OBSESSIONS

YOU WILL BE MINE

EFFIE CAMPBELL

DARK OBSESSIONS

EFFIE CAMPBELL

Copyright © 2023 by Effie Campbell

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the author, except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

DEDICATION

If you love your book boyfriends to have a few red flags to lure you in, step right up.

If you're not into the morally-grey, Mac may not be the man for you.

Like he'd say: Run.

WARNINGS

This book contains spicy content and content some readers may find triggering.

It is also written in the UK, and I use British English for spelling. If you are from elsewhere - forgive me! Remember that these are hot Scots and just imagine it in their voices, it makes it all better.

Warnings:

- Abuse from a partner, both physical and sexual (not the MMC)
- Death (not of the MMC/FMC)
- Torture (not of the MMC/FMC)
- Necrophilia (Not from the main characters)
- Stalking
- Degradation play

CONTENTS

Dedication

<u>Warnings</u>

Chapter One

Chapter Two

Chapter Three

Chapter Four

Chapter Five

Chapter Six

Chapter Seven

Chapter Eight

Chapter Nine

Chapter Ten

Chapter Eleven

Chapter Twelve

Chapter Thirteen

Chapter Fourteen

Chapter Fifteen

Chapter Sixteen

Chapter Seventeen

Chapter Eighteen

Chapter Nineteen

Chapter Twenty

Chapter Twenty One

Chapter Twenty Two

Chapter Twenty Three

Chapter Twenty Four

Chapter Twenty Five

Chapter Twenty Six

Chapter Twenty Seven

Chapter Twenty Eight

Chapter Twenty Nine

Chapter Thirty

Chapter Thirty One

Chapter Thirty Two

Chapter Thirty Three

Chapter Thirty Four

EPILOGUE

A note from the author

CHAPTER ONE

When had his touch started to make my skin crawl?

Tommy slipped his fingers beneath my hair and gripped my neck painfully, sending waves of warning shooting down my spine.

'You'd better make it worth my while after the party.' His words slurred slightly, already too many drinks deep.

I used to love his wild ways. Everything about him was so much less measured than the men I grew up around. Being the daughter of a heinous mafia kingpin brought me all the trappings of luxury, but with every moment of my life monitored. Tommy had represented freedom, hedonism, a way to lash out. Especially after my sister-in-law shot my father, leaving me free from his control. Where she and my brother had settled into running the family business and living in a happy little bubble, I'd exercised my freedom in full. I'd fallen headfirst into my relationship with Tommy, with no safety net. At first it had been exactly what I needed, wild nights and stress-free days, but over the months the attention he gave me had turned sour. Yet, there were still glimmers of it from time to time. Enough to give me hope.

'You know I hate coming to your shitty family things. I'm a fucking rockstar, I'm above this shit.' His fingers dug all the harder as I twisted my neck to loosen his grip.

'I know,' I whispered. 'I appreciate you coming.'

'Gotta mingle with the peasants now and again. Let them get a glimpse of what their shitty lives could have been.'

The private elevator came to a stop, the doors opening up into Cam's luxury apartment. Apartment didn't describe it, really. The penthouse had

two floors and extended the entire length of the building. It had floor-to-ceiling windows that provided breath-taking views of Edinburgh Castle. He was anything but a peasant. We ruled half of Scotland's criminal underbelly. Fuck, we owned a private island and the jet to get there. Not that Tommy cared. His balls were bigger than his brain.

Tommy grabbed my arm as I tried to leave the elevator, trapping me against the wall. 'You have thirty minutes max to do your family shit and then we're going.'

It had been weeks since I'd seen them. I missed them. But I didn't want to anger Tommy either. Half an hour was better than nothing. I nodded as he pinched my face between his cheeks before thrusting his other hand beneath my skirt. Panic shot through me as I tried to wriggle free, looking around, fearing that someone would see us.

'Remember that this is mine,' Tommy said as he pinched my clit viciously between his thumb and forefinger through my underwear.

I winced and bit my lip to stop myself from crying out. 'I'm here to see my brother.'

'Just keep it that way.'

Then he was gone, leaving me to right my dress and try to stem the wetness in my eyes from turning into tears. Pressing my fingers below against my wet cheeks, I looked up as I dabbed at my face, willing my mascara to stay in place. It was then I spotted him. Mac. My sister-in-law, Maeve's, brother. The way he was staring at me made my stomach flip. I had barely spoken to him over the nearly two years that Maeve had been part of my family, and was sure he detested me. I just didn't know why.

I met his dark-eyed stare and dropped my hands to my sides, blinking away when he continued to glare at me. When I looked back up, he had moved on.

With a sigh, I headed into the throng, dodging bodies and making a beeline for my brother.

'Katie!' His face broke into a grin as he made his way toward me, pulling me into a bone-crushing hug.

His arms felt like home. I'd spent so much of my youth in them, seeking solace when my father hurt us, and trying to fill the gaps in our childhood with the only person who cared about me. He'd always been my rock. But now he had a family of his own. A woman he adored, and two adopted teens who needed his support. Hell, he even had our mother.

'Hey Cam,' I replied, wriggling out of his grip and offering a smile. 'Happy birthday. Are you enjoying your party?'

'Even more now that you're here. Where have you been lately? It's been weeks since we last saw you.'

'Oh, you know, this and that. Keeping busy. I've been renovating the new house.' I needed to deflect before he asked questions about why I've been avoiding my family, or about Tommy.

'I still think you need to move somewhere closer to us.'

'Glasgow's only an hour away.'

'Aye, but your house is in the middle of nowhere and you keep refusing my men as security,' Cam said, running a hand through his hair. 'I've heard that you haven't put in a security system yet either. It's not safe Katie.'

'It's hardly the middle of nowhere. I have neighbours.' Kind of. Through the woods.

'I'm worried about you.' His voice softened my resolve. Maybe he was right. Maybe I should move closer to Edinburgh to be nearer to him and Maeve. It was at that moment that I saw my mother making her way toward me.

'Katie,' she said with a smile, pulling my stiffened shoulders into her arms and giving me a squeeze. The only thing that squeezed was my chest, in panic. When Maeve had found her and convinced her to come home after my father's death, I'd been excited to see her. I missed her so much after she ran out from under father's tirade of terror that I hadn't really grasped how much her abandonment had hurt me. When she came back into our lives, it was like meeting an almost stranger, an overfamiliar stranger who loves you. It put me on my ass emotionally. Yet Cam had taken her back into his life with arms open, instantly sparking up their old relationship with no issues or insecurities. Why couldn't I? Instead, I avoided her as much as I could, and thus avoided them all.

'Mum,' I said, stiffly, before extracting myself from her arms and taking a step back. 'How are you?'

'I'm doing great, honey. It's so good to be settled into town. Cam's got me all set up with a lovely flat near here. You should come over and see it sometime. Or I could come visit your house?'

The pleading look in her eyes made me avert my own as I stuttered out a response. 'I'm just... well, just a bit busy at the moment. Tommy has an

extensive tour coming up, and he's got all the promos going on for it at the minute. And I'm renovating the house.'

'I can easily pick up a paintbrush and help,' Mum said. 'I'm sure we could all come and help.'

'Or I could get in a team and have it done within a week or two,' Cam said. Not a DIYer at all.

I didn't want them in my house. I needed it to be mine, away from all of them and their happy-go-lucky lives. Breaking away and standing on my own was exactly what I needed after being smothered by my father and his syndicate for my whole life.

'I'm going to go grab a drink.'

I twisted through the people before they could say anything else, taking a deep breath and heading toward the bar that they'd had set up in one corner. Tommy was there, grabbing a whisky bottle from the bartender and swigging straight from it. Tension coiled in my stomach as I watched him gulp down mouthful after mouthful. His drinking had increased in the past few months as his band's popularity hit new heights. The side of him that had come out when drunk sent fear down my spine.

A hand slipped through my arm and turned me away from Tommy's ugly scene and Maeve squealed as she pulled me into a hug.

'God, I'm glad to see your face,' she said into my ear as she squashed me.

'It's not been that long,' I countered, squeezing her back before releasing her.

'It bloody well has. Too busy off in the throes of romance, huh?'

I gave an awkward laugh before nodding. 'Yeah, something like that.'

'I saw you at the Rock Awards the other day on the TV. You looked immense. That dress was fucking amazing.'

'Thank you.' Warmth crept into my cheeks at her easy praise. 'Easy when you have an entire team of stylists dolling you up.'

'Psh.' She waved a hand as though sweeping my words away. 'Nonsense, you'd look fab if you rolled out of the shower and went with your towel on.'

If only Tommy had thought so. Instead, he'd grabbed my love handles and squeezed them hard through my dress, telling me that maybe I needed to lay off the cake for a bit. It had taken everything I had to hold back the tears so that the make-up artist wouldn't need to do an emergency repair.

'You're so sweet,' I said. 'How are Grace and Elias?'

Her face instantly brightened. 'They are doing fab. They've come on such a lot since they moved in. Their school work has improved massively, and the nightmares have decreased. I think they've finally accepted that we'll always be here for them, however they need us.'

She'd saved them from being trafficked and opened her home and heart to them. Both she and Cam had. Month by month, their family unit had solidified through their shared trauma. And I'd felt more and more like an outsider. Not that I could blame them, they made efforts to include me, but I couldn't slip into their happy bubble. My world felt sharp and dark and ready to implode.

'It's so lovely to see you, but we need to head off,' I said, unwilling to let my black mood bring down Cam's party.

'But you only just got here.'

'Sorry, it's just that Tommy has a thing and we could only stop by for a little while.' It was more that Tommy had sunk half a bottle of whisky and I didn't need him picking a fight with anyone or throwing a tv out of Cam's window. It was better to remove him pre-emptively.

'Okay, well let's do coffee in the week?'

'Sure,' I said, having no intentions of following it through. 'Text me.'

Tommy had fixed his eyes on me as I started toward him, a hungry look on his face that no longer made my insides quiver the way it once had. When he got drunk, he got horny. And when his dick refused to rise to the occasion, he'd get mean. Sex had started off okay, but he had become obsessed with trying to fuck me even though his dick had refused to cooperate from the first few weeks we'd been together.

'Ready to go?' I asked.

'Need me already, baby?' The slur in his words turned my stomach.

'I'm just tired and ready to go home.'

He slipped a hand around my waist and pulled me close, his whisky tainted breath running over my lips as he took in my face. An old spark flared in my chest as his eyes softened. A moment of hope that he saw me as he had at the beginning. When it was a whirlwind of emotion and lust. Before, I'd become just another part of his retinue.

He placed a soft kiss on my nose and whispered, 'You look pretty today.'

And just like that, I melted into that hope, as I always did.

He held onto my waist gently the entire way down the elevator and into the underground car park where his car waited for us, his bodyguard and driver in the front.

I relaxed as we approached the car, glad that nothing had gone wrong at Cam's party and hoping for an uneventful night once Tommy had inevitably fallen asleep on the drive back to Glasgow.

As we got near the hood of the black car, he spun me, grabbing my face in his hands as I cried out.

'Tommy. Stop.'

He pushed me back against the car and shoved his fingers up my skirt, pulling my underpants down and thrusting two fingers painfully inside me. I tried to push his hand away, but he held me in a vise grip.

'Stop fighting it, baby. You know better that to deny me what I want. I always get what I want.'

'I don't want to. Not here, not like this.'

'All you have to do is lay there and take it.'

'Someone might see.'

'I bet that would make your pussy wet, at least.'

He flipped me over and pressed my stomach into the car's bonnet, hoisting my dress up over my ass and pinning my arms painfully behind me. As he opened the condom wrapper, there was a moment of relief from the pressure, but it quickly returned as he pinned me to the black metal.

Then he was there, still soft and trying to force his flaccid dick into me. Not caring that I wasn't wet, nor that I didn't want it like that, even if he could go through with it. As he always did. I'd ignored it in the beginning, his focus never being on my pleasure, as I was so glad to be away from my father and living under Tommy's apparent hedonistic glow. I thought maybe it would come later, as he fell for me. I'd reassured him that there were other things we could do, or just not worry about sex, but he'd refused to touch me intimately. It was all about trying to fuck me. And when he couldn't, his fury only amplified.

'Please stop,' I whimpered. The driver and the bodyguard sitting in the front seats at least had the decency to avert their eyes.

Tommy grunted as he thumbed himself inside me, and I zoned out, leaving my body to his use while I let my brain flee. Leaving him to keep trying until he got frustrated enough to pull himself off of me and stagger into the car.

All I wanted was for him to love me. And I had to take whatever crumbs he was willing to give me.

CHAPTER TWO

Watching Katie sandwiched between her douchebag boyfriend and the wall made me want to walk over and rip his god damned balls off.

Watching him thrust his hand up her skirt and her face contort in pain had me itching to separate his head from his body.

It wasn't my place.

Every time I saw them, I had to remind myself that it wasn't my place to interfere. She chose him. She wanted him.

But I couldn't stop watching her, whether or not it was right.

When Tommy moved off, she took a moment to compose herself before her eyes lifted to mine, holding my stare for a moment as her eyebrows quirked.

I should have looked away, but I wanted her to see me. To realise that she wasn't alone. To know that I missed the bubbly, delicious woman I'd so briefly met the previous year.

When her eyes held mine, the world slowed around me, my heart squeezing inside my chest and my breath hitching. Because fuck, I wanted her to notice me, too.

Then she blinked away, and her hold on me relaxed a second, allowing me to move around the corner and breathe more easily.

The babble of voices around me left me looking for an escape, and I made my way to the balcony, gulping in the cooler air as I stepped out.

Being near Katie was suffocating. All-consuming. And I needed to stop putting myself in the position where I had to watch Tommy be a dick to her. She was eroding right before my eyes, and it pained me to witness it. I'd kill for one of her sweet smiles. Which was insane. She was my sister's

sister-in-law. Fuck all to do with me. What had we ever shared? Barely a word. A few smiles and pleasantries. So why did I feel like she'd captured a part of me and that I needed her to get it back? It wasn't healthy. I needed to quit my obsession.

The door behind me opened as the noise of the party momentarily swelled. My brother, Ewen, sidled up beside me and handed me a glass of whisky.

'What are you skulking about out here for?' he asked.

'Just need a breather. It's stuffy in there.'

'Who are you avoiding?'

I took a measured swig of whisky before lying through my teeth. 'No-one.'

'Or everyone? Stop being such a sour faced git and start enjoying shit.' Ewen leaned against the balcony railing and faced me. 'Are you coming to the opening?'

I had very little interest in the revamp and reopening of Ewen's sex club. The nightclub below it was a money laundering mill, but the sex club was Ewen's baby. His sordid little escape where he reigned. More power to him. He knew what he liked and created his own world around it.

What I wanted, I couldn't have.

'I don't know,' I said, downing my whisky. 'I have no interest in watching you getting your rocks off.'

'You know I prefer watching. And I think you could do with getting your own rocks off. Might wipe that sour look off your face for once.'

'I'm doing just fine.'

'Sure you are. That's why you stare at Katie like she's a mother-fucking gazelle and you're ready to tear her up.'

'Shut up. I don't stare at her. It's that idiot boyfriend of hers. He's just such a fuckwit. Acts like he owns the place.'

'Think it goes with the celebrity status.' Ewen shrugged.

'He's not that famous.' I hated the bitterness that crept into my voice.

'He is, though. And Katie is enjoying the ride. You need to get yourself some action and stop moping after her like a lovesick pup.'

'I'm not lovesick. I just think he's garbage.'

Ewen laughed and finished his drink. 'Aye, he's garbage, and she'll realise it, eventually. You coming back with me tonight?'

I'd spotted Katie and Tommy leaving the party through the window as he spoke. Ignoring it was the sensible choice, but I couldn't. 'Nah, I'll make my way.'

'Remember, we're going to see Dad in the morning. I don't want to drag your ass out of bed to get you to the hospital.'

'I'll be there.' I made my way into the apartment and through the crowd, waiting impatiently for the elevator to come back up. It had stopped at the underground parking level. The hospital would be a hard visit. After almost two years of life support, it was time to decide what to do with our father. Cameron's father had shot him, causing catastrophic brain injuries that had left him comatose ever since. It hurt every time to see him there, kept alive by machines, but letting him go was painful, too. Mum was gone, as was our eldest brother. We'd all been delaying another loss as much as we could, but the husk on that hospital bed was no longer our father.

The elevator inched down toward the parking lot, every second seeming impossibly slow.

Why are you even following them? They'll probably be out of the building by the time you arrive.

My brain was forever trying to reason with me.

The chilled air hit me as I stepped out of the elevator and into the parking lot. For a moment, I heard nothing until a muffled cry sounded off to my left. I followed the noise.

Ducking behind a pillar, I watched as Tommy pinned Katie to the car, thrusting his fingers under her skirt.

My fist clenched at my side as her face contorted from the invasion. I wanted to rip his fucking arm off and beat him with it.

Then he was turning her, pushing her over the car. I couldn't hear the words they said, but her body language was throwing off no in a hundred ways. Her red hair splayed over the bonnet as he ripped open a condom and slid it over his dick before piercing her there like she was some fucking groupie after a show. She deserved better.

I shouldn't watch this.

But I couldn't look away.

Tommy's men sat in the car, trying their hardest to look anywhere except at Katie. Their inaction and lack of reaction told me that Tommy acting like that wasn't out of the ordinary. Undoubtedly, not just with Katie either.

Her body went limp beneath him, her eyes glazing as she waited for him to finish. There was no moaning, no writhing, no gasps or sweet nothings. It was like she wasn't even there.

Fury engulfed me.

Why was she with him when he treated her like a piece of shit? She finally had freedom from her abusive father after my sister had killed him, and she was squandering it on a guy who treated her like a flesh light.

I needed her to see that she deserved more.

That whatever was going on in her head that made her accept his treatment was wrong.

I had to show her what she could have. Fuck, not even with me. I was no saint. But I could show her that Tommy was trash.

I'd give Katie her fire back. Bring back that bubbly, sweet thing that had bounded into my life when Maeve married Cam.

I would show her she deserved more. Whether or not she wanted it.

Barely a minute later, Tommy stumbled away from her, his steps uneven as he took his drunk ass and dropped it into the car.

And for a moment, I saw Katie in all of her glory, splayed over the car, sending warring emotions battling through me. Rage at the way Tommy treated her, a need to kill the stupid fuck who had no idea how wonderful the woman he was wrecking was, and unadulterated lust. I wanted nothing more than to lose myself between her thighs until she screamed my name.

Instead, I did nothing.

Said nothing.

Just kept watching.

CHAPTER THREE

Erica bundled into the cafe, arms laden with shopping bags right as the server delivered our coffees. She smiled sweetly before plonking herself in the seat beside Macey.

'It's been forever since we last saw you,' Erica said, battling her shopping bags into submission under the table.

'Yeah, I'm sorry. Just been busy doing up the house.' I dipped my eyes to the top of my cup, focusing on the way the chocolate dusting was melting into the hot, foamy milk.

'Yeah right, more like all wrapped in that hunk of a man of yours. I saw the pictures from the music awards, man you both looked incredible.'

Macey rolled her eyes as Erica waxed lyrical about Tommy again. At first, it had been fun, having a celeb boyfriend who my friends drooled over. It was an accomplishment of sorts. But after months of her comments about him, it was getting old. If he wasn't famous, there was no way she'd talk about him the way she did.

'God, you must have jumped him the minute you got him home.' Erica let out a laugh as she waggled her eyebrows. 'Or before?'

'We've been together for well over a year. I don't need to jump him every five minutes.' Maybe I should tell her how it really was? How, in reality, he wanted me to lie there and be quiet while he attempted to fuck me. That when I moved to touch myself, he'd shift so I couldn't. That his dick didn't work, with me at least. Tell her I looked at so many other guys, normal guys, and wished Tommy looked at me like they looked at their partners. The excitement had suckered me in, but why did I stay?

Scampering around on my hands and knees collecting up any crumbs of kindness that he occasionally scattered my way.

I was lonely.

Pathetic.

But I needed him more than he needed me.

'I'm surprised you ever let him leave the bed,' Erica said before taking a mouthful of her coffee.

'Anyway,' Macey said, working to change the subject, 'How are things with your mum?'

'Still awkward. Cam's stepped back into a relationship with her, but I find it so difficult. I know she had to leave us to get away from Dad, but it doesn't hurt any less. I want to accept her now that she's back, but it's like there's a block.' She'd left when Cam and I were kids, before our father either drove her mad or put her in a grave, but it had left us completely at his mercy. He'd looked for her initially, but if she'd taken us, my father wouldn't have stopped until she was dead. Understanding her reasons didn't make forgiveness any easier. My father had made Cam do terrible things to toughen him up, and hurt us both endlessly over the years. I just couldn't put it aside, even if Cam could.

'It'll come. It'll just take some time.' Macey reached out and touched my arm, giving me a soft smile.

'And if it doesn't, then she deserves it for abandoning you,' Erica said. 'Erica!'

'Well, it's true. Being hurt by your mum stings. Mums are supposed to protect you.' Erica wasn't wrong, but it was yet another sore topic that I didn't need drilling home.

'Did you hear that Ewen McGowan's club is having a refurb and reopening?' I needed a mood lightener, and a mafia owned sex club was the perfect distraction.

'I did. It's super exclusive, though, right?' Macey placed her chin in her hand as she spoke.

'It is. Maeve can probably get me in. Do you guys want to go?'

Erica laughed. 'I have no desire to see you two getting it on with anyone.'

'I'm not sure it'll be like that on opening night. Plus, I'll be with Tommy, so won't be doing anything like that.' Even if I wanted to.

Erica's eyebrows lifted at the mention of Tommy going. 'I guess I can check the diary. As long as we all go together. I don't want to be ditched in a club full of randy randos.'

'Count me in too. I've never been somewhere like that. You don't think people will be full on going at it, do you?' Macey's cheeks pinked at her words.

'I've no idea. But there is an open bar, so it can't be all bad.' I shrugged and took another sip of my coffee before a tingle crept up the back of my neck.

I lifted my eyes to the street facing windows before scanning the cafe. No-one was paying me any attention. The tingle remained, a whisper of a warning, but with nothing solid to make it real. I shivered and put my cup down as I tried to shake off the feeling.

'You okay? Macey asked, her brow furrowing as she watched me.

'Yeah, I just had that feeling you get when someone is watching you.'

My friends looked around before Erica smiled, 'We're hot, of course people will be looking.'

If only I had an ounce of her self-belief.

With one last glance around the busy room, I sighed and gave my shoulders a shake.

'It's nothing. Maybe I'm just tired.'

It had been happening frequently in the past few weeks, the feeling of being prey. Vulnerable. I'd considered that maybe Cam had put his guys tailing me, but Maeve had assured me otherwise. Could Tommy have someone watching me? I didn't think so. He was far more concerned with his safety than mine. Unless he thought I was cheating?

I doubted he cared enough about me to worry about me cheating. He could replace me with a thousand other women at the click of his fingers.

<u>OceanofPDF.com</u>

CHAPTER FOUR

I watched as Katie's pretty face lifted and scrunched with concern as she looked around the cafe. The seat near the door, behind some leafy plants, hid me well, and her eyes didn't fix on me as they flitted from face to face.

Following her was stupid. Immature. Hell, kind of creepy.

But I couldn't help it. After the painful discussion at the hospital with my siblings to select the date to say goodbye to Dad, I needed an escape. And like it or not, Katie had become my safe haven. A balm to my frayed nerves.

The more I watched her, the more impossible it was to look away.

I didn't intend to follow her home after the day had dipped to nightfall.

Or to park through the woods and stalk her to her kitchen. Yellow light bathing the dark grass a few feet from where I lurked, leaning against the roughened bark of an ancient tree.

Cameron had been right. Her house was woefully protected. If it didn't serve my own purposes so well, I'd badger Maeve into getting Cam to fix it. But for now, I'd use the lack of protection for my own immoral purposes.

Just to watch.

It didn't hurt to watch her.

Standing outside in the shadows sent a wave of calm over me as her proximity soothed me.

I watched as she cooked herself some cheese on toast and poured a glass of red wine. I watched as she ate, watched as her lips reddened with the dark wine and I shifted against the tree as she licked crumbs from her lips.

Being a creep made me uncomfortable, but I couldn't drag myself away from her either. It may have been the first time that I followed her home,

but seeing how easy it was, it wouldn't be the last.

When she cleared up the kitchen and moved through the house, I followed through the trees that edged her house. Tripping over tree roots and silently cursing in my need to keep her in view.

She settled in a bedroom at the rear of the house, a room that looked finished compared to the rest of the house. The walls were a dusky, feminine pink, and her bed was large and spilling over with white linens. I grinned as I took in the headboard and footboard, both made from metal pole after metal pole. Perfect for securing her, too.

I shook the thought from my head as it entered. I wasn't there to touch her. The idea bounced around my chest after evicting it from my head, pulling at my insides. Could I show her how it should be? Would it give her the nudge she needed to leave Tommy if she saw that she could have more than whatever he was giving her? That she deserved more than zoning out while her boyfriend rutted behind her?

Katie moved about the room before stripping down to her lacy little underwear, clearly not at all concerned that someone might be outside her bedroom. Her red hair tumbled about her shoulders as she spent a few minutes moisturising herself, running her hands up over her curvy legs and stomach.

I had to readjust myself. More than once.

Every part of me itched to run my hands over her. To feel the silkiness of her skin. To smell the moisturiser on her. To taste her against my lips.

Fuck.

No.

I dug the palms of my hands into my eyes. What was I doing?

I needed to leave.

I turned and stumbled a few paces further into the woods, but I needed one last look.

She'd gotten into an oversized tee shirt and laid on the bed, toying with her phone. The window framed her perfectly, and I slipped my phone out of my pocket, lifting it and snapping a picture of the scene. It was stupid, an admission of guilt if anyone saw it, but I wanted to keep that little piece of her for myself. An intimate moment that no-one else witnessed.

Mine.

But she wasn't mine. I was getting too involved.

She pushed her hand under the tee shirt and my world stilled around me. I barely dared breathe in case it somehow fucked the moment up.

Katie.

My dirty girl.

Touching herself.

I slipped closer toward her window, needing to see her more clearly. By the time I had gotten as close as I could without being seen, her chest was rising in short little puffs as her hand moved vigorously between her thighs.

'Yes,' I whispered, my hand going to my already hard dick, 'Take your pleasure sweet girl.'

A lust filled fog descended over me as I unzipped my trousers and fisted my erection. Katie was a vision, all pink cheeked and wriggling on her bed as she thrust her fingers deep inside herself.

'Just like that.' I mimicked her frantic rubbing against the head of my dick, imagining it between her thighs, or between her reddened lips. Fuck, she'd be a good girl for me. I knew it.

My breath caught in my throat as she moaned, the muffled noise still fucking hot through the window. A tingle spread at the base of my spine as I kept my eyes on her, my balls tightening with every little noise she made.

'Come for me, Katie,' I growled beneath my breath.

And when she did, I saw stars. The way she fisted the duvet in her other hand as her back arched against the bed. The way her thighs quivered as they tightened around her wrist. The way she rode her own hand like a desperate little thing.

I barely lasted long enough to witness it before I blew my load, decorating the weeds and wildflowers below her window with my cum. The orgasm ripped through me as I watched my girl collapse back against the bed.

Fuck.

My breathing was ragged as I thrust my dick back into my pants, shame creeping over me in my post nut clarity.

What the hell was wrong with me?

Even with disgust creeping through my veins, I knew that I'd be back. Watching, waiting, and deciding what to do about her. Or about him.

Deciding whether to put my desires into action and breach her home, to show her she needed better than the half-life Tommy was giving her.

CHAPTER FIVE

The zip caught on my perfectly curled hair as I struggled behind my back to fasten it fully. Heat flushed my cheeks as I scrunched my eyes shut, trying to get another millimetre or two higher with my lower hand. I let out a breath of relief as I finally grasped the sweaty little piece of metal with my other hand and pull it up to the top.

Smoothing my hands over my hips before turning to the left and then the right, I smiled. The dress fit like a glove and filled me with confidence. The black halter dress hugged my figure and fell to the floor, covered in a cascade of tiny, sparkling golden stars. I'd spent a long time with Macey picking out one that I hoped Tommy would adore.

One last check of my face left me certain that I looked the part. Looked fit to be on a rockstar's arm at his new album release party. Looked right to be splashed over the tabloids the following day without a thousand comments about why is he with *her*? Who was I kidding? His fans would post them even if I was a bloody supermodel.

I found Tommy in the hotel lobby, pacing nervously with an open bottle of whiskey on the reception desk. A few eyes turned my way, and I smiled as a reception manager's mouth literally hung open.

Yes, that was the validation I needed.

Tommy's eyes slid up from my heel-clad toes to my face, and I waited at the foot of the stairs, on bated breath.

He came toward me, his eyes softening briefly before hardening as he neared me.

'Are you trying to fucking embarrass me?' he said under his breath, looking like he was kissing my cheek.

'What? No. Don't you like the dress?' My stomach knotted as he reached out and gripped me painfully at the hips.

'The dress is fine. It's you who's ruining it. Look at all this blubber. You think a man like me can date a fucking whale?' Heat filled my face as I let out a pained cry, his fingers digging into my love-handles. 'You need to do better.'

His words cut great hot wounds into me as the room imploded around me. The looks from others had gone from admiring to pitying. Their gazes only making Tommy's comments all the worse.

'I'm sorry,' I said, trying to hold back the hot tears that gathered at the edge of my lashes. I didn't want to go out with tear streaked makeup running down my cheeks. The paparazzi would have a field day with that.

'Just stop eating like a fucking pig, Katie. It's not difficult.'

'I don't. I'm not any bigger than I was.'

'And that's the fucking problem, isn't it? I took a chance on you because you had potential. But you refuse to put the work in. You could be so pretty. So perfect, Katie, if you tried. Don't I deserve that? Deserve the best?'

I swallowed down the lump in my throat and nodded. 'You do. You deserve the best.'

'I know.' He tipped my face up toward his and kissed me softly, almost tenderly. Wiping away the harshest part of the sting he'd inflicted on me.

'Now put on a pretty face instead of that scowl and let's get going. My fans won't wait.' Tommy let out a cheerful laugh. 'Well, they will. Because why wouldn't they wait for a piece of this?'

I followed behind him, his fingers clammy in my own as I plastered a smile onto my face.

Tommy sat at the other end of the limo's rear seat as we approached the venue, utterly ignoring me. I'd tried to pull him down next to me, but he'd made space between us and maintained it throughout the journey through Glasgow's busy streets.

Nausea clung to me as the crush of fans and photographers swelled outside of the car as we pulled to a stop.

'Tommy,' I said, reaching out as he scooted toward the door..

'Just don't embarrass me.' He couldn't even meet my eyes.

I looked down at the way my hips rolled as I sat in the car, my dress bunching around them. He was right. How did I ever think I looked good?

'Come on,' he said as the chauffeur pulled the door open to a cacophony of screams.

Tommy stopped to take my hand tenderly and help me from the vehicle, a sweet, attentive smile playing on his handsome face. He slipped a hand around my waist as we made our way through the sea of flashing cameras and wild teenaged squeals.

It was a lot.

It was always a lot.

My upbringing had come with vast wealth, and a heavy dose of pain, but it had come with little fame. It was a whole new beast that I didn't thrive under. Tommy's body thrummed with the excitement of his fans' obsession. Being the lead singer and guitarist put him forefront in the band, the guy that girls would kill to just touch. It was a head rush, at first, knowing that I had the man so many others wanted. That he chose me. But with his cruelty becoming more common, and his desire for me clearly waning, I doubted my position beside him.

As we neared the end of the red carpet, he swung me around to pose for the photographers. I lost my breath when he looked at me with all the charm and desire that I missed. He brought a hand up to my chin, tipping my lips up to claim a sweet kiss as the surrounding screams intensified. I crumbled into him, closing my eyes and breathing in the moment.

'Tommy!' The press shouted, practically climbing over one another for a chance to talk to him. To get a quote from the rockstar himself.

He picked out a female reporter and set his charming smile on her. 'Yes?'

'Tommy, how does it feel to hear that the new album is set to reach number one on release?'

Tommy rested a hand on my hip as he replied, fielding a handful of questions in his easy manner. I cringed as his hand toyed with my fat, conscious of the way my dress clung there after his remarks. I fazed out the questions and focused on trying to keep a sweet smile plastered on my face, and then that familiar feeling crept back into me. That feeling of eyes on me.

Don't be ridiculous, I chided myself; you are standing next to the star, all eyes are on you.

It was a distinct sensation, though. The hairs on my arms raised as I scanned the crowd, nothing but face after face of fans desperate to be noticed by Tommy.

There were a myriad of security and venue staff, hundreds of flashing mobile phones.

Nothing untoward.

Stop it.

You're being crazy.

Then I spotted him through the crowd.

And I knew. Knew he was my watcher.

He dressed entirely in black, a creepy skull mask covering everything, including his eyes. A jolt of terror made my knees tremble.

Who the fuck was he, and why was he watching me?

He stood across the busy street, at the junction between two sets of lights, leaning casually against the corner of a building.

I looked at Tommy, trying to get his attention, but he focused on the reporters.

When I looked back up, the masked man had disappeared.

A full body shiver took over as I tried to tell myself he was just some guy dressed up for something who stopped to watch the celebrity spectacle.

Laughter erupted around me as Tommy stiffened at my side. I focused in on my immediate surroundings as Tommy's quiet fury enveloped me.

'She didn't seem ready for that,' the female reported said with a chuckle.

Tommy tried to laugh off whatever had happened, but his fingers gripped painfully into my side. 'I think that was a shiver of excitement, right, babe?'

They had never asked me to speak on the red carpet before, and my voice came out a squeaky mess that made Tommy frown.

'Yeah totally.'

'So you are looking forward to tying the knot soon?'

It took everything I had not to let my eyes bug out of my head. Marriage? What had I missed? My brain scrambled to settle on the right thing to say. 'I'm excited for every moment with Tommy, both now and for what our future holds.'

His fingers relaxed their death grip on my hip, and I breathed a relieved sigh.

Tommy steered me into the building, grinning at the series of people who wanted to chat to him. He guided us through a quiet corner to a quiet back stairwell.

'Where are we going? Shouldn't you be getting to your party?'

I cried out as Tommy gripped me by the back of the neck and flipped me into the wall, my neck twisting as my back slammed into the bare concrete.

'Tommy, stop!'

'Are you trying to fucking embarrass me? I told you to behave.' His breath was hot in my face as he pinched my cheek between his fingers, the tips forcing my teeth to cut into the inner walls. 'You are so fucking useless, Katie!'

He pulled back and levelled a hard slap across my mouth. Stars flashed as it sent a wave of dizziness through me. I tasted the bitter saltiness of blood.

Tears mingled with blood on my chin as I looked up at him. And I saw it. I saw desire flood through him. His pupils widened as he reached down to unzip his black tuxedo trousers.

'On your knees.'

'Tommy, please, not here.'

'On your fucking knees. Don't make me have to slap more sense into you.'

I slid down the wall as he released his dick. The hardest I'd seen it in a long time. My lips stung as he forced the tip across them, gathering the blood and tears before thrusting into my mouth.

I clenched my fists by my side, disgusted, as he used my mouth to get himself off.

'Fuck, yes, Katie. You are finally doing something right. I just wish you hadn't made me hit you. You just have to behave.'

I closed my eyes when I saw my blood decorating his groin, and the sick way he looked at himself piercing my damaged mouth. I let him use me and zoned out, my fingers hunting for something to touch, something to distract me. I found the stars on the dress, the small metallic studs twisting between my fingers as I tried to forget about the assault on my mouth.

He didn't last long.

Then it was over.

He looked at his bloodied cock with repulsion before looking at my face similarly. 'Look at what you made me do.'

'I'm sorry,' I mumbled, my lips smarting as I spoke.

'Go get yourself cleaned up and find someone to fix your makeup before you come out. You're a mess.'

And I was.

In so many ways.

CHAPTER SIX

The machinery chirped incessantly in the private hospital suite where my father lay as we gathered round him.

Logan stood firm by the beside, both the eldest and the one who the brunt of responsibility had fallen on since Katie's dad had shot my father. Since our world's changed.

Guilt still ate at me as I let that night flash back into my mind. I'd been distracted by Katie even then, too busy sneaking looks at her to prevent my father from being maimed.

Dad had never looked serene while awake, but his almost two year long sleep left him thinner and softer, his face forever looking at peace.

I loved him.

Despite his checking out of our upbringing when Mum died, and his always brusque manner. I still loved him.

We'd held onto him longer than we should have.

I looked from Logan's stoic face to Ewen's, then to Maeve's. Esther had chosen not to come until the funeral, staying with her boisterous toddler and her loved up husband, Alec, for a few more days. If he hadn't tried to pawn her off to Katie's father, then none of us would be there. Dad would have lived. I couldn't blame her for not coming for a last goodbye.

A nurse filtered into the room, doing final preparations and tapping away at a computer, the clicks joining the beeps amongst our silence.

What do you say to a father who provided, but rarely cared?

To a man whose syndicate came first, even over his children?

To a man who you still miss, despite that.

Maeve broke first, sitting heavily on the edge of the bed and gathering Dad's slack hand in her own.

'Hope Mum's waiting up there. And Malcolm. Give them a cuddle from us.' Tears welled as she whispered. 'I'll miss you.'

Ewen reached out and squeezed her shoulder before clearing his throat. 'Yeah, I'm sure it won't be long before you're running an empire wherever you go next.'

'God help us if Harold is there, too. Let's keep your shit to one lifetime, huh?' Logan chuckled before scratching his neck awkwardly.

They all looked at me, expectant.

'Let's just get it done,' I said, hating myself for having nothing more poignant to say. Every time I let my mind go to him no longer existing, it was like it short-circuited. I needed to get out. To go see my antidote. To watch my girl.

'Mac,' Maeve said, her eyebrow furrowing as she continued to watch me. 'Say goodbye.'

'I'm fine. No point dragging it out. It's not like he's been here for the past two years, anyway.' It sounded callous, but my body itched for escape.

The nurse focussed her attention on us with a tender smile. 'I'm going to ask you all to pop out for a few minutes so that we can get your father ready.'

We filed out into the high-ceilinged hall and waited. Maeve stood next to me and slipped her arm through mine, resting against me in quiet comfort. I stiffened, my body still looking to escape.

'It's okay,' she said. 'It'll be over soon.'

'It's not that.'

'Then what?' She fixed me with a look that I'd known all too well growing up.

'I don't know. Everything just keeps changing. First Esther running off to Spain, and now you shacked up with a guy we used to hate and some teens you rescued. Harold's dead. Dad's dying. Logan stressing out at us over deals left, right and centre. Sometimes I just wish I could go back. Back to when it was easier.'

Back before Katie met Tommy.

'Not all change is terrible. You'll meet someone and it will change your life in the best way.'

'Whoa. I'm not looking for settling down,' I said as the nurse opened the door to Dad's room and ushered us inside.

The atmosphere was heavy as we stood around Dad, watching the machine breathe for him for the last few times.

'I'm going to unclip the oxygen in a moment. I've turned off all the alarms, so there's no need to worry about those.' The nurse gently squeezed Dad's hand as she spoke to us. 'There might be some movements or convulsions before he passes. It's the brain's way of fighting for oxygen. It's not something to fret over, and it's a normal part of the passing process. Sometimes people think it means that they are rallying, but it doesn't. Just keep talking to him, and reassuring him, and saying whatever it is you need him to hear. After he is gone, he may start turning blueish, again it's a normal response. The doctor will come in to pronounce him and then you will have as much time as you need with him.'

She spoke in a soothing voice, despite the unsettling words she was saying.

'It's been an honour to care for your father, thank you.'

She disconnected the ventilation machine and waited near the door, giving us space.

Everyone stepped forward, Ewen gripping Dad's hand and Logan fighting a welling of tears. Maeve scooted close to Dad's ear, whispering something private.

All too soon his arm jerked, before his body joined in, spasming just as the nurse had told us it would. I froze, watching my father move more than he had since the day Harold shot him. It was hard to trust the nurse's word that he wasn't trying to fight it.

Maeve cried out, tears spilling as she looked round at the nurse. I slipped my arms around her shoulders and held her tight, letting her sob, her mascara lacing tears into the sleeve of my shirt. I held her until Dad stopped moving. And continued as her shoulders convulsed in my grip. I dared a glance at our father as his lips took on their bluish tinge. It was then it hit me. He was gone. There was no more raising of his chest, or the quiet swoosh of the air. There would be no more slaps on the back when we pulled off a job, or angry admonishments when we didn't live up to his expectations. Our parents were gone. All we had was each other.

As I looked at my siblings, less Esther, a wave of emotion hit me. My chest burned as my breath stuck there, my face heating. I needed air.

The nurse jumped as I let go of my sister and threw the door open. Not stopping until I made it to a fire escape, and out onto a concrete staircase. With great gulps, I swallowed down air, fighting not to break down entirely while an alarm blared out behind me.

I was still there when Maeve slipped down onto the step next to me, putting an arm around my waist and pulling me against her.

'You okay?' she asked.

'I didn't say goodbye.'

'He'll know you were there. Some goodbyes don't need to be spoken, they can be felt.'

'I'll miss him.'

'Me too.'

We sat there together, a nurse closing the door behind us as the sun dipped behind the towering stone buildings of Glasgow.

'Do you want to come back to mine? Get some pizza?' Maeve asked, looking hopeful.

But I had someone else I needed to see.

Darkness had fallen by the time I made it to Katie's house, twigs crunching beneath my feet as I traced her house lights through the towering trees. Every step closer made me feel a kilo lighter, my body gravitating toward her.

I pulled my mask over my face, aligning it with the long-sleeved black hoody at the neckline before pulling my hood up.

Warmth flooded me as I spotted her in her bedroom, but rage soon replaced it when I saw Tommy in her room. I slipped as close to the window as I could without being seen and watched them together.

A dark, scabbed cut marked Katie's perfect lips while a bluing bruise highlighted her jawline. Darkness flooded me. She hadn't had a mark on her when I saw her the previous night. Did that fucker hit her?

I'd kill him.

I'd take him to one of the warehouses and skin him alive if I saw him lay a hand on her like that.

Tommy sat on the edge of the bed next to Katie, sliding his fingers down over her arm as she looked up at him. There was hesitation there, a flash of worry before her face softened as he leaned in and kissed the edge of her lips.

Maybe she truly loved him.

Maybe I'd displaced my distrust?

Maybe she enjoyed being bent over his car as the men sat less than a metre away.

Maybe I was wrong.

Or maybe she just needed to learn her worth. To know what it's like when a man idolises you. When he cherishes every perfect little smile that crosses your freckled face.

Tommy pushed her down toward his crotch, making her slip onto the floor between his thighs as he laid back on the bed and left her to it. With her back to me, I couldn't see much more than her bobbing head and her jerking arm. Until I saw him pick up his phone and scroll while he let her suck him.

Piece of shit.

The moment she noticed was clear in the sloping of her shoulders. Her fingers dragged about the leg of her pyjama bottoms, searching for something.

But what?

They settled on the hem and she toyed with rhythmically as she continued to try to please her douchebag boyfriend.

Was it nerves? A distraction.

After twenty minutes, Tommy still hadn't come. He stood with an aggravated huff as Katie flinched from her place on her knees. Watching her recoil renewed my anger. I clenched my fists as Tommy left the room without even considering her pleasure. She rolled over and sat against the bed, her knees pulled up to her chest and rubbing at the floor indentations on them.

She deserved to feel good. To know that she's deserving of attention and pleasure.

I'd show her.

Quietly, I made my way around the house, surveilling the interior. It was a fairly big and old home, with single glazed windows, exposed wooden floors and high ceilings. Tommy grabbed a bottle of something alcoholic and deposited himself on the sofa in a grand, but unfinished, sitting room. Between swigs of booze, he wanked himself with a furious death grip to

whatever smut he was watching on his phone. Eventually, he jizzed all over his stomach before crashing out on the striped cushions.

His car sat out front of the house, Tommy's security inside, watching their phones and eating junk food. Must be the most boring job around sitting and waiting for him to wake up. While my family was wealthy, I'd never much been bothered by the whole fame thing. Criminals tried to keep out of the spotlight, and our syndicate was no different.

Katie was in bed when I sidled back up to her window, sleeping face down with her pyjama top riding up.

Thankfully, my upbringing in the world of crime had fashioned me with many skills, including lock picking. But even more so, it had given me the knowledge that more often than not, a window or door would be unlocked.

Sweet Katie had crashed without even attempting to lock her doors.

I let myself in the back door, stilling as I listened out for any signs of life. Tommy's gentle snore sounded from one end of the house, assuring me he slept on.

A floorboard creaked beneath my foot as I made my way to the part of the house that held my girl. My fingers trembled as I touched her door handle, knowing I was about to throw myself into a situation I wouldn't be able to erase.

Now or never, Mac.

Now.

For Katie.

Her back rose gently, a strand of red hair spilling over her shoulder. I stilled as I watched her, my breath hot beneath my mask. Reaching to my left, I flicked out the lights that she'd left on. The thin, leather gloves I wore would leave no prints, but as I approached the bed, I slid my right one off and thrust it into the pocket of my hoody.

My pulse thundered as I placed one knee on the edge of the bed and reached out to touch my girl. Every delightful curve was a treat for the eyes as I considered her sleeping form. Ideally, I'd make her cum before she realised I was someone other than Tommy. Her waking up and screaming would likely bring someone to the room, although with Tommy passed out, maybe not.

I wanted her to feel good before she freaked out.

I reached out with my left hand and slid it into her glorious red hair, wishing I could feel its silkiness through my gloves. She moaned sleepily as

I tightened my grip.

Then I slipped her pyjama bottoms down over her hips, leaving them around her ankles as I pulled one knee high onto the bed, exposing her sweet little cunt.

I should have left the light on so that I could see her in all of her glory. Her ass cheeks were soft and full and I ran my hand over her, her pale skin a contrast with my tanned skin.

She writhed against the bed as I grinned.

If only I could have taken my time with her. *Next time*, *sweetness*.

Holding her hair gently but firmly to stop her looking round when she woke, I touched her. Gently, at first.

It didn't take long until she sighed needfully, her hips moving to give me better access.

'God, Tommy, that feels so good.'

His name grated on her lips, but soon enough she'd realise that none of the credit went to him. When she tried to turn over, I held her firm, finding her clit and circling it as she wriggled beneath my hand.

'Let me touch you too,' she said when my fingers tightened in her hair, pushing her face into the bed.

'Shhhhh.'

Thank fuck. She listened to me and gave into the sensations I wrought between her thighs.

My dick ached against the zip of my trousers as I delved two fingers into her wet cunt and it took everything in me not to groan right along with her.

The whimpers she gave out were delicious and drove me to do everything I could to elicit more.

Her hips arched off of the bed as she gave herself to me, opened up to accept as much fingers as I could fit inside of her. I alternated between rubbing and fucking her with them until her body quivered.

Only when she cried into the pillows as her body gave way to the crash of orgasm did I lean down over her trembling body and whisper into her ear.

'Good girl, you deserve to come like this every night.'

I dropped my voice lower, deepening my accent to one that sounded rougher and thicker with Glaswegian than my own.

It took a moment for her brain to register that my voice wasn't Tommy's. She flipped over and grabbed at the duvet to try to cover herself right as her mouth opened, ready to scream.

I took my wet fingers from her cunt and slammed them over her lips, my other hand still tightly in her red locks.

Her eyes widened as she took in my skull mask and dark, hooded clothing.

'I won't hurt you. I just wanted to finish the job your boyfriend didn't even start.'

Her breathing was fast beneath my fingers and I lowered my hand a touch, hoping that she wouldn't yell. When she didn't, I smiled beneath my mask.

'Atta girl. The only screams I want from you are ones filled with ecstasy.'

'You need to get the fuck out of my house.'

I waited, fingers ready to clamp over her bruised mouth if need be. I ran my thumb over the cut as she winced.

'Did he do this to you?'

'Why do you care? You're no better. Are you going to rape me?'

'No, sweetness. You'll only get my cock when you beg for it.'

'That will never happen.'

'I'm willing to wait.'

Her breath hitched as I slid two fingers into her mouth, watching her eyes dilate as she tasted herself on them. 'Because, I think that despite yourself, you enjoyed being touched. I can make you feel good. I can give you what he can't. I can treat you like a dirty little slut in the bedroom, but show the respect you deserve while I do it.'

CHAPTER SEVEN

Screaming was the sensible choice, unless the masked man had a weapon. Then he might decide to silence me.

It was all wrong. I'd woken up thinking my boyfriend had finally focused on my pleasure, only to come all over a masked man's fingers.

Fingers he slipped into my mouth, sending filthy thoughts into my head along with yet more tingles down my spine.

When he told me he wanted to make me his little slut, the words should have repulsed me, instead they excited me. Which made me feel even more guilty.

Where the fuck was Tommy? Had he gone home?

The masked man slipped his fingers out of my mouth and gripped my chin lightly. 'I've got to go, but I'll be back soon. And if you are a good girl and don't go telling anyone, I might even use my tongue next time.'

'You've been watching me. I saw you,' I finally whispered, the skull face staring at me, both creeping me out and giving me flutters where it shouldn't.

'I have. I'll always be watching you.'

'Don't. I should call the police.' His fingers caressed at my jawline as I spoke.

'You should. But I think we both know you won't.'

He was far more sure than I was. I couldn't be letting some stalker creep follow me around. Perhaps I'd have to get that security system after all.

Then he ran his thumb over my lip. 'Did he do this to you?'

My throat bobbed as I swallowed hard. As mad as I'd been at Tommy, I was sure he hadn't meant to hit me. His excitement at the sight of my blood

had been far more concerning. 'It was an accident.'

The masked face inched closer toward me, the heat of his breath coming through the material and warming my lips. 'If he does it again, I might *accidentally* run a knife through him.'

My breath caught as his threats landed. 'No. I love him.'

'Do you, though?'

With that, he stood and walked to the door, sliding a glove over his exposed hand as he went. He turned to face me before leaving and said, 'It doesn't look like love to me.'

Then he was gone.

I sat frozen in my bed for minutes before pulling my pyjamas up and cautiously peeping out of the bedroom door. My house was quiet, only a soft snoring coming from the sitting room. A stranger had broken in and made me come in my home and my boyfriend was nowhere to be seen. Following the noise, I made my way to the living room, opening the door to see Tommy on my sofa, his dick flopped out with a pool of cum seeping into his shirt. I stood the bottle of whisky that had fallen from his fingers upright, before switching off his phone, which still blared out moans and cries. I didn't look at the screen. I didn't want to know.

I stood staring at the house phone on my kitchen counter for a time, knowing that the right thing was to call the police, or my brother, and let them know what had happened. But what if they made me get security? I'd been enjoying my freedom for the first time in my life, and I didn't want it to stop. Not for some weirdo. He hadn't tried to take anything, only to give me pleasure, and it was the first orgasm I'd had that wasn't self-induced for as long as I could remember.

Fuck. I was being an idiot.

You didn't let a stalker off because you had enjoyed it. Nor because he tapped into a dark part of you that had tried to keep suppressed.

The worst thing was that I had enjoyed it far too much. A broken part of me came alive when I saw the masked man, and when he slipped his wet fingers into my mouth, it had set me on fire. It was so wrong. But it made me feel alive. The danger was thrilling. And that terrified me.

I made my way through the house, closing and locking every window and door before going back to my room and burrowing into my bed, tucked tight under the covers. One thing was certain. I'd have curtains installed first thing in the morning.

When I screwed my eyes shut, the skull mask filled my mind. The mask, his dirty words, and the feel of his fingers driving me over the edge. With a groan, I rolled over and cursed.

I couldn't sleep.

What if he was watching?

A chill crept down my back and settled beneath my pyjama bottoms, traitorously blooming into something not at all chilling.

What was wrong with me?

When I awoke to the sound thumping in my kitchen, my heart thundered. I should have called the police before I eventually crashed out in the early hours. I had been close so many times, but a niggling something held me back. The sun had been creeping up, illuminating the outside enough to assure me I was alone before I'd given into my itchy, aching eyes.

But now there was someone in my kitchen.

My eyes swept my bedroom as I hunted for a weapon, for something, anything, to protect myself with. If the fucker came back with his slick fingers and dirty words, I'd give him something to worry about.

Footsteps sounded in the hallway as the hairs on my arms raised. No, no, no. Fuck. I grabbed the first thing to hand, an ornamental rabbit shaped piggy bank that sat on a shelf near the bed and held it up in front of me.

The door handle shook before it opened.

'Shit Tommy, it's just you,' I said, lowering the ceramic rabbit and breathing a sigh of relief.

Tommy looked at me as if I'd grown two heads. 'Yeah, who else would it be?'

It was the opener I needed, the one I should have taken, but as I tried to think of a way to tell him, he shuffled around the room ignoring me completely while muttering about his shoes.

'It's not like you have guys banging your door down, luv.' Another bitter arrow from his words.

'You don't think anyone else would want me?'

'Not if you keep stuffing your face like a little piggy. What do they say? Something about lips and hips.' Shame burnt into my cheeks as he spoke. I

placed the rabbit back on the shelf and curled my arms about my waist.

'I'm not big.'

'Bigger than anyone else I've dated. Wait until you see how that dress sat in your folds like a badly stuffed sausage in the pictures from the other night.'

I tried to hold in the tears. They always came far too easily when I was sad, frustrated, or angry.

Tommy found his other shoe under the bed and thrust his foot into it before walking over to me and touching my chin, making me look up at him. 'I'm only looking out for you, babe. You know how the press is. They'll rip you to shreds. I could sort you out some lipo or whatever if it's easier?'

'I have money,' I said, my voice tight as I asked myself for the hundredth time why I was still with him?

'Oh yeah. I forget when you live in a dump like this.' He gestured around, letting go of my chin.

'It's being renovated.'

'Sure it is. Anyway, I gotta go. Got an interview at midday for The Gilded Knife. The guys are blowing up my phone.'

'Are you still coming to Cameron's on Sunday?'

'Why would I be?' Tommy screwed up his face at the mention of mingling with my family.

'Sunday lunch. You promised you'd make this one.'

Tommy looked into my face, his expression changing back to that intense one he had that made me feel like the only girl in the world. When he slipped his hand along my jaw and pulled my mouth to his, I lost all sense. Despite his many faults, when Tommy focused on me properly, it still sent butterflies flying through me.

'Course I'll be there. I'd do anything for you.' My brain registered the complete flip of his attitude, but my heart was putty for his attention. I needed it. I craved it. I wanted a love that was mine to keep. If only he could give me the sweet, caring Tommy all the time.

'You promise?'

'Yes,' he said, his lips hovering over mine before kissing me. There was too much tongue, but I opened my mouth and let him take. I'd let him take and take until he couldn't be without me. His teeth grazed my cut lip, bringing a fresh taste of blood to his undulating tongue. When he pulled

back and spotted it, his eyes widened and his dick hardened against my stomach. It made me squeamish.

I sighed in relief when his phone rang in his pocket and he gave a shrug before roughly thumbing my lip, pulling at the cut to widen it.

'Ouch,' I whimpered, moving to thrust his hand away. He caught my wrist and got a crazed look in his eyes as he grinned. The look he gave me wasn't lust. It was something far more unhinged. Then he blinked, and it was gone.

'See you Sunday,' he said, stepping back and dropping my wrist.

As soon as he left, I called Macey to come hang out. Between a stalker and Tommy, I didn't want to be alone.

CHAPTER EIGHT

My thumb scrolled through the images on my screen. So many pictures of Katie's asshole boyfriend, some with her in them, but many with her cut off by the framing of the pictures. Tommy's fans were rabid for him. They saw the bad boy exterior, but missed the abuse and the way he was hurting my girl. They wanted to replace her. I hoped they would. The moment she realised she didn't have to put up with him, the moment all of this could stop. I'd only meant to watch. That was my deal with myself. And I'd broken it.

I didn't regret it.

I couldn't. Having her in my hands was addictive. Hearing her whimpers and little breaths, feeling the way she'd wanted more, made me harder than I'd even been. I wanted nothing more than to pull off my mask and let her see it was me. To fuck her with my name tumbling from her lips. But it wasn't about me. She didn't want *me*.

I just needed her to not want him.

'Mac, stop fucking with your phone and pay attention.'

Ewen fixed me with an exasperated glare as I met his eyes. 'I told you I have all the security details for the funeral down. What else do you want?'

'I've been trying to tell you about what I need so you can sort out the security detail for the opening, too.'

'Just tell me how many guys you want and the times. What else is there to know?' I pulled myself away from perving on photos of Katie in that delicious star studded dress and put my phone in my pocket as I looked up at my brother.

'I want the re-opening to go perfectly. And that means it running smoothly. I need the right guys on this one. Not the young guys who will be too worried about their hard dicks to focus.' I don't know why he cared that much. It was just a redesign of his sex club. Hardly ground shaking change. The nightclub beneath was largely a cover for illicit deals and money laundering. The sex club above was purely a vanity project, as far as I was concerned. The amount of his personal funds he'd drowned it with was astounding.

'Right, so old, crabby guys who have seen it all. I've got you,' I said, standing and stretching. 'This is a lot of time and money to get your dick wet, bro.'

Ewen took a steading breath as he narrowed his eyes. 'It's not like that. You know it's not.'

'Then what is it about?'

'It's a place where I can feel at home with who I am. And can be surrounded by others who are too.'

'Sure,' I shrugged, 'If that's what you need to tell yourself.'

I was projecting, and he didn't deserve it. It had been days since I'd broken into Katie's house and I'd been avoiding returning despite the need feeling like fire in my veins. I'd waited to hear about her calling the police or calling her brother. She did neither, as far as I could tell. Maeve would have mentioned it when I went by to game with the teens. Plus, who was I to judge? I was about to creep on my sister-in-law.

Fuck, I was half hard just thinking about seeing her.

'Sorry,' I said, grasping Ewen's shoulder as I passed by. 'In a weird mood. Of course, I'll sort out your security. Just email Janice with what you need and I'll get the right guys on it.'

Running the family security business was an easy ride. On the front, we did all your usual security needs. Alarms, cameras, protection. Behind the scenes, I managed a team of hackers who helped us control our crime empire. It's amazing the info you can gather on your rivals with a few well placed listening devices or a hacked phone. Not to mention the ability to erase police records or alter government documentation.

'Thanks,' Ewen said as I headed for the door.

To see my girl.

Sweat gathered at the back of my neck as I made my way through the woods. Dusk had just come, tucking her house into a darkness that grew inkier by the minute. The lights inside flooded the woodland, drawing me closer like she was my lighthouse. Leading me to glory or doom, I couldn't decide.

Sweet Katie, where are you? I wondered as I picked my way over exposed roots and falling leaves as I circled the property. No cars outside bar her own. No bumbling body guards or drunk boyfriends. Just her.

I found her.

Tucked up on the same sofa that Tommy had crashed out on only days before. She'd piled her red tresses up on top of her head, an oversized sweater just covering her thighs. A plate of chopped veggie sat on her lap as she picked idly at it while watching something on the TV.

Stalking closer to the window, I watched her for a time. Imagining ditching my mask and knocking on her door as Mac, not the masked man. What would she do? Would she let me in?

While we had spoken little, there was no real animosity between us. Maybe she'd let me seduce her?

I had a feeling that she wouldn't want to be on the wrong side of cheating on Tommy. She was a *good* girl. She needed someone to make her be bad. To take the blame. There was only one way I could make her see that she needed to be worshipped, and that was by forcing it on her.

Then she looked up. With my pulse quickening, I moved to the side, pressing my back against the wall and shimmying away from the building until I was safely tucked in the darkened woods.

She appeared at the window, scanning for me.

You felt me, didn't you, sweet girl?

She shivered before reaching up and pulling closed a set of curtains that hadn't been there on my previous visit.

You can't hide from me.

After a few minutes, I made my way around the house, from door to window, gently checking each. Katie had locked the house up tight. I smiled to myself. She was learning.

As I passed the bathroom closest to her bedroom, I heard water hitting ceramic. The crinkled glass window made it impossible to see true shapes inside. But I could make out skin tones. I could see the moment she discarded her clothing and stepped behind the shower curtain over the bath.

Everything was distorted, but I didn't care. Condensation built as a light rain started up, soaking me as I stood by the window, only a few metres away from her naked form, but unable to touch her, to see her or to smell her. Unable to taste her. And fuck, did my mouth water at the thought of feasting upon her, of spreading her thighs and burying tongue deep inside. I had to taste her, and soon.

My hard dick ached against my zip at the thought of her in the shower, and I pulled it out, imagining her on her knees as the water fell over us both. Imagining her nipples hardening as I reached down to twist them. She'd moan, fuck would she moan and it would be the sweetest sound I'd ever heard. My cock swelled between my fingers as I circled my flesh, stroking it and picturing her pretty lips stretched over the tip. She'd take it all. I knew she would. She'd swallow me down and cry for more.

I grunted as I neared completion. The thought of her on her knees for me was too much to bear. The proximity to her set my nerves on edge, everything crackling with intensity. I wanted to be inside, to tie her open in the bathtub and direct the water right at her wet little cunt as she took my cock like the best girl. To come deep in her throat as she cried out, coming again and again.

I bit down on my lip as I came hard, my fist filling with cum. It was hers, always hers.

The shower ceased, and I saw her distorted form get out and wrap herself in a towel behind the undulating window pane. In a moment of madness, I reached up and slapped my hand against the glass, spreading my cum into a slippery heart over the pane.

She screamed.

I grinned.

Because I'd be making her scream in an all too different way soon.

I made it back to my car a few minutes later, my breathing quickening as I threw myself into the shitty car I'd picked up to cover my tracks. Just in case she had any ideas about telling.

CHAPTER NINE

He'd come back.

He'd been outside tugging his dick while I was in the shower.

The sick weirdo had left his cum in a heart on my window.

I should have called the police, or my brother. I should have left the cum there as evidence. Cleaning it off was a stupid idea. Hell, going outside had been a stupid idea. Getting back in and masturbating furiously in my bedroom with the new curtains left wide was insane.

But I wanted someone to *see* me. To really see me. It was stupid, and dangerous, but it excited me.

For a moment, I'd considered leaning forward and licking the sticky liquid, to take a part of him like he'd taken a part of me. The very thought was deliciously darker than anything I'd ever dared to think. I'd spent my life trying to always give out positive vibes, and it was like my brush with danger was unlocking a whole new person.

Yet again, he'd disappeared afterward.

Bar the odd tingle of being watched, I'd not seen a glimpse of him in days, and I sought him out.

Maybe I needed help.

When Saturday rolled around, I declined an invitation out with the girls and an offer of a cinema trip with Maeve. Instead, I stayed home and worked on painting the hallway an eggshell blue that I'd spent forever finding in just the right shade. I locked the doors, knowing Tommy was the only one with

a key, and turned up my music to drown out the rest of the world. Evanescence rose to a crescendo right as a shadow fell across me. I turned to see a figure blocking out the light from the kitchen.

'Tommy? What are you doing here?'

He strode toward me with that crazed look back in his eyes. I stepped back, dropping my paint roller and ending up pressed against the freshly painted wall.

His hands were red. Bloodied.

'What happened?' Had he gotten into a fight?

'All for you Katie, it's all for you.' He grasped me around the waist and threw me into my bedroom, pinning me to the bed as he hauled down my yoga pants.

'Tommy, stop.'

He pinned my arms painfully to my back as I squealed. It wasn't supposed to be like this. A condom wrapper landed beside my head on the duvet as he forced his way into me.

'Stop, Tommy, please. Not like this. It hurts.'

'You wanted this. I saw your sad eyes every time I couldn't get it hard. You made me do this.'

Hot tears dripped down my cheeks as I struggled against him, his thrusts making me sick to my stomach.

'I did it for you, Katie. I'll do it again and again to keep you in your place here beneath me.' His breath reeked of whiskey as he pinned me on the bed and spoke his sloppy words into the side of my face.

Resisting was only hurting me more. I checked out as best I could, leaving him to thrust into me in his erratic, drunken way.

I closed my eyes and prayed for it to end soon.

He dug his fingers into my shoulders as he finished; the pain being a blissful escape from the attack between my thighs.

'There you go. I did it. It's what you wanted,' he said blearily before haphazardly fastening his trousers and rolling onto my bed.

He didn't even remove his condom.

Tremors shook my body as I stood and wrapped my arms around myself, hot tears pricking my cheeks. I had wanted him to get hard, but not like that. Not with me being nothing but a rag doll for him to use.

Within minutes, he was snoring.

I looked out of the window into the thick woods beyond. Hoping he hadn't seen me like that. Even he wouldn't want me like that.

Pathetic.

I stumbled through to the shower, flipping on the light and looking at my upper half in the mirror. Blood streaked my clothing. When I removed them and threw them in the wash basket, I saw the first blooms of bruises marring the skin over my shoulders.

He hadn't even kissed me.

What had gotten into him?

He'd always been selfish in the bedroom, but never detached to the same level.

Why was he bleeding? Or was it someone else's blood? Had he punched someone?

I glanced at the window before stepping into the shower, wondering if he was out there. If he wanted to do what Tommy had done.

Feeling sick, I got into the shower, letting my tears fall freely as I scrubbed every inch of my skin. I still didn't feel clean. I let the water run over me until it cooled, shivering as I stepped out onto the mat.

That's when I saw it.

On the steamed mirror there was a heart in the condensation, water drips falling from its outer edge.

He'd been in my bathroom.

I grabbed a towel and wrapped it tight around me as I peered into the hallway, my heart thundering in my chest.

Tommy's snores were all that I could hear as I made my way through the house, checking every room, and every door and window. The front door was ajar. Tommy hadn't locked it behind him when he came in. I pressed it shut and double locked it.

The house was empty. Was I relieved? Or had I been hoping to see him? To talk to him? To find out who he was and why he was stalking me?

Stopping in the kitchen, I opened the freezer and pulled out a tub of ice cream, eating it straight from the container with a spoon.

What was happening to my life?

Tommy was acting more crazed every day. And so was I. The heart on the mirror meant the man was in my house. In my bathroom. He could have hurt me. I really should phone the police and report it, or at least get Maeve's family's security firm to help me out. I had done nothing to the locks in my house when I bought it. A security system would help to alert me to any danger.

Tidying away the ice cream tub, I walked through the house to where Tommy lay snoring, his hands still stained red. Perhaps the danger wasn't outside.

Opening my phone, I searched for Tommy's name and for news about Gilded Knife. While plenty of articles and fan posts popped up, there was nothing about Tommy being in a brawl. Not yet, at least. Not that anything would come of it. The celebrity world is almost as corrupt as our mafia world. His agent would have the other brawler paid off already and signing a confidentiality agreement. It was half of his job to go around cleaning up Tommy's messes.

Loosening his laces, I tugged off his shoes and tried my best to manoeuvre him to one side of the bed to make room for myself. He was a dead weight. Had he taken something other than alcohol?

Anger flooded me as I huffed and heaved him over to his side, hoping he wouldn't throw up on me in the night. I pulled on an old, loose band t-shirt that served as a nightie and brushed my hair with jerky strokes, rage just building in my limbs the more I stared at Tommy. Yet again he'd come into my home and used me without even considering that I might actually enjoy some pleasure myself. He hadn't cared if he hurt me. He hadn't listened when I'd told him to stop.

I threw the brush at him in a moment of rage and watched as it bounced off of his leg and clattered to the floor.

He didn't even flinch.

It was then I moved to the window, pulling one curtain with a sharp tug to the middle of the window.

Then I felt it. That familiar tingle that had been plaguing me for weeks.

I scanned the woods outside, my heart quickening when I spotted him.

He stepped forward slowly, confidently, until he was only a few paces away on the other side of the glass. My mouth dried as I drank him in. He was well built, toned from what I could see below his tight fitting black clothing. The mask concealed his entire face, not even his eyes were visible, like one of those green suits people wore on sets of movies. Except black, and with a distorted image of a skull-like ghost printed on it.

He tilted his head as I watched him. Was he waiting for me to scream and panic? To call the police?

Then he was right in front of me, my body feeling weak under his gaze. I may not have been able to see his eyes, but I could feel them raking over me.

He saw me.

In a moment of madness, I reached forward and turned the key on the window lock, my breath hitching as I turned the handle and pushed the window open.

He didn't immediately enter.

We stared at one another as minutes passed, my whole body tense as I considered reaching over and slamming the window closed. What did I think would happen? Nothing good could come of inviting your stalker into your home.

And then his hands were on the sill, one boot landing in my room, then the other. Then he was in my room, the tension wrapping around me as realisation hit.

I ran, eyes wide, as I made for the door.

He was quicker.

His arms wrapped around me from behind as he pulled me flush to his chest, one hand clamping over my mouth.

I tried to scream, the muffled noise not even slightly rousing my sleeping boyfriend.

I fought against him, kicking and biting and scratching, his gloved fingers holding me firm.

'Sweet Katie,' the rough, low Glaswegian accent said in my ear, 'Don't fight it. I'm not going to hurt you. Not like he did.'

I stilled in his arms. He'd seen Tommy fucking me.

My cheeks reddened in shame.

'I'm here to make you feel good. To show you what you're missing by wasting your time on him. To show you there is so much more.'

He let his gloved fingers drop from my mouth to my throat as he gripped it lightly but firmly, tipping my head back against his shoulder.

'You want that, don't you? To feel.'

I nodded against him, his fingers on my throat sending mixed messages to my brain. He could strangle me. Kill me. But his grip there sent flutters between my thighs that I was finding difficult to ignore. 'Tell me.'

'I want to feel.'

'How long has it been since you had a mouth on your cunt?'

I trembled.

'Years.'

'Too long, sweetness. Someone needs to worship you properly and that asshole won't do it. His ego only has room for one person's pleasure and it's not yours.'

My throat bobbed against his gloved fingers as I swallowed hard.

'I could kill him, you know. I could slit his throat right there and then you'd never have to worry about him again.'

'No,' I gasped. 'No.'

'You're right, too messy. Not in your house.'

'I don't want you to kill him. I love him.' Even as they left my mouth, the words were hollow. How could I love him when I'd let another man into my home, when excitement fuelled me at being in his arms?

'I'm going to taste you, Katie.'

'I'm going to lay you down on your bed and eat you until you scream right next to him. Again and again until you are spent across my tongue. Until you'll feel nothing but the memory of my tongue for days after. You are going to be a good girl and let me, aren't you?'

It was madness. A level of stupidity I'd never lowered to. But he was like a serpent with sweet, tempting words that I just couldn't ignore. It had been so long since I'd had someone go down on me, and my body absorbed his words, leaving my brain absolute useless mush.

'Yes,' I said softly, as he slid one hand between my thighs and touched me. I flinched at the sudden touch before moaning as the smooth gloves slipped into me with no resistance.

'So wet for me already. Such a good little slut. I'd taste them, but I want my first taste to be straight from the source.' His voice took on a new gruffness as he toyed with me.

'That's it, open wide for me.' I'd opened my legs without thinking, needing more of his delicious touches. 'So needy, aren't you? So very desperate for an orgasm that you'd let a masked stranger into your room while your boyfriend sleeps. You're going to be a delightful little toy tonight, aren't you?'

'Yes...' He pinched my clit as I cried out.

'It's yes, Sir.'

'Yes... Sir,' I moaned, trying out the alien word while he rubbed my tender flesh.

'That's who I'll be to you. Not a name. Not a boyfriend. Just your Sir. I'm going to make you realise your worth Katie, make you see the pleasures that await you when you stop hiding.'

'Why?' I asked, closing my eyes as he slid two fingers inside me.

'Because you deserve it.'

Then he turned me around to face him, grasping my throat and backing me up until the back of my knees hit the bed. His fingers tightened around the sides of my neck, my air cutting off as his masked face stared at me.

'Are you scared?' he asked.

'Yes, Sir,' I admitted, fear still streaking through me even, equally mingled with excitement. 'Are you going to rape me?'

'No, sweetness, I'm not. You will need to beg for that. To earn it. It's not something I'll give you lightly.'

'So you are just breaking in to my home to make me come?' My words were scratchy as he let me have enough air to speak.

'Oh no, Katie. Because I know you will fucking beg for my cock by the time I'm done with you. You will do all manner of debauched things to earn it. You will stop giving into that twat raping you and ditch him when you remember what you are missing. When you see how much he's keeping you from exploring your true self.'

Then he threw me onto the bed before going to my wardrobe and rummaging through it, pulling out two long, thin scarves.

'Can't have you peeking now, can I?'

He pulled me to sitting before running his fingers over my jaw, tipping my face up to him. 'You're so fucking beautiful. It's a shame to cover up these pretty eyes.' He slid the scarf over my eyes and tightened it around my head, blocking my view entirely. 'Don't worry, I'll take fine care of vou.'

'What about Tommy?'

'He's too fucking drunk to know what's going on. I'm going to eat his girl right next to him and he won't remember a moment of it.'

It was so wrong, but I was wetter than I'd ever been. So close to the edge just from his few touches and his dirty words.

The other scarf pinned my wrists together, and I squeaked when he tugged them sharply and secured them to the headboard. He must have left a long part between my tied hands and the posts, giving my arms some movement. He flipped me onto my knees and I felt the cool breeze from the window flow over my wetness.

And I waited, my whole body tense as I knelt, face down, ass up in nothing but a tee shirt, entirely vulnerable to the stranger in my home. It was insanely reckless and too fucking hot.

His footsteps creaked on the old wooden floorboards as he paced back and forth, each noise making me more apprehensive.

'You've made some stupid decisions tonight, Katie. Do you feel the position you've gotten yourself into? You are there, splayed open, so I have full access to you. Your boyfriend is passed out and unable to help you. You let me, a stranger, into your home. You didn't call the police either, did you?'

'No...Sir, I didn't.'

'Do you think that was wise?'

I stuttered, my breath hitching as he laid his hand over the exposed skin of my ass. 'N... no.'

'You've taken my word that I won't hurt you, that I'm not here to fuck you and then slit your pretty little throat. Why?'

Fear was mounting along my spine as he spoke, my thighs trembling as his words bathed me in anxiety. What if he hurt me? I pulled sharply against my hand ties as he chuckled softly behind me.

'Don't worry darling, they are nice and tight. You aren't going anywhere. Not when I finally have you right where I want you.' He slid a finger down between my pussy lips, separating them before focusing for a moment where I wanted him most. The keening noise I made was downright pathetic. 'You have such a pretty cunt. I've dreamt about it. I watched you touching it once and joined you outside your window. I saw you moan and squirm and needed to taste you for myself.'

I gulped hard as he pulled his hand back and placed a hard slap on my pussy, making me squirm and drop my hips to the bed. He looped an arm around my waist and hauled me back into position as warmth spread through me.

'You need to be punished, Sweetness. You've been such a silly girl. For letting me in. For not calling for help. But mostly for letting your idiot of a

boyfriend use you in a way no woman deserves. And your punishment will come. Another night.'

Burying my face in the duvet, I groaned as he thrust his fingers into me, filling me up before stretching them wide inside me.

'Because tonight, I'm going to make you come until you can barely think straight. Until you can't help but want to see me again. Until you are the one searching the crowd to seek me out.'

Then his mouth was on me, his fingers gripping my hips as he trapped me against his face. He didn't start gently, nor tease me. He ate like a man who'd been all but starved. The sensations overwhelmed me almost immediately, between the heightened emotions from the danger I'd put myself in, to the fact it had been so long since anyone had focused their efforts on me the way my masked assailant did. Tommy's weight shifted, sending a wave of fear through me, but I couldn't hold back as the man's hot tongue slid over my engorged clit. My brain fogged as everything seemed to focus on that one part of me where his mouth drove me insane. He thrust his tongue into me, tasting, toying.

It was too much.

I cried out as I came hard, his fingers pulling me all the firmer onto him as my body shook. For a few blissful moments, nothing else mattered. Not my love life, nor my family, nothing. Only him and his devilish tongue. The tremors continued as he sucked my clit into his mouth, not letting up on the pressure as it intensified to a point of overwhelm. I panted as I dug my fingers into the duvet, clawing at it like a desperate animal as he took my pleasure and used it to drive me to the point where I felt like I'd black out.

When he licked the length of me luxuriously, letting out a mmm that had me reeling, I collapsed against the bed.

I assumed Tommy slept on... I heard nothing from his side of the bed.

'What a perfect toy you are, Katie. I can tell just how badly you needed that. You tasted delicious, exactly how I imagined you to be.' His dirty words were right in my ear, his breath hot against my neck before he leant in close. 'You still need more, though. I'm not finished with you. You have so much lost time to make up for.'

'I don't know if I can take any more.'

'Oh, you haven't got a choice. You're my pet now. And I know what you need. Don't worry, you'll be begging for more soon enough.'

Then he moved me onto my bed, pulling my tee shirt up and exposing me entirely to the cool air of the room.

'Perfectly pink, just as I'd expected,' he said as he tweaked one of my nipples, sending a jolt of electricity through me. It hurt, but made me arch back up to find his fingers.

'That's it, my sweet little slut, search for Sir's touch. Show me you want it.'

And I did.

I whimpered, and moaned and sought his fingers and tongue, finding myself needing his touch almost as much as his filthy words. He bit at my nipples before soothing them with his tongue. He slapped my pussy before kissing it better; the pain mingling with pleasure and making it impossible to think straight.

When he stretched my legs wide and focused his mouth on me once more, I almost lost my mind. The guttural noises I made were nothing ladylike at all. I could hardly believe that they fell from my mouth. When he gave me his fingers along with his tongue, I couldn't speak, my whole body taut like the strings on a violin.

'Please?' I whimpered when I was close, so close, but he kept slowing his fingers to delay my falling.

'Please, what?' He growled, the vibrations against my pussy making me weak.

'Please Sir? Please make me come.'

'Good girl,' he said, twisting his fingers inside of me as he set his mouth back over my wetness and redoubled his efforts.

In a few seconds, I was gone. Nothing but a sea of sensation, a crashing, writhing set of limbs as I exploded against his mouth.

My breath was shallow when he let up, placing tender kisses over my thighs as I trembled.

'Thank you,' I murmured, my body spent as I drifted into a place that was only partially real.

'I'm not done yet,' he said.

CHAPTER TEN

Katie lay on the bed, her cunt glistening in the low moonlight coming through the window. She was perfect. Every imagined moment I'd had with her didn't compare to having her laid out before me like the most delicious buffet.

Tommy laid next to his writhing, hot girlfriend, totally unaware of the pure bliss I was driving her to. The temptation to place a deep red gash over his throat was overwhelming. The only thing that held me back was that it would turn me from the creep giving her mind bending orgasms to a murderer in Katie's view.

She'd let me into her room, and I had no intentions of making her change her mind when she was so willingly submitting to me.

Her pliability only made me want to stretch her further, see how much she'd offer me. Would she beg for my cock? Would she drop to her knees and crawl to me like a perfect little pet begging to lap at my dick?

My erection was painful against my zip, and I wanted nothing more than to push it inside her beautiful body and fuck her until I filled her. Mark my territory with my cum.

I'd forced myself to watch as Tommy fucked her earlier, pinning her down and using her without once even touching her in any way that would bring her pleasure. She had to see that he wasn't right for her.

He'd arrived covered in blood, and he'd marked my girl with it. I'd stood in the bathroom and listened to her cry in the shower. It broke my heart. She needed better. Watching her whimper and moan, seeing her desperate reactions to my touch, how could he not want that?

She had so much to give. And it was being squandered.

It was getting late, and I couldn't stay all night in case his royal waste-of-space woke up, but she was going to give me one more orgasm. One where she couldn't remain passive. One where she had to face the reality that she *wanted* this.

'Up on your knees, sweet girl.' I said, supporting her when her legs wobbled.

'I don't think I can take any more.'

'Oh, you can Katie.' I fisted my hand in her hair and wrapped the other around her throat, tipping her face to mine. God, I wished that I could have looked into her eyes and seen her expression. But with my mask pulled up, I couldn't risk it. 'This time, you are going to take your orgasm from me. You are going to sit on my face and ride me like the perfect little slut you are.'

'I can't, I'll squash you.'

'No, you won't. There's barely anything to you.' I tightened my fingers around the sides of her neck and grinned as she took a shallow breath. 'Plus, I'd happily submit to death if it was beneath those divine thighs of yours. You will sit down fully and you will fucking ride my face until you come all over it. Do you understand?'

Her voice was small as she whispered, 'Yes, Sir.'

When her lips parted and her tongue darted out to wet them, the urge to kiss her was drove into me. I didn't just want it. I needed those lips on mine. It wasn't a step that I'd wanted to take that night, but with her breath mingling with mine, and those plump, pink lips just aching to be kissed, I couldn't help myself.

I tightened my hand on her throat, making her gasp, and when she did, I leaned in and captured her mouth with my own. The stiffening of her body told me of her hesitation, her lips closing briefly, but then she melted into me, opening her mouth and submitting to my tongue. I groaned as I stole her kiss, my mind swirling at the heady rush of her. Kissing was intimate, far more intimate than fucking, and not something I gave away easily. I preferred my women to be submissive, and usually kept a barrier that separated kink and sex from emotion. But I couldn't with Katie. I wanted all of her. The sweet, giggly nature that I missed. The smart, funny side of her. And fuck, yes, I wanted the side of her she was showing me as I touched her. I'd spotted it in little moments, and was glad it was there. She needed pleasure and needed to feel special under a firm hand. Tommy had

given her the firm hand, but in an abusive, selfish way. It was a poor excuse for domination.

Tugging her hair sharply elicited a delightful squeal that I swallowed down as I kissed her. Her tongue slipped against my own as she relaxed, exploring my lips while I devoured hers. Her pulse thundered against my fingers as I held her tight, claiming my girl at last.

When I broke the kiss, she wavered in my arms.

'I never knew that it could feel so good.'

'That what could?' I murmured in her ear as I tried to catch my breath. My head was swimming with her.

'Having a hand on my throat and being kissed... like that.'

I smiled as she leaned against me, her lips still searching for more.

'It's time to sit on my face, sweetness.'

I placed her still tied hands on the top bar of the headboard and spread her thighs wide, laying down and settling myself between them. She moaned as I slid my hands up and around her thighs, my biceps cradling her ass as she hovered above me.

'This is so that you know you took your pleasure. It's easy to go into your head and tell yourself I tied you up and made you come. To be passive. But you are not passive in this. You will take your pleasure and in the cold light of the morning, you will remember that you were a part of this. Do you understand?'

Her voice trembled, 'Yes, Sir.'

'Do you want this, Katie? Do you want to ride my face until you come?' 'I do.'

'Then sit your ass down and show me, baby.'

She sat down, tenderly at first, until I groaned as her heat met my mouth. I pulled her fully onto my tongue, revelling in the taste of her. Her hesitation was sweet until she realised I was serious when I said she would have to ride me to get her pleasure. I wouldn't put in the work unless she did.

When she gave into her need and gripped the headboard, rocking her hips until her cunt slid over my tongue, her gasp made me even harder. Then I saw it from my place between her thighs, the moment she finally gave in. It was in the way she tipped her head back, in the relaxing of her shoulders and the quickening tip of her hips.

Her pants turned to moans, desperate noises that made me growl. Tommy shifted next to us, turning on the bed. I froze, but she was too far gone to even realise. Reaching one gloved hand up, I thrust my fingers over her mouth as I worked my tongue over her soaked cunt.

She picked up speed against my face, writhing and bucking with a renewed desperation as she got closer to orgasm. Her tee shirt had fallen back down to her hips, and I desperately wished I could see those perfect tits of hers bouncing as she rode.

Next time.

My fingers slid from covering her mouth to raiding it, her tongue lapping at them before sucking on them needily. Oh yes, I'd need to put her mouth to work soon. As soon as she was ready.

Surrounded by the scent of her, I captured her clit in my mouth and sucked, slipping my hand to her throat and gripping it hard. It sent her flying over the edge as she cried out. I squeezed harder to quieten her as I used my other arm to pin her to my face, licking and sucking as she gave it all to me. Her thighs clamped on my face and temporarily cut off my breath as I continued to restrict hers. There was no denying how hard she came, her whole body wracked with shakes as she was swept away with sensation.

With a last lick, I let her breathe. Her sweet, desperate gasps were like fucking crack. Despite just having a hit, I'd need it again soon.

After sliding out from beneath her, wiping my face and righting my mask, I was relieved to see Tommy still fast asleep. He'd rolled toward us, but otherwise was still out.

Katie leant against the wall, her body limp as she came down from her high.

I needed to get out of there, but I couldn't just leave her the way she was. She needed care.

She leaned her head against my chest as I untied her wrists, rubbing her hands to make sure the blood flowed into them. I removed the scarf from her eyes, seeing her cheeks wet beneath the material.

'Oh sweetness, it's okay. Let it out.' I kept my voice deep and tried to maintain the rougher accent, it taking way too much thought to keep up the ruse.

Sliding my hands beneath her thighs and back, I lifted her and took her to the kitchen. Seating her on the countertop, I found a cloth in the drawers and wetted it before wiping down her tear-streaked face. She kept her eyes

closed, but wrapped her fingers in my top, kneading the material like a kitten looking for comfort.

'Spread them for me.' I separated her thighs and washed her as she whimpered. Once clean, I made her a sweetened cup of tea and some toast, which I placed on the coffee table in the sitting room.

Last, I found a blanket and wrapped her in it before seating her in my lap, enclosing her in my arms as she rested her head against my chest. Her sobs were needed, cathartic. I knew it, but she didn't.

We spent sometime with her sniffling against me as she found her footing back earth-side. 'You did so good. You took my tongue so well, sweetness. I'm so proud.'

The words worked their magic, bringing her out of her sub-space as the adrenaline wore off.

'Why am I crying?' she asked, her words muffled against me.

'It's been a night of heightened senses for you. Fear, danger, lust, release. It's your body's way of coping. It's normal, don't worry.'

'I shouldn't be in your arms. You've been breaking into my home. It's all wrong.'

'Did it feel wrong?' I asked.

Her silence stretched out for a few moments, and I wondered if she'd drifted off.

'No,' she said, finally, 'It felt right.'

'That's because you are my good girl. You need this.'

'How did you know?'

'Like calls to like. I need it too, just the opposite.'

'But why me? There are places you can go to get it without stalking someone.'

'You needed it, desperately.'

She sat up and looked into my masked face. She lifted her hand to the edge of the mask and I reached up, holding her wrist gently. 'No. Not today.'

The first streaks of the lightening day were showing through the woods and I needed to get out of there.

'Will you come back?' she asked as I lifted her and laid her down on the couch.

'Do you want me to?'

'I'm not sure. It would be cheating.'

'Not if you dumped him.'

'I can't ditch my boyfriend for my stalker. That's insane.'

'Not as insane as staying with a man who doesn't give a shit about you. When was the last time he made you come like that? Has he ever?'

With that I made my way back to the bedroom, taking a moment to walk over to the still passed out Tommy. My knife was in my hand before I thought about it, flicking open the blade and holding it next to his throat. Temptation swam through me with a heady rush as I imagined pressing it home, seeing his dark blood oozing out as he spluttered and cried.

Begrudgingly, I closed my knife and pushed it back into my pocket. A quick pat down of his back pockets located the next best thing to taking his life, his keys to Katie's front door.

It was with a smile that I traipsed back through the wood. Tired, but smelling my girl with every inhalation through my mask.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Voices awoke me from the spot where I'd curled up and passed out on the sofa. I sat up with a start, the previous night feeling like an absolutely mad fever dream. The half-drunk cup of tea sat on the coffee table, letting me know that my late night visitor and the mind blowing orgasms were real.

A voice from the door was hushing Tommy, telling him to keep his voice down. What on earth was going on?

I swallowed hard as I remembered Tommy's face pressing against my calf while I rode the masked man's face with abandon, almost hoping that Tommy would wake up and see what I had to offer.

He didn't. Too lost in his world of booze or pills, or whatever the heck he had taken.

Padding on my toes, I slipped closer to the kitchen and peeked around the corner.

Tommy stood with his back to the counter, his head in his hands.

'I can't believe you've done it again. What the fuck were you thinking?' his agent, Chris, said.

'She was just some girl...'

'It doesn't matter who the fuck she is. Don't you think that who you are will make it all the easier for someone to find out?'

My heart sank. Tommy had been cheating on me. Again. A tendril of guilt gripped my stomach as I caught a thought. *I had cheated too*.

No. It couldn't be cheating if he was a masked assailant.

Except I'd invited him into my home.

I'd taken my pleasure willingly.

I was as bad as Tommy.

A wave of nausea hit me, and I slapped my hand over my mouth.

'There was CCTV this time, Tommy,' Chris said.

Tommy fisted his hair and looked as sick as I felt.

'Shit. What am I going to do?'

'You're going to give me a huge fucking pay rise for dealing with it. I have guys who can sort it all out. Make it disappear. But I will skin you alive myself if you do it again. Understood?'

Tommy nodded. 'I'm sorry.'

'Just get your ass home and clean yourself up. You've got a nice girl here. You need to cut this shit out before it costs us everything.'

The clothes Tommy wore weren't the ones he'd come in the night before, and Chris held a plastic bag at his side, his fingers barely gripping it with disgust. With the way Tommy had reeked of whisky, it's no wonder he needed cleaned up. The blood... had he hit the girl like he'd hit me? Was that why he'd come home with a hard dick?

I shuddered and took a breath, ready to make my presence known. Before I could, Chris opened the door and practically strong armed Tommy out of it, slamming it behind him.

Sunday lunch on my own again, then.

Maeve pulled me into a hug the minute I walked out of the elevator. As her arms squeezed me tight, I fought the urge to cry. God, I needed the hug.

'You alright?' Maeve said, peering behind me into the lift. 'No Tommy?'

'No, he had a work thing.'

'Ah well, all the more for us!'

'What are we having?' Cameron had taken on one of Father's chefs after his demise, and the food was always fantastic.

'Cameron's cooking.'

I stopped gawped at her. 'No, he isn't.'

'Yes, he is.'

'Cameron's never cooked a meal in his life.'

'The kids have been teaching him,' Maeve said with a sweet smile. 'It's really cute.'

The kids Maeve had saved weren't really kids anymore. They seemed to stretch by inches every time I saw them.

'So who's coming?' I asked as we walked through to the main living space in their enormous apartment.

'Esther doesn't fly in until Tuesday, with Dad's funeral being Wednesday, Logan is busy being his crime lord self.' Maeve rolled her eyes and laughed. 'Ewen's stressing over everything for the funeral, so he's off briefing someone. Mac was as non-committal as ever, and Mum is away to London for the weekend with some old friends. So me, you, Grace, Elias and Cameron.'

'Perfect,' I said, relieved that the entire circus wouldn't be coming. Not that I didn't enjoy Cameron's in-laws, but en masse, they could be a lot.

I'd spent the morning obsessing over the news stories app on my phone and the insta hashtags for Tommy and his band. Dreading pictures or videos of him and the girl he'd been with popping up. Then overwhelming waves of guilt and stupidity hit me for what I'd let the masked man do to me. I was as bad as Tommy. The one thing Tommy could count on me for was my fidelity, and even that I'd ruined. I'd wanted each of the orgasms from the masked man enough to not care about my passed out boyfriend on the bed beside us. I'd ridden his face in sheer desperation and licked his gloved fingers as I had. I'd keened and whimpered and sighed as he wrapped his hand about my throat.

Worst of all. I hoped he'd be back.

And that terrified me.

Who wants a visit from their stalker?

He could be anyone.

I bumped my shoulder into Cameron as I entered the kitchen area where he looked flustered, cheeks pink and a light glaze of sweat on his forehead.

'Hey,' he said, taking his wooden spoon out of the pot and pointing to a bowl of lettuce. 'Wash that for me, will you?'

'Aye, aye, chef.' I couldn't help but smile at the domesticated version of my brother that I caught glimpses of more and more often. With father gone, Cameron had largely dropped the icy demeanour with which he'd protected himself since childhood. Pride filled my chest at how he'd opened up at the hands of Maeve. The family syndicate was flourishing with the two of them at the helm, all while being sickeningly in love. I finally had the sister I'd always wanted.

I washed the lettuce before picking up a knife and chopping the veggies to add to it. 'So what are you making?'

'Fettuccine...' Cameron read the title from his phone. 'Fettuccine with ricotta, roasted peppers and langoustines.'

'How very fancy. I never thought I'd see the day that you'd be in a pinny in the kitchen. Next thing, she'll have you barefoot and with a baby on your hip.'

'Shut up.' Cameron laughed, and it sent a bloom of joy into me. It reminded me of our early childhood, when we were still innocent to the crime world we grew up in. It was so good to see him happy. When was the last time Tommy had made me laugh? 'You know we don't want any babies. Just enjoy putting in the practice hours.'

I screwed up my nose before rolling my eyes. 'Gross.'

'So no Tommy?' Cameron said, sounding unsurprised.

'Part of the job, unfortunately. You know he's busy.'

'Busy trying to find the bottom of every whisky bottle in Scotland.'

'Cam.' I chopped the tomatoes and avoided his eyes.

'I just want you to be happy. I miss you.'

'You seem to have it pretty sorted here, with Maeve and the kids, and Mum.'

'There is always room for you. None of them could ever replace you. It was always me and you.' Cam leaned over and slipped an arm around my shoulder, pulling me into an awkward side hug. It took everything in me to fight back the sting of tears. Crying would only make things worse, but man, did I need the comfort his arms always brought.

'Stop being sappy,' I said, shrugging him off and turning to scrape the scraps of the veggies into the food waste bin.

'Just... promise me you'll let me know if you need anything.'

'Yeah, always.'

After helping set the table, I sat chatting with Elias and Grace, catching up on what they were doing at school, and their plans for what they'd do afterward. When I caught sight of my brother grasping Maeve by the waist and burying his face in her hair while she giggled, a pang of jealousy snatched at my stomach. I wanted just a slice of their happiness. Was there anyway I could find it with Tommy? Would his near miss with the media and his cheating make him focus on us more?

Cameron had just placed the food on the table as we took our seats when the elevator chimed. And out walked the last person I expected at lunch. Mac McGowan. While Maeve's brother showing up was no different than me being there, he was hardly one for family get togethers.

I groaned inwardly and helped myself to some salad as he nodded at Cameron and greeted Maeve.

'Hope you don't mind a last-minute addition,' he said as he draped his coat over the back of the sofa and pulled out the chair beside me.

'Mac!' Both Elias and Grace said in unison, with a hefty injection of excitement in their voices.

He was such a surly guy, that it always astounded me they loved him so much.

'Can you stay and game after?' Elias pleaded.

'I've got a drawing I wanted to show you,' Grace said.

'You got it,' Mac said before fixing me with a brief look.

Unease settled over me as he nodded at me before turning back to the table and reaching out to pile pasta onto his plate.

'This looks cracking,' he said before tucking in without waiting.

'I've been teaching Cameron.' Grace looked thrilled with herself. 'I found the recipe on Tiktok.'

'Good work. Who knew the stone man could whip it up? Might have to come round more often.'

'Hilarious,' Cameron said, looking every bit thrilled at the compliment.

Everyone ate as I picked at my salad. Tommy's jabs about my weight still playing on my mind. I'd been trying to avoid carbs. It's the way the celebs do it, so I could do it, too. The smell was driving me insane, and I looked at Mac tucking in with a hint of green envy.

'Not hungry?' Maeve asked as I speared a tomato.

'Oh, I had a little something earlier, sorry.'

I felt my cheeks heat as everyone looked at my mostly empty plate. Mac reached out to the bowl of pasta and filled the spoon with a heaving scoop of it before plopping it onto my plate.

'What are you doing?' I said, narrowly missing being hit by an errant piece of pasta

'You need to try it. It's good.'

I stared at my brother-in-law, the man who'd barely spoken to me in years. The man who avoided me at all costs. He ignored me and went back to eating while I looked around the table with a *what the hell*? expression.

CHAPTER TWELVE

It took everything in my power to continue to not stare at Katie as I joined them. I was so used to hiding in the shadows and drinking her in that trying to act like a normal human being around her was almost impossible.

I shouldn't have come. I didn't usually, but I couldn't stay away after knowing Katie would be at lunch. After being surrounded by her taste, her smell, her body, I had to see her. The coconut scent of her body wash filled my nostrils and made me think about her in the shower, about spreading cum on her window while she screamed.

Fuck, I had to change that thought before I ended up with a boner beneath the dinner table.

Katie pushed a tomato around her plate slowly, while side-eyeing my forkfuls of pasta. Why was she avoiding it?

Tommy.

It had to be.

She'd been skinnier than I'd ever seen her the previous night. I could only assume she was trying to avoid eating to appease her dipshit abusive cockwomble of a boyfriend.

Well, fuck that with a load of nettles.

I piled some pasta on her plate as she watched, her pretty pink lips open. Temptation made me want to thrust my fingers back between them to have her suck them down again.

'What are you doing?' she asked me.

'You need to try it. It's good.'

Then I went back to eating as she looked flabbergasted that I'd do such a thing. But she needed to eat, and if she wouldn't, she'd force me to make

her. Fuck, I'd put her on a leash and feed her from my fingers like a pet if I had to. She was too skinny, and pale too, and I needed my girl to be healthy.

In the end, she twirled a piece of pasta onto her fork and placed it delicately in her mouth, her eyes closing as she practically moaned. The pasta was good, but not that good. What else had she been denying herself on Tommy's behalf?

I noticed her picking at her wrist in between bites, a red scab looking inflamed. As far as I could tell, she didn't even notice doing it, like she was absentmindedly picking at it as a coping mechanism. The urge to reach out and still her hand almost overtook me, but putting the pasta on her plate was out of character enough.

'No Tommy today?' I asked, hoping it meant she had kicked him to the curb after a night of cumming on my face.

'Work stuff,' she shrugged, her cheeks pinking.

Conversation went from topic to topic as we ate, before I helped clear the table. Elias and Grace went to fire up their consoles, as I offered to help clean up. When I found myself alone in the kitchen with Katie, I couldn't help but provoke her about Tommy.

'What's the point of a boyfriend if he goes nowhere with you?' I said as I took the dishes she rinsed and placed them in the dishwasher.

'What's it to you?' Her words were sharp, defensive.

'Nothing, just seems that he never does anything for you.'

'He does.'

'Why do you care? Why are you even here? You tolerate my brother, and you hate me.'

I put a bowl down as she rounded on me with her wet hands and narrowed eyes.

'I don't hate you.'

'Then why are you always avoiding me and sitting around with a face like a dog that's chewed on a bee?'

'Maybe,' I said, stepping closer to her as she bumped back against the counter, 'It's not hate. I just think you give Tommy too much credit. He's probably out fucking some groupie right now while you are pining over him.'

She swallowed hard as I boxed her in between the counter and my body, gazing down at her eyes as I'd wanted to the night before. Wanting to

whisper in her ear that I knew exactly what she'd been up to, that I knew exactly what she needed. But I couldn't. Not without outing myself.

'And what? You think you'd be any better?'

'I bet I could make you fucking scream, Katie. When was the last time he did that? Does he make you squeal into your pillow every night?'

Before I could continue, she slapped me hard across the cheek, the burn setting me alight.

She swallowed hard, and I broke, reaching up and wrapping a hand around her throat as she leaned back against the cabinet behind her. Her breath turned ragged as my cheek stung. 'He doesn't, does he?'

'There's more to relationships than that.' Her voice wavered, sending vibrations through my hand. I pressed a thumb up against her jawline, tipping her head up toward me.

'Does he leave you feeling weak at the knees, Katie? Because you look in the need of a good fuck to me.'

Her hand slipped around my wrist as she pushed me away. 'You'd be the last person I'd ever consider.'

I chuckled to myself as she left me to finish cleaning up. It had been risky, but feeling her pulse quicken against my fingers had been worth it. Seeing those big eyes dilate at the pressure on her throat had made the whole lunch worthwhile.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

What the hell was happening to my life?

Even after an afternoon trying to distract myself by shopping with Macey and Erica, I was still fuming from lunch by the time I got home a few hours later.

First Tommy spirals and starts acting even more out of sorts, then I'm stalked to my home, and then Mac starts saying I look like I need to get laid.

Well, fuck him. I practically did get laid.

Kind of.

Thinking back to my night with the masked man lit me up and I cursed Mac for bringing him back into my mind.

No.

It was all wrong.

If he came back I'd do the right thing and call the police. Or Cameron. They didn't need to know I'd let him in once. It would be his word against mine.

Who did Mac even think he was to talk to me about Tommy like that? He barely knew either of us. Hell, he barely ever even spoke to me. Clearly, he was just jealous. Envious of Tommy and his celebrity status. That had to be it.

When I pulled up to my house, I sat in the car and scanned the nearby tree line. Unease crept up my spine even though daylight still spilled among the trees. It was only ten paces to my front door and I shifted my keys in my hand, locating the one to open it. My breath shook as I opened my car door

before running to the house, unlocking it and slamming the door behind me. I latched it up tight before breathing a sigh of relief.

Throwing my handbag on the counter, I kicked off my shoes and put my jacket away. It was only then that I noticed a little box on my counter. My heartbeat felt like it shook my whole chest cavity as I gaped at the box, which definitely hadn't been there before I left.

Going from window to door, I checked them all. Every one was locked up tight.

A prickle tingled up my spine as I felt like I was going to puke.

Not even the locks could keep him out.

The box was red velvet, long and thin, and there was a notecard beneath it. The writing was in a fine script which said one word. *Sweetness*.

Goosebumps arose as I remembered that word on the masked man's lips. *It's time to sit on my face, Sweetness*.

The card trembled in my fingers as I turned it over. On the reverse side it said, *Stop picking at your wrist*, *toy with this instead*. *I'll be watching*. *Don't make me come in there and tie those hands up again*.

Running a finger over the painful, raised scab, I looked at the windows. Was he watching?

The box's exterior was exquisitely soft as I ran a finger over it before picking it up and opening it. It was a bracelet made up of small black beads, with a golden clasp. It said David Yurman along the inside of the box's lid. The tiny spherical gemstones were cool beneath my touch as I picked up the bracelet. It looked expensive. Growing up as the daughter of a crime boss who was drowning in ill gotten money, I had plenty of jewellery. I looked it up online, finding the exact bracelet easily on the brand's site and saw the thousand pound price tag.

Good god.

That was a lot for a stalker to spend on me. Where did he even get that kind of money? Unless he was a syndicate too. Could he be one of my brother's men? Or one of Dad's enemies?

I held the bracelet out like it might well explode in my face. What I wanted was to throw it in the bin. Or to toss it out of the window. Leave it for him to find and let him know he can't boss me around. Neither option was the one I chose. I looped the smooth onyx stones around my injured wrist and closed the clasp.

It fit perfectly, the gentle weight of it reassuring against my skin.

When I went to bed that night, I stuffed chairs under my door handles to keep anyone out. Whether Tommy, or the masked man, I didn't want either of them in my home. I needed space, and sleep without the worry of my home being invaded.

As I lay in bed, I twirled one of the beads around the metal beneath it, the sensation calming me.

Tommy had been uncharacteristically sweet since picking me up to attend his band mate Evan's birthday party.

The limousine rolled to a stop outside of Evan's gaudy mansion, from the outlandish statues that lined the stairs to the inlaid golden features that decorated just about everything possible. The band was doing well, but there was no way Evan wasn't up to his eyeballs in debt with the amount he must have shelled out for the vast home on the outskirts of Glasgow. It probably had a laundry list of celebrity former owners.

It was better than Tommy primarily drinking away anything he earned. Living hotel to hotel between crashing at my place. He did own a modest home, but he'd never taken me there. I wasn't convinced he had even been in it since I'd met him.

My door opened as the driver made to let me out, but before I could shimmy out, Tommy pulled me back toward him and kissed me. Really kissed me. In the way that made my insides melt. Or had.

As his tongue slid over my lips, invading my mouth, a panic filled my chest. His body pinned me and sent flashbacks of being pinned to the bed beneath bloody hands.

'I love you so much baby,' he whispered against my lips as I scrunched my eyes closed, his whisky tainted breath turning my stomach. 'You are all I need.'

I submitted to the onslaught of his kiss as he held me tight to him, my hand went to my other wrist, where the spot I tended to pick was. Instead of the rough patch of broken skin, my fingers found the smooth bracelet and I turned the beads as I zoned out beneath Tommy's tongue.

'If you ever left me,' he said under his breath between kisses, 'I'd have to find you. There's no-one else for me.'

'Come on, stop joking around and let's go in before you miss Evan's party.' I needed to get out of the stifling car.

Tommy met my eyes when he pulled away from me slightly, his hand gripping my arm so hard it made me yelp. 'I'm not joking. I'll never let you go. You're end game for me.'

I swallowed hard as that same, unhinged glaze crossed over his face. 'I know.'

'Good. Let's go get a drink.'

He slid toward the door before yanking me out behind him.

As we walked hand in hand toward the entrance, a familiar tingle travelled up my back as I searched amongst the gardens. I couldn't see my masked stranger anywhere. Was I imagining him?

Or worse, was I wishing for him?

The party was busy and exhausting. The mansion was packed with everyone from music industry professionals, to fans to family members. Tommy grew steadily more drunk as the hours passed, leaving me to try to put out all the fires he left behind after running his mouth. Sometimes I wondered how his bandmates even put up with him. He was a liability to them all. It seems his pretty voice and bad boy vibes forgave a lot more in the rock scene than they would anywhere else.

Hell, they'd suckered me in.

Tommy finally passed out on a couch in the hall way shortly before midnight, leaving me to catch my breath at last. His chest rose steadily as I watched him sleeping. Had he meant what he said? Would he really never let me go? If I broke up with him, he could have another girlfriend in a matter of minutes. He'd never let on that he was overly concerned with our relationship, what had changed?

The artwork on the walls distracted me as I made my way away from the din of the party in search of somewhere quiet to escape to for a few moments. Running a finger over one of the large, gilt picture frames, I thought I saw something move in the reflective glass that covered the picture. I turned, but there was no-one else in the long corridor but myself. My pulse quickened as I walked quicker, trying locked door after locked door until at last, one opened upon my insistent tugging on the handle.

Shoving the door, I took a last look down the corridor, but saw nothing. The room held a powder room, with a toilet beyond. The first door didn't have a lock, but the inner room with the toilet did. I shut myself in and slid the bolt behind me, catching my breath as I leaned back against the old wooden door. Heat spiked in my veins as adrenaline leaked through me, the

thought of being followed by the masked man with the tongue that drove me wild as thrilling as it was terrifying. Dicing with danger was leaving me feeling reckless, but excited. Alive. Like I wasn't just arm candy for my rock star boyfriend, or my crime boss brother's little sister.

Him watching me made me feel real. Significant.

I waited a few minutes before giving in and having a wee, while ordering myself an Uber home. It would take twenty minutes to arrive, but I'd rather that than end up having to take Tommy home to my house drunk. Maeve had asked me to attend the wake after her father's funeral the next day, and I wanted to be there for her. Tommy could crash at Evan's.

After flushing the toilet, I stepped out into the outer chamber of the room and made my way to the sink, washing my hands. When I looked up, I saw it. A wet heart smeared into the mirror. I jumped back from the running water and looked around the room. It was empty. But, he'd been there. He had to have been. I pulled the door to the corridor open, but it remained as empty as it had been prior.

I closed the door and went back to the sink, drying my shaking hands as I picked up my bag. I needed to get back to the party, to the safety of people.

The heart drew me to it in the mirror, my face staring back at me through the wet streaks of the heart. What was it? Saliva?

Heat flooded me as the reminder of where his saliva had been last when he was lost between my thighs, when he'd driven me wild with his dirty words. Fuck, I'd wanted more. I'd wanted to beg him to fuck me right there next to Tommy, to fill me up until I couldn't even think straight anymore. Until there was nothing in my mind but pure pleasure.

I pressed a palm against the heart and leaned my head against the mirror, my face right next to whatever he'd left there for me. Before I'd thought better of it, I pulled my dress up over my hips and slid a hand into my knickers, finding that part of me that I'd ignored since inviting the masked man into my room.

A whimper escaped my lips as I pressed my fingers against myself, grinding against them with need. My breath fogged the mirror as I fingered myself roughly, imagining it was the masked man. He'd press me against the mirror and call me a little slut for touching myself while thinking of him. I bit my lip to stifle a moan as I rocked my hips, needing more than my hand could provide.

My thighs crashed against the counter as I writhed, giving into the lust that overrode my senses, closing my eyes as I slid my other hand through his spit. I pushed the spit covered fingers inside myself in a moment of madness, crying out at the memories of his tongue. My face smeared against the mirror as my thighs trembled, the pressure between my thighs increasing with every thrust of my spit coated fingers.

It was dirty. Filthy. And I was so incredibly turned on that I didn't care.

I opened my eyes briefly, my face still pressed against the wet mirror. I screamed when I saw his masked face in the reflection, dropping my hands and trying to cover myself.

'Keep going, Katie,' he said, his deep voice dripping with lust. 'Fuck yourself for me.'

'What are you doing here?' I gasped, my stomach in my mouth as I stumbled backward.

'Watching you touch yourself with my spit like a dirty little whore. Now bend back over the sink and finish the show.'

I glanced at my bag, knowing my phone was inside. If I could grab it and make it to the toilet, I could lock myself in and call someone.

He followed my gaze and tipped his concealed face. 'Do you want me to leave Katie? Or do you want to show me what a good slut you can be for me?'

'I'm not a slut,' I said softly.

'It's not a bad thing. You will absolutely be a slut for me. I'll make you beg to be treated like one. And you'll be perfect.'

'What if I don't want to?'

'You do want to Katie. I see you. I see that you enjoy this. But you need a man who can show you that you can be worthy and magnificent even while you are on your knees, crawling and begging to be filled with cock. That you can be treasured outside of the bedroom while you are spat on and degraded in it.'

I didn't want that. I wanted to be loved. But my pussy said otherwise, the traitorous bitch wetting afresh at his deviant words. The thought of dropping to my knees and crawling to him gave me a heady rush.

'Now stop your arguing and bend over the counter like a good girl. Get your fingers back into that wet cunt before I find something else to fill it.'

Taking a steadying breath, I did as he told me. My cheeks flushed pink in the reflection as he stood behind me, far enough away that I could see his body from the knees up as I stared at the mirror. He groaned when I pulled up my dress and lowered my underwear, exposing myself to him. The noise he made making my knees weaken. I closed my eyes as I threaded a hand through my legs, sinking my fingers into myself to the knuckles.

'Eyes on me, Katie.' I snapped them to him in the mirror, gasping as he undid his trousers, taking out a thick dick topped with glinting metal. My fingers stilled as I watched him stroke his shaft, his gloved hand slipping over the glistening tip. It was mesmerising watching him, and that same fearful thrill shot into me. Within a few steps he could pin me to the counter and be inside me. Could I trust him to hold back? Did I even want him to.

The creepy skull face stared at me as I began to thrust my fingers slowly in and out of myself. It took barely a minute before I was back to the whimpering, needy mess I had been before I'd spotted him. I mirrored the speed of his hand on his dick as he stroked, imagining it was his stretching me open. Claiming me. My legs quivered around my hand as I quickened the pace, at the edge and knowing it wouldn't be long before I couldn't hold off any longer.

'Come for me sweetness. Give in to it. I want to watch your cunt quiver as I stroke my cock.'

Biting my lip to stifle my cry, I rode my hand until my orgasm hit, making me collapse against the counter as I kept my eyes on him the entire time. He grunted when I moaned, and fisted his dick, stroking faster.

Then he closed the space between us as I tensed.

'Are you going to fuck me?'

'Not until you've begged for it sweetness. You haven't earned it yet.' His voice was strained, sounding like every word was pained as he continued to stroke himself behind me. His fist touched my wetness with every stroke, letting me know the tip of his cock was only an inch or so from me.

I stood up from my position over the counter and his hand shot around me, grabbing me by the throat and pinning me back against him.

'Such a dirty little girl touching yourself with my spit on your fingers. So desperate to have some of me inside of you, aren't you?'

Heat filled my face as his gloved hand tipped my jaw toward his masked face.

'Yes, Sir,' I admitted as he chuckled.

'Oh Sweetness, you are going to do much worse and thank me so sweetly every time.'

He groaned as he pressed the tip of his cock against my hip, thrusting into his fist as I watched his straining cock with wide eyes. It was big and veined and topped with silver. I'd never sucked a pierced cock and my mouth practically watered as I stared.

'Hungry?' he grunted into the side of my face.

'Yes, Sir.'

'Open your mouth and stick out your tongue.' He growled when I did as he asked. His fist kept up his stroking as he watched me in the mirror, looking every bit desperate as drool gathered and dripped off of my tongue and onto my chest as I waited there.

'There's a good girl.' His words cut off as he came hard, ropes of white cum filling his hand and dripping down my hip and thigh. He used his other hand to tip my head up slightly while he took his cum drenched fingers and wiped them over my tongue.

Revulsion mixed with desire as I accepted his offering, his gloved fingers pushing his cum into my mouth and down into my throat. When I gagged he held my throat more firmly and continued to feed me his cum.

'You'll take every fucking drop,' he said, gathering up the streaks on my hip and thrusting his fingers roughly into my mouth. 'Lick them clean.'

Disgust weaved through me as I licked and sucked at his sticky gloved fingers, needing him to be pleased with me. It was all wrong, but I wanted, more than anything in that moment, for him to be satisfied.

I gagged as I sucked down the last salty remnants.

'You did so well,' he said into my ear as he ran his other hand over my hair. 'You swallowed every drop like such a good little cum slut. You're going to crave my cum by the time I'm finished with you. You'll beg for it. You'll lick it from the floor just to get a taste.'

My body convulsed as he slipped a hand between my thighs and stroked my swollen pussy.

'You deserve another orgasm my sweet girl, but your phone is ringing and I like you like this, needing more. Wanting another visit.'

I hadn't even heard my phone in my needy state.

'Answer it,' he said.

The Uber driver's voice came over the line. 'Hello, this is Andrew, I'm here to pick you up. I tried messaging but didn't hear back. Do you still need the ride?'

Right as I went to speak, the masked man slid two fingers deep inside me while his palm grazed against my clit. I moaned out loud before clearing my throat.

'Sorry... I... uh. Yes. I'm coming. I mean... I'll be down in a minute. Sorry.'

I hung up as he thrust his fingers lazily.

'That was mean,' I said, trying to focus through the haze his fingers were sending me into.

'Not as mean as this will be.' He stepped back and left my wetness empty as he zipped up his trousers. 'I don't want you touching yourself until I see you next.'

Squeezing my thighs together, I narrowed my eyes. 'You can't tell me not to touch myself.'

'I can. I just did.' The door opened as he pulled the handle before looking back at me with his masked face. 'And good girl for wearing my gift.'

'Wait,' I said as he left the room. 'How did you get into my house?'

But he was gone, and by the time I'd righted my underwear and dress and tried to follow him, he was nowhere to be seen.

With a sigh, a salty mouth and sodden thighs, I made for my Uber.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The mansion was already abuzz with people as my siblings and I walked through the door. My black coat dripped puddles onto the marble floor of the main entry hall as I took it off and handed it over to a member of staff.

It had rained incessantly at Dad's funeral, and I could imagine it tickling him no end to see us all stood around his grave soaked through. At last, we laid him to rest beside Mum. I just had to make it through the wake. We'd kept the funeral service small, just family and Dad's closest associates, but the wake was a much bigger affair. The ground floor of our family mansion was teeming with people, from politicians to criminals. Not that there was a lot of difference there. Not for the politicians my dad knew well at any rate.

I checked in with my security staff, ensuring that everyone had been patted down for weapons and that the staff were monitoring for any upheaval. After Harold and my father's deaths, tempers had simmered down amongst Scotland's criminal elite, but rarely did time pass without someone deciding to try to help themselves to too much of the syndicate pie.

Satisfied with the arrangements, I made my way through the crowds, accepting condolences with a nod as I went.

I hated every minute.

The last thing I wanted was to have to grin and bear it through a sea of well-wishers, half of whom would gladly have shot my father themselves had Harold not done it.

I found my siblings in the library, a zone we'd had kept free in case we needed an escape.

It seemed bizarre to have us all in one room again. Only two years previously, we'd all lived under Dad's roof and by his rules. Now Esther had moved to Spain with Alec, and she sat next to him on a red leather sofa reading a book softly to their daughter. Maeve rested against Cameron's side, his arm looped around her shoulders protectively while Elias and Grace were nose deep in their phones. Ewen and Logan gave us glasses and poured some fifty-year-old Glengoyne whisky from Dad's private collection for us.

Even Gladys, Alec's elderly neighbour who had absconded to Spain with them, was there, happily taking a glass and raising it to the sky.

'To Dad,' Logan said, his voice thick with emotion. 'He'll be reunited with Mum at last.'

'If he's not starting a new war with Harold in hell,' Ewen said. Everyone held their breaths for a moment before laughter burst from them.

'I think he'd be bored without someone to fight with,' I added, taking a deep sip of the rich amber liquid and closing my eyes as the delectable burn scorched my throat. It was good stuff.

'Still not coming home yet?' Maeve asked Esther, who smoothed her daughter's hair while her little eyes drooped.

'Afraid not. We just love it there.'

'Jock and Eva not fed up with you yet?' I jibed, leaning back in a wingback chair as Logan topped up my drink.

Gladys let out a hearty chuckle. 'Oh, they'll never get fed up with them, they spoil the lot of them. Plus, Scotland's not got a patch on the weather out there. Good for old bones.'

'You should all come visit. There's room in the inn for you all.' Alec slipped an arm around Esther as she tipped her face up to him, smiling. It stung. I wanted Katie to look at me like that, as though I was the centre of her universe. Instead, I was a masked assailant, slinking in through open windows or opening doors with stolen keys. She didn't even know it was me. It was hot to get her off, to feel her pant and sweat in my arms or on my face, but I wanted - no needed - more.

A raucous laugh brought me out of my reverie as Tommy stumbled into the room, with Katie trailing behind him.

'God, you all look fucking miserable,' he said, swiping Dad's whisky and drinking it straight from the bottle. My fingers tensed against my glass, the tips whitening.

'Katie, Tommy, nice to see you.' Logan took the bottle from Tommy and pushed a glass into his hand, topping it up before placing the whisky bottle out of reach. 'I don't think we were expecting you.'

'Sorry,' Katie said, her voice lacking the warmth I so sorely missed hearing. Too timid. Too broken. 'I had said I'd pop by to Maeve and Cameron, and Tommy wanted to tag along.'

'Sick mansion,' Tommy said. 'Who get's it now that your dad's pegged it?'

'Tommy!' Katie gasped, her cheeks flushing red.

I watched from my chair as Cameron's jaw twitched and Maeve placed a hand on his thigh to stay his reaction. He was clearly as pleased that she was with Tommy as I was. Could I sow intervention there? Perhaps I would need to up my antics with her to the next level, show her what she's missing out on by staying with a man who doesn't give two fucks about her.

'I do,' Logan said, his words stiff as he sat down heavily.

'We're just going to go for a little walk around,' Katie said, practically pulling Tommy from the room as she averted her eyes in embarrassment. Tommy pulled roughly back from her arm as they left the library. My body tensed, ready to pounce into action when he lifted a hand. But he pulled her roughly to him and kissed her. A furious bubbling envy filled me to bursting, leaving me feeling sick to my stomach.

Mine.

I shook off the possessive voice in my head that claimed her. She wasn't mine. She would never be mine. But I had to make sure she wasn't his either.

The atmosphere in the room had grown heavier after their departure until Logan's voice cracked through the silence.

'I'm getting married.'

'What?' Came at least four voices, including mine.

'I'm engaged. Not officially. I'll make that happen publicly soon.'

Maeve sprung to her feet as she rounded on her eldest brother. 'You don't even have a girlfriend. How can you be getting married?'

'It's a mutually beneficial arrangement.'

'Who the fuck to?' I asked.

'Nicole Veletti.'

'You are getting embroiled with the Velettis? Are you insane?' Ewen topped his whisky up to the top of his glass and downed it.

'They have a stronghold in Europe. It will be an excellent opportunity for us,' Logan answered.

Esther spoke up, her voice still tender as she held her daughter. 'Have you learned nothing, Logan? Don't waste your life on an opportunity. You deserve love. Deserve to have someone who is with you because they wouldn't want to be anywhere else.'

Logan stood up and ran a hand through his hair. 'Listen, I am in charge of furthering our family and our syndicate. I need connections, and I need heirs. It's not the same for me as it is for you guys. My decision isn't up for debate. I was just informing you before things go official. Nicole is an accomplished woman. She's beautiful, and she understands this lifestyle. She will make a perfect mafia wife who understands the responsibilities of the role. And I expect you all to get on board real fast.'

People had mostly drifted home a few hours later once they had consumed the food, and we'd all exhausted stories of my father's life. The staff worked to clean up behind the guests as I made my way through my home, trying to figure out what would change next. If Logan married, would Ewen and I move out? It wasn't odd us brothers living together in the spacious mansion, but if Logan was married would they want their space? Hell, would she even live here if it was only for business' sake?

As I walked through the snug off of one of the kitchens, I saw movement outside of the window.

It was my Katie.

With him.

My fingers went to the knife in my pocket as I watched them argue. It would be so easy to take him out. To just end him before he could cause her any more anguish. I itched to see him bleed out. I'd never been particularly blood thirsty, despite our line of business having put me in the killing seat plenty of times before. It had always been on a needs-must basis. Kill or be killed. But coils of pleasure unfurled in me at the thought of permanently removing Tommy from the face of the earth. Killing a celebrity wasn't as simple as some drug runner, though. The police stayed out of our business, but murdering someone who graces the front of the newspaper regularly was risky. They would hunt for the killer. Or for him if they couldn't find a

body. And then the police would be all up in my, and Katie's, business. Her masked stalker would be pretty high up there on the suspect list.

More than anything, she'd feel guilty. And she didn't need that. She needed to walk away with her head held high.

I saw Tommy push Katie against the wall and my hand tightened around the knife in my pocket. When he used his other hand to unbuckle his belt, I hit the floor running. I might not kill him, but I could save her from another assault.

Taking a steadying breath to calm myself, I hauled open the outer door closest to them. Tommy startled and stepped back as I walked out into the space they were in.

With as little interest in my voice as possible, I said, 'You guys should know there is CCTV out here.'

'Who cares?' Tommy said.

'I mean, if you guys want to make me a little home video for me to watch later, who am I to complain?'

'Fuck off.' Tommy fastened his trousers as he stumbled backward.

'This is my house. How about you fuck off?' It was immature, but it was significantly less than the mouthful of hate I wanted to hurl at him.

'Gladly, come on Katie.'

She looked at Tommy's outstretched hand and then up at me with the tiniest glance. 'I said I'd hang with Maeve and Cameron after the wake.'

'Really? You're going to ditch me?'

'I'm not ditching you. I told you I'd be staying for a bit.'

Tommy's eyes narrowed as he looked from me to Katie. 'Fine, whatever. I'll go out with the guys. Don't wait up.'

When he walked off, I saw Katie's shoulders slump in relief.

'Why are you with him?' I asked as I leant back against the stone wall.

'Why do you care? You're so rude to him.'

I looked at her, only to see her eyes blazing. Wait, was she angry at me?

'He's an insufferable prick with an ego so big I'm surprised he can fit in through the doors of my house. How can you stand him?'

'He's not always like that.'

I turned to face her as she took a step back, her breath catching in her throat. She'd clearly not forgotten our moment in the kitchen together at Cam's. 'Look at you Katie. You're wasting away.'

I pressed a hand against her ribs and traced it down to her hip as she swallowed hard.

'I'm hardy wasting away. You need to be thinner if you are in front of paparazzi all the time.'

'No, you don't. You need to look after yourself. I can feel your fucking ribs. And I'm pretty sure it's down to that asshole.'

Katie flicked her eyes up to mine, before covering my hand with her own, her thumb glancing over my missing finger tip. Then she removed my hand and slipped out from beneath my grasp.

'It's none of your business. Stay out of my life, Mac.'

'No.'

She fixed me with those big eyes before sliding them away from my face and turning to leave.

Fuck.

Should I leave her alone? Stop involving myself in her life?

Probably.

Would I?

Never.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

I stayed at Macey's for three nights, needing to be away from Tommy and from my stalker's reach. My head swam whenever I thought about what the hell was going on with my life. What was I doing? Maybe Mac was right about Tommy. The relationship was hurting me more than building me up in recent months.

'Stop your sulking and try this on.' Macey threw a dress at me as I sat on her bed. 'We need to figure out what we are wearing for the opening at the weekend.'

'I'm not sure I want to go.'

'Oh stop it, you are going.'

'I can get you in even if I don't come.'

'I'm not going without you, but I'm going, so so are you.'

'Things aren't great with Tommy. I don't know if being in a room with scantily clad women around him will be a fun evening for me.'

Macey sat next to me and wrapped an arm around my waist. 'Do you think you'll marry Tommy? Is he your end game?'

The thought of marrying him was like lead in my stomach. Not a great sign. 'I don't know.'

'Listen Katie, I love you, but Tommy isn't the settling down type. Have fun with him, enjoy the parties and events, and then find yourself a good man when he cheats for the last time you can handle. Take what you can while you can and then leave him as a memory. A crazy part of your life.'

She pulled me to my feet and nodded at the dress. 'But for now, two can play at his game. Go to the opening looking fucking bomb and remind him what he's missing. Make him salivate.'

I still hadn't told her about my stalker. I wanted to, but something stopped me every time I went to bring it up. Like talking about him would make it real. If I brought him up, I'd have to face the reality of what I'd done with him. Hell, I'd let him feed me his cum. It was fucked up.

Worse, I'd enjoyed every moment.

And I needed more.

Wanting him made me hate myself. I had a boyfriend. I shouldn't be wanting anyone, far less a masked man who filled my head with filthy words.

'Okay,' I said, 'I'll try on the dresses and I'll come to the opening on the weekend, but I think I'm going to go home tonight.'

'Why? It's late already. You may as well stay.'

Because I want to go home and see if my stalker will make me come so hard I forget who I am...

'Just needing my bed.'

'Fine, but text me when you get in, okay?'

The light from my car headlights flashed over the aged exterior of my home as I pulled up the long, tree-lined driveway. Relief washed through me as the empty driveway came into view. No Tommy. I sat in the car and texted Macey, letting her know I was home safely, while peering out at the dark-soaked woods that surrounded my home. When I purchased the house, the woods had felt like protection, wrapping me up in the isolation that I craved from my changing family.

Before my father died, my life was consistent, but not good. His death, Cameron's marriage, and my mother's return brought unexpected changes.

But recently the isolation had felt more like it was crushing me than helping me.

Switching the car off, I grabbed my keys and phone and made to open the door when my phone buzzed against my palm.

I'd been expecting Macey's name to pop up, but it hadn't.

The text was from a number I didn't know.

Welcome home, Sweetness.

An icy shiver ran down my back as I glanced around, unable to see the masked man anywhere. My pulse quickened as my palms grew clammy, my thumbs hovering over the keyboard.

I could lock the doors and turn my car on and drive to Cam's. Or back to Macey's. I could get away.

Another text popped onto the screen as I sat staring at it.

Do you want to play a game?

I swallowed hard as a flicker of heat warmed my stomach.

What kind of game?

I'm in the woods. Come find me. When you do, I'll give you a head start. Make it home without me catching you and I'll take off my mask.

And if you catch me?

Then I'm going to feed you my dick, and you'll worship it like a good cock-whore.

The memory of his thick, metal topped cock flashed in my mind from where I'd seen it in the mirror. The idea should have repulsed me. Made me put the car in gear and get the fuck out of there. But it didn't.

I needed to get out of my head and, as disturbing as it was, he was the perfect remedy for that.

Plus, if I could evade him and get into my home, he'd let me see who he was.

I'll play.

Yes, you will... There's a clearing in the middle of the woods. Head straight from your house toward the moon rise, I'll be waiting for you.

My fingers trembled as I stepped out of the safety of my car, pushing my phone and keys into my dress pockets as the evening's cool air wrapped around me.

Going to him was insane.

I'd lost my fucking mind.

But I craved his touch, both the tender and the rough. I needed him to take me out of myself.

I was setting myself up to fail the game before it had even started.

Twigs crunched under my shoes as I made my way into the thicket of trees, feeling more vulnerable with every step. I could feel his eyes on me, but couldn't pinpoint where he was. I slipped my hands around myself as I walked, tucking my chilly hands beneath my arms. Every sound made me jump as the woods came alive around me. A chirp to my left made me jump while a crunch of leaves to my right had my heart in my throat.

I continued on, feeling less sure of my decision with every step.

The crunching of feet made me spin on the spot, my breath stilling as I scanned the woods behind me.

There was nothing there.

By the time I reached the clearing, I was on edge, fear tingling through my veins and increasing with every passing moment.

The clearing was empty.

I turned in a circle as I looked for his masked face among the trees. Nothing.

It was too creepy. I needed to go back to the house.

Turning toward home, I squealed as he stood in the way, his mask looking even more threatening in the dark woods. What the fuck was I thinking?

He held a coil of thin rope in his fist as his head tilted.

Silence thrummed between as I stood rooted to the spot.

What if this was his end game? What if I'd just handed myself on a platter to him when he intended on killing me?

What a fucking idiot.

'Katie.'

'Yes?' I said, my words barely audible.

'Run.'

And I did.

I pivoted and crashed through the woods, heading for what I hoped was home. Loud footsteps sounded behind me, the crunch of them making me sweat as I dodged roots and trees. The hairs lifted on my neck as I tried to find my way home, turning this way and that to lose the masked man pursuing me. Then the footsteps stopped. Which was almost worse.

Panic rose in my chest as I turned, desperately trying to figure out where he was. Where I was.

And then I saw it, the porch light of my house barely visible through the woods.

I took off at speed, careening through the trees and wincing as branches tore at my clothing. The light glowed more brightly as I approached it, and victory filled me as I grinned through my panting breaths.

I'd finally know who he was.

Then he stepped out in front of me as I screamed, running straight into his arms.

'Got you,' he said through the mask, turning me and gripping my arms.

'No,' I moaned, kicking out and wriggling to break free of his hands. I was too close. I wanted to see his face.

Breaking free of his grip, I dodged around him as he cursed. I made it a few paces before he caught me again, wrapping his arms about my waist and picking me up off of my feet. He dragged me back into the woods and wrestled me to the floor as I flailed.

'You're even fucking hotter when you fight me, sweet girl,' he said through a ragged breath as he pinned me beneath his thighs.

'I want to see you.'

'I know. Not today. But you'll get to taste me.'

My mouth went dry as he spoke, realisation covering me in a haze of desire. Because as much as I truly wanted to know who he was, I wanted pleasure more. Wanted his attention and his need for me.

He flipped me over, the mud and leaves pressing into my face as he pulled my hands behind my back and secured them together with the rope. If I hadn't already been wet from the pursuit, the bite of the rope digging into my skin would have flooded me. No-one had ever tied me up before him. It was a heady rush to be so vulnerable.

He leant down above me, his words a hot whisper against my cheek as he spoke, the mask brushing against me with every word.

'I've fucking missed you, Katie. Have you missed me?'

'Yes, Sir,' I said, my head already feeling floaty as I lay pinned beneath him.

'Oh, you're such a fucking good girl. I'm going to make you come so hard you forget your name.'

'Please,' I whimpered, already trying to grind my hips into the dirt beneath us as I anticipated his touch.

He moved off of me and slipped a gloved hand under my dress, his other hand clasping my tied hands into the small of my back. The noise I made when he pulled my panties to the side and pressed his gloved fingers roughly inside me made my cheeks heat. It was pure lust.

'So fucking wet for me. You enjoyed being chased, didn't you?'

'Yes.' I moaned deeply as he thrust his fingers inside me, making me shudder beneath him.

'You're going to be glad I caught you by the time I'm through with you.'

'Are you going to fuck me?'

'You know the answer to that. Are you ready to get on your knees and beg for my dick?'

'No.'

'Then you're going to have to wait for it. You'll get a taste tonight, but I'm only going to fill that sweet little cunt of yours when you need me so badly you'll do anything to get my cock inside you.'

Even as he said it, I wanted him. I wanted him stretching me wide over his pierced cock. To feel him hard and thick and ramming into me. Claiming me. I wanted to beg for it. But there was a wall that held me back from doing so.

'Look at you arching your back to get more of my fingers, my dirty girl.' I arched my hips up all the further at his filthy praise, wanting his words almost as much as I needed his touch.

His fingers slipped out of me and swept over my clit, bringing a ragged moan tumbling from my lips.

The smell of earth surrounded me as I ground my body into the leaf covered dirt, not caring in the slightest as he continued to toy with me, alternating between spreading me over his fingers and bringing me to the edge as he rubbed at me swollen clit.

The gloves added a rough feeling that drove me insane.

'Please, can I come?' I asked through gritted teeth as I practically vibrated beneath him.

'Yes, Sweetness, come for me.'

I gave in fully to his touch, letting the waves sweep over me and pull me under. My cries filled the woods as a body shaking orgasm ripped through me, my pussy gripping down viciously on his fingers.

'That's it, good girl. You take my fingers so well.'

When the orgasm subsided, the reality of the situation set in. I was bound in the dirt and coming on a masked man's fingers. It was dirty. Demeaning. Why did it make me so fucking hot?

He pulled me to my feet and pushed me back against the rough bark of a tree, pinning me beneath his wide chest.

My breath caught as his masked mouth pressed against my neck, his tongue evident beneath the thin material as he licked and bit me through it. I needed more. I needed there to be nothing between us.

'Please take it off.'

'Not yet, you're not ready.'

'I want you to kiss me.'

His fingers trembled against my waist at my admission.

'Please kiss me?' The desperation in my voice made me blush, but I was past the point of caring. 'Unless you don't want to... I know that's not what this is.'

Shame flooded me as I looked down. I was begging my stalker for a kiss.

'I've wanted to kiss you since the moment I first saw your perfect lips. Never feel ashamed of telling me what you need. I want to lose myself in you. I want your lips, your gasps, your pleasure. I want it all. I need it. You're like a fucking drug.'

'Then kiss me again, please?'

My heart thundered when he reached around me, pushing me to my knees before looping the rope affixed to my wrists around the trunk of the tree. I gasped when he pulled the rope tightly around my chest, back around the tree, and then across my throat. It wasn't tight enough to choke me, but it meant I was fixed to the rough bark, unable to move from my place on my knees.

Metal glinted in the moonlight as he slipped a knife out of his pocket, flicking open the blade as my insides turned to jelly.

There was nothing I could do.

'Don't be afraid. I'll never hurt you.' He ran the blade gently across my collarbone as I shook beneath it. The metal was warm where it had sat against his thigh, and fear mixed with desire as he traced it over my goosepimpled skin. 'You're so fucking pretty, Katie. Those eyes, your fuckable

lips, every inch of you is a delight. You deserve to be worshipped. To be pleasured. I'd happily spend my life between your thighs just to hear you gasp.'

The praise in his voice left me feeling warm despite the cold air. He saw me. Not as an extension to his ego like Tommy did, but as someone precious.

I flinched when he slid the knife between my breasts, cutting through the fabric of my dress before grabbing it between his gloved hands and tearing the material in two. He tugged it free of the ropes until the scraps of my dress were in his hands, and I knelt in my underwear.

He used his knife to cut a long strip from the hem of the dress before tossing the rest aside. He slid the knife through the straps of my bra, severing it from my body and throwing it to the side. Tremors of desire filled me as he dragged his blade down over my breasts, pricking my nipples lightly, making me itch for more.

'So very needy. What a delight you are.'

The fabric settled over my eyes as he looped it around my head, fixing it tightly so that it entirely obscured my vision. It only heightened every other sense. The sounds of the woods were even more pressing as I strained to hear what he was doing.

His scent filled my nostrils as he slid an ungloved hand onto my jaw, tipping my face upwards. I opened my mouth, waiting for him as my whole body overrode with tingles. The spice of his aftershave mingled with the earthy smell of the woods and left me craving more of him. All of him. I tipped my face into the warmth of his hand, swallowing hard against the rope that held my throat back against the tree.

'I've wanted you for so long.' His words were a throaty growl as his warm breath tickled over my lips.

'Please don't make me wait. I need you.'

His mouth was like fire as he claimed mine. With a desperate need, I gave way to his lips and tongue as he kissed me hard, desperately, swallowing down my gasps as though he was starving for them.

His hand found my throat, covering the rope as he used his thumb beneath my jaw to control the angle of my head, tipping me so I couldn't hold anything back. My head swam as his tongue slid over my own, tasting and teasing as I craned beneath his touch. I wanted more. I needed everything he had to give. He pressed his body flush to my own as he knelt in front of me, his hard cock pressing firmly into my stomach.

'Do you feel what you do to me?' he said, as he broke the kiss to nip at my jawline with his teeth. 'I'm so fucking hard for you, Katie. Your lips taste even better than I'd dreamt they would.'

Then he was on me again, fuelling me with groans of his own as I surrendered to his mouth. When he broke his kiss again to slide his mouth over my hard nipples, I arched against the tree; the sensations overwhelming. His hot mouth contrasted against the night's cold air, making any part of me he touched burn with an intensity that sent my head to outer space.

I was only vaguely aware of his knife slipping over my hips before he tore away my underpants and his fingers filled me while he focused his tongue on my nipples. My pants were quick and furious as I ground my hips against him, his palm grinding against my clit. Within seconds, I came hard, crying out as I quaked against the tree, his teeth on my breasts and his fingers sunk deep inside me.

Before I could catch my breath, he'd dropped low and fitted his hot mouth over my still pulsating pussy, his tongue sliding between my lips as he drank the last shudders of my orgasm down.

I couldn't move my hips away when the sensations peaked. He licked through the overwhelm, not allowing me to retreat from him.

'It's too much,' I whimpered.

'It's not enough,' he growled against me, nipping me with his teeth as he worked me back to the edge. 'I need you to come against my tongue before I fill your throat with my cum.'

'I can't.'

'You don't have a choice.'

He splayed me wide with his fingers before thrusting them deep inside me as his mouth closed over my clit.

I lost myself.

The world closed in around me to nothing but the onslaught between my thighs. When I came I screamed, filling the air with tortured cries he wrought from me as the rope around my neck creaked with tension. He didn't let up until I was utterly spent, sagging against my bonds.

His mouth found mine, and I tasted myself on his tongue as he kissed life back into me.

'I'll never tire of making you scream. You are glorious, Katie. You deserve to be worshipped every fucking day. I'd give my life for ten minutes between your thighs.'

It was a head rush, his delicious words piercing between heated kisses.

When he stood up, leaving nothing but air surrounding me, I stretched against the ropes, trying to find his warmth.

I blinked as he removed the fabric from my eyes, his mask back in place, along with his gloves. Tears pricked as I realised it meant no more of his heady kisses.

He crouched in front of me as a tear streaked down my cheek.

'Fuck, sweetness, your tears make me fucking hard.' With a gloved finger, he caught the tear and smeared it down over my lips. 'It's time to show me what that hot little mouth can do.'

Salt tainted my tongue as I let it dart out, wetting my lips.

'That's it. Get that mouth ready for my cock.'

He stood in front of me and unbuckled his belt; the sound sending flutters between my thighs. Then he pulled out his cock, and he hadn't been lying when he'd said how hard he was. His cock stood proud against his stomach, darkly engorged and straining. Silver glinted at the tip, and I swallowed hard as I blinked up at his masked face.

'Do you want to show me what you can do?'

'Yes, Sir,' I whispered. It was the truth. I wanted to hear him moan. I wanted to please him. I was *desperate* to please him.

Slipping a hand into my hair and fisting it tightly, he stepped forward, pressing his cock downward with one hand and smearing its tip across my lips.

I was going to make him come so hard, he'd lose his mind like I'd lost mine.

<u>OceanofPDF.com</u>

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The way she looked at my dick like it was the most delicious treat had me almost coming before she'd even taken me into her mouth.

Seeing her there, on her knees, tears tracking down her cheeks, lips swollen from my kisses and dirt pressed into her skin. Fuck, it was too much.

Chasing her had my blood storming through my body. Kissing her had me needing her so fucking badly. I was a goner. All my best intentions to just get her to leave Tommy were gone. I had to make her mine. I had to belong to her. Her heady kisses and beautiful face were all I could think of in my future. She was perfection.

I smeared the tip of my cock against her lips and grinned beneath my mask as her tongue darted out to lick at my piercing.

'That's it. Show me how badly you want my dick in your throat. You want to be a good little cum slut for me, don't you?'

She nodded eagerly, trying to move forward to capture my cock with her hot little mouth. The ropes held her fast.

'Oh, sweetness, I'm going to ride your pretty face. You won't need to move.'

The whimper she gave had my balls tensing.

'Tongue out.'

Katie complied, the pink of her tongue a temptation. I slid my dick along it, biting my lip to stifle the moan that it elicited. A tremble shook my thighs as I held back, wanting nothing more than to sink the entire length down her hot, wet throat. I wanted to feel her choke around it, have her throat squeezing as she bucked to get air.

Slowly, Mac. She needs it slow after being used by Tommy for so long.

Her tongue swirled around the swollen head and I saw stars. Her mouth was better than I'd imagined. I'd fisted my dick and thought about her on her knees a thousand times, but nothing compared to reality.

'Get me nice and wet baby, it'll make it easier when I fuck that sweet mouth.'

I kept it gentle at first, teasing her lips and tongue with my dick as she whimpered and keened. Her eyes glazed as she sank into subspace, leaning into her submission with each passing moment. But it was cold, and I didn't want her to get sick. I'd need to quicken my pace.

'Open wide, Katie. Show me what you are letting me take.'

She obeyed, opening her mouth wide and letting her tongue slip out over her teeth. I slid a gloved thumb inside, smiling as she closed her mouth and sucked it desperately.

'Do you want my cock?' I said, my words deep and throaty.

'Please, Sir.'

'Say it.'

Her throat bobbed against the rope as she swallowed hard. 'I want it. Your cock. I want you.'

Never had I heard something that made my heart race so hard. *She wanted me*. Well, the me that she believed me to be.

My willpower to hold back crumbled, and I slid my dick into her mouth, thrusting it deep as she struggled around it.

'Show me what you've got, Katie. Make me fill your dirty mouth with hot cum. That's what you need, isn't it? To close your eyes and have your holes filled by someone who knows what you need.'

And she fucking did.

Her tongue and mouth worked to suck and lick me whenever I pulled back, and she tipped her head to take me deeper whenever I thrust forward. I entwined my hands behind her head to hold her firm, making sure the rough bark of the tree didn't scrape her as I fucked into her mouth. Pressing deeper as she fought the urge to cough, I sank myself to the balls, holding her firm before pulling out to let her gasp a breath. Then I sank back into her, my eyes rolling as she enveloped me. Hot, wet, and so tight, I wouldn't last.

I pulled out and smiled as a long string of saliva trailed between us, fresh tears wetting her cheeks as she panted.

'Your throat feels so fucking good around my cock, Katie. You're going to make me fill you up too quickly.' I slid my fingers through her tears and over her mouth before stopping to kiss her hard through my mask, my fingers tightening in her hair as she moaned into my mouth. 'I love your tears, mingling with the dirt I've pressed into your face. What a sight you are. All for me.'

Then I stood and tipped her head back up, thrusting into her mouth, using long strokes to raid her throat again and again. Her mascara smudged dark trails under her eyes and down her face, her tits glistening in the moonlight with the dripping saliva that gathered there.

My balls tightened when she slid her tongue beneath my cock as I pistoned my hips, the sensation driving me mad.

I fell over the edge and forced her face firmly against me as I fucked her mouth hard, feeling her cough and splutter around me. It only made the orgasm better. My balls released, spilling my cum deep down her throat, and I saw fucking fireworks behind my eyelids as I held her tight until I was fully empty.

She cried out when I removed myself from her mouth, her lips red as she gasped in the air. She was lost in her head, nothing but a pile of lust and sensation.

'You took me so well, sweetness.' I knelt down next to her and slipped my gloved hand along her cunt, watching my fingers gleam as I held them up to the light. 'It made you so very wet to take my cock, didn't it?'

'Yes... Sir...' she said, her voice high and sweet.

'I'm going to throw you in the dirt and make you come on my fingers once more, then I'm going to take you home and get you cleaned up. Do you want to come again?'

I didn't wait for her response before slipping my knife between the ropes, severing them from the tree, but keeping her wrists knotted together.

'Answer me, Katie.'

'Yes, please make me come again.'

I thrust her forward, pushing her facedown in the dirt as I hauled her ass up into the air so she was on her knees.

'Look at you, face down in the mud with your wet little cunt on show to whoever might walk by. And it only makes you hotter, doesn't it?'

She murmured her assent as I slipped my fingers between her thighs, teasing her once more. I kept one hand gripped in her hair, pushing her face firmly to the floor as I used my other hand to fuck her already swollen pussy. When I landed a slap on the wet flesh, she bucked before letting a low moan out.

'Who does this belong to?'

'You!' she cried as I slid a third finger into her.

'It will, sweetness. And I'm going to spend my days filling it with my tongue, and my fingers and my cock until you forget ever having had someone else in there.'

She arched her back as I thrust my fingers deeper.

'Now cum for me, my little slut. I want you spent.'

Her whole body shook as her eyes rolled back, her whimpers and cries merging into one long moan. As the orgasm subsided, she shook, the intensity of the night mixed with the cold and exhaustion taking over. I tucked my dick back into my pants and fastened my belt before cutting the last of the rope free, gathering up her abandoned, torn dress along with her phone and keys. Last, pulled her up into my arms. Her face pressed into my chest as sobs took over.

'You were perfect. Don't think any less of yourself for enjoying it. You and I are the same but different, made to fill these roles for one another. There is nothing to be ashamed about.'

The press of her hot cheeks warmed my chest as I carried her through the woods and back to her home, letting myself in through the door with her keys and running a bath for her. She shivered as she waited, fresh tears streaking her dirty face. I petted her hair while the room filled with steam, running my fingers through it as I held her against me, keeping the connection there as she floated in her mind.

I'd cursed the leather of my gloves as I washed her down, wanting to feel her skin against mine. I couldn't risk her seeing my missing finger tip or my tattooed knuckles, but I wanted so badly to remove the mask and be able to look into her eyes without the veil between us. I wanted her to know it was me. Mac. Not a nameless stranger. It would ruin everything if she found out. It would tear me apart to keep lying indefinitely.

When her freckled skin was clean of the dirt and debris, her hair freshly washed and towel dried, and I had her snuggled in fresh pyjamas, I brought her a hot toddy and sat on the bed beside her.

'Drink it up, it'll help your throat.'

'How did you know my throat would be sore?' she asked, sipping on the hot concoction of honey, lemon and whisky.

'You don't swallow down a dick like that without feeling it afterward.'

She raised her eyes to my masked face and smirked. 'Oh, and you'd know, would you?'

My heart did a somersault in my chest. It was a glimpse of the pre-Tommy Katie I'd so briefly had the pleasure of knowing, and it took my breath away so see her again. My insane plan was working.

'I'm willing to prove the hypothesis by coming back and filling your throat again and again.'

Katie squirmed on the bed as she lifted her fingers to her lips, clouding my brain with dirty thoughts.

A veil of doubt crossed her face, eradicating the moment of sunshine she'd had.

'I'm a terrible person. I'm cheating on my boyfriend and I don't even know who with.'

'Don't shoulder the blame, give it all to me.'

'You're not the one cheating.'

'I'm the one who followed you and broke into your home, and finger fucked you in a mask. Hardly a bastion of good.'

'Will you ever tell me who you are?' Katie placed her mug on her bedside table before scooting forward until she was face to face with my mask. It took everything to hold firm when she lifted a hand and stroked down the contours of my face. She could snatch the mask off in one jerk, but I swallowed as she ran her fingers over my covered lips.

'I will. One day. When things are less... complicated.'

'When I'm not with Tommy?'

'Perhaps.'

'I think about ending it. A lot. Even before all this.' Her back hit the pillow as she slumped in the bed and ran her hands over her face. 'But he isn't all bad. He made me feel wanted. Envied. Needed.'

'Not everyone who needs you deserves to have you.'

'Not everyone deserves to be needed.' A yawn stole over her mouth as her eyes dipped, and I stood, satisfied that she was okay after the intense experience in the woods. It was getting late, and my brothers would wonder why I wasn't home again.

Warm fingers gripped my glove as I stood, pulling me toward her.

'Please don't go. Will you stay a little? It's been so long since anyone has held me.' Her words were like little darts which pierced me. Fuck, how could I say no?

'For a little. Only because you were so very good tonight.'

She shimmied over on the bed, making a space for me to slide in behind her, her tight pyjama-covered arse resting against my crotch as I wrapped my arms around her.

It was divine.

The smell of her filled my nostrils as I buried my masked face in her neck, holding her tight to me.

'It's pathetic, I guess, asking your stalker to cuddle. But you make me feel safe.' Her words were a soft murmur, bordering on sleep.

'You could never be pathetic, sweetness.'

'I'm almost ready,' she said, barely audible.

'For what?'

'To beg for your cock...'

My pulse quickened at the last little mumble before her breaths settled into a deeper, sleep fuelled rhythm.

I didn't leave her until the morning light started sneaking beneath her curtains, unable to drag myself from her warmth and the heady sensation of her tucked in my arms.

For a few hours, she truly felt like she was all mine.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Macey and Erica flapped about Macey's apartment, putting the final touches to their hair and makeup while I sat on the sofa and stared out at the twinkling lights of Glasgow's nightscape. My masked man had been gone when I woke up, leaving me cold and alone to face what had happened in the light of day.

I'd had gone too far. Not because of the deviant things I'd let him do to me, but because of what it had left me feeling. I was no better than Tommy. He may well have cheated, but I had, too. It may not have started that way, but I was making choices which placed me directly in my stalker's arms. The way he touched me and spoke to me left me on fire, but once the flames were gone, only guilt and shame remained.

I'd asked him to stay and hold me, and if that wasn't the biggest warning sign of my waning sanity, then I didn't know what else could be.

Tommy, the stalker, my issues with my mum. It was all too much. I needed to escape for a bit. Grab the girls and go abroad, run from it all until my head cleared.

'Come on, Katie, Tommy's limo will be here soon and you don't even have shoes on.'

Erica looked knockout, her latex dress sitting high on her thighs, and so totally her. I'd never been to Ewen's sex club, so I had no idea if her clothing would be indicative of others, but if so, I'd barely be able to look anyone in the eye all night.

Macey looked equally hot. The dress she'd opted for was made of stretchy bandage like material that looked super complicated to get in, or out of. She'd secured it with oodles of body tape so that she could still party hard without the strips of fabric revealing anything too private.

I ended up wearing a tight leather corset, frilled skirt, fishnet tights, and high heels.. My reflection had barely been recognisable as the usual me. I kind of loved it.

'Tommy is going to be salivating at the sight of you,' Erica said as she pulled me to my feet and pushed me toward the door. 'Get your shoes on, the doorman just rang up to say he's here.'

My stomach lurched. Did I even want Tommy to be letching over me? It was all I had wanted a few weeks before, to hold his eye, but more and more often, his attention was nothing but negative.

We made it to the car some ten minutes later, and Tommy grinned as the three of us shimmied into his limo.

'Well, well, ladies. What a sight for sore eyes.'

I tried to sit down in between my friends, but Tommy grabbed me by the waist and dragged me down into his lap.

'I've missed you baby, you've been ignoring me,' he said, his words soft, but his eyes hard as he spoke.

'Sorry, I've just been getting the house sorted...' The lie ate at me as I dropped my eyes to my lap.

'I like this.' Tommy swept his hand down over my waist and hip, following the curve of the corset, before grinding himself against my ass. I shifted uncomfortably before sliding myself onto the seat beside him as heat filled my face.

'Thanks, I borrowed it from Macey.'

Tommy eyed my friend before grinning. 'Who knew Macey was a dark horse who'd have something like that at the back of the cupboard?'

'Who says it's at the back?' Macey said with a laugh.

Goose pimples rose along my arms as Tommy's eyes glinted while watching my best friend. I needed to keep him away from her before he tried anything that would ruin our friendship.

The club was one of the most decadent places I'd ever seen.

Low lights and sumptuous furnishing gave way to hidden nooks where you might stumble upon all manner of deviant activity. Performers danced and interacted on podiums and stages throughout the maze of areas. We watched as a naked man cleaned his Mistress's boots with his tongue. We stopped to have a drink at the bar to the sound of a woman's delighted moans as a man licked at her flesh with a thin whip. Everywhere we looked, there was something new to see.

'Fucking hell,' Erica said, pointing to a woman who was on her knees below the bar, sucking on a man's cock. He sat there as if nothing was going on, chatting with the people around him. A pang of desire hit me at the thought of doing that with my masked stranger, followed by a flood of embarrassment.

Tommy pushed my hair over my shoulder and leaned in close, whispering into my ear. 'You're going to get on your knees and suck me in here tonight.'

'No, I'm not. My brother might be here.'

'He might enjoy it.'

I spun around, my mouth open as I glared at him. 'That's disgusting.'

He laughed and shrugged. 'Maybe I should just get you tied to one of those leather crosses and let you watch someone show you how to properly suck a cock. I'm sure Erica would get on her knees for me.'

Anger bubbled up in my chest as he spoke, and he grinned. 'Stop it. We are not doing anything with anyone here tonight. We are here to support Ewen, and that's it.'

Tommy held up his hands with a chuckle. 'I'm just playing with you, Katie. Chill out.'

He ordered a bottle of champagne for us, while he sipped on a whisky and watched the goings on around us. The club had a rule about not drinking to excess, but I could already tell he'd preloaded with a few too many before picking us up.

'I'm going to take a look around, see if I can find your brother-in-law and get a membership to this joint,' Tommy said, before pulling me in for a slobbery, whisky laden kiss. 'Behave yourself.'

I shuddered as I wiped my face on the back of my hand.

'That's not a face you should have after your boyfriend kisses you.' Macey said, looping her arm around my shoulders.

'Things have just been weird lately.'

'Having doubts?'

'Yeah, I think I am.'

'Being famous doesn't make him worth sticking around for. You'd have a queue out the door if you were single.'

I smiled at my bestie as she let out a squeal. A man in nothing but some tight leather shorts was crawling past and stopped at her feet.

'Would you like a footrest, Miss?' he asked her, keeping his eyes on the floor.

She laughed and shrugged. 'Why the hell not?'

The man practically trembled when she put her feet up on his back, and I left her and Erica giggling over him as I went searching for Cameron and Maeve.

The club was packed with people, but the way it was laid out made it still feel exclusive. I opened a curtain which held a glass lined corridor. The glass windows looked into play rooms. Some were empty, while others held a series of different rooms where people were engaging in a range of sex acts.

I swallowed hard as I watched a woman with her head between another woman's legs, the one receiving the attention shuddering hard as she came. Bar porn, I'd never seen real people having sex, and it sent tingles rushing through me. Moving down amongst the watchers, I made my way past room after room of deviance before stopping in front of a room seeped in red. Inside, a woman had three men inside her simultaneously, her face blissed out as she swallowed down one man's dick. A wave a pure lust washed over me, and I placed a hand against the glass as I steadied myself. Her eyes rolled back as the two other men angled themselves to stroke deep inside her, one in each hole as their balls rubbed back and forth on one another. I couldn't imagine feeling so full, so attended upon. The man inside her pussy pulled out and dropped his face between her thighs, lapping at her as the other man continued to fuck her ass. A tingle made its way up my spine as she came hard, her fingers threading into the man's hair as she rode his face. I looked around, that familiar feeling of being watched sweeping over me. There was no masked man, though. I turned back to the action before slipping along the corridor to where it was quieter.

A familiar figure was in the room, laying on the bed with a woman on his face.

Tommy.

It was like a hole was punched straight through my chest.

The woman was moaning as she ground her hips, while Tommy's fingers dug into the sides of her ass. I didn't need to see his obscured face to know it was him. I saw red. How many times had I begged him to touch me, to make me come? He had never gone down on me. Not once in almost two years. Yet he was eating the woman like a man fucking starved.

Rage swarmed me.

It wasn't that he wasn't willing to give pleasure. He just wasn't willing to give *me* pleasure.

'He's not worth it.' A male voice said near my ear, making me jump.

I turned to see Mac there and narrowed my eyes. My rage needed a conduit and his grumpy self was the perfect place for it.

'What the fuck would you know about someone being worth it? Hardly seen you holding down a relationship.'

Mac didn't flinch at my words, he just kept staring at me with his stupid, dark lash-lined eyes.

'Look at him, he doesn't give a shit who knows he's got his face between someone else's thighs. Anyone could see. He knows you could see.'

Pain gripped my insides as I looked at Tommy, who was now leaning over the woman, kissing her as he fingered her slowly while she writhed below him.

'What am I supposed to do? Break in there and yell at him?'

'You could get even?'

My breath caught as Mac leaned in behind me, his hot breath on my neck as he pinned be between the window and him.

'What are you doing?' I asked, looking around me as people mingled in the corridor. 'Your family members are here.'

'I couldn't give a flying fuck. They have heads they can turn away.'

He slipped a hand up my skirt as I gasped, his fingers delving below my panties and slipping into my wetness.

'Not here. Not like this,' I moaned, his fingers driving any sense out of my head.

I grabbed him by the hand and threaded through the corridor until we found an alcove, where I threw caution to the wind and pressed him back into it. It was stupid, and rash, and a terrible fucking decision, but I needed to replace my anger with something else. And Mac was tall, dark and brooding and could stand in for my masked man in a pinch.

'If you tell anyone about this, I will lop your balls off.'

Mac grinned. 'Secrets safe with me.'

'And this is a onetime thing. Because I'm mad. And horny. I should never have come to this fucking club.'

'Yes, Ma'am.'

'Don't call me that. Now get on your fucking knees and make sure I don't regret this decision.'

I'd never spoken to anyone the way I spoke to Mac, and it sent a rush through me after all the shit I'd taken from Tommy.

When he dropped to his knees and slid his hands up my thighs, I bit back a moan. With a devious grin up at me, he reached up and ripped my fishnets open.

'Mac, what the hell?' I couldn't go out with my tights ripped to shreds.

'With all due respect, shut up, Katie.'

He hauled my underpants to the side and set his mouth over me, his tongue circling me as I leaned back against the wall and pushed my fingers into his hair.

'Oh, fuck.'

'Use my name,' Mac said with a growl before thrusting his tongue inside me.

'Mac...' I groaned as he picked up a leg and pulled it onto his shoulder, spreading me wide.

Images of Tommy and the woman flashed through my head every time I tried to close my eyes, so I looked down at Mac instead, my pulse quickening as I saw him watching my reactions. When he pushed his fingers into me, curling them toward his mouth, I came hard, riding his face as I held him firm.

'Again,' he growled as the orgasm subsided.

'I can't.' My thighs shook as he gripped me around the waist with his other hand.

'You will. I'm not finished with you.'

He placed his mouth back over me, sucking hard as I writhed, stuck between him and the wall.

'Mac. Fuck.' I pulled hard on his hair as he groaned between my thighs, running a finger over my ass as he ate. 'Oh god... you can't...'

But he did.

He slid a finger past the tight ring of muscles as I saw stars. Between the finger in my ass and the two he still thrust into my pussy, I was lost in a sea of sensation.

'Take your pleasure, Katie,' he said between mouthfuls of my pussy.

And I gave in.

Fuck Tommy.

Fuck the stalker.

Fuck everything and everyone.

Gripping his hair in my fists, I closed my eyes and pistoned my hips against his face. Tendrils of tension built deep inside me, and I lost all sense. There was nothing but his devilish tongue and fingers, and the thrills he was loading into me.

Why shouldn't I be selfish for once?

No-one had to know.

I came panting and crying out as he held me up against the wall, my vision blurring with the intensity of it.

It took minutes before I could speak, heat flushing my cheeks as Mac stood up, wiping his face on his hand. He was covered in me.

'Wow, that was...'

I saw the tenting in his trousers and swallowed hard. 'I need to go. Sorry. But thank you. We can't do this again.'

'Katie,' he said, reaching out and taking my fingers. I righted my underwear as I pulled away, looking around as relief swamped me. There was no-one else there.

'I can't, Mac. Just leave it.'

With my cheeks burning and tears stinging my eyes, I made for the ladies.

I'd cheated not once, but twice. And although I'd seen Tommy with someone else, it didn't leave me feeling any better.

It wasn't just a betrayal to my relationship, but to my family. Maeve was my friend, my sister-in-law, and Mac was her brother.

I needed an escape.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Birds chirped outside my window as the sun rose in the sky. I should have been up hours ago, but the way Katie had looked at me the night before had ground me to a halt. I'd finally had her in my hands, as me, not a masked stranger, and she'd rejected me.

There couldn't be a happy ending for us. I couldn't stay her masked paramour forever, and she didn't want *me*.

My phone vibrated against the bedside table and I launched it on the end of the bed, where it could buzz quietly.

It didn't let up.

With a groan, I sat up and looked at the screen, seeing multiple missed calls from my brothers.

Never good news.

I answered Ewen's call to a torrent of curse words.

'Calm down. What's going on?' His launch was a success. He should be on cloud nine.

'One of my performers is dead.'

'What? How?'

'They found Eloise with her throat cut in the alley behind the club.'

'Fuck. Found by who?'

'The public. The police are all over it.'

Fuck. The last thing we needed sniffing around was police involvement. 'You have CCTV out there, right?'

'It was wiped. Someone who knows what they are doing is involved. Someone's covering it.'

'I'll be there ASAP. Getting dressed now.'

I hung up the phone and threw on some clothes, grabbing my keys and taking the roads into the city at speed until I neared the club. Police tape and vehicles surrounded the club, while journalists and photographers gathered across the street.

Parking up nearby, I ducked under the police tape, letting them know I was part of club security.

Ewen was pacing in the empty nightclub that formed the lower part of the building, his face pale as he met my eyes.

'Where the fuck were you?'

'I was in bed. Fill me in.'

'Eloise was one of the performers booked to start work last night. She's a pornstar, so it's likely she has fans, but we hadn't publicised that she'd be here, and neither had she. She signed out at five in the morning and had an Uber booked. It left when she didn't show. The police are in contact with him, but he seems clear for it.'

'I thought the club closed at three?'

'It does, but some performers hung around and celebrated once we shut down. They were on a high. Fuck, I feel terrible. She was a nice girl. Had almost finished her uni course and took on the job to help clear her debts quicker. I should have done more. Had them escorted out.'

'Listen, Ewen, this isn't your fault. It's the asshole who killed her that's at fault. We'll put in our own drivers to escort performers home if needs be. First, we need to find out who the hell has wiped our footage.'

Scouring the footage didn't turn up any results. It jumped from an empty alleyway at four forty-five, to an image of her body laying against the cobbles with a large gash across her throat at five twenty. It was as if the minutes in between had never existed.

I called down my best hackers and had them look into it. We needed the footage in between.

A police officer sidled up to Ewen and me before looking around and lowering his voice. 'I'm not going to be able to make this disappear. There is too much heat on it. It isn't the first victim either. We've had three in the past few weeks. All killed in the same way, with clothing removed, but no evidence of penetration. It looks sexually motivated, but the attacker isn't following through with it, from what we can tell. Same wiped CCTV in the other cases too.'

Ewen rubbed at his eyes as he sat down hard on a bar stool.

'Listen,' the police officer said, 'You guys have more means to sort this out quickly than we do. If you find anything, let me know. This sick fucker won't stop until we catch him.'

He slid a card containing his personal number onto the bar before nodding and walking off.

'I'm guessing he knows we aren't just nightclub owners, then?' I said.

'Yeah, he's on the retainer.'

I placed a hand on my brother's shoulder, squeezing it as he picked up the card and put it in his pocket. 'We'll catch him and cut him to pieces for killing one of ours.'

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Nerves gripped my stomach as I waited for Tommy at the exclusive wine bar. I couldn't ignore our crumbling, toxic relationship any longer.

I'd left the club after my run in with Mac, and took a taxi back to Macey's, commiserating with her over what I'd seen, but keeping the details of what I'd done to myself. We'd ordered a late night pizza and eaten our weight in cheese while watching reruns of old American sitcoms. By morning, I'd known what I had to do it.

End it.

Once and for all.

The thin plastic straw indented my fingers as I toyed with it, turning it over and over while trying to take steady breaths. Then Tommy walked in and smiled at me, heading straight for me. Vomit threatened to evict my stomach as he neared.

He'd been the one constant since my father's death, even if it hadn't been healthy. I'd needed him. I still needed someone.

'Hey babe,' he said, leaning down to kiss me as I turned, so he caught my cheek rather than my mouth.

'Hey.'

'Where did you go last night? Couldn't find you girls anywhere.'

The fact he hadn't even got in touch to ask was another reason it had to end. 'I went back to Macey's.'

'I went by your house this morning, but you didn't answer.'

'When?' I'd been home by ten a.m.

'At sixish, I think.'

'Why?'

'I was horny. Needed a bit of you.' His grin turned my stomach.

'I thought you would have had enough of the girl who was riding your face last night.'

He had the good sense to at least look bothered by me knowing. 'Ah, baby, it was nothing. Just a fan.'

'Her being a fan doesn't change the fact you were going down on her when you've never done that to me. We've been together almost two years and you've never even made me come.'

'You're not like that, Katie. You aren't one of those whores who's all about getting off. You've always been there to look after me.'

'Needing pleasure doesn't make me a whore. What the fuck, Tommy?'

His jaw tightened as he pulled himself around the booth and pressed me back into the chair.

'Is this what you want, Katie?' he said as he thrust his hand between my thighs, digging his fingers into my underpants.

'No, stop it.'

His other hand pulled me roughly by the hair as he twisted his fingers under my skirt, trying to get access. 'You want to be a whore, Katie? To come on my face like all those fame hungry bitches?'

'Please stop,' I said, tears pricking my eyes. 'I don't want this.'

He shoved me away from him, his eyes darkening as he sneered.

'It's over Tommy. I'm done with this. With you.'

'You can't dump me. I'm a fucking celebrity.'

'I can. I am. It's over.'

Tommy thrummed with rage, and sweat gathered on my palms at the look he gave me. 'It will never be over, Katie. I told you, you are mine. Everything I've done, I've done for you.'

'I don't think you licked another woman's cunt for me, did you?'

My legs trembled as I stood, sliding out of the seat and away from him.

'No-one dumps a rockstar.'

'I do.'

Turning, I walked out and hailed a cab, collapsing into it and taking a deep, shuddering breath. I'd done it. I'd finally ended it. His rage was a worry, but he'd have his bed filled within days, if not hours. He'd soon forget about me.

Relief flooded me as I opened my phone and texted Macey, letting her know it was over.

My finger hovered over the chat that didn't have a name assigned to it, only a small skull icon. I clicked into it before writing out a message.

'I ended it. It's over with Tommy.'

I watched as the speech bubble danced and smiled when my masked man's message appeared on the screen.

'I'll be with you tonight.'

Tendrils of excitement rushed through me at the thought of submitting to him without the attached guilt.

'I'm ready to get on my knees and beg.'

A smile stole over my face at his reply.

'Good girl.'

The dark green underwear set I wore criss-crossed over my stomach, rising and falling with each slow breath as I watched the woods beyond my window for him. Butterflies danced in my stomach. Knowing he was coming made me more nervous than when he'd turned up unbidden.

A scraping behind me made me jump, and I followed the noise into the hallway. His masked face stood at the end of the long, dark corridor.

'Hello, Katie.'

My pulse quickened as his shadowy figure blocked out the light coming from behind him.

'Hi,' I said, swallowing down my nerves.

'Come to me.'

When I stepped forward, he held up a hand and gave a slow shake of his head.

'On your knees.'

My first instinct was to tell him to shove it. I wouldn't crawl like an animal. But I wanted him. Badly. I needed him to take over and make me forget my world.

So I did it.

The unfinished floor was rough against the palms of my hands and scraped against my bare knees as I made my way to him.

'That's it, sweetness. You've got some begging to do.'

My cheeks flushed as I neared him, his body towering over me. There was something deliciously filthy about being on my knees while he stood above me, something that made me wet with barely a word from him.

I reached him as he stepped away, making me pause.

'Come,' he said, leading the way to the sitting room, where he took up residence in one of the ancient winged armchairs.

The rug was softer against my knees as I entered the room behind him, taking my place at his feet.

Silence stretched out between us as he let me sit in my discomfort, looking quite satisfied to just watch me kneel. Something was different about him, but without seeing his face, it was hard to pinpoint.

'Please, Sir. Can you fuck me tonight?' I said, my words making me squirm. I'd never had to ask for sex. Most men were quite happy to pursue it.

'Only if you work for it.'

'What do you want me to do?'

He nudged a boot closer to me. 'I want you to take off your underwear and ride my shoe until you come all over it, and then you'll get down and lick your juices off of it. Once you've done that, you are going to work my cock with your pretty little mouth. If you do a good job, I'll fill your holes until you beg me to stop.'

'And if I don't?'

'Then no cock for you, my little cum slut.'

Did I even want this?

My mind screamed no. It was demeaning. Dirty. Wrong. My body, however, reacted viscerally. His filthy words only made me want to please him all the more, especially when I could see how hard he was through his trousers. He wanted it as badly as I did.

Taking a breath, I moved forward, sliding my underwear over my hips and down to the floor before removing them entirely.

'The bra too.'

I obeyed. Kneeling in front of him naked while he remained clothed brought a wave of vulnerability washing over me. With his mask and his gloves, there was no part of him visible to me at all, while I was completely exposed to him.

I had nothing to hide behind.

His black boot at least looked clean as I moved to place myself over it, dropping low on my knees until the leather pressed against me. The way I slid against it let me know I was already outrageously wet.

'That's it. Show me how badly you want this, Katie. Stop hiding what you are and let me see you.'

Placing a hand on his knee, I rocked my hips, closing my eyes as the sensation rippled through me. His gloved fingers gripped my chin, tilting my head up as he sat forward in the chair.

'Keep them open. No hiding. Accept that you are grinding your cunt on a stranger's boot to get yourself off. Admit that you will do filthy things to get me to pin you down and fuck you the way you need to be fucked. Because you *need* this, don't you?'

'Yes,' I moaned, quickening my hips. He had become an addiction. The masked man who stole in and extracted the fantasies I'd always kept hidden.

My lips parted as I panted while working myself against his boot, grinding my clit hard over the leather repeatedly while he held my jaw, keeping my eyes fixed on him.

'Such a good girl. So desperate for my cock deep inside you. You'd do anything to show me how much you deserve it.'

'Anything.' My words were a whimper as I slid myself against him, tension building between my thighs at the deviance of the act I was performing for him. A gasp tore from my throat when he slid his hand down and clamped his fingers on either side of my throat. My eyes hooded as he restricted my air, making me move even quicker in pursuit of the crashing orgasm that was so close to sweeping me away. I jerked myself against him, crushing my clit against his boot as the telltale trembling quaked between my thighs. The closer I drew to orgasm, the tighter his fingers clasped around my throat, making my breaths shallower as my head swam.

'Come for me Katie, let go and give into that dark bit of you that you've been hiding for years. I want to see everything you have to give. Give it to me.'

I did.

I came so hard, my cries muffled by his hand cutting off my air, that my body shook against his shin. My orgasm was explosive, leaving no part of me unaffected as I gave in entirely to the intensity of it.

He barely let go of me long enough for me to draw a full breath before he fisted my hair and forced me down, my face inches from the slick, coated boot. 'Look at the mess you made, Katie. You'd better get that tongue out and clean it up.'

I was still reeling from the orgasm as I set my tongue against the leather, licking at his wet boot with long, even strokes. My mouth was full with the taste of me as he groaned.

'Fucking hell, Katie. What are you doing to me? You're so fucking hot.' Satisfaction flooded me at his pleased words.

'That's it. Show me how well you can work that tongue. I've got something else for you to lick.'

That familiar feeling I got when with him flowed through me. As everything else going on in my life reduced down to that single moment, my only goal was to make him proud of me. To make him want to gift me with pleasure for being good.

When he pulled me back to my knees, his trousers were loose, his hard cock in his lap as an invitation.

I was on him before he could say another word, slathering him with my tongue before sucking him greedily into my mouth.

'Fuck,' he groaned as I sunk my mouth over his length, fighting my gag reflex to take in more. 'Such a delightful mouth. I should fill it more often.'

His hand loosened in my hair as he let me work him, sliding my tongue down over his balls while wrapping my hand around his cock, before swapping to swallow as much of him as I could.

The piercing at the tip made me squirm. I loved the metal against my tongue as I focused my attention on the head of his cock.

'You really are desperate to be fucked, aren't you?' he said with a throaty laugh. 'If you keep that up, you're going to blow your chances.'

He caught me off guard when he gripped my hair and forcefully pushed me down until my mouth and throat fully encased his cock. I fought for air, panic rising as he bucked his hips, grinding against my throat as I tried not to vomit.

'I'm going to make sure every hole feels well fucked by morning. Do you understand me?'

I nodded on his dick, tears flowing as I fought against his grip. He pulled me off of him and pushed me to the floor, pressing my face into the carpet as he lifted my ass into the air with his other hand. My cries filled the room as he laid three sharp spanks on my exposed ass before slapping my

wet pussy. Heat radiated from me as he spread me open, spitting on me before sinking his fingers roughly into me.

'Ask for me to fill you up, my little slut.'

'Please... Oh god...' I whimpered as he turned his fingers inside me. 'Please give me your dick.'

'It's a good job you're on birth control, because there isn't a chance in hell I won't fill you up with cum.'

His clothing rustled while he shifted behind me. Then he was there, the metal tip of his cock rubbing over my clit as I clawed at the carpet beneath me.

'I will not be gentle with you.'

'Just please fuck me, Sir. I need you bad.'

'Yes, you fucking do.'

It only took one thrust for his thick cock to fill me to the brim. My moans punctuated the air with every one of his deep thrusts. Gloved fingers dug into my hips as he held me firmly, near splitting me in two as I adjusted to his girth.

'Such a good girl,' he growled. 'Taking every bit and still wanting more.'

I was so full, sated at last, to have him take me. It was so right to be there beneath him, filled with him.

He quickened his pace, my thighs collapsing to the carpet as he put his weight on me, pinning me with his hips as he ground deep within me. Each stroke became harder and more erratic as he chased his own orgasm. When he was close, his breaths hard, pants like my own, he slipped a hand beneath me and sought my clit, circling it as I lost my mind. Being stuffed full of him seemed to eradicate any coherent thought.

'That's it my girl, come on my dick, Sweetness. Milk out every drop of my cum into that greedy little cunt of yours.'

Pressure exploded within me as I trembled beneath him, his cock not letting up as wave after wave of orgasm ripped through me. He tensed as he let out a low moan, his hips going from thrusting to a long, grinding roll as he jerked on top of me.

'Thank you,' I gasped as he filled me up with every last drop of his cum, staying seated within me until long after we were both spent, as though he was loath to untangle our bodies.

'Don't thank me yet, we're not finished.'

I rolled over as he lay next to me, his gloved fingers sweeping over my stomach before pushing between my thighs. I opened my mouth obediently as he gathered up his cum and dripped it from his fingers onto my tongue. 'Nowhere near finished.'

CHAPTER TWENTY

Katie remained blissed out on the floor while I rooted through her bathroom and bedside cabinets, grinning when I found what I was looking for. The not-even-opened bottle of lube was exactly what I needed to christen her last hole.

I placed it, and a towel, on the kitchen counter - which was the perfect height for my hips - before fetching her from the sitting room and placing her there on her back.

'It was even better than I'd imagined it would be,' she said dreamily as I spread her thighs. The way she squirmed when I touched her freshly fucked cunt made my cock jump in response.

That night was the last time I'd visit her, and I intended to leave my mark everywhere I could.

I wanted to devour her. To pull my mask up and steal her kisses, sucking them from her until she'd given everything she had to me. My body craved to possess her. To own her. But her rejection of me, the real me, let me know I was only setting us both up for misery.

Tommy was done.

She was free.

It was my job to let her go, too.

'I'm going to fuck your ass, sweetness.'

The way she tensed around my fingers told me it wasn't something she was used to.

'It'll hurt.'

'Only in the good way. I'll take my time and make sure you come while my cock stretches out that little hole. You'll take me like a good girl, won't you?'

Her teeth sunk into her lower lip as she nodded. 'I'll try.'

'You won't need to try, Katie. You just need to relax and let me in. For tonight, this is mine.'

A throaty whimper escaped her mouth as I slid a finger over her puckered hole, teasing at the entrance as she squirmed.

'Who does this ass belong to?'

'You, Sir. All yours.'

'And what do you want me to do?'

'To fuck my ass, Sir.'

'Your cunt is already dripping with my cum and by the time I'm finished, you'll be leaking from both holes.'

Picking up the lube, I took off the glove that didn't conceal my missing fingertip, and hoped she was too far gone to take much notice of my tattoos. Squirting a generous amount over my fingers, I worked slowly, massaging her ass with my ungloved hand and her pussy with my gloved one.

'Hold onto your ankles. You don't have permission to move unless I say so.'

Her tits bounced as she obeyed, reaching toward me and grasping herself by the ankles as she stared up at my masked face.

'Such a well behaved little slut tonight. I think you deserve a finger, don't you?'

The noise she made as I slid a finger into her, sinking it deep, had me rock solid.

'It's already too tight. I can't take your cock. It's too big.'

'You can, and you will. Do you want to please me?'

'Yes, Sir.'

'Then you'll take every inch and beg for more.'

A shudder stole over her body as I pulled my finger out before pressing it back home, using my other hand to tease her clit as she submitted to the rising sensations I wrought between her thighs.

'That's it. Relax around my fingers. It's feeling good, isn't it?' Her thighs trembled as I continued to tease her. When I slid a second finger into her tight little ass, her whole body convulsed. I slowed down, wanting to keep her on the edge and needy, knowing she'd have to take it all to get to come again.

Alternating my hands, I fucked her pussy and her ass in tandem, delighting in the way she tensed around my digits, my fingers sliding past one another through the thin wall of flesh that separated them inside her.

It could have been so perfect, Katie and I. If only she knew the man she so willingly submitted to wasn't a stranger at all.

'Please let me come,' she stammered as I swirled my fingers inside her.

'No. Not until my dick is inside you.'

'Please... I need you.'

Her words both lit a fire in me and burned me at the same time. She needed my dick, not me. And unfortunately, I was hopelessly in love with her. I wanted nothing more than to have both sides of Katie, the keening little cock slut, but also the sweet, bubbly girl I'd met when she'd come tumbling into my sister's life. I wanted to make her breakfast in bed before pinning her down and fucking her face. I wanted her to read to me before sitting on my mouth and taking her pleasure. I wanted to go shopping and pick out surprises that would delight her. I wanted it all. All of her smiles. All of her moans. All of her sunshine.

Emotion swept through me, and I knew if I didn't get out soon, I was going to say something I wouldn't be able to take back.

Removing my fingers, I pulled back on my glove before pressing the head of my cock against her ass.

'Deep breaths, sweetness. It might sting.'

My piercing already gleamed with pre-cum as I rubbed it against her, delighting in the way she moaned.

'Please, I want it all.'

My willpower wavered as the tip sank into her, slowly disappearing as she gasped. I squirted some more fresh lube over my shaft to make it as easy as possible for her.

'Fuck,' she whimpered, her jaw tensing as she hissed through her teeth.

'Oh, I'm going to fuck it alright.'

Reaching forward, I grasped her hair in my fist, forcing her to look up at me as I slowly pressed forward between her thighs, my dick finding its way home. Every spasm of her ass made my balls quiver.

'You are so fucking tight, Katie.'

'It's my first time,' she whispered as I thrust the last inch of my hard dick inside of her. 'It hurts.'

'Do you want me to stop?' I had no intentions of doing so until I'd filled her, but I needed to gauge where she was.

'No, please don't stop. I want more.'

With a growl, I pulled out before sinking myself back into her. Her body quaked beneath me as she dropped her legs, reaching up and wrapping her arms around my shoulders.

'You're so fucking perfect,' I gasped into her neck as she tilted her hips, grinding herself onto my dick. 'Everything about you.'

'Harder, please?' she cried as I reached between us and sank two fingers into her cunt, letting my thumb graze her clit as she trembled around my cock.

Then I lost all sense of control, needing to fill her more than I needed anything else in the entire world. Thrusting harder, I groaned as she cried out in my ear, her hot breath on my neck.

Pleasure ripped through me as her body shook beneath me, her pussy clamping down on my fingers and her ass strangling my cock as she came screaming in my ear. I turned my head, pressing my mouth over hers and swallowing down her screams, my tongue slipping over hers as my balls tensed and I unloaded endless ropes of cum deep inside her. Her hands laced in my hair as she panted against my lips, my hips still rocking in her quivering ass as it milked every drop from me.

'Fuck,' I said, capturing her lips again before leaning up and looking down at her pretty face. It was the look of horror that met me that stunned me.

'Mac, what the fuck?'

My mask. She'd pulled my fucking mask off when I was mid orgasm, and I'd been so fucking lost in her I hadn't realised.

I pressed a hand against her throat as she tried to shove me off of her. I dragged myself out of her ass, seeing her eyes close briefly in a last wave of pleasure as her ass gaped before my cum trickled out of it. It was an image I wanted to savour during the impending clusterfuck that was about to hit me.

'You weren't supposed to know it was me.' I said, cleaning myself off on a towel before handing one to her as she glared at me, her mouth moving but struggling to find the words to say what she was thinking.

'You stalked me and broke into my house and fucked me. You're my brother-in-law. How could you? Was it just some sick joke to you?'

Fastening my trousers, I stepped back as she sat up and slid herself down from the counter, holding the tea towel in front of her naked body.

I slipped off my shirt and handed it to her as my mind raced for some way to explain myself.

'It wasn't a joke. You could never be a joke to me. I love you, Katie.'

A fierce slap sounded as her hand collided with my cheek. 'How fucking dare you say that? You don't know the meaning of love. You're just someone else who wanted to use me to get off.'

'That's not true.' She pulled on my shirt before storming past me. 'I just wanted you to see he was no good for you, that you deserve better.'

Tears flecked her cheeks as she threw open her front door. 'Get out. I don't want to see you ever again. Not here, not at my brother's house. Never. Or I'll tell them exactly what you did.'

'Katie,' I said, holding her by the chin and trying to make her look up at me, 'Why did you want me when you didn't know who I was? Why not me?'

'Because you made me do things I told myself. I never would. You were an escape. But how can I look you in the face knowing the things I've done, the things I've let you do to me? I'm disgusting.'

'I was doing them too.'

'I don't care. Get out.'

'Katie, please...'

Her face flushed red as she pushed me hard toward the door.

'It wasn't supposed to be like this.'

'What was it supposed to be? Were we going to get married and tell sweet little stories of how we met over dinner? Oh yes, he broke into my house and fingered me while I slept? He spread fucking cum-hearts over my windows as I showered. You're insane if you thought it could be anything other than a sordid little affair.'

With another shove, I stumbled out of the door, catching myself against a pillar as she slammed the door in my face.

Her keys were still in my pocket. I could let myself back in and try to make her see how much she meant to me.

I could plead my case.

My gloves grazed the door handle as I sighed.

No.

She had never been mine.

Would never be mine.

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

My first instinct was to call someone to rant about Mac. As I'd lay there beneath him, the compulsion came over me to rip off his mask and finally figure out who the man was that had been driving me insane with lust.

Jet's of pure rage had mingled with the powerful orgasm I'd had while he continued to thrust into my ass, the anger making me come even harder. But once the moment had passed, I had to face up to the reality of the situation.

All along, he'd known who I was while hiding his own identity from me. All those months I'd thought he'd hated me, always glaring, barely talking. Instead, he'd been. What? Planning to break into my home and use his wicked tongue to split up my boyfriend and me?

I flicked through my phone, my fingers hovering over Macey's name. She'd be mad that I hadn't confided in her, and disappointed I'd been such a monumental idiot. Cameron and Maeve were in no way an option, either. Cameron would have me surrounded by his men twenty-four seven and likely try to have Mac castrated.

Maybe that wouldn't be a bad idea.

Even as I raged at him, there was a small part of me that still craved his touch. His cum still leaked from me as I paced my kitchen, still wrapped in his shirt. Despite the dirty, deviant things he'd had me eager to do, he'd never stopped telling me how much I mattered. Or how much better I deserved.

It was wrong. Twisted.

In his own way, he'd been trying to help.

Without his pushing, I might have turned a blind eye to seeing Tommy with that girl straddling his ears. I had ignored his cheating before.

Pulling up the text from the unknown number, I punched in a message as I let the shower run, needing to clean the night from me. If I hadn't unmasked him, he'd likely have cleaned me up and tucked me in his arms, leaving me feeling sated rather than abandoned.

Why didn't you just tell me you liked me? Why all the lies?

His response came a few minutes later, my phone buzzing sharply on the side of the sink.

You were too lost in him. I had to find a way through your haze.

It wasn't your place.

I don't care. I missed the Katie I met. The ray of sunshine with the eyes that glittered every time you spoke.

I looked up at myself in the mirror, my face thin and pale, looking back at me. My hair felt lack-lustre as I slid a lock through my fingers. Had I changed so much since Mac had met me?

Throwing my phone into a pile of towels, I tore off Mac's shirt and got into the shower, letting the water wash off all of his touches. Suds dripped down my body as I scrubbed at my hair, letting salty tears mingle with the drops on my face.

Alone.

I was alone again.

Tommy's toxic love was gone, and so was Mac's sordid attention. I'd alienated my family and barely saw my friends. I had nothing but my big empty house and memories of the bliss Mac had thrust into me at last, giving me one night of forgetting everything and taming me beneath his huge dick.

It was over. Everything was over.

My back slid down the edge of the bath as I sunk down and curled my knees up into my chest, letting the water rush over me until it had long gone cold.

A few nights later, music pounded into my head as I slammed another tequila down my throat. Alcohol did the trick to wash away the slump I'd been in. Macey and Erica laughed as they shouted unfathomable words at me, impossible to hear over the blaring music in the club we'd stumbled into.

The room lurched every time I moved, but I didn't let that stop me as I danced until my body ached. I might not have had Mac's heady presence to fuck the intrusive thoughts out of me, but I had my girls and booze, and he could get to fuck for all I cared.

The night wore on in a blur of moments of clarity amongst long periods of confusion. Seeing Macey and Erica. Dancing with hands groping me. Being given more shots. Someone kissing me. Losing my friends. Feeling sick. Feeling lost. Crying in the back of a cab.

Home.

The sun was high outside my window by the time I came to. Bright light assaulted my eyes where I'd been too drunk to close my curtains.

I tried to move, but everything ached. Pulsating pain ripped through my skull as I tried to sit up, but there was a weight on my bed next to me, pinning my blankets down. Sitting up took all my strength, leaving me feeling shaky as I looked over at the man in the bed beside me. It was neither Tommy nor Mac, the man's thick blonde hair poking out from under the duvet.

Fuck, I must have brought him home with me.

I didn't remember him at all.

Slipping out of bed as quietly as possible, I pulled on an oversized jumper before going to sneak out to the toilet. I froze when I heard a steady dripping coming from the other side of the bed.

A dark red pool amassed on my floor beside the bed, a steady drip adding to it. My hands shook as I stepped closer to the bed, sweat gathering along my back as I pulled back my duvet.

A scream ripped from me as the man lay in a pool of blood in my bed, his throat cut from ear to ear.

Had I?

A wave of vomit hit my throat as I ran for the bathroom, barely making it before throwing up. Tears pricked my eyes as my stomach heaved, the image of the man in my bed burning behind my screwed closed eyes.

What had I done?

Fuck, had I killed him?

I wracked my brain, trying desperately to piece together the previous night.

It was all a series of distorted moments. I didn't remember sleeping with the guy, and I definitely didn't remember killing him.

I curled up in the bathroom as I tried to make sense of the dead man in my bedroom, his blood staining my floor by the minute.

Eventually, I braved going back into the room, rooting through the bed until I found my phone stuck to his icy back. I scrolled through some garbled messages to Macey and Erica, which weren't at all legible, before checking my call list. Nothing.

If I'd killed the man, surely I would have tried to call for help and not just rolled over and fallen to sleep?

There was nothing on my socials, or the girls, bar some pictures of us early in the night as we selfies before we'd started on the tequilas.

I paced my room, looking at the dead man as I got myself into more and more of a panic. It had to be me. There was no-one else here.

Unless...

Unless Mac had come back and been angry to find someone in my bed. I pulled up our text string and sent a message.

Did you break into my house last night?

My leg shook as I sat on a chair across from the body and waited for his reply.

No. You told me not to come back.

Fuck.

What's wrong?

I think I did something terrible.

Katie, what did you do?

I couldn't tell him. Couldn't write it down. It would make it too real. It would leave a record.

Are you at home?

Yes.

Stay where you are. I'll be there soon.

The thought of him knowing had me running straight back to the bathroom, and that's where he found me half an hour later, hugging my thighs as I sat next to the toilet.

'He's in the bedroom,' I whispered, unable to look Mac in the eyes.

'Who? Tommy?'

'No. I don't know.'

'Did you text me to shoo away a one-night stand?'

'No... I... he's dead.' Fresh tears welled as Mac's eyes widened.

'You killed someone?'

'I don't know. I don't remember. I drank a lot. There was dancing, then a cab ride and then I remember nothing.'

He tore through the house as I followed behind him.

'Ah shit, Katie. What a mess.'

Mac walked around the scene, careful not to step in the blood. 'Where's the weapon?'

'I don't know. I didn't look for it.'

'You really don't remember doing this?'

I shook my head as I wrapped my arms around myself.

'Did he hurt you?'

'I don't think so. I woke up with my underwear still on, and don't have any injuries.'

Mac ran a hand over his face and into the hair at the back of his head. 'This isn't you Katie, it couldn't be.'

'Maybe I'm not the sunny girl you think I am. Shit, Mac, what am I going to do? I'm going to go to jail.'

More tears streaked my cheek as a sob stole through my chest.

'Hey,' Mac said, moving toward me and wrapping me up in his arms. 'It's going to be okay. You're not going anywhere. No-one knows about this. I'll get it sorted.'

'But he'll have a family who misses him. We can't just make him disappear. It's not right.'

'He's already dead, Katie. There's no bringing him back either way. He must have provoked you.'

My breath shuddered against his chest as I cried in his embrace, glad for his warm arms as my world crashed around me.

'Come on,' Mac said, taking my hand and leading me away from the bedroom. He wrapped me in a warm blanket and sat me on the sofa, pushing a sweetened tea into my hands as he made a call.

'I need a clean up. I'll text you the address. Needs to be discreet.'

'Is that your brother?' I asked, would they tell Maeve, or Cam?

'No. I have my own crew.'

'Do you have to do this often?' I asked, looking up at him where he leaned against the mantle of the fireplace.

'More often than I'd like. Listen Katie, I don't think you did this. I can't find a knife anywhere, and with how drunk you'd have had to be to forget killing a man, it would be messier. There's not a drop of blood on you. With his position, his throat would have been slit while he was sleeping. I can't see you doing that.'

'I'm the only other person here.' A tendril of hope ignited inside of me. I really, really didn't want to be a killer.

'I thought I'd had my fill of dead bodies this week.'

'The girl from the club? Have they caught someone yet?'

'No. Nothing. It was someone who knew what they were doing. They wiped our CCTV. We've got guys looking into everyone who was at the opening, seeing if there are any leads there.'

'I'm so sorry Mac. For dragging you into my mess.'

Mac sat beside me, wrapping an arm around my shoulders and pulling me into his side. 'I'd rather be here cleaning up your messes than not be with you at all.'

'I likely just killed a man and you're trying to be sweet. That's probably not normal.'

'Normal is overrated.'

'Thank you. Mac.'

I stayed wrapped on the sofa, alternating between overwhelming waves of nausea and fear while his men dealt with the man in my bed.

By the time they'd finished, it was as if he'd never existed.

The guilt remained even after they'd all left, gnawing at me whenever I thought about the people who loved the dead man.

They'd be wondering what happened to him. And I was the monster who stole him from them.

CHAPTER TWENTY TWO

The teeth chinked as I dropped them into a metal tin before handing it over to Greg.

'Make sure they are ground to dust and disposed of.'

Greg grimaced at the box before slipping it into his bag.

'This is grim, man,' he said, looking down at the corpse we'd removed from Katie's house. With his teeth removed, he looked an even more sorry state than he had before.

'Yeah. Dead bodies aren't a highlight of the job.'

'Why didn't you have the normal guys in to deal with it?' Greg pulled out a cigarette, lighting it up and taking a deep drag as I opened the vat of acid.

'I couldn't take the chance of anyone fucking this one up.'

'You must really like her.'

My hands stilled as I placed the metal lid down against the wall. 'I do.'

'She'll owe you one after this.'

My fingers tensed into a fist as I bit back my remark, remembering that Greg was doing me a solid, and that I needed him to keep his mouth shut too. 'I owed her one.'

Getting rid of a body might go some way to repairing the damage I'd done by hiding who I was while enticing her into bed with me.

Katie was a mess when I'd left, and all I'd wanted was to wrap her up in my arms and pull her into my lap. She was alone. I was the only person who knew the mammoth head-fuck she was struggling with. I had to get back to her as soon as I could. After I got rid of John Doe and any evidence that she'd been anywhere near him.

My hackers were already wiping any CCTV footage they could find of them in the club, or leaving it, while hacking into her friends' phones to get rid of any incriminating photos. Thankfully, they'd been too drunk to be worrying about taking photos on the dance floor. I also had them putting an alibi in place. Getting texts and call logs which would look to the outside work like Katie's paramour had ditched her and she'd called me to pick her up. I'd swear until I was blind that I'd spent the night with her if it came to it. There was no evidence to say any different.

'Come on,' I said to Greg as I bent down and hauled the naked, mutilated man up. 'Help me get him in the vat.'

My breath was heavy by the time we'd slid him into the murky liquid and sealed the top. The furnace roared in the corner; devouring the blankets, mattress and the guy's personal effects. I hadn't checked for ID. The less we knew, the better.

Exiting the hatch that led out of the cellar, I locked it up tight. We grunted as we pushed the heavy set sideboard back on top of it. The former teddy bear factory was the perfect place for our setup, owned by a fictional conglomerate and utterly condemned.

'Not a word to my brothers, or anyone else, or you'll be joining him in the acid bath,' I said to Greg.

'You know me better than that.'

I hoped so.

A sharp ringing had me near swerving off the road as I pulled up to the woods on the far side of Katie's home. Glancing at the in-car display, I groaned.

Ewen.

'What?' I said, hitting the answer button.

'They've got it. The footage from the club.'

'The alley footage? Pass it to the police.'

'No, from inside the club. We can trace who spoke to her, who interacted with her.'

The pizza on my passenger seat steamed up the window. I doubted Katie had eaten, and I wanted to go by and make sure she was okay. She'd only briefly responded to my texts since I'd left.

But, I also knew what they'd see on the CCTV

Katie and me.

Me on my knees between her thighs.

I needed to get rid of that footage. The CCTV wasn't in the private rooms, but in the corridors and non-play areas around the bar and outside. It was supposed to be wiped within a week of an event to protect the client's privacy, but with the murder outside, they'd been working tirelessly to get full access to the material.

'Fine, I'll be with you in half an hour. Don't start without me.'

'Why? Not trying to hide something, are you? A little rendezvous of your own?' Ewen laughed, as if the thought of me getting it on with someone was ridiculous. Little did he know.

'Shut up and get the coffee on.'

Picking up the pizza, I dashed through the woods, dodging the tree roots as quickly as I could without upending the cheesy goodness. I placed it on her doorstep before jogging back to my car and sending a text.

Pizza?

The good shit, from Del Lucio's. Eat it. As much as you can.

I'm not hungry.

I don't care. EAT.

How did you know I like pineapple on my pizza?

It pained me to put the devil's fruit on it, but she always ate it that way. I would have stomached it for her, too.

I know you Katie.

I don't even know myself anymore.

I've got some work to do. I'll text you later. Eat the goddamned pizza.

My phone pinged a few minutes later with an image. Dark rings circled her reddened eyes as she took a large bite out of a slice.

Good girl.

The speech bubble danced a few times before stilling. With a sigh, I put my car into gear and headed to the club.

CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

The TV mumbled in the corner as I lay on the sofa, staring numbly, not registering the moving pictures at all.

The previous night was still full of empty gaps. Brief moments of clarity were rare and uneventful. Still no recollection of grabbing a knife and... I swallowed hard, abandoning the thought as the pizza I'd eaten earlier threatened to make a reappearance.

Mac had come to my rescue, cleaning up my mess without judgement. Even after he'd found another man, a dead man, in my bed. He'd wrapped me up and looked after me, and even came back to make sure I'd eaten.

Why?

He could have called Cam and left me in his hands. My brother had more resources than Mac and the McGowan's did. But he'd taken my sins into his hands to absolve me of the shame that would come from having to explain myself to my family. From having them look at me differently.

Cam had spent his life shielding me from being involved in the grisly side of our father's crime empire, taking the weight of it into his own hands repeatedly. He'd be so disappointed in me.

A knock sounded against my door, making me jump. I checked my phone; it was late. Mac hadn't texted, but I could only assume it was him.

And not the police.

I looked through the peephole, but couldn't see anything, so inched the door open while keeping the chain on.

'Hello, Katie.'

Tommy grinned at me from beyond the gap as I tried to force the door closed. 'Not so fast. We need to talk.'

'I don't want to talk to you. I told you it's over.' The door wouldn't budge, even when I put my full weight behind it. Looking down, I saw his shoe wedging it open.

Fuck.

'You don't have a choice.' I flew back as he rammed the door with his shoulder, the chain ripping clean off the old doorframe as the door burst open.

My feet slapped the floor as I made for my phone, but pain ripped through me as he grabbed a fistful of my hair and yanked me back to him, wrapping an arm around my waist as I flailed.

'Let me go!'

'God, I didn't think you'd be so fucking spunky after finding a dead guy in your bed.'

I froze.

He knew.

How could he know? Unless...

'You... It was you?'

'I had to show you that you couldn't keep whoring yourself out without repercussions.'

Tommy manhandled me to the floor, wrapping some duct tape around my wrists and securing them behind my back before sitting back and eyeing me.

'Are you insane? You killed a man in my fucking bed?'

'He shouldn't have been in your bed.'

'You're insane!'

Tommy let out a laugh that chilled me to the core. 'No, you were being a little slut behind my back.'

'I broke up with you.'

'Oh, you tried to before him, but what about Mac?'

My stomach dropped as he leaned forward and pinched my face between his thumb and finger, making me look at him.

'How long have you been fucking your brother-in-law, Katie? No wonder he was always such an insufferable prick.'

My pulse thundered as he let my face go and pushed me onto the floor, straddling my thighs as pain gripped my arms where he pinned them beneath my back.

'I wasn't,' I lied.

His fist collided with my jaw as stars exploded behind my eyes. 'You're a fucking liar.'

Tommy pulled his phone out of his pocket and held it up, showing me a series of images of myself and Mac in the club, his face between my thighs. 'You're pal Macey sent me these.'

'Why would she?'

'Because she's been trying to replace you for months.'

Macey? But she'd shown no interest in Tommy. She'd never flirted with him or lusted over him like Erica had. She'd always shut those conversations down.

'She can have you. I told you I was done.'

Another blinding crunch of his fist caught me on the side of the head as I cried out.

'You're an ungrateful little bitch. It's a good job I fucking love you, Katie. Everything I've done has been for us, and you're not going to ruin it. If I can't have you, no-one will.'

'Please, Tommy. Please let me go. We can talk about this.'

The next punch brought the bitter taste of iron filling my mouth. When he saw it, he groaned and leaned forward, licking the blood from my lips.

Tears gathered as he got up and levelled a kick at my side, leaving me breathless.

'You made me do this. I didn't want to.'

The rug burned against my skin as I tried to crawl away, but Tommy grabbed my hair before throwing down and landing endless kicks to my body. Sobbing, I curled into a ball to protect my battered body, but with my arms secured behind my back, it didn't help.

'Please stop.'

'Look at the mess of you, Katie. It's what happens to sluts. I thought you were different, but you are just like all the others. You were jealous of that one that rode my face and thought you could just get that from someone else. There is no-one else for you. You belong to me.'

When he started hauling down my trousers, I didn't know whether to scream or to be thankful for the reprieve from his fists and boots.

'Am I hard enough for you now, Katie?'

I cried as he shoved himself into me, his fingers reaching up to my mouth and smearing my blood over my face.

'Bleed for me, you little whore.'

My stomach heaved as he grunted above me, adding to my pain as I tried to zone out. When I vomited, he laughed and shoved me into it. When he came, it was while raining down punches on my chest and stomach.

When he stood and zipped up his trousers, I'd hoped he was done with me.

'I'll be back to deal with you later.'

A crushing pain hit the side of my head, dipping my world into black.

CHAPTER TWENTY FOUR

Pressure burned at the back of my eyes as I flitted through hours of CCTV from the various cameras around the club. Abandoned fast food containers littered the table as we gathered round, the sweet and salty scent of Chinese food still lingering in the air. We'd traced Eloise as she performed on opening night. Watching her laugh and smile and dance brought stabs of pain. I hadn't known her, but she'd been so full of life. Vivacious even in the small, somewhat blurry, videos.

On my screen, she danced with someone, a guy who faced away from the camera. She leaned into his ear, touching her hair as she grazed her lips over the man's neck.

Ewen groaned as he added to the timeline he'd been writing up on the whiteboard, tracking Eloise from the moment she got to work and on into the night. There were still hours to fill before we reached her time of death. Her last hours.

'What if it was just some bum trying to mug her at the end of the night?'

'You saw the footage. She knew him.'

We'd gone over the film from the alleyway, my stomach clenching as we watched a man snuff out Eloise. His face was obscured from view, and his clothing was not particularly identifiable in the dark alley. She'd smiled at him before looping her arm around him before stumbling back, a knife wound across her neck spilling dark crimson over her torso. When she'd slipped to the floor, the man started rubbing himself, clearly turned on. But he never touched her. Why had he done it? He took nothing. It wasn't a robbery.

I glared at my screen. The man on the dance floor could be the same guy, his clothing looked similar. The hair could have been right. It was hard to tell.

Logan coughed behind his screen before letting out a low, 'Oh, shit.'

'What?' Ewen asked, moving round to Logan's screen before his eyes widened and fixed on me.

My arse tightened as their eyes went from the screen to my face and back again.

Fuck.

I was on my feet and rounded their side of the table, making to snatch up the laptop.

'Katie? You ate out Katie in my club? Come on man, what the fuck?' Ewen turned with the laptop as I tried to grab it.

'She's got a boyfriend.' Logan watched me scrabble for the laptop with an amused gleaming in his eyes. 'Didn't take her for the type to cheat.'

'They broke up.' I finally got hold of the edge of the laptop, pulling it from my brother's hands as Katie leaned back against the wall and threaded her fingers into my hair. My cock twitched at the image as I slammed the laptop shut.

'You had to go for Cam's sister? Really?' Logan picked up a leftover prawn cracker and rolled his eyes at me.

'He's been staring at her for two years. Like some little creep,' Ewen said.

'Like you can talk about staring. You get off watching people fuck. It's why you have a sex club.'

'Calm down. What does it matter what you idiots are into? Mac, don't shit where you eat. If you fuck her over, Cam will kill you. Hell, Maeve will kill you.'

'I'm not messing her around. I like her. Like, really like her.'

Ewen had moved to the other side of my table and was staring at my screen. 'Wait... Katie wasn't the only one playing away. It's Tommy.'

'What's Tommy?'

'The guy she's dancing with.'

We moved around to watch the screen. Eloise had turned and we could clearly see both her face and his. It was undoubtedly Tommy.

'He'd been in a playroom with someone. I didn't pay attention to who as I was focused on Katie...'

Ewen leaned forward and scrubbed through the footage until we saw them making their way to the room.

'Wait,' I said, 'rewind a couple of seconds. There. His rings. The killer was wearing a load, too. If they match, we might be onto something.'

Logan pulled up the alley sequence up on one computer while Ewen zoomed into the rings as best he could on his screen.

It was blurry, but I was sure.

Tommy had killed Eloise.

Shit.

Holy shit.

Katie. I had to warn her.

I pulled out my phone and found our texts, pressing the call button. It rang. And rang.

'Answer the phone, Katie.'

'She might be sleeping. It's pretty late,' Logan said, his eyebrows furrowing as the ringing sounded out from my handset.

'I need to go tell her to go to Cam's. Until we can find Tommy and end him like I should have done fucking months ago.'

'He's a celeb. I think we should let the police deal with this one.' Ewen ran a hand through his hair while fixing me with a stare.

'All the more reason we need to deal with it ourselves. I don't think Eloise is his only kill, and if he goes through the courts, there's a chance it'll all get covered. Katie won't be safe until he's dead. If you don't want to help, fine, but he will be dead as soon as I know she's safe.'

'What do you mean she's not his only kill?' Logan asked.

Tingles crept up my spine as I bit my lip, trying to figure out how much to tell them.

'Spit it out, Mac. If we're going to fillet a rockstar, at least fill us in first.' Ewen sat heavily on the edge of the table.

'The first night I was with her, Tommy was there. Passed out.'

'Jesus, Mac.'

'He had blood on his hands. He forced himself on her, where he usually couldn't get it up. I think he killed someone else to get a boner and took it home to Katie.'

'Fucking hell.'

'That's not all,' I said, a flashback of pushing the male corpse into the vat making me grimace. 'Katie woke up with a body in her bed.'

Logan looked like I'd slapped him upside the head. Ewen pushed his face into his hands and groaned.

'She thought she'd killed him when blackout drunk. I fixed it for her.'

'When?'

'This morning. Well, yesterday now.' I picked up my coat and dragged it over my arms and grabbed my keys. 'I need to go take her to Cam's, or ours. Just somewhere safe.'

'Go. We'll find him.'

'Keep him alive until I get there.'

I'd tried her phone endlessly as I drove, praying that she'd just crashed out after the insane day she'd had. Every ring wound me tighter.

I pulled up right outside of her door, hammering at the old wood. I didn't wait before grabbing my stolen keys and letting myself in.

The house was dark and cold, and I felt for a light switch with my hand. My fingers grazed the metal, I flicked it and squinted when light illuminated the kitchen.

I went straight to her bedroom, hauling open the door only to find her bed empty. The new mattress I'd had delivered hadn't even been unwrapped.

The sitting room. Of course, she'd have opted for the couch rather than sleep in the room where she'd believed she'd killed someone.

My heart all but stopped when I walked into the room, a tumble of red hair spilling across the floor.

'Katie?' I fell to my knees beside her, turning her over gently as anger flared within me. She was covered in blood, her lip burst in two places while her left eye was swollen almost shut. Purple bruises bloomed over her pale skin, her legs bared where her trousers gathered around her ankles.

Red mist settled over me as I felt for a pulse, finding it weakly beating. She didn't even stir.

'Fuck baby, you'll be okay. I'm so sorry. I should have been here.'

My voice shook as I called for an ambulance, fighting back tears as I looked over her crumpled, broken body.

'Please, you have to be okay, Sweetness. You have to be.'

I ran a hand over her hair as I cradled her, memorising every mark so that I could repay it back double when my brothers tracked down Tommy. He'd suffer. Fuck, would he suffer.

Her breathing was shallow and crackled as I remained on the line to the dispatcher, waiting for red and blue lights to stream in through the windows.

I should have left her for the paramedics, knowing being found with a beaten woman would bring police involvement. I needed to deal with Tommy, and spending the night answering police questions wasn't my idea of fun, but there was no way I could abandon her again, either.

'You'll be okay, my love. It'll all be okay.'

When the walls finally lit up to the tune of sirens, relief washed through me. I had to let her go for the paramedics to take over, but it killed me to do so.

She was like a rag doll as the paramedics worked on her, getting her strapped to a stretcher as I gathered up her phone and purse and followed behind them.

The looks they passed between them were full of knowing. They'd likely seen abuse a million times before, but they had me pinned wrong. I didn't care. They could judge me six ways to Sunday for all I cared.

I held her hand the entire way to the hospital, only begrudgingly letting it go when two high-vis clad police officers stepped into my way as we entered A&E.

My heart went with Katie as they pulled her away from me, my fingers dropping to my side, feeling emptier than ever.

CHAPTER TWENTY FIVE

My nose crinkled as the powerful scent of disinfectant washed over me. My limbs were leaden as I tried to raise my hand to rub at my eyes.

'Whoa, Katie, slow down there.' It was a feminine voice that met my ears, a familiar voice. It was like cotton wool filled my brain as I worked to make connections meet.

'Hey, Katie. God, I'm glad to see you awake.'

Cam.

It was Cam and Maeve.

But why were they in my room?

Making my eyes cooperate took a force of will as I blinked them open, everything a blur. My left eye could only open to a small slit, with blistering pain burning around it.

'Where am I?'

The room was far too white and shiny to be my home.

God, my lips ached when I spoke.

'Mac called us from jail. He said Tommy hurt you. He didn't have time to explain.'

Images came rushing back, stealing my breath at the reminder of Tommy on top of me, raining fists down into my flesh. He'd wanted to kill me.

'He's coming back for me,' I whispered, panic making me stammer as I tried to sit up in the bed. Wires tugged at my hands as I tried to move, adding to the many aches that plagued me.

'Hey, come here.' Cam wrapped his arms gentle around my shoulders, giving me that familiar sense of safety that he'd provided our entire

childhood. It set me off, great sobs wracking my body as he stroked my hair and held me.

'We've got two of our guys on your door,' Maeve said, reaching out to dab at my wet cheeks with a tissue. 'You're safe.'

It took a long time for my sobs to calm into tears, and finally into a shudder as I sat back and reluctantly released my brother.

'Logan and Ewen have everyone out looking for Tommy. He can't get too far. When they find him, you won't have to worry anymore. Ever again.'

'Wait,' my stomach dropped as I went over everything they said. 'Why is Mac in jail?'

'He found you. The police took him in thinking he'd done this to you. We've got things moving with our contacts in the force. He'll be out soon, if not already.'

Resting my head back against the bed, I took a shaky breath.

'Katie, why did Mac find you? You guys hate each other. Why would he have been at your house?' Maeve leaned in, her eyes flicking over my injured face.

'It's complicated.'

'Complicated as in...'

'We had a thing.'

Cam nearly choked as he gaped at me. 'You and Mac? Is that why Tommy hit you?'

Maeve all but growled at her husband. 'Even if her and Mac were together, that's no reason for him to beat her.'

I almost laughed at the look on my brother's face as he back pedalled fast. 'No, I wasn't saying that. I meant, why would Tommy have done this? Has he hit you before?'

'Once or twice. But nothing like this. I think he's gone insane. There's some stuff I've not told you guys.' I still didn't want to tell them. I didn't want them to judge me. 'He killed a man in my bed.'

'What the fuck?' Cam said.

Maeve paled as she looked from her brother to me.

'I'd broken up with Tommy, and after I found out Mac was the one who'd been stalking me, I went out and got drunk. Really drunk. I took a guy home and when I woke up, he was dead. I thought I'd done it. Mac helped me get rid of him.'

'Did you just say Mac was stalking you?' Maeve asked.

'I'm going to fucking kill him.' Cam clenched his teeth and narrowed his eyes.

Shit.

Maybe whatever drugs they had me on were loosening my tongue too much.

'It wasn't like that. Well, not after the start. I wanted him to stalk me.'

'This is messed up.' Maeve sat back in her seat, looking stunned.

'I was lonely, and I enjoyed his attention. I craved it. He made me feel safe, needed.'

'You could have been safe with us. You've been ignoring us for months, avoiding us. I thought it was because you were too wrapped up in Tommy.' Cam's voice barely hid his anger.

'I'm sorry.'

'Why? Why didn't you tell me? We've never kept shit like this from each other?' His words hurt almost as much as the bruises that decorated my body.

'You guys were a perfect little unit. You and the kids and Mum. I didn't fit.'

'You'll always fit, Katie. We love you.'

'I know you do, but I didn't gel with Mum like you did. And for a while, Tommy was a great distraction. The parties and events, the way he made me feel special when he could have chosen anyone else. I wanted his love so badly, I overlooked so many warning signs.'

'It's not your fault, Katie. Not for feeling alienated by your mum's return, and not for being with Tommy. He's clearly unhinged, and you couldn't have known that.' Maeve pulled me into a tender hug. 'It's okay to find it hard with your mum. She hates herself for what she did to you.'

'I know why she left. Dad was no better than Tommy, but it didn't make it hurt any less that she abandoned us to him.'

A noise sounded at the foot of the bed, and I winced as I looked up sharply. Mac stood in the doorway, dark circles beneath his eyes, as he offered me a broken smile. My heart leapt at the sight of him despite the nervous tingles washing over me.

'I'm so sorry, Katie. I should have been there earlier.'

He walked toward the bed, leaning in and handing me a single red rose.

Cam was on his feet, fist swinging at Mac, before anyone had a chance to react. Mac's head snapped to the side as Cam's fist collided with Mac's jaw with an almighty thwack.

'Cam!' Maeve and I shouted in unison as I sat up, despite the pain shooting through me.

'You stalked my sister,' Cam spat out.

'She told you? Well, shit. Yeah, I did.' Mac rubbed a hand over his jaw while taking a step back.

'And you think that's okay?'

'I never said it was okay. But I don't regret it for a minute.'

'Enough,' I said. 'Cam, I can deal with Mac myself. Go home and get some sleep. Will you bring Mum to see me later? I think I need to talk to her.'

Maeve squeezed my hand before standing and looping her arm through Cam's, guiding him away from Mac. 'We can do that, she'll be worried sick. I can bring some clothes and bits, too.'

'I could kill for a slushie,' I said, offering a smile that made my lip ache.

When they were gone, the silence was crushing as Mac and I stared at one another. My pulse quickened to have him near me, knowing all that had passed between us.

'Thank you for finding me,' I said softly, adjusting the bed to a sitting position to take the strain off of my aching muscles.

'I'm so sorry I was too late.'

'You found me before he could come back. It could have been worse.'

Mac sat down in the chair next to the bed, his eyes roving over me as he took stock of my injuries. 'They haven't found him yet. Do you know where he might be?'

'Maybe with some of the band? Or drunk in a hotel somewhere.'

'Where does he live?'

'I don't really know.'

Mac's eyebrows knitted. 'You've dated him for almost two years. How can you not know?'

'He spends most of his time in hotel suites or at mine. I've never been to his house.'

'I'll get my hackers on it. They're bound to be able to follow some sort of records to find out.'

We were quiet for a while as the sun rose over the city beyond the window, Mac yawning while a nurse came in and adjusted my meds and took notes.

'You should go home and get some sleep,' I said.

'I can't. I can't go home until he's dead. I can't rest while he's out there.'

Reaching out, I took his fingers in my hand, warmth filling me at his touch. 'Come, lay with me? I'm tired too.'

'Don't you hate me? Everything I did was so messed up.' Mac looked down at our hands, running his thumb gently over the bracelet he gave me.

'I don't think I could hate you if I tried,' I said with a smile.

I moved the bed back into a flat position, shimmying over as best as I could while Mac took off his shoes and slid in behind me.

'I don't want to hurt you,' he whispered, his face in my hair as he looped an arm over my waist.

'You've never hurt me. I trust you.'

My eyes were drifting within seconds, my exhausted body instantly relaxing with him wrapped around me.

'He killed the girl at the club,' Mac said behind me, my body tensing. 'And maybe more.'

'I should have let you kill him that first night,' I said, my eyes wetting as yet more death surrounded me. 'It would have saved everyone.'

'Don't worry, sweetness. I'll get him.'

His nickname for me wrapped around me like a comfortable blanket as I closed my eyes and slipped back into unconsciousness, feeling secure despite my aching body.

CHAPTER TWENTY SIX

MAC

When I woke up with Katie in the tiny hospital bed with an aching, frozen back where she'd taken all the thin blanket, I smiled. Waking up next to her was everything I'd ever imagined it to be. My arm rested around her waist, the warmth from her body like a drug. No matter how much of her I had, I wanted more.

Inhaling deep, the smell of her shampoo still lingered in her hair.

'Are you sniffing me?' Her voice was soft, but full of amusement.

'Yeah. I am.'

'You're not even embarrassed to be caught doing that?'

'No. I've had my nose pressed in far worse places on your body. Or better, depending on who's opinion you consider.'

When she squirmed against me before turning over, I smiled at her. Her eyes half closed in a wince as she adjusted her position and I lifted my hand from her waist.

'Are you okay? Do you need anything?'

'I'm okay. Apart from feeling like a bus hit me. I think I must be due some painkillers soon.'

Katie reached up a hand and brushed it over my forehead, smoothing my hair back. The tender touch made me itch to kiss her. To wrap her up and never let her go.

'Thank you for staying with me.'

'Anytime.'

Her eyes dipped from mine as she let them drop to my chest before taking a steadying breath.

'I don't know what this is. This thing between us.' Her long lashes brushed her cheeks as she closed her eyes before blinking them back up to me.

'What do you want it to be?' My pulse quickened as nerves flooded my chest. I wanted her to want... something. Everything.

'I'm not sure. I'm not saying I didn't enjoy some of the... things we did. You tapped into desires I've never let myself explore and the thought of more is pretty tempting. But you stalked me, watched me, broke into my home. I'm embarrassed about you having seen me like that.' Her voice quavered as she spoke, and I reached up to run a finger over her broken lower lip.

'Katie, there is nothing I could see that would ever make me think any less of you. Being in a position of sexual submission, playing with degradation and deviant games, it all makes me crave you all the more. But I crave this too. The real you. The Katie I first met who was confident in herself and who she was. I miss her. All I wanted was for you to get over Tommy and move on. To reclaim the amazing, fun, passionate woman you are. I never dreamed anything more was a possibility.'

'You really see me like that?'

'I do. I've been watching you wilt, and it's been killing me. I'm sorry about scaring you, and pushing myself into your life. I never meant to hurt you, or for you to get hurt as a consequence. If I'd realised how unhinged Tommy wa--'

Katie cut me off with a gentle press of her lips to mine, stealing my breath right out of my chest.

Pressing a hand softly on the side of her neck, I tipped her head to give me better access. Her tongue swept over my lip as I let her take the lead, not wanting to hurt her split lip and bruised jaw.

The kiss wasn't desperate or fuelled by lust. It was tender and sweet. It blew my fucking mind. More than having her on her knees in the woods, or spread over the counter. More that the most deviant thing I could picture having her submit to.

Shit, was this what Maeve and Esther risked so much for? That moment of intense sweetness that Katie had given me?

Because I'd fucking burn the entire world to have another one of those slow, delicate kisses.

When she broke the kiss, it was with a smile against my lips.

'Bloody hell, Katie.'

'What?'

'You're just fucking incredible.'

Hours later, I left the hospital. It took everything to pull myself away from her when she was feeling so vulnerable, but Ewen had broken into the home of one of Tommy's band members. We had some beans to get spilling.

I pulled on a black balaclava as one of my men drove round to the back of the mansion, the gate already having been opened for us.

'Be back as soon as I can,' I told the driver. 'Be ready.'

He nodded as I let myself out of the car and headed through the back entrance, following Ewen's directions until I found them in a caterer's kitchen.

Tommy's bandmate, Evan, sat tied to a chair in the centre of the room, flanked by my brothers who's faces were concealed like mine.

'Ah, just who we were waiting for. Now the fun can really get started.'

Evan cowered as Logan patted his shoulder, the friendly gesture throwing him off.

'Have you told him why we're here?' I asked, placing my bag down and making a show of pulling various implements out of it one by one as we chatted.

'Not yet, we didn't want you to miss it,' Ewen leaned against a counter to the side of our captive.

'Do you want money? I have money.' Poor Evan. Clueless.

I remained quiet as I pulled the metal mallet out of the bag, placing it on the countertop with a satisfying thunk.

A puddle of piss appeared at Evan's feet as a whimper left his mouth. 'Please. I haven't done anything.'

'Oh, I very much doubt that, but we're here for information, not to deal with your personal transgressions.' I kept my voice calm, needing him to feel like he was the only one out of control in the situation.

'Information about what?'

'About a friend of yours. One of your friends killed a woman we know, and we are trying to find him. He's all but disappeared. That's where you come in.' Logan crossed his arms as he spoke, Evan's eyes widening at the mention of murder.

'My friends aren't murderers. You have to have it wrong.'

'How about your bandmates, Evan? The Gilded Knife is quite the name for a band with a serial killer at its helm.'

Poor guy looked like I'd slapped him, his mouth agape as he tried to process my words.

'Who?'

'Tommy.'

'Tommy's a shithead, but he isn't a killer.'

'Confident in that, are you? I have him on video, slitting a woman's throat in an alleyway. Certainly looked like a killer to me.' The delaying was making me itch. I understood the getting the victim antsy with our calmness, but I didn't want to be there. I wanted to put Tommy in the ground and try to build a relationship with my girl. Without the hiding, and the masks. Something real. Something honest.

Evan swallowed audibly as I turned and casually leaned back against the counter, twirling my flick knife between my fingers.

'Listen, Evan, we don't want to hurt you. Or rather, it makes no difference to us if we hurt you or not, but we need to find Tommy. His phone isn't ringing, he's not at the hotel he usually lives in, he's not been seen at any of his usual haunts. Now, while I'd love for it to be because something horrible has happened to him, I have a feeling he's hiding.' My footsteps clacked on the tiled flooring as I sauntered over to where Evan sat. 'And I'd really like you to help me with that.'

'I don't know where he is. He's not been in touch for days.'

With a quick motion, I stabbed my knife down into the chair in the small gap between Evan's thighs. He rewarded me with a squeal.

'You have been in a band together since you barely had hair on your balls, and you expect me to believe that shit?'

'It's true! Tommy barely shows up half of the time, and when he does, he's off his face with drink or drugs.' Evan winced when I reached down and pulled my knife from the wood, leaning as far back into his chair as possible.

'Now that, I can believe. But it doesn't help me find him, does it?'

'I'm sorry. I really don't know--' Evan gasped when I held my knife to his cheek, the blade pressing into his skin, close enough to leave a mark but without splitting the flesh.

'Listen to me. I don't give a fuck if you live or die tonight. I need something to go on. A lead. You've been in a band with him for a decade and you expect me to believe that you don't know where he lives?'

'He lives in a hotel, has for years.'

'And before that?'

'We had a flat together, all of us in the band. But we moved out when we started making enough to buy our own places.'

'And Tommy's never mentioned anywhere else?'

'He stays at his girlfriend's house sometimes. Her name's Katie Thompson, she's tagged on his insta.'

'You think we're stupid enough not to have checked there?'

I stepped back as Evan let out a shaky breath, his mind clearly going ten to the dozen behind his eyes.

'Our agent would know. If anyone does. They were always whispering together, and Chris was always the one to help him with whatever shit he got into. He has a whole team going around putting out Tommy's fires, so he doesn't wreck the band.'

I looked at my brothers, Logan nodded. We weren't going to get a better lead to go on.

'Thanks, Evan.'

'Please don't kill me.'

'But you understand that you're a risk now. We step out of here while you're still breathing and you'll run your mouth to the cops, or your agent, or Tommy. And where would that leave us but having to come back and skin you alive for giving us extra grief?'

I had no intention of killing the greasy little musician, but I needed him to believe that I did. If he didn't believe me, it'd leave me no choice.

'I won't tell a fucking soul. I promise.' Evan trembled as he pleaded his case. 'Tommy's been a thorn in my side for years. I won't miss him. He's an asshole. He deserves what he has coming to him.'

'That he does.' I flicked my knife closed, watching as Evan's shoulders slumped with relief. 'You have once chance not to fuck this up. Clean yourself up and go shack up with someone who can be an alibi for a few

days. The police will sniff around when we're through with Tommy, and you'll want to be in the clear. Tell a soul and you'll be joining him in hell.'

I packed my bag back up and left my brothers to press home the point while I walked back to the car.

Opening up my phone a few miles down the road, I pulled up the browser and found the info I needed. The Gilded Knife's agent and manager was one Mr Chris Fraser.

Within minutes of sending the name to my hackers, I had a full address in front of me, as well as pages of information about him.

He lived with his wife and kids on the outskirts of the city, but was last spotted tongue deep in his girlfriend, who had an apartment in the city centre.

'Well,' I said to the driver, 'It looks like we'll be taking a detour.'

CHAPTER TWENTY SEVEN

'Mum,' I said, groggily as I heard a female voice chatting softly to the nurse.

'Hey, Katie. No, it's just me, Maeve.'

'Oh, I thought my Mum was coming to visit.' Sitting up with a wince, I rubbed at my eyes.

'She was going to, but Cameron wangled it so you could come home to ours instead. We've got a private nurse lined up who can take care of your pain meds, and since nothing is broken and your MRI is clear, they'll let us sign you out.' Maeve stopped talking and fiddled with a button on her coat. 'Sorry, we should have called you and asked. It's just that Tommy is still unanswered for and we just need you somewhere safe until everything is sorted.'

I smiled at the closest person I had to a sister. The closest person at all, I guessed, seeing as Macey had sent pictures of Mac and me to Tommy. Even the thought was a punch to my gut. I'd have to cross that bridge later and talk to her.

'If I come to your place, will you make Cam cook for me?' I smiled as Maeve giggled.

'You bet your ass I will.'

'I'm sorry about Mac... and I,' I blurted as Maeve took the seat next to me.

'Hey, I shacked up with your brother and I've never apologised to you.'

'Well, you didn't really have any choice.'

'The heart falls where it falls. I don't own Mac, and I want to see him happy. Do you think you guys have legs?'

Did we? Could the relationship go anywhere? It wasn't a conventional start to a dating story, but Mac had knocked me off of my feet in the most bizarre, intense and soul drenching way. While I was unsure whether we could somehow take our dark, steamy affair and morph it into something lasting, I couldn't imagine not being wrapped up in his arms again. Or being pushed to my knees while he fills my head with the dirtiest, most delectable thoughts.

'Ah,' Maeve said as two burly men came into the room along with Benny, our years-long chauffeur. 'It seems we need to get you dressed. It's home time.'

'Benny!' I squealed. It had been months since I last saw him. Whilst an employee, he'd been a vital and solid part of Cam and my youth. Like a surrogate uncle. Steadfast and kind, and always loyal.

'Miss Thompson.' He tipped his hat as he scoured my battered face. 'You are a sight for sore eyes.'

'More like a sight to give you sore eyes. Come here and hug me. I've missed you.'

Benny gave me an awkward cuddle before patting me on the hand. 'I'm glad you're okay.'

'Me too.'

'Let's get you back to Edinburgh,' Maeve said, ushering the nurse in to unhook me from my IV and prep me for leaving.

The city gave way to rolling green as we hit the motorway. Benny sat upfront with one of Cam's men, while Maeve and I sat in the back with another. I fiddled with my bracelet, running my fingers over the beads absentmindedly.

Nerves turned my stomach at the thought of being at Cam's. Mum would be around, and I still didn't know how we could all fit together. Could I forgive her? She'd lived through hell with my dad, and if she'd taken us when she left, he'd have traced her until he buried her six feet under.

More than anything, I wanted us to be happy. All of us. I wanted a new chapter full of happiness. I missed it, if I'd ever really had it. We'd never wanted for anything. Dad had never withheld material objects or money. He'd insisted we had the best of everything to show everyone else the vast

wealth he had obtained. But our lives had been low on fun and frivolity. I thought it was about time we all had some.

Benny kept looking in the mirror for long periods of time, and eventually I glanced behind me. A car dodged between lanes whenever Benny moved.

'Are we being followed?' I asked, squinting at the black car behind us.

'Nothing to worry about, Katie.'

I gripped the armrest as Benny sped up, evasively moving between traffic. The car maintained its pace behind us.

Then I saw him.

Tommy.

Fear clawed at my stomach.

'It's Tommy,' I whispered as our bodyguard took out his gun, loading it.

'Shit,' Maeve said, pulling up her phone and texting Cam. 'Can't you shoot his tires out or something?'

Benny shook his head. 'Not in the middle of the M9.'

The bodyguard in the front turned and glared out of the back window. 'Pull off and into a back lane. We'll take him out there. He's alone.'

An awful crunch shook the car as it lurched forward. Tommy had rammed us. Maeve screamed while I screwed my eyes shut, the seatbelt aggravating my bruises as the hit made us swerve.

'Quickly,' the bodyguard said.

Minutes later, we were speeding through the lazy Scottish countryside with Tommy hot on our heels.

'Kill him,' I said, desperately gripping my bracelet. 'You can't let him get me.'

'It'll be okay,' Maeve said, grabbing my hand.

The bodyguard opened the window and fired a shot at Tommy's car. It hit a headlight, making it shatter. Each bang made my head ache.

Then a loud smack took my breath away as our car turned and flipped. Everything slowed as the car rolled, belongings flying amongst our combined screams. The bodyguard's body crunched with a sickening noise where he was hanging out of the window, squashed between the car and the ground as we rolled.

The car came to a stop upright, its alarm beeping loudly as my head ached. My chest felt like it was on fire where the seatbelt had crushed against it, holding me in place.

A sob tore against my throat as I looked at Maeve, still secured next to me, but unconscious, blood dripping from a cut on her forehead. The mangled corpse of the bodyguard hung limply halfway out of the window while Benny was still in the front. A groan came from the other bodyguard in the front, and I heard him cock his gun.

I reached behind me and pulled my phone from my pocket, desperately dialling Mac's number.

He answered almost instantly, his breathing laboured. 'Katie, you okay sweetness?'

'It's Tommy, he's found me,' I panted, pain blooming in my chest.

'What? Where?'

'I don't know. He ran us off the road. We're hurt. Maeve and Benny too-- 'I screamed as a gunshot sent the side window shattering through the vehicle, the guy in the front's head exploding with a red splatter that made me want to vomit.

'Katie!' Mac yelled at the other end of the receiver. 'I'm coming.'

The door next to me yanked open, cold air enveloping me.

'Hello, darling. Did you miss me?' Tommy reached in and undid my seatbelt, hauling me out of the car and throwing me to the ground. My phone dropped, and he picked it up, sneering at Mac's name on the screen.

'She's mine. You'll never get your fucking hands on her again,' he said into the phone before tossing it on the road and crushing it beneath his boot.

'No,' I groaned, dragging myself to my feet and limping toward his car, which was still running.

'Oh Katie, baby. Don't you have a kiss for me?'

Tears streaked my cheeks as my leg gave out beneath me. His arms wrapped around me as I fell, flipping me around as he pulled my face to his, crushing his mouth against my lips. I fought him as hard as I could with fists and teeth, but he only laughed.

'Keep the fight for later. I'll enjoy fucking you while you beg for your life.'

'Let me go Tommy,' I cried as he strong armed me to the trunk of his car. 'Please let me go.'

He shoved me roughly into the boot before slamming it down above me, sinking me into the darkness.

The tears fell blindly as I shivered in the back of the car.

I was as good as dead.

Being dead would be preferable.

CHAPTER TWENTY EIGHT

Cameron and I arrived at the scene of the accident at the same time, our cars screeching to a halt on the narrow road. Katie's call pulled me away from Logan and Ewen right as we'd captured Tommy's agent, and I had to abandon them to holding him. Between Katie's screams and the gunshot I'd heard, I had to get to her as soon as possible.

Benny's car was on all four wheels, but with huge dents and scrapes across the metal. Our guys had only taken minutes to track their phones, and defying all speed limit laws, we'd gotten to the car in record time.

Swallowing down bile at the sight of the half-crushed, half-severed body hanging out of a smashed window, I steeled myself for whatever lay inside.

Tommy had taken Katie, but what had he done to Maeve? My baby sister. My best friend growing up.

On shaky legs, I followed Cam as he tore toward the vehicle, pulling open the other back door and disappearing inside.

My world was crumbling. I wasn't ready to face any more losses.

'Maeve. Maeve, can you hear me?' Cameron's voice broke as he reached in and cradled his wife's face in his hands. There was blood. So much blood in the car.

'He... took her...' Maeve whispered.

'I'll find her,' I said, relief washing through me. My sister was alive. Thank god. I pressed a trembling hand against the car and inhaled deeply before moving to the front door. The window had a bullet hole, the car's interior sprayed red. Hauling open the dented door, the body of one of Cam's syndicate men slumped out, half of his head completely missing.

It didn't matter how many times I'd seen blown out brains; my stomach was never ready for it. A wave of vomit slipped up my throat, and I closed my eyes, forcing it back down. My throat burned at the intrusion.

'Benny?' I said, looking past the brainless guy to Katie's long-time driver.

Nothing.

Fuck.

I tore round to his side of the car and battled with the door, pulling at it until eventually the twisted metal gave way.

A mist of blood covered Benny, but little of it seemed to be his. He would have been straight in the splatter zone from his passenger. I pressed two fingers into his neck, holding my breath until I felt a strong pulsing beneath them.

He was alive.

Unconscious but alive.

I leaned past him and picked up a gun that was discarded on the floor, before moving round and checking the other body. No gun to be found. Tracing my way back from the direction the car had been travelling in, I found the gun still gripped in a bodyless hand. Grimacing, I picked up both the gun, and the mangled hand before depositing them in my car. No point making things too easy for the police.

As a siren wailed nearby, I made my goodbyes to Cameron, leaving him to see Maeve and Benny to the hospital and to deal with the aftermath of the police.

Stopping to scoop up Katie's smashed phone, I got back into my car, my mood black with rage.

As I ran a finger over the smashed glass of the phone screen, I narrowed my eyes.

I had to find the fucker before he hurt my girl.

His agent had to be the key.

By the time I reached the warehouse where Tommy's male victim was still slowly dissolving, my blood ran cold with fury.

I didn't bother with a mask as I stormed into the room.

Chris was going to die.

The agent sat on a chair in the centre of the room, Ewen and Logan at a table to the side, playing cards as they waited for me. I'd already filled them in on Maeve's condition and Katie's disappearance to calm them after they heard about the accident.

'I'd apologise for the delay, but seeing as your pet rockstar was the reason for it, I'll not bother,' I said as I pulled a chair across the space, sending a loud scraping noise vibrating through the space. I set it down a few feet in front of him. Pulling out my knife, I toyed with it, watching as Chris's eyes followed it in my fingers.

'Listen, mate, I didn't do anything.'

'You knew.'

'Knew what?' Chris's voice was high and strained, the words distorted with fear.

'Knew that Tommy was killing women.'

Chris spluttered and shoot his head. 'No. No, I didn't.'

'You did. You knew and you let him keep doing it. And worse, you helped him cover it up.'

'I didn't--' Chris's words cut off as I flicked out the knife and stabbed it down into his leg just above his kneecap. His scream didn't affect me. I was numb to anything but finding my girl.

Blood seeped around the wound, staining his cream chinos as he panted, his arms pulling against the restraints which held him securely to his chair.

'Don't lie to me. You jumped up piece of shit.'

Taking out my lighter, I held it up to the blade of my knife, watching at the metal blackened. Tears washed down Chris's face as he watched me, his chest rising in panic the longer I let the flame dance over it. Leaning forward, I ripped open his trousers from the small hole I'd made, exposing his wound. The scream he let out when I pressed the hot knife to the gash was toe-curlingly visceral.

'Stop,' he whimpered, 'please stop.'

'How many times do you think I could stab you and then cauterise it with my knife before you died? It doesn't heal the wound, it just stops you bleeding out too quickly. Prolongs the torture.'

'What do you want?'

'Tell me the truth. You knew about Tommy, didn't you?'

When he hesitated, I lifted the knife back up in the air.

'Okay! I knew. I helped him. I had to. The band is funded by some bad fuckers from abroad, and if the money stopped coming in, they'd have me dead. I couldn't let Tommy fuck it up.'

'So you let him just kill women for money?'

'I didn't let him do anything. I just cleaned up his messes. I tried to reason with him.'

'Letting him continue makes you an accessory.'

'What do you want from me? Want me to give him up? I can't I don't bloody know where he is!' Chris let out another yowl of pain as I punctured his left hand with my blade, it slipping easily between the bones and piercing the wood beneath them.

'We have looked everywhere, and he has my girl. We need to find him and so help me god if I have to remove a piece of you every five minutes until I get answers, I will.' I leaned in close and gripped him around the throat as I spoke, delighting when his face purpled.

'Katie?'

'Yes.'

'He showed me some footage some broad gave him of the two of you. She made him angry. Let her go, man. If she cheated on him, she could well do it to you, too.' His words were barely a whisper as I dug my fingers into his throat.

'Are you suggesting that I leave a defenceless woman in his hands? Knowing damn well he'll kill her? You're as much of a fucking monster as he is.'

Removing my knife from his hand with a jerk, I splayed his fingers on the wooden arm of the chair, placing the blade at the junction of his palm and index finger. He grimaced as the metal bit into the flesh.

'Are you ready to hear the sick way bones crunch as you sever them? I might even make you eat it if you don't come up with some possibilities real fast.'

Chris paled as I pressed down, ignoring the piercing screams that filled my ears.

The pop sickened me to my stomach as the scent of piss filled my nostrils. Holding up the finger, I dropped my knife onto my chair before grasping Chris's face, forcing his mouth open and holding his severed finger up to it.

He squirmed and begged as I forced the digit between his lips.

'Okay, please. I'll tell you whatever you need.'

Fresh tears washed over his face as I placed his finger in his shirt pocket and sat back down.

'Where does he go?'

'There are a few properties he's bought over the year. Small places in shitty parts of town. Get my phone and unlock it. I have a file on all my clients, any holdings and assets.'

I narrowed my eyes at him. Of course he did.

His phone was hot and clammy from where it had been in his sweat drenched pants pocket. Screwing my face up, I wiped it on his trousers before holding it to his face and waiting for it to click open.

'Go to the folder.'

'What's the password?'

'Amelie1997.'

'I'm guessing that's not your missus' name.'

Chris had the nerve to scoff as I entered the password and looked through the series of folders, clicking through into Tommy's file. Eventually, I found one entitled holdings and pulled up the info. Multiple deeds to houses all under a pseudonym. Bingo.

Pushing the phone into my pocket and cleaning my bloody knife, I turned to leave.

'Wait, you guys aren't going to leave me here, are you? I told you. You need to let me go.'

I stilled as my brothers flanked me.

'Shit, you know he's right guys, we can't leave him there.'

'Siri - call the police!' he shouted out, leaving me fumbling with the phone and cancelling the call. My jaw tensed as I walked back to him, picking his finger out of his pocket and shoving it into his throat, holding his mouth shut as he choked on it.

'Ewen, open the vat.'

Chris's eyes were wide and watery as he gagged on his own flesh, vomit breaching between my fingers as I held them over his mouth.

The clang of the vat lid on the floor had us in action. Logan and I manhandled Chris over to the tank as he whimpered and cursed. His pleading did nothing to dissuade me from his fate. The acid was murky, floating flesh and bones visible below the surface. I covered my nose at the smell before tipping Chris on his chair to see the scene below him.

'Let me go! Let me fucking go.'

'See that body? That was Tommy's doing. He killed him. It's poetic really that your last breath will be inhaling his flesh into your fucking lungs.'

Chris's face was puce as he struggled against the bonds on the chair.

'Say hi to Tommy for me. He'll be joining you in hell soon enough.'

We slid him into the liquid, his screams intensifying as his skin bubbled.

Then he slid below the surface, his screams cut off as his mouth filled with acid. Stepping down from the vat, I leaned heavily against the side.

'Fucking hell,' I said, closing my eyes.

'You did a good thing, Mac. He deserved it.'

'Let's go get Katie.'

CHAPTER TWENTY NINE

KATIE

My head spun when I woke up, no longer feeling the movement of the car beneath me. My muscles were stiff and aching as I sat up, feeling the scratchy blankets beneath me. The room I was in was dark, with nothing but a small lamp illuminating one corner.

Tommy was nowhere to be seen. There was nothing to see.

As I stood, I took in the stained, filthy mattress I'd been on, the blankets strewn over it. It sent a shudder through me, making my skin itch.

The lamp was light in my hand as I lifted it and used it like a torch, illuminating the walls. Along one wall there was a series of polaroid pictures, and I moved closer to look at them before stumbling back.

The pictures showed women. Multiple women in various states of undress, all with red eyes and tear tracks down their faces. Then there were pictures of them bloodied, beaten, or dead. My hand trembled as I put the lamp down and steadied myself against the wall.

Fuck.

Tommy wouldn't have taken me there if he intended for me to live.

How had I missed it?

I'd known he was a bit of an asshole, but to be a killer? Hell, I'd never even suspected it.

Panic rose as I searched the room, pulling open the drawers of the desk, finding necklaces, underwear and locks of hair. I dropped them in disgust as

I saw the same necklaces and underwear on the women in the pictures.

Trophies.

Moving to the far side of the room, I yanked the handle on the door. It didn't budge. Sweat wetted my neck as I ran my hand over a window in the wall. It was cool to the touch, but nothing but black lay beyond. I banged against it and screamed, trying to find a way out. I had to get out.

I didn't want to die.

Time passed slowly as I paced the room, eventually giving up and curling up in one corner, far from the soiled mattress. My fingers went to my bracelet, twirling the beads as I tried to calm my breathing.

It was hopeless.

I could only hope that Mac and Cam would look for me. That they could find me. But how? They didn't know Tommy. How would they know where he'd put me? I could be anywhere.

Suppressing the waves of sobs that burst from my mouth only made them worse. All I'd wanted was for Tommy to love me. To need me. And he was going to kill me.

I'd picked a man even worse than my scumbag father.

I'd never see Cam again. Or Maeve.

Or Mac.

I wrapped my arms around myself and imagined I was back in his arms, wrapped up with the only man who'd ever made me feel safe, other than my brother.

All I wanted was to wrap myself back up in him.

To be safe.

To be loved.

Because despite the insane way he went about it, he truly cared about making me happy. He'd done wonderfully sordid shit to me, but always made sure I knew he never thought less of me for enjoying it. He'd washed me, and fed me, and stayed with me when I needed him. He'd only intervened to try to save me from Tommy.

It had been too late.

Hours later, my room flooded with light from the partition window, displaying another room beyond it. It looked well furnished, clean and neat with a wall to wall bookshelf, winged back leather armchairs and a bar. It

looked like a gentleman's study from the turn of the century. A stark contrast to the grubby room I was in.

My heart leapt as I saw Macey walk into the room, looking beautiful in a short black dress and heels. Then it fell as I saw Tommy walk in behind her, looping his arm around her waist.

She turned to him and giggled, leaning in to kiss him deeply as I watched.

Macey and Tommy?

What the hell?

Then I saw Tommy look at the window, which I could only assume was a mirror on the other side, and grin.

Fuck.

He was putting on a show for me.

I ran forward and banged against the glass, but Tommy hit a button on a device which flooded their room with music. Music I could suddenly hear.

Squinting, I saw speakers up in the corners of my room, letting me hear what was happening in their room. Macey hadn't even flinched when I'd banged the glass. She couldn't hear me.

I still tried calling out as she flirted and danced with him, whispering into his ear as he caressed her. I only stopped when my throat had grown hoarse with effort, and she still hadn't heard a single word.

No. No. No! Why the fuck had she gone with him?

Tommy faced her toward me and pulled the top of her dress down, playing with her nipples as I averted my eyes. But I couldn't keep looking away for long. I had to know if she was safe. If it was just a punishment to screw my best friend in front of me, or whether he intended to add her to his list of victims.

She shoved him playfully onto the sofa and pulled up her dress to straddle his face. His eyes never left the window as she rode his face. When she caught him looking in what must have looked a mirror to them, she smiled, playing with her tits as she launched into some heavy moans.

When she came screaming his name, my stomach felt hollow.

I hated him.

More than I'd hated anything.

'So fucking hot, baby,' Tommy said as she climbed off and he pushed her to her knees, her back to me while he caressed her hair.

The chink of his belt buckle sent a fresh wave of despair through me. He couldn't get hard. Unless he had the violence. It finally cleared in my head. He'd told me it was all for me. That's what he meant. He killed other women to fuck me.

Tears flowed when Macey worked his limp dick, trying her best to get him to rise to attention, as he reached down and pulled a polaroid camera from a bag on the floor.

Macey's face bobbed as he took a picture, holding it and shaking it as he stared through the mirror at where I was.

It made me sick when he slapped her so hard she screamed.

I wanted to vomit when he bloodied her lip and got a hard on.

I cried when she tried to get away.

He used cable ties to bind her wrists and ankles as she fought him, turning her to face the mirror before manhandling her towards it.

'It's all for you, baby,' he said as he pushed a button on the mirror. Macey's face paled as she saw me behind the glass, her fighting increasing at the sight of my bruised, tear-stained face.

'Katie,' she screamed, 'Help me!'

'I can't. I'm so sorry.'

I pressed a hand up against the glass as Tommy pulled a knife from his pocket. Screwing my eyes shut, I trembled, wanting to rip his fucking balls off.

'Stop,' I said. 'Please, stop. Let her go. I'll stay, I promise.'

But they couldn't hear me.

'Watch,' Tommy said, his voice dripping with lust. 'Watch or I'll torture her first.'

I wanted to keep my eyes closed, to block it out. But I couldn't let her suffer any more than the minimum possible.

She betrayed me by going to him with the images, but I loved her. I'd known her since my school days, and I didn't want to let him torture her at my expense.

I opened them to see her crying hard.

It took only a second for him to run the knife over her throat, scarlet flooding down over her chest. How quickly a life could end. He held her there, his eyes boring into me as she jerked in his arms.

My heart went with her when her body slipped to the floor out of view, leaving me staring at Tommy. He was as hard as a rock, that unhinged look

glazing his eyes.

'Look what you did, babe. You wanted me to fuck you properly. Now I can. You should be proud of me for finding us a solution.'

I turned away as he laughed, the noise grating through my body as I crumpled, sliding down the wall and burying my face in my knees.

'There's no hiding, Katie. You've a dick to ride.'

I stayed curled up as he unlocked the door and grabbed me. With rage flooding my system, I lashed out as we entered the study room. Nails bared and using my teeth, I clawed at him, gouging and scraping as he slapped me.

'Like a little fucking hell cat, damn I should have killed your friends sooner,' he grunted as he shoved me into a room next to the study where a dog cage lay in wait. 'Maybe I'll get Erica next, or go back for Maeve. She'd be a hot little fuck.'

'Fuck you, you sick bastard,' I screamed as I kicked out at him. With my injuries, I was too weak to do anything other than superficially wound him. His laughter intensified as he shoved me to my knees and into the cage, locking it behind me.

'It's time to put that dirty mouth to work.' Tommy stroked his dick as I moved further back into the cage to get away from him. 'You can make this easy for yourself or make it hard. My knife fits through those bars. How many cuts until you decide to drink my dick down, huh?'

The repulsion I felt didn't outweigh the fear as I gave in.

I closed my eyes and drifted into my head as he used my mouth, phasing out everything but the bracelet on my wrist, twirling the beads.

Twirling.

Twirling.

Numb.

CHAPTER THIRTY

MAC

The first two addresses had been empty.

My heart thundered in my chest as we pulled up to the third, it looking as uninhabited as the others. What if we were too late? It was taking too long to find her.

'Come on, let's go,' Ewen said, squeezing my shoulder as he leaned forward from the passenger seat. 'I've sent some guys ahead to the other two houses. If they find him, they'll try to take him alive for you.'

'I don't care about him. I just want Katie to be okay.'

We walked toward the building, a ramshackle tenement style house that was skinny but tall. Peering through the windows, there were no lights to be seen inside. Logan worked on the lock, forcing it open as I waited, going foot to foot.

When the door finally swung open, I made my way inside, gun drawn. The air was dank and thick with dust. Rooms opened out either side of the corridor, the decor from the seventies crumbling in the dark.

Walking as silently as possible on the worn carpet, we made our way from room to room and floor to floor, cringing as the stairs creaked beneath our feet.

Nothing.

They weren't there.

Panic welled in my chest as I failed Katie again. Lifting a fist, I punched through the old plasterboard, sending a shower of crumbly dust cascading around us.

Logan pulled me into a hug, capturing me in his arms and gripping me tight. I tried to shrug him off until I gave in, needing the hug more than I thought.

'What if he's killed her?' I whispered into my brother's shoulder, my voice shaky.

'He hasn't. You can't think like that. She still needs you.'

'Guys, he's here.'

I pulled back from Logan's arms and stared at Ewen. 'How do you know?'

He held up his phone, showing the AirDrop page. It said 'Tommy's iPhone'.

'You little fucking genius,' I said.

'Turn that off,' Logan whispered between his teeth, slapping Ewen on the arm. 'If he looks at his phone, he'll see you, you dingbat.'

'Shit. Yeah.' Ewen pressed the side button until his phone dipped to black.

'But where are they?' I asked. We'd searched the house from top to bottom.

'There must be a basement. Some of the old tenements have them.'

It took us almost twenty minutes to locate the trapdoor, finding it in a cupboard. Trepidation made me sweat as I slipped quietly down the stairs, trying to prepare myself for what we'd find there. I sent a prayer up to the god I rarely believed in to let Katie be alive. I needed her to be okay.

At the bottom of the stairs was a tiny dust-strewn room piled with boxes, but through the sea of boxes we found a door.

I nodded to my brothers as I placed my hand over the door handle and took a steadying breath. Pressing the handle down slowly, I inched the door open and peeked inside. There was a full-blown leather furniture filled study, with a window that looked into another room.

There was blood sprayed on the wall below the window. Too much blood. My stomach tensed as I saw it and feared the worst.

I made my way into the room, gun drawn as I listened. There were noises. Noises that sounded an awful lot like the slap of balls on ass and male moaning.

Anger wrapped around me as I held my gun up in front of me, and made my way toward the noises, flanked by my brothers. The first thing that greeted me was Tommy's white ass thrusting between a pair of legs. I choked back a curse as the dead body he was thrusting into jerked unnaturally. It took a few seconds for me to register that the body had dark hair, not the fiery red of my Katie. It was only then I noticed that the body was on the top of a thick metal cage where Katie cowered. A sea of emotions washed over me as she met my eyes, tears tracking her bruised cheeks. Rage, relief, murderous intent. It was all there. She was alive, and Tommy was going to pay for what he'd done to her.

'Open up baby, it's your turn,' Tommy grunted, pulling himself from the body and grasping Katie by the hair as he pulled her toward his dick.

I heard Ewen gag beside me.

Tommy was a sicker fuck than even I'd imagined.

'Let her go.' My voice was low and hard, my anger barely containable.

Tommy dropped her from his grip as he turned, his dick bouncing as he grinned. The way his lips twisted reminded me of the Joker, like his brain was detached entirely from his actions. I swallowed hard as I flicked my gun, pointing to a chair at the side of the room.

Tommy laughed. 'Well, look who it is. Couldn't get your own girl, so had to come after mine.'

'She's not yours.'

'She IS mine. She always will be. Look at all the things I've done to keep her happy. It was all for her.' He slapped the dead woman's ass as he spoke. It took everything I had not to shoot him between the eyes.

'Get on the fucking chair, Tommy.'

He sighed and shrugged before sitting down, spreading his thighs and not seeming to care an ounce that he wasn't wearing any trousers.

'Find something to secure him,' I said to Ewen and Logan as I kept my focus on Tommy, despite my heart already being with Katie. I needed to go to her, to free her, but I had to make sure Tommy wasn't going anywhere first.

'He had cable ties in the other room. He used them on Macey.' Katie's voice broke as she said her friend's name. Goosebumps wound their way up

my arms as I glanced at the body atop the cage. Fuck. He'd put Katie through hell.

As soon my brothers had Tommy attached firmly to the chair, I slammed my gun down and went to my knees in front of the cage, reaching through the bars to gather Katie against my chest. 'Sweetness, I'm so sorry it took so long to find you.'

She sobbed against me as I smoothed down her hair, breathing her in. My body sagged against the cage as I closed my eyes, holding her tight.

'Where's the key, Katie?'

'I don't know,' she whimpered.

'It's okay. We'll find it.'

Tommy glared at me as I wrapped Katie in my arms through the cage. 'Stop fucking touching her. She's mine.'

'You'll be dead soon. She'll never be yours.'

It was then that the situation hit Tommy as he flailed against his bonds, cursing blue bloody murder as Ewen and Logan rooted through his things to find the key to the cage.

'Here,' Ewen said, pulling it from Tommy's discarded jeans pocket and handing it to me.

Then she was free. I picked her up and cradled her against my chest, each one of her sobs hardening my hatred for Tommy. My sweet girl had only ever been full of light, and he'd done everything in his power to extinguish it.

I held her against me until her sobs subsided, stroking her hair and giving her the love she so desperately needed. 'It's okay. I've got you. You're safe now.'

'He killed Macey.'

'I know. He'll pay for it.'

I carried her into the other room, kissing her tear covered cheeks as I sat us both in a chair. The way she shuddered at the sight of the blood on the wall renewed my fury.

Ewen and Logan followed us and spoke in hushed tones.

'He has a fuckload of pictures of dead women in the other room, as well as trophies from his kills,' Logan said. 'I'm guessing we're not going to hand this over to authorities?'

'Not if there's anyway his celebrity ass will get away with it. The agent said guys like us funded his band, and you know they'll have deep enough

pockets to try to quash it. Plus, I want to know he's dead before I leave. I need to see him dead,' I said.

'I don't think I'll be able to sleep unless I know he'd dead too,' Katie whispered.

Logan nodded. 'So we kill him and torch the place? Get rid of the evidence.'

'No,' Katie said, sitting upright with her eyes wide. 'There will be families in the houses next to this one. If one tenement goes up in flames, they all will.'

'Fair enough,' Logan shrugged.

'I need Macey's body to get back to her family. They deserve to know what happened to her. They need to know about all the victims. To know what Tommy did. I don't want him being the victim.'

We sat silently and stewed on it for a few moments while Tommy shouted at us from the other room.

Then Katie smiled, and it sent a glorious tendril of warmth through me. 'We make it look like an accident.'

'How?' Ewen asked.

'Have you guys got any rope?'

'We can get some,' I said, watching my girl's brain tick behind her eyes.

'Make it look like he died while trying autoerotic asphyxiation. It would fit with all the sick shit they'll find here.'

'I want him to suffer. That's too quick,' I said.

Katie turned to face me, her hand slipping under my chin as she kissed me softly. It tore my heart right from my chest and made it putty in her hands. 'It is too quick, but when it's discovered everyone will remember him as a sick fuck and an idiot, they'll find his den full of twisted photos and he'll be vilified in death rather than glorified by his fans.'

Her lips moved against mine as she spoke and my need for revenge grappled against my want to please her.

'Please,' she asked, 'for me?'

'I'd do anything for you, sweetness.'

I stole another tender kiss, fighting my urge to pour all the wound up emotion into it. I wanted to claim her fiercely, to devour her mouth. I needed to pour all my pent up fear and angst into it and it took everything to hold back. She was hurt, physically and emotionally, and I needed to be careful with her.

We stayed wrapped up in one another while Logan sourced some rope and they forced Tommy to his feet on the chair, securing the noose they placed around his next to a rafter above. We had to hope it wouldn't give way when it took his full weight and bring the aged ceiling down on top of us.

'Do you want me to kick the chair out?' Logan called from the other room.

'No,' Katie said. 'I want to do it.'

'You don't have to do that.'

'I want to.'

When she stood, there was a renewed strength to her that made me breathe a sigh of relief. In time, I thought she'd be okay.

We made our way to the other room, hand in hand, and stood in front of Tommy, watching him struggle on his tiptoes as the rope cut into his neck.

'You should have left me alone,' Katie said. 'You couldn't let me be happy, could you?'

'Baby, this is crazy. Let me go.'

'I'm not your baby.'

'Please,' he wheedled, 'please, Katie. You loved me once. You can't let them kill me.'

'No, you're right. I'm not going to let them do it. I'm going to do it myself.'

Tommy tried to kick out at her, teetering on the edge of the chair as he cried out. Frustration and fear made him tremble.

'But first, Mac needs to see you suffer, and while I need this to look like an accident, there are other ways to make your last moments hell.'

I looked at Katie, narrowing my eyes. What was she planning?

'Ewen, Logan, we need ten minutes alone.'

Fuck. She wasn't...

The door creaked behind us as they let themselves out.

'For two years, you suppressed my pleasure, Tommy. You took and took, and never gave me an ounce of what I needed. It took Mac to let me see I deserved to feel good. To be adored. To be made to come until my fucking thighs quaked around his ears. You're going to spend your last ten minutes watching Mac treat me the way I deserve. You'll see what you could have had, Tommy. And then you'll die.'

I stared at Katie as she turned to me and whispered, 'if that's okay with you?'

'Anything for you, love. What do you need me to do?'

'Make him suffer. Wipe the memories of him from my body.'

'Promise you'll tell me if it hurts, you're still injured.'

'I don't mind a little pain, as well, you know.'

Then I let the floodgates open, claiming her mouth in a clash of tongues and teeth. Our mutual desperation peaking as Tommy swore at us.

'You little slut,' he shouted, as I dropped to my knees and pulled her clothing down, spreading her thighs and sinking my tongue between them. She weaved her fingers into my hair as she moaned my name, the insults only increasing from the chair in the corner.

'God, yes,' Katie groaned as I wrapped my hands around her ass and ate like a man starved. 'Do you see... what he does to me? He makes me want to fucking worship him just for a moment on his tongue.'

I wasn't used to being the one on the praise end of things, and I didn't hate it.

Her words made my tongue slide all the more thoroughly over her cunt. She came hard, riding my face with abandon as Tommy's curses filled the air.

'I need you inside me.'

'Don't you fucking touch her,' Tommy squealed, his face reddening every time he wobbled on his chair.

I needed no more encouragement, standing behind her and releasing my dick, lining it up with her wet heat. Sliding the head along the length of her, her moans filled me with need. Supporting one of her legs in the crook of my arm as we stood facing Tommy, I impaled her fully on my dick, my eyes rolling into my head with the bliss of being back where I belonged.

'God, you feel so good,' I said, kissing her neck as I thrust into her.

'Get off of her.' Tommy was incensed, seeing Katie trembling around my dick.

'Harder,' she moaned. 'He feels so fucking good inside me, Tommy. Look how hard he is. Fills me to bursting every time.'

I increased my strokes, closing my eyes as my thighs shook. Fuck, I'd needed her so goddamned bad that even the sick, twisted situation couldn't douse my lust for her.

'He's going to fill me up with his cum, and then, while it drips down my thighs, I'm going to kick that fucking chair over and watch you die.' Whimpers and moans interspersed her words as I pistoned into her.

My balls tightened as she reached between her thighs and stroked herself.

'Stop being such a whore,' Tommy growled when she tipped her head back against my shoulder and cried out.

'Fucking stop it.'

'God, her cunt is so fucking tight when she comes over my cock. You didn't even know what you were missing out on.' I grinned at him.

'I'm going to kill you,' Tommy screamed as Katie came hard, dragging my orgasm from me as her hot cunt milked my cock. It was explosive. After the fear and the adrenaline of the past few days, I came seeing stars with my girl quaking in my arms.

'Holy shit,' Katie panted as she continued to clamp down on me.

'I love you so fucking much,' I groaned into her ear as she gasped. 'It's okay, you don't need to say it. It's not the ideal time. But I needed you to know. I almost lost you and I can't go another minute without you knowing how much you consume my every waking thought.'

She turned, my cock slipping out of her as she cradled my face, kissing me softly. 'I can't, not yet. But I want to.'

I'd prepared myself for it, but it still stung. I understood. I'd spent two years loving her from afar, and she hadn't even known I was the man in her bedroom until a few days prior.

'Do you see his cum, Tommy? Look at my thighs.'

'You're a stupid whore. He'll get sick of you and you'll have no-one.'

'I don't need a man to make me worthwhile. I am worthwhile, just as I am.'

She placed her foot on the edge of the seat and looked up at her ex while he struggled on his toes, wanting to lash out at her but in too precarious a place to do so.

'Please, baby, don't do this. You're not a killer.'

'I don't think it counts when you kill someone who is a low-life like you. Hope you rot in hell.'

Then she kicked the chair out from under him, stepping back as he flailed on the end of the rope. I walked forward and wrapped my arms around her shoulders as we watched him die.

It wasn't until he'd stilled, his eyes bulging from his purple face, that she shuddered and broke down into tears.

I righted our clothing before picking her up and walking her out of the hellhole, and away from Tommy, for good.

CHAPTER THIRTY ONE

KATIE

I didn't leave the spare room in Cameron's apartment for a week.

Guilt ate at me. Every time I closed my eyes I saw Tommy's dead purple face and those bulging eyes.

I'd banished everyone but my brother and Maeve, as well as the nurse they hired who came to check my wounds and manage my medicine.

She'd even prescribed me some pills to numb the world when I couldn't stop the tears.

My new phone had blown up with social media requests from friends, acquaintances and strangers alike when the news had broken after Tommy and Macey's bodies had been found. After half a day of incessant buzzing, I'd drowned it in the bath before crawling back into bed.

Mac had tried to see me, but every time I saw his face it brought everything back in sharp clarity that I just couldn't handle.

'Hey,' Maeve said, coming into the room and only letting her nose crinkle a little at the dank, unwashed state of it. I'd banished the cleaners too. 'I brought you something to eat.'

'You need to stop Cam from filling your kitchen with dishes. I'm not hungry.' I turned away as she padded toward the bed and climbed on in beside me, never to be deterred no matter my mood.

'It's okay, I got you the good shit.'

'What?' I said, turning over to see her clutching a McDonald's bag.

'Nuggets. They are the answer to everything. Now sit your arse up before I pin you down and force feed them to you.'

My stomach grumbled, and I sat up, scooting my arse up to the top of the bed as she opened the bag and passed over a box.

'Did you get any barbecue sauce?'

'Yes,' Maeve grinned and dumped multiple tubs into my lap before sitting crossed legged and opening a box of her own nuggets. 'Cam told me that the two of you used to sneak out from the mansion and Benny would find you both at a McDonalds eating nuggets and giggling about your dashing escape. I figured it might help.'

We ate in silence as I closed my eyes and savoured the first food I'd eaten in days.

'Are the journalists still out there?' I asked. I'd seen them from the window days ago, but hadn't ventured near it since.

'Yeah, they are proving hard to shake off. It'll all blow over.'

'Do they believe it was an accident?' I pushed the food away as another flash of Tommy's face flooded my head.

'The coroner will attest to it having been an accident. He owes Cam a favour. It'll go no further.'

'God, I'm so glad you're okay,' I said, tears pricking my eyes as I surveyed Maeve's face. She still sported a healing cut on her forehead, but otherwise had made it mostly uninjured from Tommy running us off the road. Benny had two broken legs, but was being looked after in the private hospital where Maeve's dad had spent so long in his coma. She had assured me he was alright, but it still hurt that my relationship with Tommy had endangered so many people I loved.

'Hey.' Maeve gathered me up in a cuddle and pushed my hair out of my wet face. 'You need to stop apologising. We're okay. And you will be too. None of this is your fault. He was an absolute turd of a human, but you didn't know the depths of his depravity.'

'How's Mac?' I asked, looking down into my lap as she released me from her arms.

'Don't worry about Mac, he's fine.'

'Is he mad I haven't seen him?'

'Mad? No. Antsy, agitated, desperate? Absolutely.'

I picked up a discarded nugget and tore at the batter, dropping little pieces back into the box. 'He just feels so wrapped up in it all that I don't

know how to be around him without seeing Tommy's face.'

'You need time, Katie. It's okay to need time. And if I know my brother, he'll wait until you're ready. No matter how long that takes. He's already waited two years. What's a little longer?'

I smiled at her words.

'Is my mum still here?' I'd seen her only briefly when I'd arrived, but hadn't been ready for that emotional rollercoaster.

'She is. She's been teaching Cam how to bake. He made cinnamon buns this morning. They're actually pretty good.'

'I think I want to see her.'

'Good. But first, I'm running you a bath and getting someone in to change your bedsheets,' Maeve stood, gathering up the food detritus and dumping it into the bin under the desk.

'My phone's in the bath...'

Maeve just smiled and shrugged. 'Of course it is.'

It was late afternoon when I entered the sitting room, seeing Grace and Elias on the sofa with Maeve and Cam watching an action movie. Slipping quietly to the kitchen, I poured myself a glass of water and smiled at my mum. She was arm deep in bubbles, washing up dishes in the sink.

'You know Cam has staff for that, right?' I said, lifting an eyebrow.

My mum offered a smile over her shoulder before drying her hands with a dish towel and facing me, leaning back against the sink. 'I know. I just got used to living a different way while I was on my own. How are you doing?'

The air was thick between us with uncertainty. I'd avoided her for months. She'd abandoned me for years. But after seeing what it was like to have dated someone who enjoyed hurting me, I understood her more than I ever had.

'Not great,' I said.

'Oh, hon-- sorry. I know it's too over familiar. I'm sorry.'

'It's alright. I'm sorry I've pushed you away. I didn't know how to deal with you being back in my life. I was so excited when Maeve tracked you down, but then seeing you here, well, it hurt. It made your absence all the more acute.'

My mum closed the space between us, her eyes wet and her expression soft. 'I can't undo the hurt I caused, but I can try to make up for it. It killed

me every day I was without you. I wanted to take you both with me, but your father would never have let you go, so I had to. It was the only way to keep you safe. But I know how much it hurt to be abandoned in his care. He was an awful man, and I will live with that guilt every day of my life.'

I was in her arms before I knew what I was doing, the warmth of her embrace healing one of the tiny wounds which littered my subconscious. Her tears wetted my hair as we sobbed together, finally taking a step toward a new tomorrow.

'God, I've missed your hugs,' I said, wrapping my arms tightly around her back, astounded at how much smaller she was compared to how she'd felt in my arms as a little girl.

'I dreamt of this for so many nights, of having you and Cameron back in my life and safe. It might not be easy, but I'll go at whatever pace you're willing to have me around.'

'Thanks, Mum,' I said before reluctantly releasing her from my grip, feeling a little sheepish.

'Katie!' Grace said, coming into the kitchen and practically launching her lanky teen self into my arms. 'I tried to come in and give you my iPad to keep you entertained but Cam and Maeve banned me. I was going to let you play my Sims.'

'I missed you too,' I laughed, wiping at my eyes.

Grace leaned back and held me lightly by the shoulders while scanning my yellowed, bruised face and tear skimmed cheeks. 'Good things can come out of bad situations. Maeve told me that after she rescued Elias and I. And you all are good things that came from that.'

Her words hit me like a bus. Who knew a teenager would have the wisdom I needed to hear? Grace had seen her share of trauma before ending up with my brother, and if anyone knew about appreciating a silver lining, it was her.

'Thank you,' I said, reaching up and taking her hand. 'I needed to hear that.'

'Good. Now don't freak out, but I pinched Cameron's credit card and booked us all onto a girls holiday on his private island.' Grace's eyes crinkled in delight.

'You did what?' I said at the same time as my mum.

Cameron came into the room at the same time and shrugged. 'Don't worry, they called me to approve the transaction. I upgraded you all to the

private plane.'

Grace pouted at the surprise having been foiled as Cameron reached out and messed up her hair. She screeched before jabbing him in the ribs and dissolving into a fit of laughter.

And suddenly my world felt just a bit lighter than it had.

CHAPTER THIRTY TWO

The water sloshed in our pool as Logan tore through it, doing lengths as I sat idly by, ignoring the beer in my hand.

'Come on, Mac,' he said, stopping near my seat and resting his elbows on the edge of the pool. 'You can't mope about forever. She'll come round.'

'Yeah, maybe.'

'She just needs some processing time. You guys didn't have the most ordinary start to a relationship, and with everything that went down, her head is bound to be in an awful place.'

'I want to be her safe space.'

'You're going to need to earn it. You can't stalk a chick and expect her to fall in love with you.'

It wasn't that I had expected it, but it had been more than just the kinky sex, I was sure of it. The electricity that thrummed between us couldn't have been only on my side. It couldn't be imagined.

Could it?

Cameron had turned me away every time I'd tried to visit, and when I'd implored my sister to let me see Katie, she'd turned me down too. Albeit more gently.

I pulled out my phone, checking for the hundredth time if her number worked. Nothing. Had she blocked me? Her social media pages had all gone on hiatus with the media circus surrounding Tommy's death, and I needed to see her. To know she was okay. To feel her heart beating against my chest, reassuring me she was safe.

What if she never wanted me near her again?

The thought was unacceptable. I would win her back. I had to. She had my heart, and without her, I'd be lost.

'I hate the silence,' I said as Logan lifted himself out of the water and towelled himself off before taking the chair next to mine.

'She'll soon be back to herself and chatting your ear off.'

'God, I hope so.'

I missed her sunny smile and infectious laugh.

Logan stood up and patted me on the shoulder, gathering up his things.

'Where are you off to?' I asked.

'I've got to go meet the family.'

'Our family?'

'No. My fiancée's family.'

I narrowed my eyes while going through the past weeks in my head. Fiancée? Fuck, he was serious?

'You're not going to actually marry the Nicola chick, are you?'

'I am.'

'Why?'

'It's the way it's always been in families like ours. It's business.' Logan ran a hand through his hair as he spoke.

'It's stupid.'

'Says the guy who literally stalked the woman he loves.'

'Marrying a woman you don't know is even stupider.'

'We'll see,' Logan said with a shrug.

The silence that settled over the room was too much to bear after Logan left, so I went to find someone— anyone— to talk to.

Hours later, I ended up in Ewen's club, which was picking up again after the opening night ending in disaster. I sat next to the bar nursing a whisky as people flitted here and there, giggling, flirting and touching one another.

I didn't want to be there.

Everywhere I looked reminded me of Katie. I'd watched her at the bar with her friends. With Tommy. My eyes hadn't left her the entire night. I saw the way she watched others playing, her eyes glittering at the acts she witnessed. When hurt had replaced them as she watched Tommy, I'd played my hand and tried to sooth her pain with my tongue, I'd been so certain that

she'd want the real me as much as she'd craved my masked self, it had thrown me when she didn't.

The music rose to a crescendo as my eyes were drawn to the stage where two performers played. The woman was on her knees looking up at the man who held her leash with rapturous adoration. Their relationship could have been strictly professional or full-blown love for all I knew, but that look she gave him sent a shiver through me. Katie had looked up at me like that the night in the woods, and I needed her to look at me like that again. With her big, needy eyes, knowing that I'd do anything for her. That I'd happily kill for her every day if only it meant she let me into her life.

Ewen moved past me, ducking behind the bar to grab something.

'Stop sitting there with a sour face. You're ruining the vibe.'

'I can go...' I began, but he waved a hand at me before topping my drink up.

'No, you're fine, just at least try to look like you don't hate the place.'

'I don't hate it.'

'Tell your face.' Ewen grinned at me.

'I might try stopping at Maeve's on the way home, see if Katie's re—'Ewen cut my words with a shake of his head.

'You can't. They aren't there.'

My hand stilled on the counter as I placed my glass down.

'Where are they?'

'Maeve took Katie, Grace and her mum off on holiday. To get her away from everything.'

Sighing, I took another sip of my drink. If she needed an escape to get better, then I'd just have to wait longer.

All I could do was hope she'd come through the fog without hating me.

CHAPTER THIRTY THREE

It took four days in paradise before I truly relaxed.

The last time I'd been in our family mansion on the private island had been years prior, and it had taken my mum and me days to get used to the fact we wouldn't see my father around a corner.

But, finally, it was sinking in that it was over.

Tommy was dead. Dead and gone. Forever.

Cameron had sent through an article to Maeve, which had confirmed that Tommy had been named as the killer in a string of deaths, including the man that Mac had disposed of, and even his own agent. The papers were making puns about his band name - The Gilded Knife - and him being a killer, and I had a moment of pity for the other members of his band. It seemed they were blaming drugs for his altered mental state.

Relief swept through me as I realised the police weren't going to come and knock down my door and drag me to prison for killing my ex. It had taken time for me to reconcile that I wasn't the same as him, and that Mac wasn't either. We'd killed because we had to, and because Tommy deserved it, and the weight that had been threatening to bury me lightened.

I smiled as I lounged in the sun, watching Grace posing and snapping selfies by the pool. My mum sat down on the lounger next to me and passed me a sweet, red cocktail over flowing with umbrellas and other brightly coloured decor.

'Wow, that's quite something,' I said after taking a sip.

'Yeah, I think the barman has a thing for you.'

'Oh shush, I'm not looking for anything like that.'

'A holiday palette cleanser could be exactly what you need. Something fun and easy.'

As good as fun and easy sounded, rolling around with a man was the last thing I wanted. I didn't want to have silly, uncomplicated sex. I wanted to be worshipped and to worship. To delve into the dark side and then be ushered back out of it with secure arms and tender words. I wanted to be forced to my knees and made to scream his name.

Mac's name.

Because with each passing day, I was more resolute in needing him like he needed me. In wanting to spend my days with my family, and my nights wrapped up with him.

Without the masks and the distance. Without the gloves between his skin and mine. Just him and me, figuring out a way to make our lives work together in the dark and in the light.

I closed my eyes and let the sun's rays wash over me, warming all the cold, hard parts that Tommy had created over the months I'd spent trying to pacify him.

I'd spent too much of my past cowering, and I was done with it.

The future would be bright.

I'd make sure of it.

CHAPTER THIRTY FOUR

The door buzzed in the distance as I lay on the couch, flicking through endless channels of bullshit on the TV. I waited for the doorman to answer it and cursed as it buzzed again.

Where was everyone?

I'd lived in the mansion my whole life and had never answered the bloody door.

When the buzzer went again, this time it holding for a ridiculously long time, I got up and threw the remote into the cushions before stomping toward the front hall.

I tore open the door, ready to swear at whatever delivery person had the nerve to keep their finger on the buzzer when my arse about fell off.

Katie stood on the doorstep, her red hair falling about her lightly tanned shoulders, and a dozen more freckles covering her nose. She fidgeted with a pizza box she as she blinked up at me.

'Surprise,' she said, her voice unsure as I gawped at her.

I couldn't believe she was there, in the flesh. Her bruises were gone after the weeks she'd spent away from me, only the faintest of lines remaining along her lower lip. A lump jumped into my throat as I swallowed hard, trying to tame my thunderous pulse.

'Katie,' I said, lost for words.

She was a vision in a sweet, knee length dress and tan leather boots, a scarf wrapped around her neck and mirroring the autumnal hues that had swept the outside world.

She held out the pizza, offering it up to me with pink in her cheeks. 'Sorry, it's not much, but I didn't know what else to bring.'

I took it from her before placing it down on the low wall next to the steps.

'You didn't need to bring anything.' I'd had a thousand different things I'd wanted to say to her, but with her in front of me, my brain may as well have been made entirely from cotton wool.

'Can we start again?' she asked.

I smiled and nodded my head. 'Yes. God, yes, we can.'

She offered out her hand and I leaned forward to take it. 'Hi, I'm Katie, it's nice to meet you.'

'Mac. Pleasure's all mine. Do you want to come in? I could make some coffee?'

Her fingers were warm where I still held them, possibly for the longest handshake known to man. I didn't want to let her go.

'Yes, please.' Her dimples showed as she skipped up the stairs. At long last, my girl was back. Scarred more than she had been, but no longer crushed under the weight of damaged men. I hoped I could keep that smile on her face for as many years as she'd let me.

Closing the door behind her, I was surprised to be slammed against it. Katie's mouth closed over mine as she feverishly sought my tongue, moaning when I gave it to her. Her kiss was pure fire, and the heat flowed through me, burning me up inside. I pushed a hand up into her hair and tugged firmly to open her mouth further, seeking my redemption within it. Her scent wound itself around me, apples and cinnamon, and I inhaled deeply as I lost myself in her.

'Sorry,' she said as the pink in her cheeks intensified. 'I just really needed to do that.'

'Never apologise for kissing me. It will always be something I crave. I mean, it's a little forward when we've just met and all...'

She laughed and took me by the hand as I grabbed the pizza before leading her through to the kitchen, making a coffee while barely taking my eyes off of her. I couldn't risk her disappearing as suddenly as she'd arrived.

'How are you?' I asked as I sat on the bar stool next to her, our knees clashing as we faced one another, our coffees abandoned on the counter.

'I'm doing better. It's been rough, but I finally feel much more myself than I have in a very long time.'

My muscles relaxed as she spoke, weeks of long tension lifting with every word. 'I'm so glad to hear that. I've missed you.'

'I've missed you, too. I'm sorry I didn't stay in touch, but there were messages coming from everywhere and each new one felt like an overload on my brain. I needed to escape it all to piece back what was left of my life, and what I wanted to keep.'

Running a thumb over the back of her hand, I held her gaze. 'Did I make the cut?'

'With flying colours. Where else will I find someone who will fuck me in the dirt before making me a sandwich?'

'I really enjoyed both activities,' I said, taking her fingers to my mouth and kissing them lightly. 'Why do you smell like pineapple?'

'Oh, I pinched a few bits off of the pizza on the drive over. I didn't think you'd mind.'

'Mind? That you are removing fruit from pizza?'

'I thought you liked it. You brought it over to me that night...' her voice died off as she raised her eyebrows. 'I guess one pro of my boyfriend being an ex-stalker is that you know what I want. I don't even know the first thing about what you'd want on your pizza.'

'There's plenty of time to learn all about me.'

She'd called me her boyfriend, and it made me tingle all fucking over.

'Do we need to wait a certain amount of time before it's acceptable for me to sit in your lap?' she said, before biting her lower lip and widening her eyes.

'Get your arse over here, sweetness.'

I pulled her into my lap and claimed her mouth as her skirt rode up over her thighs. She wrapped her legs about my waist as I explored her with my hands, still not quite believing she was finally mine.

I'd been hers since the moment we met.

'Tell me what you want, Katie.'

'I want everything. I want it hard, and soft, and dirty, and sweet. I want to pin you down between my thighs and then have you use my mouth until I cry. I want you to fill me up day and night until we're both too exhausted to fuck anymore. Then I want to curl up in your arms as you fill my head and heart with sweet words. I want it all, Mac.'

If my heart could have exploded, it would have. Instead, I reached up and wrapped a hand around her throat, tipping her mouth up to mine.

'You're so fucking perfect, Katie. I'm going to spend eternity showing you.'

'Can I have your cock, please? I need you right now. If you don't give it to me, I might cry.'

'Don't threaten me with a good time, darling. If you cry, you'll get my dick all the harder.'

She shifted in my lap, grinding herself down on me and making my head swim.

I had her bent over the counter with her dress around her hips and my dick in hand before she could say another word. Her cunt swallowed my fingers as she let out a low moan, arching her ass to take more.

'You're so wet. You really have missed me, haven't you?'

'Yes, Sir,' she whimpered into the counter as I fucked her with my fingers.

'Did you touch this little cunt and think of me?'

'I did.' Her thighs trembled as she spread them, making more space for me to touch her. 'Oh, god, Mac.'

'Say it again.'

'What?'

'My name. I dreamt of hearing you say it so many times when you didn't know who I was.'

'Mac,' she whimpered as I dragged my fingers down over her clit, making her writhe.

'Now I'm going to make you scream it.'

I couldn't hold back anymore. I aligned myself with her and thrust deep, sinking into her with a groan. Leaving one hand between her thighs to tease her flesh, I used the other to pull her body flush with my chest, wrapping my hand around her throat, forcing her to arch her back.

'That's it my sweet, you spread those thighs and take my dick like a good girl.'

'I'm going to come,' she panted as I drove into her, the tight, wet hole feeling like heaven around me.

'Don't you dare. Not yet. Wait for me.'

'Please? I can't wait.' Her whole body quaked in my hands as I slowed my fingers on her clit, delaying her orgasm just enough to catch up with her. With the counter holding her hips tight to me, I used my dick to serve up some slow, punishingly deep thrusts that made my balls tighten. 'I could live right here between your thighs, Katie,' I said, before tightening my grip on her throat. 'I'm going to fill you up, my little cumslut. Are you ready?'

'Yes, please. Fuc--' she moaned when I returned to drawing quick circles over her clit as I slammed my hips home. When her cunt tightened up, strangling my dick, I lost all sense.

'Mac',' she screamed as she teased a seemingly endless load of cum out of me with the pulsing between her thighs. My name on her lips was music to my ears.

'Atta girl. Taking my dick like a champ, as always.'

When I slid out of her, I gathered her up against my chest and looked down at her flushed face.

'I still love you, you know.'

'Good,' she grinned, a mischievous look on her face. 'Get down on your knees and use that tongue to show me just how much and I might say it back.'

I widened my eyes in surprise before letting out a laugh. 'I'll tan your arse for that.'

She mimicked my earlier words in her reply. 'Well, don't threaten me with a good time, Sir.'

All jesting aside, I'd do anything to hear her tell me she loved me, so I did as she asked, dropping to my knees in front of her.

'Spread them for me, sweetness.'

'But you came inside me... I didn't think you'd actuall—'

I leaned forward and licked the entire way up her wetness as she moaned. 'I'm nothing if not willing to fulfil your desires, love. Now shut up and let me show you.'

And with that, I ate my girl with all the vigour of a man starved.

'You win,' she said after I'd made her come all over my face. 'I love you too, Mac.'

I picked her up and kissed her hard, my pulse jumping at her words.

She fucking loved me.

My perfect, wonderful, delightful, Katie, loved me.

EPILOGUE

Light flooded in through the dining-room windows as I set the long, wooden table we'd bought to host my family.

It had taken months to get the house finished, but I hadn't minded a moment of it when Mac and I had spent any free moment we had doing it up together. As crime-family kids, we'd never really had to DIY anything so the learning curve had been huge, but fun too.

Mac walked into the room balancing a basket of bread in one hand and a handful of cutlery in the other, dumping them down on the table.

Leaning over to set the salt and pepper shakers in the centre of the table, I giggled as Mac moved behind me and slipped his hands over my hips, pressing firmly into my arse.

'We've no time for that,' I said, standing up as his lips found my neck, sending shivers of pleasure down into me.

'I can make it quick.' He wound a hand into my hair and pulled it firmly, giving him more access to my neck as he nipped with his teeth.

'I don't want quick... I like it when you take all the time in the world.'

'Mmm,' he said as he tipped my chin to his mouth, his tongue slipping over my lips as I swooned. Even months on, his touch set me alight.

'They'll be here any minute.' I turned and put a pile of napkins in his hands while raising an eyebrow. The way his eyes creased as he grinned made my tummy flip. God, he was so bloody hot. I don't know how I'd missed it for so long. I'd always seen him as objectively attractive, but maybe his sulky face had always turned me off. But the real Mac, the happy or flirty, protective or dominating, he was like no-one I'd ever been around.

He filled my days with lightness and love, and my nights with darkness and depravity. I needed both in equal measure.

'Fine,' he said, taking the napkins and distributing them before coming back to my side as I placed down the cutlery. Quick as a flash, he grabbed me by the throat and tipped my face to his, an instant haze of lust clouding my vision. 'But if I have to be wound up, then you do too, my little cock slut.'

His breath washed over my face as he reached up under my skirt and impaled me on his fingers, fucking me slowly with them as his eyes roved over my face.

'That's it, sweet girl. Listen to how wet you get for me.' I could hear it, and my cheeks flushed. 'I want you so fucking desperate that you'd let me force you over the table and fuck you, no matter who was here for dinner. So needy that you'd drop to your knees and beg for a mouthful of dick.'

'Yes, Sir,' I moaned as he continued to fuck me with his hand, his other slowly applying increasing pressure to my throat as I panted. His mouth was frustratingly just out of reach, and when I tried to kiss him, he grinned.

'That's it, darling. You show me how badly you need my mouth.'

Within minutes I was bucking my hips and grinding down on his fingers, cursing as he kept me on the edge of orgasm, stopping his movements every time I came to close.

'Please?' I begged.

'Oh no, sweetheart, you didn't want to, remember?' His eyes were dark as he watched the reactions he wrought from me cross my face.

The doorbell rang, and I could have cried from frustration. I righted my dress as he removed his hand from my panties with a wicked gleam in his eyes.

'Knees, Katie.'

'But—'

'Now.'

I dropped to my knees and looked up at him, the submissive need in my stomach warring with the fact I was keeping my guests waiting.

Mac held his wet fingers out in front of my face, his voice dropping to a low growl.

'Lick them clean.'

My mouth was on his fingers, licking and sucking eagerly as he bit his lip to stifle a groan.

'That's it. You love when I put that mouth to work, don't you?'

I nodded as I sucked his fingers into my mouth, blinking up at him. The doorbell rang again. He shoved his fingers deep into my mouth, making me gag. 'Such a needy little slut. I'm going to give this mouth a good fucking workout the minute they leave. Do you understand me?'

My eyes watered as I nodded. Then he had me up in his arms, kissing me tenderly as my head spun.

'Go take a minute, I'll get the door.'

When I got back from tidying myself up, the table was set and my family gathered in the kitchen, sharing drinks and chatting animatedly. It was like food for my soul, seeing them all together. Happy and safe.

'Still not introducing us to this fiancée of yours?' Mac said to Logan. We'd all seen pictures of her, hell their engagement had been written about in the papers and on social media extensively. The McGowan siblings constantly ribbed him about it.

'Shut up, Mac.' Logan took a hefty swig of his wine while scowling.

'I guess we'll meet her at the wedding, right? We will get an invitation?' Ewen added.

'Not the way you lot are going, you won't.'

'Have you guys set a date?' I asked, slipping into the room as Mac handed me a glass of red.

'Katie,' Maeve said, pulling me into a hug as I tried very hard not to slosh wine all up her back. 'The house is looking incredible!'

'Thanks, I think we're finally there with it.'

'Hope the new security system is all set up,' Cameron said, raising his eyebrows at Mac and I.

'State of the art, the best my business offers,' Mac said, 'hand on heart.'

Grace and Elias had their heads stuck in their phones, utterly ignoring the surrounding adults.

'Cam brought pie,' Maeve said, changing the subject. Cam still wasn't quite past the unusual way Mac and I became entwined with one another.

'What kind?'

'Cherry,' Cam said, his face lighting up as he went into a spiel about the ingredients while we all indulged him.

We gathered round the table and tucked into the food our chef had whipped up. I may not have an enormous mansion that was fully staffed, but cooking still wasn't my strong point, so we had Cam's chef deliver our meals a couple of times a week. No-one needed to be eating toast and cheese, which was about the extent of my culinary exertions.

Conversation dotted from topic to topic as we caught up, and I watched as the people I loved most in the world laughed and teased one another long into the evening. Mac slid his hand into mine beneath the table and squeezed it, as we shared a smile.

'I love you,' he mouthed as Ewen recounted a racy tale from the club at the other end of the table.

'Love you more,' I mouthed back, squeezing his hand in response.

After we'd seen the last of them out of the door, and had the security guys let them out of the gates that now guarded our home from the outside world, I set to cleaning up, removing the dishes and cutlery from the table.

A tingle crept up my spine as I looked around for Mac, not seeing him anywhere. I shook it off and started gathering the napkins when a hand pressed over my mouth, making me squeal.

'Time to put that slutty little mouth to use. If you do a good job, I'll let you ride my dick after.'

A rip sounded as he tore at my dress, leaving it in tatters. He pushed me up onto the table, my back amongst the debris from dinner, while the candles flickered around me. Mac pulled off my panties and bra as he walked about the table, reaching down to stroke a hand over my skin.

'I've been thinking about sinking into your hot mouth all night. Fucking that throat until you take every inch. Are you going to be a good girl and take my dick deep, darling?'

'Yes, Sir,' I said, already feeling the slickness between my thighs.

The sound of his belt buckle undoing did ungodly things to me. Until I'd been with Mac, I'd never truly understood how versatile a man's belt could be. Would he tie me up with it, mark up my ass, choke me? All the fun possibilities.

He wrapped the leather around my neck, using it as a leash to guide my mouth to his exposed balls.

'Make it worth my while if you want to earn my cock.'

I writhed on the table, my naked ass sticking to the surface as I tongued his balls, sliding it over them and under them as he stroked his dick above my face.

'Fuck, yes. Hell, that tongue of yours is something else.'

He drew a whimper from me as he reached over and twisted a nipple, making me squirm. He pushed the tip of his pierced cock over my lips, sliding it past them as I stuck out my tongue and teased at the metal.

'Such a tight mouth. Open wide for your dick, sweetness. I'm going to enjoy the way your choke on it.'

His words only heightened my arousal, making me desperate to please him.

'Fuck, Katie,' he groaned as he inched himself over my tongue, his dick pulsating against it. I closed my eyes and worked my mouth around him, sucking and licking as best I could from my position on the table.

I tensed as tiny, hot sensations covered my torso, writhing but pinned with the way he held the belt around my neck fast to the table.

'Your tits look great covered in wax. I'm glad I splashed out for the special candles.' The small intense heat spots made me squirm as he chuckled, clearly enjoying his view. I continued to lick and suck at him desperately, needing more of him with each mouthful.

When he blew out the candles and hauled me even further over the edge of the table, I knew I was in for it.

With a grunt, he thrust deep into my throat, filling me to bursting with his dick. The belt pressed against my throat as he gripped it in his fist, holding my head steady as he fucked it like a pussy.

'That's it...' he growled, 'take it all.'

My stomach heaved as he entered the tight ring of my throat as I choked, sending saliva shooting out of my mouth as he pulled back.

'That's where you like to be, isn't it, Katie? Pinned down and filled up. It's where you belong.'

'Yes, Sir,' I said when he pulled out of my mouth and ran his fingers over my lips.

He continued to thrust into my mouth, alternating between praising me and degrading me until my head was swimming with lust.

'Please,' I begged as he pulled out of my mouth. 'Please, can I have your cock?'

'I'm giving you it, Katie.'

'Inside me. In my pussy. Please?'

I'd have got on my knees and begged for it if he'd have let me. My whole body thrummed with need.

'Such a dirty little cock slut.' He reached down and ran a hand over me, gathering up the wetness before spreading it over his tip. I moaned as he slid it over my lips, making me taste myself on him.

When he let go of the belt, I could have cried.

When he moved around the table and grabbed me by the hips, sliding me across to table until I was aligned with his cock, I keened.

When he impaled me, I saw heaven.

His thick cock filled me to bursting, spreading me around the base with each thrust. 'Fuck, sweetness, you feel too bloody good.'

I arched off of the table, trying to buck my hips against him, needing more.

'Yes, you show me how badly you need a good dicking, love.'

I met his thrusts with vigour as the table shifted beneath us, my cries ringing out throughout our home. When he reached forward and pulled me to him, holding the belt around my throat while supporting me with a fist in my hair, I saw stars.

'Come for me, you delightful little cock slut,' he panted into my mouth. 'I'm going to fill you with so much cum you'll leave a trail all the way to the fucking bathroom, and then I'm going to whip your arse with my belt as you get to your knees and clean up the mess you made.'

His words were the final straw, sending me soaring over the edge as he cut off my air, fucking into me so hard I thought I might break. He pushed me back down onto the table as he came, gripping my hips so hard it hurt. My orgasm rocked my whole body as I clamped down on him, my pussy holding him tight.

He collapsed against me, my body sweat-slicked and sticking to his shirt. Our breath mingled as he panted into my neck, his fingers drawing small circles in my hair.

'God, I love you so fucking much,' he whispered into my ear before turning my lips to his and kissing me with a slow, deep rhythm.

'I love fucking you so very much too,' I said with a grin as he swotted my thigh.

He pulled himself up on his elbows and smiled down at me, covering me in tiny kisses. 'I can't wait to spend forever with you,' I whispered against his lips.

'Marry me, Katie? I want it official. I want my ring on your finger, and yours on mine. I want to spend every day finding new ways to make you smile.'

'Are you really proposing to me with your dick still inside me?' I asked, delight sweeping through me despite the timing.

'I mean, it's there a lot. We'd be hard pushed to find a time to propose without it.' Mac's eyes glittered as he kissed me. 'Now answer me, you little brat.'

'Yes, Mac, I'll marry you.' I giggled as he wept me up into his arms and hugged me tight. Happiness blossomed in my chest as I watched his face light up.

'Let's go get you cleaned up so we can celebrate, my love. You're in a right state.' Mac helped me to my feet as I wobbled a bit, unhooking the belt from my neck and securing it through his trousers.

'I wouldn't tighten it up if I were you,' I said, looking up at him through my lashes.

'And why would that be?'

'You're going to need it while you make me clean up that trail I leave on the floor.'

His pupils dilated as I dropped to my knees and looked up at him before turning to crawl to the bathroom.

'I'm the luckiest man in the god damned universe,' he said as he followed behind me, the telltale sound of his belt loosening making me smile.

<u>OceanofPDF.com</u>

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Thank you for reading Dark Obsessions, the third book in my Scots mafia series. I hope you adored Mac and Katie and their unconventional love story. I really appreciate you taking your time to read a relatively new author.

A big thank you goes to my husband who supports me tirelessly, even when I'm a grump when up writing at 5am! I also want to thank the unhinged ladies - you know who you are - for being huge supports in my journey as an author. Always ready to celebrate highs and commiserate lows, compare wet Henry pictures and just be awesome.

The next book will focus on Logan and his love story, starting out with Nicole, but possibly not staying there...

Love, Effie

If you missed Esther's story - you can grab it on <u>Amazon</u>, and Maeve's story is <u>there</u> too.

If you'd like to keep up with my books and me, you can find me on <u>TikTok</u> (@effiecampbellauthor), <u>Facebook</u> (effiecampbellauthor) and <u>Amazon</u>.

If you enjoyed Dark Obsessions, I'd love a review on Amazon or Goodreads, or wherever you enjoy reviewing books.

Subscribe to my <u>mailing list</u> for new releases and news.