

# *Loving His Workout*

THE MEN OF THE DOUBLE DOWN FITNESS CLUB - BOOK  
ONE

BREE WEEKS

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To R. B. – I love you.

# *Chapter One*

## **Evie**

I look at my boss's face and glance up at the clock on the wall behind him to see it's 9:57 a.m. Oh crap, I have only three minutes! I'm glad Dan is carving time out of his schedule to help orient me to his firm since I'm new here, but this meeting seems longer than the others. If I don't get out of his office right now, I'm going to miss the show. The clock ticks forward. Two minutes! Finally, Dan dismisses me, and I quickly make my way out of his office to the large, sun-filled break room.

"Did I miss anything?" I ask the man and two women already lined up at the window.

My best friend and coworker, Janie, turns to me. "Just in time, Evie. I saved you a spot." She scoots over, giving me space to squeeze in next to her.

At 10:00 on the dot, I take a deep breath of anticipation and hope I won't be disappointed today.

Brad, another of my coworkers, says, "Here they come!"

We all giggle like schoolchildren and focus our attention on the street corner. Five of the most gorgeous men I've ever seen appear, and everyone goes silent. They're tall, muscle-bound, and incredibly sexy. But the one I came to see is bringing up the rear, leading his large black dog, who's as muscular as his owner, on a leash.

Van Michaels. With his tight shirt and low-riding sweatpants, I can't take my eyes off him. Gazing at his short dark hair and biceps as big as my thighs makes me think someone has turned up the heat in the office.

"Why do they all show up at the same time every day?" Brad wonders aloud.

"I hear they're like a motorcycle club, only they meet at the gym instead," Janie explains.

Mrs. Parrish hushes us. "Quiet, all of you! They're almost there, and you're distracting me!"

Janie and I grin at each other, trying not to laugh at the cantankerous older woman.

The gang of gorgeousness reaches the door of *Double Down Fitness Club*, which is across the street from my office. Van hesitates before entering the building as if he knows we're watching. He slowly turns his head and looks directly at the window where we're standing. The blinds are open, but surely he can't see us from that distance.

His eyes find mine, and I detect the hint of a smile on his lips. My panties instantly dampen, and I hope no one notices my erect nipples trying to push themselves out of my bra. Good thing I'm busty and need a heavy-duty garment! I jump away from the window, worried he saw us. Saw *me*. Oh, God!

Janie exclaims, "Evie! He was looking right at you! He's got the hots for you."

"Yeah, right. He was only looking at me because I'm the biggest one here." It's true. Except for Janie, everyone else in the room is thin, underweight even. My

curves mean I'm bigger than they are. Hell, even my curves have curves, and I'm proud of them.

Janie snickers as she looks down at her huge baby bump. "You can say that all you want, but you're *not* the largest one here, and we all saw him smile at you. Your workout this afternoon will be *quite* interesting."

"Oh no! I can't go today. Not after he caught us looking at him. It would be way too embarrassing." My face flushes.

"Oh, Evie, you *have* to go," Brad whines. "You're the only single person here, so you can flirt with them and get away with it. Flirt with Van. Flirt with all of them. Let us live vicariously through you. *Please*."

We don't hear our boss enter the break room above our laughter, but Janie spots him and says, "Hi, Dad! We were just finishing our break."

"Yes, I see you've finished gawking at our neighbors again. And you, Janie, about to have my grandchild! Don't you all have more important things to do?"

I'm fortunate Dan has a sense of humor. After all, I've only been with the accounting firm for a couple of weeks. I moved to the tiny town of Dalton, Tennessee, because Janie, my college roommate, is going on maternity leave soon. After she returns, her dad is retiring, so they needed someone to take care of her clients and help with the transition to her leadership after the baby's birth.

We move to exit the break room as quickly and quietly as possible, but Dan stops me at the doorway. "Evie, I got a call from a new client who specifically asked for you."

"Oh?" Janie says. "I didn't think people would ask for Evie so soon. Few people know she's here yet."

"Me either," I say, confused. "Who's the client?"

From Dan's smug expression, I can tell he is reveling in what he's about to say. "Oh, you're all very familiar with this client. In fact, you're *too* familiar with them, if you ask me. The client is Double Down Fitness Club. Evie, you have an

appointment with the owner, Vin Michaels, and his brother Van this afternoon at 3:00.”

My jaw drops, and Janie squeals in delight.

“I hope you don’t treat all your new employees this way. Throwing me to the wolves like this! Janie, you have to come with me. Please.”

“Sorry, chickadee, you’re on your own. I have a doctor’s appointment this afternoon, remember? Besides, you’re already a member of the gym, right? It will be like going there to work out.”

“I am a member, yes, but I’ve only been three times. I’ve met none of those guys.” *Those big, beautiful guys.*

“The hot sausage caravan, you mean?” Brad jokes. “I’ve been a member of the gym since they opened last year, and I’ve met none of them either, but not for lack of trying. The only one who talks to people is Vin, and I suppose that’s because he’s the owner. He has to be friendly to the members. The rest of them say nothing, and they never smile. Until I saw your doggy boy smile at you today, Evie, I thought they didn’t know how.”

I shake my head, knowing I’ll never get out of this. It’s barely after ten o’clock in the morning, which means I have five hours to calm my nerves and dry my panties. I’m doomed.



## Chapter Two

**Van**

I'm lost in a fantasy of Evie sprawled out over the bench press set, her plump ass in the air when something whirls past my head.

"Hey, little brother. Are you dreaming about pounding that little red-headed bean counter again?" Vin goads as I pick up the tennis ball he threw at me.

"Her name is Evie, and I'll thank you for staying out of my head *and* out of my fantasies. And stop throwing shit around in here. I'm trying to keep the place looking decent, and you're not helping. You need to act like you're the owner, not some douchebag jock." I throw the tennis ball at his head, but he ducks just in time.

Axl, one of The Club members, says, "It's obvious that the girl is into you, dude. I see her watching from her office every day and looking around for you when she's here. Why don't you take that fine round trunk of hers to your office and—"

“That’s enough,” I interrupt. “Don’t talk about her that way. She’s not some ordinary girl. She’s a goddess.” And I vow, one day, if she allows it, I’ll show that goddess exactly how hot she makes me.

Vin, Axl, and Tommy stare at me like I have two heads.

Finally, Vin shakes his head with a wry grin. “Alright, boys, let’s leave Van alone. He can finish cleaning up here before our meeting. *Goddess Evie* should be here in a few minutes.”

Vin and the rest of the guys retreat to the back of the gym, and I’m happy to be left alone with my thoughts and my dog. “Come on, Blitz. Let’s go for a walk before Evie gets here. I don’t want to miss a minute with her because I have to take your sorry ass outside.” He jumps on me as I put the leash on his collar, happily licking my face in anticipation.

Thirty minutes later, she’s sitting close enough for me to smell her, and it’s making my dick hard. She fidgets nervously with her hands, and it’s so endearing that it only makes me want her more. Vin sits at his desk talking finances with her, and I keep my eyes on her and the door. On her, for obvious reasons, and on the door so I can stop anyone who may try to interrupt our meeting or touch her without my permission. I made it perfectly clear to the rest of the guys that the first one to touch her would be the first one down. I can’t be too careful since I haven’t officially claimed her.

“What do you think, Van? Can Miss Evans help you understand her services better or answer any questions for you?” Vin gives me a knowing smirk, aware I haven’t been paying any attention to their conversation.

All I can say is, “I’m good.”

Honestly, I’m *not* good. I don’t think I’ll ever be good again unless she lets me strip off her tight sweater and bury my face in her heaving mounds. My eyes linger on her chest a moment too long, and she catches me staring. Her face reddens, and she glances back at Vin.

“Well, if my brother is satisfied,” Vin smiles at me, “then so am I, Miss Evans.”

“Please, call me Evie. It’s been a pleasure meeting you both, and I look forward to working with you. I’ll pop over once a week to drop off the work I’ve completed and to pick up anything you may have for me. Normally, I’d email it, but since we’re so close, it’s easy to meet in person. If that’s alright with you, of course.”

“Yes,” I answer a little too quickly, wincing slightly when I realize she was talking to Vin and not me.

As he’s walking her out, he leans over to me and whispers, “Smooth, brother. That wasn’t awkward at all.”

I resist the urge to punch him, not wanting to draw any more attention to myself.

I walk around for a few minutes, hoping my hard-on will go away, but when I make the mistake of looking out the window and see that glorious backside of hers swaying across the street to her office, my cock stands right back up again. Fuck!

“What do you think?” Vin asks as he comes to stand beside me, and we both admire the view.

“I think I want to give her the high hard one.” I joke.

“I know *that*, dumbass. I mean, about her doing our accounting. You are hot for this girl, I know that. Is that why we’re hiring her, or do we genuinely need to hire someone to take care of the finances?”

I cock my head in surprise. “I thought you only asked me to the meeting so I could be near Evie. You don’t normally ask for my advice on running the business.”

“Well, maybe that’s a mistake. I’d like you to play a larger role in running this place. If that’s something you’d be interested in.” Vin raises his eyebrows in

question.

“That would be great if you trusted me enough. You know, I’ve always focused more on our other mission than the gym itself.”

“You’re my kid brother, stupid. Of course, I trust you.” He winds up to throw another tennis ball at my head, but I jump out of the way.

“Still too fast for you, bro! To answer your question, yes. I think you’ve done a great job, but if we’re going to expand this place, we’ll need to make sure we’re using our funds efficiently and responsibly. It makes sense to have a professional taking care of the finances.”

“Alright then, little brother. Done. She’s hired. Better let the rest of The Club know we’re meeting tonight so we can make plans for our next mission.”

“On it.” I immediately head to my office to shoot off an email.

## *Chapter Three*

### **Evie**

**A**fternoons at the office are typically quiet since most everyone leaves early to be with their kids after school. Some coach sports or lead scouting events, while others simply work from home. I like that Dan has created a flexible workplace. It's refreshing. Usually, it's Janie and me here at this time, but since she's at the doctor, I have the whole place to myself, and I'm relieved. I need some privacy after meeting with the Michaels brothers. Vin was pleasant and professional, but Van's presence in the meeting made the space between my legs tingle. Something about his quiet broodiness makes me want to jump inside him and find out what makes him tick. I wouldn't mind jumping on his body, either.

I close my eyes and imagine he's at the door to my office, his powerful, naked body ready to take me to the zenith of pleasure. I can almost feel his firm hands dancing across every inch of me, slowing to concentrate on my more sensitive

areas. The same heat emanated from him in his brother's office. And here, all alone, I'm free to explore it.

I reach my left hand into my bra and pinch my nipple hard, imagining my fingers are Van's teeth nibbling and scraping the tips of my breasts. Sliding my right hand up my skirt, I feel the warmth between my legs. I spread my knees and gently stroke my mound with one finger. My core throbs as I slide my finger closer to my slick folds. I insert one finger inside, and I'm so wet that it goes all the way in with no resistance. My walls clamp down instinctively, and a moan escapes my throat.

Pulsing my finger in and out brings out a hunger that's been dormant for far too long. I lean back in my chair so I can penetrate myself deeper. I get into a pleasant rhythm of pinching and massaging my tits while finger fucking myself, and the taboo of touching myself in my office makes it much more exciting. The danger of getting caught brings my pleasure to a whole new level. I'm on the verge of orgasming when I hear a noise outside the building, breaking my concentration.

I jump up and straighten my clothes. "Hello?" I call out. "Is anybody there?"

I'm met with silence. *Maybe I got too caught up in the moment, and my mind is playing tricks on me.*

I leave my office to look around. In the reception area, I find an envelope on the floor and realize someone must have slipped it under the door. Clients often do that if they're dropping something off and don't need to meet with anyone.

I pick up the envelope and toss it on Mrs. Parrish's desk, marveling at how neat she keeps her area. As the receptionist for an accounting firm, her job is to make people feel welcome. I suppose having an inviting space is an important part of that. Another is to have a cheery personality, a quality Mrs. Parrish does *not* have. Although, I guess she must be friendlier to clients than the staff because all the clients love her.

I scold myself as I think about how close I came to being caught masturbating by a client in the office. A jolt of fear runs through me. If I'd been caught, I would have gotten fired, making it the shortest time I've ever spent at a job. I'm sick to my stomach thinking about it, especially considering how disappointed Janie would be.

"Alright, Evie," I say aloud, "no more of that stuff in the office." I turn toward the hall to return to my desk, still muttering to myself. "Save your sex fantasies about the hot guy across the street for a more appropriate place, like home."

"Ahem, Miss Evans," I hear from behind me. "Um, Evie?" The sound of Van's husky voice makes me freeze. "I'm sorry to come over unannounced. I hope I didn't startle you."

I turn my head to find him staring at me. Or actually, at my ass. My heart starts back up again, racing away in my chest. "Mr. Michaels. I'm sorry, you startled me a bit. I didn't know anyone was here. Give me a second to catch my breath." *Oh, God, I hope he didn't hear me talking to myself. Did I say I was fantasizing about him?*

I take a seat in the reception area and look over at him. He's standing by the door like he's guarding the place. Or guarding me. "What can I do for you, Mr. Michaels?"

"Call me Van. Again, I'm sorry I startled you. I was leaving the gym and saw someone suspicious putting something under the front door of your office. I also noticed yours was the only car in the parking lot, so I wanted to check on you."

*How does he know my car? Has he been watching me the way I've watched him?* "I appreciate the concern, but it was something from a client."

"Are you sure? The guy didn't look like any client of yours," Van explains, looking around outside. His eyes dart back and forth between the parking lot and my chest.

“Well, I didn’t look at the envelope, but clients put stuff under the door all the time. I put it on our receptionist’s desk. She opens all the mail and packages we receive.” I’m having a hard time looking him in the eyes, too. With me sitting and him standing, my eyes are level with his groin.

Van begins to say something but stops, shaking his head.

“What? What is it you’re not saying, Van?”

“I don’t want to alarm you, but I thought I recognized the person who dropped that off. And I don’t think it has anything to do with your clients. Do you mind if I see what’s in the envelope?”

The concerned look on his face tells me this is serious. “Let me open it. If it’s from a client, I can’t allow you to see it.” I grab the envelope off Mrs. Parrish’s desk and rip it open to find a flash drive. “Let me go to my computer and see what’s on this thing.”

He follows me down the hall to my office. He continues looking around as though he’s waiting for the bogeyman to jump out at us.

“There’s no one else here,” I tell him. “My coworkers have gone for the day.” I motion for him to sit in the chair across from my desk, but he remains where he is, standing guard by the door.

I put the flash drive into my computer, and after a few seconds, a video file loads. “Hmm. That’s odd. I don’t think I’ve ever received a video from a client.”

Before Van can stop me, I click play and immediately scream in horror at the silent images flickering across my computer screen.

Van runs to my side and looks at the screen to see the video of me leaning back in my chair, pleasuring myself. The footage ends a few seconds before I heard the noise that made me stop. *God, he must have been right outside!*

The orientation of the video appears to be the lamp on the credenza by the door in my office. Van inspects the lamp and finds a hidden camera taped to the side



of it, barely visible. He rips it off, throws it to the floor, and stomps on it, breaking it into a million pieces.

“I feel sick,” I say as the room spins.

Somehow, Van is beside me again, which turns out to be a good thing. His worried eyes are the last thing I see as I faint in his arms.

## Chapter Four

**Van**

She moans softly as she wakes, and I rush to her side, grabbing her hand. “You’re alright, Evie. Open your eyes slowly. Stay calm. No one is going to hurt you.”

She does the opposite, and I’m surprisingly turned on by it. Her eyes fly open, and she bolts upright. She sits up too quickly because she winces and grabs her head. “Oh, God, my head is killing me!”

I fight the urge to roll my eyes. Yep, this one’s going to be a pain in my ass. But she’s the sexiest woman I’ve ever seen, so I’ll deal with it if I want to make her mine.

A look of horror crosses her face, and she puts her hand over her mouth to cover her sob. “Oh, God! The video!”

“Don’t worry. I have it right here, and no one else has seen it. No one else *will* see it,” I promise, opening her palm and gently placing the flash drive in her

hand before closing her fingers around it. “You can do whatever you want with it.”

She looks at me with tears in her eyes as she breaks the flash drive into two pieces. She hands the pieces back to me, and I toss them in the trash.

“Where are we?” she asks.

“My office at the gym,” I tell her. “I have people in your office right now doing a sweep to make sure there aren’t any more cameras or devices.” A shadow darkens her face, and I rush to reassure her. “Don’t worry. Your coworkers will never know they’ve been there. My guys are discreet.”

She shakes her head. “I don’t understand. Who would do this to me... and why?”

“I think it was a message for me.” I turn my back on her because I don’t want to see the look of anger or disappointment I know is coming.

“A message for you? Van, who *are* you? What’s going on here?”

I turn to face her, and to my surprise, I see none of the emotions I expected. All I see are confusion and concern. “I suppose I do owe you an explanation. Just promise me you’ll hear me out.” She nods, so I take a deep breath and start talking. “My brother and I started this fitness center as a legitimate business to hide our actual activities.”

“Oh, God!” she exclaims. “You’re drug dealers!”

I chuckle, shaking my head, “No, Evie. It’s nothing like that. We started the gym so we would have a place to hide people who need our help.”

Her brow wrinkles. “What kind of people?”

“Women, mostly, escaping from abusive relationships. They come to us for help, and we hide them here until we find them a safe place. Sometimes they need a place to spend a few nights. Other times, they need new identities. And sometimes, they need us to confront their abusers. They almost always need food, money, and clothes. We take care of all that for them.”

“Unbelievable! That’s amazing! They stay here? In the gym?” She looks around as if she’s going to see battered women milling about.

“I can’t go into all that, honey. It’s kind of top-secret. You understand, right?”

“Yes, I can understand that part. But... I still don’t know what all that has to do with me.”

There’s no way for me to save face. I have to tell her everything. And I have a feeling it’s going to piss her off. “It’s my fault. The guy who sent the message has been trying to stop what we do here. He’s an old army buddy of mine who turned into an enemy. His name is Charlie Marker. He came after you because he’s clearly been watching me. Let me explain before you react to the next part. He’s been watching me watch you. He knows I wait for your car to leave the parking lot before I go home. I’ve followed you to see you safely home. And that means that he knows where you live. I’ve put you in danger, Evie. I’m so sorry. He must know I want to claim you.”

“Claim me? What the hell do you mean you want to ‘claim me?’” Her voice grows louder. I wince. I knew that would piss her off.

“Declare you’re mine, so no other man, either within The Club or not, will ever touch you again.”

“And exactly how do you do that? Do you plan to brand me or something? What the hell is The Club? Am I supposed to know what you’re talking about?” she snarls, her face close to mine.

No one *ever* gets in my face and yells at me. I stare at her, unable to decide if I want to rip off her head or her clothes. Probably both. Through gritted teeth, I answer, “I make love to you. I give you the best sex you’ve ever had. And then you’re mine. No one ever touches you again. I give you mind-blowing orgasms that spoil you for other men. You’ll only want me, my touch, my dick inside you, for the rest of your life.”

She's trembling, and I can't tell if it's from terror or because she's as turned on as I am. Maybe both. Her mouth opens and closes twice, but nothing comes out. She continues to stare at me.

There's a knock on my door before it opens, and Vin peeks his head in the crack. "Van. I'm calling a meeting. Right now," he says and shuts the door behind him.

Evie and I continue to stare at each other. She's no longer trembling, but I can see she's still furious.

"Stay here," I order, storming out of the room.

## Chapter Five

### Evie

“Of all the twisted, psychotic bullshit I’ve heard in my life! Is this guy for real?” When I get *really* angry, I talk to myself. And, yeah, I’m pissed!

I pace around the room, muttering. “Does he honestly think I’m hopping into bed with him so he can *claim me*? That’s the dumbest thing I’ve ever heard! I don’t care how hot he is; I will not let him *own* me. Who does he think he is? He can go straight to hell!”

I know I should leave and go home. I’ll be damned if he’s going to keep me here against my will... but I’m concerned about what might happen next. If the guy who took the video knows about me, am I safe anywhere? And since Van the genius followed me home, I’m not likely safe there. I know Van is trying to protect me. He’s infuriating, but I sense he won’t let anyone hurt me.

But what’s with all the “claiming” business? A shudder runs through me, making me wonder if I would like it. I’m sure I’d like the sex, but do I want to

be *claimed*? How does that even work?

The door opens, revealing a pretty brunette carrying a change of clothes. “Hi!” she says, a big smile on her face. “My name is Erin. I’m Tommy’s wife. You’re Evie, right?”

“Yeah, nice to meet you. Where’s Van?”

“All the guys are still in their meeting. But I brought you these.” She holds up the clothes before handing them to me, her smile growing even brighter. “I thought you’d be more comfortable if you got out of those work clothes. I figured you were close to my size.”

“Thank you, Erin. That’s very thoughtful, but I don’t intend to stay much longer. I just want to talk to Van and go home.”

“Oh, honey,” she says in a sympathetic tone. “It isn’t safe for you to go anywhere. And Van certainly won’t let you leave by yourself. Not with crazy Charlie Marker messing with you. I think it’s best if you wait here until the guys figure out what to do.”

“How long is that going to take?” I ask, trying not to sound rude.

“They should be done in an hour or so. Listen, there’s a private bathroom down the hall. Why don’t you take a shower and relax for a little while? You must be starving. I’ll get us some food, and when you get out of the shower, we can talk and get to know one another.”

She’s so sweet. I’d be a jerk to refuse, so I don’t. “Thank you. Sounds nice.”

“Hey, don’t worry. You’re one of us now. I’ll be back soon.”

She’s gone before I have time to ask her what “one of us” means.

Forty-five minutes later, Erin and I are eating pasta and laughing like we’ve known each other for years. She was right about the shower and change of clothes. I do feel much better. I’m irritated at Van for disappearing on me, but Erin assured me he would be back.

“Do you want another glass of wine, Evie?” She refills her glass for the third time.

“Yes, please. It’s a good thing you brought two bottles. We sure can put it away, can’t we?”

“That’s one perk of being a Club Woman. We pretty much get anything we want, anytime we want. And right now, I want wine.” She laughs as she tops off my glass. “So, anyway, as I was saying, the gym is called Double Down because of girls like you and me. Most of the guys like their women with a bit of *extra*, *extra*, if you know what I mean. Vin especially likes girls with big boobs, so he thought it would be funny to call it Double Down, as in DD, in honor of us girls with large breasts.”

Erin tells me more stories about past missions and all the women and families they’ve helped over the years. I yawn as she clears away the dishes and places them back onto the tray.

“I’m going to let you get some rest now, Evie. I put my card on the bedside table. My cell phone number is on the back. Use it if you want to talk.”

“May I ask you a question before you go?”

She nods, taking one last sip of her wine and placing the glass on the tray next to the dishes. I don’t wait for verbal confirmation.

“What did you mean when you said I’m one of you now?”

“Well, a Club Woman is really the backbone of the mission. We offer support and help where we’re needed. We’re a well-oiled machine, and we each play our part. And it’s not as misogynistic as it sounds; the guys support us, too. Our guys are alpha men, but they’re not assholes. A few women actively take part in the missions.”

“Have you?”

“God, no! But only because I don’t have the training. Everyone who goes on a mission either has a military or law enforcement background, worked in security,



or has some other type of combat training. We have a couple of former boxers and MMA fighters, and some are highly skilled in martial arts. They've trained for years."

"So, it's not some good-old-boys club?"

Erin shakes her head and smiles. "No. Definitely not. My role is one of support, but not because I'm a woman. I'm a Club Woman."

"And you think I'm a Club Woman, too?"

She takes my hand. "Oh, honey. You really don't know, do you?" When I shake my head, she continues, "I've known Van for a long time, and he's dated a few girls, but I've *never* seen him so crazy in love with anyone. I've never seen him look at anyone the way he looks at you."

"In love? We just met. How can he be in love with me after a few hours?"

"You don't believe in love at first sight?" I give her a look that tells her how ridiculous I find the notion, and she giggles. "Well, that's the way it happened with Tommy and me. We met at the grocery store three years ago, married two weeks later, and have been together ever since. It was pretty intense. I'm a Club Woman because a Club Man loves me, and the same thing is true for you."

A cacophony of male voices suddenly erupts in the hallway.

Tilting my head at the door, I ask, "Does that mean the guys are out of their meeting?"

"Sounds that way. I'm going to find Tommy. It was lovely having dinner with you, Evie. And don't worry. Trust Van. He's one of the good guys."

I sit in silence, thinking about everything Erin told me, missing her infectious laugh and sunny disposition. Thankfully, I'm not alone for long. A few minutes later, Van opens the door and steps inside.

## *Chapter Six*

**Van**

I notice the empty wine bottles on the table, and I smile. “Looks like you and Erin had an enjoyable time.”

“We did. She’s very sweet.” She bends to scratch Blitzen behind his ears, and the dog nuzzles up to her. I’ve never seen him warm up to someone new so quickly. Normally, he takes a while to be comfortable with unfamiliar people touching him.

She’s showered and changed clothes. I can smell the body wash and shampoo as I walk past her to my desk. My dick is hard again, and I need to sit down so Evie won’t see it. I put my gym bag on the floor, hating that I’m going to have to tell her what’s in it.

“I need to send a couple of emails, and then I’ll show you to your room,” I tell her as I open my laptop.

“Now, wait just a minute! What do you mean, my room? How long do you expect me to stay here?” She jumps to her feet and instantly sways dizzily.

“Evie!” I rush toward her, worried she’s going to fall. “Are you okay?”

She pushes my hands away. “I’m fine. I had a little too much wine and stood up too fast. That’s all.” She regains her composure, and she looks pissed again. “Seriously, Van. What is going on here?”

“That’s what we were discussing in our meeting. We have a room for you, and you’ll stay here for as long as it takes for us to make sure you’re safe.”

Fury fills her eyes. “Um, no. I will not. I have an apartment, a job. I have a life! You can’t keep me from those things. That’s kidnapping!”

I close my eyes, hoping to pull myself together. She’s even sexier when she’s angry. “Evie, listen to me. You don’t know this guy. He’s bad. He’s former Special Ops, and he’s dangerous. He knows where you work, and he knows where you live. He’s been inside your apartment.”

Fear replaces the fury in her eyes. “How do you know?”

“He left a message for me there.” I pull the teddy bear from my gym bag. Holding it out to her, I ask, “This isn’t yours, is it?”

“No.”

“It was on your bed. Propped up on your pillow.”

She looks down but isn’t fast enough to hide her tears.

A sharp pain twists in my chest at her distress. “The teddy bear is a message for me. It’s a sick joke to him, and it has special meaning for me. It has to do with something that happened with one of the local kids in the village where we were stationed in Afghanistan. Maybe I’ll tell you about it one day.”

She rolls her eyes sarcastically. “What? You mean sharing secrets is part of claiming me? You’re going to talk to me like a normal girlfriend? I’m shocked. You’re so quiet and broody. I wasn’t sure you knew how to have regular conversations.”

“I already told you what I meant when I said I wanted to claim you,” I say through gritted teeth.

“Yeah. Fucking!”

I inhale and exhale deeply, trying to calm myself. “Get your clothes, and I’ll take you to your room. I’ll send my emails later.”

I open the door for her, and she storms out, skidding to a halt when she sees Vin and some other Club members outside the door. Some are snickering, having heard her screaming at me, but only the newest and dumbest members. The rest are straight-faced and avoid eye contact while they await Vin’s instructions.

Despite her embarrassment, she lifts her head high and gives me a haughty look. “Lead on, Macduff.”

We enter the room that’s been prepared for her, and it looks beautiful. The Club Women have thought of everything. They’ve placed fresh-cut flowers in the room, and I notice Erin’s special touch, a bottle of the same wine the two of them were drinking earlier.

Evie puts her clothes on the bed and looks around. “This is nice. I suppose it helps to have a nice room if I’m being detained.”

“Come on, Evie, don’t be like this. You’re not being detained,” I sigh. “You’re free to leave here anytime you want, but I’m going to come with you if you decide to leave. It’s for your safety. The guy behind all this is bad news. You need to trust me.” I step closer to her, hoping she can read the sincerity on my face.

“I want to trust you,” she says softly. “I think you’re trying to help me, but how do I know you’re not trying to get into my pants?”

“That’s not how I do things, Evie. Yes, I want you. I think you know that. But Marker is the one who got you involved in this. Not me. Let me get you out of this. Please.” She’s close enough I can read the fear in her eyes when I say his name.

She gazes into my eyes, and I can tell she’s considering her words. “I was thinking about you.”

“What?”

“I was thinking about you when the video was recorded.” The words are quiet, and her gaze drops to the floor. “I want you as much as you want me.”

“Look me in the eye and tell me that,” I command softly, my hand gently lifting her chin so I can look at her.

Large teardrops cling to her lashes before spilling down her cheeks. Her arms wrap around my shoulders, and she pulls me closer until our mouths are barely inches apart. “Do you promise to take care of me?”

“I promise,” I whisper, licking my lips.

She stands on her tiptoes and touches her lips to mine. Her mouth opens, inviting my tongue inside, and I happily accept. The kiss is gentle at first but quickly grows hungry, ravenous. I’m about to pick her up and put her on the bed when my cell phone rings.

“Fuck!” I mutter between gritted teeth, frustrated. The timing couldn’t possibly be worse. “That’s Vin’s ringtone. He knows I’m with you and would only call if it was important.”

“By all means.” She nods toward my phone, letting me know she isn’t upset.

“What?” I bark into the phone, louder than I intended. “Fuck! Yeah, I’m coming. I’ll meet you outside.”

After the call, I return my attention to Evie. “I need to go. I’m sorry. Vin said they know where Marker is. Stay here and try to get some sleep.”

Against every instinct in my body, I turn, leaving her standing alone in the room.

## Chapter Seven

### Evie

**M**y eyes jerk open as I come awake instantly. I'm not sure how long I slept. It feels like hours. I need to find Van.

I open the door and go down the long hallway toward the main room of the gym. Most of the lights are off, and it's eerily quiet. *Oh, God, has he left me here by myself?*

As I get closer to the main part of the gym floor, where the machines are, I hear movement and realize with relief I'm not alone in the building. My heart seizes when I take one last step and see Van working out by himself. I jump back quickly, hoping he doesn't notice me, but I stay where I can see him. I want to watch him. He's beautiful. He moves like a panther, with muscles to match. He's shirtless, and his athletic shorts are cut perfectly to his hips. Sweat flies from his body as he flexes and contorts into incredible positions. My panties instantly dampen. I may orgasm right here and now.

I watch for a few more minutes as he increases the weight he's lifting.

He must sense me watching him because he stops abruptly and spins around. “Evie!” He grabs a towel off the bench and wipes the sweat from his body. “I thought you were asleep. I didn’t wake you, did I?”

I step closer, my head spinning and my core aching. “No, you didn’t. It was so quiet back there I thought you’d left me here alone.”

“We closed the gym early tonight. We didn’t get him, Evie. I’m sorry. Marker was gone by the time we got there. The rest of The Club is out looking for him.”

“I’m surprised you’re not out there with them. I thought finding him was urgent.”

Shaking his head, he says, “It is urgent, but my priority is to protect you.”

I should go back to my bedroom. I barely know Van. I should consider myself lucky his brother called earlier and interrupted what had almost happened. Instead, I walk closer and take the towel from his hand. I dry his face and neck. I notice goosebumps covering his body, and I look into his eyes. They’re filled with desire. I rub the towel over his shoulders, and a quiet groan escapes his throat. He swallows hard, and I wouldn’t be surprised if there were sparks of electricity traveling between our bodies.

He jerks back as I move the towel further down his chest. “What’s wrong, Van? Don’t you like this?”

“You’re a nice girl, Evie. But if you don’t stop, I promise I will end up doing things to you that nice girls never dream of.”

A tiny frisson of fear runs through me, but it only excites me further as I lean closer to him. I can smell his musk layered with the salty sweat from his body, and my pulse quickens. My tongue runs along the side of his neck, under his earlobe, and the skin quivers beneath it. “I am a nice girl, but I’ve dreamed of all kinds of naughty things. Why don’t you show me what you have in mind?”

He grabs my shoulders and pulls me away from his neck. Before I protest what I assume is his rejection, his mouth crashes into mine. His lips are soft, much

softer than I expected, and I detect a slight hint of a sports drink on his tongue as it gently strokes against mine. Our hunger increases as both his hands fly to the waistband of my sleep shorts. With a movement so fast I don't have time to breathe, he yanks the shorts and my panties to my ankles.

I gasp loudly as he kneads my ass with one hand and runs the other up between my legs. I step into a wider stance to allow him full access, my head falling back with delight as his finger makes contact with my pulsating heat.

He bends and wraps both arms around the backs of my knees, lifting me over his head. My shorts and panties fall to the floor underneath me. He carries me to the wall and uses his foot to position an exercise ball before carefully setting me down on it. He leans in for another kiss while his hands explore my body. He breaks the kiss, one hand between my legs and the other on the back of my neck.

He pulls my face away from his to ask, "Are you sure about this? Once I claim you, there will be no turning back. If you give me permission, I'm going to take you, and take you, take you some more, so hard you won't be able to walk out of here."

Instead of answering with words, I pull my top over my head, allowing my breasts to spill out in front of him. My naked body sprawls across the exercise ball. I carefully roll back so my neck and shoulders press against the wall behind me. I open my legs wide and firmly plant both feet on the floor on either side of the ball.

He licks his lips as he looks at me, his hard cock bulging against his shorts, but he makes no moves to remove his clothes. "That's not how this works, sweetheart. Tell me expressly what you want me to do to you. I need your permission."

I reach out with my bare foot, running it up his leg until it rests on his cock. "I want you to take your dick out of your shorts and fuck me with it."



## *Chapter Eight*

**Van**

Once she bluntly states exactly what she wants me to do to her, I take charge, removing her foot from my cock and letting it fall to the floor. I lower myself so I'm kneeling between her thighs, her legs on either side of me, and her womanly perfume making my mouth water. I give her a naughty grin before letting her scent guide me home.

Her juices are already hot and flowing as my mouth engulfs her. I stroke my tongue along her swollen slit, lapping up every luscious drop of her honey. I could survive on her body and the nectar it provides for the rest of my life. She is the sustenance for my soul.

She lets out a brief gasp when my tongue pushes inside her center, and she gyrates her hips ever so slightly against me. A low, deep moan escapes her throat as I grab the exercise ball with my hands to roll her closer. My groin aches with every sound she makes, and I long to pound myself into her perfectly pink and delicate softness.

She calls out my name as my tongue goes deeper, and I suck her protruding clit into my mouth. I gently tug and nibble as she moans louder and louder. She doesn't stand a chance between the exercise ball, my tongue, and her rotating hips.

The movement of her hips takes over, gently bouncing the ball, and I slide my fingers inside her, first one, then two. I increase the pressure on her clit as my fingers invade her, and she screams my name. Her pussy expands and contracts around my fingers as her body trembles.

“Oh! Oh, God, Van! Oh, yes!”

“Slow down, baby. We have plenty of time, and I intend to make you work for every wave of pleasure.”

I pull back slightly and blow quick puffs of air over her glistening inner thighs, using my fingers to spread her open more. She bucks forward, attempting to grab the back of my head to force my mouth and tongue back to work.

I remove my fingers from her pussy and shove my slick index finger inside her tight asshole as I resume my assault on her clit. She screams, her head flying back and hitting the wall behind her. I watch as she writhes in ecstasy at my touch, her juices flooding my mouth. Her body jerks and shudders, out of control. I don't let up until her body goes limp, and she lets out a deep sigh.

I sit back on my heels and gaze up at her. God, she's beautiful. Her body is full and ripe, her erect nipples like cherries. She's all I could ever want for the rest of my life. But I'm not quite done with her yet.

## *Chapter Nine*

### **Evie**

I've never orgasmed so hard in my life. I didn't know it was possible to feel so much pleasure. As my breathing returns to normal, I look down at Van, seated on the floor between my legs. The mischief on his face tells me he has more in store for me. Oh, God! I don't know if my body can handle any more of him.

He stands in front of me, and I draw my eyes to his erection straining against his shorts. Just as I wonder if he's hard enough to rip a hole through the fabric, he pulls them down his legs, kicking them off as he takes my hand.

"What now?" I ask, my voice hoarse from screaming.

"I told you I was going to make you mine tonight if you allowed it," he reminds me as he walks me over to the weight bench. He positions himself flat on the bench and winks up at me. Pulling me toward him by my hips, he helps me straddle him and rubs his swollen cock against my tender pussy. I lower myself onto him slowly until he fills me completely.

“This won’t take long, baby. Just ride me.”

I gasp at the sensation of fullness as he reaches all the way to my core. My slick walls quiver as I take him in. He moans so loudly I’m afraid someone will hear us, but I remember we’re all alone in the place.

“Yeah, baby. Take all of me,” he commands as I slide up and down his thick shaft. He grasps my breasts with both hands, kneading them as I grind against him. He was right. This will not take long for either of us.

Despite my being on top of him, he’s the one in control. His hands leave my breasts and move to my hips. His muscular arms flex as he lifts me several inches before dropping me back down; again and again, he impales me, aided by the slickness between my legs. God, he’s strong! He keeps changing the tempo from fast to so slow we’re barely moving, driving me mad.

I scream, “Faster, baby, faster!”

He shakes his head and smiles as he slows down. “You’re going to have to learn I’m in charge. You’re mine, and it’s my job to fuck you. Your job is to enjoy it and to come for me.”

As if to solidify his orders, he stands and tells me to grab a yoga mat. I throw it on the floor as he crashes into me again. “Spread your legs wide for me and let me take you there.”

“Yes!” I scream as he enters me again. “Yes, Van, yes!”

He plunges into me over and over as the pressure inside my core builds. This time, there’s no alternating speed or tempo. He’s a wild fucking machine, pounding my pussy harder and harder. My toes tingle as my orgasm approaches. It’s right there, ready to claim me.

“I’m going to come again, Van!” I tell him as if he doesn’t already know.

“Wait for me, baby. I want us to come together. Don’t you dare come yet,” he demands, immediately taking my hard, erect nipple into his mouth as his thrusts speed up.

*Like that will not make me come faster!* I'm frantic with the need to come, scratching my nails down his back.

"You ready, baby? Are you ready to come for me?"

"God, yes! Van!" I scream again and again as intense waves of pleasure erupt from my center and spill out in every direction.

As the waves reach their zenith, he shoots his hot, thick ropes deep inside me with a loud groan before collapsing on top of me. Our faces are flushed with pleasure as he takes one last bite of my nipple before rolling over and pulling me into his side. I rub my legs together, relishing the creamy slickness from the mingling of our essences.

I don't want to move. Ever again. I want to stay here, naked, with his arms around me forever. I belong here. This is my home now.

## *Chapter Ten*

**Van**

**S**ex with Evie was everything I expected it would be. I pull her body closer, indulging in the sweet aroma of our coupling. “You’re mine now, Evie.”

“I’m happy to be under your spell, baby. To be honest, I don’t mind being ‘claimed’ after all. In fact, I’d love for you to claim me again in a few minutes,” she says with a wink before kissing me.

“I loved you from the minute I saw you. But I needed you to make the first move. Now that you have, there’s no stopping us from being together.”

“What was all that about me having to give you permission out loud? Is that some kind of code of honor?”

“Something like that. I’ve seen things, honey, things I wish I’d never seen. And I promised myself I’d never be the wrong kind of man. When Vin and I started The Club, we deliberately chose men who honor women, who respect and cherish them. One way a man expresses that is to make sure his woman is completely comfortable.”

Smiling, she says, “It’ll get old quickly if you ask me every single time, won’t it?”

“I suppose it would. I don’t know. I’ve never had a woman for more than a couple of romps in the hay. Nothing like this, with you.” I kiss her again, gently. “I won’t ask you so explicitly every time, but I swear to you, what we do in bed will always be your decision.” I hesitate, giving her a devious smile. “Although, I have a feeling that with your personality, everything we do out of bed will probably be your decision, too.”

She laughs, and I wonder if my heart will burst with joy. I hold her in my arms for a long time, both of us quiet, and I figure she’s fallen asleep. I’m surprised when she speaks again.

“What did you see, Van? What did you see that bothered you so much? Do you want to tell me about it?”

“Maybe someday, baby,” I say. There’s no need to go into all of that right now. I’m afraid she’ll learn soon enough what our club is all about.

## Epilogue

### Six Months Later

#### Van

**M**y dad used to say I would know I was in love when I was lying in bed next to my pregnant, sleeping wife, with saliva running out of her open mouth as she snores, and my only thought was, *God, she's the most beautiful woman in the world*. Well, Dad was right. Although, confession time. I loved Evie from the moment I saw her. I still don't know what she sees in me, but whatever it is, I'm eternally grateful.

Her snoring wakes her, and I stifle a laugh as she looks around with an embarrassed expression, clearly hoping I hadn't noticed.

I pretend not to. "Good morning, baby. How did you sleep?" I ask, pulling her closer.

"It was touch and go there for a while." She reaches for my hand and places it gently on her swollen belly. "This little nugget was up all night doing jumping



jacks on my bladder. Speaking of—” She quickly jumps out of bed and runs to the bathroom.

Blitzen is at my feet the minute they hit the floor. “Evie, while you’re in there, I’m going to take the big nugget here for a walk. Take your time, honey, and I’ll make breakfast when I get back.”

I hear her call, “Thanks, babe.”

I bound downstairs, Blitzen at my heels, and grab his leash and my phone from the foyer table. He’s so excited, he nearly drags me outside as soon as I open the door. I text Vin during our walk to tell him neither of us will be at the gym for a couple of hours because I plan to spend the morning with my gorgeous wife. I end the text with “Suck it” for good measure.

Since Evie quit her job and became the accountant for *The Double Down*, the gym has been much better off financially than when Vin took care of everything. We’re helping more women than I ever dreamed possible. We still haven’t found Charlie Marker, but I know he’s out there. Waiting. Watching. Well, so am I. And I’m a patient man.

I hear the notification that Vin responded as I get back to the house, but don’t bother checking it. I’m going to spend some quality time with my wife. Everything else can wait.

I’m cutting up some fruit when Evie comes into the kitchen, her long, wet hair flowing down her back. She reaches across me to grab a strawberry, and I inhale her fresh, clean scent. My dick gets hard when she smiles at me, a fact she doesn’t fail to notice since I’m wearing thin athletic shorts and nothing else.

“You know,” she says, “I can work from home today if you’d like to skip breakfast and go straight for dessert.” She opens her robe enough for her ample breasts to spill out right in front of my face. “I’m sleeping with the boss’s little brother, so I’m sure it will be fine.”

“But you just got out of the shower,” I argue jokingly.

She takes my hand and leads me upstairs. “Who cares? I can take another one.”  
I had no idea my life could ever be this good.

## **THE END**

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**Julia:**

Vin Michaels broke my heart after high school, choosing to go out on his own adventures without me, and throwing away all the plans we'd made together. But, that was a long time ago. I'm completely over him, and I've done well for myself since then. I attended a prestigious university, graduated medical school, and now my career is beginning to take off. I'm sure his life has been just as full.

Seeing him again will be no big deal...

**Vin:**

Julia Sinclair is back in town, and my heart started beating again today after twelve long years. When I left her, I wanted action and adventure, not to be tied down to any one woman. I was such an idiot! She's here now, but so is a dangerous enemy, and I must keep her out of the crosshairs.

I will have her, and I will keep her safe...

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Bree Weeks writes steamy short reads that may just make you blush. She believes in love at first sight, the power of a good story, and that college football and a good HEA are the greatest things ever.

She lives just south of Nashville, Tennessee, with her husband and their dogs. When she's not writing, she loves to connect with her fans, cook good old-fashioned southern food, and spend time with her grandchildren.

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