciate my friends.

A 92% compatibility is a good start.

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Steve Hansen. That's the name of my match. According to Terry, he's close to his family and has a tight-knit circle of friends he's known since high school. He works in the family business. Something to do with taxes or accounting. Terry went over so much information about Steve, it's hard to remember it all.

I mostly remember the things that made my stomach twinge with hope. Steve wants a husband and kids someday. He likes black and white films. One of his best friends is famous, and he's never said a word about him to the media.

He sounds perfect. I've been reminding myself all morning that there must be a catch. It's not like he'd tell the Perfect Match Agency about his flaws. But I'd be lying if I said I wasn't excited to meet him today. Nervous and a little terrified too, but still excited.

My house is bursting at the seams with a full film crew. Lights, boom mikes, and multiple cameras clog up my front room while a guy in a holey T-shirt and ratty pair of jeans yells at all the people rushing around. His name is Luke, and he introduced himself to me as "the director."

The director of what, exactly? I agreed to be filmed when I met Steve for the first time, but I didn't think my house would end up feeling like the set of a film.

"You'll stand here," Luke says, pointing to a spot in my living room that's a full three feet from the front door. "When you see him for the first time, I need to see a tiny swoon. Not over the top, but we need to know you're into him. He's a nerdy type, so you'll have to sell it."

I bristle at his stage direction. Will Luke be directing Steve's reaction to me as well?

"He'll be shocked because you're Leo Sanders, so we'll give him a second, then I need a hug or a kiss, okay?"

I stop. "Wait. He'll be shocked I'm Leo Sanders? The agency promised me he'd be told my name."

The director waves my concern away. "That's the way they wanted to do it, but we only told Steve that he was matched with a celebrity. The drama will be better this way, trust me."

Luke kept my name from Steve? That means he doesn't know that he's been set up with an omega who was recently photographed having sex with multiple alphas at the same time. It's one thing to have a famous friend, but I don't think most accountants who work for their family's business would want to be with someone like me. And now Luke is going to film Steve's disappointment—or possibly disgust—for the whole world to see.

This is a disaster.

"You need to tell Steve my name before he meets me," I say.

"That will ruin all the fun. He's almost here. Places everyone!" Luke ambles away from me, clearly unconcerned that I'm upset. If I don't stop him, I could end up in another embarrassing scandal.

So much for trying to save my acting career.

I pull out my phone and find one of the emails from the agency. Terry listed his phone number at the bottom. I dial it, my fingers trembling.

It takes Terry a few rings before he answers.

“Hello, Leo. It’s good to hear from you. How is everything going with your match?”

“I’m about to meet him, actually. But I just found out that no one told him my name, and now the film crew wants to get his reaction to my identity on camera.”

Terry curses under his breath. “I apologize. Luke assured me that Steve would be informed of your name and basic information prior to your first meeting. But clearly, I should have overseen the situation more closely. I’ll call him and get this sorted out.”

“Thank you,” I say.

“Of course. I’ll also have my secretary call Steve. Hopefully we can reach him before he arrives. Again, I’m so sorry this happened.”

The line goes dead.

Relief courses through me. At least I was able to put on the brakes before this situation got out of control. But a small part of me is disappointed. Just a few minutes ago, I thought Steve knew my name and still wanted to meet me. That wasn’t true. He might change his mind when he finds out who I am.

A phone rings nearby. Luke answers it. “Hello... I’m in the middle of something, Terry... Yeah, well you were wrong... I’m not going to stop shooting now... No, absolutely not.”

Knock, knock, knock.

That must be Steve. Terry’s secretary hasn’t had time to call him yet.

A member of the film crew reaches for the handle of the door. I run toward him, stopping him just in time. I still open the door, but when I do, I rush outside and close it again, blocking their view of us.

A tall, gangly alpha with pale skin and dark hair stands on my porch. His shoulders are a little hunched and his eyebrows are unruly. He's so different than the movie star alphas I work with who are paranoid about their appearance. I like him immediately.

I guess that's the point of all those compatibility tests. But I wasn't expecting to be this affected by him. I want to stare into his big hazel eyes or bury my nose in the crook of his neck or thread his long, bony fingers through mine. I feel so drawn to him, I almost forget where we are.

"Are you Leo Sanders?" he asks.

"Yeah."

My heart is stuck in my throat as I wait for his reaction. I wish I didn't care what he thinks of me, but I do. I long for him to want me, even if that want is only physical.

He drags his hand through his hair. "Wow. I wasn't expecting... I mean, they made me sign an NDA, but I didn't think... wow."

His eyes lock with mine and for a moment it seems like he's as drawn in by me as I am by him. I almost reach out and touch him, but I'm still not sure. Maybe it will take a moment for his mind to remember all the horrible things he's read about me online.

"I'm just an accountant," he says. "I'm sure you don't want... I think they made a mistake."

Is he saying that because he's worried I don't want him or because he doesn't want

me? Maybe he's just trying to be polite.

"You don't have to go through with this if you don't want to. I would understand."

"Oh, I want you. I'm just a little nervous." He ducks his head bashfully, his cheeks flushing pink. He reminds me of the alphas I dated in high school before my appearance transformed from an awkward drama geek to something Greg could sell to movie producers.

Someone tries to open the front door, but I hold it shut.

"There's a whole camera crew in there wanting to film us," I explain, when his attention turns to the moving doorknob. "Would it be okay if we got away from here? Just you and me?"

His lips spread into a lopsided smile that's devastatingly handsome. Steve may be a nerd with unkempt eyebrows, but he's still hot. My stomach fills with butterflies. It's like I'm a teenager all over again.

"Yeah. That sounds nice."

I hold out my hand to him. His scent rushes at me the moment our fingers touch. It's like the essence of sex mixed with soap and man. I want to close my eyes and inhale deeply through my nose.

I turn around and run down the steps, pulling him behind me. He trips over a crack in the sidewalk and almost falls down, but he keeps on running. He has the awkward gait of a man who's never been taught to run properly, which makes him feel more real than anyone I've met in a long time.

His hand shakes all over the place when he pulls out his keys to open the old green

sedan parked in my driveway. I repress a smile.

“Here, allow me.” I hold out my other hand. He gives me his keys without thinking, and I slide the biggest one into his car door.

“Where are we going?” he asks.

“I don’t know.”

Running off with him like this is crazy. I must be violating my contracts with both Greg and the Perfect Match Agency. But I climb into the passenger seat of his car anyway.

“Just drive,” I say.

He turns on the engine and peels out of my driveway, his tires screeching on the asphalt. Then he veers right, driving further into the gated community where I live, instead of toward the exit.

“I’m going the wrong way, aren’t I?” he asks.

“Yep.”

“I have to turn around and drive past your house again, don’t I?”

I wince. “Uh huh.”

He does a harsh U-turn, lurching us wildly around the cabin because we haven’t had the chance to put on seatbelts yet. He guns the engine, speeding past Luke and his film crew spilling out my front door. Luke screams at me to come back at the top of his lungs, waving his arms wildly. Steve doesn’t even pause.

“My friends call that a FGMT,” Steve says. “Fully grown man tantrum.”

I throw back my head and laugh.

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Leo is beautiful when he laughs. He's beautiful all of the time, obviously. But watching him lean his head back, his eyes full of pure joy and his dimples popping, is like watching one of those slow-motion parts of a movie. I've never seen anything or anyone who was so gorgeous, they made time stop like that before. It feels more like one of Henry's fantastical campaigns than real life.

That might also be because of Leo's scent. It's intoxicating. I want to lean over and suck on his neck. That is not normal. I should not do it.

If we don't get out of this car soon, I might.

"Where are we going?" I ask again.

"How about a hotel?" he suggests.

Leo wants to take me to a hotel? Does that mean what I think it does?

"I should tell you that I am terrible at casual sex. You know, in case that's what's about to happen. I fall in love with every omega I sleep with, which sounds romantic, but it's not. I become needy and overly affectionate, like an aggressively cuddly lap dog."

"Good to know." His lips slide into a smile that makes his dimples reappear on his cheeks. I've seen that smile before in his movies. It's absolutely adorable. I can't believe I'm seeing it in person.

That's why I almost plow into the security guard's little office by the gate. I swerve

to the right just in time. The guard waves us through, clearly alarmed by my driving.

“You are way too attractive to be matched to me,” I say.

He shrugs. “Don’t sell yourself short. I think you’re very attractive.”

My brain cannot compute Leo Sanders thinking I’m attractive. It also cannot compute going to a hotel with him.

This can’t be real.

“You could date anyone. You could even date Batman,” I say, before I stop and consider how ridiculous that sounds. “I mean you could date the guy who plays Batman in the movies. He’s huge and has a ridiculous number of defined muscles in his abdomen. It’s not even a six pack or an eight pack. It’s like a ten pack or a twelve pack. My friend Griff thinks that he’s had some of those muscles injected. There’s this jelly-like substance that body builders sometimes use to make their abs look more muscley.”

Too late, I realize I’ve turned my first conversation with my match into a monologue about Batman’s abs.

“As tempting as Batman’s fake twelve-pack may be, he’s already married,” Leo reminds me. “I met his husband on the set of ‘On My Own.’ They’re a cute couple.”

Leo has met Batman. Of course he’s met Batman. I’ve seen “On My Own.”

What is wrong with me? Have I inherited my alpha father’s habit of bringing up superheroes into every conversation?

“Sorry. I’m not really trying to pawn you off on a married actor.” I reach out and

place my hand on his, which is supposed to be comforting, friendly gesture. But he takes in a sharp breath, his nostrils flaring. His scent rushes at me and, for a moment, I forget we're strangers who met only minutes ago. I forget everything except how badly I need to suck on his neck. I lean toward him, turning my head and sliding my hand along his jaw to get a proper grip on him.

Just before my lips make contact with his skin, I stop. We're on the freeway. I'm driving one-handed and not paying attention to the road at all. This isn't safe. And he's arching his neck toward me, even though we're swerving into the next lane. Clearly, he's as affected by my pheromones as I am by his.

I grit my teeth and release him. "The agency mentioned that we shouldn't be in an enclosed space together. This is probably why."

Leo pushes the button to roll down his window. We're going fast enough that the air blowing into the car is uncomfortably loud, but it clears my head.

"We need to get to a hotel," he says.

"But if we go to a hotel room..." How do I delicately say that I'll bend him over the bed and fuck him the second we're alone in a bedroom together? "Things will happen. Sexual things."

"Then where should we go?" he asks.

The agency suggested meeting outside or in front of other people, which was the initial plan. But I can't take Leo to the park or some other public outdoor space. People will stare at him, and we left his house to get away from all that.

"We can go to my apartment," I say. "I have this private outdoor space on the roof of my building."

“Okay,” Leo says. “Where is it?”

“Um, not far from here.” I make a jerky turn into the next lane to take the upcoming exit.

“Do you always drive like you’re in a melodramatic car chase film?” Leo teases.

“Only when I have movie stars in my car,” I tease back.

My stomach flips a little because witty banter is my love language. If Leo is funny, in addition to being gorgeous and smelling good, I have no hope. I’ll be madly in love with him way before it’s socially acceptable. The whole situation will be embarrassing.

I take a few more turns before we reach the historic district of Sutton City where stately red brick buildings stand tall on either side of the road. Each apartment has big, long windows and ornate designs carved into the plaster outlining the roof. The first time I walked through this area of the city, it felt like traveling back in time. Even as a kid, I knew I wanted to live here. I could have easily purchased a whole house in another part of the city for the same price as the rent, but it wouldn’t be the same.

Sometimes you just know where you belong.

I slow down when we get to my apartment and park as smoothly as possible so Leo doesn’t feel like he’s in a Hollywood car chase anymore.

“You live here?” he asks.

“Yes. This is it.”

He takes in the curved cement steps up to the entrance and the dark green moss covering the brick between the second and third floors. “It’s enchanting.”

“Thank you.”

He climbs out of the passenger’s seat before I turn off the car, which is probably for the best. If we linger, we’ll probably end up making out in the front seat of my car.

I stare at his ass as he walks toward the stairs. It’s small and round and hugged perfectly by his jeans. I wish I could cup it with my hands—maybe slip my hand between his legs.

Damn it. I need to get my mind out of the gutter. I scramble out of the car and follow him up the front steps to my door. Unfortunately, he’s a few steps ahead of me, which means his ass is right in front of my face.

“You doing okay there?” he says, flashing me a mischievous smile.

My cheeks grow hot. “Sorry.”

“It’s okay. Look all you want.” He wiggles his hips, that mischievous smile still spread across his face. I can’t help but smile back.

Leo is fun. I shouldn’t be surprised. In most of his films he plays happy, flirty characters who spend the whole movie joking around or trying to lure another character into bed. Maybe he gets those kinds of roles because acting that way comes naturally to him.

I toss him my keys. He catches them and considers me skeptically. “Do you not want to go inside?”

“We shouldn’t go inside at the same time,” I say. “The small key opens the front door. Go up two flights of stairs and through my office. You’ll have to climb up a ladder to get access to the roof. I’ll wait a few minutes and follow behind you.”

He looks back at me one last time before opening the door. The connection between us is wild, even outside and from a distance. What will it be like to touch him when I finally can? Or to kiss him? What will it feel like to be inside him with his scent and body wrapped around me?

Leo slips into my house, leaving me on the front steps with an erection and a head full of fantasies.

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I've always loved the historic district of Sutton City. I can't live there, of course. None of the buildings have adequate security. But back when I was younger, I dreamed of living in a charming old home much like Steve's.

I stop just inside the entrance and stare at the grand staircase. The floors are the original hardwood and Steve has decorated the place with shabby antiques. It's homey and quaint, with the exception of the enormous cat tower in the corner of the living room. After the gaudy opulence of Hollywood, this place feels so down to earth and real.

A gray cat peers down from atop the tower. His tail swishes back and forth as he stares at me with an imperious glare.

"Hello, there. I'm Leo," I say.

He jumps down, landing gracefully on the floor. When I climb up the first stair, he creeps behind me, keeping his body low like he's preparing to pounce.

"I promise I'm not a robber."

The cat continues to follow me a few steps behind. At the top of the first flight of stairs, he runs ahead, pausing at the bottom of the next staircase. On this floor there are three doors. The second one is ajar. As I pass it, I peer inside. The room has a large bed, several bookcases filled to the brim with comic books, and a large reading chair in the corner topped with several pillows. It looks cozy.

The cat darts up the next flight of stairs the moment I begin to climb them. On the

third floor I find a few more doors. One is wide open. The cat rushes inside and sits at the base of a metal ladder bolted to the wall.

That must be the ladder to the roof.

The room is a basic office with a desk, filing cabinet, and bookcase. Framed photographs line the walls. One is of a younger Steve in a cap and gown with two middle-aged men grinning at his side. Those same men are also in the next photograph where Steve is standing in front of the Great Wall of China. They must be his dads. They seem really nice.

The third photo is of Steve on a beach, arm in arm with four other young guys. At the center of the group is a man I recognize as Henry Sanchez. He's the youngest self-made billionaire in the world and known for being eccentric. During Covid he wore a wizard hat during all his Zoom meetings.

So, he's Steve's famous friend.

The cat sits stubbornly in front of the ladder. He doesn't move, even when I reach for the rungs and start climbing. He meows in alarm when I unlatch the door to the roof.

“What is it? Do you not want me to go up there or do you want to go with me?”

The cat rears up on his hind legs and rests his front paws on the first rung of the ladder.

“Fine.” I climb back down and crouch next to him. “Here's the deal. If you come willingly without scratching me, I will carry you up this ladder. But if you give me any trouble, I'm bringing you right back down.” I hold out my palm to him, hoping he might take some comfort in an opportunity to sniff me. The cat glances at my hand, then back at me, without moving a muscle. Maybe that only works with dogs.

I smell a familiar scent—musky and masculine with a hint of soap. I close my eyes and inhale deeply, even though I know I shouldn't.

It's Steve. I must have taken so long looking at his photos and negotiating with his cat that he caught up to me before I made it to the roof.

I turn around to find him standing in the doorway. I'm surprised by how tall he is. He must be at least six foot three. I suppose when I saw him on my porch, I was a full step higher than him, and when we were in the car, he was sitting down.

His shoulders aren't huge, but they're wide, and his arms are wired with lean muscle. Steve may be a nerdy accountant, but he's also a big alpha with the physical power to do whatever he wants to me. I shiver. His scent is overwhelming now, and it makes me wish Steve would use his powerful body to do something besides stare at me.

I'm five foot two and small everywhere. I still shop for shoes in the children's department. Steve could easily throw me over his shoulder, pin me to the wall, or hold me down and fuck me into his mattress.

The unmistakable scent of my slick wafts through the air. He hasn't even touched me, and I'm already wet for him.

He steps closer, his eyes burning into mine. Gone is the Steve in the car who rambled about Batman's abs. This man walks with a confidence that feels almost predatory. He towers over me, his nostrils flaring.

"Leo," he rasps. Hell, it's almost a growl. A part of me knows I should retreat up that ladder so we can clear our heads. The sweet Steve I met less than an hour ago wouldn't growl at me unless he'd been reduced to his baser instincts. The agency warned us that couples with a compatibility as high as ours can sometimes push each other into a heat or rut by physical proximity alone. If we don't stop, we won't have

the chance to get to know each other before our bodies take control.

But I can't move. I stand there like a deer in headlights, my whole body yearning for him to touch me. The desire is so visceral, every inch of my skin aches with it. He leans in closer until the heat of his breath ghosts along my cheek. It's only his breath, and yet it spreads a sweet electricity through me.

"I'm not any good at casual sex," he says yet again, with a desperation that reminds me of his tender heart.

"Does this feel casual to you?" I ask him.

Steve swallows hard, his Adam's apple bobbing up and down. "No."

"It doesn't feel casual to me either."

He crashes his body into mine, jamming our noses together painfully and searing his mouth to my chin instead of my lips. But the awkwardness is only temporary. When he claims my mouth, my knees go weak from the power of his kiss. I melt into his arms as they surround me, and I soften my lips under the force of his spearing tongue. He has to hunch over to kiss me, so it feels natural when he lifts me off the floor, grabbing my ass more for leverage than to grope me. Being airborne while he kisses me makes me feel like I'm being swept away into a magical place where only our bodies and desires exist. I cling to him with an urgency that's refreshing after the last year of disappointments and despair. It feels good to want something—to want him.

"Please," I whisper against his lips.

He squeezes my cheeks. Not playfully or seductively, but forcefully, his fingers digging into my flesh. I gush slick, soaking my underwear and jeans.

He lets out a guttural groan in response and starts walking, carrying me effortlessly in his arms. I'm so disoriented, I think he's taking me to his bedroom, until my back comes into contact with the cold, metal bars of the ladder.

He spins me around. I grasp for the middle rung and find my footing on another one closer to the ground. Steve grabs for the waistband of my jeans and yanks them down, exposing my ass to the cool air and freeing my cock. It juts out in front of me, already hard and eager.

Steve buries his nose into the crook of my neck. "Leo, I need..." His voice is so raw and vulnerable, I can see what he means about not being good at casual sex. Sharing a physical connection with someone clearly means a lot to him.

"It's okay," I assure him. "I need you, too."

And I want him. Not just his body, but his tender heart.

He kisses and sucks at my neck, nibbling at the skin and causing shocks of sweet pain that sing through me like lightning. His hands trail down my sides, leaving a path of fire in their wake. He grabs my asscheeks with both hands, still sucking at my neck. His scent is everywhere now, burning through my nose and surrounding me. I let my hand fall back on his shoulder. My body is weak with desire, except for my fists that cling to the ladder.

His fingers massage my ass—not with the practiced finesse of a man who's trying to seduce me, but with an eager curiosity that's a little rougher and more satisfying. His fingers dig into my crease where I'm messy with slick. I cry out as more slick gushes out of my hole, leaking down my inner thighs.

"You're so wet," he whispers, sinking his teeth into my neck.

“Ah!” I gush slick again.

He slides the tip of his finger inside me. I’m so aroused, he’s able to push it in easily, even though his finger is long. I clench around him, groaning at the satisfaction of finally being filled.

“We were tested,” he reminds me. It takes me a second to realize he’s talking about STI’s. I was so drunk on his scent, I forgot all about that.

“I had sex a few weeks ago. I used a condom for the anal sex, but not for the oral. I had several partners on the same night.” I wait with bated breath for Steve’s response. I’m not ashamed of having multiple sexual partners, but Steve is clearly more careful about who he sleeps with. “Other than that, I haven’t had sex in six months,” I clarify. If I was in his shoes, that would matter to me. It impacts his level of risk.

“Thanks for telling me.” He withdraws his finger. For a moment I wonder if he’s about to leave to get a condom, which would be fine. But he pushes back inside me with more fingers this time. I don’t know how many, I just know that it feels like a lot.

“Oh, Steve.” I whimper.

He sucks on the lobe of my ear. “I like when you say my name.” He slides his fingers out and pushes them in again, harder this time.

“Steve!”

“Can I have you without a condom?” He pistons his fingers, making me forget everything but the wonderful width and pace of them.

Slick keeps pouring out of me, causing an obscene squelching noise as he fingers me.

He adjusts his angle, and then he's jamming into my prostate. I scream, my body tensing as pleasure surges through me. My cock spurts, untouched, painting his wall and my shirt with cum.

"Do you want me to use a condom?" he asks a second time.

I shake my head.

His fingers are suddenly gone. The emptiness is unbearable. But it only lasts for a moment. Steve pushes something thicker with more give inside me. Initially, I buck back onto him, eager for it, but as he slides it in deeper, I panic at how big he is. His cock is much thicker than his fingers. My ass tries to push him out, spasming around his girth painfully.

"Oh my God. It's too much. I can't." He rocks back, almost pulling out entirely. I can handle the tip of him, but just barely.

"I'm sorry," he says. "You took three of my fingers without any problem. I thought it would be okay."

Fucking hell. I saw his fingers. They're thick. Is he that much bigger than three of his fingers?

Even though I just came, my cock hardens at the very idea of it. There's a reason I can take three of his fingers easily. The dildos I like to play with on my own are probably bigger than a man of my size should use.

"It's okay. Just go slow," I tell him.

"Are you sure? You're small, and a lot of omegas have a hard time taking me—"

“I’m sure.”

He pushes in gently. I bear down, trying my best to open up, but he still meets resistance despite all the slick that’s dripping from my ass.

“Just give it a second,” I say. Part of it must be the position of my body. I can take a lot more when my knees are bent and separated. But I don’t want to move or wait—I want him now.

I inhale deep. “More.”

He grasps my hips and forces his cock into me, pushing past the resistance. I groan as the growing pain blooms into pleasure.

“I’m halfway,” he says with gritted teeth.

Only halfway? I genuinely don’t know if I can take all of him. I carefully step up to the next rung of the ladder, one foot at a time. This allows me to bend my knees. I lean forward and open my legs as wide as possible. Steve is so thick and deep, he stays lodged inside me during the process.

“Now,” I say.

This time he’s able to push in so far, it feels like he’s in my stomach. My body trembles, either from pleasure or panic, I can’t be sure.

“Oh, God, Leo. You took all of me.” His voice is soft and awestruck. Maybe that doesn’t happen often.

I look down and see a bump protruding from my lower abdomen. At first I wonder if it’s just my shirt bunching in a weird way, so I take my hand off the ladder for a

moment to touch it.

The bump is solid. When I press my hand against it, Steve moans.

That's his cock. He's so big, he's literally rearranging the insides of my body.

I grab his hand and guide it to my abdomen.

"Is that..." he trails off as he squeezes himself. "Oh, God. Are you okay?"

"Yes. Fuck me."

I've never been with a guy who came close to the size I like to stretch myself with. That's fine because smaller cocks feel good too, just in a different way. But with Steve, I get to have the stretch while he fucks me. The idea of that is mind-boggling.

He slides out, this time pushing back in slowly enough that I can see the bulge in my stomach appear with the rock of his hips. That's unbelievably hot.

"Harder," I say.

"Are you sure?"

"Don't you want to fuck me harder, Steve? Give it to me like you want to. Give me everything you have."

He digs his fingers into my hips, and then he's driving into me with a force that makes me wail. It hurts in a satisfying way. He barely pauses a second before slamming into me again. I'm so weak from arousal, I almost lose my grip and fall back, my shoulder blades hitting his chest. That changes the angle, and he thrusts against something wildly sensitive inside me. It's too high to be my prostate, which

means it must be the entrance to my womb.

I let out a low moan. Normally, alphas have a hard time finding it, even during my heat. But Steve's thrusts hit it straight on. I relax into him, not even trying to hold on to the ladder anymore. I can't think. He's too big, and I'm lost in the overwhelming sensation of him carving a pathway through my insides. He's holding me up by my legs now, my body completely folded in half. I scream as I come again. This time my cock barely ejaculates. My ass spasms around Steve's cock, but it's stretched to the point where it can barely clench down anymore.

Steve roars in my ear. He fucks into me one last time, jabbing at that sweet, sensitive spot. His breath is fast and labored, his arms trembling from exertion. I would worry about him dropping me if my body was still capable of worry. I'm nothing but a limp rag doll, too tired and fucked out to be concerned about anything.

Everything goes black.

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My knees almost buckle underneath me. I lean against the wall and slowly slide down it, taking Leo with me. We end up in a pile of limbs on the floor with my dick still inside him.

Part of the problem is that my erection hasn't gone down at all. I'm hard as a rock and ready to go again. I'm not able to hold him up in midair while fucking him anymore, though. That's some kind of pornstar stunt. I can't believe I did that.

I'm in a rut. That's the only explanation for what's happening. And since we had sex, that means Leo will likely go into heat sometime in the next few days. I have no idea what that will mean for him. From what I understand, movie stars carefully plan their filming schedules around their heats. If only I had waited a few more minutes to go inside my apartment this all could have been avoided.

But a selfish part of me doesn't regret it. Holding him in my arms with our bodies intimately tied is better than I ever could have imagined. I've fallen in love before, but I've never felt this bone-deep sense of completeness with a man.

"Are you okay?" I whisper in his ear, pressing a kiss to his cheek.

Leo blinks his eyes open. "Hmmm?"

"Are you okay? Was that too much?" I always get nervous after having sex with an omega for the first time. Either my size is something they love or something that really doesn't work for them.

He smiles at me. With our faces only inches apart, the smile feels wonderfully

intimate. “I like you, Steve. I also really, really like your dick.”

I laugh. “Yeah?”

“Yeah.” He leans in and gives me a tender kiss. It makes my heart ache. Could there be a chance he feels the connection between us as deeply as I do?

“I’m in a rut,” I say.

He kisses me again. “I figured.”

“That means you’ll probably go into heat soon.”

He nods, pressing a kiss to my jaw and the shell of my ear.

“That’s okay with you?” I ask.

“We knew this was a risk, right? We both agreed this wasn’t a casual thing. Would it be so bad to spend our heat and rut together?”

Could it be that simple? Could we just give in to the desires of our bodies for days on end and not worry about anything else?

“Are you taking contraceptives?” I ask.

“I have an IUD.” He sucks at the lobe of my ear, which almost makes me lose focus. I want to grind into him so badly, I’d rather forget about all the reasons why holing up in my apartment for a few days might not be a good idea.

But I don’t want to mess this up. We have to talk about the logistics before I get lost in his body again.

“What about your work schedule?” I ask.

He sits back, looking me in the eye. “I’m free for the next few weeks. What about you?”

“I can move a few things around. It won’t be a problem.” Getting to be with Leo is the kind of thing that’s worth a few uncomfortable conversations with my clients. “Do you need any medications from your house? Do you have a pet that we should go get? What about your lawn? Should we call someone to mow it?”

He laughs. “You like to be prepared, don’t you?”

“I did mention that I’m an accountant, right? We’re generally a prepared kind of people.”

He wriggles his hips in a way that causes delicious friction between our bodies. “I don’t have any medications or a pet, and I’ve never mowed a lawn in my life. Speaking of pets, where is your cat? Did we scare him away?”

I hold his hips in place. “He’s probably back in his cat tower. He rarely leaves it. Do you want to stay here with me? You don’t have to, Leo.”

He pushes me onto my back until I’m lying on the ground. “Yes.” He grabs my wrist and presses my palm against the bulge in his belly. Fuck. I can feel the pressure of my own hand against the tip of my cock while it’s still inside him. “I’m so full, Steve. Why would I want to leave?”

“I don’t know. I just wanted to get consent before...”

He rocks his hips back and forth, that mischievous smile spreading across his lips again. “Before we both lose control?”

“Yeah.”

“You have my consent.” Leo lifts his body slowly, exposing my cock, inch by inch, then he slams down onto it, taking me to the hilt. He throws his head back and moans. “Fuck me already. Please.”

I dig my fingers into his hips and thrust up. His body goes lax, and he simply grunts while I pound into him, our skin slapping together. I love the way he melts while I’m fucking him. He even lies on my chest, making it easier for me to grab him by both asscheeks and really give it to him. A part of me knows I shouldn’t be fucking him this hard, but the instinct is so powerful, it’s difficult to hold back.

He tucks his knees in, and our bodies come together differently. I can’t get in quite as deep, but the head of my cock collides with a soft, pliant spot inside him.

“Yes. Right there. Oh!” Leo sobs, clinging to my shoulders.

I find the spot again, and ram into it as hard as I can. He lets out a continuous whine while I fuck him there. I know what that spot is. I’ve helped my boyfriends through heats before. But they’ve never reacted like this when I’ve brushed against the entrance to their womb outside their heat.

I’m not sure how many times he comes as I fuck him. I don’t know how many times I come either. One orgasm bleeds into another, the pleasure long and continuous. Each orgasm doesn’t feel like enough. My body still needs him.

When my cock finally softens inside him, we’re both a sweaty mess on the floor of my office with our hair plastered to our heads and our shirts bunched up and wrinkled.

Leo presses a kiss to my chest. “That was amazing.”

I wrap my arms around him, wanting him closer even though we're technically as close as two people can be. "Thank you, Leo. That was amazing for me too." The floor underneath me is hard, and a mixture of our bodily fluids is leaking out of Leo's ass. None of that matters.

Eventually, he eases forward until my cock slips out of him. Which I understand. I'm sure he needs a break. He stands up on shaky legs, a trail of cum and slick running down his leg.

"Wow. That's a lot. Direct me to a bathroom. Or maybe direct me to a bed. I can't decide if I'm too disgusting to lie down or too tired to shower."

In the absence of Leo's weight, pain shoots down my back.

"Why didn't we have sex on the bed?" I ask.

Leo looks down at his knees, which are bright pink from contact with the floor. "I don't know. The ladder and floor seemed more convenient at the time?" He holds out his hand to me. His hair is wild, and the trail of cum and slick running down his leg is now pooling on the floor.

I wish I could take a photo of him. I think he's more beautiful like this than in any film or photo shoot on the red carpet.

Slowly, I ease my way up to standing. My back is a little less angry now. Or maybe it's just that my tailbone is angrier, so I don't notice my back as much.

Leo raises an eyebrow. "How old are you?"

"Twenty-seven. But we just had very acrobatic sex on a hard surface, and you were quite insatiable, so I had to go the extra mile."

He laughs. “That’s true. You did go the extra mile. That was probably the best sex I’ve ever had.”

Damn. This man makes my heart soar.

“Me too, Leo.”

He gives me a shy little smile. “Good.”

“Bed or shower?” I ask.

“Shower. Look at this. I’m getting our bodily fluids all over your floor.” He turns around and walks toward the door. The curve of his ass has pink marks from my fingers. I like that even more than watching my cum running down his legs.

Leo is mine now. The idea is both exciting and a relief.

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Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:54 am

After touring my share of old homes in Sutton City, I expect Steve to take me to a tiny bathroom complete with a wooden toilet seat and a discolored sink. I'm pleasantly surprised to see one of those deep clawfoot tubs next to a frosted window and new double-sink vanity.

He must do very well as an accountant.

"There's a shower in the downstairs bathroom, but I thought taking a bath together might be nice." He drags his hand through his hair bashfully, like he's nervous to admit he wants to take a bath with me. He's so goddamned sweet.

"I'd like that," I say. "Thank you."

My skin has already begun to ache the way it always does before my heat. Cuddling usually helps. Snuggling up to Steve in a hot bath sounds perfect.

He flips the water on and feels out the temperature. "How hot do you like it?"

"Scorching. Set it to as hot as you can stand, and that will be good for me."

He sneaks glances at me as he moves through the bathroom, getting out bath salts and washcloths. I take the opportunity to look at him, too. His long, lean legs are naked with the exception of his white socks, and his cock peeks out underneath the hem of his button-up shirt. Even flaccid, it's an unreasonable size. It swings back and forth like an elephant trunk while he walks.

He unbuttons his shirt and shrugs it off onto the floor. His shoulders are covered with

freckles. They bring out the touch of auburn in his hair and the flecks of green in his eyes. He takes off his socks and climbs into the tub, wincing as he submerges his foot in the water. Lowering his long body into the basin requires him to bend his knees and keep most of his upper body dry. The tub simply isn't made for someone of his size. He holds his arms out to me.

“Are you sure there's enough space for both of us?” I ask. “You're huge in more ways than one.”

He shrugs. “I have a way of making things fit.”

I laugh. He certainly does. I'm surprised my ass is only mildly sore after how much he fit in there. I yank off my own shirt, finally naked before him. He devours me with his eyes, taking in every inch of me with an obvious hunger that leaves no question of what he thinks of my body. I notice the way his cock stiffens. He's not completely erect yet, but my own cock reacts in kind, plumping up a little bit. I can't seem to get enough of him.

I climb into the tub, careful not to step on any body part that might make Steve uncomfortable. His arms close around me. I feel surrounded by him in the best way. It takes me a moment to get used to the heat of the water. It truly is scorching. But that's nice too.

There's nothing better than cuddles and a hot bath.

“Can I ask you something?” Steve says.

“Sure.”

“Why were people filming us at your house?”

That's the last question in the world I want to answer right now. I'd rather pretend that I'm an ordinary guy who signed up for the Perfect Match Agency to find love. Then I could just cuddle with Steve while I descend into my heat without a care in the world.

I twist in his arms and look up at him. "Because my life is a mess right now."

He narrows his eyes. "So you're letting people film it?"

He's right. That was a shitty explanation.

"My agent threatened to drop me a few weeks ago. Some photos of me at an orgy got leaked, and I almost lost a big role because of it. He told me I had to clean up my public image, or he wouldn't represent me anymore. And part of cleaning up my public image is getting into a long-term relationship with a respectable alpha."

He looks away from me with hurt in his eyes. "Then this isn't real for you. It's just some publicity stunt?"

"It was in the beginning," I admit.

"And now?" he asks, his gaze returning to mine.

"And now I wish I'd met you under different circumstances. My life really is a mess, Steve. My career is in shambles, my dad won't talk to me, and I don't have any real friends. So yeah. When a hot, funny guy fucks me better than any alpha I've ever had sex with, and then cuddles with me in his antique tub in his adorable apartment, of course I want more than a publicity stunt with him. I'm only human."

His lips quirk up. "Okay. That's honest. I like honesty."

“Yeah?”

He nods. “I also like it when you call me hot and funny. That helps with the whole, ‘I only signed up for a match to save my career’ thing. While we’re being honest, my dads got a cat for me because they were worried about me spending too much time alone, but it didn’t help because the cat hates me. That’s why I signed up for the Perfect Match Agency. It was to soothe the pain of rejection from a cat.”

I laugh. How did the agency find someone like Steve? He’s almost too perfect. A part of me wants to keep him at arm’s length until I find out what his flaw is, but after everything that’s happened in the last few months, I desperately need something good in my life. Would it be so bad to let myself hope that Steve is everything he appears to be?

“I don’t know how much you know about me, but there’s a sex tape of me and my ex out there. Lots of people have seen it. I also got arrested for drug possession, but I was cleared. Then there are the orgy photos. Not to mention the films I’ve done with nude scenes.”

He lifts his hand to cup my chin. “It’s okay.”

“But the agency said you’re close to your dads.”

“And you’re worried they won’t like you because of that stuff?” he asks.

I nod.

“Well, don’t. I assure you that my alpha dad will be too fixated on the fact that you’ve worked with Batman to be able to focus on anything else you’ve done. Also, my omega dad will talk about legalizing sex work to anyone who will listen because of this book he read about human trafficking, so I wouldn’t worry about him. My

dads aren't judgmental people."

I bury my nose into his chest to mask the tears welling in my eyes. He can't possibly be that accepting. He's far too perfect.

We lie there in silence for a long time. Eventually the water gets cooler, and my fingers are all wrinkled. It's time to get out. But I don't want to.

The connection I have with Steve seems horribly fragile.

"Are you okay?" Steve asks.

"Yeah. It's just... I really want you."

"And you think you don't have me?"

I reluctantly sit up. The air is cold after being submerged in the water for so long.

"What is it that you want? Other than help getting over your cat rejection?"

His lips slide into a half-smile. "I want a real chance with you. That's it. I don't mind making our relationship public if you need to do that to placate your agent, but I don't want anything between us to be just for show."

After years of everything in my life being just for show, my heart aches for what Steve is suggesting.

"Okay. I promise everything between us will be real."

If Steve is really as perfect as he seems, that's the least I can offer him.

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Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:54 am

After the bath, Leo showers downstairs. While I wait for him, I retrieve my phone from a pocket in the pants to text my alpha dad. I promised him I'd let him know how my meeting with my match went as soon as humanly possible.

I met him.

He sends a response immediately.

How did it go?

I smile.

He's amazing. Everything I could ask for and more.

Dad sends five heart emojis and three party hat emojis. There is no such thing as too many emojis as far as he's concerned. At least I know what those emojis mean. Sometimes I have to look them up.

We talked about Batman during our first conversation. It was very awkward. I blame you.

He sends a collection of laughing emojis. Some of them have tears, others don't.

I stand there for a moment in my towel, not sure if I should tell Dad who Leo is or that I'm in a rut. It all seems like sensitive information for the time being. I settle for a portion of the truth.

I won't be coming to work this coming week. I have some things I need to sort out.

There's a long pause before Dad responds.

Is everything okay?

I have to give him more information than that. I search for an article on the biological reactions of an alpha and omega who have abnormally high pheromone compatibilities, then text him the link.

He sends me a winky face. Ohhhh, I see. Have fun!

I roll my eyes. He's such a goofball sometimes.

While I have a minute alone, I send a quick email to a few of my employees, letting them know I'll be gone. I finish just as the water stops running downstairs. For a moment, I consider bringing my phone with me. Ruts come in waves, and I should probably stay reachable for as long as I can before I descend into the next wave. But I want to savor this first rut with Leo. Enough people know I won't be coming back to the office until next week.

I jog downstairs, almost losing the towel tucked around my hips in the process.

Leo emerges from the bathroom with wet hair and water droplets all over his chest and arms. He's wearing a towel of his own around his waist, but low enough that I can see the muscular V lining the inside of his hips. His scent hits me all at once. The heady, sweet intensity of it overwhelms me. I take a step forward, ready to wrap my arms around him and claim his mouth with my own.

He holds up his hand. "Wait. You need to take a shower too. That bath we shared was all cuddles and conversation. We didn't even touch the soap."

Something primal within me rages at the idea of waiting. I need Leo now. But I'm not a mindless meathead. I can control myself.

My erection that has pushed past the towel and is now proudly on display in front of me suggests otherwise, but I'm in a rut. That's perfectly normal.

What's not perfectly normal is my overwhelming desire to push Leo against the wall and plow into him all in one go, knowing he isn't prepped.

"If we're not having sex now, I need us to be far away from each other," I grind out.

He considers me for a moment, his lips quirking up on one side. "You could always have a shower afterward."

"But I thought—"

He untucks his towel and reveals his own erection. "When you look at me like that, things like showers feel less important." He folds his towel in half and drops it right in front of me. "And there are so many things we haven't tried yet." He kneels down on the towel, his mouth now at the same level as my cock.

"Oh," I say.

This man reduces to me a neanderthal only capable of monosyllabic words and grunts.

He wraps his wet fingers around my cock and just stares at it for a moment. "This is the kind of cock that an omega can't come back from."

"What do you mean?"

He sticks out his tongue and gives my tip a lick. The heat of his mouth along with his scent is too much. My cock drools precum from all the stimulation.

“You’re going to ruin me for other men.” He sticks out his tongue again and licks my cock from the base to the head. When he gets to the precum, he lathes his tongue over it and pulls off, creating a string of cum from my cock to his mouth.

“You are...” I start, but because I’m in neanderthal mode, I don’t know how to finish that sentence.

“A cum slut?” he guesses, flashing me a shameless smile.

“No. You’re...” I still can’t come up with the right word.

He takes the head of my cock into his mouth and sucks. I close my eyes and moan from the pressure.

“Do you know what I like?” he asks, circling both his hands around the base of my cock and gliding them up and down.

I shake my head, now completely incapable of speech.

“To make a man fall apart with my mouth.” He leans forward, engulfing my cock in his mouth again, but this time he takes me deeper—so deep that I feel the pressure of his throat around my tip. He gags, and his throat squeezes me, but he doesn’t pull off. He just stays there, tears leaking from his eyes while he looks up at me. God, he’s beautiful.

I cup his jaw gently. “You don’t have to do that.”

He takes me in deeper, somehow relaxing his throat muscles until the entire head of

my penis is lodged down his throat. His eyes glaze over into this blissed-out expression that reminds me of when he was riding my dick. My body desperately wants to thrust forward, but I hold still, letting him take exactly how much he wants and nothing more.

He pulls back with a pop and smiles up at me. “Can we go to your bed? I’ll be able to enjoy you from more angles there.”

I nod. I think I’d say yes to anything he suggested right now.

He stands up and takes my hand. Instead of waiting for me to guide him to my room, he takes me to my bedroom door and walks inside. “I noticed your room on my way upstairs. You have quite the comic book collection.” He jumps onto my bed, dragging me with him.

I lie down on my back. “Uh, yeah. My alpha dad and I went out to breakfast every Saturday when I was a kid. Afterwards, he’d take me to the comic book store and let me pick out whatever I wanted.”

Leo’s smile falters. He looks over at my bookcases filled with the little mementos of all the time my alpha dad and I spent together.

“So these are all from your breakfasts together?” he asks.

“Yeah.” I tug him forward until his body collapses on top of mine. His wet, naked skin makes my body light up with excitement.

“You have thousands of comic books. That’s a lot of breakfasts,” he says.

I shrug. “The man loves his eggs benedict.”

“And you, it seems.”

I am too aroused for a conversation about my parents, but I understand why Leo is bringing them up. We haven't had a chance to properly get to know each other yet.

“Yes. And me. He's probably my favorite person in the whole world.”

Leo searches my eyes, the playfulness from earlier forgotten. “You're a really good guy, aren't you?”

“I'm all right. Unless I'm expected to keep my hands off you. Then I'm no good at all.” I run my fingers down his back, pausing when I get to the curve of his ass. I'm not sure he's ready to get back to messing around yet, and I don't want to rush him.

“What if the agency only paired you with me because I'm famous, and they wanted the good publicity? You deserve someone better.”

I roll on top of him, careful not to put too much of my weight on his body. “Leo, that's bullshit. They paired us together because we have a 92% compatibility.” I kiss him, letting him feel the power of our attraction to each other. Then I grab his hand and place it on my hard cock. “Does it feel like I'm disappointed to you? I'm thrilled to have you in my bed. You're smart and talented and successful, not to mention beautiful. Besides, you know Batman.”

That finally makes him smile. “It's true.”

I kiss him again. He threads his hands through my hair and kisses me back. Our bodies writhe against each other, slippery from the water of Leo's bath and gloriously naked. The last time we had sex there was far too much fabric separating us. I cup Leo's ass and grind against him. The smooth heat of his cock glides against my abdomen, then brushes against my own.

“Fuck,” I whisper.

He slips his hand between us, gripping our cocks together. I look down at us clutched between his fingers. My cock is easily twice as thick as his and several inches longer. The size difference is strangely erotic. My cock pulses, more precum pearling at the tip.

I always have more precum than normal during a rut, but this is ridiculous.

Leo tightens his grip and drags his fingers up our lengths. I take in a sharp breath. “Leo, it isn’t...” How do I tell him that I need more without sounding like a jerk? We’re still getting to know each other. He should be able to explore my body as much as he wants without me demanding to dick him down.

He pauses, his fingers loosening on our cocks. “It isn’t what?”

My breath is labored now, which is embarrassing because his isn’t. I squeeze my eyes shut and force myself to calm down. “I’m sorry. It’s the rut.”

“Why are you sorry? Tell me what you need, Steve.”

I open my eyes. Leo is lying underneath me in my bed, looking up at me with heat in his eyes.

“If it’s too soon to have sex again, I could get some lube and maybe fuck you between your thighs? I don’t think I have enough control for oral right now. I’ll want to fuck your face, and I’m too big for that.”

Leo smirks. “You aren’t too big for that.”

“You don’t understand. I’ll be rough.” Hell, I was too rough when I fucked him

earlier. I could have really hurt him, and his throat is a much more delicate part of his body.

He slips out from underneath me and crawls to the top of my bed. “We can make it safe for me.” He grabs one of my pillows and yanks the pillowcase off. Then he grabs another one and takes the pillowcase off that one too. “Lie on your back with your arms out.”

My heart races as I do what he says. Truth be told, I’m not that creative in bed. I tend to be too focused on not hurting my partner to add anything unusual to the mix. So when Leo ties both my wrists to the bedposts, I’m not prepared for how exposed and helpless I feel.

“Is this a kink thing? Because I don’t know if I’m into that,” I say.

“No. I’m just restraining you to keep you from holding my head down during oral. I’ve had an alpha in rut do that before, and I didn’t like it.” He crawls between my legs and rests his hands on my upper thighs. “If you want me to untie you, I will.” He keeps eye contact with me as he lowers his head and takes my cock into his mouth.

“No,” I say. “I’m good.”

The corners of his lips turn up as he takes my cock deeper. Not all the way to his throat, but deep enough that my eyes roll back, and I let out a groan. The wet heat of his mouth is different than his ass, obviously. It’s not quite as tight. But the pressure concentrated on the head of my cock while he sucks makes my hips jerk up, seeking more. I worry that will be too much. I don’t want to be like that alpha who held his head down, but he moves with me, like when we were fucking before, eager for my thrusts.

Fuck, that’s hot.

His hands grip the lower part of my cock that he can't get to with his mouth and starts stroking me in time with his mouth. The combination of the sensations drives me wild. I buck up, desperate for more friction. His hands grip me tighter, and he bobs his head up and down. Drool drips down his chin and my cock as he chokes on my tip.

“Oh, God. That's it.”

Leo hums, the vibration buzzing against my skin. I continue to thrust up, able to lose myself in his mouth and hands without worrying about hurting him. My hands are tied, and he's on top, able to pull away if he needs to. The freedom of being able to move however I want during sex is completely foreign to me. I close my eyes and let the pleasure wash over me—let myself feel everything without any guilt or restrictions. My orgasm comes fast and hard, surging through my body with a force that makes me shake. It keeps going and going, and I don't have to stop it. I don't need to pull back or apologize.

When it's over, I open my eyes. Leo is watching me with cum running down his chin.

“That was the hottest thing I've ever seen,” he says.

“Thank you.”

He still has my cock in his hands. It's rock-hard, and already aching again. “Someone looks like they could go again.”

“I'm sorry.”

He bites his lip and does this cute smile that scrunches up his nose. “I'm not. Can I ride you this time? With your hands still tied?”

“Yes.” I want that more than anything. Leo doesn’t understand what he’s given me. I’ve always loved sex, but it comes with a lot of stress. That’s why I can’t enter into it casually. And he’s taken all that stress away.

A cheesy thought surfaces in my mind. My dads believe in soulmates. They’re hopeless romantics who were lucky enough to find each other. I’m a little more skeptical, in general. Especially after having such a hard time with dating.

But maybe soulmates are real. Is there any other way to explain my body’s reaction to Leo? Not just the pheromones, but the intense emotional connection I feel to him?

He makes me want to believe in fate.

“Are you okay?” he asks. “You look like you’re deep in thought.”

“I’m fine. I just... really, really like you.”

He stares into my eyes like he understands all the things I can’t say yet because it’s too soon. Then he crawls up and kisses me. His mouth is sloppy with my cum. I’m not usually into that, but tasting my cum in his mouth is perfect. Our tongues tangle, dragging against each other, and God. That’s almost as good as sex with him.

He lifts himself up and stares into my eyes again. “This is too good. It’s almost scary.”

“Yeah, I agree.”

He brushes his lips against mine gently, then sits up. “Promise me you won’t forget how good this is?”

I hate how fragile his confidence is. He shouldn’t be worried that I’ll leave him at the

drop of a hat, especially not when we've barely met and everything is going so well. But if reassurance is what Leo needs, that's what I'll give him. I'll give it to him every damn day if it will help him feel safe with me.

"I promise. There's no way I could ever forget this, Leo."

He sits on my chest and leans back, giving me a close-up view of his hole, which is now glistening with slick. He locks eyes with me as he reaches between his legs and presses two fingers inside himself. They go in easily. I'm sure he's still stretched out after the way I fucked him earlier.

"I have these dildos that are almost as wide as your dick," he says, adding a third finger. His slick squelches as he pushes them in and out of his hole.

"Yeah? Do you like them?" I ask, not sure where he's going with this.

He nods, slipping in a fourth finger. There's resistance this time, but not much. "I like to stretch myself. It's always been something different than sex, though. Something I enjoyed on my own." He slowly slides his fingers out, leaving his hole open. It contracts around nothing, still gaping slightly. "Sex with you is special for me. It's like the fantasies I explore on my own, but it's real."

His voice is so genuine and raw, it speaks to my core. I don't even question whether what he's saying is true. I can feel it in my bones.

He crawls backwards and crouches over my cock. Ever so slowly, he lowers himself onto me. The pressure of his body closing around me, inch by inch, is like the connection I feel with him in my soul. This is what I've always wanted with an omega—to feel tied and whole with him. It's the kind of thing I didn't completely understand until this moment because I hadn't felt it before. I just knew that what I was experiencing with the other guys I dated wasn't enough.

He pauses halfway, his body trembling. I worry if he's okay, but his eyes are still locked with mine, and he seems better than okay—he seems just as tapped into this as I am. I wait as he stays there, giving his body time to fully accept mine, and that pause makes everything okay. Leo is only taking as much of me as he can. He's not pushing himself too far. We're both safe in this moment because he isn't in a hurry.

Then he relaxes the rest of the way down, melting into me like he's made of liquid. I can see the outline of my cock in his lower abdomen. He places his hands there and closes his eyes, like he's savoring the sensation—like he's savoring me.

I've never felt so accepted in bed.

The tightness of his body all around my cock is bliss and home all at the same time. I am safe, and I am transported. He lowers his hand to his cock, circling his hand around it, and then he rolls his hips. Sparks of pleasure shoot through me. I can't help but move my own hips, which is okay. Leo is still in control, which means he can pull off me if he needs to. Our hips move together, the momentum building and building. He cries out and spurts cum on my stomach, but he doesn't stop. He keeps riding me, the friction between our bodies lighting me up like a firework.

I roar as my orgasm overtakes me, my whole body taut, my hips thrusting up into him. He screams with me, our voices guttural and primal. He reaches forward and sinks his fingernails into my skin, clawing at my stomach with a feral intensity that matches what I feel in my chest.

Our orgasms last so long, my body almost panics from all the energy coursing through me. The drop happens suddenly and just as intensely.

“Please untie me,” I beg. “I need to hold you.”

He scrambles forward, disconnecting the tie between our bodies. The loss of him

around my cock is only brief. After he unties my hands, he sinks himself back onto me. I wrap my arms around him and hold him tightly to my chest.

“I take back what I said before. That was the best sex of my life,” I say.

I can feel his smile against my skin. “Yeah.”

We fall asleep intertwined on my bed.

That shower will have to wait.

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Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 7:54 am

I wake up underneath the covers in Steve's bed with the solid warmth of his body underneath me. He didn't make me get off before we fell asleep. At some point his cock slipped out of my body, which is a little disappointing, but that's okay.

He'll be inside me again soon enough.

Real happiness glows inside me for the first time in years. I'd forgotten what it felt like. The connection I shared with Steve during our last time making love was incredible. I didn't know sex could be that intimate or special.

Reluctantly, I realize the reason I woke up is that I have to go to the bathroom. I climb off Steve and wander through his apartment to the bathroom where I showered. I clean myself up a bit while I'm there, which gives me enough time away from Steve to remember two very important things. The first is that I abandoned a film crew yesterday that Greg probably paid for, and the second is that I left my phone upstairs on silent.

I creep up to the top floor where my pants are rumpled up and on the floor. Luckily, my phone still has a charge when I take it out.

There are seven missed calls and a series of text messages. Most of them are from Greg.

I just got a call from Luke. He said you left your house with your match. What is going on?

Please call me. Luke said you've been gone for over an hour.

This isn't funny anymore, Leo. I paid good money for that film crew.

I sent the film crew home. You better have an amazing excuse for what you did today.

It's past ten o'clock, and you still haven't bothered to contact me. I would have preferred to tell you this over the phone or in person, but you leave me no choice. As of today, I will no longer be representing you. I'll send the relevant paperwork via email tomorrow morning.

I wait for the sadness or disappointment to come. Getting another agent will be hard and getting work after I got dropped by Greg will be even harder. But I'm not sad or disappointed, just relieved.

The idea of not working isn't nearly as scary as it was a few weeks ago when I agreed to sign up for the Perfect Match Agency. If I didn't have to travel all the time for work, then I could stay here with Steve. We could actually build a healthy relationship.

But it isn't just that. I know an alpha can't solve all my problems. I genuinely don't want to move around every few months anymore. Going from place to place like that was exhausting. I like Sutton City. It would be wonderful to stay here for a few years and recover from my whirlwind schedule.

Of course, I know what that means. Omega actors only get roles for ten or fifteen years before they're deemed "too old" for Hollywood. There are exceptions, of course. But most omegas have short careers in the movie business. If I step away now, I probably won't ever be able to return.

That doesn't bother me as much as it should.

I navigate to the other messages I received while I was away. Terry emailed me an apology about what happened earlier today. In the message he stated that I was removed from any marketing responsibilities, and that Steve would be issued a full refund. I also got an email from the director of the agency, issuing another apology. The last message is from Mark, an actor I worked with in the last TV show I filmed over a month ago.

Hey, Leo. Long time, no see. I'll be in Sutton City next week, and it would be fun to do lunch or drinks while I'm in town. I'm sorry you've been having such a tough time. We can go somewhere public where the press can take as many pictures as they want of us. Hopefully that will help. Kisses.

Unlike me, the press adores Mark. Offering to be seen with me in public is a kind gesture on his part. If I hadn't just lost my agent, I'd take him up on it in a heartbeat. But I realize I don't want to meet up with Mark just so the press can take pictures of us. I do want to see him, though. I could really use a friend right now.

Thanks for reaching out. I'd love to see you while you're in town. How would you feel about drinks at my house with no press? I've decided to step away from the public eye for a while.

I send the text because California is three hours behind, and I'm sure Mark is up anyway. He's such a night owl. Early mornings on set were hard for him.

He responds almost immediately.

Drinks at your house sounds lovely. And I completely understand why you're taking a break. You deserve one. You've been working nonstop for years. How about Thursday night? Would that work? I have some free time after eight o'clock. Or I could do Sunday night, if that's better.

Mark is such a nice guy. It will be a relief to spend time with someone without worrying about what to wear to the restaurant so I'll look good in the photos people will inevitably take of me. When was the last time I spent time with friends just to have fun?

That's the reason I don't have friends anymore. For far too long, all my friendships were thinly veiled attempts at networking. Now that I'm in the midst of a scandal, all of those friends are markedly absent from my life.

I take my phone with me downstairs and set it on the nightstand before climbing back into bed with Steve. Even in sleep, he pulls me into his arms, muttering something under his breath that sounds like, "friends with Batman."

It's terrifying how much I like him. I think I'd do almost anything to keep him. But I know that these things take time, and I have to let our relationship come into its own before I make any demands of him.

I fall asleep safe in his arms.

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Leo lets me make love to him in the middle of the night with my hands tied to the bedposts. He gives me a blow job first thing in the morning with my hands tied again, then jacks me off when my cock is still hard after it's over. He's so patient with me, even though his heat hasn't started yet.

“Do you want to eat something besides my cum?” I ask. We're still cuddling in bed, his cheek resting on my chest and my arm wrapped around him.

“That depends. Will it require either of us to get up? Because I want to stay in bed with you all day.”

My stomach flutters a little at that.

“It will require us to get up momentarily, but then we can move to the couch where we can order food to be delivered directly to my front door and watch movies in between our sexual escapades.”

He tilts his head to smile up at me. “That does sound pretty great. Is there a place that delivers pancakes? I haven't had pancakes in forever.”

“I could make you pancakes. I even have fresh blueberries. How do you feel about blueberry pancakes?”

He twists his mouth in thought. “That would require you to be away from the couch, and therefore, not cuddling with me.”

“True, but delivered pancakes will be lukewarm, at best. Who likes a lukewarm

pancake?”

“No one. If you make me pancakes, can you do it nude?” he asks.

“Am I allowed to wear an apron?”

He rolls his eyes, but he’s smiling. “If you must. But after you’re done cooking, the apron has to come off.”

I pull off the blanket covering both our bodies. “Then we’ll need to bring down lots of blankets.”

Leo grabs the blanket from me. “I’ll build the blanket fort if you cook breakfast.”

“Deal.” I plant a kiss on his lips for good measure.

He nips at my bottom lip playfully. A part of me is tempted to keep kissing him and go for another round before breakfast. Everything is so easy with him, whether it’s bantering about what we’re eating for breakfast or the mind-blowing sex. I didn’t know interacting with an omega could be like this.

He extricates himself from me and jumps out of bed. “If you have coffee, that would be amazing. Or we could order some.”

“I have coffee. I’ll make us a pot. How do you take it?”

“Black as my heart,” he says dramatically. In that moment, I can imagine him joking around with Henry. They would love him. I think he’d love them too, unlike the last guy I introduced them to. He was too starstruck by Henry to loosen up around him, but that wouldn’t be a problem for Leo. He knows lots of famous people.

I grab another blanket and head out the door with Leo. He's naked too as we navigate down the staircase.

"Once upon a time, you wanted me to take a shower," I remind him.

"We took a bath," he says.

"With no soap."

"Yes. But it was a long bath. And I've bathed your cock with my tongue a few times since then. That has to count for something."

I laugh. "Am I not allowed to take a shower, then?"

He jumps down the bottom stair and spins around to smile up at me. "When I'm napping. Then I won't miss cuddling with you."

"You are very demanding," I tease.

His smile falters. "Sorry. I get clingy during my preheat."

I drop the blanket onto the floor and sweep him into my arms. I half expect to trip or fumble somehow because I'm awkward like that, but I pull it off. The blanket in his arms even billows dramatically.

"I was just joking. You can be as clingy as you want."

He burrows his nose into my shoulder. "Famous last words."

I hold back a laugh. Talking with him is almost like talking with my dads. With way more boners and orgasms. But the humor is similar. I've never met anyone else who

can make me laugh the way they do.

I carry him into the living room where my admittedly enormous TV is. My dad bought it for me as a housewarming gift. I deposit Leo on the couch that looks similar to an antique, but is a lot more comfortable.

“I’ll be back soon to fulfill my cuddle obligations as the big spoon,” I say.

He raises his eyebrows. “Oh, so because I’m little, I automatically have to be the little spoon?”

“Do you want to be the big spoon?”

He smiles and shakes his head. “Absolutely not. The little spoon is the best cuddle position. I’m just messing with you.”

I leave him and his blanket to make coffee and pancakes in the kitchen. I mostly forgo the apron because of the way Leo keeps peeking into the kitchen during his many trips up and down the stairs for more blankets. Just as I’m sliding the last pancake onto his plate, he meanders into the kitchen wearing a big white T-shirt he must have found in my dresser. The short sleeves are quarter length on him, and the hem goes down to his knees.

“Oh, so you get to wear my clothes, but I don’t?” I say, even though I love seeing him in my shirt.

“I got cold. Also, this shirt smells like you.” He pulls the neck up to his nose and inhales deeply. “I got it out of your hamper. I know that’s gross, but I’m far enough into my preheat that I don’t care.”

My cock perks up at him breathing in my scent like that. Leo glances down and bites

his lip at the sight of my cock rising to say hi to him.

“You haven’t fucked me in the kitchen yet,” he says.

And just like that, my cock is at full mast.

“I made you breakfast and coffee. If we have sex, it will get cold.”

“Okay. We can wait. If that’s what you want.” He grabs one of the cups of steaming coffee and brings it to his lips as casually as if we’re talking about the weather.

“Cold food is always a disappointment,” I say.

He shrugs. “Food is food.”

“But aren’t you sore?”

His lips slide into a seductive smile. “My body is all loose and achy. Here, you can feel for yourself.” He grasps my hand and guides it behind him. He lifts the hem of my shirt and presses my fingers between his asscheeks. He’s already wet for me. I slide my fingers down until I find his entrance, and press against his hole. It opens for me easily, even as I push two fingers inside him.

He lets out a loud breath. “See? My womb is descending too. I can feel it.” He turns around and rests his chest on the countertop, widening his stance. My fingers slip out of him in the process, so he guides them back to his entrance. I penetrate him again. This time, I can push my fingers deep inside. He feels different than he did, even this morning. His inner wall is soft and spongy where it wasn’t before. I press against the spot, and he takes in a sharp breath.

“Yes. Right there.”

I want to keep pressing against it, but we have to talk about what that would mean. I slip my fingers out of him. “If I keep touching you there, you could open up for me during your heat.”

He nods, not meeting my gaze.

“Is that what you want? For me to breed you?”

It’s a deeply intimate experience. Not only physically, but emotionally too. I’ve never shared that level of intimacy with an omega before. When I’ve shared heats with my boyfriends, we always took precautions so that wouldn’t happen.

Leo has an IUD. If I bred him, he wouldn’t get pregnant. But it would deepen the intensity of our relationship considerably.

“If you don’t want to, it’s okay,” he says. “I get it. We’ve just met, and... it’s a lot to ask.”

“Are you asking me, Leo?”

He bunches his shoulders together. “If I did, what would you say?” He’s still facing the opposite direction, so I can’t see his face. It seems almost intentional.

Leo is so nervous to ask for this, he can’t even look me in the eye.

“I’d say yes. We both agreed this wasn’t casual, didn’t we?”

He twists his head, finally daring to look at me. “Then you’ll do it? You’ll breed me when the time comes?”

I wrap my arm around his chest and mold my body to his back until my mouth is

right next to his ear. “I think it would be hard for me to hold back.” I grasp his hips and lift him up until they’ve cleared the counter. From this angle, I press three fingers deep inside him, jamming against the softness of his womb opening. He throws his head back and cries out. I massage the softness, circling my fingers around and around.

“What are you doing?” he asks. “Just fuck me already.”

He doesn’t have to ask me twice.

I withdraw my fingers and line up my cock. I still meet a fair amount of resistance, but he’s looser now than ever. He groans as I ease in deeper.

“Who cares about pancakes, when I can have your dick?” he says.

I grip his hips for leverage, and push the rest of the way inside him all in one go. His ass clenches down, his whole body taut. “Oh my God.”

“Are you okay?” I should have gone slower. After the freedom that came with him tying me down, I’m not being careful enough.

“I need you to fuck me, Steve,” he rasps.

There’s no way he’s in heat yet. Wouldn’t it take a few days? I rock back, and thrust back in slowly. He tilts his hips down. When I fuck into him again, I press against the opening of his womb.

His hands clench into fists. “Harder.”

It’s awkward at first. He’s up on the counter, and it’s hard to get leverage. Instead of holding onto his hips, I hold onto the edge of the countertop. I slam into him and he

wails. Not in pain, but in pleasure. I can sense the difference innately as my lust overtakes me. I reach for his shoulder with my other hand, and this time I'm able to thrust into him with a force that makes him spasm around me.

"Don't stop," he whispers.

I fuck him like an animal. I shouldn't be pounding into him like this. The sound of our skin coming together is low-pitched and loud. I'm slamming into him without mercy. His slick leaks everywhere. His cock is leaking on the countertop too. It's too much to be precum. He must have orgasmed already.

I push his back down, until I'm pounding into that soft spot. Leo sobs and his body trembles. That just eggs me on. I rail into him faster, my fingers digging into his shoulder as my release overtakes me. I go blind from the pleasure, not sure what I'm doing anymore. I fuck into him one more time, forcing my tip against that pliant place within him. Leo's ass squeezes me like a vice. He screams, slick gushing from where we're joined.

"Oh my God, I think I'm in heat," he says.

I think he's right.

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Normally, I go through two or three days of uncomfortable preheat symptoms before my heat comes. My need for sex is something that blooms slowly, amongst my need for touch. It's something predictable and constant, like the rise of hunger or thirst, not something that spikes out of nowhere.

The sudden arrival of my heat is like a punch in the gut. My skin chafes at the fabric of Steve's shirt, even though it's loose. The stitching along the neckline and across the shoulders is unbearably scratchy. The counter is cold and hard underneath my belly. My body aches to be filled, even though Steve is deep inside me.

It isn't just my body, either. My heart aches. That's always the worst part of my heat. I yearn for an emotional connection to my alpha that's as deep as his cock. I hate that desperate desire for love. It's worse than the skin sensitivity, high libido, or fatigue. Most of the time I can convince myself that I don't need anyone to love me. Not even my dads. But during my heat, the loneliness in my chest becomes an unbearable chasm. Tears leak from my eyes, just like slick leaks from my ass. I'm nothing but a mess of bodily fluids and need.

"Hey, are you okay?" Steve asks.

I shake my head.

"What can I do to make it better?"

It's all so overwhelming, I can't answer. I just burst into sobs. One second Steve was fucking me into oblivion, and now he's looking at me like I'm a ceramic doll that might break. No alpha could possibly think this is sexy. What if he changes his mind

about me? Dave hated my heat. He threatened to hire someone to “take care of it” the following spring if we were still together. He emphasized the “if” like he found the idea implausible.

Steve withdraws from me. Slick and cum gush from my hole. I’m horribly empty now.

“No,” I whisper. “Don’t go.”

“I’m not going anywhere. But I’m sure this countertop doesn’t feel good. How about I take you to the couch or my bed?”

I nod. “Okay.”

“You look like you want to take that shirt off.” He points to where I’m pulling on the collar of the shirt I stole from his closet. I didn’t realize I was doing that.

“It hurts,” I say.

He grabs the shirt by the shoulders and lifts it over my head. “Your heat came on suddenly. That can’t feel good.” He tosses the shirt onto the floor. “Do you want to walk or would you like me to carry you?”

I lean forward and curl my arms into my chest. My forehead collides with his collarbone.

He chuckles. “Okay. That’s one way of answering.” He twists me around and hooks an arm underneath my knees and neck. Being lifted is uncomfortable and wonderful at the same time. I get a little motion sick as he carries me over to the couch, but I also feel cared for.

He sets me down in the pile of blankets I collected on the couch. “This is a nice little nest.”

Something primal within me likes his compliment. I wriggle my body underneath one of the blankets—not because I’m hot, but because it makes me feel safe.

“We could stay here for a while,” I say. “Just you and me.”

He smiles. “Okay.”

“This isn’t my house, but I set up these blankets, so this space is mine,” I explain.

Steve runs his fingers through my hair, brushing it out of my face. “Do you usually like to be home during your heat?”

I nod. “It’s safer.”

“That makes sense. Does this area feel safe enough? Or do you want me call a driver to take us back to your place?”

I wrap my arms around his body and pull him closer to me. His naked skin against mine is exactly what I need. “We can’t leave. I’m leaking everywhere.”

He chuckles. “Fair enough.”

“I’m not smart during my heat,” I warn him. “Brain fog. And sadness. I am very sad during my heat. I wish someone would care about me. I am so sad that no one does.”

Somewhere in the fog of my mind, I know I’ve said too much. Alphas don’t like it when you complain. They like smiles and yeses and dry eyes.

Steve presses a kiss to my cheek. “I care about you, Leo.”

“But my heat isn’t fun. Alphas like heats that are fun.”

He brushes his nose against mine, making my skin spark at the gentle touch. “You are fun, Leo. Your heat is just a few days a year. If it’s awful, we’ll deal with it together. But I bet you and I can have a good time.” He slides his hand between my thighs. It’s slippery there and incredibly sensitive. “You told me I could breed you, remember?”

I shiver at the idea of it. “Now?”

“Not yet. I have to open you up first. Will you let me open you up?”

I relax my legs. Steve pushes my knees up, and lines his cock up with my entrance. “Relax, okay?”

I’m so loose from my heat that I can take him without any discomfort. He tilts his hips, and then he’s brushing against the mouth of my womb.

“Yes. Right there,” I say.

He rocks his hips gently, putting pressure on that sensitive part of my body with the tip of his cock. It’s like he’s massaging a live wire inside my body. I shake my head, overwhelmed with sensation.

“Do you want me to stop?” he asks.

“No. Please no.”

He jerks his hips up, jabbing into it. I whine and move my hips with him, needing more sensation.

“Oh, fuck, Leo. I can feel it loosening.”

He grinds the tip of his cock against it. I throw my head back and grip his shoulders tight.

“Harder. I need it harder.”

“I don’t want to hurt you,” he says.

“Please.”

He snaps his hips up, slamming into it. I can feel it loosening too, opening up for him. He eases back and rams into it again. This time, I move my body in time with his, and we snap our hips together. It hurts, but I need the hurt now.

“More,” I beg.

Instead of the brutal thrusts from before, he goes back to rocking his hips gently, grinding his cock against the wildly sensitive opening. All I can do is lie there, desperate for more. He grasps my cock and pumps it. I’m unprepared for the extra sensation. My body seizes up with pleasure, my ass clamping down on him. I scream, scraping my nails across his back.

Steve sinks his teeth into the flesh of my shoulder and pumps into me in quick succession. His body trembles as he comes, filling me with his hot seed.

Without any finesse, he pulls his cock out and flips me around, pushing my chest into the soft pile of blankets. I’m naked and presenting for him now, my ass up and dripping with slick. He thrusts into me all in one go. I groan. From this angle, he’s bigger. He pushes my hips down and then fucks into me again, this time jabbing into that sensitive spot.

I can feel him forcing me open, little by little. It's painful, but I need it. I rock back into him, our bodies in a blissful synchronicity. I'm so lost in pleasure, I forget to be sad, and I forget about the brain fog.

I forget about everything but his dick and how badly I need him to breed me.

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Half the blankets Leo brought downstairs are soaked in cum and slick. We cuddle close in the remaining blankets, sated and sleepy. He sits on my lap and rests his cheek against my chest. A deep sense of belonging washes over me. This is how we're meant to be. He fits in my arms like a key fits into a lock.

"How are you feeling?" I ask.

"Hungry," he says.

"Food is almost here." Or I hope it is. I ordered it a while ago when he told me he wanted nachos. I've never had an omega request solid food like that during their heat. Usually, I have to hard time getting them to eat anything at all.

Knock, knock, knock.

Thank God. I wait a few moments for the delivery guy to leave it on the doorstep. That's what I requested when I placed the order. Then I extricate myself from Leo and rescue our dinner from the doorstep with nothing but a blanket around my waist.

Leo smiles at me when I return with the two to-go containers. He hasn't been this alert all day. We started fucking at about nine-o'clock, only pausing for thirty or forty minutes at a time to sleep. It's almost seven o'clock now.

He opens his to-go container to reveal a decadent order of nachos, complete with jalapenos, guacamole, two different kinds of meat, and sour cream.

"I know most omegas don't eat much during their heat, but I'm always ravenous," he

says, picking up a chip slathered in cheese. “The doctor said it’s because of the crazy diets they put me on when I’m filming, but I don’t know. I think I’m just weird.”

This is the first time Leo’s talked about filming.

“What do you mean by crazy diets?” I ask.

He finishes chewing and grabs another chip. “Oh, you know. Low carb diets, broth diets, intermittent fasting. It depends on the director. They usually only make me do it if I have a scene where I take off my shirt, but some directors are assholes, and ask me to drop weight even if I’m going to be fully clothed the whole time.”

Leo is a small man. It’s concerning that directors think he needs to “drop weight.”

“Can you tell them you don’t want to?” I ask.

“I could, but then I’d get a reputation for being difficult to work with.” He shoves another chip in his mouth.

“Do you have another film like that coming up?” I don’t know how I would feel about watching Leo starve himself because some director wants a certain aesthetic.

He stops, a chip half-way to his mouth. “Um, no. I decided to take a break.”

“For how long?”

He sets the chip down. “I don’t know. I’ve been working nonstop for years, and I was thinking it would be nice to not take off to another state or country to film something new every few months. Especially now that we’re getting to know each other. My other relationships always fell apart because we were long distance, and I’m tired of sacrificing everything for my job.” He watches me closely as he speaks, like he’s

afraid I'll be upset.

That couldn't be further from the truth. It's a relief that he's taking our relationship that seriously.

"I work from home half the time. If you need to travel for work, I could come with you and fly back home when I need to go into the office."

He smiles shyly. "You'd do that for me?"

"Yeah. You don't need to stop working to be with me."

He eats another few chips without saying anything else, but it's clear that he's thinking about something. I open my own dinner, which is chicken tacos, and eat with him.

"I need to tell you something, but I'm worried it will upset you," he says.

"Okay." I remind myself that it's good he's communicating with me about something he thinks will upset me instead of keeping it from me. That's healthy.

But it also makes me nervous as hell.

"My agent wasn't thrilled about me leaving that film crew behind at my house. We're parting ways for the time being."

"What do you mean parting ways?" That can't mean what I think it does.

"He doesn't want to represent me anymore. That's the real reason I'm taking a break. I'm not ready to go searching for another agent. I need some time to regroup and think about what I really want with my life. Part of that is getting to know you better,

but it's a lot more complicated than that."

He's right. Learning that his agent dropped him because of something we did together does upset me. I should have considered what leaving that film crew behind would do to his career.

"I'm sorry, Leo," I say.

"I'm not. I've been happier with you during the last twenty-four hours than any time in the last two years. Don't get me wrong. I love acting. But somewhere along the way, I gave up too much of myself for it. I even forgot how good nachos are." He smiles and shoves another one in his mouth.

He seems okay. I'm sure a change of this magnitude isn't easy, but if it's what he wants, I should be supportive.

"Then we'll order lots of nachos," I say. "Or other foods you haven't eaten in a while."

He laughs. "I can't go too crazy or you'll have a very round boyfriend on your hands."

"And? I could get into that."

Leo looks away from me. "Stop being so perfect, or I won't ever be able to let you go."

"That's the idea, isn't it?"

He reaches out and squeezes my hand. "Maybe. With time. But you'll have to be patient with me. I'm not used to all this acceptance and sweetness. It makes me

wonder if you're for real."

Knock, knock, knock.

I roll my eyes. It's probably a salesperson or something. I certainly won't be answering the door. Leo and I both have blankets wrapped around us, but we're not wearing any clothes.

"Are you expecting someone?" Leo whispers. We're only a few feet from the front door. I'm sure whoever is knocking heard our voices.

"No. It's just a salesperson. They'll go away," I whisper back.

The knock comes again.

"Lower the drawbridge, Sir Lance Shiningword!" Henry's voice booms from outside the door.

Oh no. I told everyone at work I'd be gone, but I forgot to tell the guys I wouldn't be able to do DD tonight. Once a month I host because Henry likes to order takeout from a sushi place by my house.

"Sir Lance Shiningword?" Leo whispers, clearly amused.

"My friends have done a lot of medieval Dungeons and Dragons campaigns, okay? I ran out of name ideas."

He laughs silently.

"Steve's probably in the bathroom or something," James says. "I have the key he gave me to look after his cat a few weeks ago."

Fuck, fuck, fuck. I forgot about that key. A tell-tale sound of metal scratching against metal comes far too soon, and then the door is opening while Leo and I are still on the couch, wrapped in nothing but blankets.

Henry barges in first and stops abruptly when he sees us. “Oh. Is this... um, hello.”

James walks in behind him and does a double-take.

“Sorry everyone. Leo, these are my friends Henry and James. They’re here because I forgot I was hosting our game night.” I turn to Henry and James. “Leo is my match through that agency, and we met yesterday. One thing led to another, and...”

Henry’s eyes widen. “Oh.”

James stares at Leo for a full beat. “You’re Leo Sanders.”

Leo pulls the blanket tighter around his body. “I am. And you’re Henry Sanchez.” He nods to Henry, who is still in a state of shock.

More footsteps echo from the porch. Cooper and Griff step inside. Griff’s eyes go wide, exactly like Henry’s, but Cooper masks his surprise a little better.

“Steve forgot we were coming,” James explains.

Cooper smirks. “I’m sure he did. I’m Cooper Smith.” He holds out a hand to Leo.

“Leo Sanders.” His hand emerges from the blankets to shake Cooper’s.

“He’s my match through that agency,” I say again, like that somehow justifies the awkwardness of the situation.

“He could play DD with us,” Henry suggests.

“No, I think we should let them enjoy their evening together,” Cooper says. “It’s good to meet you, Leo. Please forgive our intrusion.”

To my immense relief, Cooper literally pushes Henry out the front door. Griff follows behind them, leaving only James.

“Perhaps you could bring him next week. We want to meet him properly. We can forgo the games for a nice dinner. What do you think?” James asks.

“Sure,” I agree. “I mean, if Leo’s free.”

“That should be fine. Thank you,” Leo says.

James gives us a smug smile. “Very good. I’ve seen all your films, Leo. You are an excellent actor. We could watch one at dinner. Unless you don’t like watching your own films, of course. We could do one without a sex scene, if that would make you more comfortable.”

Oh my God. How can this man be so good at business negotiations and this socially awkward with omegas at the same time?

Cooper pops his head back in and grabs James’s sleeve. “It’s time to go.”

He literally pulls James out the door by his shirt and shuts it behind them.

I sigh in relief. “I’m so sorry.”

Leo laughs. “It’s okay. They seem nice.”

“They really are. Once Henry gets to know you, he’ll be a lot more talkative, and maybe Cooper can bring his husband to dinner. He’s great. I think you’d like him.”

Leo sets his food down on the coffee table and climbs into my lap. “That sounds like fun. Your friends remind me of the guys I hung out with in high school.”

“Is that a good thing or a bad thing?” I ask.

He straddles my thighs. “High school was the last time I had real friends. Most of the friends I’ve made as an adult only spend time with me to network.”

Leo is twenty-seven years old. That’s a long time to go without friends.

He really has given up too much for his job.

“I’m sorry,” I say. “That sounds lonely.”

He nods. “But I’m not lonely right now. I need you again, Steve. Will you make love to me?”

That’s the first time he’s called sex “make love.” I like hearing those words out of his mouth.

“Of course. I’ll fill you up and make you feel better, baby.” I utter the endearment casually, at the end, hoping it isn’t too much. The thing the agency didn’t mention was how our high pheromone compatibility would impact the experience of sharing a heat together. After sharing this level of connection with Leo, it’s impossible to imagine being with anyone else.

That’s a lot to sort through in twenty-four hours. Hopefully not too much.

At this point, I don't think I could bear to lose him.

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When I'm empty, Steve fills me. When I'm tired, he naps with me, his big arms wrapped around my body. When I'm hungry, he gets food sent to his front door so he doesn't have to leave my side to cook.

But that isn't the best part. When my heart aches for love, and I'm too scared to tell him what I really want, he somehow knows what I need. He doesn't tell me he loves me. That would be too much. Instead, he presses gentle kisses all over my body, massages my achy limbs, and whispers little things he likes about me until the ache in my chest mellows into a satisfied warmth.

I didn't know that was possible.

People say that heats are greedy—that no matter what an alpha does to satisfy his lover, the heat will demand more. They say that an omega's lust is a bottomless pit that can't ever be filled.

But people are wrong. Steve does satisfy me. I have moments of clarity between waves when I feel perfectly fine because he gives me what my body needs.

This whole time, the pit wasn't bottomless. I was just dating men who were too lazy to fill it. They told me I was asking for too much—that my needs were so enormous, they shouldn't be expected to meet them. They let me suffer so they didn't have to try as hard.

I'm not sure what I want to do with my life after this, but I know I don't want to spend any more time with alphas like that.

On the second night of my heat, Steve lies next to me in his bed, tracing patterns on my chest.

“Did you just draw an ‘S’ on my chest, like Superman?” I ask.

He smiles. “Maybe.” He traces an A next.

“That’s Captain America.”

He nods. “In some costumes. That’s who I’m named after, by the way. Or as my alpha dad explains it, he named me after the man Captain America was before he got his powers because he was a good person, even without superhuman strength.”

Maybe it’s my heat, but that makes me tear up. Mostly because Steve is every bit the man his alpha dad wanted him to be.

“Do you have a namesake?” he asks.

I shake my head. “My omega dad thought Leo was a pretty name.”

“It is.” Steve rolls his body on top of mine, pinning me to the bed with his weight. I can barely breathe, but I love being trapped under his body like this. It makes me feel safe.

“I can smell your slick. You’re ready to go again, aren’t you?” he asks.

“Yes.” The ache between my legs isn’t overwhelming. If I was spending my heat with Dave, I wouldn’t bother him about it. But I don’t have to bother Steve to get my needs met. He’s attuned to my body, anticipating my needs before I speak them aloud.

That makes me feel safe too.

He kisses me gently. "I think I can do it this time," he whispers against my lips.

I'm attuned to him too, and I know what he's talking about.

"Please."

"I've never bred an omega before, Leo."

Knowing that I get to have him in a way no one else has before makes the ache in my chest bloom into warm happiness.

That's the thing about needs. They're only uncomfortable if they're unmet.

"I've never been bred before." The other alphas could never get the right angle. They didn't really try.

Steve doesn't have to prep me before pushing inside. At this point, his size seems normal. He's exactly big enough to fill the emptiness inside me. I place my hand over the bulge in my abdomen and close my eyes. We're two halves of a whole, and his half is a marvelous. He makes my insides light up and sing with pleasure.

"I'm going to move us to the edge of the bed to get a better angle," he says.

He drags me to the right, almost effortlessly, until he slides off the bed, still inside me. The angle changes, just like he promised. He's pressing directly against the mouth of my womb. He grabs my hips and pushes directly into it. Sweet agony blooms inside me as he increases the pressure, slowly forcing me to open for him. I whimper as the head of his cock squeezes inside, impaling the sensitive flesh.

“Oh, Leo. You’re so tight.”

I grab for his shoulders and dig my nails into his skin. I need him to stay with me—to open me up even further. Not just my body, but my heart. I’ve closed myself off in so many ways because I had no hope that someone would treat me right or love me for who I am. But Steve keeps pushing deeper until the head of his cock is lodged inside my womb, tying us in the most intimate of ways.

“Steve!” I cry out.

He cups my jaw, looking deep into my eyes. The base of his cock swells within me, locking us together. “Someday, I’m going to make a baby with you, Leo. I’m going to marry you and grow old with you.”

It isn’t a question. He isn’t proposing. He isn’t expecting any kind of answer from me. He’s just letting me know what he wants.

“Someday,” I agree.

He moans as his seed spills inside my womb. It’s hot and wonderful. I’m split so wide on his knot, I don’t know if my body will ever be the same. I don’t want it to be. I want Steve to change me forever.

I come, my body spasming painfully around his intrusion. The pleasure spreads through me like lightning, leaving my body exhausted and completely, wonderfully sated.

Someday we will have more than this. I believe that we’ll get to do all the things Steve just mentioned. But for right now, this is enough.

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Less than a day after my heat is over, I'm clutching the bottle of wine in my lap with a death grip as Steve parks in front of a colonial house.

"What if they don't like me?" I ask.

"Not possible. Ever since I told them your name on Sunday, they've been binge-watching your movies and texting me about how great you are in every one of them."

Oh my God. They've seen me do sex scenes with people who are not their son. This is going to be so awkward.

"But seriously, Steve. What if they don't like me? Would we break up?"

He takes the wine from me and sets it on the middle console. Then he grasps both of my hands in his. "In the unlikely event that my parents don't love you, I will have a conversation with them about why I want to be with you and we'll discuss any concerns they may have. They're not unreasonable people, okay? They just want me to be happy, and you make me very happy."

Less than a week ago, we were sitting in this same car, escaping the camera crew camped out at my house. He looks so different to me now. I don't even notice his bushy eyebrows. All I see are the strong lines of his face and how big his body is. I want to curl onto his lap and ask him to hold me. During my heat I had an excuse to demand his body and his time, but now we have to return to the real world. I don't know if I'm ready yet. A part of me wishes my heat could last forever.

"Can I go back to your place after dinner and sleep in your bed?" I ask, even though

it sounds pathetic. I am so addicted to this man.

His lips quirk up on one side. “I was hoping you would. I’ve gotten used to sleeping with my little spoon.”

My stomach fills with butterflies. This is why I’m head over heels. He isn’t just handsome, he’s sweet. How could anyone resist that combination?

“But we’re not moving in together yet,” I clarify. “We just barely met.”

He pauses for a long beat. “I think you should have your own place for as long as you want, but I don’t love the idea of sleeping apart.”

I don’t love that idea either.

“Let’s talk about this later, when I’m not freaking out about meeting your dads,” I suggest.

“Good plan.” He grabs the wine and climbs out of the car. This is it. After a week of falling steadily for Steve in the privacy of his apartment, we’re now taking our relationship into the real world.

I haven’t been this nervous since my first day on a film set.

I follow Steve up the driveway and onto the porch. He gives me back the wine and opens the door.

“Hey, Dads. I’m home!” he calls out.

The living room is decorated with antique furniture, much like Steve’s apartment, with picture frames everywhere. Many of them are of Steve as a young boy, grinning

at the camera while fishing, holding a baseball bat, or sitting on Santa Claus's lap. I get so distracted by the pictures, I almost don't notice the older omega who emerges from the hallway.

He has more gray hair than he did in Steve's graduation photo, and his belly is a little rounder. He smiles at me.

"Dad, this is Leo. Leo, this is my omega dad. His name is Tim."

Tim holds out his arms to me. I step forward hesitantly. He wraps his arms around me gently. "It's good to meet you."

Another man comes down the stairs. He's as tall as Steve and has his same wide shoulders. In many ways, he looks like an older version of my boyfriend.

"This is Leo. Leo, this is my alpha dad. His name is Tony."

Tony pulls me in for a hug that is not gentle at all. "Welcome! Steve said you like nachos, so we made nachos. We made a lot of nachos. Probably too many. We figured you'd be hungry after your heat, and we were nervous because it's not every day that you meet the guy your son has a 92% compatibility with. You're practically family."

Now I know where Steve's tendency to ramble comes from.

"We're still figuring out where our relationship is at, Dad. We don't want to take things too fast."

Tony holds up his hands. "I totally understand. I knew your omega dad was the man for me by our third date. I also knew that if I told him I was ready to marry him, he'd think I was nuts and never speak to me again. Sometimes you have to bide your

time.”

Tim takes his husband’s hand. “Don’t tell them our dating story or we’ll scare poor Leo away. Let’s go eat those nachos.”

They turn around and walk further into the house.

See? Steve mouths. I told you they would like you.

We follow his dad’s into a white kitchen with a large island. As promised, three cookie sheets covered in nachos wait for us. They smell amazing.

“We have all the fixings in separate bowls. We only heated the cheese and meat with the chips,” Tim says, handing me a plate. “Have as much as you want. I remember how hungry I used to get after my heats.”

“We used to order two pizzas because he’d polish off an entire pizza by himself,” Tony says. “There was this one time we were in this remote cabin, and there wasn’t a pizza place nearby. We just had these cans of beans. How many cans did you eat?”

Tim laughs. “I don’t know. Four? My stomach was angry at me after that.”

They chat easily about their memories and the food while putting nachos on their plates. It’s all very casual. I’m just as hungry as they planned for, and I pile my plate high with chips, adding in generous portions of salsa, sour cream, and jalapenos.

“I have to ask. What was it like working with Robert Lockwood?” Tony says.

Of course. Steve warned me that his alpha dad was obsessed with Batman.

“He’s nice. Very into health and fitness. He only drinks water. He doesn’t even drink

coffee or tea.”

Tony grins from ear to ear. “That’s fascinating. Are his abs real?”

My first conversation with Steve’s alpha dad is hilariously similar to my first conversation with him.

“I don’t know,” I admit. “He didn’t say.”

“Right. That makes sense. I was excited to see that you’ll be starring in Nightsleuth. It’s one of my favorite comics, and I think you’re perfect for it.”

My stomach drops. “Where did you hear about that?” I wasn’t aware that anyone knew I’d been cast in that role. Especially not now that I’ve been dropped.

“In the press release they put out yesterday,” Tony says. He pulls out his phone and swipes the screen a few times, then hands it to me.

Sure enough there is an article titled, Leo Sanders to Play Nightsleuth in New Film Adaptation of the Classic Comic. At first I wonder if the information got leaked before the producers could update the casting information, but as I scan through the article I realize it’s a standard press release. Dan Kirby, the director, is even quoted. “I’m a big fan of Leo. I think he’s the perfect choice for Nightsleuth’s snarky personality. He may have a wild personal life, but he’s always professional on set. I stand by my decision to cast him.”

That’s when I realize Greg never confirmed the producers’ decision to drop me from the project. He only said they were considering it. After Dan said something like that, it might be safe to assume I still have the role.

Just a week ago, I’d be relieved. This is my foot in the door to rebuild a career with

another agent. But I meant it when I told Steve that I need a break.

“My contract on that film has gone back and forth. I’m still not sure if it will happen,” I say, honestly.

Steve slides an arm across my back. “If you still want to do it, I can travel to wherever you are a few days a week. We don’t have to be long-distance.”

“Or all week. If you need to work remotely for a few months, that’s okay.” Tony reaches for more chips like we’re talking about the weather, instead of the primary reason why none of my romantic relationships have worked out.

I’m still not sure I want the role. Superhero movies mean skin-tight suits, which would mean a strict diet and living at the gym. I don’t know if I’m ready for that yet. But at least I have a choice. I don’t have to walk away from my acting career because there’s no other option.

“We need to show you the photo album,” Tim says.

Steve laughs. “You and that damn album. No one needs to see what I looked like with braces.”

“Ooo, I want to see,” I joke.

Tim sets his plate down on the counter. “I’ll be right back.”

“At least he took out the bath pictures. When your omega dad met my parents, there were two pages of bath photos.” Tony says. He sits down on a barstool next to the counter. Steve joins him, still smiling. Clearly, he’s not that worried about me seeing him in braces.

Tim returns with a thick binder stuffed full of plastic pages. He hands it to me. “Steve was such a cute little boy.”

I put my plate down and take the binder from him. Each page has four photos tucked into a plastic sleeve. It starts with baby photos. Steve had the chubbiest cheeks. I take my time, mulling over each page of him lying in cribs and sucking on his rattle. It makes me wonder what our children would look like.

The baby photos transition to toddler photos. The backgrounds of the photos speak volumes. Steve was at the aquarium, zoo, Disneyland, the beach, the aviary, and the library all in a small window of time. In every photo, his alpha dad is carrying him or holding his hand.

“The two of you spent a lot time together,” I say to Tony.

His lips spread into a familiar wide smile. “We still do.”

“My omega dad was there too,” Steve tells me. “Always behind the camera.”

Tim sits next to Steve. “I liked taking pictures of the two of you.”

I flip through the rest of the photo album. Steve’s braces make an appearance, as well as several omegas in his high school dance photos. As I get to the end, I realize my dads probably don’t have a photo album like this at their house. I was a little wild, even in high school, and that’s when the distance between us started. My omega dad caught me in the back seat with an alpha when I was sixteen. He grounded me, but more than that, he distanced himself from me emotionally. I remember the coldness between us.

There’s no coldness in the relationship Steve has with his dads. If I had kids with him, I don’t think there would be any coldness in our relationship with them either. In

fact, I imagine he'll be a lot like his alpha dad when he becomes a parent.

“Thank you for sharing that with me,” I say, handing the photo album back to Tim.

“Will you let me take a picture of you and Steve?” he asks. “We can add it to the end.”

The corners of my eyes burn with the tears that threaten to fall. Just like that, Steve's dads are ready to add me to their beautiful book of happy memories.

“Okay,” I say.

He pulls out his phone and holds out it in front of him. “Stand up, Steve.”

Steve jumps up and without any warning, wraps his big arms around me. Tim snaps photos as Steve holds me close.

It's exactly the kind of love I've always hoped for: warm and happy. Steve fills my heart as well as he fills my body during sex. There's such an abundance of everything good with him that I'm not sure I can take it all in without being ruined for anyone else.

I decide I don't care. Steve is it for me. I want this photo to be the first of many in Tim's stuffed photo album. It doesn't matter if I've been hurt before. I won't let my fear or insecurity ruin this opportunity for something good in my life.

Tim lowers his phone, and I notice his eyes are glassy too. “You two are such a cute couple. Come here. I need to hug you again.”

He embraces me at the same time as his son. Tony joins in, putting his big arms around us all. It's a bit cheesy, and if I'm honest, a lot to take in all at once. But it

feels good.

The best part is that it's real. I got so lost in the glamour and money of Hollywood, I forgot what realness was like. The sad thing is, there's no true intimacy without realness—no way to bond with someone unless you let your walls down.

I think intimacy was what I was looking for the night I went to the orgy. I wanted to connect with someone—to experience a bond. It didn't happen that night, but in a round-about way, that orgy is why I'm here with three people who feel like the family I've been searching for.

Maybe my wildness isn't so bad after all.

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Three years later...

“Where do you want the shield?” The bellhop asks. He’s holding a big-ass metal shield that probably goes with Henry’s armor or something.

“Let me guess. Henry gave you that?” I say.

The poor boy nods. “He said it was part of the wedding décor?”

Oh, for fuck’s sake. This is getting out hand. Originally, Leo wanted to get married on a private beach in Jamaica, but that was before we found out their laws concerning transgender rights are horrifying. Cooper is a transgender alpha, and we wanted him to feel safe at our wedding, so we decided to do the ceremony on a beach in Hawaii. Then the press found out about it, and we had to switch our plans yet again in an effort to not get mobbed by the paparazzi.

Naturally, Henry decided to be dramatic about the whole thing and bought an island for our wedding. A whole fucking island. The island already had a hotel and big gazebo on the beach, not to mention a bunch of rooms for our guests, so we agreed. But Henry didn’t stop there. His “decorations” are popping up everywhere just as we’re getting everything set up.

“How about we put it in the dining hall?” I suggest. At least that way, Leo won’t have to look at it until dinner.

“There’s already a full suit of armor, five swords, a jousting stick, and a huge wooden horse in there.”

Damn it. This is getting out of hand.

“Is the wooden horse hollow?” I ask.

“I don’t know.”

If I know Henry, it definitely is. That sounds like a Trojan horse.

“Why don’t you go check, and if it is, will you put the shield and all the swords in there? Try to fit the armor in there too, if you can. Where is James?” Usually, he would be the one to kindly explain to Henry that it’s rude to force your friend to display your medieval decorations at their wedding, even if they’re having said wedding on your island.

The bellhop, who can’t be older than sixteen, blushes furiously. “He’s... in Henry’s room.”

“Will you go get him?” I ask.

The boy shakes his head. “Henry said they needed privacy.”

“Ugh, why? Would you mind knocking on the door and saying I need to talk to James? I don’t have any cell reception, and I need his help.”

The boy shakes his head again.

Cooper walks up from behind me. “They really do need privacy, trust me.”

The bellhop takes the opportunity to leave with the shield before I can argue any further.

“Henry is out of control. First it was the armor and all the swords, now he’s adding a

shield to the mix. Where is James?"

Cooper presses his lips together. "He's in Henry's room."

"Yes, but why isn't he talking Henry down from all this?"

Cooper lets out a breathy laugh. "Because he's in Henry's room. Steve, I understand that you're distracted with all the wedding stuff, but surely you noticed that they showed up to breakfast this morning with rings on their fourth finger?"

I hadn't noticed.

"They both got married? When? To who?"

Cooper pauses, letting me piece it together on my own.

"James is in Henry's room," I repeat.

"Yep." He pats me on the shoulder. "I imagine James is too distracted to talk Henry out of his usual shenanigans, so we'll have to make do on our own. I had the angel statues Henry bought from that Blink episode of Doctor Who removed from the beach and all the medieval tin plates swapped out for standard ceramic. My sons are ready to go as the flower boys, and my husband is setting up chairs by the gazebo."

I drag a hand through my hair. "How long do you think they've been... I didn't think Henry was into..."

"Why do you think James has been willing to clean up Henry's messes all these years? I can't believe no one else noticed that he had feelings for him," Cooper says. "When should I have the musicians start? They said they could play a few songs while the guests are arriving."

“But Henry... he’s never even tried dating.”

Cooper sighs. “Okay. We’re stuck on this. I’ll tell the musicians to start now. You need to be ready and on the beach in fifteen minutes, okay? Hopefully Henry and James will be done by then.”

Fifteen minutes. I’m getting married in fifteen minutes.

I wander out of the lobby and toward my room on the main floor. Henry insisted that Leo and I have separate rooms, even though we’ve been living together for two years now. We were unofficially living together long before that. I had a hard time sleeping without him after our first weekend together.

Mark, one of Leo’s actor friends, waves at me in the hallway. I wave back absently before opening the door to my room.

My tuxedo is laid out on the bed. My alpha dad is waiting next to it, reading the latest Nightsleuth comic. He sets the comic down and sits up. “Hey. How are you doing?”

“I’m... getting married. And apparently Henry and James got married already.”

Dad winces. “They were going to wait until after you got back from your honeymoon to tell you. Didn’t want to steal your thunder.”

“Wait, you knew?”

“They’re not very good at hiding it, so I think everyone knows at this point.”

“How could I be so oblivious?” I ask.

Dad gets out of the bed and stands in front of me. “It’s your wedding day. That’s the only thing you need to focus on.” He picks up my suit coat with both hands and holds

it out to me. “When your father and I got married, we rented our tuxedos. None of this fancy custom tailored stuff. And on a private island, no less.”

“Yeah. It’s a lot.”

“Well, you’re marrying Nightsleuth. It should be a lot.”

Leo would never admit it, but I think he did the Nightsleuth movie for Dad. It was Leo’s last film, with the exception of the sequel. They were both hits, and he had plenty of offers from other agents and film producers. And yet, he still walked away from it all.

I changed into the tuxedo and let Dad fasten my cufflinks. They’re in the shape of Nightsleuth’s mask, of course. Dad ordered them when I told him we were getting married. I stand in front of the full-length mirror. Over the last few years, plenty of people have made comments about my appearance. The general consensus is that I’m not handsome enough for Leo, and I have to agree with them on that. But today, I don’t look half bad.

Dad stands next to me, wearing a tuxedo similar to my own. “Have I told you that I like Leo?”

“Yeah. More than a few times.”

My omega dad is even worse. He kept asking when I was going to marry Leo, even though I explained to him that I’d already talked with Leo about it, and he wanted to wait. Everything about the beginning of our relationship was so fast, he insisted on taking the rest of it slow, so we wouldn’t “mess things up.”

“I was worried I wouldn’t like your husband,” Dad tells me.

“What? Really?”

He shrugs. “You dated a few guys I didn’t care for. I kept my mouth shut because it wasn’t my place to say anything, but I was terrified that someday you’d end up with a guy who didn’t feel like family—who’d pull us apart. As a dad, you can’t control stuff like that. You just have to let your kid love who they love.”

“I had no idea,” I say.

He straightens my bow tie. “Then I did my job right. But I gotta say that Leo feels like family. I like spending time with him almost as much as I like spending time with you.” Dad’s eyes well with tears. “That’s pretty special.”

My vision gets a little blurry. Of course, I’ve noticed over the years that Leo got along well with my dads, but when he puts it out there like that, it makes me feel incredibly lucky. Because Dad’s right. I could have ended up with a guy who didn’t love my dads as much as Leo does.

Dad walks to the door and opens it. “We should probably be off.”

I follow him out the door and through the hallways of the hotel to the patio out back. The way to the wedding has been marked, probably by someone following Cooper’s orders. I’ll have to send him a gift after this is over. Sand gets in my nice shoes as we walk on the beautiful beach that my friend bought just so Leo and I could have our special day here.

Most of our guests are already seated, including two short men on the back row who Leo wasn’t sure would come. But there’s no doubt as to who they are. The omega looks exactly like Leo, if a bit older, and the alpha has his nose.

I hope he’ll be okay when he sees them sitting there.

The rest of Leo’s side is filled with the friends he’s made at the local theater company where he volunteers as well as a few actors who he stayed in touch with after leaving

the film industry. My side is crowded with family. Luckily, Henry and James have emerged from their room, although Henry's cheeks are a little pink. Cooper and his husband sit on the front row with their baby. His two oldest boys stand at the back of the audience with baskets full of flower petals.

I take my place by Griff, who is the minister for our wedding. He got certified online. My alpha dad waits at the back of the crowd because Leo asked him to give him away. My omega dad sits next to Robert Lockwood on the front row because somehow Leo managed to get Batman to come to our wedding.

He knows my dads well enough to understand what that will mean to them.

Three men with violins begin to play songs from the Lord of the Rings, which means Cooper didn't catch all of Henry's interference. At least the song is pretty and not "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life" from Monty Python's Life of Brian. It could be worse.

Cooper's sons walk down the aisle, chucking the petals with gusto. They run out halfway through and rush to the front row to be with their dads. Next come Leo's closest friends from the theater, all dressed in matching groomsmen tuxes.

A single figure walks toward the crowd. He's wearing a white tuxedo that fits him like a glove, including his prominent baby bump. He's so goddamned beautiful, I can't breathe. He looks at me from across the room, and that same connection we shared since the first day we met pulses between us. Some people may call it a 92% pheromone compatibility, but I call it fate. This man was my destiny since the moment I saw him.

Our eyes remain locked as my alpha dad takes his hand and leads him down the aisle. I don't think he even notices his dads in the audience. Good. They don't get to steal this moment from us.

Tears stream down my face as he gets closer and closer. Finally he's standing before me. My alpha dad hugs Leo, then goes to sit next to his husband, only to find Batman there. Leo holds back a smile as he watches my alpha dad gape at Robert Lockwood.

Thank you, I mouth.

Dad finally sits down, but he hasn't stopped staring at Robert.

Griff clears his throat. "Mawage.... Mawage is what bwings us togever today."

Henry's laughter booms from the audience. That reference from *The Princess Bride* must also be a contribution from him. Leo laughs with him, which is a huge relief. I wanted this day to be perfect for him, even though I have goofball friends.

"Just kidding," Griff says. "I have the privilege of marrying Leo and Steve, even though I'm not a priest. I am as celibate as a priest, though, if that helps."

The audience laughs. I notice that Leo's parents don't, but that's okay. His omega dad's gaze keeps flicking from Leo's baby bump to the nose piercing he got for his role as Nightsleuth, and then never took out because he liked it.

"It's not every day that a superhero gets married to an accountant," Griff continues. More laughter. "It helps if the accountant is tall and well-endowed, though."

Oh my God. Maybe we should have hired a real priest. Leo is still smiling, though, so maybe it's okay.

"I'll shut up for now and let them say their vows."

For a horrible moment, I wonder where our rings are, then Cooper's oldest son walks up with a pillow that both of them are tied to. He holds out the pillow to me with one hand, while he picks his nose with the other.

Cooper bites back a laugh as the entire audience watches his son pick his nose. His husband's shoulders shake with silent laughter when their son puts the finger in his mouth after he's done.

Leo takes the pillow from the boy. "Thank you for that." He pulls my ring from the ribbon on the pillow and gives the pillow to Griff. "Three years ago, I asked you to run away from some cameras with me. On that day, I didn't realize I needed to run from all the cameras in my life. I don't think I ever would have figured that out without you." He grasps my hand and lifts it up. "I love you, Steve. I vow to keep loving you for the rest of my life. I vow to be your little spoon, grow our babies in my body, nourish my relationship with your dads, and laugh at Henry's antics."

More tears slide down my cheeks because he knows exactly what I need from a husband.

"I vow to appreciate how special you are, kiss you every day, and love our children as much as your fathers love you. I even vow to love your ornery cat, even though he hates us both."

He slides my ring onto my fourth finger. I brush away the tears, but my face is still wet.

Griff hands me Leo's ring. It's just a simple gold band, exactly like mine.

"My alpha dad once told me that he knew my omega dad was the one by their third date, but I have him beat. I knew you were the one for me the first day we met. It just took you a while to get on board."

He smiles. "No. I just didn't want to ruin this by going too fast."

"Well, three years and one pregnancy later, we're finally here. I want you to know that I think you were well worth the wait. I promise to hold you every night, cherish

you the way you deserve, and support you in whatever dreams you want to chase. I will give parenting my all. I swear to you. And I will always be true to our love. Not only with my body, but with my heart and soul. You will never have a reason to question my devotion to you.”

Tears slide down Leo’s cheeks. He lets me slide his ring on.

“You two are nauseatingly in love. Congratulations. You may now kiss each other,” Griff says.

I bend over and press my lips to Leo’s. Even after all this time, my heart races the same way it did when we first met. His scent still overwhelms me, especially now that I can smell his pregnancy.

He was the one who decided to get his IUD removed. He told me about it, of course. I could have worn a condom if I wanted to. But that first time we made love without any form of birth control, I knew he was committing to be mine forever. That was the real day we married.

I break the kiss and sweep him into my arms. The crowd cheers for us. Even the two short men in the back quietly clap. My parents cheer the loudest. My alpha dad has even stopped staring at Batman, and is whistling like he’s at a hockey game and the Bruins just scored a goal. Henry and James are kissing, Cooper’s son is picking his nose again, and my omega dad is crying with joy.

It’s messy and hilarious and perfect. Just like my life with Leo.