



Yes, Coach (Bratton Hollow #1)

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Category: Romance

Description: I had one job...keep my head down, graduate, and get the hell out of this town.

No distractions. No detours. Definitely no getting involved with my broody, ex-NFL linebacker coach.

But then I walked into his office.

He called me baby and I called him Daddy.

Now Coach Murphy Reynolds watches me like I'm his game-winning play.

And when he tells me I don't have to be strong anymore, turns my rear end red and give me juice in a...sippy cup?

I melt faster than my panties in that overheated gym.

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Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 8:09 am

Murphy

I 'm practically moaning her fucking name as I wake up, my cock already straining against sweat-soaked sheets.

The dream won't let go. Her honey hair spilled across my pillow. Those hazel eyes, wide with trust as I stuffed myself into her ripe cherry cunt. The way she whispered "Daddy" against my throat, like she was speaking to my fucking soul.

I'm fisting myself again. I'm already leaking pre-cum from the memory of the dream.

Fuck. Thirty-seven years old and jerking off to dreams of a student? What kind of sick bastard does that make me? Yeah, she's eighteen. I checked that as soon as she transferred in but still.

I throw myself into the shower to finish the job turning the water all the way to the coldest setting, but it does nothing to ease the lust or wash away the guilt.

Both trail me to Riverside High like hunting dogs: persistent, relentless.

I unlock my office in darkness, hands still shaking.

Coffee burns my tongue. Game film becomes a blur of meaningless shit on my laptop screen.

Nothing helps. Nothing ever fucking does anymore.

At 7:47 AM exactly, she materializes in my doorway.

I know the time because I've been watching that clock like my life depends on it, counting down minutes until her first-period study hall.

She's always early. Always prepared. Always looking at me like she can see past the coach, past the careful walls I've built, straight down to the man who's slowly coming apart.

"Coach Reynolds?" That voice. Breathless and innocent in a way that makes my jaw clench, my hands curl into fists. "Do you have a minute?"

Fuck no. Smart answer. Right answer. The answer that keeps us both safe from the wreckage I'm about to make of this.

I nod, gripping my temples between my thumb and index finger. "Come in."

She slides into my office, closes the door with a soft click that might as well be a gunshot.

Today's uniform: pleated skirt hitting mid-thigh, white button-down perfectly innocent except for how it pulls across her chest. Ankles bare except for the delicate lace trim of her socks...

Like something out of a vintage ad, sweet, coy and intentional. Standard schoolgirl, nothing special.

Except there's nothing standard about what she does to me.

"I got the scholarship letter." She holds up an envelope, her smile bright enough to power the school. "Full ride to State."

Pride and something darker wage war in my chest. She deserves this scholarship.

She deserves everything good this world can offer.

But State University sits four hours away.

Four hours of highway stretching between us, and the thought makes my hands shake like I'm some lovesick kid instead of a grown man who should know better.

My NFL days taught me about distance. About leaving everything behind when the season ends. About how easy it is to become a ghost in someone else's memory. But this feels different. This feels like losing something I never had the right to want in the first place.

"That's..." I clear my throat, try again. "That's incredible, Taryn. You earned it."

She moves closer to my desk, and I catch her scent.

It's softness and sex wrapped in flowers and sugar, but...

Did she wear it for me? Or is that just my fucking ego ramping up a gear?

Her blond waves are tied up tight, my fingers fucking twitching to grab hold of it and hear her moan as I fuck her from behind.

Slap, slap, slap. The sloppy smack of wet flesh meeting over and over. My balls swinging back and forth so hard they slap against her drenched folds.

It gets worse. Her fingernails painted pale pink, a deep enough shade to not be all sweetness and I picture those little fingers gripping my girth, pumping up and down as I unload all over her cute little button nose.

"I wanted to thank you. For the recommendation letter. For believing in me when nobody else did."

The gratitude in her voice nearly breaks me.

She doesn't know how she's crawled under my skin and made herself at home there.

How I lie awake calculating the hours until I'll see her again.

How I imagine being the one she turns to when everything becomes too much, the one who finally tells her she doesn't have to carry it all alone.

I've seen her job applications on my desk when she needs references.

Three part-time positions to keep her mother's medical bills from drowning them both.

Seen her fall asleep over textbooks in study hall, exhaustion carved into the slope of her shoulders.

She's been holding up the world since she was fifteen, long before she transferred to this school, and every protective instinct I possess screams at me to fix it. To fix everything for her.

But I can't. A coach offering money to a student, would raise questions I can't answer. Questions about why I give a shit about one particular girl's struggles more than the rest. Questions that would destroy us both.

She shouldn't have to be this strong. Shouldn't have to be the adult in every room she enters.

"You don't need to thank me." My voice comes out rougher than intended. "You're brilliant, Taryn. Anyone with eyes can see that."

Color floods her cheeks, and she ducks her head. The gesture transforms her and strips away the careful composure she wears like armor, revealing something softer underneath. Something that makes my chest ache with the need to protect her from a world that's demanded too much, too young.

"I should let you get back to work." But she doesn't move toward the door. Instead, she worries the letter between her fingers, teeth catching her lower lip. The vulnerability in the gesture nearly undoes me. "I just... I'm scared, Coach."

There it is. The crack in her perfect facade. The admission that she's not as fearless as she pretends to be.

"Scared of what, sweetheart?"

The endearment slips out before I can stop it, but she doesn't flinch. If anything, she seems to soften further, like she's been waiting for someone to see past the mask.

"Of leaving everything behind. Of not being... enough." Her voice breaks slightly on the last word, and something savage and protective roars to life in my chest. "What if I can't...what if I fail?"

She trails off, but I hear what she doesn't say. Without someone to catch me if I fall.

"You can do anything, Taryn." My voice comes out rougher than intended, heavy with conviction. "You're stronger than any of the pro-trained athletes that stared me down on the field."

She lets out a bitter laugh. "Yeah, well, being the strong one isn't exactly all unicorns

and Birthday Cake Oreos, you know?" Her attempt at humor falls flat, I don't miss the dark circles her eyes, the way she tries to cover it with makeup. She's too fucking young to be so exhausted.

"I'm so tired of having to figure everything out by myself. "

The confession hits me like a physical blow. This brilliant, beautiful girl who's been carrying the weight of the world on her shoulders since she was a child, admitting she's tired of being everyone's rock. That she wants someone else to be strong for her.

Someone like me.

The question hangs between us, heavy and dangerous. I should give her the appropriate coach response. Something about believing in her abilities, about how proud I am of her accomplishments. Should maintain the professional distance that keeps us both safe.

Instead, I stand. Move around my desk until I'm close enough to touch her.

"You don't have to be strong with me."

The words come out without permission, but they're true. Truer than anything I've said in months. Her breath catches, and for a moment we just stare at each other across the space that suddenly feels too small and too vast all at once.

"Coach..." Her voice is barely a whisper.

"I know." I lift my hand, hover it near her cheek without quite touching. "I know I shouldn't..."

"Please." The word breaks on a sob, and then she's stepping forward, closing the

distance between us. Her forehead comes to rest against my chest, and her whole body seems to deflate with relief. Like she's been holding her breath for years and can finally exhale.

My arms come around her automatically, one hand settling at the small of her back, the other tangling in her hair as I lock my jaw, praying to the ceiling for control. She fits against me perfectly, like she was made for this moment. For my protection.

"It's okay," I murmur against the top of her head, breathing in her sweetness. Her scent is already branded into my soul, but this time, I swear to Christ I get a hit of that ball-busting pussy she's carrying around like a loaded weapon. "You're okay, I got you."

She shudders against me, and I feel the exact moment she lets go. Stops being the responsible one, the caretaker, the girl who has all the answers. In my arms, she's just Taryn. Young and scared and needing someone to tell her everything will be alright.

"I don't want to leave," she whispers against my chest.

Then don't. The thought is immediate, fierce, and completely inappropriate. But holding her like this, feeling her melt into me like she's found her safe harbor, I can't bring myself to care about appropriate.

After what feels like hours but is probably only seconds, she pulls back slightly. Looks up at me with those hazel eyes that see too much, trust too easily.

"Thank you," she says softly. "For letting me vent. I'm sorry, but you're just... so solid. I sort of cracked."

"Hey." My voice comes out gruff. "None of that shit. You think I can't handle a little honesty?"

She nods, a small smile playing at the corners of her mouth. It's the first real smile I've seen from her in weeks, and it hits me like a sucker punch to the solar plexus.

"I should go to class." But she doesn't move away from me. Doesn't step out of the circle of my arms.

We stand there for another heartbeat, maybe two. Then reality crashes back in—the sound of students in the hallway, a teacher's voice calling down the corridor. She steps back reluctantly, like she's fighting gravity itself.

"See you later, Coach." Her voice is soft, almost shy.

She leaves without another word, but the damage is done. The air in my office still smells like citrus and possibility... and pussy. Shit, I'm harder than I've been in years.

I lock the door with shaking hands, twist the blinds shut. This is pathetic. Desperate. But I can't walk around school like this, can't coach practice with her scent still clinging to my clothes and my cock straining against my khakis.

My hand finds my length through the fabric, and I'm already so close it's embarrassing. Three rough strokes and I'm coming hard, jaw clenched to keep from groaning her name. The release is angry, brutal, and nowhere near enough.

I clean up with tissues from my desk drawer, disgusted with myself. What the fuck kind of man have I become? Getting off to the scent of an eighteen-year-old in the place where I'm supposed to be teaching these kids discipline and respect.

Because of her.

I find the note slipped under my office door after practice, folded once with my name written in her careful script.

Coach Reynolds - Thank you again for everything. I hope you sleep well tonight. - T

I stare at the paper until the words blur. Sleep well. Like she knows exactly what she does to my nights. Like she's doing this on purpose, this careful dance around what we both feel but can't say.

The paper smells faintly of her perfume making my mouth water and my dick spurts in my pants.

I fold it carefully, slip it into my wallet.

Tonight, when I'm stroking myself raw thinking about her, I'll have something that's actually been in her hands.

For a split second, I consider wrapping the paper around my cock, but I'd shred it into a thousand pieces and I'm keeping this shit forever.

Besides, papercuts on your dick? Hard pass.

No, I'll sit there with my head back, paper pressed over my face, imagining it's her sweet pussy instead of some note, but it's the closest damn thing I have to her.

For now.

I'm so fucking screwed.

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Taryn

Today it's definitely Florida. Which means I'm running on fumes.

I pad to Mom's room in my pajamas, pushing open the door that sticks because we can't afford to fix it.

She's sitting on the edge of her bed, shoulders hunched over as another coughing fit racks her body.

The oxygen concentrator hums in the corner, and there's that faint smell of cigarette smoke in the air, even though she swears she quit months ago.

"Here." I grab her water glass from the nightstand, and she takes it with shaking hands.

"Thanks, baby," she says once she catches her breath. "How's school?"

"About that. I've been thinking... Maybe I should defer for a year. Take some time to figure things out?"

She frowns. "We've talked about this. You got a full ride, and they're not going to hold it forever. I'll be fine, I find some home care..."

"Home care with what money, Mom?"

She grimaces, but she doesn't have an answer and we both know it. The impossible

situation we're both trapped in.

“I don’t want you missing out on life because of me.”

“I love you. I’d do anything for you.”

“At least... don’t make a decision yet, okay, baby? Let me take another look at my finances and see what I can do. I’ll figure something out.”

We both know there’s nothing to figure out. Unless she suddenly finds a suitcase full of bills stuffed in the laundry chute.

“Okay,” I say, kissing her forehead and heading back to my room, passing the stack of medical bills on the kitchen counter that I’ll deal with later. Always later.

I stare at my closet like it's about to reveal the meaning of life instead of just a bunch of Catholic school uniforms that supposedly all look the same.

Plot twist: they absolutely do not.

There's the skirt that's regulation length (boring) and the one that's... technically regulation if you squint and don't have a ruler handy.

The button-down that fits like I'm applying to be a nun and the one I definitely didn't shrink on purpose in the wash last month.

The knee-highs that actually stay up and the rebel ones none of the other girls wear, ankle socks, folded over with lace trim.

A loophole in the dress code that should apply just to the lower grades, but I’m using it to my advantage. At least, that’s what I hope.

Spoiler alert: I'm going with Team Rebellion today.

I'm not proud of this scheme. Okay, that's a lie—I'm totally proud of this scheme.

Yesterday in Coach Reynolds' office was like.

.. Have you ever had one of those moments where the universe suddenly makes sense?

Where all the weird tension and stolen glances finally click into place, and you realize you weren't imagining the whole thing?

Yeah. That.

The way he held me like I wasn't just another giggling girl with a crush. The way his voice went all growly when he called me sweetheart (and yes, I replayed that about fifty times in my head). The way he promised I could come to him when I didn't want to adult anymore.

I've been obsessing over that promise all night. About how his arms felt around me—solid and warm and completely inappropriate for about seventeen different reasons that I'm actively choosing to ignore right now.

The shorter skirt rides up when I sit down, which is totally not why I chose it.

And the fact that Coach Reynolds will have a perfect view from behind his desk during first-period study hall?

Pure coincidence. Just like how this shirt makes my boobs look less "responsible teenage caregiver" and more "actual woman who exists. "

I catch my reflection in the bathroom mirror and almost lose my nerve. This is certifiably insane. He's my coach. A whole-ass adult man who probably sees me as just another kid with problems he has to solve.

Except... yesterday felt different. The way he looked at me when I admitted I was scared—like he wanted to wrap me up and protect me from everything.

The way his entire body went tense when I stepped into his space—all six-foot-whatever of him, shoulders broad enough to block out the world, that pro-footballer frame still solid under his school-issued polo.

The way his voice dropped an octave when he told me I didn't have to be strong with him.

I got you.

I literally shiver remembering how he said it, all gruff and certain while he tapped his chest and stared into my eyes, and I drank in the solid jaw, the dark hair, the silver starting to creep in at his temples.

Heat pools between my thighs as I think of it, and for a second I feel like I'm eight years old again, wanting nothing more than for someone bigger and stronger to promise everything will be okay.

My phone buzzes with a text from my best friend Chloe.

Chloe : Girl, you better not be doing anything stupid with Coach Hottie.

Me : Mind your business.

She's absolutely right, and I hate that she knows me so well.

Chloe : I'm serious, T. That man could ruin your whole life. And get your scholarship retracted.

Or make it, I think, but I don't text that back because even I'm not that stupid. Instead, I grab my backpack and head for the door.

The walk to school gives me time to chicken out about seventeen times.

The air's already warm, sun filtering through the trees with that early-summer sharpness, and the scent of cut grass clings to everything.

By the time I'm standing outside Coach Reynolds' office at 7:45 AM, I've talked myself back into this terrible, wonderful idea.

He's sitting behind his desk, coffee mug in hand, reading something on his laptop.

For a second, I just watch him through the glass door.

I love the gray threading through the dark hair at his temples.

That scar through his eyebrow that makes him look dangerous even when he's just reviewing game film.

The way his shoulders fill out his polo shirt like he's still the NFL linebacker he used to be instead of a high school coach stuck in small-town Massachusetts.

He's beautiful in that rugged, completely masculine way that makes my stomach flip and my brain turn to mush. Which is probably why this plan seemed like a good idea at six in the morning.

I knock softly on the chipped blue metal door frame.

"Come in."

His voice does things to me that should probably require therapy. Deep and rough, with just a hint of authority that makes my daddy issues purr like a contented cat.

"Morning, Coach." I step inside and close the door behind me, noting the way his eyes track the movement. Good. "Hope you slept well."

The reference to my note makes him go very still, coffee mug halfway to his lips. His gray eyes lock onto mine, and I see the exact moment he notices the skirt. The shirt. The way I'm standing just a little too close to be completely appropriate.

"Taryn." My name comes out like a warning. Or maybe a surrender. "You're early."

"I wanted to work on my personal statement." Complete lie. I finished that thing three weeks ago. "For the official paperwork for State. I was hoping you could take a look at it."

I move toward his desk, making sure to put a little extra sway in my hips. Not obvious. Just... noticeable. The skirt rides up slightly when I lean forward to place my folder on his desk, and I don't immediately adjust it.

His knuckles go white around his coffee mug.

"Of course." His voice strains through clenched teeth. "Always happy to help."

Always happy to help. Right. Except the way he's looking at me doesn't feel helpful. It feels hungry. Like he's thinking about doing things that would definitely get him fired and possibly arrested, and that should scare me, but instead it makes heat pool low in my belly.

"Thanks, Coach. You're the best." I settle into the chair across from his desk, crossing my legs and letting the skirt ride up just a little more. "I really don't know what I'd do without you."

He clears his throat and opens my folder, the lines around his eyes deepening, but I catch the way they dart to my legs before he forces them back to the paper. "Let's take a look."

For the next ten minutes, we go through my personal statement line by line.

It's actually pretty good—all about overcoming adversity and using challenges as motivation, the kind of inspiring bullshit that scholarship committees eat up.

But the whole time, I'm watching him more than I'm listening to his suggestions.

The way his hands move as he points out sections that could be stronger. The way his voice gets softer when he talks about my achievements, like he's proud of me. The way he keeps stealing glances at my legs, then forcing himself to look away like he's disgusted with himself for noticing.

It's intoxicating, this power I feel when I'm around him, but in turn, the power I feel from him as well.

When I do a slow, uncross re-cross of my legs, he freezes, then closes his eyes like he's begging forgiveness from the Lord.

"This part here," he says, pointing to a paragraph about my work ethic after he opens his eyes again, "could use more specific examples. Maybe talk about balancing your jobs with school, how that's taught you time management."

"You mean like how I work thirty hours a week and still manage to keep a 4.0 GPA?"

I lean forward, ostensibly to look at the paper, but really to give him a better view down my shirt. "How I've been taking care of my mom since I was fifteen and somehow still find time for homework?"

His jaw tightens. "Exactly like that."

"Or how I come to school every day with three hours of sleep and still manage to pay attention in class?" I let my voice drop slightly, become softer. More vulnerable. "How I pretend everything's fine when really I'm drowning most of the time?"

That gets his attention. His eyes snap to mine, and I see concern there along with the heat. "Taryn..."

"I'm okay," I say quickly, before he can launch into protective coach mode. "I'm better than okay, actually. Especially after yesterday."

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The reference to our moment in his office hangs between us, crackling like the air right before a lightening strike. I can practically see him remembering the way I felt in his arms, the way I melted against him like I'd been waiting my whole life for someone to hold me.

"Yesterday..." He runs a hand through his hair, messing it up in a way that makes me want to smooth it back down. "That was..."

"That was exactly what I needed," I finish for him. "Thank you. For letting me fall apart a little. For catching me."

For promising to be my rock.

He stares at me for a long moment, and I can practically see the war going on behind his eyes. Professional distance versus personal concern. Appropriate behavior versus the temptation to break all the rules.

"You don't have to thank me for that," he says finally. "Taking care of you..." He stops abruptly, like he's said too much.

But I heard it. Taking care of you. Like that's what he wants to do. Like that's what this is about.

"Is that what you want to do?" The question slips out before I can stop it, and my next words feel dangerous. "Take care of me?"

He goes very still. "Taryn."

"Because I have to tell you, Coach, I'm really tired of taking care of myself." I uncross and recross my legs, doing my best Sharon Stone, noting the way his eyes track the movement despite himself. "It might be nice to let someone else be in charge for a while."

The silence stretches between us, heavy with possibility, sweet and sticky like maple syrup, and the weight of things we probably shouldn't be saying. Finally, he leans back in his chair, putting distance between us.

"You should get to class," he says, but his voice sounds rough. Affected.

I don't move. "First period is study hall. I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be."

"Taryn."

"What?" I tilt my head, giving him my most innocent look. "I'm just a student working on her personal statement with her favorite teacher."

"I'm not your teacher. I'm your coach."

"Right. My coach." I lean forward again, close enough that he can probably smell my perfume. "The one who told me I could come to him whenever I didn't want to be strong. The one who promised to be my rock."

He closes his eyes, like he's checking this isn't a dream. "That's not what I meant."

"Isn't it?" I reach across the desk, but instead of touching him, I trail one finger along the rim of his coffee mug, right where his lips were moments ago. "Because it felt like a promise to me."

When he opens his eyes, they're dark with something that makes my breath catch.

The same look I've been fantasizing about for months—like he wants to devour me whole.

"You're eighteen years old," he says, but it sounds like he's trying to convince himself more than me.

"I am." I lift his mug, deliberately placing my lips exactly where his were, and take a slow sip. His coffee tastes like him somehow—dark and rich and a little bitter. I let my tongue trace the rim before setting it back down. "And you're thirty-seven. I looked you up."

"Jesus, Taryn." He grips his temples like he's fighting a headache. Or fighting himself.

"I know exactly what I'm doing, Coach." I let my thumb stroke across his knuckles, just once. "The question is... do you?"

The warning bell rings, signaling five minutes until first period officially starts. Neither of us moves to break the connection.

"We can't do this here," he says finally, voice low and rough. I can see the cords in his neck standing out, tense with restraint.

"Then where?" The question is out before I can stop it, bold and reckless and completely unlike the responsible girl everyone thinks I am.

His eyes go dark. "Taryn..."

"I'm serious." I lean closer, lowering my voice to match his. "I meant what I said yesterday. I'm tired of being strong all the time. I'm tired of being the adult. For once in my life, I want someone else to make the decisions."

"You don't know what you're asking for."

"Don't I?" I squeeze his hand gently. "I've been thinking about it all night, Coach. About what it would feel like to let go. To trust someone else to catch me when I fall."

He stares at me for a long second, and I can see the exact moment his resolve starts to crack. The moment the man wins out over the professional.

"After school," he says quietly. "My office. We'll... talk."

I smile, feeling victorious and terrified in equal measure. "Just talk?"

"That depends on whether you can follow directions."

The bell rings, officially starting first period, but neither of us moves to break the connection. His thumb brushes across my knuckles, and I swear I can feel that touch everywhere.

"I'm heading to the little girls' room," I say. "Freshen up... And give you a moment to gather your thoughts."

"Yeah." He doesn't look away from me. "Gather my thoughts."

I head for the door, then pause with my hand on the handle. "Coach?"

"Yeah?"

"Thank you. For not treating me like a kid."

His jaw tightens. "You're not a kid, Taryn. That's the problem. But something tells

me, you'd like to act like a kid sometimes. I think you weren't allowed enough of that in your life."

The words are serious, and they hit me harder than I expect. For a second, I'm frozen, feeling like he just reached right inside me and plucked out a truth I hadn't even known was there. Then I lick my lips, nod, and turn away, feeling his eyes on my ass in the regulation-breaking skirt.

I leave with the sense that something inside me is changing. Students chatter and move around me like a flood around a stone.

A flicker of something low and hopeful warms my heart. I have no idea what I've just started, but for the first time in years, I'm not thinking about consequences. I'm not planning three steps ahead or worrying about what could go wrong.

For once, I'm just letting myself want something.

And what I want is Coach Murphy Reynolds.

Game on.

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Murphy

The hours between Taryn's morning visit and three-thirty feel like a fucking eternity.

I try to focus on game film, but all I can see is the way she traced her finger around my coffee mug. Try to review practice schedules, but my brain keeps replaying the sound she made when she tasted my coffee. Try to eat lunch, but all I want to do is eat her fucking pussy.

Christ. I'm losing my goddamn mind.

By the time the final bell rings, I've jerked off twice more—once in my office bathroom during lunch, once in my truck in the faculty parking lot like some desperate teenager. Neither time helped. If anything, it made the ache worse.

I'm standing behind my desk when she appears in my doorway at exactly 3:35 PM, and the sight of her nearly brings me to my knees.

She's taken off her cardigan, leaving just that too-small button-down that pulls across her chest. Her skirt has somehow gotten shorter since this morning, or maybe she's rolled the waistband.

I see a little birthmark on her inner thigh I never noticed before.

Perfect, dark little spot I want to trace with my tongue. Leave a bite mark around it like it and everything attached to it belongs to me.

She's let her hair down. It's loose around her shoulders and I imagine what it would look like spread over my pillow with me looking down while I put my dick inside her, or paint her fucking toenails or read her a story.

She looks like every forbidden fantasy I've ever had, standing there with that innocent smile that doesn't match the come fuck me or come save me look in her eyes.

Both of which I want to do with my whole fucking soul.

"You came," I say, and immediately regret how rough my voice sounds and my choice of words, because now I can barely fucking breathe thinking of how she would sound doing just that.

"Did you think I wouldn't?" She steps inside and closes the door behind her with deliberate care. The click of the lock echoes like a gunshot. "I always keep my promises, Coach."

The way she uses my title makes me wince. Like it's a game. Like she knows exactly what she's doing to me.

"Sit down." I gesture to the chair across from my desk, but she doesn't move.

"I've been sitting all day." She moves closer, her hips swaying in that way that makes my teeth clench. "I'm tired of sitting."

"Taryn." Her name comes out like a warning, but she doesn't stop. Doesn't back off like she should.

"You know what I kept thinking about during calculus?" She's close enough now that I can smell her perfume. Something sweet and young that makes my fucking mouth water. "About you telling me I could come to you when I didn't want to be strong."

"That's not what this is about."

"Isn't it?" She reaches for Tom Brady, my fucking plant, and runs one finger along a leaf. The gesture is innocent, but the way she does it makes it feel dirty. "Because I've been thinking, Coach. About what it would feel like to let someone else make all the decisions for once."

My hands grip the edge of my desk, but I keep my voice level. "You don't know what you're asking for."

"Then show me."

The words hang between us like a lit fuse. I can see the exact moment she realizes what she's said, the way her eyes widen slightly. But she doesn't take it back. Doesn't apologize or laugh it off.

She means it.

And that's when something inside me snaps.

"Alright." My voice goes deadly quiet, the same tone I used to use before I leveled quarterbacks. "You want me to show you?"

I move around the desk in three quick strides, and as I come closer she backs up. Back and back and back until there's nowhere to go, and suddenly she's trapped between me and the wall. My hands slam against the concrete on either side of her head, and I lean down until our faces are inches apart.

"You want to know what it feels like to let someone else be in charge?" My voice is rough, dangerous. "You sure about that, baby girl?"

The endearment slips out without permission, but the way her breath catches tells me she likes it. Her pupils are blown wide, and I can see her pulse racing in her throat.

"Yes." The word is barely audible, but it might as well be a shout.

"Then you're going to listen to me very carefully." I let my voice drop to that tone I used to use on the field—pure authority, no room for argument. "And you're going to do exactly what I tell you to do. Understand?"

She nods, wide eyes shining as she gazes up at me.

"Use your words, Taryn."

"Yes, Coach." The breathless way she says it makes my cock twitch.

"Good girl." I watch her eyes flutter at the praise. "Now, are you going to be a good girl for me?"

"Yes."

"Yes, what?"

She swallows hard, and I watch the movement of her throat. "Yes, Coach."

"Better." I push back slightly, giving her room to breathe but not escape. "Here's what's going to happen. You're going to sit in that chair like I told you to. And you're going to keep your hands in your lap and your mouth shut unless I ask you a direct question. Can you do that for me?"

She nods again, then catches herself. "Yes, Coach."

"Prove it."

She moves to the chair on unsteady legs, and I can see how affected she is. Her cheeks are flushed, her breathing shallow, her fingertips are shaking. She sits down carefully, smoothing her skirt, then places her hands in her lap like I instructed.

"Good girl." I lean against the front of my desk, arms crossed, studying her. "Now, let's talk about what you think you want."

"I know what I want."

"Do you?" I tilt my head. "Because what I think you want is for someone to take care of you. Someone to make the hard decisions so you don't have to. Someone to tell you you're a good girl when you do what you're told. Someone to put your needs first and tell you no when it's hard but it's what's best for you. Someone that will put up with your bullshit and know it's just a front for the things you are afraid of and don't want anyone to know. "

Her breath hitches, and I know I've hit the mark.

"But here's the thing, sweetheart." I push off from the desk and move closer, watching her try not to squirm.

"You think you know what you're asking for, but you don't. Not really.

You want someone to take care of you? That's adorable.

But taking care of you means I own your choices.

When I tell you to do something, you do it.

Period. No negotiations, no second-guessing, no taking it back when you realize you're in over your pretty little head. "

"I'm not scared."

"No?" I reach out and trace one finger along her jaw, feeling her shiver. "Your pulse says otherwise."

"I'm not scared of you ."

"You should be." My thumb finds the hollow of her throat, pressing lightly against her racing pulse. "Because once we cross this line, there's no going back. Once you're mine, you're mine. Do you understand what that means?"

"Tell me."

"It means I decide when you eat, when you sleep, when you come." Her eyes go wide at that last one, and I smile darkly. "It means your pleasure belongs to me. Your body belongs to me. Your trust belongs to me. Your hopes and your dreams and your problems. Mine. All fucking mine."

"And what do I get in return?"

"Everything." The word comes out rougher than I intended. "You get to stop being strong all the time. You get to let someone else worry about taking care of you. You get to be my good girl, and I promise you, baby, I will take such good fucking care of you."

She's breathing hard now, her hands clutching the arms of the chair. "Coach..."

"That's not what you're going to call me when we're alone if this is what you want."

She blinks up at me, confused.

"Think about it." I lean down until my mouth is next to her ear. "What do good girls call the man who takes care of them? The man that wants the best for them in life, no matter what?"

I hear the exact moment she understands, the sharp intake of breath.

"Daddy." The word is barely a whisper, but it hits me like a physical blow.

"That's right." I pull back to look at her, and the trust in her eyes nearly brings me to my knees. "Say it again."

"Daddy." Stronger this time, more sure.

"Fuck, yes." I cup her face in both hands, my thumbs stroking her cheeks. "You're going to be so perfect for me, aren't you, baby girl?"

"I want to be."

"You will be." I lean down until our foreheads touch. "But first, I need to know you're sure. Once I kiss you, there's no pretending this is just a conversation between a coach and his student. Once I touch you, you're mine. Are you absolutely certain this is what you want?"

"Yes, Daddy." The words come out strong and clear, no hesitation.

"You're about to be kissed by a man. Not any man, either. Your fucking Daddy."

And then I'm kissing her.

It's nothing gentle or sweet. It's pure possession, all tongue and teeth and saliva and crushing lips. She melts into me immediately, her small hands fisting in my shirt, pulling me closer. She tastes like mint and innocence and something that makes me want to devour her whole.

When I finally break away, we're both breathing hard.

"Stand up," I order, my voice rough, feeling more like myself than I have in as far back as I can remember.

She complies immediately, and I can see how much the submission soothes her tired soul. Her eyes are glazed, her lips swollen from my kiss, nipples pressing out on that white fabric, and I bet what I can't see is that her panties are fucking soaked.

"Come here."

She takes a step forward, then another, until she's close enough to touch.

"Closer."

She moves until she's standing between my legs, her body heat radiating against me.

"Put your hands on my shoulders."

She does, her touch tentative but trusting.

"Good girl." I run my hands up her sides, feeling her shiver. "Now, I'm going to touch you, and you're going to stay very still for me. Can you do that?"

"Yes, Daddy."

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"If you want me to stop, you say 'red.' If you want me to slow down, you say 'yellow.' If you're enjoying yourself, you don't say anything at all. Understand?"

She nods. "Yes, Daddy."

"Perfect."

I slide my hands around to her back, finding the zipper of her skirt. The sound it makes as I lower it seems impossibly loud in the quiet office.

"Step out of it."

She does, her cheeks flushed but her eyes never leaving mine. "You'd let me do anything to you, wouldn't you?" I murmur, and she nods breathlessly. She trusts me completely, and that trust is the most intoxicating thing I've ever experienced.

"Beautiful." I let my gaze travel over her body, taking in the way her shirt hits mid-thigh, the smooth expanse of her legs. "My beautiful girl."

"Daddy..." Her voice is breathy, needy.

"What do you need, baby?"

"I need... I need you to touch me."

"I am touching you."

"More." The word comes out desperate. "Please."

"Please, what?"

"Please, Daddy."

"Much better." I slide my hands up her thighs, watching her face carefully. "Is this what you want?"

"Yes." Her eyelashes flutter, eyes rolling back for a beat.

My thumbs brush against the slip of fabric covering the heat between her legs, and she gasps.

"These are soaked." The satisfaction in my voice rolls out of me like thunder. "Is this all for me, baby girl?"

"Yes, Daddy."

"Good." I reluctantly drag my hand from her panties and start working the buttons down the front of her shirt. "You okay, baby?"

"I think so." Her voice shakes but her eyes stay wide on mine.

"You always tell me the truth, understand?" She nods quickly. "Good. I'm just going to look at you, touch you so you know what it feels like to be mine. I'll never hurt you, baby."

I ease her blouse down her shoulders and off her hands, leaving her in just her bra and panties and those fucking black little shoes and lace trimmed socks.

She's sin incarnate and she's all fucking mine. She's got all the right curves, satin creamy skin, a quivering little belly that I imagine kissing when she's got a tummy ache or bringing her the heating pad when she's got cramps.

"Fucking perfect." I pull her into my chest, exploring her back with rough fingers. "You feel so good, baby. So warm."

"Daddy, please."

"Please what? Use your words."

"I need... When I'm around you, it aches so bad."

"I'm going to make you feel so good, sweetheart. But first, you need to understand something." I tilt her chin up so she's looking at me. "This pussy belongs to me now. This beautiful body belongs to me. And I'm the only one who gets to make you come. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Daddy."

"Say it."

"I belong to you, Daddy."

"That's right." I ease my hand under the elastic of her panties, down, down, easing a fingertip along that perfect little slit. Heat and wetness engulf the intrusion and I nearly pass the fuck out. "And Daddy's going to take such good care of what belongs to him."

The sound she makes when I press my finger into her folds for the first time is the sweetest thing I've ever heard.

We stand like that for a long moment. Her cheek against my chest, hands gripping my biceps, my finger just wiggling against her clit, silently, slowly, introducing myself to her as everything inside me screams to fuck her like a savage, then tell her I'll always be there for her hugs and cuddles.

It's a fucking awakening. For us both.

"You want more?" I rasp against the top of her head, feeling the smallest of nods, but the door handle rattles, followed by a sharp knock.

We both freeze, her head snapping back, looking up with panic.

"Coach Reynolds?" It's Phil Morrison, the principal, who's always fucking stopping by the sports building these days. I swear he never did in the past. "You in there?"

"Fuck," I breathe, and I see Taryn start to move toward her clothes.

"Stay," I order quietly, and she stops immediately. "Don't move."

"Just a minute," I call out, my voice surprisingly steady.

I grab her clothes and hand them to her, then move to unlock the door while she dresses quickly.

"You'd let me do anything to you, wouldn't you?" I murmur as she pulls her shirt over her head.

By the time I open it, she's mostly presentable, though her lips are still swollen and her hair is mussed.

"Hey, Principal," I say, keeping my hips behind the door. My hard-on visible from

space. "What's up?"

He leans around me, his expression softening when he sees Taryn trying to keep her breathing steady. "Oh, hi Taryn, didn't expect to find you here. You okay? You're cheeks are really red. It looks good, kind of—"

"Actually," I cut him off with a grunt, "I was just finishing up with Taryn here." I gesture behind me, and Taryn forces a small smile. "College prep stuff."

"Ah." He nods, eyes narrowing, and if he gives me one fucking speck of trouble right now, I'll send his head through the cinderblock wall. "All good. We'll catch up later. Good to see you, Taryn."

He turns and leaves without another word, thank fuck.

After he's gone, I close the door and turn back to Taryn. She's sitting in the chair again, her hands folded in her lap, but I can see the look in her eyes.

"What is it?"

Her nose twists, as if she's trying to clear it of a bad smell. "He's a creep."

"Principal Morrison?" I turn to look after him. "What's he done?"

"To me? Nothing. But other girls have caught him staring at their chests and trying to see up their skirts in class. Younger grades, too. Underage." She raises her eyebrows at my quizzical look.

"Girls talk, Coach, we watch out for each other. He hasn't tried anything, as far as I know, but he cornered Chloe once and she got a really bad vibe."

Thought he might, you know... be trying to feel her out. See if she's interested."

I growl. "He tries anything like that with you, you come to me. Right away. You hear me?" She nods, but the anger is still building inside. "For that matter, you hear of him trying anything with any other girls, you come to me. I'll be keeping an eye on him."

For a moment, she's silent, then, "Thanks. Not many teachers take that kind of thing seriously."

"It is fucking serious, but it also lumps me in that sick, pervert category, Taryn."

"Our situation is completely different. I'm the one that—"

"Nevertheless... We can't do this here."

She sighs. "I know."

"But I meant what I said. About you being mine."

"I hope so."

"Now," I move to my desk and grab a piece of paper, writing down my address, "Tomorrow night. Seven o'clock. Bring nothing but yourself." I pull out my phone and hand it to her. "And put your number in my phone."

She takes the paper with shaking hands, then my phone and starts tapping the screen. "What if someone sees me?"

"They won't. I live outside town, and my nearest neighbor is half a mile away." I reach out and brush my knuckles over her warm cheek. "You still want this?"

"More than anything, Daddy."

The way she says it makes my chest tight.

"Then go home, baby girl. And tonight, when you're lying in bed thinking about what we started here, remember that you're mine now. That beautiful body, that sweet pussy, that trusting heart—all mine."

She nods, handing my phone back with a new little sparkle in her eyes. "Yes, Daddy."

"Good girl. Now go, before I do something that gets us both in trouble."

She heads for the door, then turns back. "Daddy?"

"Yeah, baby?"

"Thank you. For not treating me like I'm too young to know what I want."

"You're not too young," I tell her. "You're perfect."

After she leaves, I sink into my chair and run my hands through my hair, my dick so fucking painful I need about a hundred Advil and a killer beat-off session.

What the fuck have I just started?

But even as I ask myself the question, I know the answer.

Everything.

I've started everything.

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Taryn

I don't sleep.

Not even close. I lie in bed staring at the ceiling, replaying every second of what happened in Coach Reynolds' office. The way his voice went all rough and commanding. The feel of his hands on my skin. The word "Daddy" falling from my lips like it belonged there.

Coach : Sleep well, baby girl. Dream of me. - M

I stare at the text until my eyes blur, then type back.

Me : Can't sleep. Too wound up.

His response is immediate.

Coach : Good. I want you thinking about what's going to happen tomorrow night.

Me : What IS going to happen tomorrow night?

Coach : Everything. Get some rest. You're going to need it. Sweet dreams, baby.

I press the phone to my chest and squeeze my eyes shut, but it's useless. Every time I close my eyes, I see his face when he called himself my Daddy. The dark promise in his eyes. The way he looked at me like I was something he wanted to possess completely.

Around 2 AM, I give up and pad to the kitchen for water. Mom's door is closed, and I can hear the soft hum of her oxygen concentrator. At least one of us is getting some sleep.

I spend the rest of the night alternating between panic and anticipation.

What if I'm making a huge mistake? What if someone finds out? What if I'm not what he wants when it really matters?

But then I remember the way he touched me. The way he said "mine" like it was a fact, not a game. The way he made me feel small and safe and cherished and sexy all at once.

By morning, I've made up my mind. Whatever happens tonight, I'm all in.

School drags by like molasses. I catch glimpses of Coach Reynolds in the hallway, and each time our eyes meet, I feel that familiar flutter low in my belly. He doesn't acknowledge me beyond a professional nod, but I see the heat in his gaze. The promise of what's coming.

My phone stays silent all day, and I start to wonder if he's changed his mind. But then, right as the final bell rings with me still sitting at my desk in study hall, I get a text.

Coach : Wear a dress. No bra. Panties are okay. This time.

My tummy does fifty somersaults, then my phone dings again and I make this involuntary chirping sound.

Coach : And I'd love to see a smile, you deserve to always be happy.

Heat floods my cheeks as I read it, and I quickly shove my phone in my backpack before anyone can see. The casual authority matched with this soul-deep nurturing vibe he gives makes my knees like noodles.

I race home and tear through my closet, which admittedly doesn't take long since I own exactly three dresses. One is for church (too formal), one is from sophomore year homecoming (too fancy), and one is a simple sundress I bought at Target last summer with babysitting money.

It's navy blue with tiny white flowers, hits just above my knees, and has buttons down the front. Easy to take off, just like he said.

I shower and shave everything twice, then spend twenty minutes staring at myself in the mirror. Without a bra, my nipples are visible through the thin fabric, and the knowledge that he specifically requested this makes my entire body flush with heat.

"You're going out?" Mom asks when I come into the living room. She's curled up on the couch with her nebulizer, looking smaller than usual.

"Just for a little while. Study group." The lie comes easier than it should.

"You work too hard, baby. You should be out having fun, not always studying or working." She reaches for my hand. "Promise me you'll do something just for you once in a while?"

If only she knew.

"I promise, Mom."

"Good. And Taryn? You look beautiful. That dress is perfect on you."

The drive to the address on my GPS takes fifteen minutes through winding country roads. I've been to this part of town before for babysitting gigs, but I've never paid this much attention like I'm leaving mental breadcrumbs. I need to know my way back, with or without my phone guiding me.

My heart is lodged in my throat as the GPS on my phone announces I've arrived at my destination and I turn the wheel of my Honda to the right and along a long gravel driveway.

The house is set back from the road, a generous rustic wood ranch with a porch along the entire front, all shaded by hundred-year-old oaks and towering pines like the house is being wrapped in a hug by nature.

I sit in my car for a full five minutes, engine running, trying to work up the courage to get out. This is it. Once I walk up to that door, there's no pretending this is some innocent, misunderstood flirtation.

My phone buzzes.

Coach : I can see you sitting in your car, baby girl. Come inside.

That gets me moving. I grab my purse and walk up the porch steps on shaking legs, but before I can knock, the door opens.

And there he is.

He's changed out of his school clothes into jeans and a black t-shirt that clings to his chest in ways that should be illegal. He's still one hundred percent NFL stock, with biceps bigger than my thighs, thick muscles that brace between his neck and shoulders and a grid iron walk that makes me absolutely melt.

His hair is slightly damp and messed up, like he's been running his hands through it, and his gray eyes are dark with something that makes my breath catch.

"You're beautiful," he says simply, bringing a hand to cover his mouth for a second, and the way he's looking at me makes me feel like the most desirable woman in the world instead of an eighteen-year-old girl in a Target dress.

"Thank you, Daddy." The title feels natural now, right.

Something shifts in his expression at that. "Inside, baby. I want you in my home."

I step past him into a living room that's surprisingly cozy, but what catches my attention are the plants. Lots of them, lined up on windowsills and tucked into corners, all thriving and happy looking.

"Plants?" I say, raising an eyebrow. "Not exactly what I pictured in Coach Reynolds' bachelor pad."

He runs a flat hand back and forth over his pecs, looking almost embarrassed. "They don't talk back. Don't need much either, just water and light and a minimal amount of attention."

He closes the door behind me as I step across the wood floor into the living room, toward a massive snake plant by the window, its thick leaves standing at attention like little green soldiers. "This one's impressive. What kind is it?"

"That's, uh..." He clears his throat. "That's Andy."

"Andy? Like, that's the species name?"

"Andy Reid." His cheeks actually flush, and it's adorable. "The thing's impossible to

kill, outlasts everything else, tough old bastard. I, uh... I name them."

I snort, pressing my fingertip to my mouth on a giggle. "You named your snake plant after Andy Reid?"

"Don't start." He swallows, scratching the back of his neck, looking sheepish but so sexy.

"Oh, I'm definitely starting." I move to the next plant, a delicate little thing with purple flowers. "Let me guess... this pretty one must be Tom Brady?"

"Hell no. That's Pete Carroll. Looks all sweet and innocent until it takes over your whole damn garden."

I let the belly laugh come out without muffling, and there's a satisfaction in his eyes that hits me bone deep. "Okay, so where's Brady then?"

His tongue glances his teeth as he shakes his head.

"On my desk at school. Or he was, anyway. You ran your fingers along his leaves, and I got mad. Damn near killed the thing until I forced myself to give it to Jim... Um, Mr. Turner. We talk football together and his science class needed some fucking greenery. It wasn't the damn plant's fault, but I couldn't stand looking at it any longer. "

I start to laugh, but then catch the look in his eyes and realize... He's serious. He got that jealous because I touched a plant named Tom Brady?

Why do I find that so flippin' sexy?

"And..." I have to force myself to remember to breathe. "Bill Belichick?"

"Kitchen. The Ficus. Stubborn as hell, thrives on neglect, still outperforms everything around it."

The fact that he knows all their personalities, that he's put this much thought into plant-football metaphors, is somehow the most endearing thing I've ever heard.

"Turn around." He shifts forward, and I can tell the plant conversation is over. He makes a spinning gesture with his hand over my head.

I turn my palms up, doing a slow turn, letting him look his fill. When I complete the circle, his jaw is tight and his hands are clenched at his sides.

"Fuck, you're perfect." He reaches out and traces one finger along the neckline of my dress. "Did you follow all my instructions?"

"Yes, Daddy."

"Show me."

My cheeks burn, but I reach up and undo the top button of my dress, letting it gape open enough to show that I'm not wearing a bra. His sharp intake of breath makes my nipples harden.

"Good girl." He steps closer, close enough that I can smell his cologne and the faint scent of soap. "Are you nervous?"

"A little."

He steps closer, close enough that I have to tilt my head back to meet his eyes. "Good. You should be. Do you know why?"

I shake my head.

"Because I've been thinking about this moment for months.

Ever since you started running the track where I could see you.

About having you here, in my space, with nowhere to run.

" His thumb traces my lower lip, and I think back to the first time I ran that track, wearing booty-hugging running shorts just for his eyes.

Barely eighteen. "About all the things I'm going to do to you and do for you. "

My breath catches. "What things?"

"Patience, baby girl." His hand slides to the back of my neck, fingers tangling in the hair at the back of my neck with a soft tug.

Just enough to let me know things are changing.

"First, I need to know you trust me. Completely.

Because once I start touching you the way I want to, I'm not going to want to stop. "

"I trust you, Daddy."

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"Do you?" His grip tightens slightly in my hair, not painful but possessive. "Because trusting me means doing exactly what I tell you, when I tell you. It means you belong to me tonight. Think you can handle that?"

The way he's looking at me, like he wants to devour me whole, makes my knees weak. "Yes, Daddy."

"We'll see." He releases my hair and steps back, leaving me feeling oddly bereft. "Come on. I'll show you around. I want you comfortable, baby."

He gives me a tour of the house, and I try to pay attention, but all I can focus on is the way his hand rests on the small of my back as he guides me from room to room.

The kitchen is in warm gray and white, neat as a pin with gleaming appliances and a cool refrigerator with glass doors, so I see inside how everything is perfectly lined up.

Half-gallon of milk, label forward. A few Powerades standing in a line like good soldiers. A bowl of what looks like dark cherries and a few bottles of craft beer on a lower shelf.

The guest bathroom he shows me in the hall has fluffy white towels and expensive-looking liquid soap with some French name on the label. Then there's an office with a huge dark wood desk and bookshelves filled with books, photos of his career, trophies and yes, plants.

"This is my room," he says, pushing open the last door at the end of the hallway. The air conditioning hums above, but it's doing nothing to cool the fire racing over my

skin.

It's clearly the primary bedroom, dominated by a king-size bed with a dark wood headboard. The comforter is deep blue, and there are actual adult touches like matching nightstands and a dresser that doesn't look like it came from a college dorm room.

"It's nice," I manage, though it comes out a little more envious than I intended.

"Taryn." He turns me to face him, the weight of his enormous hands settling on my shoulders, grounding me.

"Before we go any further, I need you to understand something.

What we're about to do... it's not just sex.

It's about trust and control and giving yourself to someone completely. Are you sure you're ready for that?"

"I've been ready for months."

"Have you?" His eyes search mine. "Because once I have you, really have you, I'm not going to want to let you go. You'll be mine in every way that matters. Do you understand what that means?"

"Tell me."

"It means I'm going to know your body better than you do.

Your mind as well, and eventually, your heart.

It means I'm going to take care of you in ways no one else ever has. It means when you come apart for me, whether it's from my tongue, my hands, my dick, my voice or whatever other object I choose to use, it's going to be because I made you feel safe enough to let go completely. "

The words send heat spiraling through me and to my shock, my chin starts to quiver. "That's what I want, Daddy."

"You sure?"

"I'm sure."

He studies my face for a long moment, then nods. "Okay, baby girl. Then let's start slow." He guides me over the cream-colored rug, lowers himself onto the edge of the bed and pats his lap. "Come here."

I shift into his magnetic orbit, and he guides me to sit sideways across his thighs. One of his arms comes around my back to support me, and the other rests on my knee.

"How does this feel?"

"Good. Safe."

"Good." His hand on my knee starts to move, just slightly, his thumb tracing small circles on my exposed skin. "I want you to tell me if anything doesn't feel right, okay? This is about you feeling good, not about me taking what I want."

"What if what you want is what I want too?"

"Then we're going to get along just fine." He smiles, and for a moment he looks younger, less intense. "But first, I need to know some things about you. Have you

ever been with anyone before?"

Heat floods my cheeks. "Not... not really. I mean, I've kissed people, but nothing serious."

"What about touching? Have you ever let anyone touch you the way I touched you yesterday?"

"No, Daddy."

His eyes darken at that. "What about yourself? Do you touch yourself when you think about me?"

The question makes me squirm in his lap, but something about the way he asks it, gentle but commanding, makes me want to answer honestly.

"Yes."

"Good girl. I want you to always be honest with me, even when it's embarrassing." His hand slides a little higher on my thigh. His palm is rough, fingertips adding a little squeeze as he finishes. "What do you think about when you touch yourself?"

"You. Always you." The confession tumbles out before I can stop it. "I think about your hands on me, your voice telling me what to do. I think about what it would feel like to have you inside me."

"Fuck, baby." His voice lowers like the words are dragging upward from somewhere deep inside him. "You have no idea what it does to hear you say that."

I can feel exactly what I do to him. He's hard beneath me, and the knowledge that I affect him this much is intoxicating.

"Can I touch you?" I ask shyly.

"You can touch me anywhere you want, sweetheart. But first, I want to take care of you." His hand slides higher, and I part my legs instinctively. "Is this okay?"

"Yes, Daddy."

"You'll always tell me if something hurts, clear?"

I nod, then remember his rule. "I will, Daddy."

His fingers find the edge of my panties, and he pauses. "Open your legs wider for me."

His voice rumbles down into my core and I shift, wiggling on his lap to part my thighs.

"Good girl." He nods, eyes fixed on my face, fingertips sending a jolt through me as they brush the fabric between my legs. "These are soaked again."

"I can't help it. You make me so wet."

"Christ." He presses his forehead against mine. "You're going to be the death of me, you know that?"

"Good," I whisper, feeling bold.

He laughs, low and rough. "Such a smart mouth. I'm going to have to do something about that."

"Like what?"

"Like this." And then he's kissing me again, deeper this time, his tongue sweeping into my mouth while his fingers slip beneath the elastic of my panties.

The first touch of his skin against me makes me gasp into his mouth. He's gentle but knowing. Not fumbling or tentative, like I'm his house and he's still showing me around.

"So fucking soft, baby," he murmurs against my lips. "So perfect."

"Daddy, please." I'm already a whimpering mess, begging for that ache to be relieved.

"Please what, baby? What do you need?"

"More. I need more."

"I know you do." One finger slides to my opening, pushing inside, and I arch against him with a soft cry. "Is this the first time you've had a finger inside you except for yours?"

"Yes," I pant.

"I can tell. I'm barely able to get an inch in this little honey pot of yours. We're going to take this very slow." He starts to move his finger gently, pulsing, in and out, in and out, watching my face carefully. "How does that feel?"

"Amazing. Don't stop."

"Oh, baby, Daddy decides when things stop."

I tell you what to do, not the other way around, got it?

" He adds a second finger, and I can feel myself stretching around him as I stutter something that sounds like 'yes'.

"Fuck, you're tight. Gonna have to stretch this sweet little pussy before I can fit inside you. "

The promise in those words makes me clench around his fingers.

"Well, feel that. You like that idea, don't you? The thought of Daddy's dick inside you right here." He pushes in, his thumb sliding up through my folds until it's on my clit, pushing, pushing. "Eyes on me, baby, don't you look away when I'm talking to you."

"Yes, Daddy." I manage, the room starting to darken in the periphery of my vision.

"Good girl." More pressure, more pushing, rolling, rubbing, and I nearly come off his lap. "There we go. Right there, isn't it?"

"Oh God, yes." I moan, struggling to keep my eyes open as his narrow, tongue on his lower lip.

"That's it, baby. Make all those sounds for me." He sets up a rhythm that has me writhing on his lap, legs opening, soft sounds spilling from my lips. "You're so beautiful like this. So responsive. Pleases me."

Something builds inside me. Down deep, it's like a ball starting to roll, getting bigger, a pressure that's both wonderful and overwhelming. "Daddy, I think... I think I'm going to..."

"Of course you are." He doubles down on my clit, that bundle of nerves ready to jump off whatever cliff is coming. "I know you already. Daddy's got you. Deep

breath, let it go."

He drives his finger forward until his knuckles meet my open folds.

There's a burning pain that's just enough to let me know he's taking me somewhere I've never gone before.

The orgasm hits me like a wave, the undertow pulling me down, down, stealing my breath and making my whole body shake.

He holds me through it, fingers moving, pulling more and more out of me.

"Thata girl. That's so good. So pretty. You can give it all to Daddy, baby. I'm here."

When the waves start to ebb, the room comes into focus and I'm boneless against his chest, and he's stroking my hair gently.

"How do you feel?" he asks softly.

"Like I never want to leave this room."

He chuckles. "We're just getting started, sweetheart." His fingers are still inside me, and he moves them slowly, making me gasp. "I think you can give me another one."

"I don't think I can."

"You can and you will." The words are stern, some of the softness leaving his eyes. "You're going to give me what I want."

"Are we going to..." I shrug, swallowing, a low terror building inside me, wondering if I'm really ready for this. "Fuck?"

He seems to read me like I've got thought bubbles in neon over my head.

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“No baby. Not right now. You’re not ready for that, but you will still give me what I want.

So, relax.” He shifts me off his lap and onto the bed, positioning me on my back, my legs falling to the side, my arms wrapping around my belly.

"You just lay there and Daddy’s going to kiss you.

You're gonna fill my mouth this time, baby.

I gave you what you need, now you'll do the same for me. "

My cheeks burn, but the heat in his eyes makes my body respond instantly. He pushes my dress up my legs, nodding toward my chest. “Unbutton. I want your tits out where I can see them.”

With a stern nod, I do as I’m told, his body shifting on the mattress, making my body bounce as he lowers his chest to the bed.

"Let's open up for me. Daddy's hungry."

He settles between my legs, drawing my panties down my legs, then positioning them with knees high, moving my feet outward.

“I like your socks. You made me so fucking hard the other day when you wore them. You know you’re my little girl now, right? And you’ll do little girl things to please me.”

I swallow against the sudden dryness in my throat as I finish the last buttons on the bodice of my dress, and he works my blue slip-on Keds off my feet, planting a kiss on the top of each foot after he throws my shoes onto the floor with a soft thud.

“Look at those little perfect tits you’re growing for me. Spread that dress open, I want to see your nipples get nice and hard while I put my tongue in your pussy.”

“Oh shit,” I blurt out on a gasp as his mouth connects in a solid, earth-shattering kiss right against my clit.

I’m a squirming mess from that moment on. Arching and twitching and crying as he moves his mouth all over down there. Tongue, lips, teeth, all taking their turns as I react instinctively like it’s all too much, slapping my legs closed.

"Oh no, baby girl. Let Daddy have what he needs. You use your word if you need me to stop, you remember? Red to stop, yellow to slow down. But that’s only when you are sure you can’t take anymore, clear?"

I nod, he returns the gesture, then he’s Coach Hurricane between my legs.

I push my hips upward, as he takes my legs in an iron grip, pulling me wide. I flail and moan, grabbing the pillow in both hands, pulling it up to the sides of my head, muffling the sounds of his wet mouth doing the most unbelievable things.

I had zero clue having a mouth on me could feel like this.

My second orgasm builds faster and harder than the first with his fingers. When I fly apart this time, I’m sobbing his name, my hands fisted in his hair.

"Beautiful," he murmurs against my sensitive flesh, kissing softly as my body twitches, stuttering little breaths caught in my throat. As I calm, warm lips linger on

my inner thighs. His tongue dances in a long slow stroke, down until he's kissing me behind my knee. "Absolutely fucking beautiful. So sweet, I'll be needing more of that every fucking day, little one. Just so you know. When Daddy says he's hungry, you take off your panties and present yourself for my pleasure, got it? "

I can't catch my breath, can't form words. It's like discovering a new color and realizing it's absolutely your favorite. Like finding out there was this whole dimension of feeling I never knew existed.

"I can't believe..." I start, then trail off, embarrassed.

"What, baby girl?" He pushes onto his knees, leaving my legs to fall limp and wide as he swipes the back of his hand over his lips. His massive chest rising and falling, face and neck glistening with my wetness.

"I can't believe how good that felt. I mean, who knew a mouth could do that?" I finally say, my voice raw like I've been screaming at a concert all night. I look up at him with glazed eyes. "What about you?"

"What about me?"

"Don't you want...?" I gesture vaguely toward the obvious bulge in his jeans.

"Tonight was about you, baby girl. About showing you what it feels like to be taken care of."

"But I want to take care of you, too."

A chuckle escapes his lips. "Oh, trust me, you will, baby. When I say, in my way. Daddy's gonna teach you how to take good care of him. But I'll decide when."

He shifts upward, laying next to me, moving me so I'm curled against his side with my head on his chest. I can hear his heartbeat, strong and steady, and feel the rise and fall of his breathing.

"Daddy?"

"Yeah, baby?"

"I want to belong to you."

The words feel huge in the quiet room, but they're true. Truer than anything I've ever said.

His arms tighten around me. "You do belong to me, sweetheart. From the moment you walked into my office this morning, you've been mine."

"Really?"

"Really." He presses a kiss to the top of my head. "And I take care of what's mine."

"Forever?"

"Forever, baby girl."

I close my eyes and let myself believe it. Let myself imagine a future where I don't have to be strong all the time, where someone else makes the hard decisions and catches me when I fall.

Where I get to be his good girl for the rest of my life.

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Murphy

I'd made sure she texted her mom, checking on her and then telling her she was staying at her friend Chloe's house to work on a project and would be home in the morning.

The lie had come easily, but watching her type it out had reminded me of exactly how young she is, how much she still has to navigate around the adult in her life.

I extract myself from her sleeping form, grab my phone from the nightstand and head to the kitchen, needing coffee and space to think.

The house feels different with her in it.

Warmer. In all the years I lived with my ex-wife, none of our homes felt like this.

Taryn's been here for hours, and I finally understand why it's not the place that makes a home, it's the person.

My phone buzzes in my pocket. A text from my assistant coach about this afternoon's football practice, but all I can think about is whether Taryn will be in the stands like she sometimes is, watching me with those hazel eyes that see too much. Or running the track, distracting me from what I'm supposed to be doing.

And what happens if someone notices the way she looks at me now? The way I look at her.

By the time she wakes up, I've been running scenarios in my head. What happens to her scholarship if this gets out. Whether she'd be able to transfer schools. How her mother would handle the scandal on top of everything else she's dealing with.

Would I go to fucking jail? Then I couldn't be there for her at all.

She appears in my kitchen doorway, hair a mess, my shirt hanging to her knees, looking young and beautiful and completely content.

"Morning, Daddy," she says with a smile that makes my chest tight.

"Morning, baby girl." The endearment slips from my lips like a breath. "Sleep okay?"

"Best sleep I've had in months." She moves to the coffee pot, standing on her toes to reach the mugs, and the t-shirt rides up to show off the first blush of purple from where my fingertips dug in as I held her apart for my mouth. "You?"

"We need to talk about how we handle this at school."

Something in my tone makes her freeze. She turns slowly, mug in hand, and I can see the exact moment she reads my expression.

"Handle what?"

I take the mug from her, walk to the refrigerator and pull it open, then say, "This.

Us. We need to be smart about it." I twist the top off the juice and pour it into her mug, recapping it then turning back around, walking the three steps her way and putting it in her hand.

"You have too much to lose if we're careless. "

"What do you mean?" She asks, looking at the mug with a quizzical scowl.

"I mean your scholarship. Your future. Everything you've worked for." I keep my voice level, matter-of-fact. "One wrong look, one person putting pieces together, and it's all gone."

Her face goes carefully blank. "So what are you saying?"

"I'm saying we need rules. Boundaries at school. No one can know about this until you graduate."

"And after I graduate?"

"After you graduate, you're not my student anymore. But until then, we keep this private."

She sets down her mug and crosses her arms. "You mean we sneak around. Hide what we are."

"I mean we protect what's yours to lose."

"What about what's yours to lose?"

I shrug. "I'm thirty-seven years old. I've had my shot at building a life. You haven't. I won't let this destroy your future."

"I wanted coffee," she snaps, then spins like she's going to walk away.

"Oh no you don't. We're talking, you don't walk away from me when we are talking."

I've got her upper arm in my hand before she can get two steps in.

"You're bossy, is what you are. And I like coffee."

"You might be right on both of those, but you need nutrition, not caffeine. You're eighteen, but you are still growing, and coffee is not good for you. If something is not good for you, then you're not getting it."

She rolls her eyes as I retrieve the mug and put it to her lips. She crinkles her nose, eyes narrow, but she takes a sip as I tip it up.

"There, you happy?"

I shrug, setting the mug down and lowering my lips to hers, whispering, "If I'm with you, I'm happy."

I kiss away the sweet orange juice off her lips, introducing her to my tongue again, feeling her body soften.

When I pull back, her eyes are more focused, that bratty defiance washing away.

"You know what? Fine. You're right about the scholarship thing." She picks up the juice on her own this time and takes a sip, wrapping her hands around the mug. "But I have conditions."

I raise an eyebrow. "Conditions?"

"Yes. If we're doing this whole secret relationship thing, then I get to set some ground rules too."

The fact that she's negotiating with me instead of just accepting what I've decided is

both irritating and impressive as hell. "Such as?"

"Such as, you don't get to act like you don't know me at school. I'm not asking for PDA, but you can't pretend I don't exist."

"I would never do that, baby, but that's fine. Done."

"And I want your phone number programmed into my phone under a normal name, not 'Coach Reynolds.' Something I can actually say out loud if someone sees me texting."

"What did you have in mind?"

She grins, and there's mischief in her eyes. "Well, you could be my Uncle Murphy. I have a very close relationship with my uncle."

I nearly choke on my coffee. "Your uncle?"

"What? Too weird? Okay, how about my boss? I do work for you sometimes, helping with team stuff. Murphy from work texts me about... work things."

"Work things."

"Very important work things. Like whether I've been a good girl today."

The way she says it makes my cock twitch. "You're going to be trouble, aren't you?"

"I sort of hope so. You look like you could use some trouble in your life." She moves closer, leaving the mug on the counter again, before pressing herself against my chest, her warm little hands over my heart. "But you knew that when you claimed me."

I wrap my arms around her, breathing in that warm scent that's already becoming addictive. "Smart mouth."

"You love my smart mouth."

"I do." I tilt her chin up so she's looking at me. "But make no mistake, baby girl. These rules, this arrangement, it's temporary. The second you graduate. I'm not hiding what you are to me anymore."

"And what am I to you?"

"Mine." The word comes out rougher than I intended. "You're mine, and eventually everyone's going to know it."

She shivers against me. "Yes, Daddy."

"Good girl. Now, since we're on the subject of rules, let me add a few of my own."

"Such as?"

"Such as, you text me every morning and every night. I want to know you're safe, that you're taking care of yourself. Whenever we're apart, if you leave somewhere, you tell me. Then, you tell me when you've arrived at your next destination. No texting and driving though. Ever. I'll turn that ass bright red if I find out. "

"Okay."

"And if anyone gives you trouble—anyone—you tell me immediately. I don't care if it's another student, a teacher, or the fucking principal. You're under my protection now."

"What are you going to do, beat up a seventeen-year-old?"

"If necessary." I'm only half-joking. "But hopefully my reputation will be enough to keep most idiots in line."

She laughs. "You know, for a guy who's worried about people finding out about us, you sure sound like you're planning to be pretty obvious about the whole protection thing."

"There's a difference between being protective and being obvious. I've been looking out for you for months anyway. Now I just have more reason to."

"More reason?"

"Because now you're mine to protect instead of just someone I care about."

The distinction seems to satisfy her, because she melts further into my arms. "So when do I see you again? I mean, really see you, not just at school."

"Tomorrow night. You're coming back here."

"Am I?"

"Yes. And you're staying the night again. I'll think of some excuse for your mother."

"What if I have plans?"

I give her a look that makes her squirm. "Do you have plans?"

"No."

"Then it's settled." I press a kiss to the top of her head. "Now go get dressed. You need to get home before your mother starts to worry."

"She thinks I'm at Chloe's, remember?"

"And Chloe knows what, exactly? That you have a man in your life?"

She bites her lip. "Not exactly."

"Meaning?"

"Meaning I may have told Chloe I was staying home to take care of Mom, and I told Mom I was staying at Chloe's."

I stare at her. "You lied to both of them?"

"It's called strategic misdirection. And don't look at me like that—you said yourself we need to be careful."

"I'm just... You're a criminal mastermind."

"I prefer 'creatively flexible with the truth.'"

Despite myself, I'm impressed. And a little concerned about what other creative flexibilities she might employ in the future.

"Just make sure you're always honest with me, baby girl."

"Always, Daddy."

"Good girl. Now go get dressed before I decide to keep you here all day."

"Would you?"

"Don't tempt me."

She stands on her toes to kiss me, quick and sweet, then heads toward the bedroom.
"You know, Daddy, I think this secret relationship thing might be more fun than I thought."

I watch her walk away, admiring the way my t-shirt clings to her curves, and can't help but agree.

We're definitely going to be trouble.

Murphy

Two days.

Two fucking days since our conversation in my kitchen, and I've barely gotten five minutes alone with her. Yesterday she had to rush home from school because her mom was having a bad breathing day. She was supposed to be staying at my place again, but her mom needed her. I might be a fucking monster, but for her I'll do anything.

She stopped by this morning, but could only stay for coffee because she had to cover someone's shift at the diner.

I'm going out of my goddamn mind.

Which is why, when she texted me an hour ago saying her mom was finally stable and she had the whole night free, I didn't hesitate. Told her to pack an overnight bag and prepare for the magical mystery tour, a reference she didn't get because she's so damn young. Hell, it's a reference I shouldn't get.

Now she's in my truck, smoothing the skirt of the dress she just put on at my house.

"You sure this isn't too much?" Taryn asks, voice low as she tugs at the hem. The fabric catches the light—deep red silk that clings in all the right places. She looks like something out of a dream.

My fucking wet dream, to be precise.

I glance over, take her in, and my chest tightens. "Too much? Hell no. If anything, it's not enough."

She bites her lip, looking down at herself like she doesn't quite believe she belongs in something this nice.

"You look incredible," I say. "You could wear a garbage bag and still stop traffic, but this... this is how you should be dressed. Like a damn queen."

Her cheeks go pink. She brushes a strand of hair behind her ear, like she's trying to make herself smaller. "It just... it feels like a lot. I mean, this dress probably cost more than my mom's rent."

"Doesn't matter what it cost." I reach over, hook my finger under her chin until she meets my eyes. "You deserve this. You deserve better than you've been given."

She swallows hard, but she doesn't look away.

"Let me do this for you, Taryn," I say, softer now. "Let me take you out. Properly."

A slow smile breaks across her face. She nods. "Okay. Just... don't be surprised if I trip in these thousand-dollar heels."

"I'll always be there to catch you."

I grab her wrist and pull her closer, my voice dropping to a growl. "And everyone's gonna be wondering why that distinguished gentleman is groping a little girl like she's his personal sex toy."

The crude words make her breath catch, her pupils dilating with arousal. "Let them wonder."

The plan is to take her somewhere nice, but far enough away from home we could be seen together without worrying about running into half the school board.

"Where are we going?"

"Trust me, baby. I have it all in hand."

"Mysterious Daddy," she says with a grin.

I can see her nipples harden beneath the smooth fabric of her dress. Classy enough for dinner, but with enough cleavage to make my mouth water.

"You look fucking incredible," I tell her, pulling away down the drive. "Good enough to eat."

"Best save some appetite for dinner, Daddy."

The restaurant is exactly what I hoped for.

Old school Italian with dark wood paneling, red velvet banquettes, and the kind of atmosphere that makes you want to speak in hushed tones.

We fit right in among the other well-dressed men and women, chatting quietly over expensive wine.

The hostess shows us to a curved corner booth that's practically its own private room, and I slide in next to Taryn instead of across from her.

"This is nice," she says, looking around appreciatively. "Very... adult."

"You are an adult."

"I know. But this is the first time I've felt like one." She leans into me, her hand finding my thigh under the table. "Thank you for this."

"Thank you for what?"

"For wanting to show me off. For not being ashamed of what we are."

The words hit me harder than they should. "I could never be ashamed of you, baby girl. You're the best thing that's ever happened to me."

She kisses me then, soft and sweet, and I don't give a fuck who sees us.

Dinner starts innocently enough. We order wine and appetizers, and I listen to her talk about her college plans, her excitement about finally being able to leave Riverside behind. But somewhere between the salad course and the main dish, her hand starts wandering.

It begins as innocent touches. Her fingers tracing patterns on my thigh, her foot brushing against my calf under the table. But as the wine relaxes her inhibitions, she gets bolder.

"You know," she says, leaning close enough that her breath tickles my ear, "I've been thinking about what you said earlier. About having an appetite."

"Have you?"

"Mmm." Her hand slides higher, dangerously close to where my cock is already harder than a lead pipe. "I'm wondering what you're hungry for."

"Careful, baby girl. We're in public."

"I know." Her fingers find the zipper of my pants, and I have to bite back a groan.
"That's what makes it fun."

She's going to be the death of me. "Taryn..."

"Shh." She starts on my zipper, but I grab her hand, her eyes snapping wide.

"Did you ask to touch Daddy's dick?" I growl, her lips falling open, lashes fluttering.
"Touching me is a privilege. Sometimes, I'll give you free rein, but sometimes you have to earn it."

She audibly swallows. "I'm sorry, Daddy." The flush of rejection in her eyes makes my heart ache, but this is a process of her learning, it's not cruelty.

"You don't have to be sorry, baby. I didn't tell you that before, so you had no way of knowing.

We're going to learn things together, you are going to understand what it's like to give up control and yet feel how free that makes you.

Touching me is something you'll crave, and sometimes I'll say no.

But that doesn't mean I don't want you. It just means, not now. Not until I say."

"Okay, Daddy," she whispers, working her bottom lip, the pink gloss clinging to her top teeth. She tries to pull her hand away, but I hold it steady.

"Ask like a good girl for what you want."

Waitstaff and customers walk by, some giving us side long glances. Clearly something is drawing their attention. Our energy, perhaps. The full-grown man with

the stunning barely-legal princess practically sitting in his lap.

“Can I touch you, Daddy?” Her words are barely above a whisper, but they shake me to my core. “Please?”

I tap my cheek with the index finger of my other hand. “Give Daddy a kiss first, then yes, you can touch.”

She straightens her spine, touching her warm lips to my rough cheek as I guide her hand to the raging boner under my pants, leaning toward her ear. “Take Daddy out, baby, go slow and easy. I want to enjoy the first time you touch me.”

Her smile sends me nearly to the brink, then when her fingers wrap around my length, I nearly come out of my skin. “Just sit back and enjoy your dinner, Daddy.”

The waiter chooses that exact moment to appear at our table, asking if everything is satisfactory. I manage to nod and make appropriate noises while Taryn's hand moves slowly, tortuously, her thumb tracing circles on that crazy spot on the underside of my shaft.

“Everything's perfect,” I tell the waiter. “Now, leave us alone unless I wave you over. Me and my daughter need to talk.”

Taryn's lips fall open on a giggle. “Daughter,” she whispers, her lips on my ear. “Daddy's little girl giving her first handjob.”

He moves away, shooting Taryn a quick, ‘Are you okay?’ sort of glance, and she just gives him a saccharine sweet smile in return, her hand moving faster, the soft shifting of her body and her shoulder surely giving away what's going on under the pure white table cloth.

Fuck, that's hot. Her hand feels so fucking good and knowing that little shit of a waiter was lusty after my girl and damn well is pretty sure she's jacking off her old man right here in public has pride filling my chest.

"Like this?" She hisses, running her bare toes up the inside of my calf. "Am I doing it right, Daddy?"

Holy fuck.

I grab Taryn's wrist and still her movements. "Enough."

"But I'm having fun!"

"So am I. But if you keep that up, I'm going to bend you over this table and fuck you in front of everyone in this restaurant."

The threat makes her breath catch, her pupils dilating with arousal. "You wouldn't."

"Try me."

She studies my face, and whatever she sees there makes her withdraw her hand.

"Now, put me away and zip up my pants."

Getting me back in is a hell of a lot harder than letting me out, and watching her struggle only makes me harder.

Finally, as I take the last bite of my risotto, she's got me back in the stable, locking up the barn door, but the damage is done.

I'm ready to explode, and from the flush on her cheeks, she's right there with me.

"Check, please." I signal the waiter with a flick of my fingers, then settle my hand down in Taryn's lap, shoving her dress out of the way and taking a handful of that warm wet pussy. "All mine. Don't you fucking forget it."

Ten minutes later, we're in my truck driving toward the address I scouted out on the internet yesterday when I couldn't get her off my mind. It's a small cabin, all ours for the night, tucked away in the woods about ten minutes from the restaurant.

"Where are we going?" Taryn asks, her hand back on my thigh.

"Somewhere private."

"How private?"

"Private enough that nobody's going to hear you scream."

She giggles, settling back in her seat, and I drive with one hand on the wheel so I can rest the other on her knee. She winds her window down, letting the still-warm evening air tousle her blond hair. So fucking beautiful.

The cabin is perfect, just like the photos I saw on the website. Secluded, set back from the road so once I've parked and cut the engine the whole world disappears. Pines crowd the edges of the clearing, and the quiet settles in deep.

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I take her hand and lead her inside, showing her around the comfortable space that's all ours.

High ceilings with timber beams, big windows that look out on nothing but trees.

A leather couch facing the fireplace, where the owners already got a fire going, just like they promised.

The scent of cedar and smoke curling into the air.

A stack of books on the coffee table. A bottle of wine and two glasses waiting in the kitchen.

The bed's a king-size, with a thick quilt and clean sheets that seem to invite us to stay here forever, and promise no one would ask any questions.

"Murphy, this is..." Taryn turns in a slow circle, taking in the rustic charm. "How did you..."

"Baby, the devil makes work for idle hands."

"What do you mean?"

"When I couldn't see you yesterday, I had to make plans for when I did." I move up behind her, my hands settling on her hips. "I wanted somewhere special to make you completely mine."

"I'm already yours."

"Not the way I want you to be." I turn her in my arms so she's facing me. "Not yet."

The admission hangs between us, heavy with promise. We both know what I'm talking about. What we haven't done yet.

"I want that too," she whispers. "I've wanted it since that first night at your house."

"Are you sure? Because once we do this, there's no going back. You'll be mine in every way that matters."

"I've been ready for months, Daddy."

The word sends heat straight to my groin. "Then take off that dress."

She reaches for the zipper, but I catch her hands.

"Slowly. I want to savor it."

She complies, her movements deliberate and seductive as she slides the zipper down and lets the dress pool at her feet. Underneath, she's wearing black lace lingerie that makes my mouth go dry.

"Fuck, you're beautiful."

"Your turn."

I strip off the suit jacket and tie, but when I reach for my shirt buttons, she settles a hand on mine.

"Let me take care of you, Daddy."

Her fingers are trembling slightly as she works the buttons free, and the sight of her nervousness mixed with desire makes my chest tight with emotion.

When she's got my shirt open, she runs her hands over my chest, exploring the scars and muscle with reverent fingers.

"I love your body," she murmurs. "It's like a bunker. Hard and safe and I want to live inside it."

"All yours, baby girl."

The rest of our clothes disappear quickly, and then we're skin to skin on the bed, her soft curves pressed against my harder angles. I take my time kissing her, relearning the taste of her mouth, the sounds she makes when I find that sensitive spot behind her ear.

"Please," she gasps when I've reduced her to a writhing mess beneath me. "I need you inside me."

"Not yet." I kiss my way down her body, pausing to lavish attention on her breasts before continuing south.

"First, I'm going to make you come with my mouth.

Then I'm going to make you come with my fingers.

And then, when you're so desperate you can barely think straight, I'm going to fuck you until you forget your own name. "

"Daddy, please..."

"Patience, baby girl. Daddy's going to take care of you."

I settle between her thighs, and the first taste of her nearly undoes me. She's already so wet, so ready, and the sounds she makes when I work her with my tongue are the most beautiful thing I've ever heard.

It doesn't take long to bring her to the edge, and when she comes apart beneath my mouth, her hands fisted in my hair, I nearly come just from watching her.

"So fucking beautiful when you let go," I murmur against her inner thigh. "My perfect girl."

Before she can fully recover, I'm working her with my fingers, finding that spot inside her that makes her arch off the bed.

"Oh God, I can't... it's too much..."

"Yes, you can. Give me another one, baby. Let Daddy make you feel good."

The second orgasm hits her even harder than the first, and by the time the aftershocks fade, she's boneless and pliant beneath me.

"Now," she whispers. "Please, Daddy. I need you now."

I position myself at her entrance, the head of my cock already slick with her arousal. "Look at me, Taryn. I want to see your face when I make you mine."

Her hazel eyes lock onto mine, trusting and open and so full of love it takes my breath away.

"I love you," I tell her as I push inside, slowly, carefully, giving her time to adjust to my size.

"I love you too," she gasps, her nails digging into my shoulders. "Oh God, you're so big..."

"You're doing so good, baby girl. Taking me so well." I pause when I'm fully seated inside her, giving us both a moment to adjust to the incredible sensation. "How does it feel?"

"Full. Perfect. Like I was made for you."

"You were made for me." I start to move, slow and gentle at first, but the way she responds, the way she meets my thrusts and begs for more, quickly drives me to increase the pace.

"Harder," she pants. "Please, Daddy, I need it harder."

I flip us over so she's on top, her hands braced against my chest as she rides me. The sight of her above me, hair wild, skin flushed with arousal, is almost too much to bear.

"That's it, baby girl. Take what you need."

But after a few minutes, I can see she's getting tired, her movements becoming less coordinated.

"Get on your hands and knees," I order, and she complies immediately.

The new position lets me go deeper, and the sounds she makes when I hit that perfect spot inside her are absolutely filthy.

"You like that, don't you, baby? Like being fucked like this?"

"Yes, Daddy. God, yes."

"Such a good girl for me. My perfect little girl." I reach around to find her clit, rubbing tight circles as I continue to thrust into her. "Come for me, Taryn. Come on Daddy's cock."

She shatters around me, her inner walls clenching so tight I can barely move. The sensation pushes me over the edge, and I come with a roar, spilling myself deep inside her.

We collapse together onto the bed, both of us breathing hard and covered in sweat.

"Holy shit," she pants against my chest.

"Was that okay? Did I hurt you?"

"Are you kidding?" She lifts her head to look at me, her eyes bright with satisfaction.

"That was incredible. You're incredible."

I pull her up for a kiss, tasting wine and lust on her lips. "I love you so fucking much."

"I love you too, Daddy." She curls against my side, her leg thrown over my hip. "So what happens now?"

"Now we do it again."

"Again?"

"Baby girl, we have this cabin for the entire night. I plan to make up for lost time."

The promise makes her shiver with anticipation. "I like the sound of that."

"Good. Because I'm nowhere near done with you yet."

As I roll her beneath me again, already feeling myself hardening at the thought of taking her a second time, something deeper anchors in my chest. She's given me her trust, her love, and I know there's no going back.

This may be messy. It may be risky. But it's real. She's still my student. Still under my care. But none of that changes the fact that I'd burn it all down before I give her up.

Career, reputation, everything—none of it matters without her.

And right now, in the quiet warmth of this cabin, with her body beneath mine and her eyes locked on me like I'm her whole world, I don't feel guilty. I just feel lucky.

Let the rest of it come.

Tonight, she chose me.

And I'll spend the rest of my life proving I'm worthy.

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Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 8:09 am

Taryn

Two Weeks Later

The secret relationship thing is both easier and harder than I expected.

Harder because keeping my hands off Murphy at school is basically torture, especially now that I know exactly what those hands can do to me. Ever since our night at the cabin, we've been fucking everywhere we can manage it.

His truck in empty parking lots. The storage room behind the gym after hours. His office with the door locked and my hand over my mouth to muffle the sounds he pulls from me. Quick and desperate and so filthy I can barely look him in the eye during actual school hours without blushing.

I'm addicted to the way he takes me. The way he whispers the dirtiest things in my ear while he's buried inside me, telling me what a good girl I am for taking his cock so perfectly. The way he makes me beg for it, makes me tell him exactly what I want him to do to me.

Three weeks of this and I'm constantly on edge, constantly wet, constantly thinking about the next time he's going to pin me against a wall and make me come undone.

Easier because Murphy was right about the protection factor.

Nobody messes with me anymore. Not the mean girls who used to make snide comments about my thrift store clothes, not the guys who thought they could cop a

feel in the hallway, not even the teachers who used to dismiss my questions.

Word has somehow gotten around that I'm under Coach Reynolds' wing, and apparently that's enough to make people think twice.

What they don't know is that I'm under more than just his wing.

"Earth to Taryn," Chloe says, snapping her fingers in front of my face. "You're doing that thing again."

"What thing?" I try to focus on my calculus homework, but it's hard when Murphy is across the field demonstrating a play to the defensive line, his voice carrying in that commanding tone that makes my thighs clench together.

"That thing where you zone out and get this dreamy, slightly dirty look on your face." She follows my gaze to where Murphy is showing Tommy Martinez the proper stance. "Please tell me you're not having inappropriate thoughts about Coach Reynolds during math tutoring."

If only she knew. Yesterday he bent me over his desk during lunch period, my skirt hiked up around my waist while he fucked me so hard I had to bite my lip to keep from screaming. The bruises from his fingers on my hips are still there, hidden under my clothes like a secret.

"I'm concentrating on derivatives," I lie.

"Uh-huh. And I'm concentrating on becoming a Victoria's Secret model." She leans closer, lowering her voice. "Seriously, T. The sexual tension between you two is getting ridiculous. Like, visible from space ridiculous."

My heart stops. "What do you mean?"

"I mean he's been watching you for like ten minutes straight while pretending to critique the blocking scheme.

And you've been staring at him like you want to climb him like a tree. And it's not like his hard-on is under wraps.

" She grins, and I glance over, remembering the too small compression shorts we picked out on a shopping spree two weeks ago where he bought me so much stuff, I had to sneak it in the house to keep my mom from getting suspicious.

"Not that I blame you. If I were into older guys with serious BDE—Big Daddy Energy—he'd definitely be my type. "

She giggles while I feel the heat rush to my face.

"He does not have Daddy energy," I hiss.

"Honey, that man screams 'I will take care of you and ruin you for other men' from a mile away. It's literally written all over him."

My whole body is on fire because she's not wrong.

That's exactly what he does to me, exactly what he is to me.

My Daddy, who takes care of me and ruins me for anyone else in the best possible way.

I want to tell her exactly how he makes me feel, exactly how he loves me and fucks me like his good little girl.

Instead, I try to keep my voice level. "You're imagining things."

"Am I?" She studies my face carefully. "Because I saw you two in the hallway yesterday, and he was standing way closer than a teacher should be standing to a student. Like, way closer. And the way he was looking at you..."

Shit. We've been careful, but apparently not careful enough. Yesterday Murphy cornered me by my locker after the lunch period fuck, checking to make sure I was okay, that he hadn't been too rough. I got distracted by the scent of me still clinging to his skin.

"He was helping me with my locker. The combination gets stuck."

"Taryn St. Claire, you have been opening that locker for months. You do not need help with the combination."

"Fine, he was telling me about a scholarship opportunity. Happy?"

"Getting there." But she's still grinning like she knows something I don't want her to know.

"I'm not judging. If he makes you happy then I say go for it.

Just be careful, okay? Whatever's going on between you two, people are starting to notice.

And not everyone's going to be as understanding as I am. "

The warning sends a chill down my spine, but before I can respond, practice ends and the team starts jogging toward the locker room. Murphy catches my eye and jerks his head toward his office, a subtle signal we've developed over the past few weeks.

A signal that means he wants me. Now.

"I have to go," I tell Chloe, already gathering my books.

"Let me guess. More college prep?"

"Something like that."

I wait five minutes after the last player disappears into the locker room, then make my way to Murphy's office. The door is already propped open, which means it's safe to enter, but the second I step inside, he closes and locks it behind me.

"We have a problem," I say before he can kiss me senseless like he usually does.

"What kind of problem?" His hands are already on my waist, pulling me against him.

"Chloe. She's getting suspicious."

His jaw tightens. "How suspicious?"

"She knows something is going on. Not what, exactly, but something. She says people are starting to notice the way we look at each other."

"Fuck." He runs a hand through his hair, the same gesture I've seen him make during stressful plays. "We've been getting sloppy."

"Maybe we need to cool it for a while. At school, I mean."

The suggestion makes him go very still. "No."

"Murphy..."

"No." His grip on my waist tightens possessively. "I'm not going backwards, Taryn."

I'm not pretending I don't want you every second of every fucking day."

"But if people are noticing..."

"Then we'll be more careful. But I'm not giving this up." He cups my face in his hands, his thumbs stroking my cheeks. "I'm not giving up having you whenever I need you. Do you understand me?"

The commanding tone in his voice makes me melt. This is why I can't resist him, why I let him take me in dangerous places where we might get caught. Because when he gets possessive like this, when he claims me with that voice, I'd let him do anything to me.

"Yes, Daddy."

The word slips out automatically, and his eyes go dark with desire.

"That's my good girl." He backs me against the wall, his body caging me in. "Now, about this afternoon. Your mom's physical therapy appointment is at four, right?"

"Right." Mom's been having more bad days lately, which means more doctor visits, more time away from home. More opportunities for Murphy and me to be together without lying about where I am.

I feel horrible for using those opportunities the way I do, but at the same time I know Mom wants the best for me. And Murphy is the best.

"Which means you have two hours before you need to be home."

"What did you have in mind?"

"My place. My bed. And about an hour and a half of me making you scream my name."

The promise makes my knees weak. "What about the other thirty minutes?"

"Recovery time. Because I plan to fuck you so hard you won't be able to walk straight."

A knock on the door makes us both freeze.

"Coach Reynolds?" It's Principal Morrison's voice, and my blood turns to ice. That fucking creep is back again?

Murphy puts a finger to his lips, then moves me away from the wall and back toward the chairs in front of his desk. He grabs a folder from his filing cabinet and shoves it into my hands.

"Scholarship applications," he whispers. "You're here for help with scholarship applications."

I sit down and open the folder just as he unlocks the door.

"Hey, Phil. What's up?"

Principal Morrison steps into the office, his gaze immediately finding me. "Miss St. Claire. Working hard, I see."

"Yes, sir. Coach Reynolds is helping me with some final scholarship paperwork before I graduate."

"Excellent." His smile seems genuine enough, but there's something in his eyes that

makes me nervous. Something that looks like suspicion. "Murphy, could I have a word? In private?"

My stomach drops to my shoes. This is it. Someone saw something. Someone said something. We're about to lose everything.

Murphy's expression doesn't change, but I see his hands clench briefly at his sides.

"Of course. Taryn, why don't you take those applications home and look them over? We can discuss them tomorrow."

"Yes, Coach." I gather my things and stand, careful to maintain the appropriate distance between us. "Thank you for your help."

"Anytime."

I sidestep past Principal Morrison with what I hope looks like casual confidence, but inside I'm screaming. This is it. This is how it all falls apart.

Murphy

The second Taryn disappears down the hallway, Morrison closes my office door and takes a seat across from my desk. His expression is unreadable, which in my experience means I'm about to get fucked.

"So," he says, settling back in his chair. "Taryn St. Claire."

I keep my face neutral. "Bright kid. Full ride to State."

"Yes, I'm aware of her academic achievements. Probably better than you are." He pauses, studying me. "I'm also aware that you've taken a particular interest in her... success. On the track, I mean."

"She's got more potential than most. Deserves the guidance."

"Of course she does. And I appreciate your dedication to our students' futures." Another pause, and I see something flash behind his eyes. Anger? No, something else. It looked like jealousy. "I've just been hearing some... interesting observations from other faculty members."

Here it comes. "Such as?"

"Such as the fact that you and Miss St. Claire seem to spend a lot of time together. More time than you typically spend with other students seeking college advice. And the door to your office is often locked when the two of you are here."

"She's got more applications to review. More deadlines to meet. We don't want the constant interruptions."

"I'm sure that's all true, but you can see how it might be perceived by someone with a suspicious mind."

"Morrison leans forward, his expression sharpening."

"Murphy, I've known you for three years."

"You're a good coach, a good teacher, and a good man."

"Which is why I'm going to give you the benefit of the doubt here."

"I say nothing, waiting for the other shoe to drop."

"But I'm also going to give you some advice, man to man. Whatever's going on with you and that girl, you need to be very, very careful. Because if there's even a hint of impropriety, it won't just be your job on the line. It'll be her future too."

"It's worded like a warning, but the inflection makes it sound like a threat. It hits like a punch to the gut, but I keep my expression steady. "I appreciate your concern, Phil, but there's nothing inappropriate happening here. I'm helping a student with college applications. End of story."

"Good. Because Taryn St. Claire has been through enough in her young life. She doesn't need the scandal that would come from being involved with a teacher."

"She's not involved with a teacher."

"Of course not, but like I said, suspicious minds."

.." He stands, moving toward the door. "I'm sure there won't be any problem with you maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.

No more private meetings unless there's another staff member present.

No more special attention that could be misinterpreted. Just coach and student, nothing more."

The demand hits me like a physical blow. No more private meetings means no more stolen moments in my office. No more quick encounters between classes. No more of the desperate, hungry kisses that get me through the day.

And my mind keeps going back to what she said, about the way girls talk. About the way Phil Morrison acts. About the things I'd likely kill him for if I had even a shred of proof.

"Is that an order?"

"It's a strong suggestion. One I hope you'll take seriously."

After he leaves, I sit in my empty office staring at the wall, my mind racing. The message was clear: they're watching us. He's watching us. Would he really ruin Taryn's life because he wants her for himself? Like he'd ever have a fucking chance with someone like her.

I grab my phone and text Taryn.

Me : Change of plans. Can't do this afternoon. Will explain later.

Taryn : Are we in trouble?

Me : Not yet. But we need to be more careful.

Taryn : How much more careful?

I stare at the question, knowing what she's really asking. How much of this do we have to give up? How much distance do we have to put between us to keep her safe?

Me : We'll figure it out. I love you.

Taryn : I love you too, Daddy.

The simple declaration makes my chest tight with possessiveness and fear in equal measure. Because the truth is, I don't know how we're going to figure this out. I don't know how I'm supposed to keep my hands off her for the next two months when every instinct I have is screaming that she's mine.

But I know one thing for certain: I'm not losing her. Not to some small-town scandal, not to administrative pressure, not to anything.

I'll find a way to make this work. I have to.

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Taryn

I 'm hanging around outside the sports building, waiting for Murphy, when Principal Morrison walks out into the afternoon sun.

The moment I see him, my stomach turns. Murphy's text told me that we're not in trouble, not yet, but clearly something has happened because we've been told to be more careful.

I turn away and start walking in the opposite direction, hoping to make it clear there's nothing going on between me and Murphy beyond the professional, but I hear Morrison's voice before I can take a step.

"Taryn, a word if you don't mind?"

My shoulders lift involuntarily at the sound of my voice on his lips. Some teachers call us by our first names, some would default to Miss St. Claire, but the few times I've heard the Principal call out a student's name it's always been the formal option.

So why my first name, and why now? Is he going to ask me to betray Murphy? Because that will never happen.

"What is it, Mr. Morrison?" I force what I hope is an innocent smile as I turn to face him.

He takes two steps my way, closing the gap and smiling in return. "Oh, Taryn, you can call me Phil."

I try to stop the grimace before it appears. “Okay... Phil. What’s up?”

“Just letting you know, I don’t think Coach Murphy is going to be bothering you again.” Another step closer to me, then another. “I’ve made it clear that—”

“He doesn’t bother me.”

Morrison frowns, taking another step closer and dropping his voice. “We both know that’s not true. A girl of your intelligence shouldn’t be interested in some former football ogre like him. You need a man of learning. Someone who gets you.”

“Principal Morrison, I don’t know what you mean. There’s nothing going on between me and Coach Murphy.”

“Good. Good. Of course not. Why would there be? I’m just saying, in a few weeks you’ll no longer be a student here, and you’re going to have options. But those options and applications can be a lot more successful with a recommendation from the school principal.”

“What are you saying? Are you...?”

He reaches out to touch my face, and I nearly fall to the ground in my rush to back away, my feet catching on the edge of a paving slab that tries to trip me.

“Oh, Taryn, come on. I’ve seen the outfits you wear. You can’t expect a man not to notice you.”

“That’s... What I wear is my business!”

“I’m not complaining,” he says with a grin. “I just think we can help each other out and—”

“Get away from me!” I scream, tears pricking at the corners of my eyes. “Just leave me alone.”

I try to turn and get away, but he grabs the front of my shirt, his fingertips brushing my breast, and I nearly throw up. I try to bat his hand away, but it only tightens more, grabbing a handful of my shirt and trying to pull me closer.

“Taryn, you’re... You’re misunderstanding. I didn’t mean—”

“I know exactly what you meant .” At that moment, Murphy appears in the doorway to the sports building, and I scream. “Help!”

Principal Morrison turns his head to follow my gaze, and instantly lets go of my shirt. In seconds, I’m running, my eyes streaming with tears as I throw myself into Murphy’s arms, glad that at this moment he doesn’t choose to push me away for the sake of appearances.

Instead, he growls in that protective way, and I feel my heart instantly start to calm.

“What. The. Fuck.” He demands, his arm wrapping possessively around my waist. “Tell me what happened. Right now.”

“She’s overreacting.” Principal Morrison sounds indignant. “All I was doing was offering—”

“Not you,” Murphy barks. “Taryn. Tell me what happened.”

I glance between them both, trying to find the words. “He was... I mean, it wasn’t what he said so much as the way he said it. And then he grabbed me, and—”

“He did what?”

“I was just trying to stop the girl from falling! Taryn, come on, you’re being ridiculous.”

“You come in there and lecture me about appropriate relationships, then you’re out here, what? Sexually harassing an eighteen-year-old girl?”

“Sexually harassing? Murphy, that’s slander! I could have you—”

“Do it.” Murphy pulls me tighter to him. He takes a step forward, getting closer to Principal Morrison, right up in his face. “Go ahead. Do it, motherfucker. Let’s see what the school board makes of this incident, shall we?”

There’s silence for a moment. Morrison stares at Murphy, and Murphy at Morrison. The principal is the first to break it.

“What do you want?”

“You’re retiring in the next five years, right?” Murphy says, eyeing him. Morrison nods, but doesn’t say anything. “Bring that forward. After graduation, you’re gone.”

“Murphy, I can’t do that. Be reasonable—”

“This is fucking reasonable, you dumb fuck. The things I want to do to you... Take the fucking easy option, for both our sakes. Claim illness, claim family issues, claim you're fucking chasing your dreams for all I care, but I don’t want to see you here or at any other school again. Because if I do, the school board will be the least of your worries. Do I make myself clear?” Silence.

Then when Murphy speaks again, it’s loud enough that Morrison jumps out of his skin. “Do I fucking make myself clear?”

“Yes. Yes, crystal clear.”

“Now get the fuck out of my sight.”

When he’s gone, Murphy takes me between his hands, meets my eyes and says the words that instantly calm me down.

“Good girl. That’s my good girl, coming to me as soon as there was a problem.

I’ll always take care of you, Taryn. We’ve been sloppy.

That’s my fault, and I’m going to take care of it.

Make sure nobody sees us around school the way we have been.

But as soon as you graduate, all bets are off. Yes?”

I nod. “Yes, Coach Daddy.”

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Taryn

S ix Weeks Later - Graduation Day

The past six weeks have been the longest of my life.

True to his word, Murphy has maintained professional distance at school. No more private meetings. No more lingering looks. No more stolen moments that made the days bearable.

But what the other teachers don't know is that we've just gotten more creative.

Murphy's been picking me up after my shifts at the diner, taking me to that same cabin he rented or sometimes just parking on back roads where no one will find us.

We've fucked in his truck so many times I've memorized every detail of the interior.

The way the leather seats feel against my skin.

The way the windows fog up when he makes me come so hard I can't breathe.

He's been insatiable, like he's trying to make up for all the time we can't touch at school. Taking me harder, rougher, more possessively than ever before. Marking me in places only he can see, whispering filthy promises about what he's going to do to me once I graduate.

Once I'm officially his.

Today is that day.

I'm sitting in the faculty section of the auditorium, watching as the Class of 2025 files onto the stage in their caps and gowns. It's usually the Principal that takes the job of handing out diplomas, but today he was apparently too sick to come in.

It's not the first time in the past few weeks either.

When I spot myself among them in the program, my breath catches in my throat.

This is it. In about an hour, I'm going to officially be his.

No more hiding. No more sneaking around. No more pretending he doesn't own every part of me.

The ceremony seems to drag on forever, but finally they're calling names. When they announce "Taryn Marie St. Claire," I watch Murphy from my seat in the graduate section. He's trying to look professional, but I can see the pride and possession in his eyes.

The look that says mine.

I walk across that stage with my head high, and when I accept my diploma, I look directly at him. The smile I give him is full of promise and relief. No more hiding. No more being careful.

As I step down from the stage, Chloe is waiting at the bottom of the stairs. Her eyes are glassy, but her smirk is firmly in place.

"We did it, T," she says, pulling me into a tight hug. "School is officially over."

"Are you crying?"

"Please. I don't cry," she sniffs, wiping at her eye. "There was just... dust. Or allergies. Or someone cutting onions directly into my face."

"Uh-huh. You're telling me you're not going to miss this place?"

She pulls back, giving me a look. "Miss the school? No fucking way. The town... Maybe. Some of it."

There's a tone in her voice. Something she's not telling me. "Spill."

"Nope," she says with a wink. "You've got your secrets and I've got mine. And don't tell me you haven't because I had to cover for you a few weeks ago when your mom called thinking you were at mine, and I had a text right there on my phone screen from you telling me you were with her."

"Oh."

"Damn right, oh . What, you think you're James Bond with all your misdirection or something?"

I squeeze her hand. "Okay, we both have our secrets. For now. And this town isn't going anywhere, right? It's not like either of us are moving a million miles away."

After she disappears into the crowd to find her mom, I make my way toward where Murphy is standing with other faculty members, my heart pounding with anticipation.

"Congratulations," he tells me when I reach him, his voice carefully professional despite the heat in his eyes. "You should be very proud."

"Thank you, Coach Reynolds." I can barely contain my excitement. "I couldn't have done it without your guidance."

But we both know it's been more than guidance. For months now, he's been handling the parts of my life that felt too big, too complicated. Making decisions so I didn't have to carry everything alone. Being the adult so I could finally just be his girl.

"You did this all on your own," he says, but his eyes tell a different story. We both know how many late nights he spent helping me with applications, how many times he talked me through panic attacks about deadlines and decisions.

Mom appears at my side, beaming with pride and slightly out of breath from the walk across the parking lot. Her oxygen tank is smaller today, one of her better days, and I'm grateful she got to see this.

"Coach Reynolds," she says, reaching out to shake his hand. "I can't thank you enough for everything you've done for Taryn. Not just the college help, but everything. She's been so much calmer these past few months. More... settled."

The observation makes Murphy's jaw tighten slightly. She's not wrong. Ever since he started taking care of the big decisions, I've felt lighter. Less anxious. Like I finally have someone I can lean on.

"Taryn's a special girl, Mrs. St. Claire. She deserves to have someone looking out for her."

"Yes, she does." Mom studies both of us for a moment, and I wonder what she sees. "You're a good man, Coach. I'm glad she has you in her corner."

"Always," Murphy says quietly, and the word carries more weight than Mom probably realizes.

As the crowd continues to disperse, I find myself alone with Murphy for a brief moment. Mom got a ride home with Mrs. Lowe, Chloe's mother, and I told her I might be late tonight. She didn't question it, and I wonder again just how much she knows about my life that she hasn't questioned me on.

I promise myself that soon, I'll be honest with her. Just as soon as I can find a way to break the news.

"So," I say, my voice carefully casual but my heart racing. "What happens now?"

"Now?" He steps closer, close enough that I can smell his cologne. "Now you're not my student anymore."

"No, I'm not."

"Which means tomorrow night, when I take you out to celebrate, there's nothing inappropriate about it." His voice drops to that tone that makes me melt. "And it means I can finally take care of you the way I've been wanting to."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean no more hiding how I feel about you. No more pretending I don't want to make every decision that's too hard for you to handle alone." He reaches up and touches the pendant at my throat. "No more acting like you're not exactly where you belong when you let me take charge."

My breath catches. "Murphy..."

"I know what you need, baby girl. I've seen how you relax when I handle things for you. How relieved you get when you don't have to be the responsible one." His thumb traces the pendant. "That's not going to change just because you graduated. If

anything, it's going to get better."

"Better how?"

"Better because now I can take care of you properly.

Help you pick your classes, make sure you're eating enough, handle the paperwork that stresses you out. And do what I can for your mom, if she'll let me.

Get the best doctors, the best treatments.

" His eyes are intense, possessive. "Be your Daddy in every way that matters. "

The words make my knees weak. This is what I've wanted, what I've been craving without fully understanding it.

"And what if people talk?"

"Let them talk." He leans closer, his lips brushing my ear. "You're mine now, Taryn. Officially and completely mine. And I'm going to take such good care of my girl."

"Promise?"

"I promise. From now on, you don't have to carry everything alone. Daddy's going to handle the hard stuff so you can just focus on being perfect for me."

Tears blur my vision. "I love you so much."

"I love you too, baby girl. More than you know."

As we walk out of the auditorium together, his hand possessively on the small of my

back, I feel something I haven't felt in years: completely safe.

Protected. Like I finally have someone strong enough to lean on, someone who wants to take care of me instead of expecting me to handle everything myself.

"Daddy?" I say quietly as we reach his truck.

"Yeah, sweetheart?"

"Thank you. For taking care of me. For making me feel like I don't have to be strong all the time."

"You never have to be strong with me, baby girl. That's what I'm for."

He opens the passenger door for me, and as I climb in, I know this is just the beginning. No more hiding. No more pretending. Just me and my Daddy, and the promise that I'll never have to face the world alone again.

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Murphy

As I watch Taryn settle into the passenger seat of my truck, something fierce and possessive settles in my chest. She's mine now.

Completely, officially mine. And I plan to spend the rest of my life proving to her that she made the right choice in trusting me with her heart and her need to be taken care of.

"Where are we going?" she asks as I start the engine.

"Home," I tell her. "Our home."

The word makes her smile, soft and trusting and so beautiful it takes my breath away.

"I like the sound of that, Daddy."

"Good. Because that's exactly what you are now, baby girl. Mine to protect, mine to care for, mine to love." I reach over and take her hand. "My responsibility in every way that matters."

"Forever?"

"Forever."

As we drive toward the house where she'll never have to carry the weight of the world alone again, I know this is exactly where we both belong. Her trusting me to be

strong for her, me making sure she never has to be anything but my perfect, cherished girl.

"Actually," I say, changing direction. "First we're going to dinner. Somewhere nice to celebrate my graduate."

"Murphy, we don't have to—"

"Yes, we do. My girl just accomplished something incredible, and I want to show her off." I squeeze her hand. "Besides, I have something for you."

"Another something?" She looks down at the pendant she's wearing, touches the soft cardigan I bought her last week because I noticed her shivering in the school's over-air-conditioned halls. "You spoil me enough already."

"Not nearly enough. And after tonight, I don't have to hold back anymore."

At the restaurant—the same Italian place where we had our first real date—I wait until after we've ordered to pull out the small wrapped box.

"Murphy, what did you do?"

"I noticed something," I say, setting the box in front of her. "You're always pushing your hair out of your face when you're concentrating. During homework, when you're stressed, when you're trying to focus on something important."

She looks puzzled but intrigued as she unwraps the box. Inside are six silk scrunchies in different colors—soft pink, lavender, cream, sage green, dusty blue, and pale yellow.

"I went to buy you one," I continue, watching her face light up as she examines each

one. "But I couldn't figure out what color would look best with your hair, what would match your different outfits." I shrug, feeling almost embarrassed by how much thought I put into it. "So I bought them all."

"Murphy..." Her voice is soft, almost wondering. "You bought me scrunchies."

"Silk ones. They're better for your hair, won't cause breakage or leave those little dents when you take them out."

She looks up at me with tears in her eyes. "You researched hair care for scrunchies?"

"I researched everything that would make my girl more comfortable." The admission comes out rougher than I intended. "That's what I do now, Taryn. I notice what you need, and I make sure you have it."

"These are perfect." She slips the pink one onto her wrist immediately. "They're so soft, and the colors are exactly what I would have picked if I'd been brave enough to spend money on something so pretty for myself."

That hits me right in the chest. Of course she wouldn't spend money on little luxuries for herself. She's been too busy taking care of everyone else, making sure every dollar goes to necessities.

"You'll never have to be practical about what you want again," I tell her. "If you want something pretty, something soft, something that makes you feel good, you tell Daddy and he'll get it for you."

She slides the green scrunchie out of the box and gathers her hair up with it, the silk catching the restaurant's soft lighting. "How's that look?"

"Perfect. You look perfect, baby girl."

And she does. Soft and pretty and completely mine, wearing something I chose for her because I pay attention to what she needs.

This is what forever looks like. And I can't wait to show her just how good it's going to be.

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 8:09 am

Taryn

One Year Later

I wake up to the smell of bacon and the sound of Murphy humming in the kitchen, and for a moment I just lie here, soaking in how perfect my life has become.

Our house is everything I never knew I wanted.

It's not huge, but it's ours—a cozy two-story just off campus with a wraparound porch and a garden Murphy's been teaching me to tend.

He bought it outright, cash, which had shocked me until he explained about his NFL contract money and the investments he'd been making for years.

"Never had a reason to spend it before," he'd said simply. "Now I have two girls to take care of."

Two girls. Me and Mom.

The assisted living facility he found for her is nothing like the places we'd looked at before, the ones covered by Medicaid with their sterile halls and overworked staff.

Sunset Manor is warm and welcoming, with private apartments and a staff that actually cares about their residents.

Mom has her own space but access to round-the-clock medical care, social activities,

and meals she doesn't have to worry about preparing.

She cried when we first toured it. Happy tears, for once.

"You don't have to do this," she whispered to Murphy. "I can't pay you back."

"You're not supposed to pay me back," he replied firmly. "You're family now. This is what family does."

The monthly cost made my head spin, but Murphy didn't even blink. Just signed the papers and arranged for movers like it was the most natural thing in the world.

"Daddy takes care of his girls," he'd told me later when I tried to thank him for the hundredth time. "All of them."

She's getting the best treatment, and is getting better. Nobody can say for sure if things have turned a corner or if they're just settled, but it's a world away from what it was.

I stretch and pad downstairs in one of his t-shirts, following the sound of sizzling bacon and his off-key humming. He's standing at the stove in just pajama pants, his hair still messy from sleep, and my heart does that flutter thing it's been doing for over a year now.

"Morning, beautiful," he says without turning around, somehow always knowing when I'm watching him.

"Morning, Daddy." I wrap my arms around his waist from behind, pressing my face against his warm back. "You're up early."

"Wanted to make sure my girl has a good breakfast before her big day."

Today I start my sophomore year at State, and I'm nervous in ways I can't quite explain. Not about the classes—Murphy's been helping me plan my schedule, making sure I'm not overloading myself. Not about the social aspects either. I have Chloe, for starters. She's not in the same classes as me, but I see her every chance I get. As for the secrets she wouldn't talk about at graduation? Well, those aren't mine to tell. Suffice to say, I've never seen her happier than she is right now.

I've made a few other friends too, though Murphy tends to glower at any guy who looks at me for too long.

"You threatened another boy yesterday," I say, remembering the way he stepped between me and Josh from my statistics class when Josh had gotten a little too friendly during our study group.

"I had a conversation."

"You told him if he touched me again, you'd rearrange his face."

"That's a conversation." He turns in my arms, hands settling on my hips. "Kid needed to understand boundaries."

"He was helping me with a problem."

"He was looking for an excuse to put his hands on you." His voice drops to that possessive growl that makes my stomach flutter. "Only one person gets to touch you, baby girl, and it sure as hell isn't some college boy who thinks he's slick."

The jealousy should probably annoy me, but instead it makes me feel cherished. Protected. Like I'm something precious worth guarding.

"You know I'm only yours, right?" I stand on my toes to kiss his jaw. "You don't have to worry about college boys."

"I don't worry about you. I worry about them. They don't understand what they're dealing with." His hands tighten on my hips. "They see a pretty girl and think they can just... pursue her. They don't realize she belongs to someone who will end them if they try."

The possessive words send heat straight through me. Even after all this time, the way he claims me makes my knees weak.

"Speaking of belonging to someone..." He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small velvet box. "I have something for you."

My heart stops. "Murphy..."

"It's not what you think," he says quickly, but he's smiling. "Well, not exactly what you think. Not yet. And not another collar either."

That makes me blush. The collars are my favorite things. Even when I'm otherwise naked, the lettering saying "Good Girl" makes me feel special and loved.

Those aren't the only gifts he gets me, either.

Two weeks ago he took away my internet time after I got into an argument with some douche on Facebook.

I started throwing a tantrum and... well... it could have led to spankings, but it didn't.

Instead, he presented me with this sippy cup, complete with the word "brAT" emblazoned on the side.

I couldn't help myself. I just loved it too much to remember why I was moody.

Daddy put me to bed for naptime, with the cup filled with juice on the side, and when he came to wake me it was all empty.

I haven't used that cup since, but it's not going anywhere. Sometime, I might need to be reminded that Daddy knows best.

He opens the box to reveal a delicate gold ring with a small diamond that catches the morning light. It's beautiful, but it's not an engagement ring. It's something else entirely.

"It's a promise ring," he says, taking it from the box. "A promise that you're mine, that I'm yours, and that when you're ready—when we're both ready—I'll make it official."

"Murphy..." Tears blur my vision as he slides it onto my right hand. It fits perfectly, of course. He probably measured my finger while I was sleeping.

"There's an inscription," he says softly.

I look closer and see tiny script on the inside of the band: Daddy's Girl.

"I love it," I whisper. "I love you."

"I love you too, baby girl. More than you'll ever know." He cups my face in his hands. "You know what this means, though, right? Wearing my ring?"

"What does it mean?"

"It means you're officially claimed. Marked as mine. Any boy who gets ideas about my girl will see that ring and know she's taken."

The thought makes me glow with satisfaction. Being marked as his, claimed in a way

everyone can see.

"Good," I say firmly. "I want everyone to know I'm yours."

"That's my girl." He kisses me softly. "Now, about breakfast. I made your favorite."

He plates bacon, eggs, and pancakes, setting it in front of me with a glass of orange juice and my vitamins. The vitamins were his idea—making sure I'm getting proper nutrition since I have a tendency to forget to eat when I'm stressed about school.

"Eat," he says, settling across from me with his own plate. "All of it this time, baby girl. You need fuel for your brain."

"Yes, Daddy." I dig in obediently, still admiring the way the ring catches the light. "Are you nervous about today?"

"About you starting classes? No. You're brilliant, you'll do fine." He pauses. "Are you nervous?"

"A little. It's just..." I struggle to find the words. "What if things change? What if I change? What if college makes me different, and you don't like who I become?"

The fear has been nagging at me for weeks. What if becoming more of a brat? More of a bad girl?

What if Daddy stops looking at me like I'm the most important thing in his world?

"Hey." His voice is firm but gentle. "Look at me, sweetheart."

I meet his eyes, seeing understanding and patience there.

"You think I fell in love with you because you were helpless?"

Because you needed rescuing?" He reaches across the table to take my free hand.

"I fell in love with you because you're brilliant and strong and beautiful. Because you have opinions and dreams and a mind that amazes me every day. Because you're my perfect girl. "

"But what if—"

"What if nothing. You think learning and growing is going to change the fact that you're mine?" He brings my hand to his lips, kissing my knuckles. "Baby girl, I want you to become everything you're capable of being. I want you to challenge me, surprise me, grow into the incredible woman I know you are. But that doesn't change anything between the two of us. You're still my baby girl, and I'm still Daddy, and we always will be. You think you'll stop needing me just because you learn to take care of yourself? "

"And you'll still want to take care of me?"

"Always. Because taking care of you isn't about you being weak or incapable.

It's about you being precious to me. It's about me loving you so much that making your life easier, better, happier is what makes me happy.

" His thumb strokes over my knuckles. "You could have ten degrees and run a Fortune 500 company, and I'd still want to make sure you eat breakfast and tuck you in at night. "

The words ease something tight in my chest. "Promise?"

"I promise. You're stuck with me, baby girl. Through college, through whatever comes after, through all of it." He grins. "Besides, someone has to keep the college boys in line."

I laugh, feeling lighter than I have in weeks. "You're going to be a menace on campus, aren't you?"

"Me? I'm the picture of professionalism. Assistant Strength and Conditioning Coach Murphy Reynolds, here to help student athletes reach their potential." His grin turns wicked. "If some of those student athletes happen to be boys who look at my girl wrong, well, that's just coincidence."

"You're terrible."

"I'm protective. There's a difference."

I finish my breakfast while he tells me about his plans for the day—meetings with the athletic department, setting up training schedules, making sure he knows exactly where I'll be and when.

It should feel suffocating, but instead it feels like being wrapped in the warmest, safest blanket imaginable.

"Ready for your first day of sophomore year?" he asks as I gather my backpack.

"With you watching over me? I'm ready for anything."

He walks me to the door, straightening my cardigan and making sure I have my lunch money, my schedule, my phone charger. Taking care of me in a dozen small ways that make me feel cherished.

"Have a good day, baby girl. Learn something amazing and tell me all about it tonight."

"What if some boy tries to talk to me?"

"Then you show him your ring and tell him your Daddy doesn't like to share."

The possessive words make me grin. "And if that doesn't work?"

"Then you text me, and I'll come have another conversation ."

I stand on my toes to kiss him goodbye, tasting coffee and promises on his lips.

"I love you, Daddy."

"I love you too. Now go learn something so you can come home and impress me with how smart my girl is."

As I walk toward campus, the ring catching the morning sun and my heart is full of certainty.

I know exactly what I'll say when people ask about the beautiful man who drops me off and picks me up every day, who watches my classes from across the quad, who makes sure I never have to face the world alone.

I'll tell them he's mine. My protector, my provider, my Daddy in every way that matters.

And when the day is over, when I've learned new things and talked to new people and maybe even impressed a professor or two, I'll come home to him. To our house, our life, our perfect little world where I get to be his cherished girl, and he gets to be my everything.

"You come back to me, baby girl," he calls from the porch, and the words wrap around my heart like a promise.

"Always, Daddy," I call back. "Always."

THE END