

KAIZER WOLF



Innocent Devil's
Harem 4



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Innocent Devil's Harem Book 4

K AIZER W OLF

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Table of Contents

- [\(1\) 46. Crowned](#)
- [\(2\) 47. Bonds](#)
- [\(3\) 48. Insecurity](#)
- [\(4\) 49. Surprise](#)
- [\(5\) 50. Round Two](#)
- [\(6\) 51. Morning](#)
- [\(7\) 52. Date](#)
- [\(8\) 53. Third-Eye](#)
- [\(9\) 54. Threat](#)
- [\(10\) 55. Meeting](#)
- [\(11\) 56. Ultimatum](#)
- [\(12\) 57. Opening Up](#)
- [\(13\) 58. Introductions](#)
- [\(14\) 59. New Idea](#)
- [\(15\) 60. Big Secrets](#)
- [About the Author](#)

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This story contains adult content that may not be suitable for all audiences, including explicit sexual relations, as well as unconventional social dynamics (including a harem).

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(1) CHAPTER 46: CROWNED

As Mrs. Rebecca and I made the hour-long trip back home from Ms. Miriam's mansion, we were both silent most of the way, allowing me the opportunity to begin processing everything that had happened recently. Honestly, it felt like it had been the longest day of my life, and part of me wondered if my traumatizing death and resurrection had something to do with that.

Or maybe, it just felt long due to it being so eventful.

After all, I had so many new experiences, some good and some bad.

Earlier in the morning, I'd taken Avery's mom over to her place to grab some things, only to have a brief confrontation with her cheating husband. At the same time, I was getting messages from Mrs. Rebecca, and what the mature redhead told me sort of went to my head a little, causing me to cross a pretty big line with Mrs. Copeland by kissing her.

It didn't go any further than that, but Michelle admitted that she was interested in being with me, and just wanted to speak with my blonde classmate about it first.

We then went back home, only to not stay long as Serenity, Gabriella, and I all made our way back over to Mrs. Rebecca's house to ask her more directly about the black stone.

Which resulted in the sexy mature woman finding out my ability to influence others, resulting in her testing me by asking if I'd give up Serenity for her, only to ask me to leave

when I declined, with her aiming to find out how I'd react to rejection.

If I'd *accept* the rejection...or just make her do what I wanted, since I technically wielded that kind of power.

The whole thing was extremely upsetting, but afterward she explained why she did it.

Explained that she could trust me now, since I'd proven I was truly *good*, even when upset.

As she put it, '*You don't get lemon juice from an orange, and you don't get orange juice from a lemon. When you squeeze, the juice can tell you what kind of fruit it is.*'

And I was an orange. Sweet, innocent, and *good*, in her opinion.

Yet, even after all that, it was only the start of the day.

After returning home a second time, Mrs. Rebecca told me that the person who might be able to help with the mysterious black stone wanted to meet me. Today. But she had stipulations, because she wasn't just a normal person.

She was Gabriella's great-great-grandmother.

An immortal full-blooded succubus.

And she wasn't exactly thrilled to automatically trust the spawn of an incubus.

Mrs. Rebecca put me in handcuffs, put both a blindfold and bag over my head, and then stuffed me in the trunk of her car for the hour-long drive. Then, upon arriving at Ms. Miriam's place, the sexy demon maid Gwen took me to a secluded room in their basement, making me wait in a chair, the handcuffs chained to the floor.

The eventual meeting was a tense one, since the deceptively young succubus had concerns that I was a threat to all of them. However, after using a unique magic on me, to determine what kind of person I was, she did a complete one-eighty in attitude and instead began treating me like a welcomed guest.

Even offered to let me fuck her maid...

And when I declined, she disclosed that she was interested in fucking me herself, since she pretty much fucked everyone to begin with, and I had sincerely piqued her curiosity. I actually declined again, just because I felt like everything was a test at that point, but ultimately ended up getting at least somewhat intimate with her when we discovered that my figurative third-eye might be closed.

More than that, it turned out that I had a seal on this magical sense of perception, and so Ms. Miriam used my sexual energy to fuel a spell to force my third-eye open.

That's when things sort of began to go downhill.

Or at least, that's when the first sign happened that it wouldn't be an entirely happy day.

There was an earthquake.

The whole mansion shook violently.

Because something had attempted to break through the barrier guarding a transdimensional gate to a hellish world where literal monsters existed.

After recharging the orange crystals that created the barrier, Ms. Miriam thought that would be the end of our problems, resulting in us spending some more alone time together, only to eventually end up in a threesome with her demon maid, Gwen.

But then, all hell truly broke lose.

A monster escaped the portal, a beast that killed me effortlessly, and likewise a monster that I killed just as effortless upon waking up from my death. After that, I didn't feel like myself for a long time, struggling with what I wanted versus what was right and moral.

Because I had a sincere need to have sex, but the terrified succubus I wanted to have sex with wasn't currently willing.

In the end, I abstained for a while, only to take Gwen up on her offer to fuck her instead.

Finally satisfied, having absorbed the sexual energy I now truly needed to sustain myself, I then fell asleep with

Ms. Miriam in my arms and the much taller Gwen cuddling with my left leg.

The sleep helped too.

But now, it was time to go back home, and to face Serenity and Gabriella as a slightly different person. To admit to them what had transpired while I was away, including my untimely death.

Yeah, it was truly a really long day.

When we finally got back to Mrs. Rebecca's house, I was a bit torn between wanting to get in my car to leave right away...versus staying over at her place for a little while, to get a short lesson of 'education' in, now that my third-eye was open, and ready to be trained...

Technically, I wasn't sure if it still needed to be trained, since my recent death and resurrection seemed to jumpstart my magical capacity, but at the same time, I was still a novice in all things related to the supernatural.

Not to mention, now that I thought about it, I still hadn't noticed the edges of the dimensional gate when I helped Gwen ensure it was still sealed up.

However, Mrs. Rebecca really didn't leave me much of a choice when all was said and done. After all, we had the whole house to ourselves, she'd promised to make things up to me several times now, and I felt confident there was another part of her that just sincerely wanted to share some true intimacy with her baby boy, as she liked to call me.

And that last fact was reinforced when she took me up to her room, only to explain that she wanted to put a condom on me, knowing we'd probably both find it difficult to leave her bed if she got a taste of my cum and that endless surge of passion started up again.

Using a condom also had the side-effect of making this a bit of an educational lesson after all, simply because I had to be careful about absorbing her sexual energy when my cum wouldn't be helping to escalate her passion.

Granted, we both had plenty of passion and lust without the extra boost.

Mrs. Rebecca put on that latex outfit again, the one that let her tits hang out and had an opening between her thighs, having her help me zip it up in the back, so I could fuck her while feeling the slick shiny material all over her body.

However, the whole experience was much more about the intimacy than anything, with her starting off by sitting next to me on the edge of the bed, talking with me a little about how I was feeling overall, and making a point to emphasize her motherly demeanor.

She then had me caress and kiss her massive tits, stroking my white hair tenderly and leaning down to press her lips against my temple while I sucked on her nipple, before finally asking me to get on my knees to kiss her pussy and suck on her clit a little.

I did so, feeling her warm latex-cover thighs against my face, my nose full of the sweet scent of the material, along with her maple syrup aroma, listening to her speak to me affectionately while I serviced her a little. And the overall effect seemed to really help solidify my pre-death mentality, to an extent, because I wasn't doing this for her because I *demanded* it, or even necessarily for my own direct pleasure, as much as I enjoyed it as well.

Instead, I was doing it *for her*, because she *wanted me to*.

Because my sexy cougar was asking her cub to help her out a little, and I wanted to please my MILF.

Honestly, the overall atmosphere about it was the complete opposite of when I'd aggressively fucked Gwen and used her to satisfy my own needs. Instead, this was much more like all the other times I'd had sex thus far, feeling overwhelmed to have such a hot woman take control and fuck me.

Granted, I didn't necessarily feel 'overwhelmed' anymore.

Rather, I was willing to allow this MILF goddess to be in a more dominating position in the bedroom, much like a mature woman her age would normally be in such a position over the average young guy.

However, after spending a good ten minutes being intimate, with the tip of the condom already full of clear precum, she finally had me get in bed and climbed on top of me so I could feel her latex-covered sides and heavy warm tits, all while her hot cunt gently engulfed my cock, the head buried deep inside of her.

She was slow about fucking me, taking her time as she gently worked her hips up and down while our lips remained interlocked in slow tender kisses, her heavy tits squished against my dark-gray chest.

It was actually really refreshing, and when my cock finally exploded, it wasn't due to some rush to achieve orgasm, but rather the result of me being unable to hold it back any longer, the climax not having really been a goal at that point.

However, I definitely noticed a difference in how the atmosphere of the room felt upon getting there, unexpectedly realizing that I was suddenly super sensitive to Mrs. Rebecca's sexual energy. And similar to how she'd explained to Gabriella the previous day, I now understood what she probably meant by fine-tuning it as the energy oscillated.

Because I could feel it fluctuating now, and felt a pull toward touching her in certain ways in order to cause it to rise in volume, density, and intensity.

However, at the same time, the automatic craving to suck up that energy was absent, unlike what happened with Gwen both times, her own orgasm seeming to trigger my sucking up her passion into my own body.

I realized that must mean I was a bit different than a succubus, who might absorb energy whether it was her cumming, or her partner. Alternatively, it was as if I was waiting for my aphrodisiac cum to stimulate her to the point of orgasm before I did the same.

Certainly, I could tug on that energy now, but didn't feel the desire to do so yet, instead craving to see just how high I could make it climb before consuming it.

And sure enough, as I began touching Mrs. Rebecca gently, feeling led to firmly grasp her latex-covered hips as I gently thrust her down on my throbbing cock, beginning to take control now, her passion began to rise even more, with her finally cumming when I moved to gently bite her jaw, just prior to planting kisses on her neck when she tilted her head up, her mouth hanging open in pre-orgasmic ecstasy.

She almost sounded as if she was going to cry when she finally reached her peak, her moaning having grown loud and desperate, as if she'd never needed anything else in the world as she needed this orgasm right now.

An orgasm shared with her cub.

I was careful as I sucked up her passion when she cummed, even as I felt her gently tug on the lust that had built up previously, that flavor of energy still hanging around. For a second, I felt like it was kind of ridiculous that we were essentially exchanging energy, wondering how that even made sense, only to realize the obvious, aside from the fact that we were absorbing slightly different types of energy.

Even if I was able to use my own lust, my own energy, I would have still needed her help to generate that energy in the first place, especially since it sounded like succubi usually maximized a human's lust upon having sex with them the first time, whereas a normal human couldn't achieve that level of passion in another human.

Meaning, I was making her far more passionate than would be normal, my cum acting as the catalyst to make her

passion flow endlessly, while she was likewise causing me to produce far more lust than a normal person might achieve.

Thus, together, through our mutual pleasure, we were both generating far more sexual energy than was normal. And whether we exchanged that energy or not, we still needed each other to create it.

Now that we were both finally satisfied, we just continued to rest in that position in her bed, Mrs. Rebecca's curly red hair all over my neck and shoulders while her cheek was pressed against my chest now, the overall slowness of our sex causing the after-sex to simply feel like a satisfying, intimate, and extremely relaxing extension of the main event.

In particular, that relaxing sense of peaceful bliss, the kind that made me want to fall asleep with a smile on my face, persisted for much longer than I'd experienced before, as if all was right with the world in the most perfect way possible.

And for a few minutes, I literally forgot about everything else, feeling as if there were only two people in the world, my sole companion more perfect than I could have ever hoped for.

As much as I loved Serenity, never mind how much I was obsessed with Gabriella, there was a small part of me that realized I could be sincerely happy to live the rest of my life being this MILF's cub. It was as if I could see it all laid out before me, like a premonition of a *possible* future, living a life where she took me out on dates in her red Corvette, cared for me at home like she'd do for anyone so much younger than her, and taking me to her bed every night to experience this intimate perfection.

I wasn't sure if the fantasy was a byproduct of something supernatural happening between us, possibly even just the influence of her being part-succubus, but I had to admit I was sincerely content as she laid on top of me, wrapped tightly in my arms.

However, after a bit, it slowly began to dawn on me that, the realization of that particular fantasy would, in fact, mean I wasn't with Serenity in any capacity, and that finally pulled me out of my content bliss. And Gabriella's mom knew it was time too.

All I did was sigh.

It was a heavy sigh, but it was more than enough to communicate everything.

Mrs. Rebecca lifted her head with a warm smile, a hint of sadness in her emerald eyes, giving me a tender kiss on the lips before carefully climbing off me.

Once I sat up too, she then asked me to actually rinse the condom out before throwing it away, seeming a little embarrassed to admit that she wasn't sure if she could trust herself to be alone with my cum. Honestly, I didn't find it too odd or surprising, since my load did seem to have an actual effect on women, one that could be possibly addicting.

After getting dressed, she walked with me downstairs and to the front door, giving me one last tight hug before seeing me off. I sent Serenity a quick message before climbing into my car, letting her know I was finally heading home, and then I was on my way.

I drove my car in complete silence, surprised to find myself feeling a little numb and almost sad now that I was finally completely alone to process everything that happened.

It felt weird.

Because now that I was alone, all I could think about was that I really died.

All I could focus on was the sensation of having my heart ripped out, the whole thing happening so fast that my mind simply processed the fatal wound as an overwhelming pressure in my chest, rather than having any sense of pain.

But then again, I was pretty sure the monster's hand went right through my spine, so maybe that's why I hadn't felt any pain. Still, I was very bothered by the fact that it

was able to hurt me so easily when even a knife normally wouldn't cut my skin without an exorbitant amount of pressure.

And strange that I couldn't stop thinking about it now.

I supposed that previously, I had Ms. Miriam, Gwen, and even Mrs. Rebecca to focus on, to help distract me from the gravity of the situation, and just how serious it was. But now there was no distraction, and I felt somber about the fact that, if I'd been a normal person, or even just a normal half-incubus, then I would be dead.

Truly, I would be dead right now.

But I wasn't dead.

I was alive.

And different.

Very different.

Deciding to take a detour, almost feeling reluctant to be around others again, now that I was alone, I took a random backroad until I found myself stopping at a more secluded location that I was pretty sure didn't see much traffic.

I then waited for a few seconds, listening to the vehicles in the distance on the other roads, before climbing out and beginning to trek through the trees at a fairly slow pace.

I wasn't even entirely sure where I was going, but just wanted to go someplace by myself for a few minutes amongst the trees.

I finally stopped once I glanced behind me and saw that my car wasn't visible through the brush anymore, prompting me to focus down on my hands, my ears having already told me no one was around.

Like waking up from a dream, I could recall these hands digging into a hard muscular and bony chest, remembering how it felt to have my claws sink within and grasp around a pulsing midnight heart, vividly recollecting how it sounded as I tore it out and sank my teeth in.

I couldn't remember how it might have tasted, only that eating it satisfied a desperate *need*.

A need for flesh, so my own body could heal.

A heart for a heart.

I probably could have eaten anything, but I went for the heart simply because that's basically the only thought that had been on my mind - heart.

I lacked a heart, I required a heart, so I went for the heart.

Simple as that.

I also couldn't recall how the creature's blood tasted, likewise just knowing it was necessary to quench my thirst. It terrified me to consider what I might have done if that beast had already been eradicated by Gwen's magic, knowing that it was *I* who stifled the power I'd given her at the last second when she cast her spell, just enough to stun the monster to buy me a single second, but not enough to obliterate my prey.

I suspected the sexy maid would be irritated to know I'd done that to her, possibly even feeling betrayed, but in a brief moment of clarity, I knew that I might very well sink my teeth into Gwen herself, if I didn't have another source of resources to consume in order to allow my body to heal itself.

My sense of self-preservation was that powerful.

And that scared me, the fact that I borderline couldn't control myself if I was hurt badly enough.

It was the same as when I experimented with Gabriella, shooting myself to see what would happen if I got hurt enough, only to fall unconscious and attack the deer in front of me.

Thankfully, I ignored my fiancé, but I had no way of knowing if that would always be the case.

Which really bothered me.

A lot.

Especially now that I could be so much more lethal.

Ironically, I could think of one simple solution, one that might have been laughable only a few hours ago, but now

seemed within the realm of possibility...

Just don't get hurt.

But in order to not get hurt, it meant I'd actually need to put some effort into understanding my own body. Effort into understanding my own *magic*.

And experimenting with both, in preparation to defend myself next time.

Granted, I'd gone eighteen years of my life without these kinds of problems, and this culmination of events seemed partly random, and partly just the consequence of previous decisions. Like, the fact that Nick's serial killer father was after me, was all because he'd caught me on camera trying to save the ex-wife who he'd hired someone to kill, and whose murder he'd been filming.

So really, aside from that one issue, which connected all the events that happened, I hadn't encountered much danger, minus the dimensional gate problem...

Assuming the portal breech *wasn't* random and actually my fault somehow...

After all, Gwen had mentioned that it had been a summoning ritual that caused the breech, and that a magical catalyst to serve as an anchor into our world was all that was needed to bypass their defenses. Of course, we didn't find any opals left behind, but I had already considered the possibility that my cum, left behind by Ms. Miriam flicking it off her tail, might have been the cause.

The idea still sounded ridiculous, but I couldn't help but feel it was too much of a coincidence that the attack happened while I was there, truly beginning to feel that I'd been the indirect cause. Although, if something was trying to get out of the hellish world lying beyond the gate, then no doubt they might have succeeded eventually.

Thus, in a way, it was probably better it happened while I was there, as opposed to happening months later when I wasn't present to defend Ms. Miriam and Gwen.

However, for the foreseeable future, I couldn't imagine encountering anything else dangerous, seeing no reason why my otherwise peaceful life wouldn't just return to normal.

However...

However ...

Creatures like that monster apparently existed in the world, even if they *weren't* currently in our world, and I would be a fool to assume the behemoth that I'd slain was the strongest out there. I would also be a fool to assume that there weren't even more dangerous enemies out there, who might wield powerful magic as a weapon, instead of only brute strength.

And while I had no intention on seeking out such danger, I also needed to be prepared in the event it found its way in my life again.

So yeah, I wanted to explore my capabilities a little.

And I also realized I might need to visit Ms. Miriam in the middle of the night for more than just romance.

Because I needed a teacher.

Of course, Mrs. Rebecca would continue to guide me in sensing and controlling sexual energy, but I also needed someone who could guide me in learning how to wield magic.

Granted, that didn't mean I wasn't going to test it out now, my skin already gray, my hair snow white, my eyes now gold and black.

Kicking off my shoes and socks, I proceeded to unbutton my pants, not planning on taking them off, instead just wanting to test how large I could grow while still remaining clothed. Focusing on my hands again, I felt my bones begin to grow warm, a soft audible popping filling my ears as the ground began growing further away.

My legs began to grow tight against my pants, my thighs enlarging and elongating, my chest rapidly filling my navy-blue Polo shirt to the fullest, my shoulders beginning to

threaten to tear the semi-stretchy material it was made from, even as my biceps bulged with internal pressure.

Stronger.

I was strong prior to dying, and definitely a bit muscular, but I could feel myself becoming significantly stronger, my enlarging muscles beginning to feel like tightly wound springs just ready to explode with lethal force. The same ridiculous force I'd used to literally tear off a monster's arm in the process of yanking it away, and maiming it, in an effort to prevent it from killing Gwen and Miriam.

Although, one thing was different from what I was used to during my normal shifting.

I had *horns*.

And not just small horns, but large rough ones that were a good four or five inches tall, and at least two inches wide at the base, originating just below my hairline, being spaced far enough apart that the center was roughly aligned with the edges of my slitted gold eyes.

I had yet to grow out my wings, since I was still wearing a shirt, but oddly enough, while I had control over when my wings grew, I discovered that growing larger also meant that I began growing the midnight horns as well, the color a sharp contrast to my white hair, the two processes seeming intimately connected.

On the contrary, I couldn't seem to prevent the new weapons from sprouting out of my skull, but I became slightly amused when I imagined them to be my makeshift demonic crown – a sign of true royalty and power, a far more potent symbol than the various tiaras Ms. Miriam wore.

Granted, the sexy maid had horns too, but mine felt different, seeming to be much thicker and going almost straight up, instead of hers curling backward, only angling upward at the end, causing her to look like she might have cat ears from a distance.

The unexpected sound of my seams beginning to tear caused me to stop growing entirely, knowing I hadn't quite ruined my clothing yet, but was seriously close to splitting the material if I got much bigger.

In my estimation, I was standing roughly nine or ten feet now, at least three feet taller than the average man, and my overall size was about eighty percent of what it had been the last time I was fully transformed.

Fully augmented.

Fully *crowned*.

I could work with this.

I felt comfortable at this level, not having an urge to complete my physical augmentation, even if I could technically go further. Honestly, the moment my horns fully grew, once I was roughly seven feet tall, the internal pull to continue ceased.

Much like a physical itch, I was comfortable again at that point, upon achieving my 'crowned state,' and only persisted in order to see how big I could get before my clothing reached its limit. Although, there was no doubt I'd tear my pants and shirt if I tried moving a bunch.

Right now, half my toned stomach was visible, my unbuttoned pants as tight as hell, my feet far too large to fit in my currently discarded shoes, but at least I could grow this large while remaining clothed.

But that also meant I could achieve this larger form at only seven feet, and have most of the benefits I seemed to gain from it, including the increased physical strength. Honestly, the only reason why I might want to grow to ten feet, or even my full possible height, was if I was facing an enemy that large and wanted to be more physically intimidating, but otherwise I felt like seven feet tall was more than plenty enough height.

Now, on to my magic.

In particular, that was something I didn't fully understand.

I recalled Mrs. Rebecca explaining that it wasn't some separate energy out there, but was energy generated by living creatures, which was why human sacrifices were probably a thing in the past, since lifeforce itself was a potent form of magical energy.

She also mentioned that succubi turned lust into magical energy, and that even an emotion like anger could turn into magic, which was likely where my own initial boost of magic had originated from after resurrecting.

Dying made me pissed.

And I turned that rage into both strength and *fire*.

Both of which felt easy and instinctual.

However, I knew at least some magic required the use of an incantation or spell, and I honestly had no idea the reason why.

For the blue fire I'd used to turn my enemy to ash, I vaguely remembered the spell I'd used.

Or at least, I knew what *command* I'd given in my thoughts, based on what I desired to happen to my foe.

Incinerate.

Problem was, the use of that 'spell' wasn't like how I'd imagined it would be, at least based on games and such. It wasn't as if I was required to designate a certain amount of mana to cast it, such as using 10 MP in a game for a fireball. Rather, I simply cast it by thinking it, the resulting effect and strength varying entirely based on my *intention* and the *amount* of magic I used.

That, of course, made it versatile, since the same spell that obliterated my enemy could produce a simple spark just barely large enough to start a campfire. However, I could also tell that there was some meaning behind the word I chose to use.

For me, the word *incinerate* meant obliterate, destroy, erase from existence *with fire*.

So, if I only wanted to start a fire, it seemed like it would be much better to just use the word flame, spark, burn, or

even just fire. Any of those would work, the exact verbiage not seeming to matter, as it was my *intention* that appeared to be more important, the word helping to focus that intention.

But that just made it seem as if spells weren't set in stone, like they might be in a game, with that aforementioned *intention* instead being the most important factor...

Or was that truly how it worked?

After all, in contrast to what I'd done with my incinerate spell, I also knew there must be real spells out there too, because I'd just learned a healing spell from Ms. Miriam, and it was more elaborate than simply saying 'heal.'

In fact, I felt like saying 'heal' would do nothing at all, whereas there seemed to be inherent power in the prayer-like chant I'd spoken previously. Even my shortened version felt necessary, with me just eliminating a lot of the repetition and unnecessary words.

Still, I felt power in those specific words.

Bone mend, sinew bind, flesh persist...

Breathe new life.

Even telling the body to obey .

It all felt necessary.

Very necessary.

So then, was it possible that I had a natural affinity for fire magic?

Did that make a difference?

Maybe someone with a greater affinity for healing magic would be able to cast it without a complex chant to do so...

Or maybe that was completely wrong.

Was it possible that turning magic into *fire* was less complicated? After all, trying to heal and mend a physical body was a bit more elaborate.

Honestly, I wasn't sure, which was another reason why I sincerely needed Ms. Miriam to teach me, because undeniably I was also required to recite the healing spell out

loud, whereas casting my fire magic felt as natural as breathing, a simple spoken thought directing my internal energy.

As natural as breathing...

Taking a deep breath, I let it out slowly, realizing my body must have heated up while thinking about everything, since a visible steam escaped my lips when I exhaled, even though it was warm outside. Focusing on my hands again, I raised my right palm, and *thought* my desire into existence.

Flame .

Instantly, a floating blue fire manifested an inch above my open palm.

Torch .

The previously fluid azure energy instantly grew taller as it seemingly exploded with energy, visibly looking like the type of fire I'd expect to see coming out of a literal propane torch used for welding. Which only confirmed what I considered before, since I doubted there was a spell called 'torch.'

Rather, I was using words to help solidify what I wanted my magic to do.

At least, when related to fire.

Ceasing the magic, I took a step toward the nearest tree and placed my hand on the rough surface, deciding to experiment with a completely different type of magic.

Grow .

I frowned when nothing happened, even though I wasn't expecting much to begin with.

Focusing harder, I began trying to push magical energy into the tree, feeling it leaving my body, but seemingly with no effect. So then, either I needed a spell to make a tree grow, or else it just wasn't possible for me to do.

Hard to say, since I literally had no idea what was, or wasn't possible.

However, I did quickly realize one thing.

I was low on magical energy.

Not like I'd been before, when I had the desperate urge to have sex, and felt a ton better after fucking Gwen into having multiple orgasms and generating all that delicious energy for me. Essentially, the energy I needed to sustain myself felt fine.

So really, I was technically full in that department, but the amount of *disposable* energy I had available for my fire magic was extremely low.

Which only brought up more questions.

First, was there a difference between the energy I needed to thrive, versus what I was using for magic?

That must be the case, since I felt like the sincere need for sex wouldn't arise for a while, as if that was a separate gas tank that was truly full. And, I felt as if that more vital tank would remain full for a while, so long as I didn't experiment a ton more with my fire to the point that I needed to dip into that main one.

But the problem was, I also wanted to be able to practice my magic, or at least have it available to use it in the event it was needed again.

So how could I gain more disposable energy?

Would having more sex allow me to increase my reserve?

Or was there something else I had to do to gain that type of disposable magic?

Maybe a skill I'd have to learn? A skill that turned sexual passion into raw magic capable of fueling spells?

Honestly, it was even possible I didn't have a large internal reserve to begin with, and might have to store such energy separately, much like Ms. Miriam did with her opals.

Basing some assumptions on what I knew from her, I was aware that a full-blooded succubus appeared to both need lust to survive, while also being able to use it to fuel spells, but maybe her internal storage was more limited than I assumed.

Maybe my internal storage for disposable magic was more limited too.

Hard to say at this point, since I had no sensation of how large my capacity might be, only having an idea of how much I had currently, based on how much I'd used up with my brief 'flame' and 'torch' experiments.

But that was about the limit of what I could learn on my own, at this point.

Unfortunately, my overall ignorance left me without many options. Until I spoke more with Ms. Miriam about it, I'd just have to put the subject off, unless I lucked out by accidentally gaining more magic, but I was a little hesitant to do too much experimenting when I knew I could seriously harm someone I loved by doing the wrong thing during sex. Not to mention, it felt like I'd be eliminating the intimacy of the act by making it into an experiment, and I didn't want to do that to Serenity or Gabriella.

If anything, it would be better to practice that kind of thing with Ms. Miriam – and even Mrs. Rebecca, who could at least identify if I was doing something dangerous – rather than take that risk with my two primary women.

Taking one more deep breath, I allowed my body to return to normal size, got my socks and shoes back on, and then began heading back to my car.

I hadn't been among the trees for too long, so I was unsurprised when I found it undisturbed just as I'd left it, no one having stopped to check on why there was an abandoned vehicle pulled off to the side of the street. Honestly, only one car had driven past to begin with, and it hadn't even slowed down when passing.

Taking a deep breath, I climbed back in, put it in gear and did an awkward two-step U-turn to head back the way I'd come and finally go back home.

I'd only been gone for most of a single day, and yet it felt like ages.

Did my death have something to do with that?

Or was it just because so much stressful stuff happened in a short period of time?

I wasn't sure, but now that I'd transformed into my larger form a second time, and experimented a little with my control of magic, I felt a little better about reuniting with everyone.

Felt more reassured that I was in control of myself.

As well as more mentally prepared to tell them what really happened while I was gone...

Shit, that was going to be a difficult conversation.

It wasn't until I pulled onto our road another ten minutes later, only about two miles to go until I reached our driveway, that the unexpected happened, causing me to almost slam on the brakes, instead just slowing down in bewilderment.

Because suddenly, I felt Serenity's presence, exactly like I'd felt Gwen's presence upon waking up from death, and the urge to 'claim' her hit me with the same force as it had done for the sexy maid.

I couldn't help myself, the moment I felt it.

Instantly, just like that, I was connected to Serenity, an unseeable bond solidifying into place, giving me the capacity to enhance her strengths and even share my power with her if I so desired. And with that bond, an intense craving within me - one I hadn't known existed until now - felt satisfied, as if I'd desperately longed to share this bond with her all my life, only for it to be impossible until now.

Impossible because I wasn't capable of it before.

And potentially impossible because...

Well, because she wasn't a full-blooded demonic imp before...

(2) CHAPTER 47: BONDS

I'd already given a little thought to considering why Serenity, Gabriella, Avery, and Michelle all looked vastly different when transformed, but only now, upon syncing with Serenity from a distance and recalling she might be part-imp, did I fully realize that my blood might have brought out underlying supernatural traits that already existed within them.

And I felt like that possibility was reinforced by the differences between Avery and her mom.

They both had white hair.

They both had frosted lips and eyelids.

They both had black sclera and blue eyes.

But Avery's eyes were icy blue, whereas Michelle's eyes were exceptionally unique, being a deep blue with a vivid white ring around her pupil, making the midnight sphere appear like an eclipse. And then there was the color of their skin when transformed, Avery's turning a light tan, similar to Gabriella, while her mom's skin turned a light gray, not unlike my own medium gray skin.

I felt like it was obvious that the gray skin color must be directly tied to me, since Gwen was a full-blooded imp, but had pale skin, whereas Serenity was part-imp and ended up with a medium-gray shade a little lighter than my own skin.

However, undeniably Serenity's black hair and purple lips came from her imp heritage, since that's how Gwen looked naturally.

In hindsight, that seemed unsurprising, considering that my incubus father left me with his servants. No doubt there was a supernatural lineage involved, that had been diluted with human blood over the many years, and I was starting to think that imp servants, in particular, were somewhat common. Although I wasn't entirely sure if Serenity's heritage originated from the same classification of imp as Gwen. More specifically, I wasn't sure if Serenity originated from *inferno* imps, or not.

Nevertheless, I felt confident Serenity was at least the same type of *demon* as the sexy maid, even if there was a slight difference in subspecies.

But then, that just made me wonder why Avery and her mom were different.

Why did Avery have tan skin like Gabriella?

Was it because Avery's father had something supernatural residing in him? I supposed it was possible, since Michelle admitted that her attraction toward the guy went against her parents' wishes. If anything, it might be possible that people with supernatural lineages tended to gravitate toward each other naturally, thus making it a common occurrence that two people with supernatural traits marry and have children together.

Granted, that was a sharp contrast to the descendants of incubi and succubi, who seemed to repel each other.

Those two groups must be the exception.

But then that made me wonder if Michelle had a supernatural lineage, shared with her daughter, or if blue eyes and white hair were what any human with blonde hair and blue eyes would have transitioned into.

Hard to say.

But that also made me wonder, why did no one have gold eyes like me?

Theoretically, I would have assumed that grabbing a random human, and giving them my blood, would result in a

creature that looked mostly like me, including my coloring, but I had no way of knowing if that was correct at this point.

Which meant, I had no way of knowing if Michelle had something special about her, or if the star-eclipsed eyes were due to something else entirely, like her dying...

Granted, I'd just died, and I didn't have eyes like that... Dammit.

Was there any way for me to find out?

Might Ms. Miriam have an idea, if I went ahead and told her about it?

When the bond initially happened between me and Serenity, I wasn't sure if she would have noticed it, initially just speeding up again and continuing on down the road, since I was really close. But once I'd driven another mile, three unexpected things happened almost simultaneously.

I abruptly sensed *Avery*, of all people, and instinctively grabbed her, forming the same bond I now shared with Gwen and Serenity both.

My phone then vibrated, with me pulling it out just in time to see that Serenity was calling, before I suddenly felt *Gabriella* too, metaphorically snagging her up and becoming synchronized.

I answered the phone.

Serenity immediately spoke, but not to me. "You too?" she said urgently, sounding panicked. "Just now?"

I quickly spoke up. "Hey, everything okay?" I asked seriously, wondering if they were freaking out about what I'd just done.

"No, everything's *not* okay," Serenity retorted. "I..." She paused. "I don't even know how to say this, but I unexpectedly felt someone really powerful heading our way." She hesitated again, beginning to sound more panicked. "They still *are* heading this way! And now Avery and Gabriella sense it too! How close are you?! I'm not sure what to do! Should we hide? Or try running away? Surely, you don't think it's your father, do you?"

I was shocked by the question, and even more stunned by the assumption, realizing her experience of what I'd done was very different than my own understanding, possibly just because she'd never experienced such a thing before and assumed it couldn't be me, considering she'd been around me all my life.

Of course, she didn't know I was different now.

I replied quickly, slowing the car down a little to ease her panic, so I had enough time to explain.

"Serenity, it's me. You're sensing *me*," I said gently. "I'm on our road, and about to pull in."

There was a long pause.

Surprisingly, it was Avery who spoke up in the background, apparently having heard what I said.

"It's him?" she whispered almost inaudibly.

"Are you sure?" Serenity tried clarifying to me, still seeming uncertain.

I sighed heavily. "Yeah, I promise it's me. Sorry for scaring you."

"But why?" she asked simply, sounding bewildered now.

I took another deep breath. "Something happened while I was gone," I admitted. "And I'm a bit different now. But it's still me. I promise I'll explain everything in just a few minutes, okay? I'm getting ready to pull in."

Michelle spoke up then, her voice just as quiet, as if she was speaking more to herself.

"How come I can't sense him?"

Of course, no one over there had an answer, and I wasn't sure anyone even took her comment as anything other than a rhetorical question, from her simply thinking out loud.

Honestly, I wasn't sure myself, but I fully agreed that I couldn't feel Avery's mom like I could now perceive the others. Including Gwen!

If I focused, I realized I could even still perceive the general direction the sexy maid was located, even from an hour's drive away...

But not Michelle.

Bizarre.

What could possibly be the reason why?

Maybe because I'd known Serenity and Avery the longest of the four? But then why sync so quickly with Gabriella, but not at all with Michelle? Or maybe did intimacy have something to do with it?

No, that couldn't be it either, since I hadn't really been intimate with Avery at all.

Commitment then?

Problem was, that didn't explain Gwen, even if she was a full-blooded imp.

Dammit, why couldn't I ever figure anything out?

Maybe Ms. Miriam would know about that too.

But again, the problem was, sharing that information with the true succubus would also require me to admit that I'd turned otherwise normal people into supernatural beings with my blood...

And I was sincerely a little worried about how she'd react to that, especially when I couldn't afford for her to decline helping me to learn how to use magic. However, as I began thinking about it, I started wondering if maybe I would tell her after all.

Because we'd shared some really intimate moments while I was at her mansion, and even though it was only half a day, I felt almost as close to Ms. Miriam as I did Serenity, which was saying a lot. Unfortunately, there was also the possibility that the way I felt was due to her working her succubus charm on me, and that me telling the youthful-looking woman all my secrets might actually result in her betraying me...

And I was fully aware that she might get that intimate with everyone she slept with, making all her 'lovers' feel like they were extra special to her...

After all, she'd said as much, even if I truly believed we'd sincerely shared something uniquely special.

But then there was her aura, which I felt like she couldn't easily fake, feeling so gentle and longing.

A longing for something she previously wasn't able to have, but might be able to experience with me.

So then, maybe I would approach her about it, and just be straight with her.

Tell her how I really feel, even though she should know that, and also explain that I need her to teach me magic, and that I also want to share all my secrets with her, without hindrance, in hopes that she'll be the partner I need to help me figure everything out.

And also tell her how I feel about trust, and how I have a difficult time trusting others to begin with. Explain why I'd been hesitant to share everything previously, and how it will make me feel if she does reject me after I've told her everything.

And then, maybe...hopefully, she'd accept everything, and we could work through it together, with her at my side.

Maybe.

I took a deep breath as I finally pulled into the long driveway, not at all surprised when I saw Gabriella, Avery, and of course Serenity, who was still on the phone, all clustered together as they peeked out the window, trying to visibly verify that it was really me pulling in.

They then all disappeared, one after another, with Serenity being the first to open the front door after hanging up with me, walking out tentatively as I pulled up next to her blue car.

I then sighed heavily again, as I got out, only to stop where I was as I glanced at Gabriella, followed by Avery, as they both made an appearance, all three of them stopping at the edge of the driveway.

My gaze then shifted to Michelle, who was surprisingly transformed right now, looking uncertain and even more hesitant than the others, as she stepped onto the small porch. Her hair was white, her skin an appealing light gray,

her lips and eyelids looking frosted, all while her star-eclipsed eyes were a deep blue, set against a midnight background.

That's when I felt it.

I felt *her*.

But it was different than the other three, and I wasn't sure why.

Thinking about it for a few seconds, while holding her gaze, I almost felt as if she wasn't available to claim like the others, and while I felt as if I could forcibly claim her, it would take actual effort on my part, as opposed to it being super easy with everyone else thus far.

Yet, I didn't feel like her already being married had anything to do with it.

No, it was something else.

Maybe indecisiveness?

I honestly wasn't sure, but my long stare had the other three women looking back over their shoulders while Michelle continued to hold my gaze.

I finally spoke up, my tone gentle. "Michelle, would you be willing to come here, please?" I asked.

Surprisingly, she nodded without hesitation, stepping off the porch and making her way over. There was still a sort of nervousness in her actual expression - her light gray face seeming uncertain, the look on her face combining with those darker gray freckles, running across her nose and cheeks, and making her look even younger - but she had no reservations about coming closer.

So she walked past the other three and right up to me, stopping at a normal distance - not too close, and not too far away. Her willingness reminded me of her rhetorical question just moments ago, wondering why she couldn't feel me too, almost making me wonder if she was eager to solve that mystery herself.

But she didn't say anything, seeming to wait for me to speak.

Problem was, I wasn't sure what to say either.

Was the cause of this difference really due to indecisiveness? Or some other reason entirely? I supposed it couldn't hurt to find out.

"Can I ask kind of a random question?" I wondered quietly, even though I knew everyone could hear me just fine with their still-improving hearing.

She nodded. "Of course, honey. Anything."

I hesitated, knowing it was an awkward one. "What did you and Avery end up deciding on?" I wondered.

Her star-eclipsed eyes widened in surprise, before her expression actually became more confident, as if she was mentally prepared to discuss this subject. "We decided it might be best if Avery waits, so that she can continue her last few weeks of school without having issues being around you." She paused. "She's concerned that remembering intimate moments spent with you will make it difficult for her to look normal at school, but feels that she can handle it if you both pretend like things are how they have been the last few years."

I nodded, frowning slightly. "And what about with you?" I prompted, knowing that my recent death and resurrection, coupled with my recent shift in mindset, were actually making it easier for me to ask these types of questions bluntly, without any major nervousness.

Surprisingly, she grimaced slightly. "Umm, well...I suppose that's up to you," she said hesitantly.

I shook my head. "I mean, what did *you two* decide on, between yourselves," I clarified.

She lowered her gaze, but spoke clearly. "Avery wants me to pursue a relationship with you," she admitted quietly. "Sort of as a way to feel secure that you'll stay in our lives. And, it's also..." She paused. "Well, it's what I want too." She sighed. "It just feels wrong for me to want that."

I felt the slightest shift in my perception of her, causing me to suspect it might really be a decisiveness issue with

her in particular, prompting me to hold out my hand toward her, palm up.

She focused on it, and then looked at me in confusion.

I spoke bluntly. "Avery wants it, you want it, and I want that too. So let's agree to that, and we'll work through the details as we go along."

Shockingly, her star-eclipsed eyes visibly filled with tears a little, before she took a deep breath, and carefully lifted her hand to place her light-gray fingers gently on my palm. However, I already felt the change prior to her even touching me, and the moment she did touch me, I was already claiming her as my own.

Her star-eclipsed eyes immediately widened slightly, before she took another deep breath, a pleasant smile touching her frosted lips. "I can feel you now," she said warmly, her tone extremely affectionate.

"Yep," I replied with a small smile. "We're connected now, since you're no longer indecisive about us."

Her blue and black eyes widened slightly, before she nodded with a frown, seeming a little apologetic at that realization, but deciding not to verbalize that apology.

Serenity finally spoke up. "So, is that what this is, then?" she asked seriously, finally beginning to walk closer too. "You can form some kind of connection with people who want to be with you?"

My brow furrowed slightly as I considered that, focusing on her deep brown eyes. "Honestly, I'm not entirely sure, but I think that might be what this is."

"What makes you uncertain?" Gabriella wondered, probably thinking Serenity's explanation made perfect sense.

I cleared my throat, giving her my attention as she walked over too, Avery quickly following on her heels. "Well, because it might not necessarily be a romantic thing, and might just be more about loyalty or something."

Michelle chimed in, seeming alarmed. "But I'm loyal," she said quickly.

I nodded at her. "Yeah, and I believe you. But I'm just saying, I might be able to have this kind of connection with anyone, including guys, sort of like a way to share my power with my own little army of individuals." I shrugged. "But then again, it might be purely a romantic thing too. Hard to say."

Needless to say, that left them all speechless, with Serenity being the first to speak up what they were all apparently focusing on.

"Share your power?" she said uncertainly.

I assumed the disconnect here was that I'd already 'shared my power' with all of them by giving them my blood, resulting in their transformations, yet clearly I was talking about something different entirely. However, before I responded, I glanced over my shoulder when I heard a vehicle on our road, only to take a deep breath.

"Here, why don't we go inside, just to ensure we have some privacy, and then I'll try to explain everything."

They all nodded, all four of them having glanced over when I did, all seeming to be able to hear the vehicle as well...

Which meant, having private conversations from each other might be impossible at this point.

Not that I necessarily planned on keeping Michelle or Avery out of our more intimate conversations anymore, already feeling like they were involved enough that I should be able to share everything with them, including things I might have previously only shared with Serenity and Gabriella.

However, that also meant I needed to be open about what I'd truly learned about myself, including the sex part, and just bluntly make it clear that Ms. Miriam and Gwen were two people who I was probably going to be having sex with long-term.

Or at least Gwen, depending on how things turned out with Ms. Miriam.

Previously, prior to dying, I would have struggled to admit such a thing openly like that, even to Serenity or Gabriella, but now I felt much more balanced between the two extremes of my overly humble self, versus my overly arrogant self, thus making me a little less reserved to discuss how things were going to have to be from now on.

In response to my request to go inside, we all began heading for the door, with Gabriella and Avery taking the lead, followed by Michelle, and then Serenity taking the opportunity to grab my arm and hold it against herself, giving me a makeshift hug as she walked with me into our home.

Of course, I was sure we all doubted the vehicle would be pulling into our driveway, but with Michelle still transformed, and the possibility of others shifting unexpectedly from a strong emotion, it was just better to speak behind closed doors.

That being said, we all went into the kitchen and had a seat, with me actually sitting at the head of the table for once, with Serenity sitting on my right side, along with Michelle next to her, while Gabriella sat down on my left, and Avery sat across from her mom.

I then took a deep breath when they all gave me their attention, squeezing Serenity's hand briefly when she offered it on top of the table, but then letting go to interlace my own fingers in front of me.

Serenity looked a little disappointed when I didn't actually hold her hand for long, but I had a lot of things to discuss, some of which she might not react well to, and just wanted to be able to focus and get it all out without worrying about her reaction.

Pausing for a long few seconds, I decided to just begin with covering the basics of what everyone should know at this point.

"So, obviously I'm half incubus, and might have a need for sex, similar to a succubus."

Surprisingly, no one averted their gaze, not even Avery or Michelle, instead everyone only nodding in response.

I took a deep breath. "Well, something happened while I was visiting the person who was supposed to help with the black stone, and I think I truly need that now. Sex."

Gabriella chimed in. "Are the four of us enough?" she wondered. "Or are you going to need to sleep around?"

I shrugged, focusing on her emerald gaze. "Honestly, I don't know at this point, but I just know for a fact it's a true need now." I paused, glancing at the rest of the table, deciding to just start from the beginning. "The person Mrs. Watson took me to see is a woman by the name of Miriam." I focused on Gabriella. "She's your great-great-grandmother, and is a full-blooded succubus."

Gabriella nodded. "Yeah, my mom said that on the phone before. Not the succubus part of course, but I figured that out on my own."

"Right," I agreed, knowing that, but just wanting to make sure everyone else knew too. "So while I was there, I met Ms. Miriam and her maid, Gwen, who is likewise not human, even if she looks mostly human."

That made them all surprised.

"What is she?" Avery asked, speaking up for the first time.

"She's as tall as me, but is actually a type of demon called an imp." I focused on Serenity. "And I strongly believe that you also come from imps, because she has red eyes and purple lips, just like you do when you're transformed."

Serenity's brown eyes were wide as she considered that.

Gabriella spoke up. "So then, you think your blood brought out our supernatural traits?" she assumed.

I nodded as I looked at her on my left, not surprised she'd pieced that together. "Yeah, I think it might be possible you're actually more of a succubus now than your

mom, or at least some combination of succubus and whatever I am.”

“Whatever you are?” Michelle said seriously. “I thought you were an incubus.”

“Technically yes, but possibly something else entirely.” I paused as I focused on everyone. “Ms. Miriam said that I have a lot of traits that don’t make sense. For example, while full-blooded succubi actually have wings, apparently incubi don’t have wings, and they certainly can’t grow them.”

“Wait,” Gabriella interrupted. “Are you saying that this Miriam person had wings?”

I nodded. “Yeah, she has wings, as well as a tail. And she actually looks as young as we do,” I admitted. “Like, if you saw her, you would definitely not think she was several thousand years old.”

They all just stared at me with varying levels of surprise, only for Serenity to speak up again.

“So, since this Ms. Miriam person is a succubus...” She paused, glancing at Gabriella, before looking at me again. “Is it safe to assume you had sex with her?”

Surprisingly, I didn’t flinch or grimace, or otherwise even feel odd about admitting the truth.

“Yeah, we pretty much did, and she was actually able to help me sense the type of sexual energy I was absorbing. I still need to practice, and be very careful when I am having sex, but I am in enough control that I don’t feel like anyone would be in danger from me sleeping with them.” I paused. “I also had sex with Gwen, and I’m really glad I did, because I actually really needed it after everything that happened.” I paused again. “Needed her sexual energy,” I clarified.

“Kai,” Serenity said hesitantly. “Why did you need it? Not that I have a problem with it, but what exactly happened? How did this Ms. Miriam person get hurt? And did *you* get hurt? Avery admitted that she was really stressed after you called the first time.”

I looked at Avery in surprise, causing her to glance away, seemingly in embarrassment, but she nodded as she spoke up. "I felt really angry," she admitted. "Like you got hurt, and it just made me really angry. I transformed and couldn't turn back."

Well damn.

I didn't know what to think of that.

Just another thing to add to the growing pile of unexplained mysteries.

I sighed heavily, focusing on Gabriella and then on Serenity again. "Yeah, I sort of got hurt. A..." I paused. "Well, a literal monster attacked their mansion, and I probably shouldn't explain the details about why it would attack there of all places, but I...well, I sort of died."

Everyone had varying reactions, with Gabriella visibly looking like she was going to pass out, Avery and Michelle looking alarmed, and Serenity abruptly grabbing the table in complete shock, her body tensing like she was about to bolt out of her seat. It was a miracle she hadn't shifted, since she of all people had the right emotions to be about to shift.

"Kai!" she exclaimed. "What do you *mean* you died?!"

Well, shit. Maybe I should have danced around that topic a little, instead of being so blunt.

"Serenity, calm down," I said gently. "Obviously, I'm okay. So please, calm down and I'll explain."

She just stared at me for a long second, looking over my chest and shoulders for a moment, as if trying to find some evidence that I'd been harmed, before her tension slowly decreased and she sat back a little in her seat so she was more straight.

"You mean you *almost* died?" she finally tried to clarify, as if she was hoping I'd just misspoken, not that her suggested alternative was much better.

I shook my head. "No, I'm afraid not." I sighed when Serenity started looking more pale too, with Gabriella still just seeming stunned, like she hadn't fully recovered from

the initial shock. "And based on what happened after I died," I continued. "I think I was *supposed* to die for some reason."

"Kai," Gabriella whispered, her volume completely gone. "Why would you even say that?"

I glanced at her and then gave my attention to Michelle. "You were right about the stone," I said simply, before focusing on everyone else in turn. "Ms. Miriam said there was, in fact, a message on the stone, but also a curse that would have killed me."

"Oh sweetie," Michelle whispered somberly.

I took a deep breath. "Obviously, I haven't done anything with the stone at this point, since Ms. Miriam said she should be able to remove the curse and let me see the message. But because of the attack that happened, I ended up dying anyway. And when I woke up, I was different."

"Different how?" Serenity wondered. "I mean, I can feel you now. I feel so much power coming from you. Is that what you mean?"

"Sort of," I admitted, deciding to push my chair back so I could stand. "And if you don't mind, I think the easiest way to explain how I'm different is to just show you."

They all exchanged glances with each other, all of them looking a little nervous, likely just because they had no idea what I was about to do, before they all gave me their attention again.

"I'm going to get bigger," I decided to explain as I was kicking off my socks and shoes again, wanting them to at least be able to anticipate the basics of what they were about to see.

I had everyone's attention as I undid my belt and pants, leaving my clothing on as my skin began graying, and I noticeably began growing taller, my warmed bones making audible popping sounds that filled the kitchen, with me planning on just stopping at seven-feet, since if I went much higher than I'd be stabbing my horns into the ceiling.

Of course, I expected them to be a little shocked by my increased height and new horns.

However, what I didn't expect was for me to reach that crowned state, where my thick black horns were fully grown, rising straight up from my forehead...

Only for all of them to instantly shift in the blink of an eye.

All of them audibly sucked in a shallow breath, seeming fixated on me, even as their bodies visibly tensed.

Gabriella was the first one to speak, seeming in awe.
“Kai, you’re like a god now.”

I frowned at that, knowing that my arrogant self would have agreed with her only a few hours ago. “Maybe more like a demigod,” I offered. “Or at least, a very powerful demon.”

She simply nodded, still focused up on me, her tan skin an appealing contrast to her vibrant red hair.

I decided to begin shifting back to my normal size, though their own changes in appearance didn’t happen nearly as fast, all of them beginning to shift back on their own, at their own pace, so that I was looking completely normal before anyone else was.

However, by the time I’d buttoned my pants and sat back down, everyone looked human again.

Serenity cleared her throat. “So, you defeated the monster then?” she assumed. “And I’m guessing Ms. Miriam got hurt, but everyone at least survived, right?”

I nodded, not surprised that the detective in the group easily pieced everything together. “Yeah, pretty much. The creature actually killed me, but when I woke up, I attacked it and destroyed it.” I took a deep breath. “I was actually even bigger than that, when I woke up. I can grow to be like twelve feet tall, or something similar.”

“Jeez,” Michelle said in surprise. “That’s probably almost double the height you were.”

"Yeah, just about," I agreed. "I can also apparently use fire magic too, which was helpful in killing it."

Serenity just shook her head as she leaned back in her seat, all of them seeming stunned by that extra little bomb I'd dropped on their heads.

"Don't believe me?" I teased, knowing I could probably produce a little blue flame to show them.

Serenity sighed heavily. "I just don't know what to think anymore," she admitted. "I do believe you, of course. But literally only a day ago, and I didn't know any of this stuff was real." She focused on me. "I thought you were normal, I didn't believe magic existed, and now here I am with a completely new body, talking about monsters and magic with you."

I nodded. "Yeah, it's a lot to accept."

Michelle chimed in again. "So, now what, honey? Should we be worried about more monsters? And what about the black stone? Do you think your biological mother wanted to kill you on purpose? Maybe to benefit you?"

I shrugged. "Hard to say what my mother's intentions might have been, or if it's even really from her. And I don't know if the curse was meant to benefit me or not. Depends on whether or not the person knew what would happen if I was killed." I sighed. "But as far as the future goes, I don't think we have to worry about monsters like that anymore, but I also think it would be stupid to not be prepared to be faced with a fight one day."

I glanced at Serenity when she nodded.

"So, I plan on learning magic from Ms. Miriam," I continued. "And I also want all of you to learn how to defend yourselves. Hopefully those skills won't ever be necessary, but can't hurt either."

"I can help with that," Serenity said confidently. "I know plenty of self-defense from my time in the academy. And if we can learn to use magic too, then that'll help."

I nodded. "Yeah, I'm hoping that I can learn more about it and teach everyone, but worst case and I might have to see if Gwen can visit to help teach everyone."

Although, I wasn't sure how that would work, considering the sexy maid's horns and all. But then again, I knew that they could use illusion magic to hide her features, so maybe it really wouldn't be a big deal.

"Why the maid, and not Ms. Miriam?" Gabriella asked, speaking up after not having said much for a while. "I wouldn't mind meeting her myself."

I sighed. "She has reasons for needing to stay where she is," I admitted. "And I don't know if she'll be okay with having everyone over. I can ask, of course," I added. "But she's a little hesitant to trust others, and doesn't like to take risks."

Serenity frowned. "But she took a risk in meeting you, right?"

I grimaced. "Not exactly. She took that risk because she was worried about Gabriella and her mom, but she had Mrs. Rebecca blindfold and handcuff me, and then when I actually got there, she literally had a gun pointed at me when we spoke."

"Shit," Serenity hissed, surprising me, since she didn't normally cuss like that.

I shrugged. "She was just being cautious. Succubi don't really trust incubi, so she was definitely wary of me to begin with."

Gabriella pursed her lips. "But she likes you now, right?" she assumed.

I nodded. "Yeah, she was able to use a magic that allows her to sort of 'know a person's true nature,' and so she was willing to trust me after that."

"Makes sense," Serenity agreed, only to smirk slightly. "After all, you're my little angel, no matter how you look."

I exaggerated rolling my eyes, causing her to smile a little wider.

"So what now?" Gabriella wondered. "Are you planning on going back there anytime soon?"

I frowned at that, glancing at Serenity. "Well, no. Probably not today or tomorrow, at least. There shouldn't be any immediate danger, and it's been like nonstop go-go-go for the last few days." I sighed heavily. "And I'd really like to take the time to actually kind of get used to all the changes that have happened in our lives."

"Me too," Serenity whispered, still holding my gaze.

Michelle cleared her throat. "Well, Avery has already decided to take tomorrow off, just to give her some more time to get used to everything, but then after that she'll probably try to go back to school on Tuesday."

I glanced at the younger blonde in surprise. "Are you sure?"

Avery nodded confidently. "Yeah, I should be okay. Gabriella has continued to tease me, and I've been doing a much better job of controlling where the change happens on my body. I'm not perfect at it yet, but she makes me way more flustered than I've ever been on a typical school day."

"As a sort of test," Michelle quickly continued, when she saw my uncertainty. "Just so Avery has some exposure in public, we plan on going grocery shopping tomorrow, since we've all kind of eaten like wolves while you've been gone. And that will give me and Avery something to do while you and Serenity spend the day together."

Oh shit, I'd almost forgotten about that.

But yeah, I really needed some alone time with her especially, since we were technically dating at this point, and yet had barely spent any meaningful time together, aside from us 'sort of' having sex the previous night.

"Right," I agreed, giving Michelle a nod.

"In the meantime," Gabriella chimed in. "I'm planning on going to work tomorrow, since we all talked about it and decided it was important to continue living normal lives for now, at least until you and Avery officially graduate."

I nodded, figuring that was what would happen anyway.

Avery and I still had a few weeks of classes to finish, and it might raise suspicion if Serenity quit her job anytime super soon.

Technically, it sounded like Michelle, Serenity, and I all had enough money saved up to last us a long time, but now wasn't really the time to start thinking what we would do more long-term. For now, we needed to continue living our lives, and try to figure out what we could along the way. Then, maybe in a few months, we could figure out what we wanted to do long-term.

"Okay, so then, what about this evening?" I wondered, just wanting to get an idea of everyone's plans, or at least to find out if anyone had come up with any plans.

Serenity spoke up. "Michelle and Avery were wanting to stay the night again, and we figured we'd just do the same sleeping arrangements." She paused. "Or are you talking about before that?"

I nodded. "Yeah, just wondering if anyone planned on doing anything in particular before bedtime."

They all exchanged glances, before Gabriella spoke up. "It's up to you, Kai. Why? Are you..." She paused. "I mean, are you needing some energy right now?" she wondered.

Oh shit, I was not expecting everyone's expressions.

No one was embarrassed.

Instead, it was suddenly like, at the mention of that idea, they all glanced at me with a slight longing in their eyes, as if each of them was silently hoping I *did* need sex right now, and would pick them to get it from.

Holy shit.

Holy shit, this felt like a dream.

But as I cleared my throat, preparing to answer, I knew this was my new reality, and realized there was no real reason why I had to put the brakes on my relationships with these women any longer. They were all mine, they all wanted me, and it was important I give them all my

attention, aside from Avery right now, since it sounded like she needed things to remain as they were so she could get through her last few weeks of classes.

But that didn't apply to Michelle.

Honestly, I hadn't expected our discussion to take this direction, but now that it had, I supposed it would be a shame to not take advantage of it.

I tried not to smile as I cleared my throat, all of them patiently waiting my response.

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(3) CHAPTER 48: INSECURITY

Being completely honest, I really wanted to take advantage of the fact that all of my women were interested in me picking them to help recharge my metaphorical batteries. However, even without the newly acquired ability to sense auras, I would have been able to anticipate how me picking a certain way might have a negative impact on the others.

Serenity, for example, noticeably both looked and *felt* a little somber when I glanced at Michelle for longer than a second, which was completely understandable. And then, when I proceeded to focus on my sexy brunette, who I was sincerely relieved to be able to call my girlfriend, Michelle looked away entirely as if she was suddenly remembering that she was probably at the bottom of the list, in terms of who was most important to me right now.

Not that I had everyone ranked by any means, but it was obvious that was at least *her* perception.

A perception I wanted to change eventually, since I was sincerely very interested in the blonde MILF, just as much as Avery, if not more so.

However, even without their auras telling me just how unstable our group relationship was right now, I could still detect it from facial expressions and scents that the current stability was a fragile one.

Which meant, we needed more time.

Or rather, I needed to take the time to slowly build my new relationships with each of them, allowing them to feel

secure enough that I could just walk into a room with all of them, and pick out one woman to fuck, without the rest feeling bad about *not* being picked.

However, as it stood now, asking just one person to come with me upstairs, leaving the rest behind, would have unfortunate consequences that might have a long-term impact. And while having all of them join could be seen as an alternative, I didn't want to share my first time with Michelle in a group setting, and likewise felt like none of them were ready for that kind of thing to happen, aside from possibly Gabriella.

Thus, I needed to be honest with myself.

My fiancé had just asked if I needed sexual energy right now, and the true answer was 'no.'

The sexy devil maid, Gwen, had given me more than enough sustenance to feel satisfied only a few hours ago, and if I *did* choose to fuck right now, it would be for pure pleasure, even if I did also siphon off some energy too.

However, this whole situation was brand-new to everyone, none of them having been able to process everything for longer than a couple days - *if* that - and it was obvious that no one felt entirely secure in their relationship with me.

Definitely not Serenity, who might have otherwise had me to herself eventually, if not for Gabriella stepping into our lives.

And honestly, not even my redhead fiancé was fully secure, likewise seeming a little somber that I'd focused on Michelle for as long as I did, as if she was worried she was already old news.

So I just couldn't do that to them.

Instead, I needed to let our sprouting relationships come first, and let the sex be a natural outcome rather than rushing in headfirst for the pleasure. Because, even if I truly had a need for sex at this point, I didn't think that going 'without' would be much of a problem, considering that I felt

like I'd still get plenty of sex by just prioritizing the actual people first.

At the very least, I had no doubt I'd end up fucking *someone* tonight, likely Serenity after everyone had gone to bed. And no doubt that I'd find time to fuck Gabriella in the next twenty-four hours too.

And then there was Michelle.

I felt confident that the sexy blonde MILF and I would end up fucking in the next few days, especially with her being more than willing to advance the relationship, but the actual sex needed to be preceded with us just spending some alone time together, rather than going straight for the bed first.

It was a sharp contrast to how it had gone with Mrs. Rebecca and even Ms. Miriam, but they already viewed sex as being a casual encounter to begin with, whereas all my other women decisively did not perceive sex that way.

Thus, I just needed to be patient.

And not even for a long time, since only a few days might make a huge difference in how everyone reacted to this type of situation.

Focusing on Gabriella, I responded to her question. "Honestly, as fun as that would be, I'm actually okay right now. I was more just wanting to know if anyone already had plans in general." I shrugged. "And, I mean, hopefully we're all going to be together for a long time, so I'd rather just focus on hanging out with everyone tonight..." My voice trailed off when I felt the overall mood shift in response to my words.

Surprisingly, despite their initial eagerness, followed by all the uncertainty coming from everyone, the overall auras in the room finally shifted to one of relief.

It was like they all sincerely wanted me, but all similarly felt bad about the possibility of not getting picked, thus resulting in everyone being more than okay with me just not picking anyone right now.

I continued, trying not to smirk at their invisible reactions, though definitely feeling more confident in my decision now. “So then, if no one really has any plans, what do all of you want to do? Watch a movie or something? Or maybe play a board game? We also should figure out what to do about dinner.”

Surprisingly, it was Serenity who chimed in first, seeming to have recovered the fastest from my decision. “You know,” she said, having a mischievous look in her eye. “It could be fun to watch a *scary* movie with you, and play a little game to see who can stay looking normal the longest.”

I rolled my eyes, knowing she was trying to lighten the mood, but also a little concerned that a scary movie might make me recall the most recent horrors I’d experienced in real life. However, I didn’t want to bring that up, since it was too serious of a subject, instead pretending like I was considering it.

Gabriella giggled, speaking up so I didn’t have to. “Might be better to make him watch a romantic chick flick with us instead, since he’s had years of practice controlling his transformation, and at least some of us could use the advantage,” she added, glancing sideways at Avery.

My classmate’s cheeks flushed slightly.

“Are we sure that would put Kai at a disadvantage?” Serenity teased. “Might actually put Avery more at a disadvantage, and he might just ignore the movie, only pretending to pay attention.”

Gabriella was all grins. “We could quiz him afterward, and punish him if he doesn’t know the right answers.”

“I’m right here, you know,” I said playfully, literally sitting with them on either side.

“Me too,” Avery chimed in. “And I can handle a romantic film...” She paused. “I think.”

Gabriella and Serenity both burst out laughing, and even Michelle smiled at Avery’s obvious uncertainty.

"Maybe we should start with dinner plans first," I commented. "Sounds like everyone has been super hungry all day, and it makes sense if all of you might end up with wings."

"*Wings?*?" Avery and Michelle both said in sincere shock.

Gabriella and Serenity just smirked at each other from across the table, with my fiancé responding to them. "Yep." She paused. "Of course, Kai can grow wings, and my back has been really itchy, so we were thinking that might happen to the rest of us too."

They both seemed stunned.

I cleared my throat. "So don't freak out if you gain a bunch of weight," I added. "Because I actually weigh a little over two-hundred, even though most guys my size only weigh probably about a hundred and sixty."

"Wow," Gabriella commented. "I wouldn't have even guessed one-sixty. You're certainly tall and muscular enough to be up there, but you have like no fat on you at all." She paused when I gave her a surprised look, realizing she needed to elaborate. "I knew this arrogant, cocky guy in high school who advertised his weight all the time. He was actually bulkier than you, but claimed to weigh only about a hundred and forty. Supposedly, he was down to under five-percent body fat."

I nodded. "Yeah, I have no idea how much I would weigh normally, but my wings probably weigh a good forty to fifty pounds by themselves."

Michelle sighed heavily. "I suppose that means I shouldn't worry about my hunger so much." She grimaced. "I'm hungry even now, but I feel like I've already eaten two days' worth of food just today, and didn't want to start getting fat."

"Yeah, actually I'm really hungry too," Avery admitted. "But I was trying to hold off after having already eaten so much today."

Serenity finally chimed in. "I totally get it," she agreed. "And I admit I haven't eaten as much as I probably should have, but neither one of you are even close to being in danger of getting fat."

"Honestly, no one here is," I chimed in. "And I would strongly encourage everyone to stuff themselves, because if you don't then it's very possible that you'll lose the fat you currently have."

Surprisingly, I didn't need to clarify what I was talking about, as Michelle tensed her arms slightly against her heavy chest, making her cleavage more exaggerated, even as Gabriella focused on Serenity's boobs, while Serenity did the same to her, with Avery actually glancing down at her own chest.

They were all really busty, with Gabriella being the largest, followed by Michelle and then Avery. Even Serenity was a little above average with her C-cup breasts, especially given how thin she was otherwise.

"R-Right," Michelle agreed, clearing her throat as she glanced at her daughter. "I suppose for once in our lives we shouldn't worry too much about eating healthy right now. Might need to be more intentional about going for higher calories."

"You know what I've actually never had?" Gabriella unexpectedly blurted out, grabbing everyone's attention. "Pizza," she said seriously.

We all looked at her in sincere surprise.

"Wait," Serenity replied. "You've really never had pizza, Gabriella? Not even a veggie pizza? How did I not know that?"

My fiancé shrugged. "Believe it or not, I haven't. And I guess it's just never come up, since we've usually done Chinese or a deli place for lunch." She sighed. "My parents being vegetarian obviously means they've always eaten pretty healthy, and pizza is just one of those things, loaded

with carbs, that just doesn't fit well within their definition of healthy."

"I didn't realize you were vegetarian, honey," Michelle commented. "I would have made something different today if I'd known."

The busty redhead immediately shook her head. "Oh, no. That's alright, Mrs. Copeland. Breakfast and lunch were amazing, especially that bacon this morning, and I've never been super religious about it." She sighed. "Honestly, with how much my body still feels like it's changing, I'm probably just going to eat whatever I want, meat included, and then figure out what my overall diet will be like only after I'm fully like Kai."

"Me too," Avery agreed. "I don't want to lose my boobs," she blurted out.

We all focused on her, just a little stunned from her being so blunt about it, only for Gabriella and Serenity to laugh again, with Michelle again smiling slightly.

Serenity then focused on me, giving me a warm grin. "So, I guess want to just go for *all* the calories and do pizza?"

I nodded. "I mean, you know I'll eat anything. Stuffed crust?" I wondered hopefully.

She smirked. "Of course," she said as she leaned forward to pull her phone from her back pocket. "Wouldn't have it any other way." She then glanced at Michelle next to her. "You and Avery can get whatever you want. I'm paying."

"Are you sure, honey?" Michelle wondered. "I feel like I could eat a whole pizza by myself."

Serenity nodded confidently. "Yeah, it's no big deal. I was already thinking I'd just order at least six large pizzas, since worst case and we'd just have leftovers for tomorrow." She paused when she saw the uncertainty in her blue eyes. "If it bothers you, then you can just pay next time," she offered.

That made Michelle seem a bit more comfortable. "Sure, sweetie," she agreed with a nod. "I just don't want to be a

burden."

"Not at all," she replied warmly. "I really like having both you and Avery over. And money definitely isn't an issue."

The mature blonde nodded again, glancing at her daughter while Serenity began getting an order started on her phone.

"We doing delivery?" I wondered.

Serenity frowned at that as she glanced at me. "Do you think we should pick it up?" she asked.

I shook my head. "Oh. No, I don't really care either way. Was just curious."

She nodded. "I'll just have them deliver it then. Shouldn't be a big deal, and I'll let you answer the door."

"Sure," I agreed, knowing it had never been a problem before, the few times she and I had ordered pizza over the years, but still having the lingering sense of paranoia.

But realistically, I wasn't going to let the delivery driver see into the house to begin with, since I'd be able to hear their car in plenty of time to step outside in anticipation of accepting the pizzas. And it was entirely possible that the driver might end up being female.

Plus, I felt much more capable to handle any unexpected threats that might come up, even if such a threat was unlikely, not to mention that all my women were likewise now more than capable of defending themselves.

So yeah, really no reason to feel so paranoid anymore.

If Gabriella and Serenity had both been like me previously, then neither of them would have gotten kidnapped in the first place.

Thus, once Serenity had collected everyone's order, and we had an estimation of nearly an hour before it would get delivered, I decided to head upstairs to rinse off in the shower and put on a fresh set of clothes.

After all, I was still wearing the pants that Ms. Miriam had literally cummed in, the scent a constant reminder of the short sexy succubus, and while no one else had noticed that

I had traces of having recently fucked earlier that day, I didn't want my own scent to begin masking Ms. Miriam's aroma.

On the contrary, that nice pair of black pants had just become a souvenir for me.

Something I'd leave unwashed and unworn for the foreseeable future.

Of course, I had like two other pairs of nice black pants, as well as several khaki pants, so it wasn't like I was going to miss them. But I was also changing because I wanted to be more comfortable anyway, opting to grab a pair of shiny black gym shorts and light gray T-shirt to throw on.

It didn't take me long to get clean, but I was enjoying the hot water, being reminded of how overwhelmingly warm it felt to have the sexy devil maid touch me, finding myself curious as to why Gwen's touch could warm my very core, even when her actual body temperature was fairly normal.

Honestly, I wondered if maybe I was perceiving something else entirely as warmth, like maybe sensing her affection, compassion, or some other emotion, with my body interpreting it as a physical heat.

Hard to say, though I felt like that made more sense considering I knew Ms. Miriam had made me feel really warm whenever she'd shown me little signs of affection, such as by intertwining her thin fingers in mine.

I would have probably stayed in the shower for a bit longer too, were it not for my phone vibrating.

My assumption was that it might be Mrs. Rebecca, and while I was sure she wouldn't mind me waiting to get back to her for a few minutes, I didn't want her to wait.

However, that just left me shocked when my phone displayed someone else's name.

Miriam.

I knew she'd put her number in my phone, but hadn't thought to check. Made sense she'd just use her first name,

since I didn't have a ton of numbers in my phone to begin with, and certainly didn't have any other Miriam's saved.

I quickly checked her message, finding myself worried that maybe she wasn't okay.

'Hey...Are you able to talk on the phone right now?'

Sincerely concerned now, I quickly responded with, '*Just a sec*,' and then rushed to get dressed. I then headed downstairs to find everyone still in the kitchen, though Michelle was up making a pot of coffee, while everyone else was seated much more comfortably in their chairs, Avery actually sitting with her legs crossed, one elbow on the table, her hand in her cheek with a pleasant smile on her face.

Honestly, Avery especially looked like she couldn't be happier right now, just enjoying the simple act of existing in my house.

Serenity focused on me when I stepped into the room.

"Hey, Ms. Miriam just sent me a message. Asked if I could talk. You don't have a problem with me heading back into the woods, do you?" I paused when she looked confused. "I don't really have a problem with you overhearing or anything, but she's a very guarded person, and I don't want to lose her trust. I feel confident she'll probably share stuff with everyone here eventually, but don't want to step on her toes too soon."

Serenity looked surprised. "Of course, Kai. I don't have a problem with that. Did you think it would bother me?"

I grimaced at that, knowing what she was implying.

Having lived alone together for the last five years, she'd always been pretty respectful of my privacy, which was one of the reasons why I was so shocked she'd unlocked my door earlier, after the whole rejection test Mrs. Rebecca had done. Because usually she didn't do that kind of thing.

And if I didn't want to talk about something, she often just let it go.

But now, I felt like things were a little different.

"Well..." I paused. "I just care about you, is all," I admitted quietly. "I didn't want you to feel like I'm keeping important stuff from you."

"You can just say it," Gabriella chimed in. "You didn't want her to feel like you were cheating on her, right?"

I grimaced again, kind of shocked that she'd said that so bluntly.

"It's okay, Kai," my fiancé continued. "We're all okay with sharing you, and we understand that this situation with my great-great-grandmother is a sensitive one."

"Yeah," Serenity agreed with a confident nod. "Obviously, I think we'd all prefer you're not on the phone with her for several hours, but I don't mind you talking with her." She paused. "Or, you know, doing other stuff too, if it's needed."

I cleared my throat. "Well, I strongly doubt she's calling just to say hi. But still." I sighed. "I guess I'll be back in a little bit then. I'll still be listening out for the pizza guy, so don't worry about grabbing the order when he gets here."

"Sure," Serenity agreed. "No problem."

I gave her a small smile, only to give Gabriella a bigger one when she smiled affectionately at me, before glancing at Michelle and then going to grab my shoes so I could go out back to make my call. I wasn't sure how strong everyone's hearing was at this point, so I ended up jogging pretty far into the trees before I stopped, feeling like I should be far enough for them to not pick up on the conversation.

Granted, worst case and they'd just end up overhearing.

Sighing, I went ahead and started the call, briefly surprised when it only rang once.

"Hey," Ms. Miriam said simply, sounding extremely somber.

Oddly enough, her voice sounded so young that it shocked me, while simultaneously feeling so familiar that it was like I'd been dreaming of it all my life, and was only

now remembering, almost causing a strange sensation of nostalgia upon hearing it again.

However, her actual tone was concerning.

“Everything okay?” I asked seriously, sincerely worried now. “Is something wrong?”

She paused for a long second. “Umm, no. I’m okay, and everything is fine.”

I lowered my voice, suddenly *very* serious. “If you’re in trouble, I’ll come right now.”

She sounded surprised. “Oh, no, I’m sorry Kai. I really am okay right now. Nothing is wrong. Honestly, I actually feel great, considering everything that happened earlier. I think between you healing my broken legs, along with all the energy you’d given me, prior to shit hitting the fan, I’m actually doing pretty well despite the near-death experience. All thanks to you.” She paused. “And my maid checked on the, umm, *doorway* earlier. It’s still normal.”

I assumed she was talking about the dimensional gate, just not wanting to say as much over the phone. However, I was still confused about the purpose of her call.

“So then?”

She sighed heavily, that somberness returning to her adorable voice. “Well, I was wondering if we could talk a little. Maybe later tonight.”

“You want me to come over?” I said in surprise.

She hesitated, pausing for a couple of seconds. “Would that be too much trouble to ask?”

I frowned as I considered that, having no idea what was going on right now.

Did she really just want to talk? And if so, then about what?

“Is this about the stone?” I asked hesitantly. “Or something else?”

She was silent for a long few seconds, only to sound dejected. “If it’s too much trouble, then maybe some other time. Sorry to bother you.”

Shit, it sounded like she was about to hang up all of a sudden!

"Wait," I exclaimed, concerned she really was about to disconnect the call. "Ms. Miriam, I..." I sighed, shifting gears a little. "Ms. Miriam, I really like you. I *want* to talk to you. I *want* to spend time with you. But I just don't understand what's going on right now. I'm just trying to figure out why you want to talk, and if it's something important enough that I need to drop everything else right now, or if it could theoretically wait until tomorrow."

She was silent for a few seconds. "It can wait until tomorrow," she admitted quietly, her voice still sad.

"Ms. Miriam," I whispered, feeling at a loss now, only to sigh heavily. "Do you need me to come over tonight?" I finally asked bluntly, knowing she'd requested as much, but specifically using the word 'need.' Thereby implying that, if she truly *needed* me to come over, then I would do it, even if she wasn't willing to tell me what she wanted to discuss.

She was silent again, to the point that I was about to speak up, only for her to sigh.

"Kai, I don't..." Her voice trailed off as she sighed heavily again. "I don't know how to *exist* anymore. You've only been gone for maybe two hours, and I just..." Her voice trailed off again.

My eyes widened in surprise.

"So then..." I wasn't sure if I fully understood what she was getting at. "You miss me?" I tried clarifying, feeling a little dumb after I'd said it.

"That..." She paused. "I feel like that would be an understatement. But it's more than that."

"Can you not say over the phone?" I wondered.

She took a deep breath. "No, I can. Or rather, I guess I can explain that much. However, some of the things I wanted to talk to you about should be discussed in person."

"Okay, well, since we're already on the phone, can we start with what you *can* share? I promise I won't hang up on

you," I added, trying to lighten the mood.

She made an amused noise at that, only to surprise me by sniffling.

Shit, was she crying?

I hadn't noticed anything else, prior to the sniffle.

"Can I trust you?" she asked quietly.

I was shocked by the question.

"What? Yes, of course you can trust me. Surely you know you can."

"I don't mean with my safety," she whispered somberly.

"Can I trust you with..." She paused. "Well, with my heart."

My eyes widened all over again, truly shocked.

"I..." Shit, I wasn't sure what to say. "Umm, I mean, I think so. I'm not sure if I fully understand what you mean by that though. Like, are you afraid of me breaking your heart?"

She took a deep breath. "No, that's not exactly what I mean. Or at least, I fully expect you to sleep with other women. Especially the women already in your life. It's just that..." Her voice trailed off. Again.

I could tell this was really difficult for her.

Even having this type of conversation was difficult for her, her vulnerability obvious now, and as the silence between us began to grow longer, my mind started piecing together what she might really be asking me.

My tone was gentle. "Are you afraid of me rejecting you?" I whispered.

There was a pause.

"Yes."

I sighed. "Thank you."

She seemed confused and hesitant all over again. "F-For what?"

"Well, I guess because it's obvious that was really hard for you to admit, and even though I have a million more questions now, like why you'd even care that much about me, I wanted to at least express my appreciation. I mean,

even just saying that much means you're putting a lot of trust and faith in me. And trust is extremely important in my perception, so I fully understand how big of a deal it is."

"Why I'd even care that much about you?" she repeated, sounding a little incredulous. "Kai, you don't understand, I've lived for a very long time and ever single person I've truly fallen in love with..." Her voice trailed off as she sniffled again, except this time I could hear what sounded like tears tapping gently against fabric.

"Ms. Miriam," I said somberly, realizing now why it might have been better to have this conversation in person. Because at least then I could wrap my arms around her in reassurance. But then again, thinking back to her actual concern about me rejecting her, I realized I couldn't just give her a yes or no answer. It was something we'd have to discuss in depth, especially the part regarding how she'd live life from now on.

I sighed.

"I love you," I whispered.

"I love you too," she whimpered, sounding sincerely pitiful.

"I'm sorry," I continued. "Sorry you lost everyone important to you. I...well, I know my own losses probably don't even come close to yours, but I at least understand a little. Between losing my mom and dad, and at least having a pretty good idea of how devastating it would be if I lost Serenity, I sort of know how you feel. To an extent, at least."

She sniffled, not responding.

I frowned then, realizing I needed to take the initiative to address her concerns, since otherwise I felt like we weren't going to get anywhere.

My tone was more normal. "Okay, so let me explain things from my perspective. We pretty much just met, and it was a rough day, so I'm not really expecting a bunch from you right now. Like, I'm already pretty indebted to you, between you agreeing to help out with the stone thing, and

then the whole, umm, eye thing." I paused, figuring she'd know I was referring to her breaking the seal over my third-eye. "So, I'm not really thinking in terms of 'rejecting you' or 'not rejecting you.' Like, I really need your help in so many ways, including in ways that Mrs. Rebecca can't help with, so I feel like I have no right to expect anything of you. I can't afford to expect anything of you. Because you have everything to offer, and I don't really have anything to give."

She sounded more collected now as she responded. "Things Rebecca can't help with?" she wondered.

"Umm, yeah, stuff related to fire," I attempted to explain, hoping I was being allusive enough.

"You want me to teach you how to control your magic," she stated bluntly.

Shit, seriously? That was okay to say over the phone?

"Umm, yeah. Although, I think I'm okay on the control part. But I don't fully understand how it works, or even how to use it, apart from the fire thing." I paused, my tone becoming playfully annoyed. "And also, I think we need to have a little discussion about what is okay, or not okay, to discuss over the phone," I added.

She made an amused noise, sounding almost fully composed now. "Sorry, I suppose that's my fault for confusing you. See, it's not *regular people* who I'm worried about overhearing our conversation."

Oh shit.

Now everything made a lot more sense.

It wasn't that she was trying to hide that she was a supernatural creature, since the average person listening in might just think she was crazy, delusional, or possibly just pretending to be in character for a play or something.

Certainly, they wouldn't believe she was being truly serious.

However, alternatively, if a supernatural entity was listening in, then they might not be overly alarmed unless

they heard words like ‘succubus,’ ‘transdimensional gate,’ or anything else that might put a target on Ms. Miriam’s head, at least for those individuals who might be seeking out such targets for various reasons.

At the very least, I had already considered that there might be groups out there that desire to kill off the immortal incubi and succubi. And also possibly groups who might desire to open up that hellish gate Ms. Miriam had spent so many years protecting, sacrificing her own freedom, to an extent, in order to selflessly protect the world from the threat it posed.

After all, she couldn’t exactly just leave completely, thus making her a makeshift prisoner to that location. A willing prisoner, but a prisoner nonetheless.

Damn.

But now that she’d given me a key piece of information to clarify what might, or might not, be alright to share, I still needed a handful of seconds to process that, before responding.

Thankfully, Ms. Miriam appeared to be patient, probably knowing that her small disclosure was a bit of a bombshell. Like, shit, if magic was okay to talk about, then did that mean I could mention the third-eye thing too? Or was that off limits?

I supposed I was still going to have to be a little careful either way, at least until we could have a more detailed conversation about it. And in the meantime, I’d just continue to be allusive unless she otherwise made it clear that she could plainly discuss a particular subject openly.

But at least the magic thing was okay.

(4) CHAPTER 49: SURPRISE

I sighed, trying to think about how best to respond to Ms. Miriam's clarification about her concern *not* being in regards to *regular people* overhearing our conversation. Implying she was much more worried about a supernatural individual hearing, who might be interested to find out that she was an immortal succubus, or that she was solely protecting a dimensional gate that could unleash a literal apocalypse on our world, if the barrier was ever removed.

I took another deep breath. "That makes much more sense," I said simply, hoping to discreetly confirm that I understood now. "But anyway, yes. I do need you to teach me magic. And I also need your help with that stone." I paused. "And honestly, there are probably ways in which I need your help that I don't even realize yet. So, I kind of can't afford to reject you, no matter what you do, or don't do. And with the stone thing, I'm not about to make a request that could put your life in danger."

Ms. Miriam was quiet for a few seconds. "That..." She hesitated. "That makes me feel a little bit better."

I frowned at that, kind of wanting to emphasize that there were obviously certain things I'd prefer she did differently, but unable to bring myself to say it, considering everything else I'd just said was entirely true.

And sure, I knew I could theoretically demand she do all those things for me anyway, while abstaining from sex with others. But if I wanted her to continue respecting and trusting me, then it would have to be her own decision.

Otherwise, I really didn't have any right to dictate how she live her life, and no way in hell did I want her to end up risking her own safety, because she was concerned about how I'd feel with her using a random guy as a scapegoat, when she tried to dispel the powerful blood curse that would have otherwise killed me.

And fuck, the idea that she'd have to sincerely do that really sucked.

But what could I do? What could I say?

Because as far as I was aware of, the scapegoat situation, in particular, wasn't something we could easily get around without her risking her own life.

I sighed heavily, really just not knowing what to say.

"Kai," Ms. Miriam said gently, in response to my sigh.

"Yeah?"

Her tone became more affectionate, but also began sounding a little somber too. "You're the first person. After all this time, you're the first person I might actually be able to have a real relationship with. Someone I can truly be with and not worry about whether or not I might hurt them, from being too low on energy." She paused. "And that...well, it kind of makes me afraid. I'm afraid of losing you. Afraid of you not wanting to be with me. This is literally a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me, to an *extreme* degree, and I'm honestly a little terrified of messing it up." She sighed. "Like, I don't know if you've even really thought it through, but I sort of have a lot of baggage. Stuff that might make you change your mind about me. Stuff that might make you disgusted at me, for one reason or another."

"Stuff you've done?" I said in surprised, unsure of why she'd think that, considering I inherently understood what it meant for her to be a succubus.

Her voice was quiet. "Stuff done to me," she said almost inaudibly.

I grimaced at that, recalling how wet she was when she was terrified. "Ms. Miriam, I'd have to be a real asshole to

not want you because of something that happened outside of your control.”

She didn’t respond.

“Or am I misunderstanding?” I asked hesitantly.

“I’ve...well, I’ve made a lot of poor decisions over the course of my life. Some things were my own fault, others not so much.” She scoffed then, almost sounding annoyed at herself. “That question honestly isn’t easy to answer, because we’re literally talking about probably a dozen horrible things, and another two dozen unpleasant things, with some of them just being consequences of my own dumb decisions, and others being...” Her voice trailed off, only to become somber. “Just bad luck, I guess,” she added quietly. “Wrong place, wrong time, kind of stuff. And some of the things were horrible, but only lasted for a short period of time, while other things were unpleasant for a long time... and then...” She hesitated. “And then, one thing that was horrible for a very long time.”

I grimaced, only to take a deep breath. “Hey, Ms. Miriam?”

She sounded confused. “Umm, yeah? What is it?”

“I love you.”

She didn’t respond.

“And I’d like things to work out between us,” I continued.

She sniffled. “Me...me too,” she agreed.

“And, as I already mentioned, I kind of need you. So I can’t really reject you. And even with everything you’ve just said, obviously I can kind of imagine what you might be talking about, and it still doesn’t make me want to even consider rejecting you over it.” I scoffed, my tone becoming more lighthearted. “I mean, you’re literally the most alluring person on the planet. Kind of surprised you’re even having this huge lapse in confidence.”

She scoffed too, sounding equally as playful, even if it was obvious she’d been crying a little. “Well, you also left today. And I’m not even exaggerating when I say that you’re

the first person, *ever*, who I've had sex with, who also left willingly afterward."

"Wow, not even one guy, huh?"

"Or girl," she agreed. "Not even one. They all want to stay."

I smirked slightly, though I knew she couldn't see it. "Well, there's your answer then. You're irresistible. And even though I left today, I fully plan on visiting again. And as long as you'll allow me to come over, then I have no intention to ever stop visiting, no matter what. Because I truly need you."

Of course, what I wasn't saying was that I might not have sex with her if it turned out she'd fucked a bunch of other guys that day, but I did still plan on visiting at least. However, no way was I going to tell her that, since that's what she was inherently afraid of - me refusing to have sex with her because she was still fucking around all the time.

At the end of the day, I still really wanted her to only fuck me, but I was at least willing to give her a possibly indefinite chance to choose that on her own.

Ms. Miriam's tone was suddenly somber again. "Even after I dispel that spell on the stone?" she said quietly. "Even after I teach you magic? You think you'll still need me?"

I sighed heavily, feeling uncertain of how to respond to that at first, only to have an idea. "Ms. Miriam," I said seriously. "If someone were to offer you a million dollars right now, would you accept it?"

She was immediately confused. "Well, yeah. Assuming there were no major strings attached, of course I would." She paused. "I have plenty of money," she added. "But just because I have enough doesn't mean I would turn down *more* of it, if..." Her voice trailed off, only to laugh. "Wait. Are you comparing me to a million dollars?" she wondered, amusement in her tone now.

I smirked. "Well, after making that point, I was going to say you were like a hundred *billion*, but yeah. Sort of, I guess."

She chuckled again, the most fucking adorable sound in the whole world. "That's cute."

"I do need you though," I admitted seriously. "Like, I don't know how to prove that to you, or to even make it sound logical, that I'd need you after having barely just met you, but I really do. And honestly, that truth kind of scares me a little too. Because I need you, I want you, and I kind of have no right to have any say about how you live your life." I sighed, realizing it was time to just be honest. "I know it's really hypocritical of me, but the fact that you could pretty much just do whatever you want, and I'd just have to put up with it, kind of makes me uncomfortable."

"You want me to stop fucking random men," she stated plainly.

I sighed heavily, not responding.

Because it wasn't like it was a question anyway. Of course she knew that's what I wanted.

Her voice was quiet as she continued. "I...I want to have a real relationship with someone," she said somberly. "I want to have sex with someone for hours at a time, every day of the week, for years upon years, and not be terrified I might go too far...and kill them."

"But?" I prompted, feeling like there was a 'but' coming.

She sighed, choosing to emphasize what she was saying. "You know, there's a form of intimacy that you can't experience with random partners. An intimacy that is only shared by those who have spent a ton of time together, like a married couple that's been together for fifty years. An intimacy that is truly *unobtainable* to those like me. I've tried," she added, her voice unexpectedly breaking. She took another deep breath, sounding collected again.

"Similar to how Rebecca has done with her husband, I've tried. But it's never worked out. The moment I involve sex,

that person becomes a true addict, and can no longer see me as anything other than a source of pleasure."

My eyes widened at that. "You mean, you've tried to have a romantic relationship, without the sex part?"

"Yes," she agreed somberly. "For Rebecca, the main problem is only frequency. But for me, it's so much more than that. As much as I enjoy seducing others, a part of me doesn't enjoy how it permanently enslaves them, much like an illegal drug might do. And it's hard to have a real partner - a real relationship - when you're just a 'high' to your partner. And seeing a man I love become an addict - knowing I'm the cause of his addiction - isn't a source of joy for me. Quite the opposite."

I knew Mrs. Rebecca had commented on the same subject earlier, when explaining why she rejected me as a test, but I could only imagine just how much more that was true for Ms. Miriam. In fact, there was probably a night and day difference between their plights.

A night and day difference between just how powerful of an influence they had on others.

And if having sex with Mrs. Rebecca was already like being addicted to a drug, then how much more overwhelming might it be for a normal human to have sex with a true succubus?

I mean, from the sound of it, the addiction was permanent.

The change absolute.

It made me wonder how Ms. Miriam actually managed to keep people away, almost wondering if maybe she had a method of making them feel like it was all a dream or something, so they didn't keep showing up at her doorstep all the time.

However, even despite what she was saying, I knew the overall situation was more complicated than that. Because she *did* truly enjoy seducing people, but it was an act that

was also necessary, and secretly brought her a bit of grief too, at least when dealing with those she truly loved.

No doubt she'd accepted, long ago, that this was just how things were for her, choosing to just accept and enjoy her life, instead of driving herself crazy with guilt. Though, it was obvious that she couldn't completely escape the sadness, even if it wasn't on her mind at all hours of the day.

I took a deep breath. "Sounds complicated," I said simply.

She sounded surprised again. "Which part?"

"Just all of it. I mean, I assume you enjoy making people addicted to you, but there's also a part of you that hates it too. A part of you that wishes someone could truly love you back, apart from how you make them feel."

Her tone was quiet. "Umm, yeah. I guess it *is* kind of complicated. I kind of feel like Jekyll and Hyde sometimes. Part of me is a devious seductress, and the other part of me is a hopeless romantic."

"Just the way I like my women," I teased.

There was a brief pause...

Only for her to burst out laughing, a sincerely unrestrained chime of giggles.

"Oh goodness," she gasped, still laughing. "You really *are* special."

"Still doesn't sound like a compliment," I retorted, referring to the last time she'd said that, when I commented about her giving me Eskimo kisses.

"It's not!" she wheezed, laughing even harder.

I couldn't help but grin, happy to have lightened her mood. It took her a good half minute to finally calm down enough to continue.

"Oh, I like you so much," she commented, still sounding highly amused. "Truly, if soulmates exist, I'd feel confident you were mine. And that's saying something, considering how many people I've been with." She then sighed. "Well,

I'm really glad I called you now. I feel a lot better after talking a little. And there are some things I'd like to discuss in person, but it can wait."

"Can I ask what you want to talk about? Like, just the general subject?"

She sighed. "Well, when I called, I was..." She hesitated. "Kind of sad. And anxious. I wanted to talk to you about what it would mean for us to be together. The kind of responsibilities such an arrangement might entail for you. Especially if I...well, if I started living differently."

My eyes widened in surprise.

At first, I was just shocked that she was implying she might really give up random sex for me, but then I considered the implications that might have, especially in terms of *her* current responsibility.

The gate.

The portal to another dimension.

A place where powerful and horrifying monsters existed.
A gate that she kept sealed...

With magic she obtained from fucking others .

And if she gave that up for me...

Well, shit.

It really was more complicated than I originally thought. Because if she had to rely on *me* as the sole source of magical energy, both to sustain herself and to keep the gate closed, then that essentially meant it would then be *my* responsibility to ensure the gate remained shut.

And sure, I had no doubt she would still continue to make trips down there to actually refill those orange crystals, but she still needed to get the magical energy from *somewhere* . Which ultimately meant that, if I wanted her to not fuck around, then I had to commit to that being partially my responsibility too.

And if I didn't fuck her for a long time, for whatever reason, then I had no right to be upset about her fucking around again to ensure that gate remained closed.

Especially since the alternative would be apocalyptic in nature.

At the end of the day, the gate would have to come first.

Of course, I didn't *have* to accept that responsibility. I was sure that she'd still be more than happy to fuck me, along with all the other men in the world, and continue to remain solely responsible for the dimensional portal. But if I wanted to be more involved in her life, and especially if I wanted her to be more exclusive to me, then that would inherently mean I also accepted all her problems as my own.

I sighed. "I think I have an idea of what you're getting at," I admitted, knowing I should avoid talking about the gate over the phone. "And yeah, sounds like a conversation we need to have soon."

"Tomorrow is fine," she said reassuringly. "Or the next day. Now that we've talked about what was really bothering me, I feel a lot better." She paused, sounding a little sad again. "Sorry for being so needy."

"Not at all," I replied. "I mean, think about it from my perspective. You obviously want me, and that makes me really happy. And sure, I admit that I would prefer to wait at least until tomorrow before I stop by again, for a variety of reasons, but I am really happy to hear you miss me."

"I do miss you," she agreed quietly. She then sighed. "But yeah. I told you before I'm a bit of an impatient person by nature, but I can be patient with this situation. Especially since we're only talking about days here, not like months or years."

"Right," I agreed. "And I honestly miss you too. It's just I spent most of the day there and all."

"I understand," she replied. "And truly, I appreciate all the attention you gave me." She sighed. "And I know you keep saying you feel indebted to me, but I kind of feel the same way too."

"Oh really? Why is that?"

She sighed again. "Well, there's the obvious fact that you can keep up with my own sexual appetite, but then there's the whole thing with you making me cum the fucking hardest I ever have in my whole life."

"That's really not an exaggeration?" I wondered, kind of finding that hard to believe, but also realizing it must be true, since it appeared that the absorption of sexual energy might at least have the ability to enhance how strong her orgasm was.

More than that, I felt confident that was the case.

I didn't know if it was because she could actually feel my own lust too, in combination with hers, or if it was just that the magical energy stimulated her own pleasure. But the fact that she'd sucked up so much of my energy was the obvious reason why she literally squirted in my pants.

"It's truly not an exaggeration," she said reassuringly. "I don't want to explain why over the phone, but when we talk in person, I'd be happy to educate you on my orgasms."

I grinned. "Sure. Sounds wonderful."

"Oh, I'll make sure it's very wonderful. For both of us." She giggled. "Anyway, I suppose I've kept you too long. I..." She took a deep breath. "I really love you. I wish I had a stronger word for how I feel, but unfortunately, I'm limited by language. So instead, I'll just have to do my best to show how I feel with my actions."

Damn. I hoped that meant what I thought it meant.

"Me too," I agreed. "And feel free to message me again, even after we hang up. I realize it would have taken forever to have a lengthier conversation like this over text, but I'm more than happy to chat about less serious things. Or even serious things that can be communicated with less words."

She made an amused noise. "Thank you, cutie. I think I will. Bye for now. And thanks again."

"You're welcome," I replied warmly. "Talk to you in a little while."

"Bye," she repeated, before hanging up.

I took a deep breath, checking the time to see we'd been talking for roughly twenty minutes. Honestly, despite what I'd said earlier about listening out for the delivery guy, I'd completely forgotten about it for most of the call. However, between my sensitive sense of smell and hearing, I was easily able to verify that our order hadn't arrived yet.

At least, I didn't smell pizza, and when I focused back toward the house, I heard Gabriella chuckling at something, as well as someone sipping on a drink, probably Michelle drinking coffee, but otherwise heard no sounds of people eating.

Taking another deep breath, I focused on my phone again, figuring I'd take the initiative this time, just so Ms. Miriam was clear that I really did like her.

I sent a simple message.

'I love you.'

Her response came so quickly that I was convinced she was already typing it out, with my message being sent just a half second sooner.

'I love you so much.'

I couldn't help but grin, unsurprised when she sent another message just after that.

'Wow, I guess great minds think alike.'

I decided to respond.

'Or it's just that great lovers yearn alike.'

It was kind of corny, and I probably could have come up with something that sounded better, but I was sure she understood what I was getting at, and didn't want to waste an hour on a single message, trying to figure out something more clever.

I then continued walking back to the house, phone in hand, taking another look at my screen when she responded half a minute later.

'Cute. But yeah, I guess you're right. I look forward to seeing you again. Hopefully soon.'

'Definitely,' I replied simply, knowing we'd already discussed me possibly visiting later tomorrow.

When I got back to the house, of course Serenity and Gabriella both wanted to know how it went, so I just kept it vague for now, explaining that Ms. Miriam partly called because she missed me, but also because she wanted to talk in person about some more serious stuff.

They weren't too surprised about the fact she missed me, but were a little concerned about me possibly leaving again so soon. Thus, I reassured them that I wasn't heading back over there tonight or anything, and might instead make a trip tomorrow evening.

Both Serenity and Gabriella wondered if it was possible they could go too, so I went ahead and sent Ms. Miriam a message, seeing if she minded or not.

Her first reply was simple.

'Oh. Yeah, that's fine.'

Her second message was a bit more elaborate.

'It'll be nice to finally meet Gabriella. I hope she's not upset at me for insisting that her mother not disclose my existence. She's actually now at the age where I might have considered introducing myself anyway.'

When I let Gabriella read the message she simply nodded. "Honestly, I don't blame her, since kids usually can't keep secrets. And I probably wouldn't have taken any of this stuff seriously when I was in high school. If you don't mind, tell her I'm looking forward to meeting her too, and that I'm not upset at all."

I did so, prompting Ms. Miriam to respond with another simple message.

'Thank you, Gabriella. That makes me really happy.'

I handed over my phone to let her read the message while I headed for the door, since I heard someone turn into our driveway, and could smell the pizza.

Turned out that the delivery guy was in fact a dude, driving a truck, but he definitely wasn't interested in

hanging around, handing me the stack of pizzas, thanking me for the decent tip, and then hopping back in his vehicle to take off.

We were all sitting around the table a couple minutes later, with all the ladies revealing just how hungry they all were when they began devouring slices like it was going out of style.

Like, for the first handful of minutes, it was completely silent, aside from the chewing and swallowing, as they all ate at record speeds. No talking at all. Not even to say, ‘this is good.’

I decided to tease them when Avery ended up glancing at me, suddenly seeming embarrassed by how she was eating.

“Dang, all of you are really turning me on right now,” I commented playfully.

Serenity and Michelle both half-choked on mouthfuls of pizza, while Avery’s face turned bright red right before she shifted, her face still red even though her hair was white right now, only for Gabriella to laugh.

“Yeah, all this cheesy gooeyness is making me a little horny myself,” my fiancé said playfully. “I already feel like I’m having an orgasm in my mouth. All I need now is a little stimulation down there and I might cum for real. If you’re interested in letting me sit on your nice thick cock,” she added with a wink.

Serenity and Michelle both instantly shifted, looking embarrassed as hell by her dirty talk.

Gabriella only laughed more.

“Kidding!” she giggled, only to get an even more mischievous look. “I’d say we have a little ways to go, before everyone’s ready for a big orgy like that.”

Avery immediately started choking, looking the most embarrassed I’d ever seen her. Even despite the tan, her face was almost looking purple now.

Gabriella giggled some more, focusing on me. "Wow Kai. Just me and you, huh? Everyone else shifted, but you stayed as cool as a cucumber. I was sure that last one would get you."

"Wait," Serenity exclaimed. "Are we playing the game already?" she wondered, referring to their earlier plans to see who could stay looking normal the longest.

Gabriella smirked. "Maybe," she said seductively. "Depends on whether or not Kai whips out his nice cock or not. Because if he does, then my ass will be finding a new seat."

I smirked when she grinned at me, only to look a little disappointed when I neither shifted, nor whipped out my cock.

"Well, dang," she commented. "Apparently, you're no fun this evening."

I just shook my head. "Maybe if it was only Serenity here, then I might play your game," I teased, enjoying when my sexy brunette shifted her weight awkwardly in the corner of my eye. "But I don't want to scare Michelle and Avery off," I added.

"I don't mind," Avery blurted out, only to turn a brand-new shade of purple.

Gabriella laughed. "Oh okay, I'll save the rest of my teasing for the movie."

"So it is a chick flick, then?" I assumed.

"Yep! And we've already decided on seating arrangements," she said cheerfully.

I frowned at that, realizing that actually was a bit of a problem, considering there was only the one couch, and then a recliner in the corner that never got used. I supposed we could move the recliner closer to the couch, so that it faced the TV more, but that still only left four seats for five people.

"And what are the arrangements?" I wondered curiously, glancing at Serenity's gray cheeks just in time to notice

them grow an even darker shade of gray.

Gabriella continued. "Michelle, Avery, and I figured we'd take the couch. And then you and Serenity can use the recliner. Figured that was the most fair."

"Oh," I said simply, glancing more fully at Serenity.

Because even though we'd technically been intimate once before, I still wasn't used to really being physical with her, especially not openly, and there was something especially taboo about the idea of having her in my lap with others around.

She immediately spoke up, her now crimson eyes hesitant. "I-If you want."

I nodded. "Umm, yeah. Of course."

Serenity only nodded, still seeming a little embarrassed herself.

I then decided to lighten the mood a little, by asking what movie we were watching, even if I didn't particularly care, only to get all of them talking about the trailer they'd watched, causing everyone to look normal again within a minute.

And since Gabriella seemed to be done teasing for now, even if I suspected she might have been a little bit serious before, the conversation took on a life of its own, since I was literally surrounded by four women who all had something to say about the new topic.

Which meant, I didn't have to chime in again at all, becoming a literal bystander to their conversation as they giggled and socialized, until they were taking turns heading upstairs to change into pajamas for the evening.

Serenity was the last one to go up, first making a trip to the living room to get the movie ready on one of the streaming websites she had a subscription to, before heading upstairs just in time for Gabriella to come down, ushering the rest of us into the living room.

I was actually surprised that my busty fiancé wasn't wearing those purple silk pajamas for once, almost a little

disappointed that she'd changed into regular pink fluffy ones, but deciding to not focus too much on it, since she was still phenomenal to look at either way.

However, I was then surprised when Gabriella took it upon herself to drag the recliner to the left side of the couch, as if she was showing off her newfound strength, with the flatscreen TV on the right of the fireplace, causing me to give her a confused look when she pulled it a bit too far back, almost to the point that Serenity and I would have the back of their heads blocking our view of the TV.

It wasn't until she winked at me and told me to have a seat, followed by her turning out the lights while she got situated on the couch with Michelle and Avery, with the mature woman in the middle, that I began suspecting what was going on. And then, as Gabriella started the movie up, my suspicions were further confirmed when I heard my sexy brunette woman walking hesitantly down the stairs, her heart pounding in her chest as she tentatively made her way down.

I decided to not look, beginning to feel a little nervous myself by the whole situation, especially when my fiancé turned the volume up a little too loud.

I wasn't sure what I was expecting, since I hadn't really been paying attention to every little detail, but things finally clicked all the way when Serenity quietly stepped in front of me, the only light now coming from the TV, pausing briefly before setting right down on my rapidly hardening cock.

She was wearing the silver silk nightie from last night...
And nothing else.

No bra, her nipples poking through the shiny material, and I also knew no underwear the moment my hands were on her silky hips to help her readjust herself on my hard shaft straining to burst through my shorts now.

Holy fuck.

I tried to keep my cool as Serenity leaned back into me, tried to keep my hands under control as I finally began

wrapping my arms around her trembling body, attempting to keep my breathing even as the scent of her arousal escalated.

And not just hers, but I could smell Gabriella's arousal too.

And...

Shit. They all knew exactly what was going on right now. They were all in on it.

But how far exactly was I supposed to take this? Because I honestly wasn't sure if I was going to be able to keep my cock in my shorts right now, especially with Serenity not wearing any panties to make it at least incrementally more difficult to do so.

Fuck.

Fuck, with her in my lap now, I wasn't sure if I even cared anymore.

Running my hand up Serenity's silk-covered belly, I grasped at her soft squishy tit, my lips immediately going for the back of her neck, even as she whimpered softly from my strong embrace, a sound that *should* have been hidden by the volume of the TV.

Problem was, the increased smell of arousal coming from all the women in the room made me suspect everyone's hearing had improved enough to catch the noise, especially since there was nothing overly exciting happening on the flatscreen at this point.

But my horniness had already pushed me past caring, especially considering it seemed pretty obvious this was what they wanted. Earlier, I'd assumed it might be better to wait to get too openly physical, but apparently they'd made their own decision on that front.

In a way, they were giving me and Serenity our privacy, but still paying close attention to the sounds we made.

So yeah, fuck waiting.

After squeezing her tit firmly a few times, Serenity finally twisted her upper torso in my arms, her now purple lips

urgently greeting mine in a soft kiss, her warm tongue slipping into my mouth. At the same time, she reached down for my shorts, giving them a little tug, providing me all the encouragement I needed to reach down as well and begin wiggling my ass out of them.

I only got them halfway down my thighs before she was carefully standing up again, just enough to get her ass off my lap, glancing forward nervously at the three heads facing away from us even as she reached back to grab my cock and slowly sat back down.

I sank effortlessly into her soaking pussy, trying to keep silent myself as she whimpered again softly.

Holy fuck, I couldn't believe this was really happening.

I only vaguely noticed Gabriella readjusting herself on the couch, leaning more against the side arm as she propped one leg up, clearing her throat quietly, knowing from the sound of her pulse that she was well aware of what was going on in the dark just behind her.

They all were, all of them visibly transformed right now.

Now fully impaled on my cock, Serenity twisted in my arms again, urgently searching for my mouth a second time, no longer trying to hide her heavier breathing as she gently tensed her thighs, my cock throbbing ceaselessly deep inside of her. I suspected that part of her escalating passion was from my leaking precum, but I also realized she might actually have a kink for this kind of thing, with her sincerely enjoying that the others were aware she was impaled on my cock right now.

Or maybe it was just the illusion of us sneaking around. Because that's what it felt like.

Even though it was obvious we weren't hiding anything at this point, it did kind of feel like we were being naughty right out in the open without anyone else's knowledge, and it was very easy to imagine this entire scenario like that, as if Serenity had chosen to have a girl's night, inviting a

bunch of friends over, only to fuck me in the dark while they were all glued to the TV.

And that idea was only reinforced when I finally grabbed her hips in an attempt to help her ride my cock, only for her to urgently shake her head as if she was afraid of being found out. In fact, the entire nonverbal gesture screamed that we had to be as quiet as possible, and I was more than happy to play along, realizing we were going to have to do this really slow, and without speaking.

So instead, my hand moved between her thighs, feeling for her warm pussy and then gently pressing against her clit, prompting her to immediately bite her lower lip as she whimpered softly, only to go for my lips again.

I kissed her passionately, my tongue thrusting in and out of her mouth, even as hers danced in and out of mine, trying to continue to be as quiet as possible, until I finally pulled away giving her a meaningful look as I rubbed her clit more firmly.

I was trying to silently ask if that felt good, and she seemed to understand what I was wanting to know, because she simply nodded urgently in approval before forcing her lips on mine again, her moaning becoming much less restrained as she drew closer and closer to her climax.

Similarly, I was becoming lost in my own desire, beginning to tense my hips in an effort to start climbing my own peak too, the combined arousal of *four women* causing the small stimulation to be enough to inch me closer as well.

The moment that Serenity quietly jerked to the side on my arms, doing everything in her power to stay quiet as she got there, I wrapped my arms firmly around her body and thrust more openly, the wet noise technically quiet enough that a normal person wouldn't have heard...

But it was obvious they could hear.

I gritted my teeth the moment my load exploded deep inside her snatch, sincerely surprised when Serenity

moaned without restraint, just loud enough that anyone could have heard over the TV.

"Uhh."

It was short, but undeniable, plenty enough to have everyone's heart racing, even as my brunette girlfriend continued to whimper while attempting to keep her volume down.

It was obvious my cum was sending her into that rapid escalation of passion, so when she began straightening up again, my cock still throbbing inside her, I gently cupped my hand over her mouth, searching her crimson eyes to make sure this more aggressive approach was okay as I went for her clit again with my free hand.

Her arousal literally skyrocketed the moment I really took control, her entire body tensing, her eyes closing even as her brow furrowed in obvious desperation as she began climbing her peak a second time. However, even with my hand covering her mouth, she moaned even louder upon getting there, the noise much more guttural as she began twitching in my embrace all over again, her breathing heavy through her nose.

We were then both completely motionless as she tried to catch her breath, her red eyes visibly swimming with pleasure in the dark, before she twisted against my front again to gently resume planting tender kisses on my lips, her entire expression now overwhelmed with passion. I could sense the energy she was generating of course, and I could have easily absorbed some of it, but I chose not to for now since I was still satisfied from fucking Gwen, and I just wanted to focus on the lovemaking itself, rather than the feeding part.

Plus, I wasn't done yet, and would prefer to save that kind of thing for the end either way.

I knew we were barely twenty minutes into the movie at this point, but that knowledge only excited me, since I had no intention on pulling out anytime soon, fully intending on

getting there myself at least once more, and hoping to make Serenity cum at least twice more.

Which was exactly what I did.

I kept my cock buried in her for the next hour, continuing to fuck her as quietly as possible, managing to cum two more times, her own orgasms likewise double my goal, with her always moaning the loudest the moment she felt my load filling her pussy up.

However, despite the occasional noise, it was otherwise silent aside from the dialogue coming from the movie.

The whole time, no one spoke.

No one socialized, or even laughed at the parts that probably should have been funny.

And despite there being three people on the couch between us and the TV, not a single one looked back at us, not even when Serenity's moans were unmistakable.

Instead, they all stared straight ahead, the scent of their combined arousal thick in the air.

And out of all my sexual experiences thus far, I had to admit that this was the most fun.

I couldn't wait to do it again. Except, next time it would be Serenity's turn to sit on the couch, while I had one of my other women impaled on my cock in the dark.

Possibly even *right after* this movie, the moment I suggested we watch *another* chick flick.

(5) CHAPTER 50: ROUND TWO

The fact that my four women had made an executive decision, to begin pushing the boundaries of how physical we got in front of each other, made me ridiculously aroused. And even after cumming in Serenity's pussy three times, with her getting there a good six times, all while we tried to remain as quiet as possible in the dark living room, I was still horny as fuck.

Because I wanted to watch *another* movie after this one, except it would be Serenity's turn to sit on the couch and pretend like she didn't know what was going on, while someone else quietly sat on my cock.

The only issue was figuring out how to communicate that without being too blunt, since it was obvious that pretending like this was happening in secrecy was a big part of the thrill. Everyone was absolutely very aware of what was going on, but all of them remained completely adamant that they pretend like they had no clue.

Thus, when there was only about ten minutes left of the movie, and Serenity finally got off my cock and waddled upstairs with her hand in between her thighs in order to get cleaned up, I pulled up my shorts and then grabbed my phone out of my pocket to send a message.

The first one was to Serenity, who had thankfully left her phone upstairs.

'That was amazing. I love you so much. Is it possible we can watch another movie, and you swap seats with Gabriella?'

Upstairs, I heard her grab her phone right away, only to type out a response.

'I love you so much. And yeah, I think it'll be plenty easy to convince everyone to watch another chick flick.'

I couldn't help but grin.

'Should I send Gabriella a message, or do you want to?'

She took longer to respond this time, since she'd resumed focusing on getting cleaned up, sounding like she was putting on normal pajamas now. I considered just going ahead and sending my fiancé a message anyway, but decided I could wait a few minutes. Especially since the current movie wasn't quite over yet.

Serenity then finally saw my message, typing a response.

'I'll take care of it. You just sit there and look hot.'

Holy shit. Even despite the sex, having Serenity openly call me hot was a huge boost to my ego. I mean, yeah. I knew I was good-looking, but she'd never really complimented me like that before. I decided to let her know.

'You calling me hot just made me super happy.'

I heard her make an amused noise upstairs as she read the message, before sending another.

'Love you. Just sit tight.'

I did as she asked, unsurprised when Gabriella's phone was vibrating about a minute later, with her not even glancing back at me as she sent a response, only for them to continue exchanging a few messages, with Mrs. Copeland visibly looking over a little to see the conversation. In the meantime, Serenity actually stayed up there, seeming to dig through her closet, sounding like she was opening a plastic bag at one point.

I actually ended up turning my head back toward the stairway, just past the living room entrance, wondering what she was searching for, before focusing back on the couch when Gabriella finally spoke up in a low voice.

The busty redhead leaned forward slightly, looking past Mrs. Copeland as she spoke to Avery almost in a whisper. “Hey, we’re going to watch another movie. Do you need to use the bathroom or anything?”

Avery immediately shook her head, her hair still white, her eyes still glued straight ahead on the screen.

Gabriella only giggled, glancing up at Michelle when the mature woman gently cleared her throat and then leaned forward a little to stand up. Finding myself immediately uncertain about how to handle this slightly awkward period between movies, I decided to focus straight ahead, feeling more confident that ignoring each other was the plan when the sexy MILF walked around the couch and out of the room without so much as even glancing in my direction.

She then headed upstairs to the bathroom, while Gabriella got up and got another chick flick ready to start, appearing as if she just picked a random one without concern for the title or anything else. She then likewise headed out of the room without even so much as glancing at me, reaching the top of the stairs just as Michelle stepped out of the bathroom.

I was almost thankful when the mature blonde didn’t come back down right away, instead stopping in Serenity’s room to quietly say hi. Because it felt awkward enough now that it was just me and Avery in the living room, sitting in the complete dark, with the only light coming from the TV, since Serenity’s bedroom light barely even lit up the stairwell. And I knew I’d feel even more uncomfortable if Mrs. Copeland came back down right away.

Granted, I also was aware that this whole ‘show’ they were putting on was a big part of the fun, and was more than happy to ignore each of them in preparation to do it all over again.

Focusing upstairs when I heard Gabriella step into my room, clicking on the light, I couldn’t help but get a big grin on my face when I heard her changing her pajamas, smiling

even wider when she audibly snapped a strap on her hip, immediately tipping me off that she was probably wearing that vinyl leopard-patterned thong.

And of course she was slipping on those purple silk pajamas again, her heartrate a little elevated in likely anticipation of being the one in my lap this time.

And I suspected she wasn't the only one eager for the second film, because once done, she left my room to poked her head through Serenity's doorway, only for all three women to begin heading down the stairs at the same time in the near dark.

Everything then happened really fast.

Serenity walked into the living room wearing regular fluffy pajamas, of course without even glancing at me as she gestured for Avery to move over to the middle cushion. My blonde classmate looked upward as if she was a little surprised, but complied without hesitation.

Serenity then sat down on the right, even as Gabriella walked in looking as sexy as hell, the purple silk hanging provocatively on her curves as she grabbed the remote...

And sat right back down in her previous spot on the left.

My eyes suddenly widened in surprise when I registered that I was staring at the back of three heads again, my fiancé hitting play on the next movie, except that the person currently not in the room wasn't who I was expecting.

Wait.

No way this was happening.

Holy shit, no way this was happening right now.

I tried not to look when I saw Mrs. Copeland in the corner of my eye, stepping into the dark room...

And then turning directly toward me.

Oh fuck.

Oh fuck, oh fuck.

I waited until she stepped right up to me before slowly looking up at her, trying to control my breathing when I realized she wasn't wearing the same pajamas as before.

She was now wearing a deep blue silk nightie that matched the silver one Serenity had been wearing previously, except that it was obvious it was a bit too small, the shiny material extra taut on her shapely hips, while her massive tits looked like they were about to spill out of the extremely tight top.

Oh fuck, they'd played me.

I was so focused on Gabriella changing that I hadn't even remotely paid attention to any sounds that someone *else* might be silently changing.

Still, I couldn't believe this was happening right now.

And when I met Michelle's gaze, I couldn't believe she looked so confident and assertive. Shit, there wasn't even a hint of the frequently timid woman I was used to interacting with, with her looking as if she was just as comfortable with this situation, as she was with taking over the kitchen.

An obvious sign of her experience in the bedroom, coupled with the decisiveness of the decision she'd made earlier about being with me.

There was absolutely no hesitation at all as she reached out to gently brush some white hair off my forehead, only to gently grasp my face in both hands and bend forward to plant a tender kiss on my temple. My breathing picked up as I focused on her huge cleavage now displayed before me, her heavy maternal tits looking like they could fall loose at any moment.

Oh fuck.

Michelle then reached for my lap while her lips continued to linger on my skin, her fingertips gently resting on my stiff cock, only for her full lips to immediately turn into a warm smile as she gently tugged on my shorts, giving me that undeniable nonverbal cue.

I tried to keep quiet as I began wiggling them down again, getting them past my knees this time, and down to my ankles. Mrs. Copeland then pulled away with a look of passion in her star-eclipsed eyes as she tenderly cupped my

cheek, her now gray freckles along her nose looking a little darker than usual, as if in response to her flushed face.

I still couldn't believe this was happening.

I still couldn't comprehend that I was about to spend the next hour and a half with this sexy blonde MILF in my lap, all while the other three politely pretended like they hadn't a clue what was going on. However, the moment Michelle slipped in front of me while still affectionately stroking my cheek with her thumb, I immediately realized this wasn't going to be like how it was with Serenity.

No, she was an experienced woman, and she wasn't interested in pretending like this wasn't exactly what it was. At least with Serenity, if the other three had glanced back then they might not have immediately realized I had my cock buried in her pussy.

But the moment that Mrs. Copeland lifted her knee up next to my bare hip, still facing me, the recliner creaking loudly as she put weight on it, I instantly knew this entire experience would be a world of difference. Because even if we were quiet, we were no longer hiding what was really going on.

I felt overwhelmed with lust as I focused up at Michelle's huge tits while she carefully straddled me, feeling like I couldn't catch my breath once she was finally in position and began hiking up her tight nightie a little, slowly lowering herself down right on top of me.

I sucked in a sharp breath when I felt my head touch her juicy lips between her thick thighs, only to glance at the couch when I recalled we had a bit of an audience, realizing Avery was visibly trembling as she pretended to focus on the movie, her scent a bizarre combination of nervousness, anticipation, and arousal.

Mrs. Copeland began pressing down more firmly then, moaning softly as my head sank into her warm snatch, only to make a more guttural noise as she slowly sank down all the way.

In the corner of my eye, I saw Gabriella glance over at my blonde classmate, only to smirk slightly as she affectionately reached over and wrapped her arm around the girl's trembling shoulders, prompting her to whimper slightly as my fiancé gently pulled the blonde against her side...

And then leaned in a little more to kiss her tenderly on the temple.

Oh fuck.

My gaze focused up at the mature blonde now that she was fully mounted, realizing her star-eclipsed eyes were almost closed in obvious ecstasy, with her finally focusing down at me through her eyelashes after a moment, looking a little haughty as she reached up to her right tit practically in my face, giving the shiny blue material a little tug.

Instantly, her huge tit spilled out right against my lips, and I went for her dark nipple without hesitation.

"*Uhh* , " she moaned softly again, eliciting another aroused whimper from the couch, the sound of a more passionate kiss filling my ears.

I reached up to grab my MILF's other tit, feeling the smooth silk over her nipple, before giving it a gentle squeeze while I sucked harder on the one in my mouth, prompting an even louder moan as she gently began rocking on my cock, her breathing rapidly picking up.

The recliner began creaking beneath us from the more intentional movement, Mrs. Copeland seeming much less concerned about being overheard as she softly moaned with every downward thrust.

"*Uh-uh-uh-uh* , " she gasped, the wet noise of her pussy against my shaft becoming even louder, partially due to the extra juices left behind from Serenity. "*Uh-uh-uh-uh* ."

The strength of the arousal in the air from all four women was overwhelming.

The recliner began creaking even louder.

The collective breathing coming from the couch was significantly more noticeable.

Feeling like Michelle was getting close, I let go of her nipples and reached up for her face, her tits squishing against my upper chest as she took my cue and thrust her lips down on mine.

She immediately cummed.

“*Mmmm !*” she moaned loudly, the sound muffled by my mouth, but still undeniably noisy.

The passion and lust in the air was now ridiculously potent, and I desperately wanted to get there too, deciding to begin sucking up a little of the sexual energy to see if I could help stimulate my own orgasm.

Oh fuck, it worked!

I went from feeling like I was far away, to rapidly climbing the peak at record speed, my cock suddenly exploding my thick load deep into Michelle’s cunt, immediately causing her postcoital ecstasy to ramp right back up.

“*Uhhh !*” she gasped loudly, sucking in a sharp breath. “Oh God,” she whispered. “Oh my God, *please .*”

Her frosted lips desperately met mine again, growing even more urgent as the recliner resumed its creaking, her pussy noisily engulfing my cock over and over, her passionate kisses now entirely unrestrained as she thrust her tongue urgently in my mouth.

She whimpered with each thrust downward. “*Mm-Mm-Mm-Mm !*”

Grabbing her hips briefly, I then felt around for her juicy ass, loving how her toned butt shook with each urgent movement, her tits beginning to gently slap against my upper chest as she pushed her chin up on the top of my head, her entire body beginning to tremble in obvious carnal pleasure.

I half expected her to scream when her body tensed, but instead she only whimpered loudly as she pressed forward

against me, my lips now on her neck as I went for her hips again to grab her firmly and continue thrusting.

"Oh, oh, oh, oh," she began whispering repeatedly, sounding like she was struggling to catch her breath as I fucked her without restraint, sipping just a little more of the abundant energy to stimulate my orgasm again.

My cock exploded in her cunt a second time.

"*Uhhh!*" she moaned, eliciting yet another uncontrolled whimper from the couch.

Urgently, Michelle's lips met mine again, her knees tensing against my hips as she started rocking just slightly, seeming to focus more on our kiss now, passionately making out with me as my hands resumed fondling her heavy tits.

We were barely five or ten minutes into the second film at this point, and I knew we weren't even close to being done, knowing this was a temporary intimate moment preceding another build up to even rougher fucking.

A brief moment for this sexy cougar to show some affection and tenderness to her cub before we resumed our carnal pleasure.

And sure enough, after kissing for a solid five minutes, Mrs. Copeland's star-eclipsed eyes opened in surprise when she noticed an entirely different loud kiss coming from the couch behind her, a strong reminder that we had a very engaged audience listening in, only for her eyelids to flutter shut as the recliner's creaking started up again.

"*Mm-Mm-Mm-Mm*," she whimpered as she kissed me passionately while riding my throbbing cock.

We were both getting there nearly at the same time only a couple minutes later, resuming that passionate kissing all over again, using only our bodies to communicate, since we were overall aiming not to talk.

By the time the movie was almost over, it was obvious Mrs. Copeland was worn out, still sitting on my throbbing cock, but now only holding my head against her huge tits,

occasionally planting tender kisses on my forehead and temple.

She then sighed heavily when it was obvious the movie was probably almost over, her hair actually blonde again, her eyes their normal deep blue as she gave me a warm affectionate smile. She gave me one last kiss on the lips, and then began carefully easing herself off my cock, looking a bit embarrassed at all the fluids I had all over me.

But I was more than fine.

I gave her a reassuring smile, grabbing her delicate hand to give her one last peck on the back of it, and then winked at her as she carefully made her way through the mostly dark room to head up the stairs. A couple minutes later, and I heard the water running, with it sounding as if she was taking a quick shower.

Having pulled my own shorts back up, I noticed from the scents and overall combined auras in the room that pretty much everyone else had made an attempt to settle down too.

Gabriella still had her arm wrapped around Avery's shoulders, but otherwise it seemed as if they were actually focused on the end of the movie now. And that fact became even more obvious when Serenity finally spoke up quietly.

"I am so confused right now."

Gabriella chuckled. "You haven't seen this one?" she wondered. "It came out quite a few years ago."

Serenity glanced at her, shaking her head. "Nope. I don't normally watch too many movies. There are a few shows I follow, but that's it."

My fiancé nodded, giving Avery one last squeeze and then letting go to put a little bit of space between them. "Have you seen it?" she wondered, her tone casual.

"Yes," Avery squeaked, only to clear her throat. "Mom and I watched this one when it first came out."

"Oh cool," my busty redhead replied. "That's great you two get along so well."

"Yep," Avery squeaked again, causing me to smirk.

However, as much as I loved the experience my women had just given me – literally almost three hours of amazing bliss – I realized it was going to be difficult to keep up this whole 'pretending nothing happened' ruse if I remained where I was, so I decided to get up and head into the kitchen.

After all, we still had quite a bit of leftover pizza, even despite how much all of them ate, and I wanted to try to get it all in the fridge before I headed to bed.

When I turned on the kitchen light, I heard all of them turn to look over their shoulders, only for Serenity to speak up loudly.

"Hey Kai, what did you think of the movie?" she wondered with a hint of playfulness in her tone.

"It was okay," I replied, trying to sound indifferent. "I normally don't find those kinds of movies overly interesting, but both of the ones we watched were actually pretty alright. Might have to do this again sometime."

She made an amused noise, finally getting up and stretching a little, no doubt a little sore from her entire body being tense for so long. She then started walking in my direction, just as Michelle began coming down the stairs after having changed back into her previous fluffy pajamas, her blonde hair damp from the shower.

"Well that was a pretty decent movie," Serenity commented to the sexy MILF. "Although, I didn't realize you'd already seen it."

Michelle cleared her throat, sounding a bit timid again. "Oh, yeah. I think I have, honey. But that's alright. I don't mind seeing most movies more than once."

"I was just going to help Kai clean up in the kitchen, if you feel like joining."

"Of course, sweetie," she agreed, the two of them coming in behind me as I worked on reorganizing the fridge a little.

Surprisingly, Michelle addressed me then.

"And what did you think, dear?" she wondered. "I'm sure those kinds of movies aren't your thing, but was that one alright?"

"Yeah, it was pretty great," I admitted, knowing she was truly asking about my actual experience at this point. "Out of all the possible things I could have done this evening, I wouldn't have chosen any differently."

"I'm really glad to hear that, honey," she said warmly.

I decided to glance back toward them, just in time to see Serenity wink at Michelle, before she moved to help consolidate the remaining pizza slices into fewer boxes. Almost at the same time, Gabriella and Avery finally walked in, with my blonde classmate seeming a little tan, as if she was struggling to maintain her normal appearance.

Michelle addressed her without hesitation. "And what did *you* think of the movie?" she wondered. "Didn't we watch that one together a few years ago?"

Avery cleared her throat. "Umm, yep. We saw it in theaters, remember?"

"Oh, that's right," Michelle agreed, only to laugh. "Wasn't that the time you almost squirted soda out of your nose?"

"Yeah," Avery agreed, suddenly sounding a bit more mischievous. "The time you almost choked on your popcorn and got some down your shirt."

Michelle chuckled again. "I suppose that part of the movie wasn't as funny the second time around."

Avery cleared her throat again. "Umm, I guess not. But it was still pretty decent. I'd..." She hesitated, her cheeks visibly tanning. "I'd probably watch it again."

"Me too, sweetie," she agreed. She then sighed heavily. "I'm pretty tired now though. Hope everyone doesn't mind if I crash on the couch soon."

"Me too," Gabriella chimed in, exaggerating a yawn. "It's been a pretty long evening, and I need to get up early tomorrow."

"Oh right," I commented. "Am I taking you to work?"

Serenity spoke up. "I figured we'd both just drop her off, Kai. If you're alright with getting an early start to the day."

"Yeah, that's fine," I said simply, looking forward to spending most of tomorrow with her. "I don't mind that at all."

"And then," Serenity continued, focusing on Michelle. "Let me grab you the extra spare key we have, so you two can come and go whenever you want."

"We'll probably aim to leave when you do," Michelle replied. "Get the shopping done early. And then we can always go back to our house if no one is here."

"Yeah, but you plan on picking up groceries for here, right? Still need to get into the house."

"Oh." She shook her head at herself. "Of course, sweetie. Sorry."

"Not at all," Serenity replied warmly. "And, I mean, I hope we can keep hanging out pretty regularly, so I'm more than happy to let you hold onto a key to our place."

Michelle smiled warmly. "Definitely," she agreed. "Avery and I are more than happy to visit as often as you want."

"Good," she said with a grin, only to glance around the kitchen to make sure it was mostly cleaned up. "Well, I think I'll head upstairs then. I'll probably brush my teeth again, and head to bed. Kai, are you staying up much longer, or are you coming to bed too?"

I tried to not react, of course knowing that was the plan, but loving how affectionate her tone became at the end.

"I think I'll join you in just a few minutes. Just want to make sure everything is situated down here, and then I'll be up."

"Sounds good," she replied warmly, turning to head up the stairs.

Gabriella spoke up as she angled toward the stairs too. "You coming now Avery? Or still planning on staying up?"

She cleared her throat. "I'll come now. It's already pretty late." She paused. "Night mom. Love you."

"Love you too, honey. Sleep well."

I tried not to smirk at their interaction, loving how an otherwise super awkward situation instead maintained a bizarre equilibrium, simply because of how they approached it. Like, I thought we were weeks away from getting to this point, possibly even longer, and yet the four of them had managed to transition our group relationship into an extremely intimate one at lightning speed.

I still wasn't sure how they even set all this up, but I was very much interested in finding out once I joined Serenity in bed upstairs.

Once it was just me and Michelle still in the kitchen, everyone upstairs now, I finally focused on her fully, wondering how she was going to act toward me now that we'd shared an extremely intimate couple hours together.

Surprisingly, it appeared we'd really broken the ice, because now that we were alone, she took my body language as invitation to walk up to me, placing her hands tenderly on my chest as she reached up to press her lips gently against mine.

Her gaze was affectionate as she broke the kiss. "Thank you, honey. I couldn't have asked for a better evening."

"Me either," I whispered. "I especially enjoyed you being so assertive. Wasn't expecting that, but I really loved it."

She gave me a warm smile. "Good. Then I'll take that as an invitation to do it again, whenever I want."

"Please do," I agreed with a grin.

"Same goes for you," she added, only to go for my lips again.

I kissed her a bit longer this time, before pulling away, her expression affectionate as she wished me goodnight. She then made her way to the living room to get situated on the couch, and I finally made my way upstairs to Serenity's room.

I wasn't surprised to discover that she'd changed right back into that silver nightie, though she sincerely looked tired enough that I suspected she might not be up for another round of passionate lovemaking.

Still, that didn't stop my cock from growing as hard as a rock as I climbed into bed and pulled her into my arms, her deep brown eyes warm and content.

"I love you," Serenity whispered. "I hope we made your evening perfect."

"You did," I replied back quietly. "But I am really curious. How in the world did all of you even set it up? And why?"

Surprisingly, she frowned slightly. "Do you really want to know?"

I was a little shocked that she was a bit more serious now. "Yeah. Of course."

She sighed, only to gently plant her full lips on mine, before focusing up toward the ceiling. "Well, as far as how we did it, without you knowing, we mostly spoke through messages on our phones. Just typing things out, and then erasing it without actually sending it." She paused. "But as to the reason why, it kind of began with Gabriella shortly after you got home."

"Well, that doesn't surprise me," I replied, realizing they must have decided on it while I was talking with Ms. Miriam on the phone. "But why do you seem a little sad about that?"

She shook her head. "Oh no. I'm not sad. I just didn't want you to think we were unwilling, is all. Everyone was very much interested in the plan. We just needed that little extra encouragement."

Now I was confused. "I'm not sure I understand," I admitted.

She took a deep breath. "Well, when you were on the phone with Ms. Miriam, Gabriella made the point that the woman is probably more irresistible than the four of us combined, and that we should really consider making an

effort to compete with her, so that you didn't find the prospect of having sex with *her* to be even more enticing than doing stuff with all of us."

Damn.

On the one hand, that was actually pretty smart. And made a ton of sense.

But on the other hand, I realized why she was hesitant to tell me.

She continued. "So did we do a good job?" she asked hopefully.

I gave her a warm smile. "Yeah, you did an amazing job. I can honestly say there was nowhere else I would have rather been. And the fact that you actually surprised me, twice even, just made it all the better."

"Good," she said affectionately. "That was our goal. While you were on the phone, all of us pretty much acknowledged that we're basically your wives at this point, and that we should make an effort to make this situation easy on you by crossing the major boundaries, so you don't feel like you're pressuring us into it." She paused. "Like when all of us were talking at the table right after you got home, and Gabriella asked if you were needing sexual energy. It was obvious you felt uncertain about picking someone, even though we knew you wanted to."

I nodded. "Yeah, I felt like I couldn't win in that situation, since it was as if picking one would end up disappointing everyone else."

"Which was also partly why Gabriella brought it up. She realized we were making this whole situation awkward and overly difficult on you. And she pointed out that it was in our best interest to take responsibility for crossing those lines on our own." She paused. "It's also why we decided to have Michelle sit with you for the second movie."

I couldn't help but smirk, just at the reminder of how great it had been.

"Plus," Serenity continued. "With the way our hearing is improving, we realized it was only a matter of days before there'd be no privacy anymore. If not sooner. So, we figured we'd just jump into it, although we did all agree that it would be easier if we at least *pretended* like we were being sneaky about it."

"Yeah, I especially loved that part," I agreed. "It really did feel like we were sneaking around."

She smiled warmly. "Well, with me, at least," she said playfully. "Not sure Michelle was quiet enough to count."

"And you were okay with that, right?" I asked seriously, knowing she was plenty aroused during the event, but also being aware those feelings might change afterward.

She nodded. "Yep. I really liked it, actually. I've never really watched porn before, or anything, but I can kind of understand why people would want to. Hearing you have sex was pretty intense." She paused. "Not that I plan on watching porn," she clarified. "Just saying that I enjoyed it too."

I nodded, giving her another kiss. "Love you."

"Love you too," she said with a grin. "So much. I can hardly wait to spend all day with you tomorrow."

"Me too," I agreed.

"And if you happen to wake up before me, and want to play a little, feel free. I kind of want to know what it's like to wake up having sex."

I smirked. "Same here. If you wake up before me, feel free."

She gave me another affectionate look, only for a cute yawn to touch her lips, her eyes finally closing. I held her more tightly against me in response, loving the feeling of her athletic body covered in silk, giving her one last kiss before closing my eyes as well.

I was still pretty wired after the intense experience, but as everyone else in the house drifted off to sleep, everyone's heartrate and breathing peaceful, my mind

began to really wander as well, until I was finally succumbing to my exhaustion, after such a long day.

However, unlike the nap I'd had earlier at Ms. Miriam's place, my brain didn't fully shut off.

And while I felt like I slept as hard as a rock, there was a small part of me that remained aware all night long, paying close attention to every twig snapping, every cricket chirping, every owl rustling its feathers.

I was truly asleep.

But I was also very much awake.

Very much *aware*.

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(6) CHAPTER 51: MORNING

Serenity actually ended up rousing before me, apparently deciding to take me up on my offer for her to wake me with sex. However, even though I'd been asleep until the point that I felt my cock sink into her hot snatch, I'd also been fully aware of my surroundings the entire night, and wasn't at all surprised to find myself buried inside her.

Not that I'd already been awake by any means, but it was more like I was dreaming about what was going on in the environment around me, instead of having actual dreams...

Granted, that realization didn't stop me from passionately making out with her as she began riding my shaft, moaning desperately as if she'd woken up super horny to begin with.

I couldn't blame her, since just remembering last night was enough to make my hormones surge too.

Having sex with her in the living room had been a dream come true all on its own, but then doing it all over again with my sexy blonde MILF? That had definitely been the icing on the cake. And I knew part of what made both times so amazing was that they were both unexpected.

It was the surprise that got me.

Especially since, the second time I had assumed I'd be 'watching the movie' with Gabriella in my lap.

Serenity was really loud when she got there, although her bedroom door was technically closed, and then even louder when I shot my load in her, causing her to climb the

high of a second orgasm at record speed. No doubt the whole house could hear our sex, but I wasn't too concerned about it since we'd already crossed that line.

If anything, we were everyone else's alarm clock.

Or at least Gabriella and Avery, since it sounded like Michelle was already in the kitchen cooking breakfast for everyone.

Of course, we both knew that we couldn't keep fucking for hours, so once she'd calmed down after her second time, she rolled off me to my side - trying to catch her breath, her shapely perky tits rising and falling, the shiny material reflecting the dim light streaming in from her windows - and then gave me one last kiss before climbing out of bed to go take a shower.

I figured I might make a trip just to my room in the meantime, to get clean clothes but also to say good morning to Gabriella and Avery. However, after Serenity got to the bathroom, I barely managed to scoot to the edge of the bed before the cracked door was opening again.

Gabriella was still wearing the purple silk pajamas, the shiny material hanging provocatively off her huge tits and shapely hips, her skin that transformed tan, her red hair even more vibrant than usual, even as she spoke like she was out of breath.

"I was going to wait," she said as she closed the door behind her. "But after hearing that, I can't. I need you in me."

I smirked, having no problem with that as I pulled my shorts back off, even as she thrust her thumbs in her silky pants to shove them to the floor. I barely was able to scoot back to the headboard before she was climbing right on the bed with surprising grace and straddling my hips, lowering her hot snatch down right on top of my cock.

"*Fuuuck*," she moaned, wrapping her arms around my head and pulling my face against her silk covered tits.

"That's what I needed. Listening to you fuck last night was

so hot. Did we surprise you? We were trying to surprise you."

I reached up to begin unbuttoning the front of her top enough to get at one of her huge tits. "Yeah," I whispered. "Completely surprised. Both times," I added, leaning forward to suck her hard nipple in my mouth.

She moaned. "I'm so glad," she said, hugging my head firmly again as she began rocking up and down on my shaft. "We figured we could get you the first time, but when you wanted to do it again, we weren't sure if we could surprise you. I figured if I changed, then it might distract you."

"Mhm," I agreed as I gently bit her.

Gabriella gasped, squeezing my head tighter as she bounced. "Oh fuck. Oh fuck, you're so good. I want to cum so bad. I've never burned with passion for so long. I thought about convincing Avery to help me surprise you in the middle of the night with a threesome, but I know she thinks it's best to wait."

I almost scoffed at that, not wanting to ruin the mood, but not sure how Avery was going to stay looking normal at school after experiencing last night. Honestly, it might actually be better for the two of us to get physical sooner, rather than later, so that she could get used to me like I'd already gotten somewhat used to Gabriella.

"Oh fuck, I'm going to cum," she gasped, the whole bed creaking now. "Oh fuck, yes. Please yes!"

She nearly screamed, instead a guttural cry escaping her throat, her passion exploding.

Which in turn allowed me to suck up some of her energy so that I could cum too, causing her entire body to jerk forward violently as she felt me fill her up.

"Uhhhh !" she exclaimed, only to scream this time as she cummed again.

I reached back to firmly squeeze her tight ass as she tried to recover, her breathing heavy as she trembled against me, her arms still wrapped tightly around my head.

"Oh fuck," she finally whispered, a tremor seeming to run up her body. "Shit, maybe I should just skip work forever so we can fuck all day."

I smirked at that. "I'm open to that possibility."

She giggled, only to sigh heavily. "I wish we could. But it's better for us to maintain appearances right now, especially after everything that's happened."

"Right," I agreed, finally meeting her emerald gaze when she sat up straighter, my cock still pulsing inside her. "Maybe in a couple of weeks we can revisit the subject, once I finish classes."

She gave me a warm smile, gently reaching for my face to cup my cheeks, before planting a passionate kiss on my lips. "Sure," she agreed. "But for now, at least it'll be a little easier to make it through the day. Maybe you and Serenity can visit me on my lunch break."

I nodded, sincerely liking that idea. "Yeah, I don't see any reason why not," I agreed.

She gave me one last kiss, before getting up. "Do you want to shower next?"

I shook my head. "Nah, go ahead. Sounds like Michelle is making breakfast, so I'll eat first."

Gabriella got a mischievous glint in her eye, only to wink at me, but didn't otherwise say anything, instead climbing off to throw on her pajama pants again, and then heading back to my room where Avery was waiting, who also sounded awake.

Surprisingly, there was no sounds of a kiss being exchanged, though I could tell from my new ability to sense auras that there was definitely a sexual charge going on. I knew Gabriella wanted me to take all of Avery's firsts, not having known my blonde classmate hadn't kissed anyone before, with her rushing to that step without thinking it through, and it seemed like she was even backing off on that part too, considering the affectionate kisses on the temple were pretty tame the previous evening.

Pulling my shorts up for the second time, I headed right downstairs to get something to eat.

Michelle was flipping pancakes on two skillets on the stove, wearing the fluffy pink pajamas she'd put on after taking a shower last night, with her composure overall normal, the only hint that she'd heard what was going on upstairs coming from her stark white hair and supple light gray skin. At first, the sight confused me a little, considering she was plenty experienced in the bedroom to begin with, and she'd maintained her appearance under other circumstances that I would normally consider provoking.

But then, I began picking up the 'anticipation' in her aura, realizing what the reason might be.

She was hoping it might be her turn.

Well shit.

I honestly hadn't expected to have sex at all this morning, and here I was going to be fucking my third woman for the day. But then again, Serenity did say last night that they'd discussed my sexual needs, along with what it might mean for a full-blooded succubus to be interested in me.

Plus, after last night, I'd technically had my cock in Mrs. Copeland just as long as it'd been in Serenity and Gabriella. Like, if we were going on time alone, then all three women were tied for first place for amount of time mounted, since I'd spent about the same length of time fucking Gabriella the handful of times we'd messed around.

And recalling how they'd discussed the fact that they were all basically my wives at this point, even if it wasn't official, made my hormones surge all over again.

I walked right up to Michelle and wrapped my arms firmly around her front, her heavy tits squished against my arms as I bent down to gently peck her on the temple. She whimpered in response to my embrace, leaning into me heavily as she turned her head more in response to my kiss.

"Good morning, and thank you so much for last night," I whispered.

She whimpered again, pressing her ass into my groin. "G-Good morning, sweetie," she finally managed. "W-Would you like some more breakfast?"

For half a second, I was confused by her use of the word 'more,' only to realize the obvious. I did technically feed on passion, and she was offering some of hers. However, unless we went into the living room, there wasn't really a good spot to fuck in the kitchen right now.

The table was technically broken, a chair might be a bit awkward, and the counter was currently too messy with the pancake ingredients. Thus, I had a different idea, even though there was really no reason why we couldn't take this into the living room.

"Sure," I said softly, planting another kiss. "Can I sit you down and eat you out?" I asked innocently, being intentional about my tone.

She whimpered again, causing me to grin.

"I'll take that as a yes," I whispered, slowly turning her around in my arms, and then holding onto her shoulders as I led her over to the table next to a chair. It was hard to remember that this woman was in her forties sometimes, because even if she was a bit juicier than Avery, she was also just as slim and youthful looking in certain ways. And while she didn't quite have the same athletic build that both Avery and Serenity had, she was still super fit like Gabriella.

Turning to face her again, seeing that her star-eclipsed eyes were full of passion and longing, I bent down to press my lips to hers, while also reaching for her fluffy pajama bottoms, slipping them past her shapely hips and letting them fall to the floor.

I shouldn't have been surprised she wasn't wearing any underwear, even if she had changed after her shower last night, finding myself grinning again as I gave her one last

peck before grabbing her by the shoulders and moving her to sit down in the chair.

She scooted her hips out further right away, leaning into the back of the seat, her frosted bottom lip trembling slightly.

“Oh sweetie,” she whispered simply, the anticipation dramatically rising.

I didn’t respond as I began kissing her thick smooth thighs, taking my time as I inched closer and closer to her juicy pussy, the trimmed blonde hair doing little to hide it from my sight. She was actually only partially transformed right now, with the skin between her legs and on her lower belly actually being a normal color, almost making it look like she was wearing a light gray bodysuit similar to the one Mrs. Rebecca had worn.

However, she quickly shifted fully as I reached her juicy lips and finally began working on her, with her moaning loudly and slowly hiking one leg up onto my shoulder, only for the other to follow as she slid herself more into my face, her fingers running through my hair.

Surprisingly she got there faster than I was expecting, though it wasn’t nearly as powerful as her orgasms last night. I thought about shoving my cock in her mouth, so she could return the favor, and she even offered as much, but Serenity and Gabriella were already exchanging places in the bathroom, and I still needed to shower myself after getting something to eat.

Thus, after washing my face off in the sink, I sat down to a stack of pancakes and sausage that Michelle had placed on the table for me, her smile content and affectionate. She then sat down across from me and began sipping on a cup of coffee.

“Not going to eat?” I wondered, knowing she’d supposedly been just as hungry as everyone else yesterday.

However, the moment the question escaped my mouth, I immediately knew why she was only sipping on the coffee.

I'd been aware all night, as if my unconscious mind was in a semi-conscious trance, and the moment I thought about the noises I'd heard inside the house, nothing alarming enough to actually wake me up, I recalled that she'd raided the fridge roughly an hour ago, just prior to beginning to make breakfast.

Thus, before she even had a chance to respond, grimacing slightly, I shook my head.

"Never mind. These pancakes are really good, by the way. Sweeter than usual."

She frowned slightly. "I put sugar in the batter. Do you not usually do that?"

I shook my head. "Oh no. I've always just followed the recipe on the box, which I don't think has that..." I paused. "Not sure, actually, since I haven't looked at a recipe for pancakes in years."

She nodded. "Well, we don't usually eat them to begin with. Avery and I have both been on more low carb diets for a while now. Lots of salads, fruits, and whole grains. But when she was younger, this is how I made them once in a blue moon."

Unexpectedly, the hairs on the back of my neck stood on end as her words made me visualize the moon - specifically, a *blue* moon, even though the moon was never actually blue - my chest graying as I remembered the owl hooting for half the night about two miles away from the house, feeling like I could recall the moon itself, only partially lit up but still bright in the starry sky.

"Honey?" Michelle said in confusion when I didn't respond.

I cleared my throat, shaking the feeling off. "Umm, nothing."

"Are you sure?" she asked in concern. "You looked like you got struck by lightning there for a few seconds."

I shrugged. "It was just your comment about the moon, is all. It makes me jittery sometimes. And if I'm tired, and

need to be awake, I usually visualize it to give me a jolt.”

“Oh,” she said in surprise, her deep blue eyes wide. “Good to know, I guess.” She then paused. “And it just makes you jittery, right?” she then clarified. “Like, you aren’t forced to change your appearance or anything, right?”

I shook my head. “Oh, no.” I laughed. “I’m not a werewolf or anything, and if such things exist, then I certainly have never encountered one.” I frowned then, realizing there might truly be more supernatural creatures out there than I imagined, and that I should probably ask Ms. Miriam about it.

After all, if anyone knew about what might exist out there, it would be her.

“Just wanted to make sure,” Michelle continued. “I had assumed that my change in appearance would only happen if I got too flustered or something. I never considered that there might be times when I can’t control it.”

I shook my head again, swallowing my bite and getting another ready on my fork. Upstairs, I could hear Gabriella clicking open a bottle of soap, even as Serenity brushed out her damp hair after getting dressed. Based on the occasional tapping sound, I assumed Avery was on her phone while she waited for her turn in the bathroom.

“Nah,” I replied. “There shouldn’t be any reason why you can’t control it for the most part.”

Suddenly Michelle’s voice was quieter. “Except when you got bigger,” she said almost inaudibly.

I focused on her in surprise. “Wait, what?” I said seriously. “You couldn’t control it when I showed you my horns yesterday?”

Of course, I wasn’t necessarily showing them my horns specifically, but instead simply showing my larger transformation. However, I figured that was the easiest way to communicate what I meant, rather than elaborating about my new nickname for it – my crowned form.

In response to my question, she simply shook her head.

And I was left a little dumbfounded, wondering if the others felt that way too, and also kind of curious as to what that might *imply*. However, first I wanted to verify if what she was saying was true, and to get an idea of what extent, since if I grew out my horns at home while Gabriella was at work, or when Michelle and Avery were out shopping, then that would be a really big problem.

Because that might mean they shift uncontrollably in broad daylight!

But surely it wouldn't happen even from that distance, right?

Deciding to just test it out without saying anything further, hoping that the three women upstairs hadn't picked up that I might try it, I quickly slipped out of my seat and practically *exploded* to my seven-foot height in an *instant*, my horns literally erupting out of my skull.

Good thing I was wearing gym shorts, because they were super tight now.

And just as quickly, I watched as Michelle shifted in the blink of an eye in front of me, along with *all activity upstairs* ceasing.

Serenity stopped mid-brush, Gabriella froze solid in the shower, and Avery actually dropped her phone.

But it was more than that.

I could feel them all.

All *five* of them.

I could even feel Gwen.

And the fact that the sensation was mutual was only reinforced when my phone unexpectedly began ringing upstairs.

I began shrinking back to my normal size, even as I turned around to run out of the kitchen and up the stairs.

"Sorry," I called out to everyone, hearing Gabriella getting out of the shower now, even though she no doubt still had soap on her.

But she grabbed a towel anyway, tying it around herself and grabbing for the bathroom door, even as Avery stepped out of my room just in time to see me run into Serenity's room.

Black hair, gray skin, and red eyes, she was already holding out my phone after hearing me run up for it.

I gave her an apologetic look, seeing that she just seemed concerned and alarmed now – much more alarmed than I'd intended with my little experiment.

I wasn't even surprised when I saw Miriam's name on the screen.

I answered it and immediately spoke.

"Everything's fine."

Miriam hesitated for half a second before responding. "What happened?" she finally asked seriously. "Gwen's horns nearly exploded into flames, and she's freaking out right now."

"I'm fine," I repeated, knowing that this confirmed a number of potential issues, but also a little surprised to have my suspicion truly confirmed. "I got bigger really fast, to see if it would effect anyone who was bonded with me. Didn't realize it would effect Gwen too."

"Wait," Ms. Miriam immediately responded. "What do you mean effect Gwen *too*?"

My eyes widened in alarm.

Shit!

"Kai," she said firmly when I didn't respond. "You know another imp?"

Fuck!

I met Serenity's crimson gaze, seeing that she was just as wide-eyed as I was. "It's..." I hesitated, not wanting to lie to her. "It's complicated. I'll..." Fuck! I wasn't sure if I was ready to tell her this yet. "I'll explain more this evening...if that's alright," I added.

The succubus was quiet for a few seconds, even as Gabriella stepped more fully into sight, her damp red hair

covered in white suds, water dripping on the carpet, with Avery standing just in the doorway. Michelle had come up the stairs too, and was standing just in the hallway.

Finally, Ms. Miriam spoke. “I’m guessing you can’t share over the phone.”

Shit! I totally forgot that was a valid excuse!

“Umm, yeah. And...” I took a deep breath. “Never mind. I’ll just explain tonight.”

She sounded much less reserved now. “That’s fine. But just to be clear for Gwen’s sake, you’re truly alright, correct?”

“Correct,” I agreed.

“And will you be bringing your friend along? Or will it just be Gabriella and Serenity?”

Fuck!

Now she was assuming there was actually a third person she didn’t know about. Of course, she’d probably be truly shocked if she realized I was talking about the people she was already aware of - people who were supposed to be mostly human, including Gabriella.

But I didn’t even want to tell her *that* over the phone.

“Is there a limit to how many people can come over?” I hedged.

“No, but I’d still like to know how many to expect.”

“For now, just two people.”

“They don’t want to meet me?” she assumed.

Dammit! That wasn’t the problem at all!

There was no other imp!

I took a deep breath. “It’s complicated. Can we just leave it as that for now?”

She sighed. “I suppose. What time do you think you’ll come over today?”

I frowned, not having a clue. “Well, we all just woke up for the day. Can I send you a message in the next hour after we solidify our plans? At the very least, Gabriella is going into work today and so it’ll have to be after she gets off.”

"Sure, that's alright," she agreed. "It's just that I need Rebecca to tell you my address, and want to make sure she gets it to you when you're ready to come over."

"Oh," I said simply, deciding not to mention that I could find her without it.

She sighed again. "Okay, well, I guess I'll let you go. I'd sort of forbidden myself from calling you again so soon, but when Gwen freaked out, I thought something was wrong. I mean, she said she thought as much."

"My fault," I repeated. "I'm still all new to this, so if it happens again, feel free to assume the worse, because I'm not going to do it like that again. I just wanted to see what would happen."

She was silent for a moment. "Sure," she repeated. "I, umm...love you."

"Love you too," I said reassuringly. "And I'm looking forward to seeing you..." My voice trailed off when I was reminded of what that would mean. That I'd have to tell her that I'd changed all my women into a creature similar to me.

"Me too," she replied sincerely. "Bye for now."

"Bye."

I hung up, taking a deep breath.

"So wait," Gabriella immediately said. "Nothing is really wrong?"

I looked at her in confusion. "No, everything is fine. Why would you think something was wrong?"

"I thought so too," Serenity agreed. "Like, obviously we are all okay *here*, so when you transformed like that, I thought maybe something was wrong over there. Where Ms. Miriam is."

I stared at her for a second, suddenly understanding what was going on from their perspective. Understanding why they weren't reassured by me saying everything was fine. Especially not when Miriam called right away.

"Oh," I finally said. "No, I didn't feel like anything was wrong with them. It's just that Michelle said she felt like she

couldn't control her transformation when I grew my horns, and I wanted to see if that was really true." I held up my phone for emphasis. "Apparently, it's more true than I imagined considering Gwen reacted to it, which means that I can't just grow bigger whenever I want, or else I might make one of you shift while you're in public."

Serenity and Gabriella both looked at each other urgently.

"Well shit," Gabriella hissed. "I hadn't even considered that. And yeah, I felt like the transformation was uncontrollable too. Both yesterday when you showed us, and of course now it definitely was."

"Yeah, and that's why I tested it out," I emphasized.

Serenity nodded at that. "It really freaked me out, but I'm glad you did now. I mean, obviously if you're ever in a situation where you *need* to transform, then do it. We'll just have to deal with the exposure."

I looked at her in surprise, realizing what she was implying. "Umm, well I don't think that will ever be necessary, but yeah, I get your point. Better to be alive and on the run." Although, given that I could share my power, that just made me wonder if they could actually request that somehow – for me to share my power with them.

My brow furrowed as I considered that, only to voice my thought, glancing toward the doorway so Avery and Michelle felt included.

"Okay, so obviously I'm sure you all realize I can actually share power to an extent. Can we try to see if any of you can request that?"

Gabriella chimed in. "You mean, if one of us were in danger, and needed your help?"

I nodded. "Exactly. Although, with Gwen it felt super easy, like breathing, whereas doing it now feels more difficult. And I'm not sure why. I can feel all of you, but sharing my power doesn't feel easy..." My voice trailed off yet again, starting to wonder if maybe it was because I was

actually low on power, possibly having used most of it up in that fight, especially with my incinerate spell that literally turned my enemy into soot.

Serenity spoke up. "Well, this Gwen person is a full-blooded demon, right? Maybe that's why?"

I shrugged. "Maybe, but I would think that all of you being like me would make it just as easy. Could be that I was more...umm, upset then. Or just had more power then."

Serenity simply nodded, prompting me to focus on Gabriella, who had surprisingly closed her eyes.

I realized she must be trying to request my help.

However, when I began sensing something, it wasn't from her.

It was from outside the room.

"Michelle?" I said in surprise.

There was a pause as everyone looked over toward the doorway, Gabriella included, with Michelle stepping closer next to Avery.

"Yes? Did you feel something, honey?" she wondered, her star-eclipsed eyes hesitant.

"Yeah, I did. It wasn't anything urgent, but I could sort of feel you making an effort to...I guess feel me?"

She nodded. "That's exactly what I tried doing, sweetie. I was able to sense you like a thousand times more downstairs, when you were taller, but now I can't as much. It's still strong right now, but not like it was when I shifted uncontrollably."

Gabriella chimed in. "So you just tried to feel him more?" she wondered.

However, even before Michelle could respond, I could sense something from Gabriella too, even though she wasn't looking at me right now. It wasn't necessarily an urgent feeling by any means, but it was like there was a connection between us and I could sense her pulling on it as if she were trying to draw me in closer.

"Now I feel Gabriella doing something too," I blurted out.

My busty redhead looked at me in surprise. "You did? Huh, and I wasn't even really trying hard. I just was trying to feel you better."

"It's not an urgent sensation by any means, but if you need to get my attention, then I think that would work. Even if we are miles away."

Serenity spoke up. "And maybe Gwen or Ms. Miriam can explain more how this all works."

I nodded. "Yeah, I guess I'm going to have to tell them both everything. So, as long as they don't freak out too much, then they should be able to help a ton."

"Why would they freak out?" she wondered. "Surely there are other supernatural creatures that can turn humans into them. Like werewolves and vampires."

I shrugged. "I don't know. I mean, I guess it's because she kind of freaked out when she found out I could grow wings, and just the fact that she didn't even guess just now kind of says a lot. Like, she's a succubus, and when I told her that I was testing out would happen, she didn't even consider the idea that maybe I'd changed any of you. Instead, she thought maybe there was another demon I knew."

"Makes sense," Serenity said with a nod. "So then, how do you want to tell her? The last thing we need is for her to feel threatened by me and Gabriella."

I sighed heavily. "I don't know. Let's figure that out later. We still have the whole day to think about it, and we need to take Gabriella to work. Plus, I'd like for at least part of this day to just be us spending time together, without stressing about things."

"Oh, sure. And yeah, we should probably be going soon, I'd imagine," she said, focusing on Gabriella.

My busty redhead shrugged. "I told my boss I'd be coming in today, but she's not going to get onto me for being late." She held her hand over her stomach then, still

only wearing the towel. "Although, I am pretty hungry and still need to finish my shower."

Michelle chimed in. "I'll fix you a plate, dear. Are pancakes alright? I also made sausage, and I can make anything else you want."

Gabriella gave her a warm smile. "Pancakes sounds great. I might actually finish them this time," she added, giving me a mischievous glance. "Kai made me pancakes on Friday, and I barely made it through half of them. Now I feel like I could eat a whole stack going to the ceiling."

Michelle made an amused noise. "Well, there are plenty, honey. I'll fix you a plate."

"Thanks," Gabriella replied.

"I'll be down in a second," Serenity chimed in, moving closer to Gabriella as she spoke to Mrs. Copeland. "And I still need to grab that spare key for you."

"Oh honey, you don't have to do that. Avery and I can just hang out at our home if needed."

"Yeah, but you plan on shopping for groceries, right?"

Michelle paused. "Silly me. You're right."

Serenity continued. "And I really don't mind you hanging onto the spare anyway. I like having you and Avery over, and we all know Kai does too."

Michelle and Avery both gave her warm smiles, before exchanging a glance, only for Gabriella to head out of the room to get back in the shower like she'd indicated. In the meantime, the rest of us went back downstairs to socialize over breakfast for a little bit, and then I showered while Gabriella devoured her pancakes, prior to Serenity and I taking her to work.

Dang, she wasn't kidding about being hungry.

Really, all four of them were eating massive portions, and yet there had been no noticeable sign that any of them were gaining weight - or at least, not gaining any extra fat.

Once Serenity, Gabriella, and I were all ready to go, we left Michelle and Avery with the spare key, and climbed into

my car to drop Gabriella off, followed by Serenity and my first official date as a couple. Honestly though, it was kind of strange, because I'd gone out to the mall and overall just hung out with her so frequently over the years, that part of me felt like there was nothing overly unusual about our plans, while the other part of me couldn't believe this was finally happening.

Even despite the recent intimacy, including the actual sex, somehow our spending time together most of the day felt like it was going to be a big step to both redefining our relationship, as well as solidifying what already existed.

Because my overall feelings were the same as they'd been previously, as I suspected was also the case for her. We were both still the most important person to each other.

And we both loved each other deeply.

Except now, that love had become something fuller.

Something richer...

Now, if only we could get through the day without unforeseen complications...

If only.

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(7) CHAPTER 52: DATE

When Serenity and I dropped Gabriella off at the nail salon where she worked – parking next to her car that had been sitting in the parking lot all weekend, considering she hadn't initially left this place of her volition last time – we decided to just chill out in my car for a handful of minutes. Part of the reason was just so we could solidify where we wanted to go first, and the other reason was to ensure that Gabriella was going to be alright.

After all, this was where she'd been when she got tasered and kidnapped.

We didn't talk about it though.

Instead, I simply made no move to put the car in gear, even after we both watched Gabriella enter the building, our view unobstructed thanks to it still being pretty early in the morning with few cars around yet. And after a few long seconds, Serenity placed her hand over mine on the center console, a sort of content anticipation developing in her aura now that we were alone.

That, and surprisingly some arousal too.

Serenity was wearing faded skinny jeans that made her ass look amazing, along with a black blouse-like shirt that was made of a stretchy material sort of like spandex, although thicker. It wasn't a shirt she'd worn often, mainly because the buttons only went up to the middle of her chest, exposing quite a bit of cleavage, though I knew from raiding her closet a few times that it was really smooth to the touch.

She originally got it when she was still attending the police academy, being one of many blouses she'd

purchased to look nice for class. However, after she'd worn it the first time, she never wore it again for school or work. Instead, the only other time she'd put it on was when we went out together to do something simple like shopping, though the last time I'd seen her in it was over a year ago.

Needless to say, it was nice to finally be able to appreciate her outfits openly, loving that she'd picked a shirt out that was objectively sexy, her plump cleavage on full display.

However, while there was definitely some sexual tension and anticipation coming from her, I knew that her placing her hand on mine wasn't any indication for us to leave. No, the gesture was a silent agreement to wait a few minutes, coupled with a more intense realization that we were truly alone together right now.

Or rather, alone *and* together.

Boyfriend and girlfriend. Now truly involved romantically, and sexually.

And we were going to be spending most of the day together, just the two of us.

It honestly felt kind of surreal.

Like, this past weekend had been the longest ever, so it already seemed as if this big step to our relationship was still brand new. And technically, it was very much still new, even despite the sex. But now that we'd be soon resuming our somewhat daily norm, including her going back to work tomorrow and me attending class again, it was beginning to settle in just how major it was that we'd finally crossed that line.

A line I'd been fantasizing about crossing for years now.

I held Serenity's deep chocolate brown gaze as the sexual tension in the air continued to slowly rise, until she finally gave me a small smile while pulling her hand away. It wasn't until I glanced at her cleavage that I realized she'd actually started to push *herself* too far, the plump swell of her breasts looking visibly medium gray.

I tried not to grin, kind of enjoying it that she was now the one who had to be more careful, especially after all the time I'd spent around Gabriella, who seemed to never struggle to maintain her appearance.

But then I did grin when Gabriella unexpectedly whispered under her breath in the nail salon, directing her words at me.

"I'm okay, Kai. Go enjoy your date with Serenity."

The person in question obviously didn't hear, instead grinning in response to my own grin.

"What?" Serenity wondered, her smirk growing even wider.

I just shook my head, finally putting the car in gear. "Just Gabriella chastising me for worrying too much."

Her eyes widened slightly. "Oh, is that what she said?"

"You heard?" I wondered in surprise, though I realized I probably shouldn't be so surprised since all of them had improving senses.

"I heard her mumble something," she clarified. "But just figured maybe she was talking to herself or something." She paused. "Kind of weird being able to hear and smell so much. Like, I thought it was crazy how sensitive I was yesterday, but then this morning I woke up and your scent was so overwhelming that it felt like someone kicked me in the face." She paused again, looking up at me. "In a good way," she added.

I smirked. "So, that's why you jumped me, huh?"

She suddenly looked serious. "It's why I want to jump you now," she agreed.

I cleared my throat, knowing she really meant that, between the tension in her aura, and the scent of her arousal. Like, she was super wet and ready, though obviously I knew we had to keep our cool while we were out. Still, I almost wanted to just have this date back at the house, so we could hang out by fucking nonstop.

If not for the sincere need to actually spend time with each other in a more casual sense, then I suspected I wouldn't be the only one on board with that plan.

"So, where to first?" I asked, heading to the mall for now, unless she came up with another idea.

"Oh, did you want to go someplace else?" she wondered, obviously knowing where we planned on visiting.

I shook my head. "No, but just wanted to make sure you didn't have any other ideas."

She frowned at that, sitting back more in her seat. "Well, normally if given the chance, about the only other thing I'd want to do was visit the gun range." She sighed. "But not only do I not want to chance seeing a coworker, I know that's not something you'd be interested in."

I took a deep breath. "It's not that I'm not interested in that kind of thing, but just that it's so loud there." I glanced at her. "One gun going off isn't too horrible, but even with earmuffs, hearing multiple shots over and over again is a bit uncomfortable."

"Oh," she exclaimed in surprise, only to look at me apologetically. "Oh Kai, I'm so sorry."

"Why are you sorry?" I said in confusion.

"I just wish I'd known. Like, so many things about you make sense now. Things I thought were a little strange." She paused. "Not in a bad way," she clarified. "But just little quirks you've had. I'm only now beginning to realize all the little things I missed."

I nodded, not at all bothered by her comment about me having quirks or acting strange. "Yeah, if not for my sensitive hearing, I might have gone more with you. I mean, I *did* kind of want to go and hang out with you, but knew you'd probably think it was really strange when I kept the earmuffs on the whole time, even when you weren't shooting." I glanced at her when she nodded. "Hope you don't regret your new hearing, if it ruins that activity for you," I added.

She looked at me in surprise. "Oh. Of course not, Kai. I'd give up anything to be with you."

I smirked slightly at that, though it was obvious from her expression that she was more focused on the implications of what I'd just said.

"And I mean," she continued. "I'll probably still try going, but if it's too much then, oh well. Not the end of the world if I can't practice anymore. And I might be able to find an open gun range somewhere." She then looked up at me affectionately. "Besides, I'm actually looking forward to trying to practice an entirely new skill."

"What's that?" I wondered, glancing at her in confusion.

She grinned. "Magic, of course!"

Oh, duh.

I laughed. "You seem pretty enthusiastic about that."

She scoffed. "Who wouldn't be? I'm kind of surprised no one else has made much of a fuss about the possibility."

I simply shrugged, not having an answer for that, suspecting it was probably just because the idea hadn't really settled in at this point, and probably wouldn't fully hit the rest of them until we were actually trying to practice. But then again, it might just be because they were all more focused on how to handle normal life in an increasingly different and more sensitive body.

"So, where do you want to go first in the mall?" I wondered. "Want to visit the jewelry store first?" I added a bit more playfully.

Surprisingly, her entire body tensed, an odd thrill pulsing through her aura.

"Is that a yes or no?" I wondered out loud, uncertain if her reaction was a good thing or not. I mean, I assumed it was, but wasn't entirely confident. At least she didn't transform though. I supposed it was now my turn to make sure I wasn't accidentally provoking one of my women to shift in public.

However, Serenity's heart was racing now, her arousal actually increasing even more as her body relaxed, her tone coming out quiet. "Okay," she finally whispered after a few seconds, almost sounding timid. "We can do that."

"Yeah?" I replied hopefully. "What finger do you want to wear the ring on?"

She focused down on her hands in her lap, her thumbs reaching to touch her ring fingers on both hands, even as she echoed her obvious thoughts out loud. "I think I do want to wear it on my ring finger. And I'll wear it on my left hand when it's just us, and switch it to my right hand for when I'm at work."

I assumed she was including Gabriella, Avery, and Michelle else when saying 'just us,' likely meaning anywhere else except for work. That way she hopefully didn't get bombarded with questions about who the guy was.

"Sounds good," I replied warmly, sincerely looking forward to picking out a ring for her now.

And apparently she was even more so, her anticipation dramatically growing as she fell silent after that, beginning to shift in her seat occasionally like she couldn't get comfortable...or like she was squirming in response to her arousal.

It wasn't until I pulled into a parking spot a handful of minutes later that I realized her exposed chest and cleavage were slightly flushed. Not gray, thankfully, but definitely flushed.

Damn, was she really that hot and bothered?

I mean, I could be in the mood too, if I really wanted to be, but being in public kind of meant I didn't have that luxury. Granted, for her it wasn't so much that she was trying to be aroused, instead simply reacting physically to everything - to the fact that we were on a real date, to the fact that we were a real couple now, and to the fact that I was sincerely going to officiate all that by getting her a ring.

It wasn't until we were walking in one of the mall entrances a few minutes later, with her arms wrapped affectionately around mine as if she'd completely forgotten to be careful, that I was pulled out of our little bubble of intimacy for a few seconds by a strange scent.

Serenity immediately looked up at me when I paused just as I reached to open the door.

"What's wrong?" she whispered, loosening her grip on me as she glanced around.

But it was pretty early on a Monday, the mall had practically just opened, and there weren't really any people around. I knew there would be shoppers inside, but by no means was the mall busy right now.

I shook my head as I grabbed the door and held it open for her. "Just smelled something different," I admitted.

She paused then, intentionally smelling the air, only to continue when it was obvious she didn't notice anything. "Is that bad?" she wondered quietly as she wrapped her arms around mine again.

I shook my head, loving that she was being so open with her affection, and a little surprised that it wasn't affecting my appearance at all. Like, it was almost as if my control over my appearance was dramatically better, but I couldn't be sure if that was simply because I was with Serenity, of all people, or if it was something else, like my body just freaking out less since I'd had so much sex in the last few days.

"No, not at all," I replied. "It's just, being that my nose is so sensitive, I've pretty much gotten to the point where I almost never smell a completely new scent. Like, even people have only so many variations of smell, and prior to meeting Gabriella, I think it had been a couple of years since I'd last truly smelled something new."

Serenity was immediately serious. "Think it's from someone supernatural?"

My eyes widened in surprise by the assumption, before my brow furrowed. "Well, the smell is gone now, and I'm not even sure it came from a person. There was a trash can outside the door. Could have been something inside."

"Do you want to go back and check it out?" she asked seriously.

I laughed at that, causing her to look surprised.

"What?" she wondered, grinning at my chuckle.

"Just imagine if I went digging through the trash every time I smelled something strange. The only time I've smelled something that turned out to hold any significance was when I first caught a whiff of Gabriella's scent."

"Oh," she said simply. "Sorry, I guess that makes sense. Just figured you'd be curious is all."

I frowned at that, my voice suddenly lower. "I suppose I did use to be curious," I admitted quietly.

She looked up at me questioningly.

I sighed. "Prior to when I was nine," I elaborated.

Her chocolate brown eyes widened in surprise, suddenly realizing what I was referring to, the time she'd only previously known as when I'd become extremely depressed for seemingly no reason. But of course, now she knew the reason why.

She hugged my arm tighter against her chest. "Sorry," she whispered simply.

I shook my head, taking a deep breath, and then smiling. "It's fine. Didn't mean to bring down the mood. And if there was a trail to follow, then I might have done so. But while strange, it was really faint and might have just been a scent carried by the light breeze. Or just something in the trash can, in which case, I'm *not* digging through the trash."

She grinned, knowing from my tone that I was being playful again. "This is really nice," she then whispered, her voice lower since we were passing a counter with a middle-aged woman busying herself with a bunch of white boxes. It was one of those perfume spots, where the same woman

would probably be standing in the isle later on in the day, trying to get people to try samples of their pricey scents.

She didn't bother us though, and before long we were in the main part of the mall, walking down the hallway with shops lining either side.

In the center of the mall, where it branched off into four hallways, three of the four corners were jewelry stores, so we just picked one and started browsing, Serenity's anticipation and excitement even higher than before. She did have to finally let go of my arm though, and while the anticipation remained, the excitement in her expression did lessen some as I imagined she was trying to avoid graying underneath her clothing.

Of course, an older woman asked if we needed help right away, but Serenity just suggested we might in a few minutes, and the lady left it at that, likewise busying herself with some early morning tasks, noisily opening several counters behind the payment area.

I knew Serenity wanted to go with simple, despite the fact that she was really falling in love with some of the more elaborate rings, but then she found one and suddenly announced she'd chosen.

"This is the one," she said confidently, pointing toward the display case a few feet away, since I'd given her a little space while I pretended to browse too.

Moving closer, I focused on the one she'd indicated, a spot where there were actually six rings clustered together.

"Third one, with the small diamonds," she clarified.

I focused on the one in question, seeing that it looked as if the majority of the band, roughly sixty percent of it, was simple white gold while it had a portion on the top where the metal curved like vines around nine diamonds, alternating between circular and marquise shaped - four of the more teardrop shape ones, and five of the circular.

And I fully agreed.

It was exactly what we were aiming for, both simple but also really nice. And it didn't necessarily look like it had to be classified as a wedding ring, even though it would be easily identified as one when worn on her left ring finger. But if worn on her right hand, then suddenly I could see this looking like just a nice ring, not being large enough to count as a standard engagement ring, yet also not being simple enough to classify as the standard wedding band.

The clerk finally chimed in then, her voice a little husky, sounding a little older than she looked. "Are we ready to take a look at one?" she asked politely.

"Ready to *buy*," Serenity replied confidently, causing me to grin at how she was suddenly taking charge of the situation.

And sure enough, the woman looked at me as if she was hoping to silently confirm that *I* was willing to *pay*, with her assuming that it would be my card she'd be charging. She was right of course, and my smile seemed to be enough to reassure her.

She gave us a warm grin as she walked around the counter we were at, and pulled out a ring-sizing tool, wanting to double-check her ring finger, only to give Serenity another confused look when she checked the ring finger on both hands, just to make sure they were exactly the same size.

For me, it wasn't too surprising that she'd check, since I could remember that my adoptive dad's gold wedding ring wouldn't fit on his right hand, since it was just a tiny bit larger. But obviously the woman didn't grasp the potential desire for knowing.

She let it go pretty quickly though, getting the ring out for Serenity to look at, and then taking it back to get resized, likely by another employee hidden in the back. And sure enough, the lady actually hung back there for a few minutes, speaking quietly with the guy about some

management email or something, leaving us to ourselves while he worked on resizing the ring.

However, about five minutes later, just as the woman came back to tell us it would just be another minute, we were both surprised to hear the unexpected.

Someone calling out her name.

“Serenity!” a man’s voice said cheerfully.

We both stiffened in surprise, with her looking up at me before glancing back at the guy just walking past in the hallway. I knew right away it must be one of her coworkers, because he just struck me as a cop, even though he wasn’t dressed like one. But he had blonde hair, bright blue eyes, and a built physique that would have him looking like a surfer dude if he was wearing swimming trunks, instead of a nice black Polo shirt and khaki shorts.

When she met his gaze, he grinned, ignoring me completely. “Thought that was you. Not used to seeing you in jeans, but I’d recognize that ass anywhere.”

Serenity immediately grabbed my elbow, as if she was afraid of me reacting to that comment, but I was more just shocked than anything. Like, did those words seriously just come out of his mouth?

He continued as if he hadn’t said anything odd. “Didn’t realize you were taking off today. Trying to ditch desk duty?”

Serenity gave me an apologetic and *meaningful* look, like she was silently asking me to let her handle this, and then walked away toward him, her voice at a much more normal volume. “Brant, I don’t want to hear you talking about my ass. Say something like that again in public and I’ll pop you one.”

He only grinned wider, facing fully toward her now to respond.

In the meantime, a guy in his thirties, dressed nicely, came out to hand off the ring we were buying to the older woman. She accepted it and gave me her full attention,

seeming unconcerned that the older girl with me was preoccupied by another guy.

I pulled out my card, and only partially listened as she shared information on insurance policies and such, instead focused on their conversation. The guy had just explained that he was taking off work to go to a surprise birthday party for his mom's fiftieth birthday, and had just stopped by the mall to grab her a last minute present. He then finally seemed to notice me, speaking loud enough that the woman helping me could probably hear, though Serenity's responses were far more quiet.

"That who I think it is?" he wondered curiously, not sounding at all suspicious that we were in a jewelry store together.

"Oh, umm, yeah," Serenity replied, trying to keep her tone even, lowering her volume a little. "He, umm, wanted to grab a gift for his girlfriend's birthday. And I promised him that I'd help him pick something out."

"Huh, must really like her," he commented, seeming to really take in the store now, as he looked around. "And what about you? You ever going to start dating?"

Serenity scoffed. "Well, if I did, it certainly wouldn't be you."

He laughed. "Ouch," he said playfully, as if he didn't take her seriously. "But really, we should hang out sometime."

"Nope," she retorted. "I don't mix work and romance. Not going to happen, Brant."

"You took that new guy home with you though. Nick or whatever."

"Not as a date," she retorted. "Damn, why am I surrounded by meatheads who can only focus on one thing?"

He grinned again at that. "So you didn't put out for him, huh? Damn, you really are a tough nut to crack."

"Yeah, and you've got two nuts I'm *about* to crack, if you don't watch your mouth."

He laughed again. "Damn, you're so hot. Ah well, I've got places to be, so I guess I'll leave you to it. Have lunch with me tomorrow?"

"Nope."

He chuckled. "Okay, dinner it is then. Looking forward to it." He then walked away before she had a chance to respond, still chuckling to himself like he thought he was the funniest guy in the world.

The older woman was just handing me the bag with the ring in it when Serenity walked back over, with the lady giving us another warm smile, thankfully seeming oblivious to the undertones of the exchange that had just happened.

"Thank you, and congratulations to you both," she said in that husky voice.

Serenity unexpectedly looked her dead in the eye, her tone overly serious and firm, almost as if she was speaking for my benefit. "Thank you," she said almost harshly. "I've been waiting for this day for far too long. Can't wait to spend the rest of my life with him."

Needless to say, the woman's smile was now very much forced as she replied. "And I can see that he's a very lucky young man," she said with a strained expression.

I tried not to laugh, knowing that the impression Serenity had given off this whole time was an entitled prissy brat who demanded she get what she want. Not at all what she was really like, which was why it was so amusing.

But then I did chuckle quietly when she firmly wrapped her arms around mine and marched us out of the store, not at all seeming concerned about Brant coming back and seeing.

No, now it was like she was leading me somewhere, as if she had a destination in mind now, and was firmly set on it.

"So, what was that all about?" I wondered, once we were heading down another hallway, since she hadn't said anything yet.

She sighed heavily. "I assume you mean the comment about my butt," she replied, only to sigh again without waiting for an answer. "Well, kind of the only way to survive in a mostly men's environment is to be 'one of the guys.' And for a woman, that basically means accepting a certain level of harmless harassment."

I scoffed. "Making comments about your ass is harmless?"

She took another deep breath, seeming to finally relax some. "It is, compared to alternatives. I'd never let one of them touch me, and there's a certain level of teasing I don't put up with, but they all take shots at each other like that. Except, usually it's making fun of each other, when its directed toward one of the other guys, whereas you could say that they prefer to 'boost the self-esteem' of their female coworkers with suggestive comments about their level of attractiveness and desirability."

"So, bully and tease *each other*, and complement and harass the women."

"Pretty much," she agreed. "And, unfortunately, the few women I've worked with are pretty receptive to it. They like the attention, and I'm sure love being the office whore."

"Hmm," I replied, my brow furrowed now. "I didn't realize it was like that. Glad you've never..." My voice trailed off.

She looked up at me in surprise. "Of course not, Kai. Even if I didn't have you, I'm the type of girl more interested in a committed relationship. Not random hookups with people I work with."

I simply nodded. "So where are we going?" I wondered when she began tugging me toward the side, aiming for a smaller hallway that appeared to lead to bathrooms.

"Just come with me," she said quietly, as we left the more open area behind, passing a few vending machines on the way.

She then went straight for a family bathroom, opening it and pulling me inside, only to lock the door behind her,

finally taking a deep breath.

I simply looked at her in confusion.

She met my gaze after a second, her expression still determined. "I'd like to wear the ring you bought me for the rest of our date," she explained.

"Oh," I replied, not having a problem with that overall, but wondering why she was so serious about it. "And you're not worried about accidentally coming across that guy again?" I wondered.

She shook her head. "I kept my hands mostly out of sight, and he doesn't pay attention enough anyway." She paused, giving me a weak smile. "He's the type of guy who doesn't check for a wedding ring, before flirting with a girl."

I scoffed. "Not surprising, I guess."

She nodded, only to look at me expectantly.

"Oh, umm, okay," I said simply in response to her expression, fumbling with the bag I was carrying, and then moving over to the immaculate countertop to set it down, while I pulled out the boxed ring. Serenity moved a little closer in response, her fingers intertwined tensely in front of her waist now, seemingly in anticipation.

Normally, I wouldn't be overly thrilled about doing this kind of thing in a mall bathroom, but honestly the location didn't matter with her.

It didn't matter to either of us.

Rather, it was the act itself that mattered.

The act of getting down on my knee and asking the question she desperately wanted to say 'yes' to.

Which was exactly what I proceeded to do, a visible wave of emotion washing over her face once I was holding up the open box toward her, revealing the gorgeous delicate ring she'd picked out.

"Serenity, you've been everything to me for practically all my life, and you *are* everything to me even now. You're the most important person in my life." I paused when her

deep brown eyes began filling with tears. "Will you be mine forever?"

She nodded, holding out her left hand even as she reached up with her right to wipe her eyes.

"Yes," she whispered. "Absolutely yes. I love you so much."

"I love you too," I replied sincerely as I slipped the delicate piece of jewelry on her left ring finger.

She focused on it for a few seconds, her hand still in mine, before she gripped me more firmly and tugged like she wanted me to stand. I did so, wrapping her in my arms, even as she did the same with me, tilting her chin back to meet my lips.

However, even after a brief kiss, I had to pull away a little, my body beginning to gray now underneath my clothing, my cock noticeably stiff against her warm thigh. Her arousal was now overwhelmingly potent in the air.

Surprisingly, she shook her head when I broke the kiss, as if in disapproval.

"No, kiss me," she whispered. "I brought you here for a reason, baby. I want you to make me yours. Right here and now."

Oh shit.

Holy fuck, was she saying what I thought she was saying?

I knew she'd been aroused pretty much our entire time together so far, but now it was like that arousal had exploded, and when she then reached down to unbutton *her* pants, I realized she was entirely serious.

She desperately wanted me to *fuck her*.

Now that I'd put a ring on her finger, and asked her to be mine, she wanted me to fuck her *hard*.

Oh fuck.

Transforming fully, my hair flashing white, my eyes now black and gold, I met her now purple lips as I helped her slide her skinny jeans and panties down, beginning to rock

my head in sync with hers as she kicked off her flats and got the pants the rest of the way off. However, knowing from her aura that there was more than a need for sex, but specifically a craving *to be fucked* by me, I didn't immediately begin unbuttoning my jeans, instead grabbing her ass firmly - the same ass that apparently everyone complimented at work - before pulling away and pushing her forward against the counter.

She grunted slightly when her hips hit it, only to focus on me in the mirror with obvious desperation in her expression.

She moaned when I grabbed her ass again with one hand while planting my mouth on her neck, beginning to give her little kisses that made her shiver, before I let go long enough to get my jeans down a little to start pulling out my cock.

“Fuck me,” she begged, surprising me with her use of the word, since she normally didn’t cuss at all, but seeming to have no reservations for communicating what she wanted.

Holding the base of my cock with one hand, even as I reached around to cup one of her firm tits, I shoved it between her thighs enough to press against her, causing her to spread her legs a little as I began to rub my throbbing head against her hot wet pussy.

“Oh yes, please,” she begged, whimpering slightly, bending her knees a little as she tried to get me inside her.

I didn’t need much encouragement though, letting go of my cock as I began to sink into her juicy folds, still cupping one breast of her smooth black blouse, while slipping my other hand underneath to feel her toned stomach and then to glide underneath her bra to grasp the other tit firmly.

“*Uhh* ,” she moaned as I began thrusting, slowly picking up the pace. “Uh. Uh. Uh. Oh yes. Uh, uh, uh, *uh* . Oh yes please,” she begged, as I continued to thrust. “Oh baby, I want to be your bitch. Please make me your bitch.”

Not the foreplay I was expecting, but I was more than happy to go along with it.

Kind of strange to unexpectedly find out that this kind of thing was her kink, of all things, but I wasn't about to ruin the mood. Still, it kind of made me wonder if the constant playful harassment at work, knowing all the other guys wanted to make her their bitch, was what prompted her to desperately want *me* to make her *my* bitch.

"Yeah, Ren? You like being my little bitch?" I asked, going along with it.

She whimpered in response, generating even more passion and lust as she focused on us in the mirror, watching her sexy demonic self get fucked by me.

"You like me claiming this ass as mine?" I added, squeezing both tits as I thrust.

"Yes," she whimpered, her crimson eyes finally fluttering closed, her head tilting back, as her purple lips opened up into a tiny 'o' when she really started getting close to her climax.

"I love you so much," I whispered, knowing she was about to get there, prepared to use some of her passion to stimulate my own orgasm the moment she reached hers. "And this hot ass is *mine* from now on," I added, knowing she needed more of the roleplay. "You're *my* bitch."

"*UHHH !*" she exclaimed a bit too loudly, causing me to release one of her tits and clamp my hand over her mouth, even as she continued to whimper and twitch, curling over slightly and groaning even louder when I shot my load in her.

"*MMMM !*" was all she managed as she was sent rocketing into a second orgasm from the sensation of having my cum fill her up.

I kept my hand on her mouth as my thrusting slowed down to a halt, resuming my gentle kisses on the back of her neck until she was beginning to shiver, instead of twitch. I then released my hold on her and felt the slick black spandex-like material on her shoulders as I continued to show her affection.

"Baby, I love you so much," she said softly, another shiver running up her body.

"I love *you* , " I whispered back, my cock still throbbing inside her. "And I really enjoyed–"

My voice cut off when there was a knock on the door, taking me off guard since I'd been so focused on her that I hadn't really paid attention to anyone in the hallway. Granted, I *had* heard someone nearby, but just assumed they would move on to the public restroom, instead of this more private one.

Fuck, were we too loud?

I wasn't sure, but now we were both frozen stiff, both of us now staring at each other in the mirror, both of us fully transformed right now.

Ah, *fuck* .

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(8) CHAPTER 53: THIRD-EYE

After I bought Serenity a ring at the mall, and she proceeded to take me to the mall bathroom so we could have some privacy while I proposed to her, we found ourselves half-naked in front of the mirrors, my cock still buried inside her pussy from behind, both of us transformed after having passionately fucked.

None of that was inherently a problem though, since we were behind a locked door.

Instead, the issue was someone beginning to knock on the door, and when neither of us said anything, frozen in place, they began trying the handle.

“Just a minute!” Serenity finally said firmly, intentionally trying to sound irritated. But I knew better. Her scent was tainted with anxiety at the possibility that this person had heard us having sex, and that was the true reason they were knocking on the door.

However, surprisingly the individual in question grumbled to herself, and then proceeded on to the public restroom.

Serenity and I both let out a deep sigh, relaxing as we began to separate, with her moving to clean up the mess threatening to escape her snatch, while I simply pulled up my boxers and pants all the way. Of course, we were both going to smell like sex now, but I doubted the average human would notice.

After all, we’d both just taken a shower not long ago, and the scent wouldn’t be strong enough to penetrate our

clothing for some time. If at all, since I knew what we'd done wasn't even that uncommon, in terms of having sex and then going out in public without showering afterward. Quite a few people walked around smelling faintly of intercourse, and no one else seemed to notice.

Once Serenity was done wiping up what she could, already looking normal again, she pulled up her panties and jeans, only to hold up her left hand and focus on the delicate ring.

I couldn't help but smirk at the affection in her deep brown eyes, moving closer to wrap my arms around her and plant a heavy kiss on her lips, loving the feel of her smooth black blouse against my skin.

She moaned softly as she wrapped her arms around my neck, only to pull away with a warm smile.

"I love you so much," she whispered.

"Love you too," I replied, only to grin again. "Now where to? Wasn't expecting the family bathroom to be one of our stops, but now I'm curious what else you've got planned."

She returned the grin. "Well, I admit I wasn't initially planning on this, but I'm glad we did. Let's go ahead and get out of here before anyone notices, and then we can figure out where to go next." She paused when I smirked, realizing I was thinking dirty now. "Which *store* to visit next," she clarified with another smile.

"Oh, so we're going to do this in a store, huh? Kinky."

She just shook her head, knowing I was teasing her, letting go of me as she looked around like she was double-checking that we had everything. But she hadn't brought her purse with us, instead just having stuck her ID and credit card in her back pocket with her phone, so other than the fancy bag and empty ring box, there wasn't anything else to grab.

She then gave me another affectionate smile before leading the way to the bathroom door.

We both paused at the door when we heard someone walking by again, probably the woman from earlier leaving the public restroom, waiting until she was in the main hall before opening it.

Thankfully, there was no one else around, so we were officially in the clear, having fucked without getting caught. However, the moment I stepped outside the door, I froze solid, hit again with that strange scent I'd noticed earlier.

A scent that was faint and brief.

One second it was there, and then it was suddenly gone just as fast, almost as if I'd imagined it.

Serenity had just been turning her head to look up at me, immediately noticing that something was up.

"Hey, what's wrong?" she whispered.

"That smell again," I said simply.

Her deep brown eyes widened in surprise. "Think it's coming from that person who knocked on the door?"

Now it was my turn to be surprised, although I realized I shouldn't have been. Serenity obviously didn't know that my nose was *very* powerful, and I could easily track down that woman even now, yet the odd scent, which I didn't even know how to describe, had completely vanished.

"No, I can smell her scent. This was something different."

"What does it smell like?" she wondered seriously, attempting to sniff the air herself. But of course, she didn't notice anything, her senses still far from being as powerful as mine.

"You know, I actually have no idea how to describe it. Nothing even to compare it to."

She frowned at that, her delicate brown eyebrows knitting together.

I sighed heavily, definitely curious myself about it, but having no idea how I might track down something that could vanish like that. Plus, even though it was strange, I didn't want to spend all morning trying to solve a mystery that might not be anything too special to begin with.

This was supposed to be our first official date, and wasting it on something like that felt like a shame, especially when I couldn't just 'follow the scent.'

Taking a deep breath, I wrapped my arm around her shoulders.

"Don't worry about it. The smell is completely gone, and I'd rather enjoy our date together."

She sighed as well, only to nod as she wrapped her arms around my waist, and we began heading back to the main hall. She then let go, slipping out of my one-arm embrace to wrap her arms around my bicep instead, like she'd been doing before.

Like she'd also done occasionally when I was younger, pretty much as soon as I'd grown taller than her.

However, as we stepped into the main hallway and began walking the way we'd come, she spoke up again in a whisper.

"Hey, didn't you say that Ms. Miriam helped you see sexual energy?"

I looked down at her in surprise, seeing her brow was furrowed again. "Well, I don't exactly 'see' it, but yeah. What about it?"

"Well, I mean, what did she do to help you sense it?"

I frowned at that, realizing I'd never actually mentioned the third-eye thing to them. "Apparently some supernatural people naturally have an ability to sense things like magic and such. She called it a third-eye, but obviously it's not really an eye. Although, now that you've said it like that, about me 'seeing' it, I suppose that is the closest comparison."

Serenity immediately stopped in her tracks, tugging on my arm as she did so, which thankfully went mostly unnoticed since the only other couple in the vicinity were walking the opposite direction, and were already behind us on the other side of the hall.

"Are you sure the smell is a *smell*?" she said seriously.

My eyes widened in sincere surprise.

She continued. "I mean, when you sense sexual energy, you just said that it's similar to seeing it. But if this third-eye thing isn't truly a form of sight, then what if what you think you're 'smelling' isn't actually an odor in the air at all. Might be your third-eye picking up on something, and you're just perceiving it as a smell because it's something very different than the other things you've detected. Things that you might have associated with your sight before."

I just stared at her, completely baffled. I mean, Serenity was a detective, and looking for clues and piecing together fragments of evidence to form theories was literally her job. And the fact that she was talented at it was partially why she was put on hard cases, despite her otherwise being inexperienced compared to the average detective, in terms of years in that type of position. But just the fact that she'd gone from so little information, to formulating an idea that might really be true, was sincerely impressive and astonishing.

And her theory really did seem plausible, because I could remember what Ms. Miriam said when I was trying to see the edges of the dimensional gate, suggesting that I was probably making the most common mistake of looking too much with my physical eyes...

And how the easiest solution would be to just *close my eyes*, but that she didn't want to stay down there long, since the portal worked both ways, and that whatever was on the other side might sense our presence if we lingered for too long...

But I might have sensed it, if I'd just *closed my eyes*.

Serenity spoke up when I didn't respond. "Want to try again?" she asked seriously, already letting go of my arm in preparation to turn around.

I sighed. "Yeah, I guess. I just didn't want to ruin our date."

She gave me an affectionate smile. "Kai, all that matters to me is that we're together. I don't care what we do, so long as it's you and me."

I returned the smile. "Love you, Ren."

"Love you too," she said warmly, grabbing my hand this time as she led me back toward the smaller hallway with the restrooms. The area was still vacant, so we walked right back up to the family restroom door, and I took a deep breath, smelling no unusual scents as I closed my eyes to try to focus on this new sixth sense I had.

Shockingly, I picked up on it again right away, now that I was focusing on the right sense, although I had to admit that it did still feel like a smell...

Just not a smell I was detecting with my physical nose, even if it was more similar.

And then, *unexpectedly*, I knew exactly what it was, except that the previous times I'd sensed it, the experience had been much different.

It was an *aura*, but not a normal one.

Previously, whenever I'd noticed someone's aura, something Ms. Miriam said incubi couldn't usually do, I did perceive it more as 'seeing it,' since it was actively shifting in response to the person generating it.

But this was different.

This wasn't an aura directly emanating from a person.

It was an aura *left behind* by a person.

And the reason why I'd sensed it was because of the potency of the emotion, similar to how a scent might be much more noticeable the stronger it was.

However, while the metaphysical scent was faint, the unexpected emotions hitting me were decisively *not*. Similar to how I felt the potent sexual and *gentle* presence of Ms. Miriam - which was the core to her aura, even as her emotions shifted - I felt two distinct aspects of this aura, a permanent part and temporary part, left behind by powerful emotions.

Or rather, I suspected it was one emotion that triggered the release of this particular scent, that one simply being *frustration* .

And I only knew of one person who had recently been frustrated in this particular spot...

But from that single emotion of frustration, all the others followed, almost like a picture being taken, capturing the whole image, giving me a full sample of the entire aura, as if I was looking at it directly.

Agonizing pain, crushing defeat, overwhelming devastation, and absolute depression.

Yet, at the very core, the part that represented the stable aspect that wouldn't change no matter what...

Defiance.

A defiance to continue on, no matter what.

A defiance to *persist* , no matter how bad it got...

To persist...

A spell?

Unexpectedly, my eyes widened in shock when I suddenly realized that I could think of a spell for this individual's aura, to essentially verbalize their aura into words, almost like...

Almost like, calling it by its name.

Not a given name, but a real name.

Just like how I'd assigned a spell to create a flame, and just like I'd learned a healing spell from Ms. Miriam, I felt like this aura had a name.

And this aura's name was...

My brow furrowed when I realized I didn't know words that would wholly represent the core of what I was sensing. Like, I felt as if the best words to call it were *Persistent Stubbornness* , but that didn't feel like it was the aura's name. That might be what the name would translate to in my language, but I felt as if the true words to identify it would be something else entirely.

Something from an entirely different language.

Serenity finally spoke up, seeming overly concerned now. "What is it?" she whispered. "What do you feel?"

I took a deep breath, and let it out slowly. "I'm not sure if I mentioned it before, but when Ms. Miriam opened my third-eye a little, I began to sense people's auras."

"Auras?" she said in confusion. "Like, emotions or something?"

"Yeah, kind of. There's a part that doesn't change easily, sort of like a person's underlying scent, or overall appearance, and then there's a part that shifts with a person's emotions. So, imagine wearing a different perfume throughout the day, or just changing your clothes. Your scent and appearance overall stay the same, and don't change easily, whereas the temporary part does, just like when you put on a new outfit."

She nodded. "And I assume I have an aura then?"

I smirked. "Yeah, everyone does. Granted, usually my nose and hearing tip me off about a lot of things, but if someone seems anxious, I can gather more information from the aura. Like this morning, I knew you were aroused, but I might have actually been a little worried if I only paid attention to your heartrate and other cues, because overall you seemed anxious too. But your aura told me you were actually more excited than anything."

"Kai," she hissed, her face flushing. "Don't just say things like that."

"Which part?" I wondered with a grin, suspecting I knew.

"J-Just the...me being in the mood part. Jeez," she scoffed.

I chuckled.

Only to sigh, followed by a frown.

She picked up on the implications of my expression. "So is the reason why you can sense this aura because it's bad or something?"

I nodded, feeling a little somber now. "Yeah, not the permanent part. But the temporary part is pretty bad. Like, I

think they're in trouble, but I'm not sure what we could do about it."

"Is it a guy or girl?" she wondered. "Or can you tell?"

I shrugged. "Well, no. Actually, I can't really tell. Not from the aura itself. But the emotion that sort of 'released' this aura in this spot was frustration."

Her deep brown eyes widened in surprise, even as she lowered her voice. "You think it might have been whoever knocked on the door?"

"Maybe," I offered. "I mean, if she was feeling all these other emotions, then even a minor inconvenience could be really frustrating. Sort of like how people have a shorter fuse when they're stressed."

She nodded. "So then, it is a girl?" she tried clarifying, since I'd just said 'she.'

I inclined my chin. "Yeah, she only made a noise in her throat, but I could tell the person was female. And I mean, technically I know which scent is hers, still lingering in the air. That alone would be enough to tell me that she was female too, even if she hadn't made a noise."

Serenity nodded again. "Let's find her then," she said seriously. "Scope her out at least."

I sighed heavily. "And do what?" I wondered. "Like, I can't exactly do anything for her. Whether it's something like an abusive relationship or something similar, there's no way I can help."

She mimicked my sigh. "Kai, this is what I do for a living. I get put on domestic abuse cases all the time, and if I don't try to help now, she might show up on my desk in the next week - or maybe next month - except as pictures of a dead body."

Of course, I knew that. I was well aware what her job entailed.

But I supposed I was just viewing this situation from my perspective, in terms of me personally not being able to do much for this individual. Because I *did* hear things every

once in a while. Really bad things. But I couldn't come to everyone's rescue.

I mean, what exactly was I supposed to do? Break into people's houses? Call the cops, and then end up becoming a suspect when they realized it was always the same number tipping them off?

Not to mention, it wouldn't solve the problem.

Not when the victim chose to stay in the situation.

Literally, I didn't have the time in the day to try to save everyone from every abusive situation they found themselves in, possibly due to their own bad choices.

I'd learned that long ago, when I was really young.

But Serenity was right.

She was a detective, and while I might not be able to offer help, she possibly could. Or she could at least let the woman know she had options. That the police would be willing to help her.

Kind of felt like a lost cause, since this female was walking around in broad daylight, by herself, without someone breathing down her neck or anything. And yet, she wasn't leaving whatever situation she'd found herself in.

Or maybe all the emotions I felt weren't even from domestic abuse. Possibly someone she knew died recently, and she felt defeated because she couldn't do anything about losing them. That didn't exactly explain the agonizing pain part, which felt truly like it was caused by physical pain, unless she'd been in a car accident or something, and was the only survivor.

Hard to say.

Or at least, it would be, until I laid eyes directly on her aura.

For all I knew, it could also be that she was being blackmailed or something, though seeing her aura certainly wouldn't give me that kind of information.

I took a deep breath, and let it out slowly, seeing that Serenity was ultimately leaving it up to me. Not surprising,

since her nose wasn't powerful enough yet to do the trailing on her own, though I doubted she'd run off anyway, since we were on a date and all.

"I guess we'll have to go on another date soon," I commented. "To make up for this one."

She looked surprised. "Oh." She paused. "I'm sorry, Kai. I wasn't trying to ruin our date."

I shook my head. "I mean, it's not really ruined for me. But this definitely feels like we're at least putting a pause on it."

She sighed, not responding.

"Okay," I finally said decisively, sticking out my arm slightly. "Let's go see if we can find her."

She nodded, wrapping her arms around my offered gesture, and then walking with me back down the short hallway toward the main one. We then began heading toward the center area with all the jewelry stores, only for the lingering scent to turn sooner than I was expecting, appearing as if the person in question had gone into a woman's clothing store, focused on younger adults.

In the front display case, there was a mannequin dressed in all leather, including a leather jacket, leather pants, and even a leather-looking camisole shirt...right next to another mannequin dressed in a flowery spring dress, with a matching sun hat...

I supposed it had barely even been five or ten minutes since this person first knocked on the bathroom door, so kind of made sense she hadn't gone far, especially with this particular shop so close to where we were.

"So what's the plan?" I whispered, pausing before stepping into the store.

"I guess, let me try to approach her. It's going to be awkward either way, but at least she shouldn't feel threatened by me."

I frowned at that, but fully understood her reasoning, simply nodding in agreement.

We then proceeded inside the brightly lit space, passing a few more mannequins with clothes on display, as well as several tables with folded jeans and less fashionable shirts. However, the scent was leading us to the side and then more toward the back down an aisle. The setup of this place was a little different than the average clothing store, with there being metal racks that held clothing in three rows high, to the point that someone would need a tool to reach the upper row of hanging shirts and dresses.

But that just meant that the store wasn't 'open concept,' in the sense that we could see someone from all the way from the other side.

On the contrary, I began slowing down as my hearing picked up on the couple of shoppers in the near vicinity, concerned we were going to turn the corner and be practically right on top of her.

And sure enough, after verifying that one woman looking herself over in an aisle mirror wasn't our target, we turned another corner just in time to see someone coming out of a dressing room, causing me to stop in my tracks.

The area had two tall metal shelf-like walls forming a V-shape that made this area look square, the space filled with individual racks of clothing that were just high enough that you could only see the top of someone's head as they moved passed them.

But that was enough.

All I saw was her aura, coupled with a flash of dark blue, and that was it.

Enough for me to react.

Suddenly, the hair on the back of my neck stood on end, and my body began turning gray underneath my clothing on its own volition, my hair threatening to turn white, all my instincts suddenly on high alert, tipping me off that something wasn't normal here.

Or rather, that something was *supernatural* here.

I reached out to grab Serenity's arm before she could try to get away, though I knew I hadn't even confirmed it was this person yet, my eyes feeling like they were about to shift as I focused down at my companion, seeing that she was unaffected by whatever I was feeling.

Unaffected, but definitely confused.

She gave me a concerned and questioning look, but I just shook my head, deciding to take the lead now. Because her plan to talk to this person wasn't going to be sufficient anymore. Not when I didn't know what we were dealing with.

Would I have noticed if my third-eye was still shut?

And why was I reacting this way now?

What was I sensing that was making me anxious and alarmed?

Of course, Serenity was still confused, but fell in step behind me, walking quietly at my side as we both headed toward the blue-haired girl, obviously dyed, who had just walked around the corner on the other side of the V-shape metal walls, sounding like she was beginning to sift through a rack of shirts.

Nothing about her movements felt aggressive, angry, or otherwise upset, as if her exterior was a perfectly presentable facade to hide what lie within, but without a doubt it was her. Because, even if she could hide what she was feeling outwardly, her aura couldn't be hidden.

Honestly, I wasn't even sure how to handle this situation, or what I might say to her, knowing Serenity truly would be the better pick. But I was also now fully committed to taking the lead on this one, even if this chick did perceive me as a threat.

Because I'd never reacted like this to another person before.

Was it because *she* was a threat?

But she didn't exactly feel like a threat. And yet, my body was clearly on high alert, all my senses feeling even more

heightened now, as if the core of my existence instinctively knew something that I didn't understand. But what? What was my body warning me about?

Why was it freaking out?

Why was my heart racing?

Was it possible that I was sensing a threat that she was somehow connected to? Rather than she herself being the threat?

When we slowly passed the corner she'd gone around, I was finally able to lay eyes directly on her, taking in her appearance as she continued to casually sift through the shirts, pausing occasionally to look at one more fully, before moving on.

She looked like a chick straight out of a heavy metal rock band.

Blue hair – which was slightly curled and nearly pitch-black near the top of her head, becoming much more vibrant halfway down – coupled with a leather jacket over a black dress that did nothing to hide her toned thighs, the material appearing almost sheer just past her rear.

Honestly, she almost looked half naked, with how much of her legs were showing.

She then had on military-style boots, and a ton of bracelets on her wrists, one of which had a delicate metal chain that ran from a leather bracelet on her right wrist to a similar leather 'ring' on her middle finger. And then, from the way her hair was tucked over her ear, I could see that she had two diamond studs in, otherwise not appearing to be wearing any jewelry.

But I barely absorbed her overall thin figure in my peripheral vision, my focus mostly on her face.

Her jawline was chiseled and defined like what I'd expect to see from a magazine model, her full lips having a slight shine from lip gloss, while her light brown eyes were surprisingly made to look even lighter by the dark makeup around her eyes.

However, I wasn't mostly focused on her face just because she was pretty or something.

I mean, she *was* attractive.

But it was instead the fact that, before I really had a chance to look past her defined cheeks and blue hair, it was as if she'd reacted to me, her dark blue eyebrows furrowed, even as she paused what she was doing, the reaction so quick that it was as if she'd frozen in place.

And thus, between the three of us, it was now silent. As if we were in our own little world.

She then spoke up before I could, her voice a little more hoarse than I was expecting, though still very feminine, kind of sounding like she really was a heavy metal rock singer who was constantly on the verge of losing her voice from her screamo performances.

"If you work here," she said firmly, not looking at me. "I don't need any help. And if you don't work here, then fuck off. Not interested."

I frowned at that, but not because she told me to fuck off.

It was because, despite her words, I felt a pang of fear spike through her aura, and not fear for herself. No, she wasn't afraid of me at all.

Instead, she was afraid *for me*.

She was afraid...*for me*.

I decided to be blunt, speaking before I had a chance to think my words through.

"Who's hurting you?" I demanded in a low voice, barely above a whisper. I felt Serenity grab my arm tighter, likely wishing I'd been a bit more thoughtful about my approach, but I ignored her.

Instantly, the girl's anxiety spiked *through the roof*, even as she grabbed a hold of the collar of her jacket, as if she was trying to hide something she assumed I saw, like a bruise or something. And the anxiety was so powerful that it was nearly overriding everything else I sensed in her aura,

with suddenly everything about her scent radiating it as well.

Radiating *panic*.

“Fuck,” she whispered in alarm. “Just walk away. Please, just walk away.” She then raised her voice, still not looking at me, but sounding even more panicked. “Just get the fuck out of here. *Now*. You don’t understand what you’re getting involved with. Fuck, *they’re coming*. Just *walk the fuck away*.”

“Who’s coming?” Serenity unexpectedly demanded, stepping more toward my side.

The girl immediately looked at her with wide eyes, focusing in our direction for the first time, almost seeming shocked that someone else was with me, followed immediately by horror and alarm. She then finally focused on me specifically, all that determination within her appearing all at once, her tone suddenly demanding.

“If you give even two fucks about the well-being of your bitch, then get her the fuck out of here. *Right now*.”

“We can help,” Serenity blurted out.

The chick focused on her again. “No. You fucking can’t. Now leave me the fuck alone.”

“I’m a cop,” Serenity continued more firmly. “I can get you help.”

The girl suddenly looked shocked all over again, only for her to turn her head away, her shoulders slumping in defeat as she literally closed her eyes. Everything about her posture was suddenly one of surrender, as if there was now nothing she could do to prevent from whatever she believed was about to happen.

As if she’d suddenly realized that we weren’t going to just walk away, like she demanded, thus sealing our own fate. As if the fact that Serenity was a cop meant we were officially fucked, and there was nothing this chick could do to stop it.

So all she could do was close her eyes and try to protect herself mentally while whatever happened unavoidably transpired.

Only one word escaped her lips, just prior to her falling completely silent.

A word that embodied the defeat and now *regret* she felt.

“Fuck,” she whispered simply.

I already knew that her concern wasn’t entirely unwarranted though, and that her claim that ‘they’ were coming wasn’t a lie. Because I could hear a small group of heavy footsteps walking much too quickly down the wide hallway to be normal, to the point that by the time that I grabbed Serenity’s arm in warning that we were about to have company – just before she tried speaking to the girl again – they were already entering the store, wading through the racks of clothing as if they knew exactly where this chick was.

As if they knew her *exact* location.

She’d been by herself previously, walking to the restroom of her own accord, and probably entering this store for the first time of her own accord. And yet there was obviously a group who had some way to track her with perfect accuracy, to the point that she wouldn’t even think to run away, knowing she’d be found no matter where she went...

I wasn’t sure what I was expecting, as the group rounded the corner together.

Or rather, I suppose that I *did* have an idea of what to expect, thus making it somewhat unsurprising when a whopping five guys came into sight.

Problem was, it was a bunch of *nerdy* guys.

A bunch of nerds, all of them lean and skinny, but with scowls on their faces as if they thought they were the star athletes of the football team, like they were top dog and everyone else was beneath them.

And also, as if...

As if, they didn't particularly like that someone might be trying to mess with their 'plaything.'

No, on the contrary, there was *murder* in their dark eyes.

There was *homicide* and *bloodlust* in their auras.

And suddenly, I had an idea of why this Rockstar magazine model might be afraid *for me*.

She thought I was going to be murdered.

And, that my 'bitch' was going to be forced into being a fuck-toy like she clearly was.

That realization alone pretty much settled it for me.

I couldn't risk exposure, but no way in hell was I letting these bastards walk away with either woman. No way in hell.

And if it came down to it, I'd kill them all before they even had a chance to blink an eye.

Exposure be damned.

Exposure be *fucking* damned.

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(9) CHAPTER 54: THREAT

The group of five guys who rounded the corner of the tall metal shelving inside the woman's clothing store were not at all what I was expecting. Certainly, based on the situation, I was beginning to suspect that she had multiple male kidnappers, but not ones who looked so nerdy, like they were on the 'mathematical theory' debate team.

To be clear, math was my strongest subject, and I had no qualms about admitting that I had great grades in school, largely just because I did all my homework and paid attention in class, which was all a great distraction from all the other things vying for my attention, especially at school.

However, these guys were the literal definition of nerdy, and not because of how they were dressed or even because they had glasses on.

Because none of them wore glasses, and they all had on pretty standard attire. In fact, a group of guys from a sports team, all hanging out together at the mall, might wear the exact same stuff. However, there was only so much clothing could do to hide their physical features.

Eyes too close together on one, nose far too large on another, eyebrows far too thick on yet another guy, and almost all of them had some quirk to the shape of their head, such as a forehead that was far too huge, or a chin that tapered in far too much to look normal.

But it was even more than that, since even physical features might be overcome with proper grooming and

hygiene. It was also the obvious attitudes, looking very self-entitled and condescending.

Granted, it was also obvious there was a lack of self-care, as evident by the oily skin, somewhat unkempt hair on a few of them, along with outdated haircuts in general.

In particular, the guy standing in the middle of the group had greasy raven-black hair that almost went down to his cheeks, parted right in the middle, and framing the sides of his pasty face in such a way that his nose looked even larger, coupled with his dark eyes appearing even more beady than they might have otherwise. Seriously, it was like he got his hairstyle directly from a ‘How to Look Nerdy without Glasses 101’ book.

And without a doubt, he was the leader.

He identified himself right away by being the one to speak up, even if it wasn’t already obvious from him being in the middle of the five, standing a foot in front of the others. However, not only was he the nerdiest looking, and the shortest, he also surprisingly had the most commanding presence, a bizarre contrast to his appearance.

When he spoke, his voice was hard and pompous, but also a little nasally.

“What the fuck is this?” he snapped.

His tone only pissed me off.

I wasn’t normally someone who let others get underneath my skin, but everything about his attitude communicated that he believed he was above me in every way, like I was the scum of the world, not even worth talking to...

As if *he* was the king, and I was the peasant.

And I wasn’t about to take this little bastard’s shit.

Because *I* was a king.

“What the fuck is *what*?” I snapped right back, squaring my shoulders.

Surprisingly, he ignored me though, shifting his infuriated gaze on the blue-haired Rockstar chick, his voice

suddenly low and menacing.

“I asked you a question, bitch.”

Okay, that took me completely off guard. Suddenly, rather than making me more pissed, I was just dumbfounded by his level of arrogance. I couldn’t believe he was so conceited that he wasn’t even talking to me, even though he was staring directly at me when asking the question, unable to believe that someone could really be so arrogant as to not even acknowledge another individual.

Truly, I wasn’t sure I’d ever met someone so full of himself.

However, his question gave me pause for another reason, as I sensed a dramatic shift in the girl’s aura in response to the demand for her to answer the question apparently directed at her. Not that her previous emotions were gone, with the pain, defeat, depression, and now terror and panic all still there, but a new pulse radiating through her aura was subduing all the other aspects, literally tainting the whole thing with one single reaction.

Absolute submission .

She was trembling now, but her aura was radiating *submission* , even to the point of suppressing her fear. And when she spoke, her voice was shockingly even, as if she was answering a completely normal question, no hint of her panic leaking into her tone, even if she was still feeling it.

“I don’t know how they knew,” she explained. “I was sure I covered everything up. Y-You checked me over even,” she added, her voice breaking just briefly.

“Yeah, I did,” he agreed with a snarl. “But you know what that means, right?”

Her expression pained, her bottom lip trembling as the fear spiked again, her eyes remaining closed, yet her voice was still even.

“Yes,” she said simply. *Definitively* .

Her tone was so certain, almost to the point of confidence that she knew *exactly* ‘what that meant,’ that

after she spoke that single word, it suddenly felt overly silent in the store.

No one moved, no one breathed, no one blinked.

I suspected the couple of nearby shoppers had heard too, because even they had stopped moving.

It was as if the world came to a halt.

And then, everything happened all at once.

Instantly, even as everyone remained where they were, a nauseating *CRACK*, like a massive tree branch snapping off the trunk, ricocheted in my ears, as I watched in horror at the girl's arm abruptly bending backward at the elbow, like someone had literally grabbed her arm and slammed their knee into the joint, her mouth slamming shut in an urgent attempt to muffle the shockingly loud scream that erupted from her throat.

A scream that could be heard throughout the whole store, even though it sounded as if someone had duct taped her mouth.

What the *fuck* ?!

What the *actual fuck* ?!

As fast as lightning, far too fast for a normal person, I was standing next to her, trying to defend her from whatever unseen assault she was enduring. Trying to understand how her arm had suddenly bent the wrong way.

But I sensed nothing! The bastard hadn't even moved!

"*Stop it!*" I finally barked out, my tone tainted with sincere panic from simply the fact that I couldn't understand what was going on right now. Couldn't comprehend what he was doing, or how he was doing it.

However, he didn't respond.

Instead, he just glared at *her*, even as the girl continued to shriek with her mouth closed, the fucking jackass not at all seeming threatened by the fact that I was standing next to his *property*.

"Stop what?" he finally spat at me, even as another *CRACK* filled my ears, the girl right next to me shrieking

again, the sound muffled by her closed lips, as her other arm abruptly snapped backward, forcing her to hold it to her side.

The sight was literally sickening.

And I didn't fucking know what to do!

Should I knock him out? Would that even help? Punch him in the face and then use a healing spell on her?! How was he even breaking her bones?!

"Shut up!" he finally barked out at her.

Instantly, her agonized muffled screaming turned into an almost silent whimper, an overpowering wave of *submission* pulsing again through her aura, literally silencing her even despite the mind-splitting torment she was obviously suffering. She was trembling violently, her face contorted in pure agony, and yet she was almost completely silent.

And just like that, it clicked.

Just like that, my panic vanished, the confusion lifted away, and my rage turned ice cold.

My appearance remained the same, but the twelve-foot monster deep inside of me resurfaced, instinctively understanding the nature of these circumstances, even if I couldn't logically explain why it was resulting in this outcome.

And with that rage, I felt magical energy boil up within me, rising, intensifying, swelling, strengthening – threatening to overflow.

Threatening to *explode*.

And with it, I spoke a command, releasing the built up pressure all at once.

I didn't know her name, nor did I know the true name of her aura, but suddenly I knew what I could call her.

What name I could *assign* to her, for the sake of my command.

My voice came out deep, the ground beginning to tremble beneath our feet, the racks of clothing starting to rattle, the lights above our heads beginning to flicker, all as

the air pressure in the room seemed to increase dramatically in response to my voice.

"DEFIANCE. By my authority, I grant you permission to Obey Yourself."

The girl screamed with her mouth open this time as her arms abruptly snapped back into place, her backward bent elbows suddenly right again, only for her to instantly collapse to the ground in a heap, sounding like she was hyperventilating as she panic-sobbed.

And what I'd just done *didn't* go unnoticed.

The raven-haired bastard moved faster than I was expecting, his face blood red in pure rage, literally screaming at the top of his lungs as he lunged at me with his fist raised.

"WHAT IN THE FUCK DID YOU-"

All at once, just as his fist was about to collide with my face, my hand shot up in a flash, catching him by the forearm, my body graying underneath my clothing, my muscles swelling, all as I crushed the twig suddenly in my grasp, my ears filling with a satisfying *CRUNCH*.

And then, before he could even comprehend that his arm was split in two, I shoved him backward, shocked when two of the guys rushed forward to catch him before he landed on his ass, moving in perfect sync, as they hoisted him by his arms to his feet.

He finally looked down at his snapped arm, the color draining from his face as if he was only now beginning to register the pain.

"I'll...I'll kill you!" he unexpectedly yelled, even as his face contorted in agony as his four buddies started helping him retreat, as if they fully *expected me* to let them go. "I'll fucking kill you!" he repeated, even as they dragged him away.

I took a step forward, about to *break* all of them, only for thin familiar fingers to grab me by the arm.

I glanced back at Serenity in surprise, realizing that her skin was visibly gray on most of her body, her eyes having a visible red tint to them.

"Kai, not here," she whispered urgently. "I'm already struggling to look normal, and we need to get out of here."

Suddenly, I realized that my phone was vibrating in my pocket, only now realizing the implications of what I'd just done.

Even though I hadn't shifted myself, or even grown taller, obviously the abrupt release of magical energy had an effect on the others...possibly including those who weren't here with me.

Shit.

I pulled out my phone to see that it was Ms. Miriam again, no doubt calling because Gwen had felt what just happened. I decided to answer it really quick while Serenity helped the girl to her feet, who was surprisingly composing herself rather quickly, beginning to look shell-shocked and teary eyed, but not at all falling apart like she'd done when she first fell.

Granted, I was aware of the reason why, that underlying stubbornness in her aura beginning to take hold again, as if she just couldn't let herself be seen like this by anyone. Not even us.

As if she was too prideful to be seen in such a defeated state, even though she was no doubt traumatized from what she'd just experienced. But then again, maybe that wasn't even the worst of it. Maybe she was already so traumatized that this incident was nothing by comparison.

I knew the five guys had already escaped into the hallway, but hadn't realized they truly snuck away unnoticed, until I heard a booming voice echo at the entrance to the store.

"Security!" a man announced.

Shockingly, Serenity spoke up. "We're over here!" she cried out, only to immediately speak quieter to me. "Just

trust me, Kai," she whispered, only to direct her words at the girl. "Go along with what I say," she added.

The girl simply nodded, her light brown eyes vacant, her blue-hair surprisingly not looking even remotely disheveled despite her fall.

I answered the phone call, speaking quickly to Ms. Miriam. "We're okay. I used a spell. Or I guess, *made up* a spell, or whatever. I'll call you back to explain. Need to try to avoid exposure first."

Ms. Miriam paused for a second before responding, sounding worried but also relieved. "Okay," she said simply, hanging up.

I shoved my phone back into my pocket, just as a heavy-set middle-aged guy with a huge belly hurried around the corner, clearly dressed as mall security.

Serenity was already holding out her police ID, since she hadn't brought her badge.

"I'm a cop," she explained. "Some guys were harassing this girl, but we made them leave."

He looked from her to me, then to the girl, and back to Serenity again.

"Mind if I see that?" he asked seriously.

"Of course," she agreed, taking a step forward and handing it over.

He only looked at it for a few seconds, before nodding and handing it back. "The cashier reported screaming. Said it sounded like someone was getting murdered in the store."

"Wasn't quite that bad," Serenity lied. "But they were definitely pushing her around. She might have screamed once," she added.

He nodded, suddenly more serious as he grabbed a radio on his hip, while focusing on the blue-haired girl in question, even as he continued to speak to Serenity. "Okay, I'll let you handle her, in the event she wants to file a police report. Any idea which way they left? If they harassed one woman, they'll likely harass another."

She shook her head. "We haven't left this area, so I didn't see which way they headed. Probably the opposite direction you came from, assuming you didn't see them, because they just left barely a minute ago."

"How many were there?" he wondered. "And what did they look like?"

"Five guys. Most of them average height. They look like troublemakers, so you'll know it's them, if you see them."

He nodded, angling away from us now. "Right. I'll go look around and make sure they aren't still hanging around." He then spoke on his radio as he walked away, making a request to another guy to start scoping out the south hall for five suspicious guys walking around.

I focused on Serenity in confusion once he was out of sight, although not because he'd left this particular situation up to her. On the contrary, this guy probably wasn't a real cop, as was the case with most mall security, likely not even having the right to arrest anyone unless he actually witnessed a crime.

And even then, it would technically be a citizen's arrest if he wasn't a registered officer.

Nevertheless, I was still confused. "Are you sure it was a good idea to send him after those bastards? They definitely weren't normal people."

She shrugged. "Yeah, it's a risk. But I'm more worried about getting out of here without a huge headache. And besides, I doubt they'd hang around after you broke that guy's arm."

I nodded, having no reason to disagree with that reasoning, trying to focus my hearing to see if I could find them.

However, it was similar to the hospital, where there were too many sounds to wade through for me to pick out particular ones. Because, while there weren't a ton of people at the mall, they were all much louder than before,

pretty much everyone talking about the ‘earthquake’ that just ‘almost made the lights go out.’

“Right, let’s get out of here then. We’ll figure the rest out once we’re in the car.”

Serenity nodded, but the girl didn’t budge at all, not even responding to my suggestion.

It was like she was frozen in place.

Both of us exchanged a glance, before Serenity focused on the chick, her tone gentle. “Hey, you’re safe now. Just come with us for now, and we’ll figure out how to help you. Okay?”

The blue-haired magazine model just shook her head, still looking shell-shocked, her voice coming out barely above a whisper. “They’re going to kill me.”

“We won’t let that happen,” Serenity tried reassuring her.

The chick finally focused, her light brown eyes serious now, though there was resurfacing defeat growing in her expression and tone. “You don’t understand,” she barely managed, sounding like her voice was about to break.

“There’s no where I can go. They *will* find me. And when they do, they’ll kill me.” Fear then resurfaced in her light brown eyes, her expression pained as she looked away. “Or worse,” she said almost inaudibly, beginning to tremble again.

Serenity and I exchanged another glance, before I finally spoke up, deciding to take a slightly different approach, going off what I knew about her from her aura. “Look, you’re afraid of them getting a hold of you again, right?”

She immediately stiffened in response, not looking at me, a wave of guardedness washing over her.

I continued anyway. “And, after what I just did, do you believe I could protect you? Or rather, do you believe that I would at least protect myself, and anyone directly around me?”

Again, she didn’t respond, her aura growing even more guarded and defensive.

I then focused on Serenity. "Let's go," I said simply.

She gave me a confused look, but followed after me when I started walking, the two of us leaving the chick behind, not at all taking our time as we made our way through the racks and tables of clothing. And we actually got pretty far, almost halfway to the exit, before we heard someone call out behind us.

Her voice was surprisingly desperate.

"Wait!" she pleaded.

We stopped and focused back at her, seeing that she looked visibly distressed, her gaze downcast again now that we'd stopped. The front desk to check out was actually visible from where we were, but there was no cashier in sight, likely scared off after all the tormented screaming earlier. Because that person hadn't been exaggerating when saying it sounded like someone was getting murdered.

Doubtful any sane person would hang around after that.

It was obvious the blue-haired chick was struggling to speak as she clutched at her leather jacket.

"I...I need to grab my purse," she finally managed. "Left it in the changing room."

While probably not the smartest idea, I could understand her reasoning for leaving something important unattended. For one, there hadn't been too many shoppers here to begin with, and a lot of places like this had little signs that could be hung on the door to let others know it was occupied. At the very least, she might have been using her purse to reserve her spot, in the event they didn't have such signs, trusting that the average shopper wouldn't bother it, and would instead see it as a sign that someone was using a particular changing room and would be right back.

So between that, and the fact that she likely hadn't planned on being away for long, it kind of made sense.

"We'll be in the hall," I replied simply, turning back around and urging Serenity to continue on, even as I heard the chick all but run to go grab her belongings.

It was obvious Serenity was still a little confused, but I suspected that the questioning look she was giving me was more in regards to wondering how I knew that approaching this stranger in this manner was going to be more effective than demanding it.

And sure enough, once we were in the wide hallway, with surprisingly no one else in sight, she voiced her question more as a lighthearted statement.

“Don’t tell me you can read minds now, too.”

I gave her a small smile. “No, but I can tell from her aura that she’s the kind of person who doesn’t like being told what to do, when given the choice.”

“Yeah, I gathered that much. Some people would prefer to jump off a cliff, rather than come back to safety simply because someone told them to do so. But I’m just a little surprised that a person’s aura can tell you so much.”

I frowned at that. “Well, I don’t think it would tell me that information for the average person. Being stubborn, on its own, probably isn’t something I could sense. But with her, it’s almost as if the most important aspect, revolving around who she is, centers on a need to make her own decisions. So that’s what I offered her. The choice to either remain near us, like we were offering, so that we could defend her, or else let her choose to fend for herself.” I shrugged. “And as much as I’d hate to see her get hurt if she refused our offer, I’m also not going to go out of my way to help if she’s going to flat out refuse it. No point in dragging her, kicking and screaming, away from the cliff if she’s really determined to jump.”

Serenity sighed heavily.

“Disagree?” I wondered.

She immediately shook her head. “Oh, no. Not at all. I agree fully. I’ve seen plenty of woman get hurt by their boyfriend, only to go right back to them the moment they get the chance.” She sighed. “And earlier, I was only planning on talking to her and letting her know she had

options. I wasn't about to try to make her seek help." She paused. "Obviously, things changed a little when those guys showed up, ready for a fight."

I nodded, glancing at the store entrance when the girl reappeared, looking just as immaculate as before, with not even her makeup affected by her brief, but intense, sobbing not long ago. She still looked half naked, since the black sheer dress she was wearing barely went past her ass, but other than her face looking a little puffy, no one would be the wiser that she'd experienced anything painful or traumatizing recently.

Given what I gathered from the situation she'd been in, I kind of wondered if she normally dressed like a Rockstar chick, or if she was only wearing the military boots and leather jacket because that's what they'd dressed her up in, like a living doll. Hard to say, because given the nature of her aura, I almost couldn't imagine this girl dressing normally.

On the contrary, everything from her blue hair to the dark makeup around her eyes, to the bracelets on her wrists, all seemed to align with her inherent personality.

Wanting to avoid her becoming guarded and defensive again, I simply wrapped my arm around Serenity's shoulders and began walking the way we'd come to first enter the mall, passing the jewelry place where we'd bought her ring, and then making our way to the main store we'd first gone through.

Unsurprisingly, the girl followed us, but the further we walked, the more she decreased the gap between us, until she was literally walking a couple of steps behind us once we exited the building.

I again sensed the aura she'd left behind in that spot, realizing this must have actually been the way she'd come in as well, causing me to look around and keep my eyes out for those nerds. However, I didn't notice anything at all, not

even any unusual scents, suspecting they were long gone at this point either way.

Still, without a scent to go off of, I wasn't sure I'd be able to find them again. And that gave me pause, causing the chick to almost run into me when I stopped just outside the mall glass doors.

Because I needed to find them again, so I could *end* them.

Especially since, I believed this girl when she said they'd find her again.

Serenity looked up at me in concern when I stopped.

"What's wrong?"

I sighed. "If I don't find their scent before we leave, then I'm not sure if I'll be able to find them again. It's strange enough that I'm struggling to pick up on it at all. Especially not when I can normally track a scent from miles away."

"Want to try walking around the mall to see if you can find it?"

The blue-haired girl unexpectedly spoke up. "Don't bother," she scoffed. "They have a way of masking their presence."

I glanced back at her in surprise, seeing that she was averting her gaze again, her light brown eyes pained.

"You're not trying to protect them, right?" I asked seriously.

She didn't look at me, but her frustration was obvious. "Fuck no," she hissed. "But you also have no fucking idea what you're dealing with. They *will* find me, and they *will* kill me. And if you're around when they come, they'll kill you too."

I frowned at that, wondering why she doubted my strength after what I'd done. But then again, maybe she didn't fully understand my role in what happened earlier. After all, if she was in enough pain, then she might have been oblivious to everything, including the shaking floor, flickering lights, and she might not have even heard me speak, all because she was in so much agony.

Hard to say, but now wasn't the time to try discussing it.

It was still fairly early in the morning at this point, but the mall was becoming a bit more busy, with a woman and her three kids currently crossing the parking lot and heading in our direction.

"Okay, let's go," I said simply, giving Serenity a small nod as we began walking again.

"Want me to drive?" she wondered when we reached my car. "That way you can focus on calling Ms. Miriam back."

I shook my head. "I'll let you send her a short message for now," I suggested, pulling out my phone and handing it to her, only to walk around to the driver's side. "Don't have much else to tell her at the moment. Might also want to call Gabriella to make sure she's okay. Maybe Michelle too."

She nodded as she climbed into the passenger's seat, beginning to type out a quick message as our blue-haired company gracefully slid into the backseat. Serenity then called my busty redhead as I pulled out and began heading to the edge of the parking lot.

Surprisingly, Gabriella didn't answer right away, which did make us a little anxious, but once I got onto the street she was already calling us back, only seeming worried that we were calling in the first place, not at all seeming aware that anything had happened recently.

Which sort of confirmed something for me.

For whatever reason, Gwen's ability to sense what was going on with me was stronger than it was with the others. And while I couldn't be certain of the reason, I suspected it might have something to do with her inherent ability to basically read minds, with her being able to get a general grasp of what someone was thinking, even if it wasn't true mind reading.

Or, it might just be that she was more attuned to the connection we shared.

Could also be that she was an imp, with Serenity sharing a similar heritage, whereas my other women clearly didn't

have those underlying genetics.

Hard to say at this point.

Being that Gabriella was at work, and had been in the middle of working on someone's nails, Serenity didn't keep her for long, the overall conversation pretty short. I assumed we would just fill her in on the details later, once she was back home. My sexy brunette then called Michelle using her own phone, just to check up on her, only to hang up a couple minutes later and take a deep breath once she'd verified everyone was unaffected, leaning back more in her seat.

"So, where are we going?" she wondered after a second.

"Haven't really decided yet. Are you hungry?"

She sighed heavily. "Honestly? Yeah, I kind of am." She groaned softly. "And I ate so much for breakfast too."

I couldn't help but chuckle slightly, even despite all that just happened. "Okay, well, where do you want to eat then?"

Her brow furrowed briefly, only for her to perk up as if she'd just recalled that we had company with us. Turning around in her seat, she focused on the chick, who surprisingly met her gaze. "Do you have a preference?" she wondered.

The rearview mirror was turned in such a way, that I could just barely see her at the edge, noticing how she glanced hesitantly at the side of my head before responding. "I'm...not going to eat," she replied quietly.

Unexpectedly, as if just the thought of food had made her stomach begin moving, a ridiculously loud gurgling growl came from her flat belly beneath the leather jacket, causing her to immediately look out the window in obvious embarrassment. It was so noisy that it might have actually been comical in a different situation. Instead, it was just a little frustrating.

And sure enough, Serenity frowned, her tone a bit firm. "Look, it's no big deal for us to pay for your meal. I assume

you probably don't want to feel like you owe us, but you don't. Okay? If anything, you're sparing us the awkwardness of eating in front of you while you sip on a glass of water or something."

The girl's light brown eyes pained, with her not responding.

I spoke up. "How about this?" I said, causing her to flinch at my voice alone. "We want information. So how about a meal in exchange for you answering our questions?"

Her voice was quiet. "I can't tell you anything."

"And why not?" I wondered.

"Because it'll be worse when they get me again," she said almost inaudibly, obvious fear in her tone.

Serenity chimed in. "We won't let that happen. They won't—"

"Yes they will!" she unexpectedly yelled, suddenly releasing all of her pent up fear and frustration. "You have no idea! What you saw back there was just an *ant* of a man, compared to the real thing! They are all far more powerful and vicious than you could ever imagine! You have no fucking idea!"

We were just passing a restaurant that focused mainly on breakfast foods, including pancakes, along with bacon and eggs, and her outburst actually frustrated me, to the point that I just wildly made a turn and pulled into the parking lot, only to slam on the brakes as I whipped into a space a bit too fast.

I then shifted it into park and focused on her with a glare, causing her to shrink away as she met my gaze for the first time, her light brown eyes sincerely afraid to see the expression on my face.

My voice was low as I responded, wishing I could just take her to a secluded area so I could show her my crowned form, knowing I couldn't do that without making everyone else transform in the process.

"No," I said in a commanding tone. "You have no fucking idea." I paused when I realized she looked like she was about to piss herself, forcing my tone and expression to be a little less harsh. "So how about this?" I began in a firm, but less hostile, tone. "Let's make a deal. Right now, we're going to go in here and eat, you included. And then, in exchange for the meal, I want you to promise me that you'll tell us what we want to know, *assuming* I can prove to you that I am stronger than those assholes. Sound good?"

She was trembling again, seeming like she was struggling to respond. "H-How will you prove t-that?" she stammered.

"By showing you what I look like when I get serious."

She looked even more afraid, her voice barely a whisper now. "A-Are you going to touch m-me?"

My eyebrows raised. "Do I need to, in order to make a point?"

She immediately shook her head, almost panicked now.

"Then no. I'll only show you my true form, and if that's not enough to convince you, then you're off the hook. Deal?"

She grasped at her leather jacket, her exposed thighs visibly tensed and trembling, her knees forced together as hard as she could manage. "O-Okay. I...I accept that offer."

Serenity sighed heavily. "Jeez, why do you have to be so difficult?" She then glanced back when the girl didn't respond, frowning slightly. "And what's your name, anyway?" she asked, only to scoff. "And don't tell me you're going to refuse to share even that. If you might end up getting a free meal out of this, then that's the least you can do."

She immediately looked out the window at that, grasping at her leather jacket again, some of the blue curls shifting on her shoulders as she tried to control her trembling. She then took a slow deep breath, and let it out with slightly puckered lips.

"I'm...Natalie." She paused. "And...thanks for the meal."

"You're welcome, Natalie," she replied warmly. "And look, if you don't want to be friends with us, that's perfectly fine. But let's at least try to tolerate each other, okay?"

Natalie looked at her in surprise, before nodding just slightly. "Umm, yeah. Okay."

Honestly, despite her obvious stubbornness, she didn't strike me as the kind of girl who was overly choosy about who she decided to be friends with. If anything, she probably was the kind of person who would be friends with almost anyone, so long as they weren't a backstabbing bitch.

Which I suspected was where the surprise came from, just that Serenity was implying that Natalie might be the type of girl who *wouldn't* want to be her friend. But I could see in her expression that wasn't the case at all, and that giving off that impression wasn't this blue-haired Rockstar chick's intention.

If anything, she probably hadn't been afforded the 'luxury' of being friends with anyone for quite some time, and was more worried about her impending torment and death, rather concerning herself with anything to do with her actually getting to live life again.

Because I realized that's what was really going on in her head.

In her perception, she hadn't been saved from her captors.

She'd only been temporarily released, and now had death to look forward to, the moment they recovered their strength and came back for revenge. And thus, she was much more interested in keeping us at a distance, if for no other reason than to prevent further casualties.

After all, when Natalie first noticed that I had someone with me, it was obvious she was sincerely worried about her - worried that Serenity might become a victim too. Which said a lot.

Even despite her own pain, torment, and depression, she didn't want anyone else to suffer the same fate. And even though she didn't know me, she similarly didn't want me to get killed simply because I was worried about her.

That fact was true then, and it was true now.

Which she emphasized again.

"Hey," she blurted out when Serenity popped open her door to get out. "Seriously, you're putting yourselves in serious danger by trying to help me."

"No," I disagreed right away. "*They* are putting *themselves* in serious danger by crossing us in the first place."

Her expression pained as she looked away, but I finally saw it. Just barely, but it was there, nonetheless.

Just the tiniest hint of hope...

Coupled with the fear of what that might mean for her - in her own perception, at least - to be indebted to me in that way.

Natalie's stomach gurgled loudly again, prompting her to pop open her door, her face flushed in embarrassment.

"Well, if we're going to eat, let's do it then," she scoffed, as if suddenly we were inconveniencing her. "By the time we get in there, they'll be serving lunch."

I just shook my head as I climbed out, deciding not to point out where we were, and the obvious implications that had for her statement, considering they served breakfast all day here. However, I did notice that her face flushed again when she focused on the building, obvious recognition touching her light brown eyes.

Serenity and I exchanged a glance as we regrouped on the sidewalk, both of us trying to suppress smirks, which didn't appear to go unnoticed by our flustered company.

Oh well.

I suspected Natalie would soon be convinced that I really could protect her from her tormentors, and thus be willing to share with us everything we needed to know about the

situation, so that we'd hopefully be better equipped to handle the threat.

But either way, while a logical part of me wanted to be cautious, the prideful part of me wanted to acknowledge that there wasn't much that could pose a real threat to me, as far as I was aware. Problem was, I did have to be concerned about others getting hurt in the crossfire, causing intelligence and strategy to still be a vital aspect that we needed to take into consideration.

But for now, we'd have brunch, and figure out the rest along the way.

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(10) CHAPTER 55: MEETING

I sat across from Serenity and Natalie in a booth while I worked on my breakfast burrito, trying not to smirk as I watched both women eat like there were ten people sitting across from me, instead of only two. In particular, the blue-haired Rockstar magazine model, who was sitting closest to the wall, still wearing her black leather jacket over her extremely revealing sheer black dress, had finally seemed to drop her guard fully once presented with her meal, choking repeatedly as she ate large bites of her pancakes, burrito, hash browns, sausage links, and bacon cheeseburger, with almost no chewing involved at all.

Shit, she literally ate like a wild animal.

Not that I particularly cared, but I was beginning to wonder if she was thinner underneath her outfit than it appeared on first glance, beginning to think that starving her was part of the torment she'd apparently endured.

Though, normally a starved person would have a smaller stomach because of it, being forced to eat smaller portions, unable to handle larger ones.

Thankfully, we were at the back section of the room, and being Monday morning meant that there weren't a lot of other patrons at this time of day. Thus, no one noticed their aggressive eating.

I now knew a little bit more about our guest though.

Prior to our food arriving, Serenity was able to slowly pull some personal information out from her, finding out that she was nineteen, about to turn twenty in a couple months,

having graduated from high school a year ago, and...that she'd basically been a prisoner since last summer.

She also wasn't from around here...

At least, not exactly.

She'd certainly been here before, but grew up in a smaller town about half an hour away. And, considering that she'd been here for a few months, I suspected that the guys who had been with her probably either grew up in the same town, or otherwise were from this general area.

She wouldn't say though.

If asked a question about herself, she sometimes gave a really general answer, assuming it wasn't too personal, but if asked a question about her captors then she immediately fell silent, a wave of sincere fear pulsing through her aura.

It wasn't until she'd eaten almost all her food that she finally stopped altogether, groaning as she slid the last few bites away and rested her head and arm on the table. She was then silent for a few seconds, until she noticed that Serenity was still eating, being much more graceful with her consumption, but still packing down a ton of food.

Natalie then looked up at me, her light brown eyes hesitant, before glancing at her again.

"Wait," she finally said. "How are you eating so much?"

Serenity simply shrugged, speaking with a mouthful of food. "Hey, you're not going to tell us your secrets, then we aren't going to share ours."

The blue-haired girl couldn't argue with that, simply huffing out a sigh as she rested the side of her face against her arm, staring across the room past Serenity with a vacant expression. In the meantime, my sexy brunette was just getting started on her hash browns, grabbing the bottle of ketchup, and popping open the lid to squirt some.

However, the bottle splattered ketchup everywhere instead, getting all over the table, with some of it hitting Natalie in the face, causing her to jerk away in surprise.

"Oh shit, I am so sorry!" Serenity exclaimed, quickly reaching for a napkin.

Natalie simply blinked a few times, not seeming upset at all, a glop right below her left eye on her eyeshadow. She then accepted the napkin when Serenity handed it to her.

"I am so sorry," she repeated.

"Not your fault," Natalie finally mumbled as she carefully tried to wipe around her eye.

"Yeah, but I probably ruined your makeup. Did any get in your eye?"

She scoffed. "It doesn't come off."

That gave us both pause, with Serenity speaking up after a quick glance at me. "Wait, what?"

Natalie sighed heavily, wiping a little that got on her leather jacket, and then cleaning up her side of the table. "It's not makeup," she said simply. "It's ink. A tattoo. Permanent."

"Oh," Serenity replied hesitantly. "That's an interesting decision."

"Wasn't my decision," she scoffed.

I couldn't help but grimace. Not that it looked bad on her by any means. On the contrary, the black and hint of blue around her eyes, including even the part of her eye that would normally have eyeliner, looked professionally done. More than that, it was like the perfect amount of makeup, not being so much that it looked overdone, while also looking tastefully adequate enough to make her light brown eyes really pop.

Problem was, it hadn't been her choice.

"Oh," Serenity said hesitantly. "Sorry, shouldn't have assumed."

Natalie only shrugged, resting her head on the table again, except facing away this time.

"Is that your only tattoo?" Serenity wondered hesitantly.

She didn't respond, prompting us to exchange a glance again, before Serenity sighed and started eating her hash

browns with what little ketchup ended up on them.

"Yeah," Natalie unexpectedly said. "It's the only one. Thankfully."

Serenity glanced at me again, only to resume eating, deciding not to continue that line of discussion. I could almost imagine my hot brunette saying something like, '*You don't have to lie to us if it's not the only one*,' or maybe something like, '*It's okay if you have something else*,' but thus far this girl really hadn't lied to us about anything. Either she answered honestly, or else she just didn't answer at all.

However, that did leave me with my own curiosities, since I could smell makeup on her. But I kept that potential question to myself, since I could recall her mentioning covering up something back at the mall, and wondered if what I was smelling was really concealer to hide bruises.

I also couldn't smell any evidence that she'd had sex recently, which also had certain questions popping into my head, given what I knew about the situation. However, I figured she'd find it insensitive for me to ask such a question, wouldn't answer anyway, and might shut down all other inquiries moving forward.

And we kind of needed her to share certain information, so shutting her down with something that didn't particularly matter right now would be counterproductive.

When no one said anything, Natalie spoke up again, still facing away from us.

"So now what?" she asked quietly.

I sighed heavily, knowing I really needed to call back Ms. Miriam, having already messaged her an additional time to let her know I was okay, but not really having an idea of what to tell her. "Are you going to tell us what you are?" I finally asked.

"I can't," she said almost inaudibly.

"And why not?"

She finally looked up at me, almost giving me a glare. “You’re literally asking me to choose between a *horrible painful death*, versus being tortured endlessly for days on end, only to then suffer a *horrible painful death*. I can’t avoid what will happen to me at this point, but at least maybe they’ll show me a little mercy if I keep my mouth shut.”

I sighed again, only to take a deep breath. I then pulled out my phone.

“W-What are you doing?” Natalie stammered uncertainly, looking really nervous now.

I didn’t respond, meeting Serenity’s gaze as I made the call.

Ms. Miriam picked up after the second ring. “Hey, you doing okay? I’ve tried to let you handle things on your own, but Gwen has been really anxious since earlier, and honestly I’m a little anxious too.”

“Sorry,” I said sincerely. “Serenity and I went on a date to the mall, and ran into some trouble. When we got there, I smelled something strange, and we later ended up figuring out that it was someone’s aura left behind.”

Natalie was staring at me in complete confusion and disbelief.

There was a pause. “Huh, that’s different,” Ms. Miriam replied.

“Which part?” I asked seriously, ignoring the dumbfounded look Natalie was giving me.

“Just the smell part. People do leave auras behind sometimes, but they have to be feeling some pretty powerful emotions to do so. Like, *traumatizing* emotions. Not happy ones.”

“Right,” I agreed. “And that pretty much lines up with what I felt.”

Ms. Miriam continued. “I suppose it does make sense that you might perceive it as a smell though. You do have stronger senses than most people. But the third-eye is

called that for a reason. Most supernatural individuals perceive things similar to how sight works.”

I cleared my throat. “Makes sense. But anyway, so the girl who left that aura behind is with us now. Problem is, pretty sure she’s not normal, but she is unwilling to share the details. Mainly because she’s afraid of what will happen to her if the guys who kidnapped her get a hold of her again and find out she snitched.”

There was a brief pause. “Okay? So I’m guessing you want my help?”

“I mean, I just figured maybe Gwen might be able to identify what she is, or something. Or does her ability not work like that?”

“No, it doesn’t,” she agreed. “But I might be able to figure it out with my Moonstone crown. Kind of depends on what we’re dealing with. I assume she looks normal?”

“Yeah. But are you sure?”

“Sure about what?” she asked seriously.

I sighed. “I just didn’t want to inconvenience you. I kind of feel like you’ve already been through a lot.”

She took a long deep breath, before letting it out slowly. “Kai, I’m worried about you.”

“Thanks,” I replied automatically.

“No, you don’t get it,” she quickly continued. “I’m worried about you, but I’m also beyond eager that this wasn’t just another normal day for you. Eager that we’re on the phone right now in the first place. Happy that you need my help.” She paused, her voice becoming quieter. “Beyond happy, that you need *me* .”

I sighed again, focusing on Serenity, who was obviously just listening now, having put down her silverware. “I do need you,” I replied sincerely. “You should know that.”

Natalie was now looking back and forth between the two of us, seeming thoroughly confused, but I ignored her as I listened.

"I suppose," Ms. Miriam offered. "But I barely slept last night, and it's been rough all morning, feeling like all I can do is watch the seconds tick by on the clock, while I wait for you to come over."

"Well, we might have to see each other sooner anyway, at this point. For some reason, I can't track those guys with my nose, and I really want to know what we're dealing with."

Ms. Miriam sounded somber. "I feel ashamed to say that makes me very happy. I really miss you."

I continued. "I'm not sure if we'll be able to bring over Gabriella though. She's at work."

Serenity spoke up then, speaking quietly like she didn't want to interrupt. "I can ask her really fast, if you want."

I shook my head, not wanting to put that stress on my busty redhead, knowing it would definitely be an issue with her boss if she left early, even after what happened a few days ago, and that it was important we return to our normal lives for a while to avoid suspicion.

Ms. Miriam's tone was reassuring. "Well, that's alright. I mean, it's not even noon yet. We can meet now, and then you can bring Gabriella over later." She paused. "Do you want to meet halfway?"

My eyes widened in surprise. "Are you sure that's a good idea? Don't you need to stay at your place?"

She scoffed at that. "Kai, I *do* get out every once in a while. I have illusion magic for that."

"Yeah, but I thought it was important for you to stay there."

"Well, yeah. I mean, I need to continue living here, of course. But there's no reason why I can't go out for a few hours. Not all the time, but every once in a while is fine." Her tone suddenly became more lighthearted. "Besides, it's been kind of dusty here with all the construction going on, and I wouldn't mind getting out of the house."

My eyes widened in surprise at that, realizing she must be referring to them fixing the damages caused by that monster I'd slain the previous day. However, I decided not to focus on it, since Natalie was listening in on the conversation.

"Okay, so then where do you want to meet?"

"Needs to be somewhere kind of secluded. I'll have Gwen look up a spot, and then send you an address. Sound good?"

"Sure," I agreed. "We'll be on our way as soon as I get that message." I paused. "Well, and after we pay for our food. We're at a restaurant right now."

"Okay," she agreed warmly. "See you soon. I really love you, Kai."

"Love you too," I replied sincerely. "Bye for now."

After hanging up, I set my phone on the table, since I'd have to check it again in the next few minutes anyway, focusing on Serenity. "Well, I guess we'll really have to do a raincheck on our date at this point."

She simply shook her head, not at the idea itself, but more seeming to indicate she didn't feel like our day was ruined. "It's alright," she replied reassuringly. "I really enjoyed the beginning. And yeah, I'm looking forward to doing this more regularly anyway, so having something come up one time isn't a big deal."

I nodded, focusing up when I saw the waitress, Dolores, coming back around to check on us. She looked to be middle-aged and had a natural tan, speaking with a slight accent that only showed up in how she pronounced words. "Do you need any boxes?" she asked politely.

I glanced at the table, pretty much confirming that there wasn't much to keep. "Nah, I think we just need the bill," I replied, even as I pulled out my card.

"Of course," she agreed politely, only to check her waitress apron and pull out a receipt, double-checking it was ours and then handing it over.

I was already holding out my card, not needing to even look at the bill to know it was going to be pretty huge, since we ate seven or eight dishes between the three of us. The lady accepted it and told us she'd be right back, while Serenity grabbed the receipt and examined it herself.

Natalie glanced at it too, only to grimace and turn her head away.

The waitress then brought back a new receipt with a pen, so I wrote in a fifteen-dollar tip, and set it in the middle of the table since she'd already walked away again.

"Ready?" I wondered, directing my words at Serenity as I grabbed my phone and began sliding out of my seat.

"Yep," she said cheerfully, seeming happy now that her belly was full, standing up too.

I glanced at Natalie to see that she was staring at the receipt with wide eyes, not having budged yet.

"Something wrong?" I wondered.

Her light brown eyes focused on me in surprise, only for her face to flush seemingly in embarrassment as she began scooting out of the booth too, being careful to try to keep her low dress from riding up too much. Unsurprisingly, she didn't respond, which only left me guessing. I knew she'd already seen the bill, so maybe it was the tip? Granted, while it was definitely a decent tip, it wasn't massive by any means.

Not like I left fifty dollars or something. Just five dollars per person.

And honestly, with how high the bill was, it didn't even meet the standard gratuity often imposed when there was a large table of ten or more people. Probably should have left her twenty, but figured that she was only dealing with three people, and probably would appreciate anything over five dollars to begin with.

Following Serenity down the aisle, I glanced at my phone when it vibrated with the address we needed, Natalie right on our heels.

It wasn't until we got outside in the car, with Serenity putting the address into her phone and then pulling out a charger to plug it in, that Natalie finally spoke up again as we pulled out onto the street.

"So, umm, what was that all about?" she asked hesitantly.

"Which part?" I wondered in sincere confusion.

She didn't respond right away, not meeting my gaze when I glanced back at her.

"Well, that girl you were talking to on the phone. Kind of didn't sound like you were talking to a friend."

I tried not to smirk. "What did it sound like?"

She didn't respond again, though of course it was obvious what she was implying.

Serenity reached over and offered me her hand then, finally forcing the smirk out as I accepted it, allowing her to pull our hands into her lap, realizing that she was similarly finding some amusement in letting Natalie just hang without an explanation, forcing her to come to her own conclusions. But, thing was, this chick was pretty much doing the same to us, refusing to answer the vast majority of our questions.

After a few more minutes, Natalie spoke up again. "S-So, who is she? This person we're going to see?"

I tried not to smirk again. "A friend," I said simply.

She huffed out an obvious sigh of frustration, only to cross her arms, spread her legs, and focus out the window, the most unreserved posture I'd seen thus far. And, without thinking, I glanced back at her, only to be surprised when I saw she was wearing a shiny vinyl thong, similar to the leopard print one Gabriella had worn the first time we had sex, except black. Her dress already barely went past her ass, so I shouldn't have been surprised that her spreading her legs would have easily revealed everything between them from this angle.

But thankfully, I managed to casually look forward again without her noticing, and similarly she seemed oblivious to

the fact that she was sort of exposing herself.

I shrugged in response to her reaction, my eyes forward again. "Your fault for not telling us what we want to know."

She scoffed. "Yeah, well you said you would prove to me that you could handle those guys, and you haven't yet."

"That's fair," I offered. "But at this point, we trust you probably about as much as you trust us. So we're not going to be completely open with you when you might have zero intention on ever being open with us."

She glanced at me in surprise, almost sounding offended. "What's that supposed to mean?"

I shrugged again, focusing on her in the rearview mirror. "Well, how do we know you won't throw us under the bus, if given the chance to save your own skin."

She abruptly leaned forward in her seat, her expression sincerely stunned and appalled. "W-What the fuck?" she unexpectedly exclaimed, only to repeat herself louder, looking pissed now. "What the actual fuck?"

"Why does that offend you?" I asked in sincere surprise.

"Because I fucking told you to leave me alone back there!" she yelled. "Throw you under the bus?! I tried to spare you from getting killed! I warned you! I warned you both!"

"Natalie," Serenity chimed in, twisting in her seat. "Calm down. We don't really think you'd do that kind of thing, but we also don't really know you, and it would be completely reasonable for someone in your situation to prioritize their own well-being first."

She scoffed, leaning back again. "Yeah, well I'm not fucking '*someone*.' I'm me! And yeah, I don't fucking want to die, but that doesn't mean I would..." Her voice trailed off as she looked away, tears visibly filling her light brown eyes, her expression rapidly becoming emotional.

I sighed heavily, my tone gentle. "Sorry. It's nice to know you're a genuinely nice person. But this is going to have to be give and take. A mutual exchange. And yeah, probably

around four or five this evening, I'll prove to you that I can protect you."

She just shook her head. "Why then? Why not now?"

I didn't respond, knowing that even telling her that much would be giving away quite a bit of information. Granted, if I grew my horns out, then she'd know anyway once all my women transformed too. Problem was, I had Ms. Miriam to think about as well, wanting to make sure she was the next person I shared my larger overall secret with, not even wanting to chance her feeling betrayed or even just *unimportant* by me telling a complete stranger prior to sharing it with her.

But then, there was also just the fact that this blue-haired Rockstar chick might really throw us under the bus if it came down to her well-being versus ours. Not that I was too worried about not being able to handle this threat, but it would be foolish to just blindly trust her without any evidence to back up that trust.

And yeah, I supposed I could use my compulsion to ensure she didn't betray us, but I was still worried about the long-term implications of that, including how my other women might perceive me exerting so much control over another.

I didn't want any of them to end up resenting me, even if I never outright used my compulsion on any of them, with them instead having an issue with the inherent principle of it. At the very least, I knew both Ms. Miriam and Mrs. Rebecca might both have issues with it. Possibly Michelle too.

When I didn't answer her question, Natalie leaned back more in her seat, spreading her legs even further, truly seeming oblivious to the exposure, and got more comfortable as she leaned her head against the window. She then closed her eyes, her blue eyebrows knitting together slightly as she slowly sucked in a deep breath.

Still holding Serenity's hand in her lap, I kept my eyes mostly on the road for a few minutes, only to glance back at her again when I realized it sounded like she'd fallen asleep, both her heartrate and breathing having pretty quickly become more even. And sure enough, her lips were slightly parted, her face relaxed now, her crossed arms having slowly dropped until her relaxed hands were resting in her lap.

She hadn't looked overly tired earlier, but I supposed it was hard to tell with the cosmetic tattoo hiding her true skin color around her eyes. Then again, maybe just from all the stress, not to mention her recent enormous meal, she was finally relaxing a little now that she knew we'd be on the road for a good half hour.

Essentially, now that we were in a moving vehicle, driving away from the city, she felt safe enough to let her fatigue kick in.

Serenity noticed too, so we kept our voices down whenever we spoke, but overall we didn't socialize much on the way there. After all, having grown up around each other, and thus spent so much time together, we were more than comfortable with the silence, with it being enough for us to just be together.

Although, she *did* ask what I thought about our guest, being very careful about how she worded the question, just in case Natalie woke up.

And I answered honestly.

I wasn't sure what to think of her at this point.

Granted, I knew what she was *really* asking.

Was I interested in her?

And I carefully addressed that concern too.

Obviously, Natalie was objectively attractive, that sole fact probably being the primary reason she'd become a prisoner to those guys in the first place, targeted based on her appearance. And it did sincerely appear as if she was a genuinely nice person on top of it.

But I wasn't really interested in her at this point.
Like, why would I be?

I was already very satisfied with everyone else, eager to develop my individual relationships with all my women. Not to mention, my reason for being with my other women had a true foundation that went beyond physical appearance. Especially with Serenity, but also Gabriella and Avery as well, who were all interested in me for similar reasons. And with Mrs. Watson and Mrs. Copeland, it was true I hadn't known them for long, but there was definitely a mutual desire that existed, coupled with less hesitancy overall due to them being more mature and having more experience.

And then, with Ms. Miriam, she was just a force of nature of sexuality.

Same with Gwen, to an extent, who willingly offered me a form of submission that I didn't even realize I kind of needed.

But I did.

Not that I wanted anyone else to act like my servant, but Gwen fit into that role so perfectly that it filled a hole in my heart I hadn't even known was there. Something I truly needed, similar to how I now truly needed sex.

But with this chick, I felt like it would be an uphill battle to try to pursue anything with her, and I just wasn't interested in having someone around who didn't really want to be. Not that I was opposed to a challenge, but I wasn't exactly a player, and already had a whopping seven women to give my attention to. Women who all *craved* my attention, and who were all very interested in a sincere relationship.

Like with Ms. Miriam.

For her, it wasn't just about the sex.

She desperately wanted a relationship with me. A real relationship, where yes, she could have sex as much as she wanted without hurting the person, or otherwise making them hopelessly addicted to her. But also one where she

could remain with the guy for years and years, metaphorically growing old together, even if she herself never aged.

So why set my eyes on a stubborn blue-haired Rockstar magazine model with a major attitude problem, when I was perfectly happy with the women I already had in my life? Never mind the fact that I didn't feel like putting effort toward someone who might not ever be interested in any kind of relationship ever again.

So, for now, we would help Natalie out the best we could, hopefully eliminate the overall threat, and then let her go on her merry way once all was said and done.

Serenity reassured me that she was fine with whatever I decided either way, so long as she continued to remain a priority in my life. And she also admitted that, at the end of the day, she felt reassured that I'd be sleeping in her bed from now on most nights, commenting that she understood I might occasionally sleep with someone else, but that ultimately we'd be sharing a bed together most of the time, even if I had sex with others throughout the day.

Honestly, I hadn't really thought much about how that was going to work out long-term, but I did have to admit our long-term sleeping arrangements would almost definitely involve Serenity in the same bed as me.

It just might also involve Gabriella in the same bed too.

And maybe even Avery as well.

Which probably meant we needed to seriously consider getting a larger bed, since three people was already kind of pushing it with Serenity's current bed. Or maybe we just needed to get a new house, so that we had enough space for all four women to live with me...

Unless I wanted to seriously include Ms. Miriam and Gwen too, in which case, moving in with *her* might be the better option...since she had so much space at her mansion and all...

It would just mean living an hour away from where I grew up, is all.

But I supposed that wouldn't be a big deal.

As we got closer to the destination Ms. Miriam had given us, I realized she'd picked a pretty obscure location like she intended, with us beginning to take some backroads surrounded by trees, until we finally reached a gravel drive that winded off the pothole laden road.

Feeling Gwen pretty strongly in that direction now, realizing they'd beaten us, I pulled onto the rocky path and made my way slowly off the street, surprised when the trees opened up fairly quickly, revealing an open field that almost looked fallow, as if it hadn't been planted in at least a year. It was actually a pretty nice spot, the late morning spring sun high enough to bathe most of the clearing in its warm light, with plenty of activity coming from the trees around, including birds chirping and squirrels scurrying among the branches.

I also saw Ms. Miriam and Gwen right away, but was shocked to see what they were *driving* - an off-road vehicle with huge tires that kind of looked like a Jeep, although I didn't see any logos to indicate the Make.

It was bizarre seeing them in such a massive open-concept SUV, but even more surprising as I pulled to a stop on the gravel, my car not being able to handle going off-road, and saw them climb out wearing completely normal clothing, not even a hint of nonhuman features in sight.

Ms. Miriam was wearing a pair of low-riding jeans, with a studded black belt, the pants likely so low on her hips so that her invisible tail was unhindered, coupled with a very nice creamy ivory dress shirt that was loose-fitting and intentionally designed with virtually no back, a series of cloth straps crisscrossing about halfway down, giving her invisible wings plenty of room to stretch.

Her hair was still fiery red though, currently French-braided into two rows that made her look so fucking

adorable that it should have been a crime.

Similarly, Gwen was dressed in jean shorts that covered very little, the inner pockets visible on her extremely muscular thighs, coupled with leather military-style boots that went up to her calves, and a navy blue silk blouse that somehow worked with the overall look she had going on.

I suspected that the very short gray leather jacket helped make it feel as if her overall outfit had a punk theme, the sleeves only going down to her elbows while the bottom portion of the gray leather only went down to just below her medium sized chest, looking fairly busty due to the tightness of the navy blue silk blouse. Of course, her horns and furry tail were invisible, but the purple skin on her lips and around her *brown* eyes was still present.

It was pretty weird seeing Gwen with brown eyes.

But fuck, they were hot.

Although, I was pretty sure that Gwen's leather boots were a true illusion, doubting she could get her hooved feet in normal footwear. Kind of made me wonder what her footprint would look like in the dirt, though I figured I'd leave answering that curiosity for later, once we dealt with the main reason why we were here.

It wasn't until I climbed out of the vehicle that I finally noticed Serenity's reaction, seeming frozen in place in her seat, as she stared at the two women now approaching us.

"You okay?" I whispered, since Natalie was still passed out like she hadn't slept in days.

She finally met my gaze, only to begin climbing out too.

"Sorry," she said just as quietly, as we met in the front of my car. "Just didn't expect..." Her voice trailed off as she glanced at them again. "Well, I guess, aside from Gabriella and her mom, I've just never met anyone so physically appealing. Both of them look like true angels. Hard to believe a person could even look so perfect."

Ms. Miriam unexpectedly spoke up loudly, projecting her voice. "I get that a lot," she said with a smirk.

Serenity's hand immediately flew up to her mouth, speaking loud enough to be heard as she responded. "Oh God, I'm sorry. That is so embarrassing."

"Not at all," Ms. Miriam replied warmly, the two of them continuing to approach us. "It was a nice compliment. And you're very pretty too. I wasn't sure if Kai was only taken with you because of the role you'd played in his life, or if there was more to it. But now I can see that he'd have been taken either way. Not many humans are as pretty as you are. Both inside and out."

"Umm, thanks," Serenity responded hesitantly.

"You're very welcome, cutie." She then focused on me. "Is it too much if I give you a hug?"

I smirked. "I might not want to let go," I said playfully.

She gave me an affectionate smile as she continued approaching, even as Gwen stopped a few feet away, the sexy maid holding a familiar crown in her right hand.

"It would make me eternally happy if you didn't," Ms. Miriam said just as playfully, with only a hint of a serious edge to her tone.

Bending down, I wrapped her thin body up in my arms and lifted her off her feet, enjoying how she wrapped her arms around my neck, feeling her invisible wings wrap around behind me as well to squeeze extra tight, only to loosen her grip as a nonverbal signal to put her down.

I did so, pecking her on the cheek, surprised when her face sincerely flushed, before allowing her to take a few steps back to stand next to her sexy maid. Knowing that Gwen could catch the shadow of my thoughts, I simply thought about how much I desperately wanted to bend her over my car and fuck her right now, knowing she'd gotten the message when her face visibly flushed.

"C-Careful, m-master," she blurted out. "I'm not using my sapphire to control my temperature."

Shocked by that disclosure, I was about to ask why, only for Serenity to interject.

“Master?!” she said in alarm.

Gwen responded before I could. “Yes. My master owns me jointly with my mistress. He claimed me yesterday, and I am now forever his.”

Needless to say, Serenity was flustered, not seeming to know what to say. “O-Oh,” she finally managed after a second.

I decided to move on, not feeling like I could offer much more of an explanation beyond what the sexy maid had already stated. “So, why aren’t you using your, umm, sapphire,” I wondered, deciding not to refer to it as a butt plug.

Ms. Miriam interjected. “Because we don’t know what we’re dealing with,” she said seriously. “Gwen is really only a danger to humans without it, since they might get scalded if they touch her skin, but I’m not about to worry about restraining her power at a time like this.”

“Oh,” I said in sincere surprise. “Well, I mean. I don’t think the girl with us is a threat, and...” My voice trailed off when I realized the stirring I’d heard just a second ago in the car was Natalie waking up, with that further confirmed when she hissed ‘*fuck*,’ realizing she’d fallen asleep, only to pop open the door to climb out of the car.

Ms. Miriam responded to my comment as she finally laid eyes on the blue-haired Rockstar chick. “You have to understand, I haven’t lived this long by being reckless,” she whispered. “I still try to live a normal life as best I can, but in situations like this, I’m always prepared for the worst-case scenario.”

I frowned at that, but could understand her reasoning, glancing over my shoulder to focus on Natalie as she approached us hesitantly. Honestly, between the four women, with how they were all dressed, they all could almost be the members of a band. They all kind of had that ‘look’ going on, especially Gwen and Natalie.

I stepped a couple feet away from Serenity, as a silent indication for her to join us, wanting her to feel welcome and included, but she still stopped nearly six feet away before reaching our group. It was then silent for an awkward few seconds as she looked us over, seeming uncertain about the four individuals standing before her.

Natalie then finally focused up at Gwen, parting her lips to speak.

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(11) CHAPTER 56: ULTIMATUM

It was obvious that the blue-haired Rockstar chick was more nervous now that she had four strangers standing together in the middle of a seemingly abandoned field. She stopped a good six feet before reaching our group, seeming reluctant to join our little circle as we socialized.

However, after a slight hesitation, she finally focused up at Gwen and spoke.

“Umm, hi,” she said uncertainly, seeming a little intimidated by the taller woman. Which I couldn’t blame her, considering that the maid was as tall as me and, while skinny, also looked like she could take out the average guy in a heartbeat. Her thighs alone looked like they could crush a grown man to death.

However, it still took me a second to realize Natalie was assuming the taller woman was the person in charge, between her and the shorter more youthful appearing redhead.

“Down here,” Ms. Miriam finally said, seeming amused rather than offended.

Of course, Natalie didn’t have to look down *too* far, since she was only maybe five or six inches taller than Miriam, but it was just the fact that there was such a huge height difference between the two seductive women, forcing her to go from looking up to focusing down instead.

Needless to say, the Rockstar chick was sincerely confused, glancing up at Gwen again as if to make sure the taller one truly wasn’t the boss here.

Gwen answered her uncertain gaze. "This is my mistress. I'm only her maid." She then paused briefly, continuing when Natalie focused down at her toned body. "And bodyguard," Gwen added, as if answering an unspoken thought.

Natalie didn't seem to realize there was any kind of mindreading going on, probably just assuming that Gwen was interpreting her expression, seeming satisfied with that explanation and simply giving Ms. Miriam her attention after a second.

"You may call me Miriam," the short redhead continued politely. "And what might I call you?"

"Oh, umm, I'm Natalie."

"You seem nervous, Natalie."

The blue-haired chick glanced at Gwen again, before clearing her throat. "Umm, well yeah. I don't know any of you."

"And you don't trust Kai here, even though he helped you out?"

I could feel Natalie's eyes on me as she responded. "Umm, well...never met a guy who did anything without an ulterior motive."

Ms. Miriam laughed at that, prompting Natalie to give her a bizarre look. The sexy minx quickly explained herself. "Very true," she agreed with another chuckle. "Men like that truly are rare. I suppose I can understand your hesitation to trust him. Even I was frightened a few times."

I glanced at Natalie at the same time she glanced at me, with her seeming uncomfortable now. "And why did he scare you?" she asked uncertainly.

Ms. Miriam frowned, focusing on me. "I suppose you haven't told her much about yourself."

I sighed. "Well, I did tell her that I'd prove to her later that I could protect her, if she'd be willing to work with us on dealing with the guys she was with. But there are certain reasons why I can't do that right now."

She frowned at that. “Does this have to do with the other imp?” she wondered seriously.

I sighed, realizing she’d truly never let that go. She thought there was another demon involved, not grasping that someone I already knew might not be fully human anymore...

Unexpectedly, Gwen’s brown eyes widened in surprise, causing me to realize she’d picked up on what I was thinking.

Fuck.

I quickly responded to Ms. Miriam. “I plan on telling you later, when Gabriella is with us too, but would prefer not to discuss it in front of our company.”

“That’s understandable,” the short redhead replied, not seeming to have noticed Gwen’s tension, the maid now glancing at Serenity, as if she was looking for some sign that my thoughts were about her. But I didn’t think about it much, trying to keep my specific thoughts on the subject vague, so that the maid didn’t end up learning about the details before her mistress did.

And with that, Gwen suddenly gave me an apologetic look, nonverbally communicating that she was sorry for trying to overstep her boundaries.

I didn’t respond, continuing to speak to the succubus, who looked like a normal person right now since her wings and tail were invisible. “So for now, I was hoping you might be able to just help us identify what Natalie here is.”

Ms. Miriam frowned at that, focusing on the person in question. “So, she won’t tell you herself, but is alright with me figuring it out?”

“Pretty much,” I agreed. “She is worried about what will happen if those guys get a hold of her again, and find out that she shared that kind of information with us. At least this way she could probably claim we forced her to be subjected to our tests, or something.”

Ms. Miriam's frowned deepened, still staring at Natalie, though nothing about her expression was unattractive. In fact, the sexy minx was ridiculously fucking cute when she was brooding, the level of adorableness only increased by her bright red hair being in twin French-braids.

"Interesting," she said simply, looking the Rockstar chick up and down. She then spoke to Natalie directly again. "You should know, that whatever you've experienced while a prisoner to those men, I've suffered far worse. So I can relate."

Natalie's light brown eyes widened briefly, only for her to scoff as she looked away. "I doubt it."

Unexpectedly, Gwen spoke up, sounding sincerely pissed. "Don't dismiss my mistress!" she snapped, immediately grabbing the girl's attention, with Natalie looking sincerely scared now. "Even if you had suffered from *birth*, it would not compare to what my mistress has endured!"

"S-Sorry," Natalie exclaimed, visibly trembling. "I didn't mean...I mean..." Her voice trailed off as she took a step back.

"Gwen, calm down," Miriam hissed. "You'll burn your clothes off."

The maid was immediately submissive, her body relaxing. "Sorry, mistress."

Ms. Miriam continued, directing her words at Natalie again. "I can understand your cynicism. I do look young. But I promise what I said is true."

"O-Okay," she replied simply, clearly not wanting to set Gwen off again.

"And I'm not trying to belittle what you've gone through," the redhead minx continued. "Only that I can relate."

"O-Okay," she repeated.

Serenity spoke up then. "Is that really true?" she whispered. "I had no idea."

"Unfortunately," Ms. Miriam replied, giving her a sympathetic look. "But that was a long time ago, so don't stress over it."

Serenity only nodded.

"Now," Miriam continued, speaking to the blue-haired magazine model again. "Will you kindly remain still while I examine you?"

"A-Are you going to touch me?" Natalie asked nervously.

"No, and actually I won't even move any closer. But, I need to use a technique that will be less effective if you fidget."

I scoffed. "Well, that's inconvenient."

Ms. Miriam gave me a knowing smile as she looked up at me. "Truly, it is. Had she been uncompliant, then it would have been nearly impossible for me to give you an answer to your question. Not without taking certain measures."

I assumed she was implying knocking Natalie out or something, but decided to respond before the blue-haired girl figured that out.

"Well, I appreciate it. I doubt we have to worry about those guys trying to retaliate anytime super soon, but I'd like to know what we are dealing with. And possibly learn some magic from you to help defend everyone."

Natalie abruptly interjected, almost cutting me off. "M-Magic?!" she exclaimed in sincere shock.

"Oh dear," Miriam replied, holding out her hand toward Gwen, prompting the sexy maid to hand her the Moonstone crown. "Yes magic," she continued, responding on my behalf. "Now hold still for me, so I can figure out what you are."

"W-Wait," she exclaimed. "Are you going to hurt me? Is it dangerous?"

Ms. Miriam was completely calm, her tone reassuring. "No, not dangerous at all. But I'd prefer to not have to do this twice, so if you'd please, hold still."

Needless to say, Natalie still looked uncomfortable, to the point that she almost seemed as if she was about to turn around and make a run for it.

Gwen spoke up. "My mistress asked you to hold still," she snapped.

That got her attention, her light brown eyes suddenly wide as she focused up at the 'bodyguard' again. "Umm, sorry," she stammered, doing her best to remain perfectly stationary.

Honestly, I didn't take Natalie for a scaredy-cat, but I also suspected she wasn't an idiot either. She was fully aware that Gwen could probably hurt her pretty badly if it came to a fight, and also was probably 'conditioned by pain' to want to avoid getting involved in such unfavorable situations.

In the meantime, Miriam adorned the delicate crown atop her red hair, and then began mumbling quietly an obvious spell.

"Sight. Perceive. Fold away the layers that conceal, and dispel the haze of uncertainty. Reveal what exists before me, and make known to my mind the truth of its existence."

At first, nothing happened as the succubus then concentrated...

Only for *everything* to happen.

Suddenly, they were both on the defensive, Ms. Miriam's fingers locking into a position I'd only seen once before, when I was convinced she was going to attack me with magic, even as Gwen's horns suddenly appeared in two tongues of vibrant orange flames, little red pinpricks of light suddenly filling the air all around her.

And I reacted without thinking, desperate to prevent them from killing this girl before she even had a chance to explain herself - to prove that she wasn't a threat, prove that she was trustworthy.

In the blink of an eye, I was standing right next to the blue-haired chick with my arms wrapped around in the air,

not touching her, but obviously defending her, visibly shocking all three women.

Needless to say, Natalie hadn't even reacted yet, as if she couldn't process what was going on around her.

"Wait!" I exclaimed, causing the girl to finally flinch violently when she realized I was practically wrapped around her. "Just chill out for a second!"

"Kai!" Ms. Miriam snapped. "Get away from her right now!"

"Why are you freaking out?" I said seriously, feeling confident they were really going to kill her on the spot.

"She's a cursed being!" the succubus continued. "A werewolf!"

I just stared at her in disbelief. "Wait, really?" I said in surprise, unable to understand why they were reacting so strongly to this situation.

"Don't act like it's no big deal!" Miriam practically yelled. "They aren't the 'furry cuddly' creatures you see in romance novels or movies! They are vicious beasts from the worst of nightmares, with dagger-like teeth that could bite a man in two!" She paused when she saw I still didn't grasp how serious she was being. "Fuck! You don't even realize what we're dealing with! A lot of them don't even grow a full coat of fur! Imagine a fucking shark with arms and legs! They just look like hairless alien mutants from hell! They're ugly, horrifying, and extremely lethal!" She took a step forward then. "Kai, she's dangerous! And she's not even in control of herself! One bite and you're fucked ! This is a trap!"

Natalie was trembling in my arms now, still not touching me, but clearly realizing that she was about to be killed, and I was the only thing standing between her and a certain death.

"Wait, what do you mean by that?" I asked seriously, not too worried about the biting part, since it was very difficult to break my skin. "She seems in control to me."

"The alpha controls them all!" Miriam retorted, taking another step closer. "Anyone bitten basically becomes a puppet! It's like a hive mind! They can't do anything without the alpha's permission! And if she fucking bites you right now, you might end up as a puppet too!"

I relaxed a little, only to sigh. "Ms. Miriam, she's *not* going to bite me, and probably couldn't break my skin anyway." I paused. "Remember when you tried? And you can relax about the control part. I sort of solved that problem."

Miriam just gave me a bizarre look, but actually relaxed her posture a little as well, possibly at the reminder that she tried to bite me as hard as she could the previous day, and didn't even manage to make me bleed. "Kai, what in the hell do you *mean*, you solved that problem?"

I shrugged, lowering my arms some, prompting Natalie to take a small step more toward me, clearly recognizing I was still her only ally right now. "The spell I used before. I gave her permission to obey herself."

Ms. Miriam just stared at me like she was completely dumbfounded. And not just her, but Gwen too, her flames having died down as she just gawked in disbelief.

"Kai," Miriam finally choked out. "What you're saying is impossible. Literally, impossible. And that's saying something, considering I know how powerful you are."

I shrugged. "I did, though."

"It's impossible," she repeated, shaking her head. "Like, I don't even think you understand. Kai, it's just *not* possible."

"And why not?" I asked seriously.

She just stared at me in disbelief. "Because Kai, it's how cursed beings work. Vampiric creatures are the same. The only way..." Her voice trailed off.

"The only way, what?" I asked seriously.

"What spell did you use?" she unexpectedly demanded. I frowned. "Like, what did I say?" I tried clarifying.

"Yes, Kai," she said seriously. "What did you say? Specifically, what words did you use?"

I took a deep breath, as I tried to remember. "Well, first I felt like I had to call her something." I paused, my frown deepening as I glanced down at her, seeing the panic in her light brown eyes.

I suspected she felt partially betrayed, trusting us to not hurt her, only to put her in a situation where two people wanted to sincerely kill her. And I doubted that me protecting her now was fully alleviating that sensation.

"Something that defined who she was," I continued. "So I did. And then I believe I said, '*By my authority, I grant you permission to obey yourself.*' Nothing fancy."

The succubus immediately clasped her hand in front of her chest, looking shaken, her body trembling slightly. Like, she suddenly looked terrified.

"Ms. Miriam," I whispered, concerned by her reaction, dropping my arms fully and turning more to face her. Natalie immediately took a step partially behind me.

Gwen finally spoke up, answering the question I was reluctant to ask.

"No, master. She's not afraid *of* you. She's afraid *for* you."

"But why?" I replied, focusing on the sincerely terrified minx.

"Kai," she choked out. "Think about what you just said. Think about what your words mean."

"By my authority?" I guessed.

She just shook her head. "Kai, you don't get it. You had no authority over this young woman. Only her alpha has authority over her. But you used magic to break that unbreakable bond. A bond that allowed him to make her a puppet. That's something only one other creature could have done. And only through killing her master."

"And what creature is that?" I asked seriously.

"Another one," she blurted out, only to clarify. "Kai, another *alpha werewolf*."

Oh.

Shit.

We were all silent for a long few seconds, until I glanced back at Natalie to see that she was now looking up at me with a slightly panicked expression.

I cleared my throat, deciding to take a step away from her since it didn't look like Miriam or Gwen were going to attack at this point.

"Oh, umm...but I'm not a werewolf," I countered, glancing at the crown on her head, wondering why she hadn't thought to use it on me.

"No, you're not," she agreed, beginning to get a hold of herself again. She then took a deep breath, forcing herself to lower her hand in front of her small chest. "Please, forgive me."

"For what?" I asked seriously.

She gave me an apologetic look. "This is at least the third time I've flipped out on you, for no fault of your own."

I shrugged, assuming she was referring to the first time we met, along with when she first found out I had wings.

"Well, just so long as you realize I'm not a threat to you."

"I know," she whispered somberly. "I'm sorry."

"It's alright," I replied, only to glance at her crown again. "But, I mean, do you want to try using that on me?" I wondered. "Just to verify that I'm not cursed or something?"

She shook her head. "I tried when you were asleep yesterday," she admitted. "After you healed me," she clarified. "Woke up before you, and figured it was worth a shot, given what happened. But it didn't work."

I nodded. "Makes sense."

Ms. Miriam immediately shifted the subject as she focused on the blue-haired girl next to me. "But she's still dangerous, Kai. The full moon is only about a week away, and she'll turn into a literal monster from hell. Nothing you'd

probably imagine a werewolf to look like. Nothing like what they have in movies nowadays. If you can't control her, then she'll have to be put down."

Natalie was trembling again, but I ignored it.

"Why do they even call it a werewolf then?" I asked seriously, just trying to keep the overall tone of the conversation away from murder.

Ms. Miriam looked at me in surprise. "Oh, well, because it's a corruption that did use a type of ancient wolf as the source of the curse, and they do sort of resemble mangy wolves if they grow a full coat of fur. But they are nothing less than horrifying." She shook her head. "Kai, you saw that monster from before at my place. This creature may not be stronger, but is still faster, uglier, and much more vicious and lethal. It would be best if we just killed her now, while she's weak."

"I didn't choose this!" Natalie unexpectedly blurted out, her trembling having increased. "I don't want to be like this! I hate it! It hurts! It's the most horrible pain in the world! And I've had to suffer it every month! Or every time that bastard wanted to torment me!"

"Wait, is that how he broke your arms?" I asked in surprise.

She only looked away, closing her light brown eyes as tears slipped out. But I knew that must be the case, wondering if her arms bending backward was a normal part of the transformation, or if that bastard was intentionally forcing her body to warp in unnatural ways to cause her pain.

Miriam spoke up again, placing her hands on her hips. "Look, Natalie, I realize you didn't choose this, but you're a cursed creature now. You'll never be the same again, and there's no saving you from this. There's no cure, aside from death. So, either you keep turning into a monster, or else we end it for you. And you should know I've made it my goal in life to protect the humans in this world."

Natalie's knees unexpectedly buckled, and she fell to the ground, sobbing into her hands. "I don't want to die! I didn't ask for this! None of it! He did this to me! He fucking tried to force me to date him in high school, and when I refused he stalked me! And then he showed up at my house one night after graduation, and demanded I date him, or else!" She unexpectedly sobbed harder, really beginning to fall apart now, her words almost incoherent. "Fuck! Fuck, fuck, fuck! He makes them all use me! He fucking beats the shit out of me, and then makes them use me..." Another intense sob wracked her body, making her unable to continue.

Miriam didn't respond, and we all fell silent as the girl at my feet began crying even harder, as if the short redhead's simple statement had broken her, telling her what she already knew deep down – that there was no hope for her. That she'd suffered for a year for nothing.

That, in the end, it would have been better if she'd died back then, rather than to go through all that, only to die now.

Granted, if he really had control over her, then I doubted she could have committed suicide, even if she wanted to. Though, I knew from her aura that she still had the drive to persist, even though she never had much hope to begin with.

The succubus finally sighed heavily once Natalie's sobbing calmed down a little a few minutes later, directing her focus at me. "Think you can control her?"

The magazine model immediately stiffened at my feet, but I ignored her.

"Honestly? I want to say yes, but I really don't know. And won't know for sure until...well, you know. Full moon and all."

She nodded, her emerald gaze focusing on the girl. "So, those are your only options then," she said firmly. "Either we need to put you out of your misery, or else you need to let him dominate you. Let him become your new alpha."

Because there is no controlling yourself the moment the full moon rises. If you weren't an alpha upon transforming the first time, then you'll never be one. And having no alpha means you'll be a mindless beast. Which means, it's my job to kill you, before you slaughter a whole town in a single night."

Well, fuck.

On the one hand, I wanted to help this chick out, but I wasn't sure I wanted that kind of responsibility. Because what if she did get out of hand and kill a bunch of people? I supposed it would be my job to kill her then. Never mind the fact that this chick clearly didn't want me, or anyone else, to be her new alpha. She didn't want an alpha at all.

Granted, she also didn't want to be cursed either, but there was no changing that...as far as I knew.

There was a small part of me that wondered if I might be able to change her fate slightly like I'd done to my other women, uncertain of how I might be able to affect a cursed being, but I was trying hard not to think too deeply about it, since I again didn't want to tip Gwen off prematurely. Still, it was something to consider, at least.

However, that didn't change the fundamental problem.

I helped my other women out *because* they were my women.

Because they were going to be in my life for a long time, if not forever. But I hadn't 'helped' Mrs. Rebecca yet, because I wasn't entirely sure if that commitment was solid, and overall I wasn't planning on helping out random people, just to be nice.

Which was the reason why I almost didn't help Mrs. Copeland out to begin with.

Because this was my blood, and my responsibility to ensure that my power didn't end up in the wrong hands.

So even if I *could* help Natalie, I wasn't sure I would do it. Not just to be nice, at least.

Maybe that was callous, but I couldn't have people running around with the potential power to do something similar to anyone else they wanted.

And ultimately, I realized that what Ms. Miriam was saying was right.

It sucked that this had happened to this chick, but she was a danger to all of humanity now. And putting her out of her misery kind of was the most logical choice. Or rather, the *necessary* choice. At least, under normal circumstances.

I sighed heavily. "Well, thanks for the help, Ms. Miriam. Sorry to make you come all the way out here."

The redhead looked at me in surprise. "Oh. It's no problem, Kai. I was honestly more eager to see you than I'd like to admit. But does that mean you're going to leave already?"

I shrugged. "Not necessarily, but you've pretty much laid out the only two options, so it sounds like there isn't anything else to talk about right now."

"Except that other imp," she said playfully, though I could tell the curiosity was killing her.

I sighed. "Well, see, here's the thing. I actually want to talk to you about a lot of things, and would rather just have that big conversation all at once. Which means, I'd like Gabriella to be present for it too."

"Oh." She nodded. "Okay. Yeah, I understand. I don't want her to feel left out."

"Right," I agreed. "But, I mean, if you want to talk about something not related, we could do that."

She frowned slightly, only to look down at the Rockstar chick. "As much as I'd love to, most of the things I'd like to discuss, even casually, are subjects I'd prefer not be overheard by a possible enemy."

I glanced down too, seeing that Natalie had dropped her hands limply to her sides, and was just staring at the ground now, her light brown eyes looking vacant. Her aura was kind of weird now too, almost seeming completely empty,

including the underlying stubbornness that pretty much defined her existence. It was obvious she felt numb.

"Well," I said with a shrug. "She probably needs some time to figure out what she wants to do."

Natalie unexpectedly scoffed, her voice sounding hoarse. "You're not even giving me a choice," she whispered. "It's either death or become a slave again."

I sighed. "Well, I'm sure you won't just take my word for it, but I have no intention on making you obey my every command. Only thing I'll expect from you is being honest with me - no lying - and to just not hurt anyone."

She scoffed again, clearly not believing that.

I then frowned as I had another thought, focusing on Ms. Miriam. "And hey, how do I become her alpha anyway. Will my eyes do the trick?"

The short redhead shrugged. "I have no idea, Kai. She's a woman right now, but she won't be when she transforms. It's very possible compulsion won't affect her in that form, even if she's still female."

"Okay, so then how do I become her alpha? Or am I already her alpha?"

She shook her head. "Again, I don't know. You've done something impossible by breaking the bond with her former alpha. Like, without killing him, and without being a true werewolf yourself, it shouldn't be possible. Yet, you did it. So-

Gwen unexpectedly interrupted. "She knows."

I focused on the maid, only to glance down at Natalie, seeing that her expression was pained.

Gwen continued. "Or at least, she has an idea."

"And what's that?" I asked seriously, assuming it must be unpleasant, based on the girl's reaction.

Gwen sighed. "Master, with your permission, I'd prefer to let her share that with you, if she decides to."

Natalie immediately looked up at the maid in shock, possibly because she only now realized the taller woman

was practically reading her mind, or maybe just because Gwen wasn't sharing what she knew. But then the blue-haired chick looked up at me uncomfortably.

I took a deep breath. "Yeah, I guess that's fine." I sighed heavily. "But," I continued, focusing down to meet Natalie's gaze. "If it's true that you're going to become a monster in less than a week, then that's pretty much how long you have to choose. Either you tell me how to become your alpha, or else..." My voice trailed off, hating that death was really her only other option. But then another idea hit me, prompting me to focus on the sexy redhead minx again. "Hey, can we just tie her up in your basement on the full moon?"

Miriam pursed her lips. "Honestly, I'd really rather not."

"How come?" I wondered seriously.

"Because cursed creatures have a reputation of getting past weaker barriers and wards, even though they can't use magic. Never mind we'd probably have to feed her." She sighed heavily. "Kai, I'm going to be honest with you. In her transformed state, she could probably kill me. I don't really want that kind of creature in my basement. Trust me, I understand your desire to save her from this. I used to be like that too. But sometimes, the only realistic solution is to kill off the lost causes. Otherwise, they just multiply into a problem that's far too huge to deal with. It happened in Europe a few hundred years ago, and while that was in no way my fault, I'm sure it started by someone showing the cursed ones mercy. Possibly someone unable to kill his or her spouse, even upon finding out they were a monster now."

I frowned as I considered that, not responding.

"Please don't think poorly of me for it," she unexpectedly added in a whisper.

My eyes widened, prior to shaking my head. "Oh, no. Not at all. I completely understand your reasoning. And I fully plan on trying to track down the other ones, and ending

them. But it's like Natalie said, we aren't really giving her much of a choice. If she doesn't want to die too, then there's only one option for her."

Miriam smirked. "I mean, if I was in her situation, I'd love to have you as my alpha."

I scoffed. "Oh, come on, you don't mean that."

She frowned. "Well, actually, I kind of do." She then paused when she saw my skepticism. "Obviously, it wouldn't be my first choice, Kai. But yes, if I'd found myself in that situation, I would fully commit myself and accept that fate."

I sighed heavily. "I suppose that makes sense. And I'd likewise feel the same way. If forced into a situation like that."

She unexpectedly grinned. "That makes me really happy."

I rolled my eyes. "Well, don't get too carried away there. That's only worst case."

She giggled in response, only to focus on Serenity, who pretty much hadn't said hardly anything since Natalie joined the conversation. I could see in her expression though that she was just silently absorbing it all, probably wishing she could do more to help, but knowing there was nothing to be done.

"Well," I continued, prompting Miriam to look at me again. "Speaking of the other werewolves, do you know of a way to track them down? I'd rather not use Natalie as bait, if possible."

She frowned. "Well, actually, if you did want to use her as bait, then you'd probably want to wait to become her alpha anyway. Otherwise, they won't be able to find her as easily."

I nodded, realizing she was right. "Makes sense. But again, I'd rather not do that, if possible."

"I might have a way," she admitted. "I'll do some research before you come over this evening, just to make

sure. You'll need to bring her along though, since the method I'm thinking of will probably require her assistance."

I focused down at Natalie. "That good with you?" I wondered.

She just stared up at me in disbelief.

"You'll need to blindfold her," Miriam added. "I don't want to chance her knowing where I live, only for her to end up under that other alpha's control again."

"That's fair," I agreed, only to direct my attention at Natalie a second time. "So, how about it? All I want from you is loyalty. For you to just be someone we can trust. And, if you can offer that alone, then I'll keep you safe. I'll kill those bastards who tormented you for the last year - maybe even let you help torture them a little and allow you to get some revenge - and then I'll do what I can to keep you under control during the full moon. Is that acceptable?"

She continued to just stare up at me, remaining silent for a long few seconds, until I raised my eyebrows.

"Y-You just want I-loyalty," she stammered, sounding almost like she was asking a question, even though it didn't sound like a question.

I assumed she was worried about me wanting the kind of things those bastards wanted, which was the whole reason why she was picked in the first place, so I decided to just address that issue upfront. I also decided it might be best to make her sound undesirable to me, just so maybe she'd believe me.

"Well, let me just say this. Those assholes wanted you as a plaything, but that's not something I need. I am more than satisfied in that department, and have no interest in messing around with some random chick whose got a shit ton of baggage. Which you obviously do," I added firmly.

Of course, I knew it was harsh to make a statement like that, but I could already see it working on her. See how that logic made sense in her mind, that no normal guy would

want her after what she'd been through, never mind the fact that she was aware that I was at least with Serenity.

And that was assuming she hadn't figured out that I was also involved with Ms. Miriam and Gwen as well.

"S-So just loyalty," she repeated.

"It's a serious commitment," I replied firmly. "It's not 'just' loyalty. I won't tolerate any form of betrayal. Trust is a big deal to me. You can't break it even once. We need to be able to trust you."

"I..." She sucked in a deep breath, only for that stubbornness to finally resurface as she glared up at me. Her tone was hard. "If you help me get revenge on those bastards - if you can help me torture and kill them - then loyalty is the *least* I can offer."

"Then, sounds like we have a deal," I replied, holding out my hand.

She focused on it for a second, only to reach out and grab it, pulling herself off her rear and standing up in front of me, giving my hand a firm shake. "Yeah. Help me kill them, and we have a deal."

I grinned. "And don't worry. I'll still prove to you later that I'm capable of it. And I'll also explain to you why I don't want to show you now."

She nodded, a metaphorical fire sparked in her light brown eyes now, as if she truly saw hope again.

As if she finally saw a small light, and after feeling briefly defeated, she'd gotten up again and was running toward it with all her might. As if she finally felt like her struggle up until this point was validated, that the pain she endured, just to survive, would all be worth it when she got to finally end her tormentor's life. To witness for herself as the life drained from his eyes.

But first, we had a lot to figure out.

And I still had a lot to share with Ms. Miriam.

But, at least it looked as if this blue-haired Rockstar chick would start working with us now, instead of dragging her

feet out of fear.

And before long, I'd show her that there was nothing for her to fear, so long as she put her trust in me.

I'd show her that I was a real king.

And that the little alpha bastard was nothing compared to me.

Nothing, compared to an apex demigod.

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(12) CHAPTER 57: OPENING UP

Just before we left the secluded field, with the promise of us still visiting Ms. Miriam in another five or six hours, once Gabriella was off work, I indicated that I wanted to speak with Gwen privately for a few minutes, realizing I still hadn't gotten the chance to apologize.

Of course, they were all confused by the request, Serenity included, but the short succubus didn't have a problem with it.

"Oh. Yeah, that's fine," Miriam said simply in response to my question, glancing up at her tall maid.

Beginning to walk over to their off-road vehicle, figuring that would be far enough at least for Natalie to not be able to overhear, since she hadn't shown any signs of heightened senses in her current form, I led Gwen around to the side so we were out of sight, the behemoth of an SUV large enough to completely hide us both when standing next to the huge rear tire.

Honestly, I wasn't sure how Miriam even managed to climb in, with how short she was.

Taking the opportunity to get a little more intimate, I turned to face the sexy maid dressed in her leather jacket and short jean shorts, and wrapped my arms around her thin waist covered in her navy blue silk blouse, gently guiding her against the side of the vehicle until I was pressing her into it, her deep brown eyes focused on me tenderly now as I moved closer to gently plant a kiss on her purple lips.

I felt her invisible furry tail wrap around my waist in response to the affection, only for her to speak only one word, questioning the somberness in my mind.

"Master?" she whispered hesitantly.

"I wanted to apologize," I said softly. "And I'm hoping you'll forgive me for what I did."

She seemed even more confused. "Master, I belong to you. There's nothing to forgive, even if you had done something."

"Still," I pressed. "I need to apologize." I took a deep breath. "After I died, and woke up again, I shared my power with you."

She inclined her chin slightly, her deep brown eyes still tender. "Yes, and you claimed me."

I nodded as well. "But I was barely thinking when I woke up, and when I rushed down the stairwell to the basement, I realized you were about to use my power to cast a spell that would destroy the enemy."

Her brown eyes widened slightly, as I suspected it was all beginning to dawn on her.

"But the problem was," I continued. "I still didn't have a heart. And I needed blood and meat to help me repair it."

Her expression quickly became determined. "I understand, master. I apologize for trying to destroy your prey."

I shook my head. "No need. You were only attempting to defend yourself and your mistress. But I didn't want you to doubt your strength, and also wanted to say sorry for weakening your spell just before you cast it." I turned my head away then with a grimace. "I was afraid of what would happen if you did destroy that monster. Afraid of what I'd do if my only option to heal myself were you two." I sighed. "Maybe I could have forced myself to leave, and try to find an animal to hunt, but I'm honestly not sure. I was barely aware at the time."

Gwen abruptly leaned her head forward and planted her soft purple lips on my cheek, her arms wrapping even more tightly around me, only for her mouth to move to my ear. "I love you master. You made the right decision, and I do not fault you for it. We are all alive, thanks to you."

I nodded, leaning more into her, enjoying the warmth of her body against mine, knowing she was far hotter right now than even the hottest of showers, since she didn't have her sapphire butt plug to keep her body heat under control, her skin hot enough to scald a person within seconds.

Yet, I loved it.

The warmth was unlike anything I'd ever felt before, aside from when I might open the oven while cooking a meal, and get hit with a blast of hot air.

Gwen began rubbing her heated lips next to my ear then, her breath equally hot, only to unwrap one arm and reach for my hand, tugging it downward until I was resting my fingers against her bare muscular thigh. I rubbed her smooth skin briefly, and then reached back to squeeze the side of her muscular ass, surprised that her jean shorts were smooth rather than coarse. But then again, it made sense that they might be the smooth stretchy kind, probably made of polyester or something, because otherwise I wasn't sure how she'd get them on in the first place, considering how thick her thighs were.

Honestly, I really loved her scent right now, because not only did she smell amazing naturally, but her clothing smelled like it was fresh out of the dryer.

She spoke up again, her tone passionate. "Master, if you are not of preference on location, then I can take you to the basement this evening, and you can have your way with me at my normal temperature."

"That would be really nice," I admitted, suspecting she'd be in danger of lighting things on fire if we fucked in a bed without her butt plug. I then sighed again, knowing if we stayed behind the vehicle much longer, I might end up just

fucking her here, which would only be bad in the sense that I didn't want to give Natalie any reasons to think that I was a sex-crazed maniac who truly only had that one thing on my mind.

Thus, we shared one last intimate kiss, breathing in the hot air coming from her adorable nose, and then I pulled away, running my hand along her furry invisible tail with a smirk on my face, before separating entirely and walking back around the corner.

Sure enough, when I focused on the ground to see the way we'd come, I saw that Gwen had left hoof prints in the packed dirt, instead of boot prints, indicating her footwear was an illusion too.

In the meantime, Ms. Miriam and Serenity had started up a pretty casual conversation, just seeming to get to know each other, as the short redhead minx asked about her job, work environment, and overall just inquired about our history, confirming things like what age we both were when our parents passed away, as well as what life had been like for the last five or so years.

Miriam seemed pretty sympathetic about even the little things, like commenting that it must have been hard for Serenity to work a full-time evening job while going to school full-time on top of it. And, it seemed that the more Serenity spoke, sharing how she wanted to ensure no one doubted that she could take care of me, the more Miriam seemed to really like her.

I already knew at this point the short succubus was a genuinely kind and empathetic individual, but it still kind of took me off guard to see her take a sincere interest in someone else. To the point that she remained focused on Serenity even when Gwen and I rejoined the group, truly engaged in the conversation, rather than just trying to make polite small talk.

Miriam then sighed after another few minutes, suggesting that they could continue getting to know each

other later. Serenity agreed, finally looking up at the rest of us as if she'd completely forgotten we were even there, giving me a small smile when she focused on me.

I went ahead and gave Gwen a quick hug, followed by scooping Miriam's thin form up to give her a hug too, deciding to give her a tender kiss of affection while I had her in my arms. She just grinned up at me with a warm smile, her tone cheerful.

"Not that I'm complaining, but what was that for?" she wondered curiously, realizing there was a reason behind it.

"I'll send you a message," I said simply, giving her one last squeeze and then setting her down on her feet. Needless to say, she was a little confused, but let it go for now as she waved politely to Serenity and Natalie, only to turn around and head back to their vehicle.

We did the same, with me pausing on the way to glance back and watch Ms. Miriam climb into the passenger's seat of the behemoth off-road SUV.

Damn, Gwen especially looked like such a badass behind the wheel.

I then decided to type out a quick message to Ms. Miriam when their engine roared to life.

'I was trying to make Natalie seem undesirable to me, by mentioning that she had a lot of baggage.'

I sent the message, only to decide to elaborate.

'Just didn't want you to think I really cared about that kind of thing. Because I want you, Ms. Miriam, even if you have a lot of baggage too. That's what the kiss was for.'

Figuring I'd just read her message later, once she got around to sending it, I continued to my car, seeing both Serenity and Natalie already climbing in. However, just as I reached the driver's door, I looked up again when their vehicle pulled up next to ours briefly, seeing that Ms. Miriam was focused on me.

"I really like you," she said sincerely. "Thank you for that."

"You're welcome," I replied. "See you in a little while."

"Bye for now," she agreed, only for their vehicle to take off again, finally getting back on the gravel drive and kicking up rocks as they flew through the trees.

I couldn't help but smirk, suspecting that Gwen liked driving her massive toy, if her abrupt acceleration was any indication. Either that, or her hooves gave her a bit of a lead foot, but I would be willing to bet she just enjoyed the ride.

After climbing in my own car, I realized there wasn't a great spot to turn around, not wanting to risk getting stuck in the dirt, so I simply put it in reverse and twisted in my seat to back out. Natalie was staring out the window again, seeming uneasy after our recent interactions, though I couldn't blame her.

However, as we backed out onto the road, and I started driving forward again, I decided to broach the subject, rather than just sit in silence for the trip home.

"So Natalie," I began simply, reaching up to readjust the rearview mirror so I could see her better, and then putting my hand in Serenity's lap, so she could hold it. "Sounds like you need to get a new alpha."

She didn't respond, wincing slightly as she continued to focus out the window.

"So, let me ask you this," I continued. "If given the choice between that bastard, and literally anyone else, would you choose him?"

She scoffed. "Fuck no," she hissed.

"Okay. So then, you'd choose anyone else?" I emphasized.

She didn't respond.

I sighed. "Okay, let me ask you this. You've hung around us for a few hours now, and you know Serenity here is a cop. You've also seen that we're happy together." I paused to let that sink in. "So, given what you know now, I want you to imagine the worst-case outcome for this situation.

Meaning, if I became your alpha, what's a realistic bad outcome, given what you know?"

She finally glanced at me in confusion. "O-Okay? I don't understand what you're trying to say," she said seriously.

I shrugged, now that I had her attention. "Well, I just want to know if that bad outcome, if I ended up becoming your alpha and abused that position, was even close to being as horrible as everything you've suffered in the last year." I glanced back at her then. "Because that guy obviously had a grudge against you, right? Since you didn't want to date him?" I paused to let that sink in, focusing ahead again before making my point. "Thing is, I don't have a grudge against you, and honestly having to deal with your problem is a bit of a headache."

I saw her grimace in the rearview mirror.

I continued. "So, is the worst thing that might happen really that bad in comparison?" I paused, ready to make my final point. "Because, right now you don't have an alpha. And you know what that means, right?"

She finally glanced at me again, meeting my gaze in the rearview mirror, not responding.

I continued. "It means, he could show up and pretty much take you back, at any time."

Her light brown eyes widened in alarm, only for her to immediately look away. Of course, I suspected she inherently knew that, but I wasn't sure if she'd really thought the whole thing through.

I sighed. "That woman we met back there. The one with red hair. She mentioned that normally an alpha would have to kill another alpha to take their puppets. Now, obviously I didn't kill him in order to free you, but I bet those rules *do* still apply to him. Meaning, he could take you back right now, probably pretty easily. *But* if I become your alpha, then he would at least have to go through me first."

She didn't respond.

"Seems like it's in your best interest to put *me* in between you and him, rather than remain exposed in such a way that he could probably just show up right now and make you his again without any hindrance."

She cleared her throat. "A-And why would you even be w-willing to do that?" she stammered. "Put y-yourself in danger like t-that."

"Does it matter?" I wondered. "I mean, seriously, does it even matter what my motivations are? You want to be free of him, right? And yeah, I get that you'd probably prefer to be free of this curse entirely, and to not even need an alpha to begin with, but if those are your only options, then do I really seem like I'd be such a bad alpha?"

She *again* remained silent.

I sighed heavily. "You obviously have at least a little time to decide. But, if you just decide to run away from all this, or even just wait too long to share with me how I can become your alpha, then you'll have no one to blame but yourself for ending up right where you started."

"Okay, I get it!" she unexpectedly snapped. "Fuck. I'm not stupid."

I sighed heavily, deciding not to respond to her outburst. Of course, I knew she wasn't stupid, but I also didn't understand why she was dragging her feet so much.

She suddenly continued. "You know what? Fuck it. Want to know how you could probably become my alpha? By fucking me, you jackass!"

Serenity and I both glanced at each other in surprise, with her tightening her grip on my hand in her lap. And suddenly it was crystal clear why Natalie was dragging her feet so much. She obviously wasn't a whore, despite what she'd been through, and wasn't thrilled about jumping in bed with some random guy she'd just met.

"Oh," I said simply, only to frown as I considered that. "And how certain are you that sex would work?"

She didn't respond.

I glanced back at her again. "You obviously don't want to, and I don't really want to either," I answered honestly, largely because I wanted to actually enjoy sex, rather than it be a chore. Especially the kind of chore where I was experimenting with a chick who was only doing it because it was her only option to avoid something worse. "So," I continued. "How certain are you? And *why* are you certain that would work?"

She finally sighed heavily, looking vulnerable now. "I don't want to talk about it. I just know it'll probably work, assuming you really *can* become my alpha."

I frowned at that, only to glance at Serenity.

She spoke up. "It's probably worth a try at least," she offered.

Damn, I still wasn't used to her being okay with this kind of situation, even though she'd explained her reasoning to me. But still...

My voice was quiet, even though Natalie could still hear me, responding to Serenity. "Yeah, but kind of don't want to."

The blue-haired chick scoffed.

I directed my words at her. "Does that surprise you?"

Her expression pained, her voice suddenly vulnerable again. "No," she said simply.

"Want to know why I don't want to?" I asked seriously, assuming she was thinking it was because of her baggage, like I'd indicated earlier.

"No," she repeated.

"Because I don't want to have sex with someone who's unwilling," I said firmly.

It was quiet for a few seconds.

"Wait, what?" Natalie finally replied.

"I don't want to put up with your reluctant attitude," I emphasized. "I view sex as something intimate and special. Not just some quick orgasm, and then it's over. And even if it *was* just a quick orgasm, and then it's over, I don't want to

deal with someone who's only doing it because she *has* to put up with it." I scoffed. "I'm not going to fuck some chick who's only tolerating the activity. Either you do it because you want to, or not at all."

She didn't respond, and when I glanced in the rearview mirror, I saw she was looking down now, her expression impassive.

"I admit that I like sex," I continued, prompting her to glance up at me. "But I'm not some desperate nerd like that bastard who hurt you. So you need to decide on what *you* want to do, and then commit to doing it, instead of dragging your feet."

She sighed this time, looking away. She then spoke up, directing her words at Serenity. "I don't understand how *you're* even cool with that."

"It's complicated," she said simply.

"Apparently," Natalie agreed.

"But he is right," Serenity continued, twisting in her seat to look back at her, still holding my hand in her lap. "We are happy. *I'm* happy. And while I can't promise you anything, I can at least say confidently that Kai will get rid of these guys, if for no other reason than the fact that they pose a threat to regular people." She then glanced at me affectionately. "He kind of has a track record of that."

"What does *that* mean?" Natalie asked seriously.

I sighed. "Being that Serenity here is a detective, I used to get involved sometimes when it really upset her." I glanced back at the blue-haired vixen. "Meaning, I went after the serial killer and ended them."

"Oh," Natalie replied simply, her light brown eyes wide now. "So then, you killed them."

I tried not to scoff at her need for clarification. "Umm, yeah. Usually just shoved their weapon through their heart."

"So you've killed before," she emphasized.

"I don't enjoy doing it. And I've only killed other killers. But yeah."

She didn't respond, and when I glanced in the rearview mirror, she was looking out the window again.

"Does that bother you?" I wondered.

She cleared her throat, her voice quiet. "Well...no. Kind of reassures me that you won't let those jackasses off easy."

I scoffed, prompting her to focus on me as I responded. "No, not at all. I fully intend on killing them. And yeah, sucks for the other puppets, who might not be evil, like that bastard who controls them, but they're still cursed beings. Can't have them running around like wild animals on the full moon, killing everyone in sight."

She scoffed this time. "No, they're all just as bad. He can technically control them, after becoming their alpha by beating the shit out of them a few days after they were bitten, but for the most part, they do what they want."

"Like what?" I wondered casually.

She grimaced, turning her head away.

I assumed I knew what that meant. That the leader didn't have to 'make' the other guys assault their plaything. Thus, I decided to change the subject, since I doubted she wanted to be reminded of that.

"So, what did you think of Ms. Miriam and Gwen?"

She sighed, glancing at me. "Wasn't thrilled about them wanting to kill me."

I frowned. "Yeah, that's understandable. I wasn't too thrilled about that either."

"Why did you defend me?" she asked seriously.

I scoffed. "Do I need a reason? I mean, it's not like you're an evil person, as far as I can tell. You just got fucked over by a bunch of assholes, and I wanted to look at all our options first."

Serenity chimed in. "I would have tried defending you too," she added. "Just everything happened so fast, and I admit I was kind of just shocked by how extreme their reactions were. It took me by surprise."

Natalie just sighed, not responding for a few seconds. She then cleared her throat. "So, what was up with that taller chick?" She paused. "Gwen, right?"

"What about her?" I wondered.

Natalie frowned. "Well, kind of seemed like she knew what I was thinking."

"Oh." I shrugged. "Yeah, she kind of does that."

"Wait," Serenity interjected, seeming truly stunned. "Are you serious?"

I glanced sideways at her. "Honestly, kind of surprised you didn't pick up on it."

Serenity's brown eyes were wide. "She can really read minds?" she clarified, only to reach up with her free hand to cover her face. "Ugh, that's so embarrassing."

"Well, technically it's not mind reading. At least, according to her." I paused when they both focused more intently on me. "When I asked about it, she said it was more like she could see the shadows of people's thoughts. Like, instead of hearing the actual thought, or I guess what the person is actually thinking, she instead grasps the general ideas passing through your head."

"Still sounds like mind reading," Natalie commented.

I shrugged. "I mean, yeah. Seems like she knows what I'm thinking about most of the time, so I don't disagree. But I don't think she actually hears the literal words you think in your head." I shrugged again. "So there's that."

Serenity leaned back more in her seat, and Natalie glanced out the window again.

My sexy brunette then spoke up, after about a minute of silence. "So, now what's the plan?" she wondered. "Are we going back home?"

I frowned at that, only to glance back at our guest. "Kind of depends. Natalie, they can obviously sense you somehow. Can you tell us how that works? Like, do we have to worry about bringing you back to our house?"

Her expression was pained, with her only having glanced at me briefly, before averting her gaze right away again.

I gave her a few seconds, before speaking up a second time. "Still not going to say?"

The disappointment was obvious in my tone, prompting Serenity to glance back at her too.

Natalie only grimaced.

I sighed heavily and focused more on the road, knowing we'd be on busier streets soon, with us having gone far enough to only have one more backroad to turn onto.

"Fuck," Natalie unexpectedly hissed, sounding like she was more speaking to herself.

I glanced back at her, prompting her to speak louder.

"Can you really do magic?" she blurted out.

My eyes widened at that, realizing my discussion with Ms. Miriam had implied that we could *both* use it. And obviously Natalie had picked up on that.

However, Serenity spoke up before I could. "Yeah, actually I've been wanting to see too. We've had so much going on since you got back yesterday, that we didn't really have time to see that."

I smirked, recalling that we were too busy having sex in the dark, while everyone else pretended to watch a movie, followed by Michelle having her turn on my lap, for me to show off what little magic I could do. However, it almost seemed as if Natalie was indicating that showing her that I could do magic would reassure her that I was telling the truth about being able to handle the threat.

Slowing down as I approached a stop sign for an intersection that turned onto a busier road, I glanced around while pulling my hand away from Serenity and holding it over the center console, immediately having both women's attention.

Then, once I was sure no one would see, I silently commanded a blue flame to appear in my palm, immediately causing two different reactions.

Serenity simply said, ‘Whoa’ in amazement.

Alternatively, Natalie was a bit louder, speaking at full volume. “Holy fuck! Is that real?” she asked seriously, holding her hand out toward it, as if to see if it had heat. However, I didn’t have to respond, as she jerked her hand back, after getting a little too close. “Fuck, it’s real.”

“Yep,” I agreed, keeping it up for another few seconds, before letting it die out so I could pull out onto the busier road. “And it can do a lot of damage too,” I added.

“H-How much damage?” she stammered.

“Do you really want to know?”

“Well, yeah.”

I glanced back at her. “If I’m pissed, I can turn an enemy to ash in an instant.”

Natalie just stared at me with wide eyes. “Y-You’re serious?”

I nodded, focused ahead again. “Yeah. I’m serious. Can’t really show you that though. For obvious reasons. Would have to kill something to prove that.”

“Fuck,” she repeated. “You should have led with that.”

I looked back at her in surprise. “Really?” I said skeptically.

“Yes, *really*,” she said seriously, her tone having a hint of sarcasm. “Fuck, all this time you could have just showed me that you can use fucking *fire magic*, and that would have convinced me.”

I shrugged. “Well, I didn’t know. Honestly, didn’t think that showing you a little flame would have been too impressive.”

She just shook her head. “I mean, if that’s not impressive, *then what is?*”

I knew it was a rhetorical question, but I couldn’t help but meet her gaze in the rearview mirror with raised eyebrows... prompting her to suddenly look surprised.

“Wait...is that *not* impressive, compared to what you planned on showing me?”

I shrugged again. "I guess I'll just let you decide that later. But then, does this mean you're willing to answer my question now?"

She frowned and looked away. She then sighed heavily. "They sort of have two ways of tracking me," she finally blurted out. "The first is like a sort of internal compass. And I'm north. Really, he can sense all the others like that, but it obviously is a pointless ability when they're with him."

My brow furrowed as I considered that. "So basically, they know your general direction right now, but if we took you to our place, then they wouldn't necessarily know your exact location. Only which way to go, to get to you."

She sighed heavily again. "Yeah, pretty much."

"And what's the second way?" I wondered.

She frowned at that. "Well, it only applies on the full moon. They'll be able to track my scent. And, in that case, yeah, they'll know everywhere I've been in the last few days."

"Okay, so today is probably safe, at least. Assuming they're still alive on the full moon."

"I...I don't know," she admitted.

I nodded slowly. "And how long will it take for him to heal from his broken arm? Will he have returned to wherever all of you were staying?"

"Probably a few days," she said quietly. "And no, it's doubtful he would have gone back, now that I'm compromised."

"So, does that mean he doesn't take risks?" I continued. "Like, will he attack even if he's not back to full health?"

She hesitated. "I...I don't know." She then sighed, scooting down in her seat, spreading her legs again, truly seeming to not realize she was revealing her black vinyl thong in doing so. "Normally, I'd guess that he'd wait until the full moon to attack. But..." Her voice trailed off.

"But what?" I prompted.

She sighed heavily again. "He's obsessed with me. Truly views me as his property. So I don't know if he'll wait, or not. He doesn't like to lose. I can't even imagine how pissed he is right now."

"Well, I plan on killing him either way, and I guess if he comes early, then it'll just make it easier. Or will he become more dangerous as it gets closer to the full moon?"

"What do you mean?" Natalie wondered seriously.

"Like, can he transform at will?"

She frowned at that. "Not exactly. He can make himself stronger, and yeah, he can grow a little bit bigger too. He can also make everyone else kind of transform - that's how he broke my arms. But it's not like on the full moon. Basically, he can start the transformation, but can't go all the way. Only the moon can force that out."

"Makes sense," I replied simply, only to focus on Serenity. "What do you think? Do you want to risk taking her to our place, or should we avoid it for now?"

Serenity's brow was furrowed as she considered that. "I mean, I think we'll be alright. Even if this perp and his accomplices did attack, we could *all* probably handle them at this point." She paused. "Obviously, it might be different on the full moon, so ideally we will want to make sure he's dealt with before then. But for now, I don't think we need to worry too much. He *is* injured after all. And we can survive a lot, even if he wasn't."

I nodded, knowing I wasn't going to let anything happen either way, but also not wanting to be reckless. "It's a lot quieter at our place too, which means I'll be more likely to notice any weird sounds. And I'll also probably go ahead and check the area out every couple of hours on foot, just to make sure I haven't missed anything."

"What about when we leave to visit Ms. Miriam?" Serenity wondered.

I shrugged. "We can just tell Avery and her mom to hang out at their house while we're gone. Not that they'd be in

danger anyway, since those guys can only sense Natalie's general direction right now, and we're going to have to take her with us anyway."

She nodded. "Sounds like a plan then. I can check to see if they can meet us there, just so they can meet her, and we can give them an update on what's going on. And then we can probably just hang out until Gabriella gets off work."

"Wait, who am I meeting?" Natalie wondered.

"Friend from high school, and her mom," I explained. "Avery and Michelle."

"Oh," she said simply.

Serenity focused on me. "Think we should tell her?"

I frowned. "Didn't want to freak her out."

"Yeah, but she's going to figure it out anyway."

I sighed.

"Wait," Natalie repeated. "Tell me *what*?"

Serenity just focused on me for a few seconds, before twisting in her seat to respond. "Obviously, Kai and I are together. But I'm not the only woman he's with. My best friend Gabriella is also with him." She paused, probably because Natalie's eyes had widened as she sensed there was more. "And he's also sort of with the other two women we just mentioned. And the two you just met."

Natalie just stared at her in disbelief, only to respond hesitantly.

"What...the fuck."

I sighed. "But you know what that means, right?" I said seriously.

She sounded nervous now. "W-What?"

"That what I said before was true. About the sex thing. I'm not..." I sighed again, only to glance back at her. "Look, I'm not saying you're completely undesirable, only that I don't need that from you. Like, I assume you were the only girl in the group before, right?"

She grimaced, but didn't look away this time. "Umm, yeah."

"Well, if I become your alpha, you won't be. You'll be one of eight women around me, and I have no problem ignoring you completely, if you want."

Serenity laughed. "Wow, Kai. You didn't even have to think about the number there. Are you keeping score or something?"

I scoffed at that. "No, of course not. But I am pretty good at math, and my brain already has everyone in several categories in my head."

"Oh really?" Serenity said curiously. "Like what?"

"Well, like 'in the house' versus 'not in the house.' First, there's you, Gabriella, Avery, and Michelle at home, and then Mrs. Rebecca, Ms. Miriam, and Gwen not at home. See? Seven people. Add one, and that's eight."

"Huh, yeah I guess that makes sense."

I quickly directed my words at Natalie again, focusing on her in the rearview mirror. "Not that I'm counting you as one of my women," I quickly added. "Only that you'd be the eighth woman in my life, who I might see with any regularity. Very easy for you to go unnoticed entirely, if that's what you wanted."

She simply nodded, focusing out the window again, seeming slightly pensive as she stared into space. She then sighed heavily. "Sorry for being such a bitch to you both," she unexpectedly said. "It's just hard to trust anyone after what I've been through."

Serenity twisted in her seat more to give her a small smile. "It's alright, and honestly I don't feel like you've been a bitch at all. Maybe a little guarded, but can't really blame you for that."

She only nodded, seeming a little somber now.

"Same here," I agreed, meeting her gaze in the rearview mirror. "Obviously, you've been reluctant about everything, and now that I have a better understanding of the overall situation, I completely understand that. After all, we are pretty much strangers to you. So it's really completely

understandable, and I hope you don't feel like we've given you too hard of a time."

Natalie looked down. "Umm, no." She then sighed. "Honestly, can't really complain. You took me out to eat, and even let me buy as much food as I wanted, and then you defended me when those other two wanted to just kill me." She took a deep breath. "You could have just given up on me, and saved yourselves a big headache, but you didn't. And yeah, I admit that I really don't want another alpha. Just knowing the kind of control that lets you have over me is honestly terrifying. Like, it really scares me." She took another deep breath. "But, that girl, Miriam or whatever. She was right. I *am* cursed. And it really sucks. But there's nothing I can do about it."

I frowned at that, glancing at Serenity as I spoke hesitantly. "I might be able to help out with that too. But it's kind of a big secret right now," I quickly added.

"Uh, *what?*" Natalie said seriously, sitting up straighter.

"No promises," I continued, really wanting to wait until after I'd told Ms. Miriam, to possibly share the details with her. "But I might be able to help with the curse. Might even be able to make it so that it's not so much a curse anymore." I paused. "But again, no promises."

"Are you...are you serious right now?"

"No promises," I repeated.

"Fuck," she hissed.

"What?" I asked in sincere surprise, glancing back at her.

"Fuck man," she scoffed. "You should have *led* with that."

(13) CHAPTER 58: INTRODUCTIONS

After visiting Ms. Miriam and Gwen in a random field off a backroad, to discuss the situation presented by this new threat, Serenity, Natalie, and I were all finally just pulling onto our street to return home after a pretty eventful morning. And truly, was it eventful, between finding out that werewolves really did exist, coupled with the fact that what I imagined them to be was nothing like reality.

But then, there was the complete one-eighty in Natalie's attitude.

Honestly, I almost felt like I had whiplash now that Natalie had kind of opened up to us some.

I supposed that showing her that I could really use magic, and then admitting that I might have a way to help with the werewolf curse, something I wasn't ready to share the exact specifics about since I hadn't even told Ms. Miriam yet, really changed her mind about her willingness to work *with us*.

More than that, from what I could tell, it kind of changed her overall hesitancy toward me.

Because, it turned out, despite everything Natalie had been through, she'd *totally* fuck some random dude to get rid of the curse that caused her excruciating, agonizing, traumatizing pain every full moon.

And she wasn't a whore by any means either, having only had sex once prior to getting kidnapped.

But to avoid the reoccurring torment that now plagued her life?

Yeah, she'd fuck for that.

She'd fuck the ugliest bastard in the world for that, and she said as much.

The pain was *that* bad.

The transformation was *that* traumatizing.

Every. Single. Time.

It hurt horribly every single time.

She compared it to being chopped up piece-by-piece, all her bones broken into tiny fragments, only to get sewn right back together as a horrifying monster with no self-control, only to get chopped up all over again and put back together as a smaller, weaker, defeated little insect of a person who actually had a conscience and might be a little messed up after having spent all night eviscerating and devouring everything in sight.

Needless to say, after that detailed explanation, I realized being a werewolf truly was a curse.

Ms. Miriam was right.

It wasn't at all anything like they had in movies nowadays. They'd definitely romanticized it, and turned it into fluffy doggie creatures, or at least wolf-man monsters that looked kind of cool. But the reality was, real werewolves did not look cool, instead being ugly mutated abominations, and the curse of being one was truly just that.

A real curse.

One that would make most want to end their own lives to escape it, if only their alpha would allow them to do so.

But apparently the alpha didn't dislike the pain, like the others.

The pain was associated with their power and authority, and they almost immediately learned to love it, like how a weightlifter might like the 'burn' they felt with each rep. For the alpha, the transformation was a satisfying burn of rapidly increasing power.

But for his underlings, it was an agonizingly slow torture with few comparisons.

Needless to say, it kind of felt like we just had a normal person in the car with us now, Natalie revealing her true self now that she'd relaxed a little, instead of the guarded individual we'd spent all morning with.

It was just now a little after noon as we pulled into our driveway, with me already expecting to see Avery's car, since Serenity had just spoken on the phone with Michelle not long ago, verifying that we'd all be getting back around the same time. Serenity also mentioned that we had someone with us named Natalie, and that we would explain what was going on when we got home, which of course had both of them concerned now.

However, the prospect of meeting new people hadn't seemed to put a damper on the blue-haired vixen's new mood.

"So this is it, huh?" Natalie commented, leaning forward in her seat as she focused ahead. "Kind of a nice secluded area, but the house is smaller than I expected."

"Sorry to disappoint," I said playfully, since sarcasm was definitely her thing.

She scoffed at that, only to reply honestly. "Yeah, well, the places I've lived in the last year have been shit in comparison, so I suppose I shouldn't knock it too hard."

"By the way," Serenity chimed in. "Not sure how you feel about personal privacy, but we're going to need to share with them what's going on. Obviously, we won't mention the exact details of stuff you've gone through, but we need to explain enough so they're at least aware."

Natalie frowned at that, leaning back in her seat. "Yeah, whatever. Figured as much."

I pulled to a stop next to Serenity's car and put it in park. "And please don't get upset if they act overly sympathetic. Michelle and Avery are both really sweet, and they sincerely care about people."

"Right," Serenity agreed as she popped open her door to get out. "Michelle is especially a sweetheart. And very much

acts like a mom sometimes.”

The blue-haired vixen sighed heavily. “Yeah, I get it. Trust me, I’m not trying to have an issue with anyone. I’ll play nice.”

“Good,” I said simply, as I got out too.

Michelle and Avery were both just coming out the front door, the trunk of their car still open, indicating that they must have just finished bringing in the groceries they bought.

Michelle spoke up right away. “Seems like you two had an eventful morning.” She focused on the blue-haired girl. “And you must be Natalie, I presume. I’m Michelle, and this is my daughter Avery. It’s nice to meet you.”

“Umm, nice to meet you too,” she replied, seeming a little timid for some reason. “Sorry to intrude.”

“Not at all, honey,” Michelle replied warmly. “Are you hungry? I’m about to get started on lunch.”

“Umm,” Natalie glanced at me. “Well, yeah, actually I kind of am. Thank you.”

“You’re welcome,” my blonde MILF said simply.

Natalie focused on Avery, looking her up and down briefly. “And you go to the same school as Kai, or something like that, right?”

“Oh, uh, yeah,” Avery agreed, reaching up to tuck some of her blonde hair behind her ear, a gesture I’d usually only seen her mom do. “Kind of known each other for a while. Few years, at least.”

Natalie simply nodded, prompting me to speak up, directing my words at the two blondes.

“So, we obviously want to explain what’s going on. How about we head inside, or did you need to grab something else?” I wondered, glancing at their vehicle.

Michelle smiled warmly. “Just have to close the trunk and grab my purse. We actually have a lot of the stuff put away already. We were kind of in a rush, since we knew we had company coming over.”

Natalie scoffed at that. "I wouldn't really consider myself company. Don't worry about 'putting up a front' for me. I don't care if it's a mess inside."

"Of course not, sweetie," Michelle said warmly. "We only wanted you to feel welcome, and didn't want you to have to stand around while we were putting stuff away."

The blue-haired vixen's light brown eyes widened slightly, seemingly at Michelle's genuine kindness. "Oh, umm. Right. M-Make sense."

I focused on Natalie, not wanting her to start feeling awkward. "Well, come on inside then. We can all sit down at the kitchen table."

She nodded while beginning to follow me, Avery coming with us, while Serenity hung back with Michelle as she grabbed her purse and closed the trunk.

As I opened the front door, I spoke again. "Bathroom is underneath the stairs, if you need to use it. Otherwise, kitchen is this way," I added, heading to my right to have a seat.

Natalie paused when Avery closed the door most of the way, just so we weren't letting out the cool air. "Oh, umm, I don't use the restroom often. Kind of the only perk, if there even is one."

"Perk of what?" Avery asked curiously.

I stopped just inside the kitchen, turning to face them still in the entryway. "I'm assuming she means perk of being a werewolf," I said simply.

Avery's bright blue eyes immediately lit up in excitement. "Oh wow, that's so cool!" she exclaimed cheerfully.

Unfortunately, Natalie had the reverse reaction, instantly hostile.

"No, it's *not* fucking cool!" she yelled, visibly pissed. "It's a fucking nightmare!"

Avery looked stunned, taking a step back. "S-Sorry. I...I didn't know."

Natalie looked away, suddenly appearing visibly ashamed now.

The front door opened up then, Serenity and Michelle coming inside, prompting Avery to step out of the way.

"What's going on?" Serenity wondered, focusing on Natalie.

Avery spoke up. "I, umm. Well..." Her voice trailed off seeming uncertain of what to say.

"Sorry," Natalie whispered, her shoulders slumped now. "It was my fault." She glanced at Avery. "Didn't mean to yell at you like that. I swear, I'm not normally such a bitch. Just... it's not cool. Not at all. It sucks."

I quickly interjected to explain. "Apparently, werewolves aren't at all like you might read in a romance novel," I said, knowing she'd read quite a few of those. "Being one is not a pleasant thing. It's painful, and they have no control."

"Sorry," Avery repeated, directing her words at Natalie. "I shouldn't have assumed. It's just that it's pretty cool being like..." Her blue eyes immediately widened, as she abruptly covered her mouth with both hands, looking at me like she was in trouble. Which, of course, made it pretty easy for the blue-haired vixen to assume what she was about to say.

"Like him?" Natalie said in surprise, as it all seemed to dawn on her, how I might be able to fix her curse. Suddenly, it was like that final spark lit in her mind, and the light bulb turned all the way on.

Now, she realized exactly how I might break her curse - by turning her into something else.

Ah, dammit.

I sighed heavily. "Please be more careful Avery," I said simply, no accusation in my tone, just a gentle reminder.

"Oh Kai, I'm so sorry," my blonde classmate replied, her tone sounding overly desperate. "I wasn't thinking. It's just, finding out she's different too, I didn't even consider that..." Her voice trailed off.

"Avery, relax," I said gently. "I was probably going to tell her anyway. And she'd figure it out on her own, if someone wasn't careful and accidentally started to look different. But yeah, in the future, let's not share the secret, even if we're dealing with someone else who is different too."

She nodded confidently. "Of course, Kai. It's not even my secret to share. And I'm really sorry."

I simply nodded, only to gesture for everyone to come into the kitchen. "Let's sit down, so I can give you two an update."

They all began to file in, with Michelle speaking up.

"Are you fine if I get started on lunch?" she wondered. "Avery and I probably should have stopped somewhere. We're both pretty famished."

"Oh, yeah of course. That's fine. We actually ended up having brunch ourselves. Do you want help?"

She shook her head. "I'm alright, sweetie."

I simply nodded as I took a seat, deciding to sit on the side of the table, instead of on the end this time. Avery went ahead and sat across from me.

Up until this point, I kind of hadn't paid much attention to the crack still in the table, the two halves held together by a few boards nailed in underneath, since it had been a couple of days since I'd broken it, but I watched Natalie focus right on it as she carefully sat down next to Avery, looking a little uncomfortable by the sight.

Serenity decided to address her obvious concern, as she sat next to me, speaking to the blue-haired vixen sitting across from her. "Would you believe me if I said someone actually kidnapped me recently?" she wondered in a lighthearted tone.

Natalie's light brown eyes focused on her in surprise as she brushed some of her blue hair out of her face. "Umm, do you mean that literally?"

She nodded. "Unfortunately, yes. Was a pretty scary experience."

I took a deep breath, and decided to just summarize everything for her. “So basically, to kind of give you some context first, I’ve been different all my life. And when I was younger, I often snuck out in the middle of the night on the full moon.”

“Wait, why the full moon?” she interjected, her blue eyebrows furrowed.

I shrugged. “I’ve just always felt wide awake during those nights. But anyway, when I was nine years old, I snuck out and actually stumbled on a murder taking place.”

Her light brown eyes widened into saucers. “Fuck.”

Serenity chimed in. “I actually had no idea that happened back then. Only that he became really depressed, for seemingly no reason.”

Natalie nodded. “Well, no wonder. No kid should have to see something like that.”

“Anyway,” I continued. “Turned out that the killer was actually hired help. And the real murderer was filming it, so he saw me when I...didn’t exactly look normal.” I paused when her eyes widened again, only for her to glance at the others, before returning her attention to me as I continued. “So, he’d been trying to track me down all this time. Had no idea. Ended up throwing two different serial killers in our general direction, just to try to flush me out. And then, when he figured out that Serenity must know me, he kidnapped her.” I paused. “I actually hadn’t even told her my secret at that point, and so she wasn’t different like she is now. She was still a normal person.”

“I did my best to defend myself,” Serenity added, seeming a little somber now. “Even had my gun on me when I answered the door. But he kicked it in, and then drugged me with something.”

“Fuck,” Natalie repeated, not at all seeming skeptical anymore. It was like she no longer had any doubts about us, or at least saw no reason for us to lie.

"Anyway," I said, placing my hand on the table, and moving it toward the crack. "Gabriella and I were just getting home, and when I saw the note left for me, taunting me to come find him before he left me a trail of body parts to collect for the funeral, this sort of happened."

Natalie nodded slowly, focusing on my hand and then meeting my gaze. "I guess you must have been pretty pissed," she commented, just stating the obvious.

I frowned. "I don't enjoy killing, and the handful of times I have, I didn't torture them or anything. I simply ended the threat. But yeah, if that guy had been here when I broke the table, then I probably would have took my time ripping his heart out and feeding it to him."

She leaned back more in her chair, seeming to relax some. "Well, when we go after those guys, feel free to take out all your frustrations on them. I'll just be happy if I can watch."

I smirked at that, only to sigh, turning in my seat to speak, in order to make sure Michelle felt included. "So that's kind of the issue we've run into," I said, segueing right into the information I wanted to share. "Natalie here was sort of kidnapped by a bunch of guys. Or rather, a pack of werewolves, and we were able to get her away from them, but they're still going to be a threat until I find them again and deal with them. Couldn't exactly take care of them in public."

Michelle stopped what she was doing, focusing on Natalie. "Oh honey, I am so sorry."

Natalie's face flushed slightly and she focused down at her lap, not responding.

Michelle continued, giving me her attention. "So what do you want us to do, dear?"

"Well, when Gabriella gets off work, we all still plan on visiting Ms. Miriam at her place. We actually saw her earlier - kind of met her halfway - but still have a lot to share with her." I glanced at Natalie, speaking specifically to her. "The

redhead you met, Ms. Miriam, actually doesn't know that I've made anyone else like me, and I need to be careful about approaching the subject, because usually creatures that have similar traits are bad news."

Natalie nodded. "I understand. I won't snitch. Last I want to do is ruin my chances of you helping me out."

"Speaking of which," I continued. "I do want to try to see if she can help figure out how your body would handle that kind of change. Because with everyone else, they were mostly just normal people, but the last thing I'd want to do is try to help you, only to make your situation worse."

She nodded again. "Make sense. And thanks. Really, you have no idea how much I appreciate it."

Damn, it was still so weird having her be so grateful. Like, even just the mention earlier in the car that I might be able to help with the curse, never mind the proof that I could use magic, it was really like she'd done a complete one-eighty with me.

Michelle spoke up again. "So what do you want me and Avery to do?" she repeated.

I turned in my seat more a second time to focus on my blonde MILF. "Those guys have a way of tracking her. Essentially, like a compass. And while that basically means that they should have no reason to come here while we're gone, since we plan on bringing Natalie with us, at the same time I don't want to chance you two getting caught in the crossfire. Probably best if you stay at your house while we're away."

"Of course dear," she said reassuringly. "That won't be a problem at all."

I nodded, about to respond, only for my phone to start vibrating, indicating I was getting a call.

Pulling it out, I was surprised to see it was Gabriella, wondering if she was calling me on her break. Standing up out of my seat, I directed my words more to Serenity right

before answering it. "It's Gabriella. Let me get this really quick."

"Sure," my sexy brunette said simply.

I held the phone up to my ear, beginning to walk away so that they could still talk while I was busy. "Hey there, how are you doing?" I replied warmly. "Calling on your break?"

"Hey baby," Gabriella replied with just as much affection. "Actually no. Just got in my car, and I'm heading home early."

My eyes widened in surprise, pausing just at the kitchen entrance. "Oh, is everything alright?"

"Yep," she said reassuringly. "But it's been a pretty slow day so far, and my boss wasn't really expecting me to come in anyway. Kind of feel silly for not realizing why we had an extra girl there." She sighed. "But she told me that, while she was fine with me staying, I could also take off early if I wanted to. Not like I'm desperate for money, or anything, and I really miss you, so decided to take her up on the offer." She paused. "If you don't mind having me home early."

"No, not at all. Although, we've had a lot happen this morning, and if you're coming home early, then we might head to Ms. Miriam's place sooner than planned."

"Something bad happen?" Gabriella wondered seriously. "Is that why Serenity called to check up on me?"

"Not exactly bad. Like, no one is hurt or anything, but yeah, we sort of have a problem to deal with now. But probably best if I explain in person." I paused. "We do have company over though, so don't be too shocked when you get home."

"Guy or girl?" she wondered curiously.

"Girl. Her name is Natalie."

"And are we taking her with us to see my great-great-grandmother?"

"How'd you know?"

She sighed. "Well, she's with you now, and you want to leave right away when I get home, so just kind of figured she must be coming along."

"Well, we don't have to leave right away. Michelle is fixing lunch for everyone. But yeah, she needs to come." I paused. "Oh and..." My voice trailed off.

"What's up?"

I sighed. "Well, the situation was kind of pressing, so we actually met Ms. Miriam a little bit ago. She and Gwen drove out to meet us halfway. But we didn't really talk about a lot of things," I quickly added, concerned she'd feel left out. "Kind of just discussed the issue that had come up, and then they went back home. But I plan on telling her everything once you're with us."

"Okay, that sounds good."

"Sorry we saw her without you."

"What?" she said in surprise. "No, that's alright. I'm just concerned now, because this must be a pretty big deal if you decided to see her early, even though we already had plans to."

I sighed. "Yeah, kind of. But let me go ahead and call her, just to make sure she's alright with us coming over early. I mean, I can't see a reason why she wouldn't be, but just want to make sure."

"Sounds good. I guess I'll see you soon then."

"See you soon," I replied warmly. "Love you."

Her tone was full of affection. "Love you too, baby. Bye."

"Bye," I echoed, hanging up.

When I glanced back into the kitchen, I realized everyone had been listening in, since I hadn't ended up going very far. Figuring they'd want to know what was up anyway, I went ahead and called Ms. Miriam.

She picked up on the second ring. "Well hi again," the adorable succubus said warmly, the sound of an engine rumbling in the background. "Wasn't expecting another call from you so soon. Everything alright?"

It was obvious from her tone that she was more happy to have me calling than she was worried.

"Yeah. I was just calling because it looks like Gabriella is getting off work early, and I wondered if you minded us coming over sooner?"

"That would be wonderful!" she said cheerfully, the engine revving slightly in the background. "What time do you think you'll be over?"

"Are you not home yet?" I asked, prompted by the sounds I was hearing.

She chuckled. "No, not yet. I didn't realize how much Gwen was itching to get out, but now that she's behind the wheel of her favorite toy, she's sort of holding me hostage." She laughed again. "We've been joyriding. Actually got pulled over by a cop just ten minutes ago." She giggled. "That was fun. But now we're on our way again."

"Oh," I said simply, uncertain of what she meant by 'that was fun.' I cleared my throat. "Umm, cool."

Unfortunately, she picked up on the drop in my tone. "Kai..." She said hesitantly, only to pause. "We didn't like..." She paused again. "I mean, I just sweet-talked my way out of getting a ticket. It was...amusing...watching him get all flustered. But I didn't touch him, or let him touch me." She sighed, only to take a deep breath. "I'm still not...well, I'm not really sure how to live differently. But for now, I haven't done anything that would make you upset."

I cleared my throat. "Sorry. Wasn't trying to stress you out."

She sighed again. "No, I'm sorry. I should have been more clear."

"I shouldn't have assumed anything," I replied.

She was quiet for a few seconds, only to switch the subject. "Well, I think I'll let Gwen have her fun for another half hour, and then we'll head home."

"It's an hour drive for us, so there's no rush. When Gabriella gets home, we'll have lunch first."

Miriam chuckled again. "Well, you just made Gwen's day, by suggesting that she might be able to play for another hour."

I couldn't help but smirk. "It really is fine. I'll let you know when we leave, so she can have as much fun as possible."

"Hey now," Ms. Miriam scoffed. "What about what I want? I'm being held prisoner right now."

I chuckled. "You poor thing."

Gwen unexpectedly laughed in the background, truly sounding in a good mood.

I couldn't help but grin even wider. "Well, okay," I continued. "I guess we will see you in a little bit then. Hope you have fun."

"Do you think you and I might get a chance to spend some time alone together?" she asked hopefully. "I'm not used to missing another person so much, and I'm not sure how I'm going to function from now on, if I can't see you regularly."

"I think we should be able to do that. But we do first need to talk about a bunch of stuff."

"Of course," she agreed. "And thank you. I'm really excited to have all of you over."

"Thank you. I guess we'll see you in a little bit."

"Looking forward to it," she replied warmly. "Bye for now."

"Bye," I said, just before hanging up.

I then put my phone in my pocket, and walked back to the table to have a seat, all eyes on me now. Figuring they were waiting for me to speak, I cleared my throat again.

"So I guess we have our plans figured out now."

"Sounds like it," Serenity agreed. "And I guess when Gabriella gets home, do you want to show Natalie before we head over?"

I knew she was talking about my larger form. "Yep, that should be fine. But first, while I'm thinking about it, I'm

going to run outside and scope out a few miles around our house, to just verify no one unwelcome has been around.”

Natalie cleared her throat, seeming a little more comfortable talking about the situation now. “Honestly, if they were going to come anytime soon, then it would be by car. I’m not exactly sure how fast you can run on foot, but they are only a little above average most of the time.”

I frowned. “That guy seemed pretty quick earlier at the mall though.”

She nodded, only grimacing a little. “They all have very fast reflexes, and could probably move about ten or twenty feet very quickly from the initial sprint. But long-distances are a different story.” She paused then, glancing down. “Unless they are still alive on the full moon. Then they’ll definitely be coming on foot...”

“Not on paw?” I wondered, trying to lighten the mood.

She grimaced more, focusing up on me. “Umm no. We don’t have paws. We really are hideous monsters, as much as I hate to think about it.”

I sighed. “Sorry. Bad joke.”

She shook her head, but didn’t respond.

“Alright, I’ll be back in a little bit then.” I focused on Serenity. “I have my phone on me, but I’ll be keeping an ear out, in case you need something.”

She nodded. “We should be fine. See you in a little bit.”

I nodded, only to focus on Michelle as she glanced back at me, deciding to give her a quick hug of appreciation. “Thanks again for making lunch,” I said warmly as she leaned into my side. “Smells good,” I added, realizing she was making spaghetti and garlic butter toast. She was also browning some beef in two skillets.

She answered my questioning gaze. “Figured we were all needing a lot of calories, and this kind of meal is easy to make in bulk. I usually mix the meat in with the pasta sauce.”

I nodded, giving her another warm smile, coupled with another squeeze. "I'll eat anything you fix."

She grinned at me. "Be safe," she said simply as I pulled away.

"Will do," I replied as I turned, giving both Serenity and Avery one last smile before heading out the door.

Once I was outside, I could hear it was quiet in the kitchen for a few seconds, before Serenity spoke up again, directing her words at Avery and Michelle, asking more about the shopping trip, clearly wanting to help Natalie feel more comfortable by not making her the center of attention.

And sure enough, as I began running through the trees to scope out the perimeter, focusing on my senses, including my third-eye, to ensure no one had been around recently, Natalie began to slowly interact in little ways, by scoffs or one-word reactions. And then, before long she was willingly sharing things from her past, such as how she was glad she wasn't in high school anymore, once Avery mentioned graduation, or how she did kind of miss one of her friends, who moved away to go to college out-of-state.

She also mentioned that she'd probably be in college right now too, if not for what happened.

And then, when Michelle asked about her family, she quietly admitted that they were gone...

Both her parents killed by the bastard who'd kidnapped her, right after he changed her, as just the beginning of the nightmare he'd put her through. In his eyes, they were a complication, so he forced her to recommend to her dad that they go on a family canoe trip, at a time when the river was already dangerous after recent heavy rains. And, when her dad agreed, she was forced to lead them directly into an ambush, watching as the five bastards drowned her mom and dad both, right in front of her eyes.

Honestly, finding that out was shocking enough, but I was also surprised that Natalie was even sharing in the first place. Because I would have expected someone like her to

never open up enough to disclose that kind of thing. Especially not something so traumatizing.

And it wasn't like she was using it as an excuse to get anyone's pity either. Like, she wasn't crying or anything when she spoke about it. Rather, it sounded more like she just wanted to get it off her chest.

To tell someone what really happened.

To tell *anyone* that they didn't drown from an undercurrent, or something like that, like she was forced to tell the police - that they were swimming and both just got sucked under.

At least it didn't sound like she blamed herself though. She was well aware it wasn't her fault, and of course, while she obviously wished she could have prevented it from happening, she knew she was helpless to do anything.

I realized that was a part of her core aura that I sensed. Not necessarily just a stubbornness to persist and survive, but also a sense of being reasonable about what was or wasn't her fault. As in, the core of who she was significantly affected her self-esteem, self-perception, and sense of responsibility, or lack thereof.

So she knew it wasn't her fault. She didn't blame herself for the things outside of her control.

And she was aware she'd been helpless all this time, commenting that the prospect of getting revenge was really enticing for her.

"Like, I don't want any of you to think I'm a horrible person," Natalie was saying. "Really, I'm not. But if I can even put those bastards through a millionth of what they put me through, then I'll gladly do it." She sighed. "At the very least, I hope Kai doesn't go easy on them. I need this. I need him to hurt them."

Serenity responded. "We understand, Natalie. We really do. Not your pain of course, but I get your reasoning for wanting revenge. For *needing* it. Just remember that, if Kai was the kind of person who would truly torture them like

what you really want, then he also might not be the kind of guy you'd want as your alpha."

Natalie was silent for a few seconds as she considered that. "I...I guess that make sense."

"Not that he won't hurt them," Serenity clarified. "But if he does, it'll be for the sake of justice, more than anything. To give them what they deserve. If he started killing like it sounds like you want, then I'd be concerned."

She was silent again, and after a heavy sigh, she changed the subject to something more lighthearted.

I was already on my way back at this point, stopping about halfway down the driveway when I heard a car driving down the road, wondering if it might be Gabriella. I actually hadn't heard Gabriella's vehicle super recently, since she hadn't been over in a while, prior to her getting kidnapped at her work, but her car also didn't really have any solid 'tells' that would let me know it was hers anyway, unlike Serenity's vehicle.

However, when the vehicle slowed down, and then when I saw her pull in, I couldn't help but grin at her expression, obvious happiness evident in her emerald eyes and small smile.

And then, her eyes lit up more when she saw me waiting for her, slowing down as she approached, her window rolled down. "Hey there stranger," she said affectionately. "You're pretty cute. Need a lift?"

I laughed at that. "Wow, how lucky do I have to be for someone as hot as *you* to want to pick me up?"

She giggled. "Well, I do have a little secret. Want to know?"

"Oh? What's that?" I said, playing along.

She lowered her voice. "I've been watching you for a while, young man, just waiting to get you all alone."

I grinned. "Damn, that's so hot. Would be totally creepy if the rolls were flipped though."

She laughed at that. "Yeah, that's true. Could be fun to do some roleplay though."

I smirked. "Well, I'm up for whatever," I said playfully.

She grinned. "Yeah, I bet you are, naughty boy." She then glanced at the house. "You said Michelle was making lunch? I can smell it from here."

"Yep. Hungry?"

"Extremely," she agreed. "And curious to meet the girl you brought home."

I lowered my voice, my tone now serious. "Well, don't lay it on too thick when you meet her. She's been through a lot of shit. Like, don't act like you pity her or anything, but also try not to come off too strongly."

"Oh, of course, Kai," she replied, only for her tone to become playful. "Don't forget I'm older than you. I *do* sort of know how to interact with people, you know."

I smirked again. "Good point. Sorry."

"But thanks for the head's up," she replied seriously, pushing on the gas and speeding up to go park next to the rest of our vehicles.

I could have easily matched her pace, but decided to just walk, meeting her just in time as she climbed out of her vehicle. I then offered her my arm, and we headed inside, making the introductions. Surprisingly, Natalie picked up on the similarities between Gabriella and Miriam right away, asking outright if they were related.

We hadn't really shared Ms. Miriam's age yet, figuring it wasn't our place to discuss that kind of private information, especially since Natalie wasn't officially a part of our group at this point. Thus, Gabriella simply said yes, and left it at that.

We then all gathered around the table to eat lunch, actually filling up all the spots for once, since we only had six chairs at the table technically large enough to seat eight people, and divulged into a sort of peaceful silence for a

handful of minutes as everyone focused on devouring the spaghetti Michelle had made.

And dang, it was a ton of spaghetti, probably enough to feed twenty people, but it also went faster than I was expecting too. Michelle then decided to pull out a key lime pie and cheesecake they'd gotten, originally planning on saving it for later, but deciding now was as good a time as ever.

Nothing like sweets to put everyone in a good mood.

It wasn't until almost forty-five minutes later, after everyone seemed pretty satisfied, that I finally brought up the next step of our plans.

"So," I began simply, grabbing everyone's attention. "I told Natalie that I'd show her that I can handle those guys who kidnapped her. Problem is, I didn't want to risk affecting anyone else, but now that we're all here, I think it's finally a good time."

Needless to say, while the others all nodded in understanding, the blue-haired Rockstar chick suddenly looked really nervous, probably because this event had been hyped up so much.

However, I had no doubt she wouldn't be disappointed.

"So, are you ready?" I asked Natalie directly.

She visibly gulped, glancing around at everyone now focused on her. "Umm...yes," she said hesitantly.

I tried not to grin.

(14) CHAPTER 59: NEW IDEA

I was still wearing jeans and a nicer shirt from my date with Serenity earlier, so after asking Natalie if she was ready for me to prove to her that I could handle her kidnappers, I decided to first run upstairs to get changed in black gym shorts and a light gray t-shirt. I figured I'd wear the same thing to see Ms. Miriam too, since it was possible I might have reason to grow larger while we were over there, not to mention the concern of encountering those werewolf guys again.

Granted, with Natalie's kidnappers, I could probably handle them just fine at my normal size, but why bother?

Like, if I could grow larger, then why not?

Because I *wanted* to be in my crowned form. I *wanted* to grow my horns out. And I realized I almost just wanted an excuse to do it. Like, there was a part of me that was a little excited to have an enemy to defeat, a feeling that made me a little wary.

But, if I *did* end up in a fight, then I'd rather ruin clothing that could be replaced easily, whereas with my jeans and most of my other pants, it was kind of hard to find the perfect pair that fit right. But gym shorts? Yeah, those were a dime a dozen, and finding the right fit was never an issue.

I also decided to send Ms. Miriam a quick message, recalling that Gwen could always sense when I transformed, not wanting to freak them out. Plus there was always the possibility that it might affect Gwen's body temperature,

since she didn't have her sapphire butt plug in to keep it more under control.

In the meantime, while I was finishing up changing, I heard Serenity speak up downstairs, seeming hesitant.

"So, just a head's up," she began, clearly directing her words toward Natalie. "If he goes all the way, then we'll end up changing too. So don't freak out." She paused. "That's why he didn't want to do it earlier, since it would have been a problem for Gabriella to change at work. Or when Michelle and Avery were out shopping."

"C-Change into *what*?" Natalie asked nervously.

Serenity didn't respond, instead probably giving a non-verbal cue, indicating to our blue-haired guest that she would just have to wait. I suspected it was because Serenity wasn't sure how much I was okay with her sharing, with me obviously preferring to just let Natalie see for herself, instead of explaining it first.

However, I had to agree that warning her a little in advance was probably a good move, or otherwise she might piss her pants when she suddenly found herself in a room full of demons. I also discovered it was a good move to tip off Miriam, considering she indicated in her response that they were already pretty close to home, but that she was going to have Gwen pull over to ensure my own transformation didn't cause the sexy maid to accidentally damage her toy.

And damn, I hadn't even really thought of that, and wasn't sure if Gwen would forgive me for that one, even after forgiving me for so much more.

But the biggest issue was still going to be Natalie's reaction.

And sure enough, when I walked back downstairs and stepped into the kitchen, the blue-haired vixen already looked like she was about to piss herself, visibly trembling slightly in her seat, almost looking like she was cold in her leather jacket and short black dress.

But she wasn't cold.

Her aura was tainted with sincere anxiety now, which she was doing her best to hide.

I cleared my throat, all eyes on me, with Michelle having moved to my chair next to Serenity, Avery across from her, while Gabriella was still sitting at the end of the table, between Natalie and Serenity.

"So obviously," I began, speaking to the blue-haired magazine model. "I don't really know how large a werewolf is, or how strong, in comparison to me. But now you know I can use fire magic, and pretty potently too. However..." I paused as I glanced briefly at everyone, realizing I should probably take my shirt off, so I could grow to my fullest height without ripping it. "However, I suspect I *wouldn't* need my magic to take one on, or even a group of them." I focused on her again, reaching down for the bottom of my shirt. "So, let me show you why."

Quickly pulling my gray t-shirt off, I then held Natalie's gaze as my bones began softly popping, the blue-haired vixen's light brown eyes immediately focusing on my chest as my muscles began swelling, my toned chest visibly filling out more as I slowly began rising in height.

Her eyes then widened in alarm when she realized my skin was rapidly graying, only to abruptly focus on my forehead when she noticed my horns forming, finally locking her eyes with mine when they shifted to black and gold.

Deciding I really *did* want to make a big impression, I began to increase the speed of the transformation, reaching my seven-foot stature as my horns finished growing, only to continue on.

Natalie was visibly trembling now, her eyes locked on mine like a deer in headlights, not even seeming to notice as everyone else around her abruptly shifted.

And she continued to hold my gaze as I began bending a little at the waist, ducking my head to ensure my thick horns didn't pierce through the kitchen ceiling, finally stopping at

my full height – a whopping twelve feet, twice the height of a normal man. My gym shorts were pretty much stretched to their limit.

All of my women looked so small now, no one even coming up to my waist at this point, my enormous form feeling like it was filling up half the kitchen, even if that was undoubtedly an exaggeration.

I then slowly stretched out my hand, palm upward, my voice coming out deep.

“So, what do you think, *Defiance*?” I asked, a bright blue torch, roughly six inches tall, appearing over my hand.

Oddly enough, whereas the last time I used my fire magic, I was low on energy, suddenly it seemed as if creating my flame, and even creating this torch, didn’t consume nearly as much power as before. Or rather, the energy I *did* have was noticeably dropping less in comparison to the full amount. It made me wonder if my recent sexual experiences, three times with Serenity, and once with Gabriella and Michelle each, was responsible for refueling my reserves.

But then, there was also the anger I felt at the mall, just before I cast my spell, knowing a lot of power came from that single emotion. The type of power to break an unbreakable bond. The type of power to do the impossible.

I suspected it wasn’t normal to generate so much magic from a single emotion like that.

But then again, it also wasn’t normal for Ms. Miriam to be able to gather so much lust from one person.

After a second, I continued speaking, focused on the frozen Rockstar chick. “Think I can handle that bastard for you? Think I can kill the jackass who ruined your life?”

She didn’t respond, still visibly trembling, her aura pulsing with a strange mixture of fear, anxiety, caution, and even submission, though right now it looked as if all her muscles were locked up to the point that she probably couldn’t move even if I asked her to.

Realizing I might be a bit more scary and intimidating than I was intending, I let the fire die down and then began shrinking back down to seven feet, so I could stand straight, now only being roughly a foot and a half above them, but still crowned with my thick black horns rising out of the top of my forehead.

Everyone was still staring at me, although the others didn't look afraid, only focusing at me in awe and devotion, as if they were seeing this form all over again for the first time. Kind of made me wonder if I needed to make a point to get them to interact with me while I was in this form, just so they would feel like it was still me, but also so that they wouldn't be distracted if we ever ended up in a fight together.

I cleared my throat, my voice still a tiny bit deeper than before, but sounding much more like me. "Hey Serenity," I said casually. "Could you come here for a second?"

Natalie finally glanced at her, only to jerk backward in her chair when she realized there was now a red-eyed demon sitting in the spot across from her, quickly glancing around to see that no one else looked nearly as demonic by comparison.

Alternatively, Serenity only cocked her head to the side in obvious confusion, and then stood up, slowly walking over to me. "W-What do you need?" she wondered hesitantly.

"Just wanted to give you a hug," I explained.

She seemed surprised. "Oh. Okay," she replied, walking right up to me and wrapping her arms right around my torso, her head resting against my chest.

I continued, giving her a gentle squeeze. "I think everyone needs to get used to me being in this taller form. Used to it still being me."

"Yeah," Serenity replied. "I admit it's a little intimidating. Think we'll be able to grow bigger too?" she wondered, leaning her head back to rest her chin on my chest, her slitted crimson eyes looking affectionate.

Honestly, the only difference between her eyes, and Gwen's, was the sclera, with the 'whites' of Serenity's eyes being pitch-black, as was the case for Michelle and Avery too, except with blue irises - icy blue in Avery's case, and a deep blue that was star-eclipsed in Michelle's case.

"No idea," I said simply. "But even if none of you can grow larger, you'll all still be formidable if you get as strong as I used to be."

Serenity nodded, with me glancing up at the table again when Gabriella finally slid out of her seat, looking the most normal out of the group - just like a busty stripper, instead of any kind of demon.

"Can I have a hug too?" she asked with a big grin, her brilliant emerald eyes surprisingly full of lust.

I opened my arm toward her, inviting her into my embrace. "Like what you see?" I said playfully as she rested one hand on my chest, her breathing unexpectedly shallow, even as her heartrate picked up a little.

She bit her full lower lip as she looked up at me. "I mean, you're hot at normal size, but *damn*. I'm so wet right now."

"*Gabriella*," Serenity hissed in obvious embarrassment.

"What?" my busty redhead said with a smirk, removing her hand from my chest and wrapping her arm around my sexy brunette. "I'm surprised you can't smell it. I can. I smell like...candy? Or maybe syrup? Or something else sweet."

Serenity's face flushed even more, her medium gray skin turning a slightly darker shade.

"Huh," I commented. "Kind of surprised you can smell what I smell now. I certainly can't smell myself." Granted, it didn't sound like she was smelling her natural scent, so much as just the scent of her own arousal. I mean, as gross as it was to think about, I could technically smell my own stuff. It didn't necessarily smell like honey, as Mrs. Rebecca described both it and my natural smell, but it was still faintly sweet-scented.

And sure enough, Serenity practically read my mind, agreeing with Gabriella's mom about my scent without even realizing it.

"You can't smell yourself?" Serenity blurted out, leaning back to look up at me. "But you smell so good, almost like honey, but more musky. Richer." She paused. "How can you not tell? The smell is so strong."

I focused on her in surprise. "Not sure," I said simply. "Maybe my brain ignores it so I can focus on other scents? I mean, can you smell yourself normally?"

"I guess not," she agreed, only to visibly relax more as she sucked in a slow breath through her nose, a warm smile touching her lips when she focused on my chest right in front of her face. Her expression then became extremely content as she hugged me tightly again, almost seeming as if she'd suddenly given up on the topic, and was much more interested in our bodies being so close.

Gabriella giggled at her reaction and hugged me again, both of them resting their heads against my chest, with one of the busty redhead's arms around my sexy brunette as well.

They then both sighed in unison, only for Gabriella to speak up. "Well, as much as I'd love to do this all day, we do have a guest over, so maybe we should give Avery and Michelle a turn before he shifts back."

"Oh sure," Serenity agreed, letting go entirely and taking a step back.

However, when they both turned to look back at the table, they saw two slightly different reactions. On the one hand, even just mentioning the idea caused Michelle's scent to actively strengthen, also looking visibly aroused, while Avery only looked really nervous.

I decided to give my blonde classmate my attention. "I know you want to wait, since you're worried about how it will affect you in class..." I paused. "And that's perfectly fine. But it might not be a bad idea to at least be on hugging

terms. Probably would be good if we spent some time hanging out together too. Haven't really had the chance, ever since everything happened."

Avery nodded slowly, her icy blue eyes hesitant, looking vibrant against their midnight background, her skin tan, her lips and eyelids frosted. "O-Okay," she whispered.

"Well, come on then," I replied, holding out my arms slightly. "Both of you please."

Michelle cleared her throat as she got up, only to walk right over to me and feel my muscled chest like the other two had done, before resting her face against me and giving me an affectionate kiss on my skin as she wrapped her arms tightly around my torso. In the meantime, Avery was a bit slower, but after cautiously approaching she was tentatively wrapping her arms around me too, seeming encouraged by my blonde MILF being right there, unashamed of her obvious passion.

I couldn't help but smile when Avery's heartrate picked up, with it going from pounding like a racehorse, to sounding like it was going to explode, her tan skin visibly flushed now as she rested her head against my chest.

And, as she focused on the older woman next to her, I smelled her level of arousal begin to increase too, prompting a grin from Gabriella who could obviously smell it as well.

I still didn't know why I perceived Avery's scent as floral, a sort of vanilla lavender, whereas my busty redhead claimed it was more like warm vanilla cinnamon - sweet, sharp, and much more potent - but it was obvious Avery's scent was a big part of the interest for my busty redhead.

Once I was done hugging my two blondes, finally letting them go, I focused on Natalie.

She spoke up after a second, sounding hesitant. "Umm, a-are you w-wanting a hug from m-me?" she stammered, seeming very anxious about the idea.

I smirked at her. "No, that's alright. But you never did answer my question."

Her light brown eyes widened in surprise, her body still kind of rigid. "I'm...I'm sorry...What...What was the question?"

"Do you trust that I can defend you?"

"Yes," she squeaked, her answer coming out rushed.

"Good," I replied, beginning to finally decrease my size.

I rolled my shoulders as I did so, part of me feeling content to be back at my more traditional height, while another part of me felt like I missed the sensation of power it gave me. Bending down, I grabbed my shirt, and then tugged it over my head, seeing that everyone else was shifting back to normal now too.

I then cleared my throat. "So, now that we've gotten that done, are we ready to head out?"

Gabriella and Serenity exchanged a glance, only for them to each focus on Michelle and Avery.

Serenity then spoke up. "I think so," she commented, getting nods from everyone. "Ready whenever you are."

I nodded. "I guess let's pile into my car then. I'll send Ms. Miriam a message to let her know we are heading over there."

Michelle spoke up. "And we'll go ahead and leave too," she added. "I think I just need to grab my purse." She glanced at me hesitantly. "I assume it's alright if we stay the night again?"

"Of course," I agreed, kind of hoping she would sleep here from now on.

Like, previously, before last night, I figured we would eventually go back to how things were for the most part, with the only difference being that maybe Gabriella moved in with me and Serenity. But after having sex with Mrs. Copeland in the recliner?

After crossing such a huge line by fucking with the others in the same room?

I never wanted her to leave at this point, or Avery for that matter.

Because I wanted to do it again.

I wanted to do it *every* night.

I wanted to maybe even make it into a game, by having all of them dressing sexy, but leaving me guessing as to which one was going to climb into my lap, while the other three sat on the couch. Granted, that of course meant that, in order to make it more of a surprise, I would finally need to cross that line with Avery too, so that the choices were one in four, instead of one out of three possibilities.

But just the idea of being limited to only one or two of them a night, with them deciding who I'd get to fuck while the others listened, or even watched, kind of made me really excited.

Granted, that didn't mean I might not take one of them to the side, and fuck more privately in my room, or Serenity's room, but still. I loved the game they'd created, and wanted to play again.

Deciding to give Michelle *and* Avery one last hug, causing the younger blonde to begin shifting slightly, but overall keeping it under control, I headed out the front door to wait on everyone to file out. In the meantime, Serenity ran up to her room to grab one of her two sleeping masks to use as a blindfold for Natalie, since Miriam had requested it, though I wasn't planning on making the blue-haired chick wear it right away.

Then, once we were all climbing in our vehicles, with Gabriella and Natalie taking to the backseat, I confirmed everyone was good to go, and pulled out onto the street. It wasn't until I was turning off our road, Avery and Michelle just behind us, that I realized I hadn't sent Ms. Miriam a message yet.

Thus, I pulled out my phone and handed it to Serenity, asking her to do so.

In the meantime, Gabriella started up a conversation with Natalie, both of them seeming a little hesitant around each other, but with the blue-haired vixen doing her part to help avoid an awkward silence by asking questions about Gabriella's job, as well as how she met me and Serenity. I also suspected that Natalie was still just a little shaken from seeing earlier how large I could grow, not meeting my gaze at all now.

But that was fine.

I was just content to hold my sexy brunette's hand while I drove, my phone now between Serenity's thighs. It wasn't until we'd been on the road for about twenty minutes, that I unexpectedly got a phone call.

Serenity glanced at the screen, and then handed it to me. "It's Ms. Miriam."

I nodded, deciding to put it on speaker phone. "Hi. Everything alright?"

Her youthful voice was warm and affectionate. "Hey cutie, are you able to talk for a second?"

"Yeah, of course. Although, I have you on speaker phone. Is that okay?"

"Oh, umm, yeah. That should be fine. It's Serenity, Gabriella, and then that girl, Natalie, right?"

"Yep," I agreed.

"Okay. Yeah, that's fine." She paused. "Anyway, Gwen and I just got home a little while ago, and I had the chance to do some digging around. Surprisingly, I found what I was looking for quicker than I was expecting."

"And what's that?" I wondered.

"A way to locate those individuals we were talking about before. I also found a very interesting, and very *rare*, tome that might help you with becoming Natalie's alpha." She giggled. "I'm a bit of a collector, so that one's especially rare. There are probably less than ten copies in the whole world. Might even be less than five."

My eyes widened in surprise, glancing back at Natalie, who seemed equally stunned. I then smirked slightly, deciding to tease the blue-haired vixen. "Ms. Miriam," I said playfully. "Do you seriously have a book about werewolf sex?"

Surprisingly, the short redhead burst out laughing at that, only to respond with an unexpected answer through her giggles. "Actually, yeah. That's sort of what it is. Or a few chapters of it, at least." She giggled some more. "And I guess that means Natalie must have told you the basics. But it's from the seventeenth century, when the werewolf curse was at its peak in Europe. There were a few who were much more interested in studying them, rather than killing them off, often to their own detriment. Guy by the name of Henry Boguet. He was born in the fifteen-hundreds, and was better known as a demonologist, but later in his life he became seemingly obsessed with the intricacies of werewolf hierarchies. It's actually quite fascinating. And peculiar, since all evidence points to him being a normal human."

"I see," I said simply, uncertain of what else to say.

She continued. "It's also possible he died as a result of his research, as many in his field of study did, since the book is technically unfinished. Like, the copy I have isn't the original, so there aren't any blank pages or anything, but I remember reading it a few hundred years ago, and realizing that he'd never completed it."

I took a deep breath. "Okay, so how many pages is it? Wasn't planning on doing any heavy reading any time soon."

"Oh." She sounded surprised. "You don't have to read it, and honestly you might struggle to understand it, just because the language hasn't been modernized. I'll just skim the appropriate chapters to jog my memory, and tell you what you need to know. Maybe compare that to what Natalie knows."

"Okay, that sounds good."

"But, that actually wasn't the main reason I was calling," she continued. "I had an idea that might interest you."

"And what's that?"

She paused, shifting subjects slightly. "I'm still on speaker phone, right? Is there anything you're wanting to keep from Natalie at this point?"

I glanced back at her, frowning slightly as I responded. "Umm, no. She pretty much knows everything."

"Including about your mystery stone?" Ms. Miriam wondered.

"Oh," I said, focusing ahead at the road. "Umm, no she doesn't know about it yet, but I don't think that's too big of a deal anyway. What did you want to say about it?"

"Well, I was thinking, there might actually be a much faster way to resolve the situation."

I was again surprised. "Okay. I'm listening."

She cleared her throat, a *fucking adorable* noise, her tone sounding a little educational now, with just a hint of mischievousness in her voice. "Well, you see, I had planned on using a scapegoat for the worst-case scenario, but overall intended on trying to keep the lucky individual alive. *However*, if I had a scapegoat who I was perfectly fine with dying, then I could basically 'trigger the bomb,' so to speak, *on purpose*, and let that individual die while I removed what remained of the curse."

Oh fuck.

My eyes were wide as I processed that. "So, we could kill two birds with one stone, then? If we had a scapegoat who we were okay with killing?"

"Yep!" she said cheerfully. "Obviously, what that means is we would have to capture one of those guys alive. But if you can manage it, which I don't see why you couldn't, then we can solve your stone problem much faster, and at no risk to me, since I won't really have to do the 'untangling of wires' part to disarm the figurative bomb." She paused. "I will admit that a part of me enjoys solving a new puzzle,

even if it's dangerous, but with me reconsidering my personal life choices now, I'm hesitant to move forward with my original plan."

Of course, I knew exactly what she was talking about.

Initially, she claimed she would just grab some random human off the street, fuck them into a literal mental paradise, and then use both their sexual energy and life as tools to protect herself while she untangled the lethal blood curse that would have killed me, had I used it.

Of course, the problem with that plan, was just the fact that she would be fucking someone else, possibly male.

So yeah, I was all for this new plan.

I also was briefly surprised she seemed so okay with killing one of these guys in such a horrible manner, when she was literally a vegetarian due to her opposition to death. However, after a second, I realized a lot about this situation was very different. For one, they were cursed werewolves, and she'd dedicated herself to protecting the people of this world, which pretty much meant killing such creatures on sight, even if they *had* once been regular humans.

Because it wasn't a matter of morality or ethics at that point.

It was a matter of doing what needed to be done, to protect countless lives who might otherwise be murdered by such creatures, entire households slaughtered if such monsters were allowed to roam freely.

That, and it also seemed as if Ms. Miriam's overall attitude was positive and cheerful due to getting to see me again, with it being almost as if nothing would damper her mood - not even talking about murder.

"Okay, that definitely sounds good to me," I replied. "So I guess let's aim to do that then. That would actually be perfect." I then paused when I recalled that a certain blue-haired magazine model wanted some revenge. "Think that

Natalie would be able to watch? She kind of needs to see them suffer. Especially the main guy.”

“Oh, yeah,” Miriam replied reassuringly. “That shouldn’t be a problem. And honestly, it’s a pretty horrible blood curse, so you might want to just plan on keeping the alpha alive, so she can watch *him*, in particular, die a horrible death. The only problem is going to be the timing of everything.”

“What do you mean by that?” I asked seriously.

Ms. Miriam sighed heavily. “Well, to locate the others, it is going to be best if Natalie still doesn’t have an alpha. I’m assuming that the guy she hates is the same one who bit her, in which case using this magic to locate him shouldn’t be a problem, so long as she’s still a lone werewolf.”

“Okay,” I replied, glancing back at Natalie, who was leaning forward now, definitely all ears.

“However,” Ms. Miriam continued. “She wants to watch him die. The inherent problem with that is the proximity it requires. There’s a risk of him reclaiming her, if she’s still without an alpha, and him thus turning her into our enemy. And I have no idea how you or I would react to a bite from her.”

I glanced at Natalie again, sensing her anxiety spike. “So how can we resolve that problem?” I wondered, assuming from Ms. Miriam’s tone that she had an idea.

“Well, this is what I’m thinking. First, we need to locate them. Then, we need someone to get eyes on their group, or at least eyes on the group’s general location, to ensure they don’t go somewhere else, and we lose track of them.”

I frowned as I considered that. “I could probably ask Michelle and Avery to do that, assuming this werewolf pack is still closer to home, but I’d be worried about putting them in danger.”

“Shouldn’t be any danger, as long as they keep their distance,” Ms. Miriam replied. “Like, I’d even be comfortable with asking my daughter Rebecca to do it. And honestly, I

would suggest waiting until later tonight, so that they are hopefully asleep. Like, we don't need to necessarily keep eyes directly on them. Because, if we determine their general location, we only need someone watching to make sure they don't leave that spot. So they might just have to watch an apartment exit, for example."

I doubted they were at an apartment, unless they broke into someone's place, since Natalie didn't believe the main bastard was stupid enough to go back where they'd been staying, now that she was compromised. *But*, I understood the general idea.

"Okay, and then what do we do, after we locate them? Would I go ahead and become Natalie's alpha, prior to attacking?"

"Yeah, that's what I was thinking," the short minx agreed. "And I do have a second, less accurate, method of locating them, in the event they do move. But that's just another reason why it would be good to do it late at night, when they are hopefully asleep, aside from the obvious part - probably isn't a great idea to go around killing monsters in broad daylight. Alternatively, you could try to capture him first, but keep him away from Natalie, and then become her alpha. Both options have some inherent risk."

I glanced back at the blue-haired vixen again. "Well, even if he does become her alpha a second time..." I paused when Natalie immediately shook her head urgently, looking sincerely terrified of the idea. And I could understand why, since the bastard could cause her immediate and excruciating pain the moment he did, prompting my voice to become more hesitant as I continued. "His control would end when he dies anyway... right?"

"Yeah, that's true," Ms. Miriam responded.

"Please no," Natalie immediately whispered. "*Please*. As much as I want him dead, I'd rather risk him getting away than become his puppet again. And like she said, if we do it

later, then he should be asleep. Also...he, umm, has some drugs. Really strong pain killers, and such. Good chance he'll be high and plastered anyway."

I sighed heavily, only to nod at her as I spoke to Ms. Miriam. "Well, I think we will aim for the first option for now. Second option feels kind of risky anyway."

Damn, the vulnerable look of *appreciation* on Natalie's face was intense.

Ms. Miriam seemed indifferent. "Yeah, that's fine. I don't think either option is necessarily more risky than the other. These guys should have no idea we've located them, so as long as you can go after them within a couple of hours, then it should be fine. And, if those other two, Michelle and Avery, can keep eyes on them, or at least their location, then we should definitely be able to keep them cornered."

I frowned as I considered that, wondering if that was really the best move.

But then again, I could always change my mind once we figured out where they were located. Because, if they were in an area where it seemed as if they *would* stay put, then it might be safe to take that approach. But if they were in a location where it was obvious they were awake and might go someplace else soon, then I could readjust my plans, whether it was what Natalie wanted or not.

Granted, even if I *did* capture him first, there was always the possibility that he could escape while I was busy trying to become this girl's alpha. Whereas, at least with the first plan, he *shouldn't* know we were coming after him until it was too late.

Natalie spoke up then, as if she knew what I was thinking from my expression. "He doesn't go out much, even during the day," she said, her tone almost pleading. "If we find his location, he will probably stay there. Like I said, he'll likely be high and plastered."

I nodded, still figuring I'd just make the call once we knew more, responding to Ms. Miriam.

"Okay, well, we should be there in a little bit. Was that everything?"

She was silent for a few seconds. "Umm, yeah. I think that was everything I wanted to cover." Her tone became more affectionate. "I can't wait to see you. And I'm looking forward to meeting Gabriella finally. I'm sure she can hear me, but I'd prefer to meet her in person before getting into a real conversation with her. So, yeah, I guess I'll let you go for now."

"Okay. See you soon." I paused, my tone warmer. "Love you."

Her tone was affectionate again. "Kai, I love you so much. See you soon. Bye."

"Bye," I replied, hanging up.

I then took a long deep breath, hoping nothing went wrong with any of our plans. Theoretically, there should be no reason to think any major problems would come up, especially if we did this at night, but my paranoid self couldn't help but wonder which option was truly the lowest risk. I supposed I could also just kill the main bastard outright, and use one of his pawns for the mystery stone, but I'd prefer to give them quicker deaths, and leave the suffering for the true culprit.

And, in the end, I realized that capturing the main guy first, with the possibility of him somehow escaping while I became this girl's alpha, was technically the 'less safe' choice, while also being the worst decision for Natalie in particular.

Whereas, with the first option, at least if he *did* change locations, he still wouldn't be aware that he'd been found out, and if the first spot was a likely place he might return to, then we would just have to wait for all of them to do just that.

Maybe we'd even get lucky and discover that they were foolish enough to return to the original place they were

staying, even though Natalie had been compromised. But I supposed it kind of depended on how arrogant the guy was.

Hard to say at this point.

But it sounded like we had some time to prepare. Thus, for now I'd have Serenity call Michelle to fill her in on our plans, and then in the meantime mentally prepare for what I was about to share with Ms. Miriam.

The big secret.

It was time to let her know what I was really capable of.

Time to let her know that my blood could completely change a person, turning them into an entirely different creature.

Turning them into a creature like me.

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(15) CHAPTER 60: BIG SECRETS

Being that I had a very powerful spatial awareness and memory, I could technically get back to Ms. Miriam's mansion without an address or overall directions. Never mind the fact that I *hadn't* been blindfolded on the return trip home with Mrs. Rebecca. However, driving there for myself felt kind of bizarre, as if I was seeing everything new for the first time.

More than that, it was almost nostalgic, even though I'd literally been here the previous day.

Kind of strange, to say the least.

Although, one thing I hadn't fully notice previously, just feeling kind of numb after my last experience here, was how 'not' secluded Miriam's place was, at least compared to the initial impression I'd been left with while there. Certainly, her property was on a ton of land that was fenced-off by a tall black metal fence. However, getting to the paved driveway leading through the trees - basically a road, since it was easily wide enough to fit two passing vehicles - was literally only a handful of miles off a fairly busy street that saw enough traffic to merit a few stop lights.

Granted, the drive between her place and civilization was still a good five minutes between the two, but Serenity and I actually lived further away from a major street, even though Miriam's mansion felt much more secluded. And sure, Ms. Miriam wasn't super close to a major city, but there were quite a few subdivisions within the area, making it obvious that her mansion wasn't really secluded at all.

At least, not by traditional standards. She was literally a hop, skip, and jump away from the nearest grocery store, probably a ten-minute drive at most.

Yet, at the same time, being at her mansion was like being in a separate world, hundreds of miles away from civilization.

Kind of made me wonder if the effects of that eavesdropping spell went further than I initially thought, or if maybe Ms. Miriam had an entirely different ward over the place, since previously all I had been able to hear was the nearby wildlife and leaves blowing in the wind, as if there wasn't anyone for miles. Definitely didn't hear any vehicles in the distance, which I should have, even if the nearest subdivision was a handful of miles away.

Wanting to test that theory out, I actually slowed down quite a bit before reaching the paved driveway, and rolled down my window, turning into the tree covered path while listening to the distant traffic.

It got me a few looks from Serenity and Gabriella, just wondering what I was doing, but then they were listening out too once I filled them in on my thought. Of course, Natalie didn't really notice at first since she was blindfolded as Miriam had requested.

But sure enough, as I drove past the first fancy black fence into the trees, there being no gate here, the sound of the vehicles began to slowly vanish, but at a rate that would have gone unnoticed had I not been paying attention.

I also discovered that Ms. Miriam wasn't kidding about the construction, because we actually passed a couple of trucks on the drive in, including a massive cement truck being driven by a guy that looked a little dazed, almost like he was buzzed.

Given the type of influence I knew Ms. Miriam could have on others, especially men, I wasn't too surprised by the look, trusting that he was only stunned from being around her, rather than from being physical with her.

At the very least, while I had no doubt the sexy minx would continue to use her charm to get what she wanted and needed, I fully believed that she didn't want to jeopardize the opportunity I presented for her - a once in a lifetime chance to have a real relationship with someone.

And, at this point, I'd continue to trust her, giving her the benefit of the doubt unless proven otherwise, because I truly believed that respect was vitally important to her, and that she respected me just as much as I respected her.

When we arrived at the gated section, deep in the trees where the trunks thinned out significantly to make room for the main property the mansion resided on, I was surprised to find it wide open, suspecting the recent coming and going of construction workers was the reason.

No one was outside when I drove around the gurgling fountain, but when I parked just behind the large concrete stairs leading to the huge front door, Gwen was coming out to wave at us, seeming to wait on Miriam, who appeared just a few seconds later, the two of them walking down the steps together.

I was a little surprised by their choice of attire.

Ms. Miriam was still wearing the same creamy ivory shirt as before, but she'd put on these strange leather sleeves, that looked like they belonged to a leather jacket, and even buttoned in the front between her collar bones, but literally only covered her arms and upper chest.

Would actually be really hot if she wore *only* that, her small perky tits on full display, but otherwise I wasn't sure what the purpose of the makeshift jacket was, especially when it was warm outside.

Ms. Miriam had also changed into low-riding leather pants, her short plump legs looking so fucking hot.

And Gwen was dressed similarly, now wearing all leather attire, including a leather vest and matching jacket, her muscular thighs appearing as if they were going to explode out of the smooth semi-glossy pants, with her overall

looking ridiculously attractive like a tall exotic biker-chick from heaven.

Or...I supposed, a sexy seductress from hell, considering her horns and furry tail were fully visible now, along with her slitted crimson eyes.

Miriam's wings and tail were visible too, but she had them pulled so close to her body, that their midnight color wasn't immediately obvious above her shoulders - not when it was already difficult to look much further than her face and thin sexy figure.

Honestly, I definitely felt underdressed now, since I'd chosen to remain in my black gym shorts and gray t-shirt from when I showed off my taller form to Natalie earlier back home.

Of course, Ms. Miriam looked super excited to finally have me here, not seeming even remotely bothered by my casual attire, but after giving me an affectionate smile, she focused on Gabriella right away. Natalie had already taken off the sleep mask and gotten out too, but hung back by the vehicle, seeming stunned by Gwen and Miriam's true appearances, whereas Serenity, Gabriella, and I all walked right up to the two of them.

"It's so nice to finally meet you, Gabriella," Miriam said warmly, stopping just before the last step. "Your mother has sent me probably a million pictures over the years, as you've grown up, so it kind of feels like I know you, but I realize the feeling isn't mutual. Sorry for not being a part of your life. I was actually around a little when you were still a baby, but not since shortly after you turned two."

Gabriella immediately shook her head, being able to look the shorter succubus in the eye due to Ms. Miriam still being on the concrete steps. "It's okay. I get it. Kids can't really keep secrets, so it makes sense."

The short minx gave an apologetic look. "Well...yes..." She paused. "If I'd remained around, then we would be

required to lie to you about who I truly was. And that's always been one of my biggest rules. We don't lie to family."

I frowned slightly as I considered that, the expression going completely unnoticed by either one of them, with the truth in Ms. Miriam's statement suddenly clicking with me when I recalled speaking with Mrs. Rebecca, prior to her bringing me here.

I had asked the mature woman why she didn't want to lie to her 'mom,' and she explained it was due to respect. That lying to the woman who raised her felt like it would be lying to God himself.

Or at least, that's how she put it.

Granted, hiding Miriam's existence could be viewed as deceptive as well, but I supposed it was the lesser evil of the two options, so to speak. Certainly, it at least wasn't the same as directly telling a lie to someone's face, although it *was* somewhat insightful into what Miriam meant by 'lie,' likely indicating that she didn't view 'deceit by omission' in the same light.

If anything, I would imagine that deceit by omission had been a normal part of her life, something important to take into consideration as we moved forward. Possibly also something to discuss eventually.

Focusing on Gwen when she briefly glanced at me, I was a little surprised when her gaze immediately flicked away again, finally noticing that her slitted crimson eyes were staring past me, at the car.

Looking over my shoulder, briefly meeting Serenity's gaze since she was standing right there next to me, I saw Natalie standing awkwardly by the rear in her black leather jacket, basically all her legs exposed due to the shortness of the sheer black dress, visibly looking uncomfortable by Gwen's stare, her arms crossed like she was trying to make herself smaller as she focused to the side, clearly not wanting to make eye contact.

I wasn't exactly sure what was going on, if Gwen was just trying to ensure Natalie stayed in line by intimidating her, or what, but our overall plans hadn't changed, so I wasn't too concerned, focusing back on the conversation.

Gabriella had just reassured the shorter woman that it really was alright, with Ms. Miriam then inquiring about work, noting that she'd gotten off early, and asking if everything was alright there, seeming to be sincerely concerned like a mother might be.

Gabriella seemed a little embarrassed as she recounted the same story, about her boss not expecting her to come in, and how it didn't fully register that it was a little strange they had an extra girl working.

However, Miriam was surprisingly attentive, examining Gabriella's face as she spoke with an almost somber expression, as if she was suddenly regretting all the years that she'd missed out on watching her grow up firsthand.

After responding, the deceptively youthful woman then sighed heavily, focusing on me, but speaking to everyone. "Well, I know we have some things to discuss, some of which may not be currently appropriate for all ears here. Would the three of you join me for a time in the East Drawing Room? My maid will watch over our guest while we speak."

I frowned at that. "I assume you plan on being hospitable to her, correct?"

Miriam looked surprised. "Oh, of course." She then focused past me, speaking to the blue-haired Rockstar, her tone more firm. "However, I should offer a disclaimer. I normally would never even consider inviting someone cursed like you into my home, but Kai has accepted responsibility for your actions and offered you his trust. However, I'm not nearly as trusting, so I'll say this once." She paused. "You are *not* to leave my maid's sight under any circumstances, even to use the bathroom, and if you

attempt to do so, then you will no longer be a guest, but an intruder, and be treated as such. Understood?"

I looked back again, exchanging another glance with Serenity, before focusing on Natalie as she responded, still averting her light brown gaze. "Y-Yes," she stammered.

"Good," Miriam replied simply, giving me a warm smile. "Then, if you'll be so kind as to follow me."

I nodded, taking a step forward when she turned around.

Neither Serenity or Gabriella spoke up either, following after, with all of us seeming to understand the basic courtesy of '*her house, her rules*,' never mind the fact that Natalie technically could be a danger if she ended up revealing that she truly wasn't trustworthy.

So yeah, I didn't have a problem with Miriam being upfront and even a little harsh about her expectations.

And if Natalie simply did as she was asked while visiting, then there wouldn't be any problems.

Glancing back when Gwen spoke up, her tone surprisingly polite as she requested for Natalie to come with her, I saw that the blue-haired magazine model hadn't even budged an inch prior to being prompted. And, she likewise seemed surprised by Gwen's polite tone.

But then again, it wasn't like anything about the sexy maid was overly hostile, only intimidating when her expression was neutral and she was staring unblinkingly with those red demonic eyes of hers.

As we all filed into the grand foyer, we left the two other women behind when Gwen asked Natalie to make herself comfortable on one of the many couches, indicating they weren't going far to begin with. And then, after entering into the hallway under the right twin staircase, I finally took the opportunity to comment about Ms. Miriam's leather sleeves while we proceeded down the well-furnished hall...

Partially as an excuse to not focus on her tight ass in those leather pants, looking so fucking hot that just the sight was making me ridiculously horny, recalling that sexy

black tail wrapped around my cock the last time I was here, but also to inquire due to my sincere curiosity.

"So, it obviously looks good on you," I commented, loving how much of her back I could see between her wings, due to the low back ivory shirt, framed on top and bottom by leather. "But never seen attire like that."

She focused back on me, her midnight wings stretching out a little, an extremely affectionate smile touching her full lips, like she couldn't be happier right now. "What? The bolero shrug?"

"Umm, if that's what you call the sleeves, then yeah."

Gabriella spoke up on my left side. "You've really never seen this before? I mean, it's not common attire, but I've seen singers on TV wear them."

"Actually," Serenity chimed in. "I didn't know what it was called either. I know what a bolero is, but never seen something that was basically just the sleeves."

Miriam giggled, seemingly at our interaction. "Well, I admit that this isn't my usual springtime attire, and I might not be as familiar with such garments if not for my wings. But, for those of us with extra limbs, more creative outfits like this are sort of a necessity to avoid frostbite in the winter. Thankfully, my wings and tail are more immune to dramatic temperatures than the rest of my body."

I frowned at that, again realizing she and Gwen were both dressed pretty warmly for the spring weather outside. "So, what about when it's not winter?" I wondered, feeling like there was more going on here.

Her emerald eyes had a hint of mischievous amusement when she glanced back at me. "When it's not winter, it's probably because I'm not keen on getting bitten by a cursed creature."

"*Oh ,*" Gabriella, Serenity, and I all said in perfect sync.

Miriam laughed again, making a turn at our destination - a room full of white leather couches - the exact *same* room where I had my last sexual experience with her, Gwen, and

Mrs. Rebecca. Thankfully, she wasn't leading us to *that* couch, and instead aiming for further into the wide space, where there was a single white leather armchair facing a three-seater white leather couch, almost looking as if it was intentionally set up to host our conversation. There were even a couple of potted plants on each end of the couch, making it look extra inviting.

However, what was a little surprising was that on one side of the armchair was a short table with a very modern tablet lying on it. Of course, I knew the succubus had a phone, but hadn't really noticed any other forms of technology lying around. Granted, I'd vaguely noticed most of the major rooms had a black screen near the doorway, which could be a fancy thermostat, or might even be something more elaborate like a security system that would display video feed of who was at the front gate.

Hard to say, since I hadn't gotten a very close look, and certainly hadn't seen anyone use one of the screens.

Ms. Miriam continued, speaking about her clothing. "This leather isn't strong enough to prevent an actual werewolf bite, and probably couldn't even handle the bite of a normal wolf for very long, but it'll do for a cursed human."

I smirked. "I suppose this is the part where you say, '*I haven't lived this long by taking unnecessary risks.*'"

"Precisely!" she agreed with surprising cheer, twisting around and plopping her small ass right down into the comfy chair. Her expression then grew slightly serious. "But really, Kai, I know you want to hope for the best, but it's dangerous to trust too easily. You don't know this girl, don't know her true intentions, and as I said before, one bite and you're fucked." She paused. "Or at least, a normal person would be. Gabriella and Serenity here, at least. It would ruin their lives."

I nodded as I sat down in the middle of the couch two feet across from her, with Serenity slipping by to sit on my right, while Gabriella sank into the cushion on my left. Both

women were still looking around at the extravagance of the room, examining each painting hung on the wall in turn.

"No, I get it," I replied. "Trust is a big deal to me too. But I don't think it's so much about trust at this point, as much as knowing that it's just not in her best interest to make us her enemy, leading me to believe that the most logical decision for her would be to stay in our good graces."

"That's true," Miriam agreed, crossing her thin yet juicy thighs as she got more comfortable, the black leather stretched tight. I only now noticed she was wearing a pair of black sandals with crisscrossing leather straps.

Fuck, why were her delicate feet so hot? Her toes looked so fucking adorable.

Ms. Miriam glanced at the tablet lying on the table when it looked like a notification appeared on the black screen, only for her to focus on me as she continued. "But, when dealing with a life altering consequence that might result from being bitten, it's just not a risk I want to take. And it's especially not a risk I would want to impose on my maid. She's been through enough, without adding curses to the list."

My brow furrowed at that, recalling that she'd mentioned previously that Gwen was something like a hundred and twenty-seven, but wasn't born a hundred and twenty-seven years ago, a seeming contradiction that she never explained. And I recalled that she didn't want to elaborate, instead leaving it for Gwen to share for herself, about her past.

However, never did I think the sexy maid had anything overly traumatizing in her history, wondering if that was what Miriam was implying when saying '*she's been through enough*,' or if she meant something else entirely.

At the very least, I knew Gwen had never been with a man before, prior to me, so at least it wasn't anything super horrible, but there were certainly other ways someone might end up traumatized.

However, I knew asking for Miriam to elaborate now wasn't going to get me anywhere, prompting me to instead move on.

"Makes sense," I replied simply, only to clear my throat. "So, umm, did you want to start? Or is it okay if we start?"

Her tone was warm. "You may start, cutie. I'm very curious as to what you want to share. And the things I want to share with *you* are mostly matters I'd rather discuss in private, just the two of us, before bringing everyone else into the conversation."

I sighed heavily, not responding as I glanced at Serenity on my right, followed by Gabriella on my left, both of them seeming a little concerned now. Of course, Miriam picked up on the change in mood, and sat up straighter, uncrossing her legs as she scooted more to the edge of the chair, her posture much more attentive and serious.

"Clearly, you're worried," she stated simply. "All three of you."

I sighed, giving her my attention. "Ms. Miriam..."

She abruptly held up a finger. "Sorry to interrupt right away, but *Miriam* is fine. Please, Kai. I appreciate the respect with all this 'miss' formality. Really, I do. But I want a relationship with you, and feel your insistence on calling me miss is going to affect us achieving that outcome."

"Oh, umm. Sure. But why would that matter?" I wondered.

She gave me an apologetic look. "Okay, *maybe* it just makes me feel my age, and I want to feel young with you," she admitted.

I just stared at her for a second, before laughing. "Oh. So granny can't handle any teasing then?"

She scowled at me, the most fucking adorable expression ever, dramatically crossing her leather-clad arms over her creamy shirt, it being very obvious she wasn't wearing a bra over her small perky tits. "Or maybe I'll just

force you to call me mistress instead, and bend you over my knee to spank you with my tail for being out of line.”

I smirked. “Could be fun. Or maybe I’ll bend you over *my* knee, and *really* make you feel young.”

Miriam’s face immediately flushed, to the point that she switched the subject. “A-Anyway, you were saying.”

I tried not to laugh, only for that sensation to quickly dissipate when I recalled the topic I wanted to share, and how she might react to it. I then frowned, choosing my words carefully. “Miriam,” I began hesitantly. “Let me start by saying, several times now you’ve discovered something new about me, and each time it’s really freaked you out.”

Her expression was apologetic as she dropped her arms, folding her hands in her lap. “And I’m really sorry about that,” she said sincerely. “It’s just, I know things. A lot of things. And some of the things I’ve learned about you would be major red flags if it was anyone else. Like, if you were really a werewolf, for example, that would be very bad.”

“And I get that,” I agreed. “But obviously, I’m not a werewolf. Or rather, I guess I really am sort of like a Frankenstein monster.”

She nodded. “Yes, on a genetic level, that’s kind of what it seems like. You truly are unique. I’ve never heard of a demon like you, and I can’t imagine how you came to be.”

I nodded, taking a deep breath, still feeling a little hesitant. “So, here’s the deal. I have more secrets to share, and I want to trust you with it all.”

Her expression was sympathetic. “What do you need from me?”

Taken off guard by the question, I frowned as I considered that, not expecting her to ask something like that. But then, I realized it was warranted, with me truly needing something from her.

Something very important.

“*Can I trust you?*” I asked seriously.

Her emerald eyes widened in surprise, only to look somber. "Yes, Kai. More than anything, you can trust me. Can I also trust you?"

"Yes. Absolutely."

She nodded. "Then, what do you need from me?"

I sighed heavily. "Well, I guess, other than trust, just for you to not freak out? I'm not sure if that's fair to ask though."

"I..." She paused, taking a deep breath. "It's hard to not be surprised. And when you do surprise me, it's difficult to not feel afraid sometimes. Not when I know what certain things would normally mean."

I nodded. "So then, maybe it would help if you guess?"

She looked surprised again. "Oh, umm. I haven't a clue what you want to share though. And not even my maid was aware you were keeping something from us, prior to earlier today."

Gabriella spoke up. "So Gwen can really read minds? That's kind of crazy to think about."

Miriam only nodded in acknowledgement, focusing on me again, her lips puckered slightly as she considered possibilities.

"So then, maybe a hint?" she prompted.

I frowned as I considered that. "Well...you're aware that I don't *need* to drink blood, and have gone a long time without it, *but* that I crave it if I'm hurt. And that it helps heal me much faster than normal."

"Wow," Miriam commented, already looking a little uncomfortable. "Went right for the punch in the gut there, didn't you?"

My brow furrowed more. "But you know I wouldn't hurt you, right?"

"Of course," she agreed with a nod, appearing as if she was trying to force herself to relax. "But I've never met a blood drinking creature that was exactly good company. A rare few are intelligent enough to hold a conversation, but

hard to feel comfortable around such an individual when you could be viewed as food.”

“Makes sense. But I’m good company, right?”

She grinned at that, seeming to relax some more. “*Very* good company,” she admitted emphatically, only to sigh, glancing away as her visible tension completely dissipated. She then took a slow deep breath, her red eyebrows knitting together slightly again, as she thought some more.

She focused on me again after a second. “I think I need another hint.”

I frowned, wondering if her knowledge of what was actually ‘possible’ was causing her to not consider what I felt like should be obvious. For example, I obviously wasn’t cursed, which meant I couldn’t pass on such a curse...at least, not in her scope of reality. Which meant, she wouldn’t consider that to be my secret. Or similar to my secret.

I cleared my throat, deciding to give her a really big hint. “Well, after learning more about werewolves, it’s possible that I might share more in common with them than I initially thought. Basically, I’m not cursed...but still. Kind of similar.”

Miriam’s entire body stiffened as she stared at me, her emerald eyes widening slightly as she hesitantly glanced at Gabriella and then Serenity. She then focused on me, slowly shifting her weight in her white leather seat.

“O...kay,” she said slowly. “So, your existence is kind of... *vampiric*, in nature.” She paused. “And kind of like werewolves.” She paused again. “Similar to cursed creatures, but without the curse...” Her voice trailed off, visibly growing more uncomfortable as she cleared her throat. “I don’t suppose you’re trying to tell me that you can essentially ‘reproduce’ like those type of creatures, right?” She then let out a nervous chuckle, an obvious laugh arising from her anxiety. A clear attempt to lighten the mood. “Otherwise, we’ll have to be more careful in the bedroom,” she commented, her following giggle getting caught in her throat.

We were all a little tense now, no one responding, and after a few seconds Miriam's pulse was visible in her slim neck, glancing at Gabriella again, followed by Serenity, and then focusing on me.

Now, she was very serious, and very uncomfortable as our silence answered her question.

Her voice came out barely above a whisper, speaking under her breath.

"Oh fuck."

We all remained silent.

After a handful of seconds, Gabriella decided to speak up. "W-Would that be bad?" she asked hesitantly.

Ms. Miriam focused on her, visibly swallowing as she tried to speak. "I..." She paused, clearing her throat again. "I don't know. It would certainly be...fuck." She focused on me, taking another second to collect herself. "Kai, are you trying to tell me that...you can make other people...like you?"

I hesitated. "If I could, would that ruin our relationship?" I asked seriously.

She abruptly leaned forward, placing her small hands over her face as she groaned softly, as if even suggesting such a thing snapped her out of her tension. "Fuck." She sucked in a sharp breath, her gaze hidden now. "No, of course not, Kai. I want you so bad, you don't even understand." She then took a deep breath, dropped her hands, and focused on me again. "But if you can do that kind of thing, then that's a big deal. Kai, cursed creatures don't just exist because of some random act of nature. They exist because someone tried to use magic to gain a benefit that *defied* nature."

"What do you mean?" I asked seriously.

"Like healing," she said, only to sigh. "Kai, you can heal so fast, even from lethal wounds, at a completely unnatural rate that even magic couldn't normally achieve. And yes, you need blood to do so, but you aren't a vampire. You

aren't blessed with supernatural healing *and* cursed to suffer almost immediate skin damage in the sunlight. And you can transform into a more powerful version of yourself, yet you aren't a werewolf. You aren't blessed with increased size and strength, while also being cursed with lack of control and an excruciating painful transformation."

"Which means?" I prompted, her emerald gaze now sharp.

She straightened up more. "It means that cursed creatures originate from experiments. From attempts to defy nature and use magic to create a powerful version of oneself." She paused. "There are those who wanted to be able to heal faster, to be stronger, or even to obtain immortality. But those experiments always went against the natural order of things, and always resulted in a cursed existence. Yet, here you are, a being who is all those things, and yet..."

"I'm not cursed," I replied, just stating the obvious at this point.

Serenity interjected on my right. "But isn't that a good thing?"

"Yes," Miriam agreed right away. "*Theoretically*, yes. This is a wonderful thing. Possibly even beyond miraculous if he can share these traits with others. Except for two huge problems." She took a deep breath. "And I'll phrase those problems as obvious questions we should be asking. One, are you actually cursed, and we just don't know it yet? And two...who experimented on you? Who created you? And more importantly, where are they now?"

My eyes widened in surprise. "You're implying there might be a threat."

"Yes, Kai. You should be the son of an incubus. And yes, clearly you have traits of an incubus, including a level of compulsion that rivals one, and yet you also have the traits of so many other things. And if someone went through the effort of essentially creating you, something people have

attempted for literally thousands of years and failed, then where are they now? Are they watching you from a distance?" She paused to let that sink in. "And whether they are or aren't watching you, what is their ultimate goal? What do they want from you?"

"They might want my blood," I realized, stating what I felt like was obvious out loud.

Ms. Miriam looked surprised, quickly shifting her gaze to Gabriella and Serenity, followed by me again. "To...to become like you?" she guessed hesitantly. "Not a bite, or something like that?"

I took a deep breath, and let it out slowly. "Yeah, Miriam. My blood. To become like me."

Realizing it was time, Gabriella cleared her throat, and slowly began to shift next to me, causing Miriam's eyes to widen into saucers.

"Oh...shit," she whispered under her breath. "Shit, you're more like me than your mother," she commented, only to glance uncomfortably toward my right, seeming to anticipate that there was more to see.

Serenity held her gaze as she slowly began doing the same, Miriam's emerald eyes widening as she focused on Serenity's exposed neck when it started turning medium gray, and then looking shell-shocked when the brunette's lips turned purple and her eyes became black and crimson.

Miriam was frozen solid now, speechless as she just stared at Serenity.

"Y-You're..." She stammered, only to rephrase. "Are you an imp? Like my maid?"

Serenity glanced at me, clearly not wanting to make any abrupt movements. "I guess maybe?" she replied carefully. "But I look a lot like Kai too."

"Y-Yes...you do," Miriam agreed, carefully leaning back more in her seat and visibly trying to relax as she focused on me. She then took a deep breath. "O...kay. So..." Her

voice trailed off as she held my gaze. Her left arm was trembling slightly.

I slowly moved my hand to my knee, my palm upward as an invitation. "Would it help if we resumed this conversation with you in my lap?" I wondered, recalling that it actually helped her gather her thoughts last time, when she first found out I had wings.

She seemed surprised, collecting herself more as she glanced at Serenity. "Oh, umm. Probably best if I didn't."

Now I was the one surprised, glancing at Serenity too, not sensing any jealousy coming from her. "Oh. Any reason why not?" I asked hesitantly, concerned she was discreetly rejecting me.

Miriam sighed. "Well, I suppose maybe you haven't noticed, but I'm doing my best to contain my natural charm right now. Unlike you, where you can sort of choose to turn your compulsion on or off, with me there's a certain level of influence I have on others whether I like it or not." She sighed, again glancing at Serenity. "But if I myself get in the mood by being on your lap, and in your arms, then I won't be able to keep my charm bottled up."

My eyes widened in surprise, glancing to my right again, realizing Serenity was now *very* focused on Miriam, her crimson eyes also unblinking, much like Gwen normally was.

I cleared my throat. "You're concerned about influencing my thinking...and concerned about influencing my partners."

Miriam laughed uncomfortably, looking at Gabriella. "Well, no need to worry about someone like me," she commented, only to frown. "I think."

I glanced at Gabriella as well, only for her to blink and meet my gaze, looking as if she was trying to remember what we were just talking about. "Oh, I'm fine. It's just a little surreal knowing the age difference." She focused on Miriam. "Like, I keep looking at you, feeling as if you look

and maybe even act a little younger than me, so kind of hard to believe you've been around for so long."

Miriam gave her a small smile. "Well, thanks for the compliment."

Gabriella only offered a smile in response.

I look toward my right again. "And what about you Serenity?" I wondered, not smelling arousal from her, but definitely noting that she seemed very focused right now. Pretty much from the moment she transformed.

She cleared her throat, finally breaking her gaze to look up at me. "Umm, I'm...okay. Being around her just gives me strange urges."

Miriam abruptly sat forward, suddenly being very obvious that she *wasn't* trying to bottle up her charm anymore, an extremely noticeable difference. "Like what?" Miriam wondered, her tone unexpectedly tender with a hint of seduction, her emerald eyes smoldering.

Serenity's crimson eyes turned into saucers, as her breathing all but stopped. "I...I want..." She seemed to struggle for words. "You and Kai are *both* Gwen's masters, and I need that."

"Wow," Gabriella said in sincere surprise, her red eyebrows raised, seeming stunned at what just happened, as well as at the fact that her best friend blurted out such an intense and vulnerable statement.

Miriam instantly turned the charm mostly off, to how it was before, and sat back again. "Sorry," she said sincerely. "But I kind of figured that's what you'd say, and knew you might not say it without some encouragement." She paused. "Gwen tipped me off earlier, telling me about your reaction to her calling Kai 'master' back in the field. How it made you feel, and how you began having that urge to be in her situation."

Serenity's face flushed as she looked at me apologetically. "I'm sorry," she whispered. "I...I don't..." She

paused, really struggling to explain herself. "It's just that..." Her voice trailed off.

I glanced at Miriam, while speaking to my sexy brunette. "I mean, I don't think there's any reason to be sorry. Her influence is hard to resist." I paused, directing my words at the short minx. "And I think that's where respect comes into play as well," I added.

"Yes, of course," Miriam agreed sincerely. "But this just confirms she's part imp. Most crave to have a master, which is why they used to be common as familiars, when there were more of them. Their natural hierarchy is to pledge fealty to an Imp Lord, as their king, but in the absence of such a master, they are more than happy to pledge to another competent being."

"So then, does that mean my blood is bringing out their supernatural traits?" I wondered, already suspecting as much, but wanting to present the question to her.

"Yes, it appears that may be the case," Miriam agreed simply, glancing at Gabriella as her red eyebrows knitted together again in obvious contemplation. She then returned to her previous thought, as her gaze returned to mine.

"However, what is most curious is that both Gwen, and now apparently Serenity as well, crave to be owned by both of us. With my maid, I assumed it was just a matter of your claim on her superseding her loyalty to me, but in the last day I've seen that's not the case. She still obeys me just as before, as her first master. Or rather, as her *mistress*. And even though I assume Serenity is very loyal to you, she likewise desires to be jointly owned, a feeling I'm sure is confusing for her."

"I'm sorry," Serenity repeated, looking away from all of us entirely, but clearly directing her words at me.

"Hey," I said gently, reaching up to place my hand on her upper back. "There's no reason to be sorry. I mean, you still love me, right?"

Serenity looked up at me in alarm. "Absolutely, yes. Kai, I love you more than anything."

"Then, there's nothing to be sorry about."

She grimaced. "But this feeling I have," she whispered. "It's like before at the mall. In the bathroom."

I knew exactly what she was referring to, specifically when she asked me to make her my bitch. I assumed that might have been a result of being reminded how her coworkers acted, with me guessing that maybe that incident had played a role in her working up the courage to mention it, but ultimately it appeared as if it was truly a need she had, originating from her being biologically part-imp now.

And maybe it was similarly a need before, when she was mostly human, but the effects of her imp heritage were being heightened by her becoming like me.

I shrugged. "I guess that just means I'll have to work harder at fulfilling that need then." I paused. "Or is it truly a sexual desire you can't get solely from me?" I asked seriously, already concerned if that was the case.

Miriam spoke up. "Shouldn't be. I mean, sex can be a part of it, but the desire to have a master doesn't inherently have to be sexual at all. Plenty of imp men pledge loyalty to their Imp Lord without it being like that even in the slightest. And likewise, there are plenty of imp women who don't become consorts." She paused when Serenity grimaced and looked away again. "Here, how about this? Let's resolve this issue right now." Her tone became more firm. "Serenity, I want you to be my servant."

She immediately looked alarmed, and even I was pretty shocked.

"N-No," Serenity stammered, abruptly grabbing onto my arm. "I can't."

Miriam seemed completely unfazed, focusing on me. "See? Choice still matters here, even if the desire is there."

Serenity and I exchanged a glance, only for her to visibly relax some as she slowly let go of my arm, that single brief

confrontation causing her to realize that truth - that she still could choose to say no, even if it's what she wanted deep down.

Miriam continued. "And honestly, this entire situation is novel and unconventional. Serenity shouldn't have this kind of desire for someone else, even if she did meet an Imp Lord. At least, not if she's with you, in the same way Gwen is." She paused. "Nor would I normally have been worried about Gwen changing her loyalties if she'd come across an Imp Lord. The fact that she has two masters right now is somewhat uncharted territory, as far as I'm aware. Gwen likewise doesn't know why it's happened, or how she could feel such devotion to both of us..." She paused. "Although, she and I have already speculated that the underlying commitment, that we might have formed yesterday, may have played a part."

My brow furrowed. "What do you mean? Like, the commitment specifically between you and me?"

Miriam's expression was affectionate again...and a little somber. "Kai, you died for me. You selflessly put yourself between me and death. And..." She hesitated, looking away. "I almost died for you, trying to save you, even though you were already gone. In that moment, I lost sight of the value of my own life."

My eyes widened slightly, suddenly recalling Miriam's broken legs the previous day, wondering if the injury she'd suffered was a direct cause of what she was sharing now - a direct result of her trying to defend me, even though it was already too late.

"So..." I replied slowly. "I guess that means we've already crossed a pretty serious line, even though we're sort of acting like we haven't. Acting like there's still a decision to be made."

"Yes," she agreed quietly, still averting her gaze. "I thought that changing my lifestyle was going to be hard, but I've had yummy construction workers in my home all day,

and even just the idea of taking one of them aside is repulsive now." She grimaced as she slowly turned her gaze to me. "I thought it would be a struggle, but it's not. Just the opposite." She sighed. "And I don't mean that they are unappealing. I mean that having sex with someone not linked to you suddenly feels unforgivable. A line I've suddenly found myself unable to cross."

"Because we've already crossed a different line," I repeated, just pointing out the obvious.

"Yes," she said quietly, only to take a deep breath, and speak at a more normal volume, sounding a little educational. "Sacrifices can be very powerful, but especially self-sacrifices, with a ton of energy released upon death, and they can have all kinds of positive and negative effects, many of which are unpredictable. Sometimes a spell is cast at death, even though no one specifically cast it. A sort of 'last wish' becoming reality."

Gabriella finally chimed in, only sounding curious and a little confused. "So, what are you saying? That what happened yesterday caused you two to become linked or something? Like maybe your souls became connected?"

Now Miriam seemed surprised. "Oh, umm. Actually...yes. That's exactly what I was about to hint at, possibly out of a desire for him to retain an anchor on this reality, *to survive*, by attaching to my living soul, combined with a desire to continue trying to protect me even after death." She paused. "But how in the world did you guess I was going to say that?"

Gabriella looked a little embarrassed. "Oh, well, I read a lot. Mostly fantasy and paranormal romance stuff."

"Oh," the sexy minx responded, still looking stunned. "And you saw something like this in a book?"

Gabriella looked at me, looking really embarrassed for some reason. "Umm, not exactly this same situation, but kind of. Really, I'm sort of merging two different ideas I've read. One involving a sacrifice, and it giving another person

powers, and another idea involving two souls becoming bonded due to a shared traumatic experience that involved magic."

"Huh," Miriam replied, the shift in conversation making her seem more relaxed. "I actually read a lot too, but not fiction. Still, I might need you to give me those titles later, so I can check them out. I had no idea humans had gotten so creative, as to begin hinting at possible realities." She focused on me, as if to elaborate. "A lot of the stuff I've seen in recent years has just been in the form of movie trailers, and how romanticized they've made certain horrible things, like werewolves, in modern culture. Traditionally, I've not felt the need to get my desire for romance from a book or movie, so I've never looked into that kind of thing."

"Makes sense," I replied simply. "But then, I guess that means that our lives are already linked in some capacity, and that's probably the reason why both Gwen and Serenity have a craving to, umm..." I paused to glance at my sexy brunette, making sure she was still fine after the realization that she still had a choice. "Have us both be their masters?" I finished.

Miriam glanced at Serenity too. "Basically, yes. Unfortunately, there's not exactly a book I can dig up to find the exact answer, but that seems to be a reasonable hypothesis at this point, given this somewhat new information." She gestured with her left elbow to my right. "And to be clear, Serenity probably wouldn't have that desire if there wasn't some kind of link between you and me. Rather, the sole reason why that desire probably exists is because she can subconsciously detect that link, and ultimately wishes to be fully subservient to you, in particular, sensing an indirect way to do so."

I glanced at Serenity, seeing that she seemed a little uncertain herself, before I nodded as I sighed heavily.

"Okay, well anyway, that was the last of my secrets, as far as I'm aware. I can make others like me, if I give them

my blood. So now what? Does this cause any problems for us?"

Miriam gave me an affectionate look. "No, I think not. As we just discussed, I'm too far gone. Too far infatuated at this point. And that was even *before* the possible supernatural bonding that occurred, when you sacrificed your life for mine." Her brow then furrowed, abruptly changing subjects. "But does this mean that you plan to do more than simply become that girl's alpha? Are you planning on giving her your blood too?" She paused. "And have you changed anyone else?" she added.

I hesitated. "Umm, yes to that last part. I've made my classmate, and her mom, both like me. Four people total."

She nodded slowly, her expression impassive. "And what about Natalie?"

"Would that be a problem if I did?" I wondered, unsure about her reaction, but figuring that giving Natalie my blood would be the easiest way to try to break her curse.

She sighed. "I honestly don't know," she admitted. "I don't think you should assume that your blood would have the same reaction on every individual. Maybe it might break her curse, or maybe it'll make it worse. Very difficult to say. Things like this don't always turn out the way you might expect, which is exactly why people have studied magic and curses for so long over the years. Because the findings don't always seem logical." She glanced at Serenity, and then at Gabriella, before continuing. "For example, when the succubi and incubi defeated the monster that created us, no one would have predicted we would receive blessings in place of the many curses we'd once had. Certainly, none of us would have anticipated becoming immortal."

I nodded, sensing that Gabriella and Serenity both only had about a million questions popping up, since they hadn't heard that story yet, but both seemed willing to wait to ask for clarification. "Okay, so then, is there a way to test it out first? Or do we just chance it?"

Miriam frowned at that, seeming pensive. "It will be best for you to try becoming her alpha before giving her your blood, so that does give us a little time. How long did it take for this change to occur?"

"Roughly four to eight hours, depending on amount."

Her emerald eyes widened slightly. "Then perhaps we can try. I'll need to secure some blood from both you and Natalie, and see what happens under a special type of microscope."

"You have a microscope?" I said in sincere surprise.

She grinned. "Oh cutie, you've only seen one of my basements so far. I have four."

What the fuck?

"And that means..."

She grinned. "I have a state-of-the-art laboratory in one, along with a very large library full of extremely rare tomes and artifacts in another, underneath an even bigger, but more normal, library."

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. "Dang," was all I could think to say.

She giggled, only to glance at Gabriella and Serenity again. "So how about this? We will go grab a sample of blood from Natalie, and then I'll get the experiment started. After that, if possible I would really like to spend some time alone with you, and I've been told you also promised Gwen a little alone time too."

"Oh, umm, yeah." I glanced at Serenity and then Gabriella.

Serenity spoke up, clearing her throat. "That's fine with me. I think we both expected you to spend some time alone with her."

"Yeah," Gabriella agreed, only to direct her words at Miriam. "Although, I would like to catch up some, if maybe you and I could hang out a little after you're done with Kai."

Miriam giggled. "Of course, sweetie. I'd really like that as well." Her gaze shifted to Serenity. "That might leave it up

to you to watch Natalie, if Kai and Gwen are going to be alone at the same time.”

Serenity nodded. “Yeah, that’s perfectly fine. I know you’re trying to be cautious around her, but I think she’s alright. I’m not worried about keeping an eye on her.”

Miriam nodded, focusing on me. “After that, I think we’ll have dinner, and then later this evening we can worry about finding that werewolf pack, and I’ll also teach you what I know about becoming Natalie’s alpha. Sound like a plan?”

“Yep,” I replied cheerfully, sincerely looking forward to spending time with her now.

“Sounds good to me,” Gabriella said just as warmly.

“Me too,” Serenity added, being the first to stand up. “Love this place by the way. Feels like we’re in a mansion from a literal fantasy right now. Would love to live somewhere like this.”

Miriam and I immediately exchanged a glance, only for her to slowly grin.

“Perhaps,” she said simply, winking suggestively at me.

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