

STALKED



don't forget to lock your door



EVA MARKS

Stalked

Eva Marks

Contents

Copyright

Dedication

About The Book

A Note From The Author

1. CHAPTER ONE

2. CHAPTER TWO

3. CHAPTER THREE

4. CHAPTER FOUR

5. CHAPTER FIVE

6. CHAPTER SIX

7. CHAPTER SEVEN

8. CHAPTER EIGHT

9. CHAPTER NINE

10. CHAPTER TEN

11. CHAPTER ELEVEN

12. CHAPTER TWELVE

13. CHAPTER THIRTEEN

14. CHAPTER FOURTEEN

15. CHAPTER FIFTEEN

16. CHAPTER SIXTEEN

17. CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

18. CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

19. CHAPTER NINETEEN

20. CHAPTER TWENTY

21. CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE
22. CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO
23. CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE
24. CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR
25. CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE
26. CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX
27. CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN
28. CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT
29. CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE
30. CHAPTER THIRTY
31. CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE
32. CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO
33. CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE
34. CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR
35. CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE
36. CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX
37. CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN
38. CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT
39. EPILOGUE

Thank You!

More Books from Eva Marks

40. Their Dark Rose-A Dark, Why Choose Sleeping Beauty Retelling — Coming February 6, 2024.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except as permitted by U.S. copyright law. For permission requests, contact authorevamarcks@gmail.com

The story, all names, characters, and incidents portrayed in this production are fictitious. No identification with actual persons (living or deceased), places, buildings, and products is intended or should be inferred.

Book Cover by Eva Marks

To those of you who'll be visiting your gynecologist anytime in the near future...

I'm sorry.

About The Book

She owns me—heart, body, and soul. It's only fair that I own her, too.

And I will. Soon...

I have one rule I've never broken in all my years as a doctor.

I don't sleep with patients. Never even wanted to.

Until I laid my eyes on *her*.

Prue Bishop is everything I'm not. Sweet and innocent. The sunshine to my darkness.

And yet in the short while we've known each other, she's changed me from being a good person to what you might call *morally gray*.

See, I can't help but stalk her when we're not together...

And visit her at night.

If she had any idea what I do while she's asleep, she'd probably never forgive me.

I can't stop myself. Not when it comes to her.

It's a good thing that I'm there, though.

Because I'm not the only one who's watching her.

But I am the only one to save her.

Don't forget to lock your door...

A Note From The Author

Stalked is a steamy romance, containing explicit, disturbing, and graphic scenes and kinks intended for mature audiences only.

Dr. Theodore Wentworth is not what you'd call sweet and fluffy. The man is the embodiment of lust, love, and obsession at first sight, and his analytical mind does its best to rationalize his irrational behavior when it comes to Prue. He does apologize at the end, but until then, well...

Let's just say, if you're looking for a man who respects the boundaries of the woman he loves, this may not be the book for you.

But if you're looking for a man who'll do anything for her, who'll give in to his obsession so thoroughly that he'll break his own rules for her... You're in the right place.

Full List of Trigger Warnings, Content Warnings and Kinks.

Stalker hero, a virgin heroine, MMC unhinged to a fault and the FMC doesn't hate it that bad, somno-aka, he's a fan of *visiting* her while she sleeps, truly terrible things being done on this gynecologist's exam table (but these scenes are fully consensual!), the heroine was left in an orphanage as a baby, constricting air, spitting, age gap, praise and degradation, bootie play, squirting, cock warming, dubious consent, fear kink, mentions of sexual assault (not by the hero, not against the heroine), someone goes bye-bye-world, extortion attempt, revenge plot.

This is an M/F story

HEA guaranteed. No cheating.

CHAPTER ONE

Prue

“Congratulations on another successful Brazilian butt lift.” I raise my flute to Dr. Michelle Waldron’s.

“Cheers.” She clinks mine, and we both take a drink of our virgin mimosas.

Which is basically just orange juice.

It’s a ritual we repeat after every complicated surgery. Or after a streak of back-to-back cosmetic procedures. Heck, after a long day in general. Meaning every day when you assist one of the top plastic surgeons in the state.

Sometimes so much as up to six times a week, depending on her schedule. Thankfully, this week, this particular Friday, we also drink to kick off the weekend.

“I couldn’t have done it without you, Prue.” Michelle sets her flute on the mahogany desk in her office. “I don’t thank you as often as I should, but you should know how grateful I am for you. You’re the best surgeon assistant out there, and I’m lucky to have you all to myself.”

Heat climbs up my neck at her compliment. I snap the hairband from my wrist, pulling my long and wavy blond hair into a ponytail.

“You don’t have to say that. I...I...”

Stuttering. Just perfect.

I’m humiliated. This shouldn’t happen. Except I can’t take a compliment to save my life. Even when I earned it through hard work. Even when my adult life, at twenty-six years old, revolves around either my academic studies or my job and has ever since I was fifteen.

I have no issues whatsoever with words like *butt lift* or discussing patients’ privates freely, but accepting a good word every once in a while?

No, not me.

I know my worth. I know the lengths I’ve gone to get to where I am today.

I would’ve thanked Michelle and not made a big deal out of it like most people would. Then again, I’m not most people. I was raised differently.

The housemothers at the orphanage I grew up in never failed to emphasize the virtue of humility.

Eighteen years of tough love. Of not praising me too much about anything, really. There weren’t any special celebrations when I graduated from high school at fifteen. No, *Amazing, Prue, given how hard you managed to find the time to work at an ice cream shop at the same time.*

No one bought a cake to celebrate me completing my undergrad in three years when I was eighteen. Not a single housemother applauded me for going out into the free world as a functioning adult.

Slaving over my school and pushing hard for a good future were supposed to be my rewards.

And they were.

Still are.

That's it. I don't do it for compliments or praise.

While I haven't been living under the housemothers' watchful eyes for the past seven years, I still feel their presence. Their strict upbringing can't be turned off with a simple flip of a switch.

It's become a part of who I am.

Regardless of how I try to be less of that person nowadays.

I might've donated my bible, haven't hung a cross in my apartment, and stopped going to church on Sundays. And yet, I can't get away.

The core values of my education linger in the back of my mind, forever to stay.

Or, at least, until I go to bed. There, my decadent dreams, wants, and wishes run free. They couldn't care less that I've been taught they're sinister and wrong. Of what good girls shouldn't dream of.

But I digress.

A rush of heat skitters across my neck, and I scratch the irritated area.

"The truth doesn't make you vain, Prue." Michelle, who knows my history, waves her hand in the air. "I fucking hate that you still think like that."

On the outside, my boss gives off vibes of a dainty woman who wouldn't dream of uttering profanities. She looks incredibly pristine, wearing her voluminous blond hair straight, dyed without a hint of gray or brown on her roots. Her surgeon fingers are long and delicate. Her age of forty-five years hardly shows on her masterfully made-up face.

It's all surface-level, though. The lucky few, like me, get to see the inside of a ruthless beast of a woman who takes no crap from anyone. She built this clinic by herself and didn't accept a single dime from her parents or her wealthy husband.

Even when she cusses, which I obviously don't—or try not to—she's a woman I look up to. A woman to admire.

Being like Michelle is a goal I pray to attain someday. To be more independent than I am today. To speak my mind freely, unburdened by my past and the constricting values weighing me down.

Since I'm not her, though, not yet, I have this strong, unrelenting urge to tell my boss she's wrong. That it makes me vain. That I don't deserve her raving gratitude.

I open my mouth and—

"No." She shuts me down before I start. We've had this back-and-forth dance many times in the past. She already knows what's coming. "And to prove a point, I'm not the only one who appreciates your work. I see other surgeons sniffing around me during conventions, trying to find out if I pay you enough so they can offer you more."

"I'm perfectly content here—" I start, meaning to reassure her. Yes, I have been approached by a couple of doctors. I also turned both down.

"So, I decided to give you a mid-year bonus. And a raise."

My lips go numb, the flames in my neck climbing to my cheeks. Incapable of looking at Michelle, my eyes dart around the office. They focus on the cream-colored walls, the wooden bookcases holding the medical books behind my boss.

I don't deserve this. I don't.

In the four years I've been her assistant, Michelle has been more than fair to me. My starting salary was higher than I expected. Bonuses and annual raises were compensations I never had to ask for.

Michelle values my work ethic and the clients' constant positive feedback of me, and she shows it. My salary climbed over the average of one in my profession of \$150K a year.

It's too much. More than I know what to do with.

I completed the physician assistant program for the financial freedom this job allows me, and I accomplished that mission.

I'm staying in Michelle's practice for the person she is. I have to make it clear to her. Otherwise, she'll think I'm a gold digger. Sure, other physicians pretty much bent her hand to do it, but I can't just accept it. It'll give her the wrong impression. One I have to rectify.

"I don't have any plans to leave anytime soon." I find my voice, placing my flute on the desk. I seek an extra boost of courage, sucking in a deep inhale of the office's vanilla and lavender scent, and look at Michelle earnestly. "I love working with you, and the pay is great. Beyond great. Please, it's not necessary."

"Oh, I'm aware it isn't." She shuts down the discussion.

"Michelle."

"Not hearing you..." She casts her gaze on her black scrubs.

Her bionic eyes focus on a tiny piece of lint on her sleeve almost no other human would've been able to discern. In a smooth, skillful movement, she tears it off without disturbing the rest of the garment.

"I'm not leaving," I repeat.

"I'm aware you wouldn't." Her lips curve into a rare, soft, genuine smile. "You deserve it, nonetheless. You're the yin to my yang. And I can afford it. So, there."

The word *humility* rings between my ears again, repeating itself, scolding me for keeping quiet. I wring my hands beneath the desk as every bit of my earlier confidence is sucked out of me, and I do my best to regain it.

"I don't spend half my salary as is. Please, Michelle..."

"Then maybe you should." She cleans off her flute, effectively ending the conversation about the money she's about to throw my way.

"Okay," I sigh.

"To other interesting news." Michelle smirks, pausing for the dramatic effect, I assume.

My eyes widen. "New celebrity client?"

I'm not the only one whose reputation precedes her. Dr. Waldron's name has been a synonym for successful surgeries that give her clients natural-looking faces, breasts, asses, and tummies for over a decade in Hollywood, in particular.

I'm supposed to be unflapped by the famous people who surrender themselves to her skillful hands. Then again, I don't take anything for granted.

"No. Something better." Gold sparks of mischief light behind her blue eyes. "A new neighbor moved into our office building. To our floor. He's been in there with the contractors for the past three days or so, but I saw him one morning when I walked in."

"Oh." Working alongside one of the busiest plastic surgeons in the country, combined with my introverted personality, leaves me little to no time for gossip.

Come to think of it, Michelle doesn't have a spare moment either.

Now, my interest is piqued. "Okay, and that's great...why?"

"I gather you don't even know he exists." She quirks an eyebrow, her smirk growing.

What's up with her today? "Should I?"

"The way this gynecologist looks? It's a sin not to." Michelle lets out a low whistle that's totally unlike her. Now that I get it, we both laugh. "I mean, I love my husband, I do. Some men, though...you have to stop and stare."

"A gynecologist? On our floor?" I ask after our short laughter dies out.

Yes, I inquire about the doctor rather than the man because...priorities.

Matter of fact, I'd rather he wasn't hot. My yearly checkup is due in three weeks, along with my birth control prescription renewal to regulate my period.

Since my gynecologist's clinic is located an hour away on the other side of the city, and the traffic over there is the worst, I've considered not scheduling a visit. I'm not about to have sex anytime soon, and I prefer using the spare time I have on jogging or catching up on sleep.

But now that we have a gynecologist so close by, I really have no excuse.

I should go see him.

"Yes. Dr. Wentworth."

Michelle fishes the notebook she carries with her at all times out of her purse. With way too much enthusiasm, she tears a piece of paper out of it and slides it over to me across her desk.

The doctor's last name and number are scribbled on it in her handwriting.

I should've noticed something, I guess. It's not a shocker that I haven't, though. I tend to punch in at around seven a.m. to filter the messages Franny, our receptionist, leaves for us.

Some I'm qualified to answer, the rest I save for Michelle when she comes in at nine. I don't notice much else. Most days I eat in, too, so missing out on the commotion across the hallway is understandable.

I get why I haven't seen him or the workers around here.

What I don't get is...

My eyebrows knead together, and I eye Michelle suspiciously. "Why would you write it down?"

"As I mentioned, I'm a married woman." From the drawer to her right, she retrieves the engagement and wedding rings she takes off before every surgery. She spins them on her finger, smiling at the flashy diamond. "Dr. Wentworth's left hand, though, was bare. Last time I checked, you, Prue Bishop, are single too."

"Happily." Not really, but that's my business.

Her meddling doesn't offend me. She fits into the motherly spot that's been vacant for years, and her doting over me warms my heart. I just wish my looks didn't scream *desperate to belong to someone*.

"I won't say another word." Michelle's facial expression reverts to strict and professional as I unfold myself from the chair. "The magic will happen on its own once you two lock gazes. Or once his gaze locks on..." She signals to my body.

"Michelle!" My reproach is void of any vehemence and is laden with humor.

She shrugs, twisting to answer late-night emails on her computer. "You'll thank me later."

"I already do." I pause at the door, waving the note at her. "For saving me the trip to the other side of the city."

"We'll see about that." She wags her eyebrows and shoos me out. "Enjoy your weekend."

CHAPTER TWO

Prue

The sun has already set when the elevator doors slide open. I march into the lobby of our office building, same as I do on every workday.

In a few steps, I wave to Marv, the elderly security guy. In a couple more, I reach the front door. I push past the glass door, walk outside, and stop.

I linger there by myself for a little while, inhaling the non-industrial air. Sure, LA's air may not be the cleanest. It's still a refreshing change after being cooped up in the clinic for over twelve hours.

Plus, the weather is relatively decent on this June evening. Not too cold, not too hot, just right. I would love to take advantage of it and walk home. I opted for sneakers—AKA, my sensible shoes—instead of low heels today.

But then it means I'd have to walk *to* work tomorrow morning.

And sweat.

No, thanks.

On my way to my Prius, I gaze around at my surroundings. Palm trees hedge the nearly empty parking lot. Their fronds rustle in the slight breeze as if it's caressing them.

A horn blares, the road stealing my attention. So many people driving back to their homes or going to late meetings, to parties or dinners. Living their lives to the fullest.

Some days, like today, I like to pretend one of those drivers is my mother. I dream about her being in one of those sedans, searching for me. In those moments, I allow myself to play make-believe. To hope she's there, deeming me someone worth meeting.

I don't judge her for leaving me, her newborn, on the orphanage doorstep without so much as a note. I don't resent her for never naming me. Never have, never will.

Everyone's circumstances vary. She could've been raped. She might've gotten pregnant in high school, and her parents forced her to give me away. Anything's possible.

Maybe, though...

I stop myself before I delve into darker thoughts.

Hoping is useless. Obviously, she's not there.

I'm not alone, either.

The hairs on my arms stand, and a chill runs up my spine, freezing the back of my neck. I'm feeling something, all right, and it's nothing good. It's ominous.

Like I'm being watched.

Hesitantly, I turn my head to the inside of the building. Marv, who was just reading the paper when I walked out here, has his head on his desk, fast asleep. I don't want to disturb him for a *feeling*.

I return to look at the dimly lit parking lot. There's no one there either. Nevertheless, I can't shake the voice telling me I'm being watched. It's urging me to sprint to my car, get in, and drive out of here. The faster the better.

I'm perplexed by the warnings flashing in my head. This is a first for me, and I've been working here for years.

Michelle's clinic is located in a low-crime area. Cars don't get jacked here, no sexual assaults in the late hours of the night. You won't see used condoms or broken beer bottles littered around here in the morning.

So what's this feeling that's come over me now? What's changed?

And worse still, why does being scared turn me on? Why does this strange need zap to my core, heating me from the inside?

Because you're a twenty-six-year-old virgin. And you get off on dark fantasies. Shut it out and move it.

Whatever the reason is, imaginary or not, it doesn't matter. I don't have it in me to care anymore.

My gut demands that I run. Just run. To return to the safety of my apartment. My own space where a long bath and a smutty book will solve all my problems.

With my phone in my hand and my thumb hovering over the *send* button to call 911, I beeline it for my car. My sneakers thump on the concrete, echoing louder in the empty, open space.

I reach for the fob in my satchel, quickly clicking it to unlock the car. The less distance there is between me and the building, the safer I feel.

Not entirely shielded, but...it's better than nothing.

"Yes," I rasp as soon as my fingers curl around the door handle. "Yes."

I throw my bag, then myself inside, start the car, and peel out of the parking lot.

I'm going home.

CHAPTER THREE

Theo

Motherfucker. Even running with her back to me, this woman's beauty is of epic proportions.

And she runs from me. Because she somehow sensed my presence.

She didn't see me lurking from inside the building. Didn't know my muscles, heart, and cock were pumping for her.

Yet she felt it. The fire burning inside me, the need to claim. It overflowed from me to her, enrapturing her like my hands itch to do.

As I watch her unlock the car mid-run, my dick strains harder in my pants.

There's no questioning it anymore.

I'm the one to blame for her being terrified. And fuck if it doesn't send more blood rushing to my groin.

It doesn't matter that I didn't mean to do it. Stalk her. Make her uncomfortable. Frighten her.

I've been diligent about giving women a sense of security around me. Unlike the man who put his filthy hands where they didn't belong and kicked me out of my residency. Who called me and them *liars*.

No. He and I are not the same person.

Or so I led myself to think.

Up until now.

Up until I saw her.

Because this shit I'm doing right now, it's not right. Doesn't matter what my adrenaline-fueled brain tells me.

There's no stopping it, though. Just like there's no stopping a hurricane. This unexplainable attraction equals mother nature's unshakable force.

When it barrels down your way, you're helpless against it. You can't hold your hands up and hope your fragile human body will be able to appease the beast.

The only thing left to do is accept it.

Which is why I'm here. Why—against my better judgment and morals—I've been following her for the last ten minutes.

The sweet, five-foot woman with her thick blond hair in a ponytail grabbed my attention the second she appeared in the hallway outside my clinic.

Fate. For the forty years I've been alive, I've never been much of a believer.

Then again, it's never thrustured someone like her in my way before.

She left the clinic she works in around the corner when I left mine. With her eyes on the ground, she hadn't noticed me stalking her from the other side of the hallway.

But I saw her. And once I did, I couldn't unsee her.

I damn near choked on the energy emanating from her.

This enchanting woman in blue scrubs didn't have a fake happy mask on her face. She didn't pretend to be someone who had it all figured out.

Something about her slow gait and how inside her own head she was told me she's been through some things. Had a past that changed her. Turned her even more special and precious. Made her perfect.

Light and dark, delicate and powerful, and undeniably intriguing—combinations that don't tend to mesh well. On her, though, it made sense. It made a ton of sense. These characteristics had masterfully been sewn into her skin, and even from afar, she looked...

Perfect.

And instead of introducing myself like any other civilized forty-year-old doctor would, I opted for a different path.

Frazzled, for the very first time in my life, I backpedaled and hid, waiting for her to enter the elevator. Once gone, I took the stairs three at a time, descending at a rapid speed to the lobby.

The sneakers on my feet pounded at the cement stairs as I flew down to make it to her.

And I did. Landed right on the first floor before the elevator dinged.

I didn't hound the mystery woman. I lurked in the stairwell, opening the steel door just barely, and traced her movements from there.

My eyes, black as the night she walked out to, followed her and gauged every little detail about her. Soft curves the scrubs couldn't hide. Adorable beauty spot at her nape.

Her cute button nose when she twisted her head to Marv and said, "Good night."

The one thing I couldn't reach was her scent. A sweet, contemplative young woman like her, she probably smelled of sunshine and the ocean. A fragrance that stemmed from her pores, a one-of-a-kind and...

Fuck, she's almost gone.

And an even bigger fuck—I'm obsessed.

In a matter of minutes, this woman hijacked my sanity. She's turning me into this person I don't recognize. No woman has ever made me this ravenous.

I see between ten to twenty women on an average day and haven't felt like this for any of them, a fact that should speak for itself.

I talk to them. Listen to them. Look inside and touch their vaginas.

As a gynecologist, that's what I do.

The women who aren't my patients haven't stirred this kind of reaction out of me either. Some tried, but I saved them from making a mistake. I was a responsible adult instead of an abusive man in power.

The women I've had casual sex with were great, though that's all they were. A long-term relationship hasn't been in the cards for me, simply because our interactions eventually boiled down to itches that needed scratching.

This itch for the woman hightailing it out of here, though, it'll take a lot more than a quick fuck to soothe.

Without giving myself a chance to realize how crazy this situation is, I eat up the distance from the office building to my car. I hop into my white Mercedes and take off after the unsuspecting woman's Prius.

I trail close behind, blending in the background of expensive sedans and SUVs. At a safe distance of two to three cars between us, I'm at her heels as she navigates through Santa Monica Blvd.

When she's off the road, I am too. She turns left, I turn left. She turns right, I swerve to the right as well.

Less than twenty minutes later, she slows near an apartment building. I drive ahead of her to park my car at the corner, where I pull over and wait. Before I do, though, I pass by her, and my eyes drift on their own accord to her window.

The low streetlight isn't much to go on. In any case, I can't slow to a complete halt and put her on an even higher alert.

Now that I know where she lives on top of where she works, I'm sure I'll have ample opportunities to look at her.

I know I will. Not like it helps my one-track mind.

I need this brief one. Just a peek. Here she is, turning to me.

Yes. Fuck. Incredibly fucking gorgeous. Round, brown eyes, high cheekbones, pouty lips. Closer to me now than she was in the building.

Almost close enough to extend my hand and touch her.

The darkness she's enveloped in doesn't obscure her beauty. In a way, the shadows enhance her features. As though she belongs there. As if there's a dark side to her, a hidden one that haunts her.

I start to think it's a quality we share.

For the last thirty minutes, I haven't been myself. I've transformed from a reputable doctor to a predator. A stalker. A man obsessed with something so precious he shouldn't have ever dreamt of.

I'm this person because of her. My match.

The more I consider it, the more I start believing my own logic.

I'm exactly what she needs. Whatever burden she carries on her little shoulders, I'm strong enough to lift it. I'll carry it for her in one arm while using the other to hug her.

Am I going nuts? Probably.

Is this savior complex an extension of what I failed to do ten years ago? I don't doubt it contributed to it.

However, the reasons don't matter. Because I'm going for it.

The car sputters as I move along and park at the side of the road, continuing to watch her in my rearview mirror. She waits for the parking garage's electronic gate to lift.

While I watch her, I catch a glimpse of myself in the mirror too. I don't just feel like I've changed. I look it, too.

My black hair's the same, shaved on the sides and longer on the top. My thick, black eyebrows rest over my black eyes like they did yesterday. The small bump on my nose from when I broke it when I was six remains in place.

But my eyes aren't really my eyes. They're hungry. Feral. Exuding the soul of a man on a mission.

My cock jerks, becoming painfully hard as I watch her cute hybrid car lower to the belly of the building. My mind wonders what she'll do next.

She might shower, discard her scrubs on the floor of her living room on her walk there. She'll free her round breasts from the restraints of her bra. Slide her delectable ass out of her panties.

She'll be naked. Completely fucking naked.

I bite the inside of my cheek, imagining her lathering soap on her skin, running her hands through her long hair. Between her legs. Cleaning everything up. Every inch of her. Every hidden, sweet crevice.

Will she go out later? Dress up to go on a date, join a friend for drinks?

I have no idea. And it's making my jaw tic.

It's making me traipse into a dangerous zone when I snatch my phone. Because I don't hesitate for a second before searching the internet for apartments for rent in her building.

I moved into my new house from NorCal last week. True, it cost a small fortune. So fucking what? I've earned and saved enough to afford to rent an apartment here for as long as I see fit.

I'm not new to this obsessive behavior.

My relentlessness is what got me accepted to an Ivy League school, how I landed an internship at one of the top hospitals in the U.S.

Eventually, it's what caused me to lose my residency there. Because I refused to let the bad guy win. And I failed.

I won't fail now.

This woman, this new mission in my life, will be mine.

After two minutes of browsing the internet, I finally find it.

One availability. Just one.

Fucking fate.

Instead of emailing and waiting for Belinda, the realtor, to get back to me, I dial her number.

"Hello?"

"Hello." Applying my stern voice, I cut right to the chase. "I'm calling about the apartment for rent in West LA."

"I have a few apartments listed in the area. Um, sir, it's a little late, though." I hear the TV in the background, sounds like a *Friends* rerun. "Could I call you back first thing tomorrow?"

I twist in my seat, my eyes skating upstairs. A light flickers on in one of the apartments on the third floor, her silhouette appearing behind the curtains.

"No. I'm afraid it's urgent." Watching her window strengthens my resolve. "I'm sorry, I haven't introduced myself. My name is Theo Wentworth." Then I add, because the fucking title always works like a charm, "*Doctor* Theo Wentworth."

"Oh, all right." Just as I expected, her tone changes into a much friendlier one. "What property are you referring to?"

I rattle off the address of the building I'm currently stalking.

"Perfect." A smile oozes into her voice. A given, seeing the one remaining apartment is on the top floor and the largest one in the building, hence the one with the highest rate. "Your family will love it there. Lots of space for the kids to run around and—"

"No family." My clipped voice indicates my growing impatience.

I'm starting to get restless. Not from Belinda's assumptions, nothing like that.

The woman I'm stalking practically calls to me.

Her shadow lingers in the window as she paces from one end of her living room to the other. As if she knows I'm here and begs me to watch.

I'm so fucking hard for her. I need to relieve the pressure. To come with the view of her doing...well, anything. Fucking breathing.

An impossible task if the realtor keeps yapping in my ear.

"I'm sorry for assuming, Dr. Wentworth." Her TV is silenced. Noises of papers being pushed around fill the void it created. "I'm free to do a viewing as early as tomorrow morning."

"That won't be necessary."

The woman's dark silhouette stops pacing. She's holding onto something square-shaped.

A book? A magazine?

"No?"

Whichever it is, it makes her stay in place. Waiting for me while I'm over here wasting time on the phone with Miss Too-Polite-That-She's-Giving-Me-A-Migraine.

"No. I'm offering the highest bid on the place and paying it in full as soon as tonight." As I'm speaking, I forward Belinda my email address. "Send me the papers, and I'll have them signed and sent back to you. If any extra payments are needed, just bill me, Belinda. I plan on moving in tomorrow, so make it happen. Am I being clear?"

“Crystal.” More papers scuffling. Another cheer to her already saccharine, realtor-y voice. “I’ll have everything set tonight and will meet you there tomorrow at eight to give you the keys.”

“Thank you,” is all I say before I cut the call abruptly.

That took long enough.

“Fuck,” I hiss, freeing my dick from its constraints and fisting myself.

I’m stupid. Fucking reckless to jerk off in public. Though there’s no one driving by or walking on the relatively secluded street now, it doesn’t mean it’ll stay this way until I’m finished.

But I need it. I’m fucking ravenous for her. Watching her, this sweet, enigmatic woman, I’m losing my damn mind for her.

She’s not simply beautiful—what a dull, bland description for a woman like her. She’s entrancing. She made me lose my mind in the span of one second. Has me stroking my cock angrily, fucking my hand like I’d bury myself inside her over and over and over.

In public.

She’s hypnotized me, and I can’t take my eyes off her. I twist my body to catch the shape of hers in the window.

Seconds tick by, and I’m losing it. I’m getting more desperate as I picture myself barging in, pinning her to the window. Screwing her brains out for the world to see.

Shit, it feels good. Too good. More exhilarating than the first time I jacked off.

Nerve endings I never knew existed light up in my body. My stomach coils in a delicious sort of pain I haven’t experienced before. My balls tighten, demanding a release as my eyes zone in on *her* high ponytail. I long to have it around my hand. I’m dying to pull on it.

To hear her screams.

If—no, *when*—I have her, I’ll tug on it until her big brown eyes tear up. Then I’ll kiss those tears away and fucking *own* her. Cherish her. Protect her from anyone but myself.

This last notion is what finally does it for me. I come with an animalistic grunt. Semen spurts on my hand, coating my clenched fingers.

Slowing my breath, I grab a tissue from inside the console. I wipe myself, tucking my cock in once I’m clean.

“Good night, mystery woman,” I whisper. “I’ll be seeing you soon.”

When I drive to my house, I’m not lamenting about leaving *her*.

This isn’t *goodbye*. This is *see you later*.

Soon.

Tomorrow, I’ll move next to her.

Tomorrow, I’ll introduce myself to her.

Tomorrow, I’ll have her.

It’s only a matter of time.

CHAPTER FOUR

Prue

I slide open the glass doors to the rooftop pool of our building.

After a full day of doing laundry, cleaning the apartment, and reading, I've been looking forward to coming up here.

Twenty feet of turquoise blue water sparkle under the soft lights of the terrace. The mosaic at the bottom blurs beneath the soft, barely noticeable sways of the water.

Beautiful. Soothing.

Careful so as not to slip, I tiptoe my way on the deck. My gaze glides lazily along the poolside area, on the scattered chairs, beds, and wicker tables. I check to see if any of my neighbors dozed off on one of the beds before I remove my robe.

I'm too self-conscious to walk around other neighbors half-naked. I've never had sex before, haven't gotten much further than chaste kisses that led to nothing. Baring my skin to others is difficult, something I shy away from whenever possible.

Fortunately, there's no one here tonight.

An unusual occasion, seeing as the weather has been warm, and it's a Saturday night.

Oh, well. Their loss, my gain.

I undo the belt around my white terrycloth robe. It slides off my body, exposing my black bikini. It does a good job hiding my round butt and supple breasts—the parts of me I prefer no prying eyes will linger on for too long in case anyone joins me while I'm doing laps.

Peeling the robe off me and kicking off my flip-flops, I toss it to the nearest lounge and knot my hair up in a messy bun on the top of my head. I fish the goggles from my robe's pocket, secure them on, and head to take my position at the pool.

My toes wiggle on the edge, cool water brushing my feet. I allow my body several moments to adjust to the temperature, stretching my arms up to get ready to dive in.

I suck in a deep inhale, carrying the smell of chlorine into my lungs...

And jump headfirst into the pool.

My legs, feet, arms, and lungs all work in unison to carry me back and forth. I swim and swim, unloading the stress of the passing week in the water.

Kick, lift my arm, breathe. Kick, lift the other arm, twist my head, and breathe to the other side. Reach the end, spin. And start all over again.

Counting my laps doesn't do it for me. I'm not in a secret competition with myself. I swim for fun, for the meditative quality the repetitive strokes have on my body and mind.

This exercise, much like jogging, holds the place that praying had in my routine. I still feel so guilty, though, for dropping them.

But I had no other choice.

The housemothers nor the kids I grew up with hadn't hurt me or anything like that. I don't resent them or the religious values they had ingrained in me. I love them. I'd been taken care of and had a couple of friends every once in a while until they were adopted.

The people and the rituals per se aren't what I put behind as soon as I embarked on this new path in my life.

The painful emotions resurface whenever I think about any of them. They hurt too badly to cling onto.

The despondent housemother's smile whenever I, again, wasn't selected for adoption. A friend waving at me for the last time with a suitcase rolling behind her. The countless times I fell to my knees, begging God to give me my real family back.

Which is why anything that triggered memories of my time there had to be wiped away. Whatever I could control, anyway.

I have my new life now. My very own apartment, working for Michelle, swimming in a bikini and not in a one-piece with sleeves.

Those are stark affirmations of the independent woman I've grown to be.

A butterfly who broke free of its cocoon. I try to drill into myself how I'm not wounded by the rejection of my parents or those who didn't want to adopt me. I'm my own person.

Should my biological parents ever show up, I'll be the happiest woman on earth. Until then, I'm committed to being content and confident.

With a deep inhale, I head back in the other direction. My feet splash as I repeat my usual affirmations to myself, more words I hadn't been allowed to tell myself while in the orphanage.

I'm wonderful. I'm strong. I can conquer the world.

Once more.

I'm wonderful. I'm...

The prickly sensation returns in full force, the heaviness of someone's stare landing at the base of my skull.

I'm not alone in the pool area.

Though my body warmed up from minutes of thrusting myself through the water, a cold chill envelops me. I keep swimming, closing my eyes now, and hoping I'm being paranoid for no reason.

To no avail. Metaphorical buckets of ice are being dumped into the pool. I'm frozen.

Someone's here.

Okay, no biggie. It's not a private pool, and I've had it happen to me before. I'll just climb out, cover myself quickly, and slip out of here.

My strokes slow as I drive my body toward the edge.

The plan in my head should be a balm to my nerves, yet I'm still miles away from anything resembling calm.

What's been happening to me these past two days?

Normally, whenever one of the neighbors joins me on one of my lonely nights up here, I'm not afraid. A tiny bit uncomfortable, sure, but nothing like this.

The only logical conclusion is this isn't one of my neighbors. The building's security guard wouldn't allow strangers in. And yet as I near the edge of the pool, I can't help to feel he messed up.

This person who watches me can't be one of my neighbors. He can't because I recognize the eerie vibe he gives me from somewhere else. Where I was being watched. Scrutinized. Analyzed by someone's glare.

It's the person from Friday evening. The one who I thought watched me in the clinic's parking lot.

Except I don't *think* anymore. I'm *convinced* this person followed me.

The terror this realization delivers shakes me out of my stupor.

No longer moving in slow motion, I pinch my eyes shut tighter, swimming to the deep end of the pool. It's not ideal, but it's closer than the low part.

I curl my fingers on the edge of the pool, sucking in a lungful of air.

On the count of three, I'm going to hop out and run for it. One, two...

I lift myself, opening my eyes as my biceps pull me higher.

And freeze in place.

A man's bare feet and his calves stand in my line of vision. He has stupid-gorgeous toes, barely any hair on his toned legs, and a powerful stance.

It shouldn't matter. It *doesn't* matter. He might as well be Henry Cavill at this point. Any person who has my skin crawling like this one right here is one I have to steer clear of.

As in, now.

"Hello."

My escape plan reaches a screeching halt at his voice.

As much as I'd love to break into a run—in which I might or might not slip and faceplant into the hardwood floor—I can't. I'm paralyzed by his command.

His authoritative tone in that one simple greeting locks me in place. The cadence of his voice is rich and a little hoarse like he just rolled out of bed.

He sounds sexy, dominating his surroundings, without giving off sleazy vibes.

Wordlessly, he tells me he won't harm me.

The panic constricting my chest unknots itself. As I linger in place, staring at his feet, I start believing I've been making things up this whole time. Have been anxious over nothing ever since Friday.

I'm overworked. I barely get any sleep.

No one's responsible for the weird feeling in my gut other than myself.

Still, though...

That *hello*.

"You okay?" The stranger pulls me out of the near-hypnosis he's put me under.

"Umm, yeah, I..." I pull my goggles up my head.

Shoot. I'm talking and staring at his feet. Still. Who's the creep now?

Blushing, I tilt my head up. My gaze travels up his knees, his muscular thighs, the teal-blue swim trunks hanging precariously low on his tapered waist.

My breasts swell as I venture higher to the V-cut shape right above the waistband of his trunks. A light layer of dark hair covers it.

When I look higher, I see his eight-pack, his ripped chest, and...

Oh, gosh. What a handsome, dark face he has.

His sharp jaw is sharp, as if shaped by a diamond. His lips are framed by an organized, black stubble. His nose seems to have been broken in the past, but even that makes sense on his face.

We continue eyeing each other, and my shame dissolves as I stare harder.

Small, almost indiscernible lines crease at the corners of his eyes. They reveal his age in a seductive, flattering kind of way. He has to be anywhere between thirty-eight and forty-five.

However old he is, he carries his age extremely well.

I'm undeniably drawn to the full, straight black hair on the top of his head. There's an itch in my fingertips, wanting to run my fingernails through it.

Though not as much as I'm captivated by his eyes. Black and bottomless as the Pacific Ocean at night.

Eyes that glare at me. At my *eyes*. My breasts and lips don't seem to interest him.

Honed and smoldering as he directs his gaze at *me*.

It's me he's looking at.

My pulse does this weird thing of jackhammering and stopping in intervals.

I'm startled by it. By the man. From what I'm experiencing.

Just everything.

I've never wanted to touch a man so badly. Never wanted anyone to touch me.

"You...?" There's no wickedness in his question, no taunting.

He demands an answer.

"I'm okay," are the two words I'm capable of stringing together.

My teeth sink into the inside of my cheek to stop my tongue from darting out to lick my lips. From mumbling and embarrassing myself in front of him. This stranger I shouldn't care about.

"Good. I didn't mean to sneak up on you." He squats so we're at eye level, his hands hanging loosely on his knees.

The woodsy scent of his cologne overrides the strong smell of chlorine. His black eyes are impossibly darker this up close. Examining me like I felt while swimming.

My heart skips a beat or three. My nipples strain against the thick nylon fabric of my bathing suit.

"It's not a very neighborly thing to do." His lips slowly curve to the side in a cold, calculated smirk. "Is it?"

A shark. The man resembles a predatory shark. And I, the stupid little fish, don't seem to care about it one bit.

I don't even know his name. Don't recognize him as one of my neighbors.

The smart thing to do would be to ask when he moved in. To unveil his lie.

The only thing I'm capable of saying in a breathless voice is, "No harm done."

He arches an eyebrow, his fingers clenching on his knees. The movement has my eyes darting to his hands on their own accord. To the veins running across his tanned skin, and the straining muscles on his forearms.

I'm so screwed.

Tension claws at me, the kind that has me clenching my thighs below water.

I need to get out of here before I make this any more awkward for the both of us. Realizing I let go of the edge, I fasten my grip on the ledge for the second time today, starting to rise out of the water.

"Please." His hot, large palm lands on my shoulder, touching me like no man ever had before. "You don't have to leave. This pool is big enough for the both of us. Stay, please."

On a reflex, my traitorous eyes dart again to where he's touching me. I don't cower from him. I'm fascinated by the tingles the contact evokes in me. By the craving for him to firm his grip, to slide his hand up my throat, then down my waist.

Lower even, and then maybe to...

I don't get to finish the thought. As quickly as he had his fingers on me, that's how fast he removes them.

And while I appreciate the space he's given me, I'm disappointed.

Huh. Interesting.

"I apologize. Again."

I return to watching his face. His small smirk, the confidence in his expression despite him claiming he feels like he's wronged me.

"Again, no harm done." I, however, am less than comfortable. I'm a ball of energy ready to explode beneath his probing gaze. "I'm done for the day, anyway."

It won't be long until he realizes the hot mess bubbling inside me. I have to stop messing around.

Out, out, out.

When I shift my weight forward and raise the upper part of my body out of the pool, he raises his palms in surrender but doesn't budge to allow me to come up.

"Wait." His dark eyes don't warm any. His demanding tone, though, turns a tad softer. Barely. "Can we start over? I'm Theo. Fifth floor."

He appears genuine. Isn't intimidated by my attempts to flee. Doesn't glare at my erect nipples. And since I'm being honest with myself... Maybe getting to know him isn't such a terrible idea.

A name wouldn't hurt.

"Prue Bishop." I relax back into the water. Since we're already talking, I'm going to need to hide my arousal. Be a decent neighbor, like he's attempting to be. "Third floor."

"Nice to meet you, Prue Three." His smirk remains the same. The somberness enveloping doesn't reflect the friendly-like greeting, but I can tell he's trying.

And I lower my guard in return. "Nice to meet you, Theo Five."

I don't get a chance to marvel at his pearly whites when he full-on smiles for a second.

Not because he seals the smile away and returns to his serious self.

Because he stands to his impressive six-foot four-ish height and jumps right into the pool next to me.

A surprised, nervous chuckle flows past my lips. My amusement, too, is momentary. I sober up fast once he resurfaces, holding the edge of the pool with one hand.

With the other, Theo rakes his fingers through his damp hair in a graceful, slow motion belonging to a man in commercials. Drops of water cascade down his face, his neck, and his broad shoulders. They land on his taut chest, accentuating the muscles bulging beneath his taut skin.

Sure, I appreciated him for not checking out my boobs or imagining my mouth doing sinister things to him. I did.

Thing is, I'm not as strong-willed as he is. I'm hardly holding on as is from shamelessly leaning forward and licking each single drop off of his body.

I'm so deep into the fantasy that I don't pay attention to what I'm doing. My tongue darts out, swiping across my bottom lip.

Then his low growl wakes me. I snap my eyes back to his and shriek. Theo's dark eyes are no longer just black. They're black holes. Fathomless. Endless. Dangerous.

"Sorry," I offer in a meek voice. My neck burns as if it's being scalded.

"For?" His muscles flex as he grips the ledge and prowls toward me, sliding forward slowly.

Air flows in and out of my lungs with effort. I'm hot all over, holding on for dear life as my feet kick to keep me above water.

I'm in the deep end now. Literally and metaphorically.

How do I answer his question? I mean, I'm pretty sure he knows the answer to that, so I can't lie to him.

I don't want to, anyway.

For some strange, inexplicable reason, I want to tell him the truth. About everything.

My dating history isn't something to brag about. The longest relationships I had consisted of three dates tops that included brief kissing sessions.

I couldn't give them more of me than that. Couldn't offer more intimacy in terms of sex or deep conversation.

I've always considered my lack of interest a result of my past. My upbringing, my abandonment issues, and my hectic work schedule.

Apparently, I've been wrong.

Because when facing this man, my past and present don't hold me back. Not in the slightest. I want him to own every piece of my soul. Every cell in my body.

More than anything, the moment has finally come. I'm ready to give up my virginity.

I'm choked by the realization, and still, I don't fight it. It's the one final connection to my past, one I'm itching to lose. To sever the last tie to my disappointments, the feelings of not being wanted and loved by my parents, the pitying looks.

With him. The first man I've ever been truly attracted to.

"Words, Three." Theo advances, stopping before me. My chin is caught in his firm grip, tilting my head up. "Words and honesty."

My body buzzes, sheer blaring energy racing up and down my spine.

Another step toward me, and my nipples would graze his chest. Rub against his skin. And hopefully, more of his hard parts would grind against my softer ones.

He'd know.

So, I give him more truths. "On second thought, I'm actually not sorry."

"Again, for what?" His hot breath fans my face, smelling of mint and desire.

"For staring at you." Refusing to cower a second longer, I add, "At your body."

"Oh?" He tilts his head, appearing intrigued rather than surprised. "And you're not sorry, why?"

I refrain from biting my lip or showing any signs of nervousness. I'm a grown woman. I should be able to ask for sex. To hint I want it. Something, anything.

"Because..." I glide toward him, closing the distance between us.

My chest presses to his. The hard length of his swim trunks pokes my belly. He's not ashamed. I shouldn't be either.

I'm not. I'm overpowered by desire. Emboldened by my urges. There's nothing wrong with my wishes. And that's for him to take me.

I stay put, reveling in the feel of his erection, in the heat of his gaze from above me.

"Because?" Theo tilts my head higher, so my eyes never leave his. "Keep those words coming, Three."

"I want you." In my dazed, aroused state, my words are barely a breath. "There, I said it."

"That's a good girl," he grunts.

I sigh at his praise and moan when his lips brush mine. He barely touches me, and yet it's the most intimate kiss I've ever had.

"Very, very, good girl," Theo murmurs. His mouth trails hot kisses along my damp neck while his hand moves to relieve me of my goggles and tosses them to the deck. "Guess what, little Prue?"

If any of our other neighbors were to walk in on us, I would be too gone to realize it. My rapid heartbeats are all I hear; the top of Theo's head is all I see. His tongue swirling at the base of my neck is all I feel. All of it.

"What?"

“I”—his deft fingers work on my hairband, discarding it after undoing my bun—“want you”—he slips those expert fingers between my neck and my wet, wild hair—“too.”

My lips go round in the shape of an O.

His confession might’ve had something to do with it.

That, and how in a short, hot second, Theo Five undoes the top knot of my bikini bra.

CHAPTER FIVE

Theo

Sometimes, every once in a while, the world works exactly the way you need it to.

Like *I* needed it to today.

The money I transferred for the rent earlier today checked out quickly. I had the keys sometime after sunrise—I pushed Belinda hard on that front, and she delivered.

My new apartment—which I hadn’t seen in person—was thoroughly furnished.

All I had to do was deliver my clothes, laptop, and my physical notes there.

And last but abso-fucking-lutely not least, was her. The woman who I now know to be named Prue.

She was as introverted as I assumed her to be on that Friday night I saw her. Saw *through* her. For the entire day after I moved in with my two suitcases, I traveled up and down the building. Attempting to bump into her accidentally.

Prue hadn’t left her apartment, not once. Despite my mounting impatience, I didn’t give up. Went up to my place, showered, and lurked for her. I stood guard at the door to the stairwell on the third floor, where I assumed she lived.

My efforts paid off.

Wearing a robe around her short, sexy figure, Miss Bishop from apartment 3D finally left her apartment in the evening. The elevator she called went up to the rooftop pool, and that was where I went.

Now, I finally have her. Topless. Her heart beating to the rhythm mine does. Her damp, pouty lips making each and every one of my nerve endings ignite.

She unleashes something in my otherwise stone of a soul. The warmth of Prue’s body permeates me. Her breasts heat my chest, the red flames of her cheeks send heat to my crotch.

Even below water, with the barriers of her bikini bottom and my trunks, I can tell how needy her pussy is. How she burns. Just. For. Me.

Prue Bishop of apartment 3D wants me. And I’m here to claim her.

If that’s not a fucking high, I don’t know what is.

First, though, I need to have her consent to get her completely naked.

Keeping her body pinned to mine, I rear my head back. She doesn’t pull back.

“Prue.” I study her chocolate brown eyes, my expression void of our earlier playfulness. “Is this okay?”

“Yes.” Her gaze, albeit lustful, is clear. Her voice firm.

“Good.” With my teeth on her delicate neck, I undo the knot at the center of her back, too. “I’m going to take you in this pool. Going to be rough about it, so if it ever gets too much...”

I rip the top off her, clutching it in my hand. Her nipples are hard against my chest, taunting my flesh. But feeling her isn’t enough. I look down at the pink buds under the water, then up again at Prue’s beautiful face.

“Tell me to stop.” I tighten my fist around her top. “Tell me to stop, and I’ll leave.”

Her lips open and close, like she has something on her mind and doesn’t know how to say it.

“Speak.”

She pins her chin to her chest. Her brown gaze appears from beneath the damp, long lashes framing her eyes, which devour me. Compel me. Enchant me.

“I’m a virgin,” she whispers.

This girl. Once more, she rouses the animal in me. She could’ve slept with one man or a thousand for all I care, but to know *I’m* the one she’s chosen to give that special gift?

Fuck. Me.

“You don’t have to make up an excuse. I understand.” Prue raises her arm to cover her tits, confusing my gratefulness for rejection. “I get that older men don’t want the mess of a young, inexperienced woman. Honestly, I—”

She doesn’t get to finish. I refuse to let her go down the unnecessary path of self-deprecation. My lips crush into her parted ones, putting an end to her rant.

“Theo,” she murmurs when my tongue seeks entry to the delicious mouth of hers. “I’m serious about this.”

“So am I, Three.”

With my rock-hard dick at her belly, with how I pin her upper body to me with the hand holding her bikini top pressed to her back, I show her I want her.

How can she think otherwise?

I lean in to claim her lips again, and this time, she doesn’t argue. Prue lets me own her, lets my tongue invade her mouth. She melts into me, giving me her lips for my teeth to nip and my mouth to suck.

She’s just as lost to me. Her tongue seeks mine. Her moans are a desperate cry for me, and her fingernails bite into my nape as if she’s trying to embed herself in my skin.

“I’m clean,” I tell her, then dive in to ravage her swollen lips. “Never fucked without a condom before, either.”

The eager cries of pleasure she makes are my undoing.

I’m desperate for more. Desperate to give her more. Have her crumbling by the power I exert over her. I’ll transform this virgin into a crazed, horny woman who comes to me and only me for her pleasure. Who’ll run to *me* to protect her. The man who’ll set the ground for her to bloom peacefully without the sadness I saw on her face yesterday.

“I’m on the pill,” she answers, then explains what I already figured out myself, “for my period.”

“Good girl.” I suck on her supple bottom lip, releasing it with a pop.

Desire brims in the soulful, brown eyes staring at me. Prue’s hair is wild and chaotic like her breaths, and my hand itches to tug on it.

I have to move us before I’m pounding mercilessly into her untouched hole. Fucking her the violent way I want to in the deep water is impossible.

“Come here.” I don’t wait for her to swim alongside me, dragging her down the pool until I see her feet touching the mosaic.

The moonlight and soft amber glow of the terrace’s floor lamps play on her face. Highlights and shadows enhance her delicate features, accentuating the blush on her cheeks.

I pin Prue to the wall of the pool, sweeping my hand into her tangled hair and tilting her head up for me.

“When you dreamt about losing your virginity…” I bend lower, rocking my hips to hers in a slow, sensuous grind. “Did you have anything specific in mind?”

“N-no.”

“Did you want it to be soft and sweet...” I part my mouth slightly, running my teeth along her jawline. “...for the first man who takes you to be tender?”

She whimpers beneath me, her body quivering. Her hot breaths spark a fire to my cheek. Her hands find my chest, seeking purchase.

She’s not talking, though. The lack of verbal reply gets her a violent thrust of my hips until she’s painfully mashed to the wall.

“Yes. No.” She searches my eyes.

The pain in her intoxicates me. Hurting a woman during sex has never been something I gravitated toward. And now, with her, I’m eating it up.

“I don’t know,” she says between moans. I rock my hips into her, less gently this time. “Will you be...this person?”

My smirk is instantaneous.

“No, Three.” I flip her around to face away from me. Her delectable ass is up in the air when I pull her hips up, so fucking ready for me. “I won’t be gentle. Not today.”

Prue nods, giving me her consent.

Dammit, she’s beautiful.

I wrap an arm around her midriff, forcing her ass to my crotch. Since I have plans for her bikini top, I don’t let go while pressing my hand between her shoulder blades, shoving her face to the deck.

“Matter of fact...” While my sheathed cock rams into her virgin ass, my lips brush the goosebumps trailing her neck.

The gorgeous woman beneath me tastes of chlorine and something musky yet fresh. A scent I haven’t smelled before. *Her* scent.

“Yes?” Prue’s breathless, hoarse voice is one of trust.

“I’m going to tie you up.” Going for a patch of skin she’ll be able to hide easily in the morning, I latch my teeth onto her shoulder and suck. “To choke you while I ride your pussy.”

“Please.” Instead of being afraid, she opens her legs wider, wriggling her ass on my crotch.

A profound growl of need rumbles in my chest. She *trusts* me. The woman who caught me by the balls the second I saw her, the woman I moved out of my house for.

Begging for my dick.

“You always have the option to tell me to stop.” My cock remains pressed between her butt cheeks while I make work of tying her hands. I put one of her wrists on top of the other at the small of her back. Then I knot them together with the top of her own bikini.

“The second you say *stop*, I’ll pull out. No judgment, no disappointment.”

She moans when I fasten the knot tighter.

I slap her tit in the water. “Say you understand.”

She looks at me, breathing hard. “I do.”

This situation we’re in should worry me. I should experience some sort of concern about being caught by one of the neighbors. I’m new here, after all, and I have no idea whether there’s one or two who like late-night swimming like Prue does.

Oddly enough, I don’t. I feel like Prue wouldn’t have wanted this moment to be ruined by someone interrupting us. And besides, there’s no way I’m letting her go. Anyone who decides to wander up here can go fuck right off.

“Please.” Her begging reaches my balls, tugging on them as if it were her hand. “I’ll tell you if it’s too much, but it won’t be. I don’t want to be a virgin anymore, and I want you to take it. Please, Theo.”

The sudden boldness of this timid girl has me riled up.

“You need me,” I growl, pulling at the flimsy string on the side of her bikini bottoms. “Want me to take your virginity, not just anyone.”

Prue’s tits sway in the water. Her now-bare ass angles up, desperately seeking my attention. “Yes.”

I’m not sure she knows what she’s saying. However, since fate came through for me so far, I take her words at face value.

Following the movement of her butt, my eyes rummage down the curves of her body. I’ve been a gynecologist for fourteen years and have examined numerous women. Have seen numerous pussies and butt cracks.

None of those, not a single fucking one, matched the two holes Prue offers me.

Pink, tight, and innocent. Mouthwatering and mine for the taking.

“Need *me* to touch this pretty little pussy.”

Not holding back, I probe her cunt with two fingers. The water makes it easier to slide them in Prue, although I’m willing to bet she’d have been just as wet on a dry surface.

Her breathy cry of pleasure and the arch of her back are instinctive. She’s feral. There’s not an ounce of lie in her body language.

“Need me to make you come before I take your virginity.”

Another perk of doing what I do for a living is I know a woman’s anatomy. I know where her G-spot is, and I am familiar with how to protect the hymen.

Most of all, I know where the motherfucking clit is. How to squeeze intense, powerful orgasms out of it.

Up until this moment, I haven’t truly appreciated this particular skill. Up until this moment, I haven’t watched true satisfaction until I’ve witnessed it spread on Prue’s face.

“Oh. Oh! Please.” Her knees buckle the closer she gets to an orgasm.

I pin her cheek harder to the deck to help her stay upright while my fingers are in her pussy.

She trembles all over. For me. “Theo.”

The sound of my name from her is the final straw holding me together.

I want to prolong this orgasm for her. Want her to writhe and cry while I tease her, stop, and tease her again. But my dick can’t stay away any longer from that sweet voice and virgin cunt of hers.

Thrusting my fingers twice more into her as I rub her clit forcefully is everything Prue needs to explode on me. Her thrashing body raises waves in the pool. Her gaped lips are helpless against swallowing water overflowing to the deck, half drowning her. Prue emanates the most mesmerizing noises from both moaning and coughing in tandem.

Noises I’ll one day hear when she has her mouth around my dick.

“Such a good girl.” I bend to kiss her cheek. Just kissing her, not helping her. “Coming apart for me so beautifully.”

The sadist unfurling in me is hungry to hurt her to match the throes of pleasure she’s in. I return my lips to the teeth mark I left on her shoulder, sucking on it. Getting her flesh in my mouth.

“Thank you.” She eyes me, then says the insanely erotic word, “More.”

“Spell it out for me, Three. Tell me you want my cock.” My hand is already lowering my trunks down my thighs and grasping my thick erection. “Tell me you want every fucking inch of me stuffing your virgin pussy.”

Her nose twitches involuntarily at the mention of the word *fucking*. I’ll address that later. Way later.

“Say it.”

Her tight pussy clenches around the head of my cock, squeezing me. Tempting me to forget everything and ram into her. Except it wouldn’t be perfect, wouldn’t be absolutely right without hearing her beg for it one more time.

“I…”

I leave my cock pressed into her warmth and move her undone bikini bottoms up to her neck.

“You...?” I wrap the nylon material around her throat, applying the slightest pressure to encourage her to do as I tell her. If possible, her thighs squeeze harder around me, sending a jolt of pleasure to my balls.

“I want you to...*fuck* me,” she whispers.

“That’s what I love to hear.” With one hand maintaining a hold on my DIY choker, I sink my fingers in her hip and drag my dick another inch deeper inside her. “Exactly this.”

“Thank—”

The rest of her *thank you* dies on her lips. I shove myself deep and hard inside of her, feeling the pressure and then the tear. Feeling her tight pussy and watching her profile, how her eye widens, same as her mouth.

But she doesn’t speak, and that’s when concern niggles at me. I didn’t cut her air supply altogether, I’m sure of that.

Then again, I might’ve scared her, hurt her. I could’ve gone over the line where pain flirts with pleasure. Every woman is different, and no hymen-breaking experience is the same.

So to think Prue is extra sensitive, and that she’s traumatized by what I’ve done...I can’t bear it.

“Prue?”

“Mm-hmm?”

I release the pressure on her throat, leaning close with my cock still buried deep inside her cunt. “How are you doing there, baby?”

Prue angles her head toward me, however much her body allows her. Her breaths are heavy, her eyes nearly pitch-black as lust overtakes them.

“I’m good.” Her hoarse voice has me tightening the grip on her bottoms on a reflex. “Like I said...” She swipes her tongue along her bottom lip, driving me well into madness. “Don’t...stop.”

“You’re one filthy virgin, Three.” I reach around her, clenching my fingers on her breast. I pull on it, groaning at the small scream she lets out. Fuck the neighbors. “I’m gonna have a lot of fun stretching your pussy to the shape of my cock.”

Prue’s moans of pleasure echo in the night around us as I start plowing into her. She chokes on water and from the soaked bottom I have around her throat.

The control I have over her and the lack of oxygen are all a part of the game.

All a part of me ruining her for any other man.

Possessiveness and obsessiveness, much like sadism, haven’t been a part of me. Of my vocabulary. Or maybe they were. Maybe they’ve been there forever, festering under a serene and somber exterior, biding their time. Waiting for Prue.

“Fuck,” I let out, my hips pummeling into her, shaking the water of the pool with the force of my thrusts. “Fuck, you’re so fucking tight.”

“Oh, gosh, yes.”

Casting my gaze lower, I see her fingers sinking into the inside of her palms. Looking so fucking beautiful in the restraints.

And her hymen blood. The erotic red liquid curling around her ass and my hips, blotches of crimson in the turquoise water.

A mental image I’ll remember for the rest of my goddamn life.

“You’re getting there, aren’t you?” I slip my fingers to her clit, stroking, tugging, kneading between my fingers.

“Yes. So close.” Prue watches me.

At that moment, I realize she has ruined me for all other women.

No other eyes, no other pussy, no other body will be remotely as good as hers.

“You’re gonna come with me.” My fingers tease the right spot, needing to orchestrate our climaxes in unison. “Gonna milk my cock dry just when my cum shoots up your pussy. Understood?”

“Yes,” she breathes, her walls starting to contract around me. “Please, let me come.”

“Do it.” I pinch her nub, twisting it to get her there. “Come on my dick, Prue. Now.”

I feel it the second she does.

Goosebumps prickle my skin, and my breath gets caught in my throat as she clenches and unclenches around me. As I drive so deep inside her that her body and mine are being thrust forward with the force of my orgasm.

In a moment of lucidity, I’m thankful for the water we splashed all around us, the lubricant that keeps her cheek from scratching on the deck.

I release the last of my seed inside her and tend to Prue.

“You’ve been a good girl, Prue.” While grabbing her waist in a firm grip, I slowly let go of her bottoms, placing them beside her head, and moving to untie the knot on her wrists. “Have taken my cock so well.”

“Really?”

“Yes, really.”

I watch her intently. Her pulse doesn’t smooth out when it should’ve already.

I don’t like it.

I don’t like it one bit.

“Prue?”

“I…” Her ass wriggles beneath me. Not like before, though. Not in a taunting, *fuck me now* kind of way. She’s anxious. “I have to go.”

She regrets what we’ve done.

I can’t allow that. She enjoyed it. Her expression said so, her moans, her keen little pleas.

We’re not wrong. What we did together wasn’t wrong. Not a one-time thing, either.

The inhibitions that have darkened her soul have no place in our present. In our future.

This is where my protecting her starts.

“No, you don’t.” I pull out of her, manhandling her until her back rests on the deck and her knees are pinned to her tits.

Her gaze is sheer innocence, a little deer caught in the headlights.

“You’re not going anywhere.” I lower my mouth to her pink, swollen pussy. “Because *I’m* not anywhere near being done with you.”

CHAPTER SIX

Prue

If I had any pearls around my neck, this moment, hearing *those* words from him, would be the moment I'd clutch them.

But I don't. Around my neck, I have what feels like the beginning of a burn mark. And I can't clutch onto that.

Theo hadn't used excessive force or anything I couldn't handle. I didn't pass out when he choked me. He hadn't been selfish when taking my virginity.

There's no denying he'd been harsh; each stroke of his cock, each pull on my bikini bottoms, was aimed to inflict pain. Intended to carry us to the edge where he could harm me, but never crossing it.

And I wanted it. I wanted him to do those things to me.

Through the two orgasms Theo had given me, I'd gotten exactly what I asked for and more. So much more.

Until my past had to swoop in, reminding me my virginity was supposed to be saved for my husband. Definitely not to a stranger who gets off on cutting off my air.

I realize how unfair this is to him. To me too. I should be floating in post-orgasmic bliss. Nevertheless, I can't shake it.

Am I broken?

Dang it. I've deluded myself into thinking I put my past behind. I wished hard that living in one of the most liberal cities in the U.S. would help me unleash my sexuality.

It has, too, a little. In my bed, when I'm alone. And that hardly counts. I wish to feel the same liberation with Theo. It's not wrong if he took what I willingly offered. What I begged for. But my guilty conscience doesn't care about consent or needs. I'm overcome with guilt. I'm promiscuous. I've lost myself. I'm not the woman I was an hour ago, and it saddens me.

I have to leave here, leave him. Run off to my apartment, collect my thoughts on my own, and see what I find there. Hopefully, forgiveness toward myself. A renewed craving for him.

First, though, I have to get up.

I flatten my hands on the deck, lifting my head an inch in the air.

"I said..." Theo pulls me toward him by gripping my thighs. His biceps flex with the effort, highlighting the gorgeous veins on his arms. "I'm *not* done with you. You're going to keep being my good little girl and lie down here while I eat you out."

"Theo, I'm done for tonight. I—"

My resistance dies a quick and sudden death when Theo's mouth closes in on my clit. Theo's lips press harder to my fluttering mound when I groan in pleasure. He sucks on it hard, his teeth chafing my skin, his tongue flicking my clit.

"Jesus," I yell out.

Screaming the Lord's name seems blasphemous. Then again, He did create Theo. He did put him in my path for my pleasure. He conjured him to be my new neighbor. My extremely sinister neighbor. Who's famished for me.

This, us—we fit. We're good together. I need to believe it's right.

My hands sink into his hair, pulling, tugging, begging the man devouring me for more. “Please don’t stop. Yes. Just like...just like that.”

“Keep your hands on your knees.” Theo’s voice is a whip, and I hurry to comply with his demand.

“Good girl.” He spears my sore, used hole with two fingers, hooking them inside me while he flattens his tongue on my clit. He laps at the over-sensitized nub, talking between each languorous lick. “I want your perfect little cunt open for me. Want to see every part of you from the inside out.”

“Yes, Theo. I’ll do anything.” My eyes close, my body surrenders to him.

“Look at me,” he demands.

And I do. The world could collapse around us and instead of running or trying to hide, I’m going to keep doing exactly what Theo tells me to.

“We’re not wrong.” Theo drags his smooth, warm tongue on me. He’s being painfully slow, unlike the fast rhythm with which he jabs his fingers into me. “Say it.”

With his sinister touch, with every stroke of his fingers, I’m losing my resistance. He thrusts into me relentlessly, his touch meant to propel me violently over the edge.

Then a sliver of lucidity permeates through the clouds of lust. My grasp on his hair lessens, my breath leaving me in a sigh.

“Theo, we shouldn’t—“

Sharp, unforgiving teeth sink into the crease where my butt meets my thigh.

“We. Are. Not. Wrong.”

Us having sex isn’t wrong. That’s what he means. Theo wants me for my body, and I, in a way, used him for his as well. What we’re doing is so carnal. So unlike me.

But I need more of him.

I’m not sure what I need anymore.

“We’re not, but this is wrong.” Tears well in my eyes, hating myself for how horny I am. For how I let my desires take the wheel for me.

Hating how I confused physical attraction to an emotional connection. It’s impossible. I don’t know him. I can’t possibly like-like him, as in the man beneath the skin. I saw him as this beautiful shell, and gosh, I really did use him.

“No,” he thunders.

“Please, no.” I push away. Once more, he keeps me locked in place, not letting me detach myself from his gilded cage of hedonism. “This isn’t right. We shouldn’t be doing this—“

“Is this a *stop*?”

The question barrels into me. Choking down my panic. Suffocating my guilt.

I don’t want to stop.

But I’m treating him like a means to an end. Like his flesh and bones and muscles were brought to this earth, so I could do with them as I wish. It’s not fair to him. He should at least be aware of it.

“I’m using you,” I whisper.

He cocks a thick eyebrow. “Still not a *stop*.”

“No.”

“Then shut up, Prue.” Water and my arousal make his full lips glisten.

I do. I have no other choice, really.

“Stop going back and forth. Stop denying how *right* this is. Whatever’s fucking with your head, that’s what’s wrong.” His gaze is downright feral. “I want to be with you. You want to be with me. And you’ll lie here like a good fucking girl and take it until *I*, no one else, say otherwise. Are. We. Clear?”

Running from him ceases to be a viable option. I’m his to bend, and he’s mine to fulfill my fantasies. I lose my fight, submitting to him.

Only for tonight.

“We’re not wrong,” I rasp, and he rewards me with more sensual sucking, nipping, lapping on my clit.

“Letting me fuck you will *never* be wrong.” Eyes dark as the night challenge me to refute him. “Say it.”

“Letting you...”

He lifts his head, slapping my pussy hard twice. Water splashes, and it hurts. It hurts so good.

I cry out, then moan when he gives an open mouth kiss to the wounded area.

My hands are in his hair again, desperate for him.

“Fuck me...”

Theo reaches his hand up on my navel, between my breasts, kneading and tormenting my nipple while his head is buried in my pussy. His tongue swirls and moves left and right so fast I’m maddened by overstimulation.

“Isn’t wrong,” I breathe out as the buildup of a third orgasm threatens to destroy me. “It’s not wrong. So not wrong.”

“Finally, we’re getting somewhere.”

He stops his ruthless pleasure attack on my pussy and lowers his fingers to my pucker.

“No,” I beg with my voice, with my eyes, with my everything. It’s a private hole. A bad one. “Not there.”

“Yes, there,” he challenges. “I’ll put my hands, my tongue, my goddamn cock wherever I goddamn want.”

Saying *stop* will make it go away. Will make him remove his finger from my forbidden hole. Yet, when his thumb covers my rim, when he pushes in just a little, it’s all I can do not to come.

I call out his name. I grind my hips on the water overflowing the deck. And then, as he resumes telling me what a good girl I am while he touches my asshole and eats out my pussy, I come undone.

“Beautiful.” Theo turns his mouth assault into a million feather-light kisses. “That’s so fucking perfect, watching you come. How you’re completely in the moment. Entirely mine.”

I’m not sure about this *his* concept, but I don’t argue. I’m too sated, too comfortable, too in an otherworldly moment to argue.

Our gazes lock over my reclining body. Theo smolders while I imagine my eyes look floaty and untethered.

“You okay?” His expert hands run over my trembling ones, silently telling me to release my hold on his head.

I do just that, allowing my legs to dangle and fall at my sides.

“I think so.”

“You think?” His amused tone matches his tilted head.

“Yes.” I choose honesty because it is my first time after twenty-six years, with a complete stranger. I’m allowed to be weirded out. Or at the very least, confused.

“Okay.” Theo applies his mature voice, one that makes me forget that I’m spread out before him. “What can I do to help you with that?”

I don’t have an answer for him. Nor do I have the time to think about one.

The familiar *ding* of the elevators announcing the arrival of a neighbor pierces the silence around us, hurling me back to reality.

“Nothing.”

Since one part of my bikini is nowhere to be found, and the other would take me forever to put on, I give up on wearing them.

I shimmy myself out of Theo's loosened grip and slide across the floor toward the pool bed where I left my robe.

"Prue—" he starts, his dominant warning not pleased one bit when I close the robe around my naked body.

"You should pull your trunks up."

By the grace of everything good, he does.

Exactly in time for the glass door to the pool area to open.

"Hi, Prue," Rhonda from floor four greets me.

"Hey, Rhonda." I pin the robe tighter around me.

I also pray that Theo takes advantage of Rhonda's attention being fixed on me, so he can shove my bikini into his pockets.

"And you are...?" she asks, casting her maple eyes toward the unfamiliar man in the water.

Theo turns around. From his profile, I see he's not smiling. His expression is flat. Polite.

"Theo. New neighbor."

It doesn't escape me how he doesn't tell either of us his last name. And that he doesn't tell her his floor number.

I don't have time to linger on it, not when I'm naked beneath my robe. Nor do I want to continue Theo's and my conversation about us having sex. Embarrassment and self-awareness plague my body, and I have to collect myself. Alone.

Which was what I planned to tell Theo.

Except now I don't have to anymore. I'm free to just...go. To mull over tonight on my own.

To decide what I want all alone.

"Welcome to the building." She smiles at him, because how could she not?

He's gorgeous.

He really is.

"You too," he tells her, then casts his eyes to mine. Again, demanding me to stay.

"Well, then." I start walking on trembling feet, pausing, regrouping, and steeling my muscles. When I head toward the door, my gait can almost pass as confident. "I'm done for the night."

"Prue, wait," Theo says. Still domineering, still commanding.

But now I'm out of his reach.

With my hand on the sliding glass door, I spin toward them. "Good night, Rhonda."

The man who took my virginity and had me coming three times under his ministrations pulls himself up and out of the pool.

Time moves in slow motion for me. I'm mesmerized by the rivulets of water on his ripped upper body. On the ridges of muscle, trickling down to his waistband.

"Theo." I force a smile.

Since I can't open this conversation around Rhonda, and I'm already panicking as is, I make a silent vow to find him again. Once my thoughts have been organized.

If he calls out my name again, I don't hear it from the stairwell. I descend quickly to my apartment, hiding from him.

I wish he won't follow me or look up what apartment I live in.

I want it to be my decision. He can push me around all he wants when he's inside me, and I'll accept it. I'll beg for more. He can even boss me around if I decide to give myself to him.

Who am I kidding? *When* I do.

Not a second before.

I close the door to my apartment and lock it behind me, praying he'll understand. Needing him to allow me this day or week to process this evening. To realize that when I'm ready, I'll come to him on my own.

I press my forehead on the door, and close my eyes.

Yeah, I'm not fooling myself. After what we've been through together, the fascination I have with him, I'm sure that I'll go to him.

As soon as I'm ready.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Theo

My obsession for Prue hasn't diminished by the tiniest fraction since I've had her.

I've never been one to settle down. To feel the need to share my life with a woman. Sex has been nothing but sex for me. It hasn't meant a relationship. It hasn't meant growing old and gray together.

It's simply been...sex.

Falling in love has never been in the cards for me.

Then again, there's always an exception to the rule. Always.

And for me, as I pounced on Prue last night, I found it.

It was her.

There hadn't been a bone in my body worried I'd get bored with her. Ever since I saw her, I've wanted far more than just to fuck her. My protective instincts flared. My heart ached to shield her, cherish and worship her until every drop of her sadness drained away.

Irrational. Insane.

One hundred percent real.

An obsession that only seemed to intensify when she told me she was a virgin.

As I sunk my cock into her and tore through her hymen, once she spasmed on my dick, and I came inside her, I was a changed man. My fascination with Prue Bishop was all I knew. She ingrained herself into my cells. Forever there to stay.

At that moment, I decided I wanted no one else to deliver her orgasms. To spill their seed in her womb. To control her one thrust at a time. No other name will pass through her lips when she climaxes. No other man or woman will hold her down and force her to take what they're giving.

Me.

Only. Ever. Me.

That was why I didn't let her leave and had her coming on my face. Even when she wanted to run.

Especially when she wanted to run.

I had to show her. Had to see my desire reciprocated and have her beg to come back to my apartment with me. And fast.

Because she was holding back and wanted to regret what we'd done.

The way she spoke when doubt clung to her pores had me believing she came from some kind of religious background. Whether it was Catholic school or having overly strict parents, I couldn't be sure. And I couldn't take it.

She was mine. The past had to stay where it belonged. In the past.

Then that damned Rhonda and...

It ended all too fast. I couldn't chase her—that would've been taking it one step too far. This fragile, precious flower couldn't be ripped out of the garden in one soulless tug.

I'll lay off her, provide her with the space she needs to realize her new reality.

For the weekend.

After that, I'm going to continue where we'd left off at the pool.

Until then, I'm here in my apartment. Following her.

Since the crack of dawn on this summer Sunday morning, I've been looking out my window and onto the street. Waiting. Watching. Expecting to see Prue's car driving out of the building on her way to do whatever it is she does on Sundays.

She must have errands to run. Visiting her parents, maybe? I don't know. But I want to find out.

At first, I considered stalking her from my place in the stairwell, same as I had yesterday. Then I considered logistics. Like how long it'd take me to go on a bathroom break and how I might miss her.

Perched against my windowsill is better. Where I can leave my laptop aimed at the sidewalk, recording what I might miss in my absence.

Which, apparently, I won't have to use.

Air surges into my lungs, seeing Prue's long ponytail outside my window. Wearing a loose, gray T-shirt and black shorts, she storms out of the building. She jogs, heading south, and disappears from my line of view.

In her absence, two options present themselves to me.

One, I already have my sweats and socks on. I can throw on a T-shirt, slip into my sneakers, and sprint out to catch up with her. My strides are longer, my determination burns harder. It wouldn't be ten minutes before I'm at her side.

And it would end up in a disaster.

I'd be coming on too hot, too fast. I promised myself I'd let her off the hook for the weekend for a reason. Tomorrow night, she'll have me knocking at her doorstep, coaxing another three orgasms out of her before we have a serious talk. She'll see reason by then.

I can't go another minute without her. Option two, it is: breaking into her apartment.

I'm strung out, my cock hard and heavy in my boxers since the moment I opened my eyes.

It doesn't matter that I have her bikini set here. The set I stole last night. Fucking *slept* with it.

Masturbated with it, too, this morning. Rubbed her top on my cock while sniffing her bottoms. The smell of chlorine nearly obliterated the musky, fresh scent of Prue, but not entirely. Enough had lingered to carry to my nose. To throw me back to when I feasted on her pussy.

But being as hooked as I am, I'm not satisfied.

I need to come again while being closer to her. Compelled to do it. I have to be quick about it too, before she returns home.

The top T-shirt in the closet gets thrown on my bare chest. It's white, though it could've been gray and torn for all I care, and I still would've worn it. Next, I slip into one of the sneakers I have neatly organized on my shoe shelves.

Last but not least, I fish out a paper clip from my improvised, temporary work desk.

My desire is a palpable thing as I leave my apartment and take the steps. Last thing I need is nosy Rhonda wondering what I'm doing, stopping at floor three. The stairs are better. There's no sign indicating what floor you're going to. If I bump into Rhonda, all I have to do is continue my jog to the lobby.

Fortunately, I don't. I push through the door at Prue's floor. Casual, unaffected, like I belong here. But my show is wasted in the empty hallway. No one's here as I meander to Prue's apartment, the one I saw her leave last night.

3D.

There's no sign with her name indicating she lives here. No *Welcome* or *Home Sweet Home* doorway rug.

Just a sign saying *3D*.

Simple. Classic. Elegant.

Like her.

Now for the lock.

With the internet's help this morning, two small *clicks* and a louder one later, and I'm inside her apartment. I shouldn't have researched it. I shouldn't be here, either.

Fuck if I'm bothered by it.

Prue's door, much like mine, closes softly behind me. Although I'm really short on time, my eyes can't help but roam around her place. I want to get to know her. No, not want. Need.

There's more to it than just touching every inch of her or admiring her beauty. I'm only partly interested in the immaculate anatomy of her pussy or the captivating desperation of her moans. In her pretty smile or soft curves.

I'm driven and obsessed with stripping her soul bare to me. I want to make love to her brain, to chase away what's hurting her. I won't rest until I do.

Her apartment betrays none of that.

The walls are bare of family photos or of any painting for that matter. The coffee table in the living room holds one small clay vase with three artificial pink lilies in it. Bland green is the color of her two couches, akin to the color of the sheets on her bed.

This place, empty of her, won't give me answers. She will, later.

For now, I'll take what I can.

I'm in her living space, and it's good enough for me.

Definitely good enough for my cock. It tents my sweatpants, demanding I do something about the agonizing pressure.

I head to her bedroom and into her bathroom. Other than the size of it and the lack of a tub, it's identical to the one in my apartment. The walls are made up of white and gray granite tiles, and built-in shelves house her towels and robes. The rest of her toiletries are neatly organized inside the drawers of the dark gray vanity.

The scent of her shampoo hits me instantly. *Prue's* scent. That intoxicating fragrance of hers attacks my nose, curling around my heart, and squeezes. A groan bursts out of my throat when I fist my throbbing erection over my sweatpants and tug.

I shouldn't be doing this. Shouldn't desecrate her safe space by jerking off to her smell.

I should fucking cool it. Act different than my sick ex-boss who harassed so many women who walked through his exam room.

Except...this isn't *any* woman.

My conscience yields when I reason with it. I'm not just breaking into a random person's apartment. Prue is special. She belongs to me. We established it yesterday.

It's a done fucking deal.

She just needs to get used to the idea.

And I know exactly how to make it happen.

A solution comes to mind. I'm going to mark a part of her home to ease her into this new relationship. I'll hide it and she won't be aware of it, but she'll feel me. She has to.

I push open the glass door of her shower and step inside. Her smell is much more prominent here. For a brief second, I'm agitated. She washed herself up after being with me. Washed me off her.

My teeth grind, and I curse.

Of course, she had to. I did too. And besides, as an OB-GYN, I should know UTIs are no fucking joke.

My jaw relaxes, but I'm no less desperate for her. Inhaling her into my lungs isn't what I came here for. I have to *feel* her.

I turn around to search for her hamper. Placed at the corner of the bathroom, it's half full. I walk over there, plucking a white pair of her thin cotton panties.

"Prue," I whisper her name, drowning my nose with her underwear.

The smell of her pussy has my mouth watering. The muscles on my thighs strain as if preparing to rut into her. I twist the rumpled garment in my hand until the crotch of Prue's panties is at my mouth. Then I dart out my tongue and lick the dried sweet juices of her cunt.

"Fuck, baby, you taste so good," I say to the empty room, tasting her a second time. "So fucking good."

A drop of precum leaks from the swollen crown of my dick. There's no way I'll be able to hold my orgasm for long, which works in my favor. I haven't memorized Prue's jogging routine yet, and there's no telling when she'll be here.

Walking back into her shower, I push my sweats and briefs down past my knees. I tie her panties at the base of my shaft as a makeshift cock ring without cutting the blood supply to it.

It's not like I need my dick to get any harder the way it's painfully straining right now. I need her. On me. Around me. Milking me dry.

I grab her shampoo from the shower niche, squirt a dose on my right hand, and flatten the left one on the wall. When I look down at my cock with her panties and her shampoo on it, another groan of pleasure rips through my lungs.

The sickening feeling of invading her privacy doesn't make me hate myself. Turns out, it works better than a goddamn Viagra.

I don't waste time, pumping my dick while thinking about her. I fantasize about Prue entering her apartment after her run. About her sweaty body, about her heaving breasts while she cools down from her jog.

Every part of her hot to the touch. Drops of perspiration rolling down her neck and shoulders, sliding past the parts of her that were marked by me.

Those salty little beads sliding lower, trickling down the space between her breasts. Exactly where I'm desperate to lick and suck and put my cock.

She releases her gorgeous mane out of the ponytail, toeing off her sneakers. Her clothes are tossed in the hamper. Her gorgeous, naked body traipses into the shower on her delicate feet.

The images crossing my mind at a rapid speed make me uncontrollably feral.

My hand strokes faster, gripping the painful erection tighter. My balls are almost up to my stomach. I'm incapable of stopping the moans and grunts coming out of me.

I picture her, goddamn *see* her, standing where I am, under the showerhead. She turns the water on cold after running outside in the early summer sun. Her nipples pucker as chilly rivulets slide across them, pink and bitable.

I want her.

Then...

Christ, I'm so fucking close.

Then she washes her hair, wiggles her toes. She thinks this is just another day, and this is just another shower.

Only today won't be just any other day.

Later today, when my darling Prue's feet touch the floor of her shower, they won't step on the tiles alone.

She'll step on my cum, too.

Be one with it.

Her foot on my seed is the one final image I need to climax. I grunt out her name, my dick pulsing as it spurts out hot semen to mark her shower floor.

As I try to catch my breath, I look down at the mess I made. My cum blends into the white tiles, invisible to those who don't know what to look for.

Perfect.

My lips curl up, my satisfaction is palpable.

I tuck myself in, still wrapped in Prue's panties.

Without glancing back, I leave her apartment.

My Prue's apartment.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Prue

The lock doesn't greet me with its usual click when I insert the key inside it.

"What in the world?" My brow furrows.

I press on the door handle, letting myself inside my unlocked apartment tentatively. Through narrowed eyes, I scan the small space I call home. No shadows linger in the corners, no creaking noises coming from the bathroom or my bedroom.

But just because I can't hear an intruder, doesn't mean they're not there.

There goes that paranoid feeling again.

What's wrong with me?

Before I start thinking about asking one of the neighbors if they heard anything suspicious, I shut the door behind me and lock it.

I'm a functioning adult, having moved out of the orphanage at eighteen. I've worked my ass off at waitressing while studying to be a physician assistant and single-handedly paid back my student loans.

I'll be truly and completely damned before giving anyone a reason to look at me as though I'm a hysterical little mouse. A girl who's afraid of the nonexistent monsters under her bed.

They're practically strangers. I shouldn't care about their opinion when I feel like my safety might be at risk. But I do.

People's opinions matter. I don't have much other than my job, the money I have saved in the bank, this apartment, and my dignity. I'm not losing any of it because I'm imagining things.

Especially when someone might gossip and said gossip could reach Theo.

My body and heart haven't calmed down since our encounter yesterday. My mind keeps reeling with how he touched me, took my virginity. With all the things I should tell him.

Things he might not want to hear if he thinks I'm a coward. Despite my hesitations yesterday, I showed him what a strong woman I am.

I don't want to ruin it by explaining I'm not usually one to freak out. I want to say something else.

I want to tell him as I stand up straight with my chin held up high that our sex was more than just sex to me.

While I jogged, my mind cleared, and I considered this, *us*. I don't want to use him anymore. I want this to be serious. Which is why, nope, I'm not about to start asking for help from anyone.

Chances are, no one broke in here at all. It wouldn't be the first time I forgot to lock the door behind me in the past. Some days I forget.

And since yesterday, I've been distracted.

Extremely distracted.

Flashbacks of Theo touching my naked skin, whispering profanities, play on repeat in my head.

Of him choking me, and how I liked it.

The soreness between my thighs serves as a constant reminder of him. Of his thick, heavy cock ramming into me, opening me. Theo stretched me to accommodate his huge girth, taking my virginity and leaving memories of him there instead.

Then there was the mixture of hot and cold in his eyes, too. His skillful maneuvers of my body. How important it was for him that I came.

I suck in a long breath, slowing my increasingly quickening pulse.

Yup, distracted. I'm thoroughly distracted.

As I toss my keys to their place on the table by the door, I shake off the last of my worries. It's more likely I forgot to lock it rather than someone stalking *me*, a nobody. I literally jogged for forty-five minutes. There's no one here.

Then again...a tiny percent of me still demands it's not that farfetched.

I remove my shoes as quietly as I possibly can, tiptoeing toward my kitchen. The drawer where I hide the biggest, meanest knives—meant more for protection than anything—doesn't rattle as I open it. I close my fingers around the handle of the top knife, the fourteen-inch cleaver that can cut through meat.

Feeling safer with it in my hold, I peek inside my bedroom.

My heart races and clamors in its cage. This scenario I've built in my head suddenly becomes a real thing.

One thing, then the other and...

Empty.

Relief doesn't flood me, not until I check the inside of my bathroom. A new layer of sweat forms on my forehead, trickling into my eyes. I blink them away, not daring to make any sudden move by swiping at them.

In the complete and utter silence of the apartment, I keep telling myself, *No one's here, you're imagining it. No one's here, you're—*

As soon as I see my bathroom empty, my phone decides to chime and ring.

I yell from the surprise.

No, that's a lie. I don't yell.

I scream my head off.

Idiot, Prue. You're an idiot.

I unzip my shorts pocket with one hand, but I don't have time to reach for my phone.

Loud footfalls on the floor close in on my apartment, and the door is being pushed open.

"Prue?" My next-door neighbor, Florence, materializes in my living room, out of breath. "What's wrong? Where's the fire?"

Talk about avoiding embarrassment.

Adrenaline, tons of it, courses through my veins. So much so that though my hands are moving, my mouth is heavy.

She looks at me; I look at her. When I say nothing, her eyes drift from my must-be weird expression to my knife-holding hand. And she takes a step back.

"You seem fine, so I...I'll be on my way..." More distance is put between us. More of her dark complexion paling. "Okay?"

Shoot. I have to say something. I can't have people saying I'm unhinged altogether.

"Florence."

The phone continues to ring in my hand as I unfurl my fingers. The knife drops on the bathroom floor with a *clink* and a *thunk*.

I don't turn my head toward it. "I'm fine. Nothing happened. And...uh...I wasn't going to hurt anyone."

My neighbor gulps and nods.

“Yeah, I know. You’re a good person, Prue. I’ll be over there,”—the elderly woman jerks her thumb to the left where she lives—“catching up on *The Bachelor* from last week. If that’s okay with you?”

Oh, gosh. She’s asking for my permission as though I’d hunt her down and stuff her body parts in my fridge Dahmer-style. Trying to explain to her I’m not some sort of serial killer would have the opposite effect, I’m sure of it.

Instead, I give her my most genuine smile. “Sure. Thank you for checking in on me.”

“Anytime.” Florence twists, makes an inconspicuous-as-possible run for it, and slams the door behind her.

“Ugh,” I groan, my head bowing to the floor.

Judging from the look on her face, there won’t be any more of these save-the-neighbor operations from Florence. It was brave of her to begin with, a woman in her seventies who couldn’t weigh more than ninety pounds came to my rescue.

She won’t be coming into this unhinged neighbor’s apartment anymore.

Oh, well. What’s done is done. I’ll deal with Theo in case the news gets to him somehow.

But before I do anything, I have to shower. My sweat has dried up by now, and my damp clothes cling to my body. I pick up the knife and drop it into the sink in the kitchen, lock my apartment, turn on the air conditioner, and return to my bathroom.

I take off my hairband, throwing it on the vanity. Next in line are my T-shirt and sports bra, both go to the hamper. I hook my fingers around the waistband of my shorts, about to remove those as well, when I feel the extra weight in my pocket.

My phone. That reminds me of what brought on this mayhem in the first place. Someone called me.

Half-naked in my bathroom, I unlock the phone. The number who called me is one I don’t recognize and isn’t from the LA area, either.

My stomach swoops at the idea it might be Theo. I’ve never gotten sales calls on a weekend, and Michelle shuts off her phone on Sundays.

It’s gotta be Theo. Has to be.

The smile that tears at my face is unlike any I’ve had in a truly long while.

I might mumble with excitement. Might blurt out the wrong thing. But I won’t screen his calls. Making the effort to somehow find my number means he likes me as much as I like him.

It means yesterday was more than just a meaningless fuck to him, too. His possessiveness wasn’t a fleeting feeling. He wants me.

I sigh out loud, clasp my teeth on my bottom lip.

I’m sure to an outsider, I’m a laughable sight. A woman standing in her bathroom, her hair a ratty mess, breasts out and shoulder marked by a wild man who took her virginity and gave her so much more. As if that’s not enough, I’m gazing longingly at my phone, too.

Well, screw the metaphorical outsider.

I’m happy. Naïve and happy. Or happily naïve.

Whatever.

My fingers fly across the screen, dialing the missed call.

I pace the length of the small bathroom back and forth while it rings.

“Hello?” a raspy voice answers, a voice that doesn’t belong to Theo. “Prue? Prue Bishop?”

Doubt creeps up my spine where excitement resided a second ago.

“Um...who’s asking?”

“Zeke Peterson. Her father.” He clears his throat while my world comes crashing down on me. “Or more correctly, *your* father.”

CHAPTER NINE

Prue

“Excuse me?” I murmur, looking straight ahead. All I see is nothing. “You’re—I-I don’t know my father. No one knows who my father is.”

During my years in the orphanage, I’d constantly badgered the housemothers, demanding they help me find out who my parents were.

When they said they had no idea and that I was dropped on the front steps without a name or a social security number, I started working to afford a detective. At the age of eight. I walked the neighbor’s dogs, babysat kids in the neighborhood. Anything I could.

A couple of years later, I had the money. Ruth chaperoned me to meet a detective, only to encounter more disappointment. With nothing to go on other than my DNA, he ended his search empty-handed after his connections in the police department told him no one matched mine in the system.

How can this man be so sure he’s my dad? And why now?

“I do know. Since I’m him,” he says in a flat tone.

I try to read into it, track his accent, anything, but nothing sticks out.

“Your mother told me about you last week. Salina West, the girl—now woman—I fucked in... Well, you don’t want to hear that.”

He’s wrong. I do want to hear it. I want to hear everything. Drink up every word about my heritage. Who my parents are. My grandparents, uncles, aunts. Even about them screwing. I’m the least bit picky at this point.

A myriad of questions floods my head all at once. They topple one on top of the other, each suffocating the one beneath it. They leave me frozen in place, my mouth slacking. My ears perk up to latch onto any details this person who calls himself my dad might volunteer.

“Let’s just say we were together. Then, one day during high school, Salina bailed.” Zeke—I still don’t call him my father—doesn’t sound resigned or sad. He simply lays out the facts to me. “In our small town in Arizona, it happens. Some people want a bigger life, ya know? They disappear.”

I do. Sort of. The reason I chose the path I took was because I wanted to provide for myself while forgetting the past. But we’re all different people, looking for fresh starts for our own motives.

My mom could’ve wanted the same for herself.

Realizing he can’t see me nod through the phone, I say, “Yes.”

“Anyway, she vanished, and I went on with my life. Got married. Had kids. Adult stuff.”

The longer the conversation goes, the more conscious I am of my state of undress as I’m talking to my could-be dad. I put the phone aside and shrug on my top, leaning over the wall and sliding to the floor so I won’t faint.

“How did you... What happened?” I massage the space between my eyebrows. “How did you find her and me?”

“Your mother showed up at the local bar two weeks ago.” I hear a car drive by in the background, followed by Zeke gulping his drink. “And the alcohol got her talking.”

I ignore his comment about their meet-up at the bar, at how it sounds like he’s mocking her. Instead, I imagine him sitting on a porch. His teenage kids are in their rooms. His wife cooking something in the oven.

Family life.

The life *I* could’ve had.

“She said she had a baby. Mine. Twenty-six years ago. Said she kept you, dropped you off at some orphanage, and disappeared. Didn’t say where.”

The dates match. The state matches where my orphanage was.

This man is piecing the puzzle together for me, creating a picture that feels incredibly realistic.

“What about her?” Sadness taints my excitement. “How did she know who I was? Is she going to call me too?”

“I’m sorry, kid, I don’t think Sali will,” he deadpans without a hint of sympathy. “If it’s any consolation, she cared for a while. Broke into the orphanage’s offices after a month or two and saw what they named you. That’s how my detective friend found you. My successful, bright daughter.”

Good thing I’m sitting, or I would’ve collapsed to the floor. The newfound knowledge barrels down on me like a ton of bricks, blow after blow.

My mom searched for me this one time. Once. She didn’t want me, like the rest of the adoptive parents and foster ones didn’t. I always believed their passing up on me was a sign from God, leaving me there so I’d be where my parents could come for me.

But apparently, divine intervention had nothing to do with my situation.

No one had wanted me. Plain and goddamn simple.

I bite my inner cheek hard to keep a sob at bay.

“Hey, you there?” Zeke calls out to me.

“Yeah.” I rub my chest, massaging the aching spot. “I’m here.”

“Fuck Salina.”

I gasp at his crude words. Then I laugh.

“That’s more like it.” He sips on his drink again, swallowing loudly. “Screw her, right? We don’t need her.”

We.

“It’s not the nicest—”

“We don’t. Fuck her.” The way he cuts me off, it doesn’t seem like he’s trying to console me.

Although, at the moment, I’m desperate enough to accept just about anything from the man who sounds more and more like he might be my father.

“We can be a family of our own, you and me, Prue. I can visit. What do you say?”

As much as I’m dying to believe him, as much as I want to have a father to hold me, I’m cautious. I’ve seen one too many catfish TV shows to have me doubting strangers.

Unless, of course, it’s a handsome man named Theo who gives me such genuine, believable vibes that I can’t deny him the keys to my heart.

Sigh.

“I’d love to meet you, it’s just...” I pause, my stomach heaving at what I’m about to ask of him.

“Out with it.”

“I’ve been disappointed. A lot.” I run my hand through my hair, embarrassed to admit to a weakness. “I want to send you a paternity test for you to return to me before we meet. Is that okay?”

“You paying?”

His question throws me off, but I don’t let it get to me. It’s a question. Nothing more, nothing less.

“Yeah, of course.”

“Okay, sure thing then.”

Our conversation has reached its end. The rest of it, the rest of our history, will have to wait for the DNA test and, hopefully, our future face-to-face meeting.

“Perfect. Text me your address, and I’ll forward you mine, so you can send it back.”

“All right. Talk soon.”

“Talk soon—” I ache to say *Dad*, the word I couldn’t say and craved for years. But as I’ve learned repeatedly, hope is a vicious fuckboy rather than a comforting lover. I settle on his name instead. “Zeke.”

We hang up, and I add ordering a paternity test to my mental to-do list for today. I have to go over the notes I’ve written down the past week about the procedures Michelle conducted.

Have to clear my head from this conversation and store away the excitement and hope.

Otherwise, I won’t stop obsessing over it when I have more important things for now. Like my work. Like what exactly I’m going to say to Theo sometime next week.

I finish what I started earlier, removing my clothes and placing them neatly in the hamper.

I step into the shower, and, ugh.

“Not again,” I groan when my foot lands on something sticky.

I really have to start washing the shampoo better from the floor if I don’t want to slip and fall the next time I walk in.

CHAPTER TEN

Theo

“Good morning, Vienna,” I greet my new secretary.

Her dark blue eyes lift from the computer. She runs a hand over her pixie cut, fixing her already immaculately styled hair. “Good morning, Dr. Wentworth.”

This isn’t the first time we’ve met, obviously. I drove down here to interview her in person. This is, however, our first time working together in an official capacity.

So far, she’s made a good impression. She showed up and was on top of things before I walked in at seven-thirty. I’m doubly impressed when there’s no need for her to be here this early.

As a rule, I don’t schedule any visits earlier than nine in the morning. That’s why I told both Vienna and Bonnie, my assistant, they had to be here at eight-thirty, not a second later. I, myself, don’t come in before eight, either.

Except today is special.

Today is my clinic’s opening day. I want to make sure the machines are up and running and have the A/C cooling the rooms to the perfect temperature for both my pregnant and non-pregnant patients alike.

Make sure everything is in place.

By the looks of it, after glimpsing into my exam room, I’m pleased. It seems Vienna took care of everything.

“You didn’t have to come in this early.” I grab my white coat from the rack inside the exam room. On autopilot, like I have for years, I shrug it over the white button-down that I paired with charcoal-gray slacks.

“I did, though.” Her eyes follow me as I walk over to the round end table, fixing the magazines so they’re exactly one on top of the other.

There’s nothing wrong with how they’re organized. The patients I’ll be seeing today are all new to me. First impressions matter. Good first impressions get people talking.

My patients from San Francisco and the raving reviews they left online got half the job done. My schedule filled up for the coming week and the weeks to come, and now it’s on me to prove myself. And organized my magazine stack is just as important as the clothes I wear and the services I offer.

Besides, doing it gives me something other than obsessing over Prue.

She stayed at home for the rest of the weekend. Hasn’t gone out to shop. Hasn’t had a late-night swimming session. Hasn’t come looking for me to say she felt the intense connection we shared.

I’ve missed her during these hours, missed a person I hadn’t known until three days ago. There was no explaining the longing I had to be around her. The compulsion to barge into her apartment, fuck her to oblivion, then force her to share every last secret she has. To open up to me emotionally and physically.

It hurts to want the way I do. And it’s taken everything in me to stay away from her.

The one saving grace of the situation is knowing she had to have stepped on the generous amount of cum I left on her shower floor. I jacked off to this fantasy so hard that my dick almost fell off.

But I said I'd wait, and I am. It won't be long now that I'm coming for her.

"You already have the job, remember?" I amble toward Vienna, flipping my palm up, motioning her to give me the printed schedule.

"Yes, I remember." My thirty-year-old receptionist smiles a professional smile.

Another reason why I hired her.

The one thing I really don't need is an office romance to tarnish my reputation. To have anyone, patients included, develop a crush or fall for me. Which has happened in the past, and I always shut it down.

Ever since witnessing the nauseating bedside *mannerisms* of Dr. Fox, the director of OB-GYN where I did my residency years ago, I refrained from it. The man was my mentor in many ways, but not this. Never this.

Failing to take him down only strengthened my sense of mission, my vow to never touch a patient inappropriately.

Instead, I swore to myself I wouldn't allow sex or even something simple as infatuation slither its way into my practice. I've been upholding my vow to myself ever since.

Fuck Dr. Fox and fuck him for getting into my head.

I have my job and patients to worry about, not him.

"I also remember you instructing me to be here for the earliest appointment." Her gaze casts over the paper I'm taking from her. "She's due in five minutes."

My eyebrows furl at her words. I'm glowering at Vienna, waiting for an explanation.

"You said you'd be here at seven-thirty," she peeps, swallowing visibly and pointing at my printed schedule. "I thought you'd prefer I didn't bother you with it over the weekend. Since, you know, you were going to be here for it, anyway."

"You don't *think* anything, Vienna, without running it by me first. I could've easily slept in at the last minute and missed the first woman on my first day."

I don't raise my voice. Not when we're about to have company any minute now. Not when my growl is more intimidating than if I barked at her.

"They are *my* patients." I slap the paper on her desk. "Failing them, any of them, is unacceptable."

"Yes, Dr. Wentworth." Vienna purses her lips together, wringing her hands. "It won't happen again."

When I'm confident I got the message through, I suck in a long inhale. I smooth out my features into a pleasing, calm expression.

"Where's Bonnie?" My gaze returns to my receptionist, and I can sense it's darkening. "Don't tell me you haven't informed her either."

Unlike Vienna, Bonnie isn't a new employee. My secretary from San Francisco wasn't willing to make the move, despite the compensation I offered her because she wasn't willing to leave her elderly parents behind. Bonnie, my assistant, came here with me. It helped that I worked my connections to help her husband find a new job.

"No, no." Blotches of red cover Vienna's cheeks. "I have, but her husband's shift started at six and her babysitter couldn't make it this early. But don't worry, she told me how you liked everything. I hope I organized your exam room to your satisfaction. Bonnie said there's this one thing she needs to pick up on the way over, but that you should be good without it until she's here. Didn't tell me what it was, I'm sorry."

"All right."

I'm not an unreasonable man. I'm aware moving here means being away from Bonnie's extended family. As long as she instructed Vienna and, evidently, did it well, I can't complain.

I snatch the printed paper from the counter. "I'll be in my exam room, waiting. Let..."

I look over the first name on the list and nearly choke on air.

"Dr. Wentworth?"

"Yes." Clearing my throat, I look up at her. "Let Prue Bishop in when she arrives."

The name I groaned in the darkness of my apartment many times over the weekend. The woman whose tits I had in my mouth, whose orgasms I commanded.

Whose virginity I took like a fucking trophy.

The human body is a curious machine. One moment, you're calm and in control of your senses. Shoulders relaxed, heart rate regular, dick flaccid.

Then, with a mention of something as supposedly minuscule as a goddamn name, you're lit up. My nerve endings fire up as if they were the love child of a Christmas tree and Fourth of July fireworks. Yes, they had an orgy inside me, and this is the result.

That's what it fucking feels like.

"Okay, Dr. Wentworth," my receptionist sing-songs, her life getting back on track.

Mine is anything but.

I twist away from Vienna, grasping at one side of my coat to hide my inappropriate, growing erection.

Think, I inwardly yell at myself. *Think fast and think hard about how you want to handle this.*

Prue will be here in...I check my watch...less than a minute. I have less than a minute to analyze the situation and decide what to do with her.

Did she know who I was when she scheduled the appointment?

Did she see the sign on my clinic that says 'Dr. Theodore Wentworth' earlier last week and just didn't connect the dots?

She could've been too tired, too busy, too emotionally overwhelmed to put two and two together.

After all, she only knows her neighbor's name is Theo. It's a common name.

I'm running out of time. I won't call her. I could tell her it's inappropriate once she gets here. I *should* tell her it's inappropriate, that her one-night-stand-who-wanted-so-much-more isn't the right doctor to examine her.

I really should.

But as she walks through the door to my clinic, I can't.

Prue strides inside, one elegant step after the other like an angel gliding on air.

She doesn't notice me right away, focusing on Vienna, and I leverage that.

My eyes scan her, every inch of her. Her thick hair is tamed into a high bun on the top of her head. Her face is bare of heavy makeup other than mascara and deep brown lipstick.

She reaches over to scratch the spot where I sucked on her skin. My mark that's hidden under a simple red and white striped T-shirt, while she hid her bruised neck with a cream-colored scarf.

My curiosity piques as I take in the rest of her, the blue jeans and her Vans sneakers.

What does she do in the plastic surgery clinic across the hall? I want to grab her and force her to tell me everything.

"Ms. Bishop." I hear Vienna as if she's talking from another universe. "If you'd just fill out this form before you walk in..."

Hell no. I refuse to get any other piece of information about her from another source.

I need *her* to tell me. Need her full lips and silk-like voice to confide in me.

And with this realization, another one settles in.

I can't turn her away.

I purposefully choose to ignore my moral compass screaming at me to tell her we have to cancel the appointment.

I blatantly ignore her wide brown eyes when she notices me. How she hooks her slender fingers around the collar of her T-shirt nervously, trying to get some air in.

My cock strains against my zipper. I viciously pretend it's not happening as I curl my lips in a welcoming smile. A predator's grin.

It does, though, whether I like it or not.

Letting her in will be unethical as fuck.

As are my next words, knowing my next appointment doesn't start for another hour and fifteen minutes. A whole lot of time to do anything I want to the timid creature who shifts on her feet in my clinic.

"No need, Vienna. We'll fill out the form together. Ms. Bishop." My arm gestures toward the door of my exam room.

Might as well be called the lion's den.

"Please come in."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Theo

Her sneakers are on my newly installed rug.

Her feminine, sensual frame is inside my pristine clinic.

Her rounded, intimidated gaze lands on me as she sits down in the chair in front of me, with only the antique oak desk separating us.

Without a single word, I know what she's thinking. She remembers the night I had my tongue and my cock deep in her pussy. She's anxious that the same man is about to have her legs spread on his exam table to examine her.

She thinks it's a fucking terrible idea.

Hell, I bet she wonders whether I'll take advantage of her, or if I'll force myself on her while I'm doing a checkup. She wonders whether or not she'll have the mental strength to refuse my commands. If she'll turn around and sprint far from this inappropriate situation.

Her expressive face reveals it all. Her concerns, her worry, her conflicting emotions.

Terrified would be the word I'd use to describe her. A scared little lamb.

She wasn't like this at the pool. She was confident even when she ran off, and the lack of it turns me on and annoys me in unison.

Prue nibbles on her bottom lip, and her eyes dart all over the room, and I both want to fix it and savor it.

Then again, I don't feel like the man I was at the pool, either. There, I thrived on her willing submission. On her consent. She was beneath me and on top of me simultaneously, able to put a stop to everything by saying the word.

Here, she trembles. Here, she's unsure.

I won't hurt her. But I do get off on the concerns vibrating from her.

I want her to quiver for me every hour of every day. Me and no one else.

Is this why Dr. Jason Fox, the molesting, sexually assaulting fuck had done what he had for years? Blood rushed to his groin, his dick hard and his mind plotting on how to abuse them as he met them behind a desk?

My guess is yes and no.

That's how *he* felt. What turned him on. Innocent women to torment.

They could be anybody.

Prue isn't just anybody to me. She sure as fuck isn't an innocent patient, and I don't plan to ruin her purely for my sadistic pleasure.

By the end of today, she'll be satisfied too.

She already gave me her consent. Told me in so many words and actions that our attraction was mutual.

I don't have a hard-on for any of my patients. My hunger isn't for anyone's fear.

If I still need any proof, I can find it in my fourteen years of practice. Whenever a woman showed signs of being uncomfortable around me, I got up and left.

No. This isn't a twisted way of exerting my power over any woman.

My need, my desire, this kink that's being turned on inside me as Prue hugs her middle, is for her.

For her, and her alone.

"Maybe this is a bad idea," she starts when I take my seat, ankle on knee, and I stare at her silently. "It is, isn't it?"

To turn up the fun level of our game a notch, I'm putting on a mask. No longer her dominant neighbor, I'm now Dr. Theodore Wentworth.

Since she's going to act like a little lamb, I'm going to be the doctor to direct her toward safety. Toward an orgasm she'll receive from these impersonal yet very invasive doctor's hands.

"No." I lower my foot to the floor, grab a pen and click it open. "You need to see a gynecologist. I'm a gynecologist. What happened on Friday stays outside these doors."

It doesn't.

By the look she's giving me, she knows it. I sure as fuck know it.

Then again, that's what's getting me hard. And I bet if I cupped her pussy over her jeans, the heat emanating from her would burn my hand.

"M-my boss." Prue catches herself stammering, and her jaw tics then sets into a harsh line.

Her body language tells me more about her, more than she's willing to share. How even though she leans toward being a submissive in bed, she isn't one on the outside.

I don't tend to be wrong about people, and the way Prue scolds herself, I'd say I'm not wrong here either. In fact, I'd say she's worked hard on being an independent woman, and she wants to be respected and to not stumble over her words.

My neighbor didn't have it easy in life.

Well, now she has me. Whatever challenges will be thrown at her, I'll always be there to catch them and take the load off her shoulders.

"Go on." I quirk an eyebrow, reminding her who's in charge here.

"My boss wrote down your number. She saw it on the door to your clinic." Prue's voice gains confidence, though not by much. "It only said Dr. Wentworth. I had no idea you were...him."

That's where I crave to keep her—slightly uncomfortable, slightly wary. But not to the point where my advances on her would come off as rape.

Because it isn't. With fear in her bones and her cunt soaked, she'll want me and beg for more.

"The neighbor who tore your hymen?" Completely in my element, my question is as clinical as, *Are you having regular period cycles?*

"Y-yes." She reddens and groans. Then corrects herself, "Yes. You. So, if that's inappropriate, I'll be on my way."

My eyes observe her like a predator would their prey as she stands up.

"Yeah, thought so." She grasps the handle of her purse. "Thank you for...you know, out there, for not telling the receptionist and—"

"Sit down." The command I lash out at her is a whip. A proverbial lasso, curling in one fell swoop around her neck and forcing her ass back on the chair.

"Okay." Big brown eyes look at me once she's back where I want her.

"I'm your doctor. You're my patient. That is a done deal, and you're not to challenge me again. Understood?"

“Yes.”

“Better.” Certain she’s not walking out of here like she had at the pool, I fix my attention on the new patient’s questionnaire.

A form I currently use to uncover more about Prue’s history. “Now, we have a few details to go over. Age?”

“Twenty-six.”

“Good.” I almost reward her with a *good girl* for her quick reply, but I hold on to the praise for later.

To further unnerve her, I let my eyes scan the paper while I mumble, “No need to ask about your sexual history.”

“No.”

Flicking my gaze up to her, I get a sick kick out of her embarrassment.

My chest burns, needing to cherish it, store it close to my heart like one would a precious memory. After my soul has its fill, my dick would, fucking that coy expression right off her face by pounding into the sweet space between her parted lips.

I don’t do either.

We’re playing. I’m her doctor, she’s my patient.

So, I ask about her cycle. She answers by telling me about her pills again in detail—which brand she uses, when she will need to renew her prescription.

Other questions follow, and she answers them dutifully. Spine ramrod straight, words spoken in a timid cadence. Her cheeks flush, revealing her enjoyment of this despite her underlying fear of what I might do to her.

Rightfully so. With her, I’m not the Dr. Wentworth the rest of the world sees. I’m far sinister, much kinkier, and an eerily possessive sonofabitch.

I won’t ever apologize for it.

She’ll just have to deal with it.

“Okay, that’s it for the form.” I place the pen down on the table.

We stare at each other, electricity crackling in the air of my exam room.

What passes between us is far more sexual than what we had going on that night in the pool. Yes, we were half-naked and yes, our intentions to have sex were obvious, unlike the suspense and not knowing engulfing our current situation.

Because this moment, this just-before-we-leap-over-the-edge, burns hotter than any fire ever would.

I slide the piece of paper to the side, my eyes shackling her gaze to mine.

Prue sucks in a sharp breath. I lick my teeth slowly.

“So…” she breaks first, and it pleases me to no end.

My silence rattles and intrigues her. I get under her skin.

“So.” I crack my fingers. “To the exam table. Let’s have a look at you.”

Her throat bobs with her swallow. My cock jerks in response to her.

No wonder I’ve never settled down. Throughout the duration of my entire fucking life, I haven’t been living. I’ve been waiting for her to come.

“On your feet,” I order, and she obeys. My dark, authoritative gaze bores holes into hers. “Go behind the curtain, take everything off…” She shouldn’t strip naked, in theory, but I don’t work by the rules when it comes to her. “Lie on the table, your feet on the stirrups.”

In the silence of the room, I can practically hear her heartbeats.

Bang, bang, bang.

“Now.” The single word bounces off the walls.

It spurs Prue into action. I sit there, listening to the rustling of the paper gown as she pulls it around her.

Her shadow moves behind the curtain, and I'm so turned on. So desperate.

"All done, Ms. Bishop?" I adjust myself in my slacks, readying myself to go to her.

"Yes..." she hesitates. "Dr. Wentworth."

I take a deep inhale and slide the curtain open.

Precum trickles from my cock when I'm faced with my new patient. Reclined, legs open, her pussy on display and her eyes batting at me. On my exam table.

In my goddamn exam room.

My Prue.

Entirely. Mine.

"Is this okay?" she asks, her voice timid.

"What's okay?" My eyebrows furrow at the strange question.

Nothing could be more *okay* than this. Nothing other than me driving her into mindless orgasms while I push my cock in and out of her. Tears would stream down her cheeks by the time I'm done with her.

"I never get it right the first time, the lying down position." Her lips curl in a flirty smile. When I'm not smiling in return, not breaking character, she reverts to her quizzical expression. "My butt is always too high or too low. I never get it right."

Her honesty is fucking adorable. A grin pushes at my lips.

I shut it down.

I'm not here to smile or make her laugh.

Right now, I'm the man who holds her in a precarious position. The man who's about to do an obscene checkup on his most valued patient.

My unsure, blinking in trepidation patient.

This isn't a laughing matter.

It's about adoring, worshiping, and driving a measured amount of fear into her heart. About touching her in the most decadent ways.

About having her squirm beneath my charge.

"I'll sit down and let you know." I settle on my stool, dragging it toward her.

Technically, she doesn't need to move an inch. Her ass rests just before the edge of the table, the position of her feet on the stirrups spreading her out to me.

I have the perfect access and angle to see the inside of her pussy. A much better view than the one than what I had over the weekend.

On Friday, in the pool, Prue tilted her hips, so I got a good look at her cunt. A decent one, given the dimly lit terrace and the splashing water obstructing my view.

Here, in my clinic, the overhead fluorescent lights show me everything in great detail. The crevices of her cunt, her swollen lips, her pink, wet entrance, the hardened clit.

She's aroused, clenching and unclenching with every few breaths.

But her smell isn't as strong as I remembered. She isn't nearly close enough to my face for the shit I plan on doing to her in what little time we have. To touch her how I fantasize about *and* sanitize and air the room, I'll have to move fast.

"Scoot forward." I'm cold as a fucking iceberg. No *please*, no *Ms. Bishop*. A strict demand.

She does, tilting her head to gaze at me with hope in her eyes. "Better?"

“Much.” I stifle a groan as her scent hits me. “I need you to relax your legs, let your knees fall to the sides. Think you can do that for me?”

“Mm-hmm.” With a sigh, she lets go, spreading herself for me.

“That’s it.” I twist in my chair to the shelves at my left, searching for latex gloves.

And not finding them. That’s what Bonnie was getting on the way over.

Dammit.

I pinch my eyes shut, expanding my lungs, letting in much-needed air.

Losing it around Prue isn’t happening.

Neither is touching her bare without her permission.

“Something wrong?” Her question arises in the form of self-doubt.

The undertone of her shivers, her frightened little gasps, have my dick hard like no other. However, and it’s a big one, I’m not into making her second-guess herself as a person for no reason.

She spurred the sadist in me to life, not a narcissistic abuser like him.

“My gloves.” I shift my thoughts back to her. My eyes find her over her parted legs, somber and back in my role even though I’m inches from feasting on her swollen clit. “I don’t have them. Not yet.”

“I’m the first one today, right?” she whispers, her cheeks burning a shade redder. “Your first patient here?”

“Yes.” My cock responds to her timidity. Demanding, aching to be sheathed by her walls. “You are.”

“And you…” Her eyelids flutter, droopy over lust-filled eyes.

“Look at me when you’re talking to me.” My fingers clench around the edge of the table, not touching her, but just about.

Her compliance is swift. “As I said on the…When we filled out the form, you’re my first, too.”

There’s no suppressing my possessive growl. It rumbles low in my chest, and I have to clench my teeth to avoid sounding like a caveman.

I know she is. I know she plays our game as much as I do.

My reaction remains the same.

She. Is. Mine.

“Meaning we’re both clean.” This little lamb who has no idea what she’s getting herself into doesn’t stop there. “So, you can examine me. Bare.”

An air of darkness simmers and takes over my body. A whisper of confidence filters through Prue.

In a way, I regret asking for her permission.

Evidently, I’ve been too lenient. Too accommodating.

She’s not scared.

“*You’re giving me orders now?*” My tone comes off as venomous as my words.

“N-no, I—“

Mumbling. That’s how I like her.

“You won’t.” I return to my seat, aligning my face so I’m staring directly into her cunt, licking the top row of my teeth. “I am. I decide whether or not I can examine you without gloves.”

“Yes, Dr. Wentworth,” she agrees in an instant.

“Which I will.” My thumbs spread her outer lips. My nerves thrum with restless energy when she’s this open, this up close.

“I’m going to touch your pu—“

I crack my neck, correcting myself. “Your vulva. And you’re going to be an obedient patient and stay in place while I do my checkup.”

CHAPTER TWELVE

Prue

Holy shit. He's doing it. He's going through with this.

This isn't how I intended our heart-to-heart to be. I imagined a clothes-on conversation in a neutral environment, like the pool. Maybe a cup of coffee in my favorite coffee bar. Set some boundaries like adults are supposed to.

Then—if he agreed to my terms to date, and I accepted his, whatever they were—we would continue where we left off.

That was how I envisioned it.

The complete opposite of my current predicament, the fantasy I've never dared to dream of.

I'm terrified and being scared makes me hot for him. So much so, I don't recognize myself.

My body responds to Theo's watchful gaze like a flower would to the sun. My emotional petal opening up for him. My heart gallops beneath his stern commands and scolding. My pussy soaks as I watch the harsh line of his jaw.

Because deep down, I know Theo's harsh attitude doesn't stem from anger. The way he tended to me on the poolside told me so. The space he gave me over the weekend exposed his sensitive, understanding side.

A truly aggressive man would've had a hard time faking it.

Theo is good.

Theo is also kinky. Very.

Though I haven't been around a lot of men—let alone been intimate with them like Theo and I are—I'd like to think I understand a thing or two about sexuality.

Theo doesn't chase his release for the sake of finishing. His darkness shows. His secret desires loom around him, sparkling in his black eyes.

He's getting off on dominating me. On making me squirm. I bend to his will, and he asks for more, barking orders so *I* come.

So I'll delve into my own kinks, peel another layer of myself for him.

A total stranger.

I want to.

"Understand?" he asks, his voice terse.

But I can't deny that his roughness intimidates a small part of me. And the fact that I see him being turned on by it as well?

I'm not sure how I feel about it. I have no guarantee it won't escalate.

...And I like it too.

I...trust him.

"Okay."

My gut tells me that my whispered consent is the last one he'll ask for today.

Theo's thumbs slide deeper into my entrance, the pads stroking reverently along the curve of my slit.

“You have a beautiful vulva, Ms. Bishop. Every part of it is absolutely beautiful.”

Wetness drips down my ass crack and onto the paper beneath my body. He uses medical terms while caressing me so obscenely.

The dissonance spreads fire across my cheeks. Theo’s probing and staring sparks shame that rakes through me, making me want to both crumble into a ball and hide for eternity and give myself to him.

“Or Prue?” Theo removes one of his hands to wrinkle the paper under my ass and wipes my back door hole of my juices. “Can we be on a first-name basis here, too?”

Theo doesn’t seek consent in his question. He’s reminding me where we are, just like he does when he cleans me as if it’s a part of his job. Like he’s not aroused by it.

He’s reminding me of this game. Of a doctor in a power position. Of a patient in a helpless one.

Why is it this gosh darn sexy?

No. Not gosh darn. With Theo rubbing the inside of my pussy, I pretty much lost the right to play modest.

Theo is goddamn, fucking, absolutely sexy.

There, I said it.

He’s freaking sexy.

Hot and overwhelming.

And turning this role play into something entirely too real.

I don’t breathe. I don’t even think that my heart’s beating anymore.

He clears his throat. He definitely wants to bark out words, I can sense it. But we’re in this doctor-patient game, and his disapproving growl is all I get.

“Prue works.” My head thrashes back involuntarily when he presses his second thumb back to my opening.

“Okay, then, Prue.” The way he says my name has chills running up my spine. Deep and husky, his voice fucking me instead of his cock.

“As I said,”—he returns to sounding impersonal, which only serves to make me burn hotter for him—“your vulva is beautiful. Or can I say pussy now that we’re on a first-name basis?”

I force a groan back down to my lungs. “Yes.”

“Thank you. You’re very wet, Prue.” His brows furrow as he slides a thumb in to emphasize his diagnosis. “Is it a common condition with you?”

Mortification suffocates my vocal cords. Somehow, I manage a reply. An honest one. “I—no.”

“I see. Interesting.” While he talks, he slides an index finger to his ‘clinical’ probing, stroking my clit once. “And your clit is hard. Have you noticed it happening often?”

My fingernails scrape the leather table cover where the paper doesn’t reach. My toes curl. It’s the result of the combination of his doctor voice and his fingers probing another inch inside me. Of the shame from my blatant arousal.

He’s not aiming to get me off, and that on its own is a mind-numbing turn-on.

“No,” I breathe.

“Are you sure?” He pinches my throbbing mound between two fingers, twisting and tugging it. “I need you to be sure. It could lead to serious complications.”

I bite my lip so hard I’m afraid I might puncture it. My nipples threaten to pierce through the paper gown. My ass levitates from the table.

I’m about to spontaneously combust.

He slithers a hand to my stomach, forcing me down before he returns to explore my pussy.

“I’m sure,” I grit out, unable to mask my desperate moan anymore.

“Okay. You can relax now.” Theo lets go of my pussy to place two firm hands on the inside of my thighs, pinning me forcefully to the table. “We have one more exam before I do the Pap smear. Since you lost your virginity on Friday, I have to check if you healed well.”

Hot tears of humiliation well in my eyes. I want to come, so primed and ready for it. He knows I am. And he stopped.

His kinks are more devious than I imagined. Leaving me writhing, begging, and pleading for him. It’s pure evil.

And heck, weirdly, even that brings me closer to an orgasm, which I won’t reach without his touch.

“Please.”

“Quiet.” His fingers sink deeper into me, denting my flesh. “Good patients don’t go against their doctor’s orders. They trust them to administer the proper exam. Otherwise, they get kicked out. Are you a good patient or a bad one?”

He won’t throw me out no matter what, but the ultimatum, my God, the things his intimidation does to me. More adrenaline injects itself into my bloodstream, and I’m shamelessly grinding on his table, the paper crumpling beneath my ass.

“I’m good.” My words are jumbled, my mind a dire mess. “I’ll be good, I swear.”

“That’s what I thought.”

Even though Theo’s hands aren’t physically on my pussy anymore, it sure feels like they are. Like his tongue flicks on my clit and he’s inside me, stretching my walls, maddening me from the inside out.

“All right.” The sound of the wheels of his chair comes first, a foil tearing second. “I’m going to start with the vaginal exam.”

My gasp sounds more like a hiccup. My muscles vibrate and my core winds tight in anticipation. I’m willing, ready, eager. Also apprehensive about how he’ll do the checkup.

He might hurt me. I might enjoy it. I might squirm from it.

The idea of coming while he inflicts pain scares me more than anything, and I scoot my butt back involuntarily.

“Prue.” Theo grabs my thigh in a punishing grip, his fingers burrowing into me, marking me, as he pulls me toward him. “Ass in place so the doctor can see you. I’d hate to have to spank that beautiful pussy to keep you in line.”

“Sorry.” The whimper in my voice is very unlike me. “I’m so sorry. I won’t do it again.”

The woman I’ve grown to be might be an introvert at times, might prefer silence, but she’s not meek or fragile. Hasn’t been until Theo bulldozed his way into my life.

He intimidates me. I wish I could be mad about how he casts a shadow on me, turning me into a submissive little girl again. And I’m not.

I want him to bathe me in his commands, push me around like a rag doll.

I long to fear him. If that makes me sick, then I don’t ever want to be well again.

“You better not.” He stands up, rising to his full six-four intimidating frame. “Because this is the last warning I will give you. As a doctor, I shouldn’t spank my patients, but you’re pushing it.”

Without taking his eyes off me, Theo plucks the ultrasound transducer from its stand. He wraps it in a condom, then fishes out a bottle of lube from another drawer at his side.

“Please don’t spank me.” My eyes dance between him and the transducer in his firm grip. “I’ll be good.”

“All right.”

His eyes darken, his sinister gaze trained on me while his thumb plays with the bottle’s cap.

“I’ll tell you what.” His attention flickers to my pussy, then back to me. “In my professional opinion, you’re wet enough to go without lubrication. Unless you’d prefer me to squirt some on?”

Theo delivers the word *squirt* clinically, again. Like it doesn't have a sinister implication. His mien remains emotionless and his tone that of any other doctor I've been to. And he's so hot for doing that.

The wrongness of the situation, the element of taboo, it's everywhere around us.

Theo knows the effect he has on me, and he doesn't look remorseful in the slightest. His lack of contrition shows how much he enjoys seeing me lose it.

I'm wound up tight, moaning instead of breathing, sweating in the air-conditioned room.

"I'm good to go without."

He returns the bottle to its drawer, dragging his thick middle finger from my slit up to my clit. "Yeah, Prue. You're good. Very good."

I don't get another word out before he jams the transducer halfway into my gaping hole.

"Shoot!" I yelp, pinching my eyes shut as ecstasy claims me.

"You're not a prudent little virgin anymore. It's *shit*, not shoot." Theo's words reiterate my thoughts somehow.

"Shit." For each one of my fervent nods, the paper beneath me crumples. The noise hardly registers. I'm attuned to Theo's commanding presence, to him and only him. "Shit."

His lips twitch and quickly return to the flat line he must've been perfecting for years.

"And keep your voice down. We don't want to plant the wrong idea in Vienna's head, do we?" He shoves the wand deeper. "Don't want her believing we're doing something inappropriate when all I'm doing is checking you."

"No," I whisper, toning down my needy moans into harsh breaths. "You're just checking me."

"Right. A doctor wouldn't do this..." The thick wand is being shoved another inch inside me, then slowly dragged out, then shoved in again. "...for any other reason than to examine you. Here, look at the monitor."

A blurry image of what's going on inside my body appears there. Blotches of black and white move and swirl on the screen since he keeps moving the transducer.

I'm supposed to lie there and pretend as though it's all par for the course.

Then again, my lust-laced vision is so blurry anyway that it doesn't matter what I see there. Everything's a mess other than Theo's clear and controlling presence.

"Here, you see, Prue, when I change the angle..." He tilts the wand, so the tip moves lower toward my ass as he holds the end higher.

Oh, God. Oh, Jesus. This new position has Theo rubbing his thumb on my clit whenever he thrusts the device back inside.

"Your vulva seems healthy," he continues, and if he's not careful, I might... "The man who took your virginity made sure to fuck you just right without causing damage."

A bomb detonates behind my eyes uncontrollably. My hips buck up off the table as a pair of blazing dark eyes suck and pull and force the orgasm out of me. Theo doesn't quit, relentless while thrusting his work tool in and out of me.

"Good, Prue, very good." His movements slow down, yet his demeanor is no less of the somber intimidating doctor. "As I mentioned, you have a wonderful pussy. Healthy, wet, and beautifully pink."

I don't get how his voice doesn't even strain. The burns around my throat where he choked tingle, getting me to wonder what else he could do to me with such a straight face.

"Theo," I breathe out when the orgasm fades, and I'm wiped out. Still apprehensive while the warmth in my heart thrums and expands in every which direction. "Thank you."

"Not done." He removes the wand, whips off the condom, and tosses it before placing the device back in its stand.

My eyes dart to the clock on his wall. 8:05 on the dot. I have to get to work in thirty minutes. "But—"

“No buts.” Three of his fingers jam into my sopping hole, curling inside like a hook. “I said I’m not done, and it means I. Am. Not. Done.”

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Theo

It was never meant to get to this. Prue wasn't supposed to come here or come to my table.

But once I started, I couldn't stop.

And I won't stop before I give her another orgasm, show her how my knowledge of female anatomy can introduce her to new kinds of pleasure. How I can bend her body to my will, manipulate it to react in ways it never has in the past.

"Not done? I don't under—" Prue begins to mouth a sentence I slice by massaging her clit with my thumb.

Words evade her. Her gaze, though, says it all as it wanders lower to my crotch.

"Don't question me." I sink my fingers deeper inside her, searching for the spot. *That* spot. "I need to probe and see for myself whether there was any damage done to the walls of your vagina."

My fingertips graze the swollen place I've been looking for. I feel it first, witness it in Prue's expression second. I'm only grazing the area, but Prue, the responsive little thing she is, already reacts to me.

Her deep brown eyes roll to the back of her head. Her back arches off the table, her hard nipples protruding through her T-shirt.

She's trying to be good. Her lips part in a silent scream when it's clear as fucking day that her lungs demand her to howl for me.

The fear I instilled in her of being kicked out or having her pussy slapped triumphs everything else. I'm in control of her. I'm taking her however I want to, and she knows it.

"Look at me, Prue." My probing and teasing stops until I have her attention on me.

My cock stands painfully hard in my pants. This restraint costs me. There's nothing I want more than to whip my dick out and drive it into her sweet cunt. She wants it too. Would crawl on her hands and knees for it, shake out of fear and beg for it.

But I don't. Not yet.

"Your tissues have healed. Nothing torn or bruised." I apply slightly more pressure on her source of pleasure now that I have her eyes on me.

"That's, uh." Prue clenches around me, her juices dripping down my wrist. "That's good news, right?"

Her orgasm won't be long now.

"Yes, very good news." My lips curve to give her my most impersonal smile, one I save for my patients. "You're okay to have sex again."

"Oh." Her breathy voice has my cock jerking with need. "Okay."

She sounds like a person who fears heights a second before the rollercoaster drops.

"Do you...?" I roll my fingers faster while taking half a step back, so I won't miss out on anything I'm anticipating will come. "...want to keep being sexually active?"

Prue's ability to speak seems to be lost. She only nods. Strands of hair come out of her neat bun, her eyes blinking rapidly.

I don't press her to talk. Only because it's more likely that she'll scream.

Fuck, how I wish to hear her. When she's crazed and feral for my dick. When she's scared and fearful of my shadow in the doorway to her bedroom.

When my hand wraps around her throat, and I'm buried in her ass for the simple reason *I* decided it's what's best for her.

All in due time.

"Don't lie to me." My growled warning makes a shiver run through her.

Or maybe it's the quick tapping of my middle finger on her G-spot.

I stop pleasuring Prue, looking down at her. "Lying warrants punishments."

"Please," she says through clenched teeth. "Please."

"Okay. I believe you." I fake appeasement.

My fingers resume their work, my eyes landing on hers one last time before they focus on her pussy. My hand gets swallowed inside her, and it's fucking delicious.

"I believe you want to get fucked again," I grunt out. Her ass jerks in the air. "Believe you want to have your tissues irritated, even torn again. To have the pussy I'm examining swollen and sore."

"I do. I do."

"Good girl." I do the most un-doctory thing possible and spit on her clit, so I can rub her faster with my thumb. "Now, let's see if you can really take it. If your pussy functions well, and you can come on my fingers. Again."

I feel as though it's happening in slow motion.

Out of the corner of my eye, I notice her hands latch on the sides of the table in a vise grip, her knuckles turning white.

The muscles of her thighs strain, her asshole snapping shut for a long, torturous second, and...

She lets go.

And she squirts on my bed.

Fucking beautiful, that's what she is.

White fluid bursts out of her, proof of her arousal. Of what I made her do.

A roar rumbles in my chest, my mouth watering to taste her. What a fucking moment. To reach into her body on such a deep level, to get to that point no one has before.

To find this intimacy with her and force out another layer Prue hides into this dark, sick space we share.

"No. No, no, no." She scrambles on her forearms, humiliated and blushing and scurrying to leave. "I'm so sorry. Oh, God, this is...it's embarrassing. I need to..."

"Lay the fuck down, Prue."

She doesn't comply. The mortification that's written on her face drives her to try to get away from me.

The hell she will.

"Lay." I flatten my palm on her sternum, pushing her down. I curse under my breath when the feel of her makes me so goddamn ravenous. "The fuck. Down."

"This is humiliating." She hides her face.

I'm not having that either. My body looming over hers, I tear her hands off her beautiful, expressive eyes with one hand. She stares up at me, mortified and gorgeous.

"As much as I get off on witnessing your embarrassment, this,"—I drag my hand out of her cunt. Slowly, deliberately, I suck my fingers into my mouth and groan from how good she tastes—"doesn't disgust me. It's fucking perfect. I could look at you

squirting and soaking my table, my bed, my car every day of every hour of the week.”

Creases appear on her brow, ceasing her scrambling. “Really?”

“That and so much more.” I spread her cum on her lips, nudging them inside her mouth. “Let me in, Prue. See how good you taste.”

She scrunches her nose, my little neighbor. Then she opens for me.

“Yes.” With my free hand, I unbuckle my belt, undo my zipper, and free my cock.

The heavy weight of it rests in my palm, and I stroke it as I look at her brown lipstick painting my fingers.

“Good girl,” I coo. “I’m going to give you my dick for doing so well.”

The sucking motion of her mouth stops.

“And you’re going to come again.”

Eyes wide. Pulse racing.

I don’t wait for her consent. Don’t need it.

I shove the gown up her thighs, revealing her pussy and her lower stomach. Her pink, swollen pussy gleams under the overhead fluorescent lights of my clinic.

“Gorgeous.” I bite my mouth, showing the first sign of loss of control. “Fucking gorgeous.”

“Do you have to use that word so much?”

Her timid request has my eyes snapping up, the vein in my throat thrumming. “What word? Fucking?”

“Yes.”

“I do.”

She trembles when my harsh response is coupled with my leaking head pushing against her. I’m not angry. I’m high on this piece of information she revealed to me.

“You’ll tell me why it bothers you.”

Her warmth, juices, and just her engulf me the deeper I plant myself inside her.

“Once I’m done fucking you.”

“O-okay.” Prue lies there, a mixture of emotions ranging across her pretty face.

I want every one of them for myself. Because I want her.

And fuck, that tight pussy sucking me to the hilt feels like heaven. She’s everything I want for the rest of my life.

“We’re going to date.” I piston my hips in a brutal rhythm, taking and taking and taking while doting her with so much pleasure. “I’m going to watch your full lips tell me every detail about you.”

“Okay.” She reaches for my hands that cover her thighs. “That’s what I want. Please, Theo.”

Her complacency blinds me to the world outside the bubble wrapping the two of us. To my receptionist on the other side of the door, to the fact that in less than fifteen minutes Bonnie will be here.

I don’t care. I’ll be done with her way before anyone notices. I won’t let them. Prue’s humiliation is mine, no one else’s. No one has the right to catch her naked and vulnerable.

Me. Only me.

“I’m about to come inside your tight, dripping cunt, Prue.” My thrusts are harder, more ruthless. The way her walls grip me, she fucking wants it too. “It’s going to be a fast one, but I promise you, baby, the second we’re home, I’ll have you for hours.”

“Hours?”

Challenging her, I quirk an eyebrow. “*Fucking* hours.”

The word Prue disapproved of is the exact word that makes her come. Her last orgasm barrels through just as powerful as the first one. She's shaking in my hold, her nails sinking into my hands.

Her orgasm does it to me, more than anything else. More than her tits, her flawless pussy, it's her pleasure that pushes me over the edge.

Her climax, watching her bathing in the throes of ecstasy. The shift behind her eyes from scared to desperate to trusting.

I jerk my hips, shooting my load inside her. I push her right leg up, my teeth sinking into her knee, silencing my grunts of pleasure, my heaving breaths.

The bite marks my teeth leave start to show on her skin. Loving the redness blooming on her skin, I lick it, soothing the wounded area and savoring it at the same time. I soak in another few sated moments of watching Prue in silence while my dick softens inside her.

"Are we done now?" Her teasing tone lands her another bite.

But that's all the playfulness I have in me.

"Yes, Prue. For now, we are." I help Prue's feet out of the stirrups and ease her to a sitting position. "Here, let me."

She's silent as I remove her gown, quiet as I clean the soaking space between her legs.

She doesn't peep when I instruct her to lift her arms and put on her bra and T-shirt. When I dress her in her panties and jeans. She doesn't give me anything, even when I move behind her to redo the bun on her head.

"What is it?" I fix my coat before cupping Prue's soft cheeks. "Talk to me."

"Do you do this..." She motions with her fingers between us. "Often?"

"Never." I crush my lips into hers for the first time today.

She's sweet and musky and tastes like home. My tongue delves inside, rubbing against hers, embedding the feel of her into my brain. Into my goddamn bones.

"I've never done it with a patient." Her scarf shifted by some, revealing the burn marks, and I set it back in place too. "Never have, never will. It's a sore spot for me. But you? You make me break all my rules. You're special. So special."

"Not so *fucking* special?"

A burst of laughter, a rare one I haven't had in years, bursts from my lips.

"Yes, beautiful Three." I take a step back, resting my palm on the small of her back, and guide her to the door. "Very fucking special."

She stops, turning to me with her head tilted up to meet my eyes. "Will you tell me about it? Your sore spot?"

"Yes." Her skin feels warm to the touch as I run my knuckles on her temple, along her jawline, then her lips. "Whatever you want to know, I'll tell you. Right after I get to know *you*. I'll take you out on a date this week. A proper one."

I want to finish my statement with *Understood?* but she seems fragile and tender right now. I haven't had any experience with being a dominant. I am aware, though, of the precarious state of the human mind after so much adrenaline has been dumped into their system.

I have to tread carefully, tap around that line between what I crave. More importantly, what *she* needs.

So, I ask instead, "Is that okay?"

"That's perfect," she beams, twisting around me to grab her purse from the chair, then leaning on her tiptoes to kiss my cheek.

"Have a great first day, Dr. Wentworth."

"It already is," I murmur to her back, watching her disappear into the hallway.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Theo

I'm not playing Prue. I didn't fuck her to earn myself a notch on my belt. Didn't risk Vienna walking in on us for the sake of getting my dick wet.

That's not me. I'm a forty-year-old man who knows what he wants and goes after it. And what I'm pursuing like a starved tiger hunting his prey is Prue.

Her heart. Her body. Her sleeping and waking hours.

I'm planning to be the air she can't live without, just like I can't live without her.

Unfortunately, this isn't the impression I've left on her over the last four days.

On Monday, I promised to ask her out. Promised to listen, to share my past in return. Why I took off from Washington and then San Francisco.

I had every intention of doing it, too.

Then life interjected, hers and mine, fucking our plans.

While Prue has worked late, I've worked later. Turns out my former and new patients combined with the marketing campaign Vienna launched worked better than expected.

Before Monday, my schedule for the week filled up nicely. Starting at nine a.m. to seven p.m., these are long but comfortable hours. Nothing I haven't done before.

But once my patients and whoever joined them on their appointment were impressed by both Bonnie's and my professional yet amicable approach, more patients called.

Wanting to establish my name in Los Angeles, I instructed Vienna to say *yes* to everyone who called. She opened up my calendar, adding visits up to ten at night for the first week.

I was aware of how looking too available could lessen my appeal, but that wasn't the case here. Within a week, I had my schedule booked until next month. And then some.

Bonnie and Vienna would be compensated for the overtime.

The person who truly mattered, though, the one I needed to make things right by and couldn't, was Prue.

Every morning ever since the Friday I first saw her, I've been planning how I'd ask her out. Take her to a nice restaurant, feed her, love her, fuck her, sleep beside her. Listen to her.

And every morning for the rest of the week, I couldn't give it to her. Sure, I could've asked her for a late-night dinner.

What kind of man would it have made me, though? A man who yawns when his date talks, who treats her like second best. An asshole who looks like he treats a precious gem as if she's a fake diamond.

Which is why I haven't asked her out on an official date yet.

Meanwhile, I've been seeing her in our office building. I've been packing lunch for two every day. I've asked Dr. Waldron's receptionist for Prue's breaks, and Vienna moved my schedule around them to show up at their clinic.

I didn't mind sucking up to my patients to apologize for it. They didn't seem to mind, anyway. As long as I saw them, they were content.

And Prue... Her bright, grateful eyes. She didn't think I was a jerk for not setting a dinner date. She understood. Liked spending time with me too. Not as much as I thrived on our stolen moments together, but it's been more than I could ask for.

Those thirty minutes we'd been spending side by side on a bench in the park next to work have been why I woke up every morning. She'd opened up to me, has been telling me about her days, and the book she's been reading before bedtime—a book I saw on her nightstand.

Because I couldn't hold back from sneaking into her apartment and watching her sleep. I tell myself I'm not invading her privacy. She loves having me around. And I can't be without her.

A few fulfilling seconds where I stare at her angelic face is all I've allowed myself the past four nights. Hovering at the edge of her bed has lifted me like nothing else ever could. Jacking off to her sleeping form unlocked new desires in me.

The lack of a barrel bolt or a chain lock maddens me, despite the easy access it offers. The security in the building's lobby is supposed to provide us with a sense of security.

As if intruders only come from outside the building.

Cocky idiots.

I'll have to install one on the door when we move in together. Until then, I won't hinder the free access I have to her.

Thankfully, she's not on to me, not yet. She's mentioned forgetting to lock her apartment, blushing, and joking about it. No talk about her sticky stomach or breasts, none of that.

Sweet, innocent Prue. Mine.

The ringing of my phone interrupts my train of thought. I fish the phone out of the pocket of my slacks to see it's one of my old patients from San Francisco. Dana.

My first instinct is to answer, except I'm waiting for Prue to come out of a thigh lift surgery in the clinic where she works.

"Hey, Franny?" I lean over on the receptionist's desk.

The raven-haired woman who couldn't be much older than Prue smiles at me. It's not flirtatious. She, like Prue, thinks I'm a better man than I really am because I walk over the hallway to spend a mere half an hour with Prue every day.

"Yes, Dr. Wentworth?"

"Theo." I return her smile, though it doesn't reach my eyes. The only person to pull those genuine grins out of me is the one in the operating room.

"Sure, it's just..." she whispers in a conspiratorial voice. "You two give me *Grey's Anatomy* vibes, and I freaking love that show."

Although Franny must be around Prue's age, she acts much younger than her. I can't fault her for her youthfulness or for having romantic concepts other people her age have.

What nags at my mind incessantly is why Prue has the emotional maturity of a forty-year-old woman. I keep wondering what robbed her of easy laughter and how I can give it to her.

I'll have my answers, and I'll have them by next week.

"Yeah, fine. Anyway," I hurry, not wanting to let Dana wait unnecessarily. She never calls unless it's important. About *him*.

"Are they going to be held up?"

"Prue hasn't notified me about any delays, so it's safe to say she'll be out here in ten minutes tops?"

“All right.” I don’t lament our shortened lunch break. First, because I’ll never get between Prue and her career. Second, I have tonight too. “Tell her I’m waiting for her on our bench, okay? I have to take this call.”

“Sure thing, Dr. Wentworth.” Franny turns back to her computer, and I swear that as I leave the clinic, I hear her murmur, “AKA, McSpicy.”

I shake my head at the nickname she explained yesterday was her take on McDreamy and McSteamy from *Grey’s Anatomy*. With our lunch in one hand and phone in the other, I take the elevators and sit at our spot.

“Theo.” Dana, one of my former and wealthiest clients from back when I lived in San Francisco, doesn’t sound like her confident self. She’s whispering, confirming my suspicions.

“He’s been talking about me, hasn’t he?” I refer to Dr. Fox.

We both know it.

“Yes.” Her heels click, and there’s a faint echo of a car passing by. “I was having lunch with a friend and that pervert walked up to me, introduced himself, and started blabbering about his new clinic.”

It’s been years since I’ve given a fuck about what he says about me. I moved here because the piece of shit gave me a good excuse for a new start, but I’m not afraid of him. I care that he harasses my patients, old or not.

The lingering disappointment in myself for letting those women down long ago resurfaces. I clench the paper bag in my fist and say nothing.

Dana doesn’t wait for my response. “As if I didn’t know. I know everything and everyone’s business around here. You didn’t have to tell me he opened a clinic here. I smelled his stench a mile-freaking-away the minute he rented a space here. And I hated that he was the reason you left. Molesting bastard.”

She does know a lot. People are drawn to her influence, to her status, and she trades her friendship for information. That’s how she found out about why *I* moved to San Francisco, even though it wasn’t in the papers or anywhere for that matter.

She was the first one to believe my story without me having to make my case. The one to convince a long list of her connections to switch their OB-GYN physician and become my patients, lifting my self-esteem after the hard blow it suffered.

“I told him, politely,” she continues, her tone turning into a furious one despite her hushed voice. “He can fuck right off. I’m seeing Dr. Rosalee Duval, the gynecologist *you* referred me to. Soon, everyone else will too. Because they’ll be personally warned by me.”

“Thank you.”

I stare straight ahead at the small patch of grass and the vast parking lot ahead. In the bustle of people walking in and out of our building, I imagine the asshole’s face when the svelte blond gave him a piece of her mind.

Eat shit, asshole.

“Dana, please don’t,” I say, despite wanting someone, anyone, to cause him some kind of harm. “I appreciate you, but you don’t have to stand up for me. I had a feeling he’d be stirring shit, and so here I am. I’m better off here.”

Much better off, considering I got Prue in the tradeoff.

“It’s not for you. Not entirely.” Someone calls her name in the background, and she replies, “Another glass of Sauvignon Blanc for me. I’ll be right there. Anyway, Theo, this isn’t about you or me enjoying rubbing it in his face. This is about his future patients. About human lives. I still don’t get how they let him off like that.”

She of all people should be aware of the power of connections in high places. I don’t tell her that, though. I’m sure she’s aware of it as well.

“The women he hurt... How he used them... And the others, there must’ve been others.” She sighs. “Makes me sick.”

Suddenly, the air around me starts suffocating me. The doubts I had on Monday resurface, eating at the happy memories Prue and I created this week.

Am I a predator too? A doctor who abuses his power? A repulsive neighbor who breaks into a woman's apartment for the thrill of invading her privacy?

Am I?

I'd like to think I'm not. I want to believe that since I have Prue's consent and have had it time and again through her words and her smile, what I'm doing is acceptable.

I'm not molesting women on a massive scale. I don't look at Prue as a person to abuse and forget the next day.

No. Prue means something to me. Prue means *everything*.

But I am, somewhat, in the wrong.

This duplicity game has to end. I have to come clean to Prue about my past, and how conflicted I am about the way I touched her in my clinic. Have to tell her that we can still role-play if she likes. As a patient, though? It has to end immediately.

I owe it to her to set boundaries. For her, to protect her.

When I'm not her doctor, I'm free to do anything I wish. When I'm with Prue, I'm hers and she's mine.

I just need to get this off my chest, and until then, I can't do our lunch breaks and pretend everything's fine. It's not a twenty-minute conversation, not a thirty-minute one either.

"You're right, Dana, I have to go."

"Take care, Theo," she whispers, and a moment before she cuts the call, growls, "and fuck him."

I nod to myself once, setting the phone aside.

"Theo?"

I'll recognize Prue's voice, scent, and aura anywhere. Even with my back to her. Even with a thousand thoughts running rampant in my head. I'll still recognize her.

"Prue." I rise and turn to her.

The sight of her injects sunlight into my scorched heart.

The bun on the top of her head fell askew sometime during the day, making her young features even more adorable. The curl of her lips is an invitation to kiss her and listen to her. Fall for her.

And her curves. Even dressed in her blue scrubs, the peaks of her breasts are outlined, the shape of her hips accentuated.

My fingers itch to hurt, caress, and mark her. My cock throbs from not being inside her in four goddamn days.

For a moment, I forget about the conversation with Dana.

Prue Bishop is the most beautiful woman in the world. The only thing that exists.

The feeling doesn't last, though. This gorgeous ray of light doesn't thaw the ice covering my soul altogether. I have to respect the decision I've made. I don't intend to start our relationship without having her forgiveness for what I did on Monday.

Pulling the brakes on what we have agonizes me. But it's the only way to go.

Soon enough, she'll have me. All of me.

Until then, I'll be there to watch her beautiful face at night.

"Is everything okay?" Her smile wanes when I don't answer.

I fucking hate that. I hate myself for what I'm about to do, too.

I move around the bench, maintaining a two-foot distance away from her. Enough to lend her some of my comforts. Not nearly enough to show her how much I care.

"I'm okay." I lift my hand and drop it. "Why do you ask?"

“You sounded upset over the phone.” She doesn’t reach for me, despite wanting to, despite her hand twitching at her side. And I fucking hate that, too. I need to get back to the clinic.

“Work stuff. Listen, I have to go.” I gesture toward the bag I left for her on the bench. Just because I lost my appetite doesn’t mean she should starve. “I packed a cold turkey sandwich today and salad. Stay. Eat.”

Her nose scrunches. “You sure you can’t stay ten minutes?”

“No, unfortunately, I can’t.” Even one more minute without an apology for Monday will make things worse. “I won’t make it to our lunch on Friday, either.”

I can see her soul cracking through her eyes, and I amend my statement. Fast.

“What do you say about Saturday night? I’ll follow through with my promise, take you out on a date.”

“You don’t have to.” Her head bows, her gaze casts to the ground. “If you don’t want to, I...uh, I won’t hold you to it.”

Fuck the distance. Fuck my cold attitude.

Cupping her face in my palms, I tilt her head up and press my lips into hers. Our brief kiss is what I’m able to give her for now. With my mouth on hers, I tell her how serious I am about her. How I won’t back down.

“Don’t want to break it,” I growl, my lips brushing hers as I talk. “Not for anything. I’ll be outside your apartment at seven on Saturday evening.”

Sunrays beam from inside her again. Melting me. “What should I wear?”

“Anything you want. Unless it’s panties. Those aren’t allowed.” I start walking backward toward our clinics. “See you Saturday.”

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Theo

The absence of Prue scalds me, the flames of my need burning through my veins.

In the dead of the night, in the silence of my apartment, I miss her.

We're separated by two floors. It might as well be two states. Two continents.

I lie here in my bed, by myself, and she's downstairs in hers. She hugs the thin, bland green sheets while she sleeps instead of entangling her limbs in mine.

Unacceptable.

My warped, obsessive desires refuse to listen to logic. My pure intentions of keeping my distance—intentions I declared to myself just earlier today—seem far and dull from where I observe them right now.

A fathomless hole gapes in my heart. Emptiness I haven't known before.

A void only she can fill.

Sleep will evade me tonight if I don't see her. Touch her.

There's no getting around the fact that I won't be able to close my eyes before I touch her.

I straighten to a sitting position on the edge of my bed. Elbows on my knees, fingers steepled, gaze directed beyond the doorway separating my bedroom and the living room.

The front door of my apartment calls to me. Though it isn't visible from this angle, I picture it. The size and shape. The heavy handle.

Behind it, the hallway of the fifth floor unravels to connect four apartments and one elevator. A stairwell too.

Two ways to get down to the third floor. To Prue.

The clock by my bed shows it's two-thirty in the morning. I've never been more awake, more restless than I am now.

In the dead of night, my obsession wins over my conscience.

I get up, slip into my sneakers, and grab the paper clip and keys on my way out.

Over the last week, while I've stalked her, I've studied not only Prue but also the behaviors of tenants of this apartment building. They come and go at odd hours—socializing late, jogging at sunrise.

The short research I've done solidifies my choice to take the stairs. The morning people, the health junkies, choose cardio over the elevator. The night people, usually drunk ones, prefer not to abuse their feet, climbing the stairs in high heels and strict dress shoes.

Their human predictability makes my sneaking around to enter my love's apartment undetected a walk in the park.

Stealthily walking in the dark hallway of floor three, I head over to apartment 3D.

Just as I did on the other nights I broke in here, I stop in my tracks when I reach her door. No light permeates from beneath it. No sound echoes through.

There's a slight chance Prue's in there reading, that the night lamp by her bed is the only light on in her apartment. I won't be able to see it standing here.

Breaking in nonetheless is a risk, the same one I've taken four times already over the last week.

One I'm taking now.

The lock ticks to the rhythm I've become familiar with. It slides and snaps, giving in eventually, granting me access to Prue's place.

As always, her scent hits me first.

I close the door as silently as possible, close my eyes, and inhale the essence of her.

Musky and fresh. Flowers and waterfalls. Tender yet effervescent.

My Prue.

My nostrils flare, my blood thrums.

The jeans I'm wearing become uncomfortable when my cock hardens and pushes against its restraints. The hairs on my arms stand on end at the thrill of being in the same space Prue occupies while she sleeps.

But I'm not here to be in the same space as her.

I'm here for *her*.

I bend to remove my sneakers quietly, then navigate through the living room. My feet pad on the floor, my socks drowning out the sound of my steps.

It doesn't take long for me to lean against the doorframe of her bedroom.

There she is. This otherworldly angel, partly covered in her mangled sheets, completely sheathed by the darkness. Just like I imagined she'd be.

And naked. That's another fun fact I've learned about her. Prue Bishop, the woman who has an issue with the repeated use of the word *fucking*, sleeps completely indecently. Completely nude.

No T-shirts, no underwear, not even socks.

All bare.

Waiting for...no, not anyone. Waiting for me.

I move closer to her, admiring her long locks draped on her cheek, the thick dark lashes fanning on her smooth, sweet cheeks.

My predatory gaze rakes across the slopes and valleys of Prue's body. Silver moonbeams permeating from the window highlight her beautiful curves. Slender shoulders, ample breasts, soft belly, and toned, shapely legs.

So far, during the nights I've visited here, I haven't pleased her. I've been satisfied with looking at her and jerking off. With painting her lips with my cum.

Tonight, I'm in a different, sinister mood. My hunger for her has grown exponentially ever since we've been together in the pool.

As soon as I come clean, the waiting will be over. But my patience...fuck, my patience evaporated. Nonexistent.

Removing my socks, jeans and briefs, I'm bare before her from the waist down. My dick juts out, heavy with a drop of my arousal wetting the crown.

She does that to me. Every single time.

I gaze at her, at this beautiful woman, the heaviest sleeper I've met.

Thanks to her deep sleep, I'm able to remove her sheets and adjust her to the position I want her. Lying spread eagle on her back, exposed completely to me without her sheets to cover her.

I fist myself, dying to spit on her cunt, driving three fingers in her. To stretch her just so I'll be able to slide inside her warm, enveloping walls.

Doing so will be tempting fate.

Prue will sleep through my grunts and groans. Through my gentle touches and whispered caresses as I massage my semen to her lips.

Fucking her will pull her straight out of the realm of her dreams and into...a nightmare? Or into one of her fantasies?

I have no way of telling. Nor do I test the theory.

Making her come like I'm about to do is too risky as is.

The bed shifts under my weight as I place one knee between Prue's spread legs near her ankles, dipping again when I lean my weight on my hand and my other knee joins.

I study Prue's face for any change in her expression and sigh with relief to see none.

Her breathing remains shallow, her breasts rising and falling at a steady pace.

I bend at the waist, cock in my fist. The closer to her I get, the more prominent the scent of her pussy becomes. She's not aroused, not yet, but the clean smell of her is no less erotic.

Perfect, like the rest of her.

My face is a hairbreadth from her pussy. My nose brushes against her clit, my lips lightly pressing against hers.

That's what I've been craving. That's what I've been waiting for.

While keeping my eyes firm on her closed eyes, I gather saliva on my tongue. I flatten it on her cunt, licking her sweet entrance, her pussy lips, her clit.

A low moan floats past her lips. Her hips shudder.

She can feel me in her sleep, how much I adore her. How I worship her.

I lick her again, flicking my tongue at the end, then swirling the tip around her mound. Her clit flutters and hardens, her body begging me for more as much as she can in her current state.

"Baby," I whisper against her wet center, blowing on her tenderly. "My beautiful Prue."

More shivers rake through her body. Her skin prickles, her breaths are now gasps.

Juices drip down to the bed, dampening the sheets. I stroke my painfully erect cock, sliding my tongue into her pussy, fucking her slowly as I watch her. My tongue swirls inside her, dragging pleasure, moans, and wetness out of her.

The pleasure I'm giving her has her nipples pulled into tight little peaks. Her mouth opens wider to allow her moans to drift from her lungs and into her bedroom.

I don't stop lapping my tongue, tasting her as I stroke myself. My groans reverberate on her pussy, and my sleeping beauty responds to me the closer she gets to her orgasm.

Her hips sway on the bed, her hands lifting to her breasts and resting there.

"That's it," I breathe the words, the hot air on her damp pussy making her cry out. "That's my good girl."

She's animalistic and raw and fucking wonderful, chasing her pleasure.

Prue makes me want to work harder for her. Put in more effort.

When I dated or hooked up with other women, I cared about their pleasure. I wasn't one of those dicks who chased their climax and used the person they were with as a means to an end. No, fuck that.

But Prue's pleasure isn't just something I *care* about. The longer I lick and nip and kiss her pink little clit, I grow more obsessed.

The need to claim her blinds me. The desire to have her orgasm from *my* lips becomes more important than breathing.

Emboldened by my possessiveness, I close my lips on her clit and suck. I suck her so hard I'm beginning to worry I might draw blood.

Might stir her from her sleep.

Then I realize I don't care.

She's my girl. It's my pussy to do with as I please.

And if she happens to wake up while I take what's mine... Well, so be it.

"Please!" she yells. Her fingers flex on her tits, her head thrashing from side to side. "Yes, *Theo*, please. Touch me, please."

There's no mistaking my name. *My* motherfucking name. The owner of her pleasure. The man who'll tear down buildings so that she'll be happy.

And at this moment, she'll find her joy when she orgasms.

I'm here for it.

For every second of it.

"As you wish," I whisper.

As a reward, I eat her out. All the while, fucking my fist hard and fast.

Prue says my name again. Her arousal drips on my chin as she locks my head between her hips.

And I do exactly as she asks. I give her every bit of pleasure. Every ounce of love I have in me until she comes apart on my face.

I stay with her, waiting out for the last wave of her orgasm to subside, for her muscles to relax around me.

"I'm so proud of you." I kiss her clit, and she shivers some more.

I'm not finished, though. Seeing her unravel has my cock harder than ever before.

My need to own her eviscerates any sense of decency.

I get off her bed, arranging Prue's sleeping body so her head rests at the edge. I lean over on one hand, aligning my cock above her parted lips.

"Going to be my good little girl, won't you, Prue?" I groan as I start moving my palm along the taut skin of my dick. "Going to take every drop of my cum in your pretty mouth."

She doesn't say anything other than breathe. I don't pause for a second. I'm mesmerized by her body, by her cunt. By her innocent, sleeping face.

"Fuck." I squeeze myself harder, feeling the pressure building, my climax seconds from imploding all over her face.

It's not where I want it, though. She's going to have me inside her.

When my climax finally pummels through me, it's hard and fast. I hold the head of my dick between Prue's lips without touching them. White rivulets of cum shoot onto her lips, her tongue, sliding down her throat.

She almost spits it out, and I can't have that. I tilt her head to the side while caressing her cheek. My soothing affects Prue's inhales and exhales, slowing them down to a pacified rhythm.

A streak of my seed dribbles between her lips again, landing on the bed. It's so fucking beautiful. I could die right now and be a happy man.

There's just one more thing.

Using my thumb, I rub my remaining seed on her mouth.

The perfect lip gloss for the perfect girl.

Her lips will be chapped by tomorrow morning. But for now? For now, it's goddamn perfect.

"Sweet dreams, Three." I press my lips to her temple.

One final kiss. Then I cover her naked body and leave for the night.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Prue

“That’s it, then? You’re actually going to meet your dad?” Michelle’s voice comes over the phone, providing me with the mental support I’m desperately craving.

At seven a.m. on a Saturday morning.

Michelle insisted I call her as soon as I woke up, knowing I don’t have many friends. No real friends at all, to be honest, other than her. Her kindness and the moral support she’s insisted on giving me are the other two reasons I’ll never work for another surgeon.

It’s a good thing we’ve worked long hours throughout the week, otherwise, I would’ve tossed and turned all night and called her at dawn.

Thankfully, the stars have aligned, and I’ve slept throughout the night, waking up anxiety-ridden less than ten minutes ago.

“Yes, I mean, he is my father.”

The paternity test proved it. The test I pushed by paying a rush fee.

I wish I could be ecstatic about it as I should be.

But I’m not.

Theo’s on my mind. He’s occupying a huge piece of real estate like he has a right to be there. The man is there in every moment of every day, his image slithering into the most hidden crevices of my soul.

I’m happy for him, for the unreal line of patients filing in and out of his clinic, for hitting the ground running the way he has.

So, obviously, I can’t blame him for the long hours. I’m aware of how private practices work firsthand. He’s no different and definitely isn’t blowing me off.

Besides, I have my own demanding job. And for the first four days of the week, he brought me lunch.

He’s a good man.

A patient one. Too patient. I’ve missed him. Missed his intimate touch.

For the past two days, I’ve also missed *knowing* he wants me.

Theo asked me out, set up a date—finally—and kissed me like I’d imagined an all-consuming, toe-curling kiss would be like. He did everything right.

Somehow, though, I still feel the attraction he had for me has fizzled out.

Or maybe he’s just busy. And patient.

Yeah, that has to be it.

No more of this self-wallowing. Not today, when I’m going to meet the man whose DNA runs through my veins, who I thought didn’t want me.

Theo said we're going out to dinner, and I believe him. I'll withhold judgment and my abandonment issues if and when he gives me a reason to.

For now, I'm focusing on my dad. He should arrive on the Greyhound bus in four hours to have brunch with me, his daughter. He even offered to take the four a.m. bus to make it by eleven and leave after we eat, so I won't feel obligated to let him stay over.

He's thoughtful, in his own way.

I've been waiting my whole life for this moment, and though Zeke doesn't sound like the perfect doting father, he does appear to try.

I refuse to dim the enormity of it by fixating on a guy.

"It's such a foreign word, but yes." My mouth parts into a smile as I lay my heart out to my boss and the closest thing to a friend I have in this world.

My parched lips crack, and I dart my tongue out to wet them. Salty. The same strange taste I've woken up to in my mouth and on my lips over the past couple of mornings.

Weird, considering I've been using the same toothpaste and haven't switched up my diet. Maybe it's got something to do with my hormones. I've been waking up wet after dreaming about Theo for the past two days.

Yeah, that has to be it.

Which I have to stop thinking about when in a few hours I'm about to meet my...

"Dad. He's my dad."

"Yes, he is." Her smile embraces me through the phone, all the way from her mansion in Beverly Hills. "I'm thrilled for you. You deserve your happy ending."

"Thank you." My teeth nibble at my chapped bottom lip. "I'm happy. And nervous. He was kind of weird when we talked." I share my concerns with her.

I don't have anyone else.

"Finding out you have a twenty-six-year-old daughter after the fact would make anyone weird, I guess." Her chuckle is mingled with sizzling sounds of what must be her kids' breakfast on the stove. "And in any case, you did well to suggest a public place. Whatever happens, you're always free to get up and walk away."

"Yeah." My eyes wander up to the ceiling, and higher—up, up, up to the fifth floor.

I draw the sheets tighter over my bare chest, surrendering to the joy this Saturday will bring. First Dad, then Theo. I should be content. I *am* content.

"It's going to be a good day, Michelle."

"It is." Glasses clink, a gruff *good morning* from her husband follows. "I have to go now. Be safe. Text me later. Promise?"

"I do." I nod to myself and hang up.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Prue

The rest of the morning flies by in a blur as I try to plan for brunch with my dad.

The anxiety and excitement have turned me into a mess. I can't seem to make up my mind about anything, not about an outfit to wear or a specific topic to discuss.

First impressions count, and I want to leave such a good one he'll never leave me again.

During these four hours, I get one text from Theo with a sweet, *I can't wait for our dinner this evening.*

My head's too wrapped up in the heaps of clothes on my bed and the hairstyles I'm considering that a simple *Me too* is the answer he gets.

He doesn't reply, and it's okay. We'll see each other soon, anyway.

For now, I'm in desperate need to figure out how to present myself to Ze—Dad.

I look at the watch on my phone when my stomach starts to rumble.

Crap, I'll be late if I don't choose something soon.

Out of everything laid out on my bed, I go for the modest choice. A long, floral tan dress that reaches below my knees. It has short sleeves and a boat neck to hide my cleavage, and I pair it with flat sandals to complete the look.

In rushed movements, I arrange the rest of the clothes back in the closet and scurry to the bathroom. I pin my long tresses into a chignon, apply minimal makeup on my face—a little blush, mascara, and lip balm for my dry lips—grab my purse, and leave.

Dad let me decide where we'd meet, and I chose a cute, quaint café that serves the best pastries in LA, and no one can tell me otherwise.

Even though it was thirty minutes away from the bus stop, Zeke didn't mind as long as I ordered the Uber for him.

Just like I paid for his bus ticket, and like I'm assuming I'll have to pay for the brunch. Which isn't a big deal. Once I paid off the last of my student debts, I haven't struggled financially like I had as a kid who had nothing.

The last thing I want is to embarrass Zeke by suggesting we split the costs. He made time for me. He left his family at home and went on a grueling seven-hour bus ride in each direction on a Saturday.

I don't need his money. I need a father.

My body buzzes as I walk over there to meet him. Nervous energy runs through me. The electricity pulses have me chewing the inside of my cheek and clutching my brown leather purse for dear life.

Heading over to meet Zeke has a lot to do with my rapidly speeding pulse. But it's something else, too.

I'm not sure what it is. Something similar to what I felt in the parking lot last week.

I would've tried reading into it further, except my mind isn't equipped for overthinking. I chalk it up to nerves and hurry my steps.

"Here goes," I whisper to myself as I round the corner to the street where the café is.

The scent of hot pastries and coffee being brewed carries outside to the street, intoxicating and simultaneously relieving some of my nervous energy.

I stumbled upon Sweet Stuff on one of my jogs about a year ago. The smells and mouthwatering pastries spread out on the clients' tables were the reason I came back after I showered. Why I've been visiting here so much.

I hope Dad will like it too.

The Uber app on my phone shows he's supposed to be here. I scan for the man in the photo he sent me, eyeing the iron tables scattered around, the people sitting on the wooden chairs.

"Prue!" I hear him before I see him, the man calling me from the entrance to the inside seating area of Sweet Stuff.

Yup, that's the man in the picture.

And there's no denying he's my father.

We share the same eyes and hair color. While the shape of our eyes is eerily similar, his hair isn't the thick mane I have on my head. His is thinning and receding.

His complexion is slightly different, too. Whereas my skin is light from applying sunscreen and avoiding long exposure to the sun, my dad's is tanned—or is it a yellowish hue?—I'm not sure.

Wrinkles form in the corners of his eyes, his mouth, all over his forehead. His beer belly protrudes beneath his white, threadbare T-shirt, and his jeans are a shade of brown.

But, honestly? I don't care about any of that.

What matters is he's my father. And he's really here.

"Over here." He beckons me to follow him inside when I freeze in place. "I have a table for us."

Through the haze of my shock, I remember I have to do *something*. I lift my hand, wave it meekly, and move one foot after the other to the air-conditioned space inside.

As I stare at him, a whirlwind of emotions erupts in my chest. I try to make sense of them, and the best I get is: I thought it'd be different. I genuinely believed I'd cry, have a meltdown, fall to my knees, and thank God for putting Dad in my path.

What I feel is...nothing. Just stunned to meet him.

I'm disappointed in myself. I let the bewilderment steal away the joy I should be experiencing.

Snap out of it, Prue. Have fun. You can do it.

We step inside the old tile floors that add a charming allure to the place.

I tilt my head up to my father. Still no butterflies.

Doesn't matter. They'll come.

One step at a time.

"Hi, Zeke," I say since I'm not sure how to address him. "I'm so happy to see you."

I hug him back when he opens his arms for me. I smell the sun on his skin, his sweat veiled under layers of deodorant and the beer in his breath. Poor man, the long ride must've gotten to him.

He pulls away, holding onto my shoulders. Some of my initial surprise has evaporated, and I notice how tall he is, probably around six-two, and his arms are really friggin' muscular.

"It's Dad." His rugged voice matches the one I heard on the phone. His expression is a harsh one as well. As if the fatherly side of him ended with his embrace. "Come on, let's sit."

Sheela, the older, blue-haired owner of Sweet Stuff, walks over to us as we head to the table he's occupied.

I look over Dad to catch her gaze, my smile easier this time. "Hi, Sheela."

“Hey, Prue.” She wipes her hands on her apron, comes to stand next to me, and does a once-over of Dad. “I heard you mention you’re her father? You should’ve said something earlier.” Her smile widens when our silence is the *yes* she is looking for. “Your daughter is our favorite client.”

My cheeks burn red, my eyes darting to the floor. I swear compliments are my kryptonite.

“Oh, really?” There’s something off about his tone, not as if he’s proud to hear I’m liked.

My head snaps up with curiosity. He simply looks intrigued.

“She comes here a lot?” he adds.

What a strange question. Why is it important whether I eat out a lot or not?

“Yes, and yes.” Sheela beams at me. “I have to make a few calls. I hope to see you around more often, Mr. Bishop.”

He doesn’t correct her about the last name and neither do I. Too complicated.

When he resumes his path to the corner table, where there’s already a half-empty beer glass, something screams inside me to not go there.

While the shadowed area is as safe as any, and I’m sure Zeke won’t hurt me, something’s off. I need the security of the fresh air. Of the sun. Of more than a handful of people around us.

I stop him by placing a hand on his bicep.

“The beer bothers you?” He quirks an eyebrow, and gleams of agitation seep into his expression. “Wanted to be consistent since I got one on the road.”

“I don’t mind.” I put on my big girl pants, remind myself I’m not a kid so desperate for love I’m willing to endure anything to be loved, and ask him flat out, “Would it be okay if we got a table outside?”

He studies me, brow furrowing. “Okay. I thought you’d like to have a quiet conversation, but sure.”

“Thanks.”

Since he doesn’t move to get his drink, I walk over and grab the beer he ordered without me and follow him outside from the dark, somewhat isolated corner.

“I do want a quiet conversation.” While I’m behind him, a complacent part of me still drives me to explain myself. “Everyone here minds their own business, so don’t worry about it.”

“If you say so…” He shrugs.

Once the warmth and humidity hit my skin and the chatter of people fills my ears, the heaviness weighing me down diminishes significantly.

My lungs expand, and my lips stretch in a smile. I find the one available table, and we both take our seats around it.

Dad’s brown eyes narrow at me, studying me again. Maybe it’ll be like in the movies where he tells me, *You have so much of your mother in you.*

Maybe he’ll start by telling me about *her*.

Except life doesn’t work that way. Despite our nearness to Hollywood, my real life appears to be the farthest from the movies they make there.

“You have it good here, I see.”

He does a slow perusal of my clothes, my purse. I don’t buy designer clothes and bags, but what I own doesn’t look cheap, either. I’m aware of that.

Why is it so important to him, though?

“Better than us.” He rubs the scruff on his chin. “That’s for sure.”

“Oh, stop.” I try to brush it off, making light of the situation. Hoping and praying to the lord this conversation won’t take the direction I’m worried it might. “You look great.”

“I’m not talking about my looks.” Darkness creeps over Zeke’s features. “But what would you know about it?”

Suddenly, I’m not so sure I want to call him Dad anymore. He’s a stranger, and the longer we sit here, the more evident it becomes.

A slightly creepy stranger.

What am I supposed to do? Get up and walk?

I’ve waited for this moment forever. How many nights I cried, the physical pain in my chest whenever I saw another kid chosen that wasn’t me. When the detective couldn’t find either him or Mom.

“Uh, okay...” is all I say.

I’m not friendly. I’m not sweet. I have to protect myself, regardless of my longing to belong.

“Financially,” he hisses, leaning over, his forearms taking up most of the table. “Listen. I won’t beat around the bush. I’m not father material. Never have been, never will be. The kids who grew up under my roof can attest to that.”

My heart rate picks up. His beer breath grows rancid in my nose as my panic rises. I have to fight the bile down my throat, hiding any sign of weakness.

“I need another daughter like I need the herpes one of my one-night stands gave me.” He bends closer, his fuck-you gaze locking me in place. “Do you understand?”

Nausea isn’t the only thing I’m holding back.

Don’t cry, don’t you dare goddamn cry.

My tears, the bastards don’t take orders very well. A couple drag down my cheeks as I stare at the man who sold me the worst kind of illusion.

He sold me *hope*.

“I do.” I drag my chair back to get up. “Don’t worry. I’ve been fatherless for all my life. I’m used to it by now. Goodbye, Zeke.”

His hand is quicker than I am. Long, powerful fingers shackle my wrist and keep me in my seat.

To an outsider, his hold might seem like a loving grip. He smooths his thumb along my skin over and over, and it takes everything in me to lock my whimper behind my lips.

Now I understand why he pushed staying inside. It’s for the exact same reason I wanted out. I dread thinking what force he would’ve used on me, what words he would’ve used, had we stayed relatively hidden.

“You’re not going anywhere.” His eyes twist, evil pouring out of them. “I didn’t come all the fucking way over here so you could turn your back on me...” His words as are hateful as his glare when he adds, “...rich girl.”

My bottom lip drops. How does he...?

“Yes, I know about your fancy job.” If I thought his eyes were evil, his smirk tops them. Easily. “My friend who tracked you down told me where you work, and your chatty little receptionist said you were a plastic surgeon assistant. You earn a ton in LA, according to Google.”

My guts feel like he clenched his filthy hand around them and twisted.

Oh, Franny...

I can’t even be mad at her. She’s told Theo much more. And it’s not like it’s a big secret either.

He’s the problem. Not her.

Apparently, he's low on cash. When my mother blabbered about my existence, he sent out his friend to see if I, the stupid, naïve, needy orphan had any money to take.

Which I do.

Which I would've given to him freely had he been nice. Had he genuinely been interested in me, his fucking daughter.

Yeah, the word *fucking* seems very appropriate right about now.

"No." I shake my head, trying not to make a scene. I just want to leave. Just want to curl up into Theo's arms and disappear.

"You're a cruel, heartless person. You're not getting a penny from me."

"I'll destroy you," he snarls. "I'll come to your workplace, to your apartment building. I'll humiliate you, make your life a living hell. You'd be better off giving me the money."

The horror in my heart radiates to my expression. My bottom lip drops, my eyebrows knead together.

The dam breaks behind my eyes. Tears rush down my cheeks, dampening the collar of my dress.

Fight. Fight back. This is where you prove how much you grew to be a fierce woman.

"No!" I shrug him off, yelling through the tears. "You will not—"

"No, he won't." A rich, familiar voice comes from behind me.

His woodsy scent envelops me. His hand around my waist engulfs me with security.

And his energy, furious and demanding, takes up the entire space around us. The entire street.

"Theo," I whisper.

His only acknowledgment of me is pressing his large fingers to my flesh.

A sliver of awareness pushes through my jumbled thoughts. "How did you know I'd be here?"

"I protect you," he says. A simple sentence that holds so much in it. "I'll always protect you."

"Who the fuck are you?" Zeke's had enough, throwing his chair back as he straightens in his attempt to intimidate Theo.

It doesn't work. In fact, I find it hard to believe anyone in the world can scare the man beside me.

"Who I am doesn't concern you, you miserable sack of shit." Theo's tone remains low and more intimidating than anyone I've ever met. "What should worry you is that I have your entire conversation recorded, and I won't think twice about handing it over to the LAPD. You won't go anywhere near Prue again unless you want to end up in jail."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Theo

“You wouldn’t dare.” Filthy spit hits my face with every word this disgusting asshole mutters. “Your girlfriend won’t forgive you for snitching on her father, and you know it.”

For a moment, his accusation has me dumbstruck.

Him calling her my girlfriend isn’t it. I’m so obsessed with her, I bathe in the title of being her boyfriend.

Someday soon, I’ll be more than that to her. I’ll be her waking and sleeping moments. I’ll keep her safe from jerks like this one right here. From anyone at all, period.

We’ll live under the same roof in the big house I bought—our house, spending evenings cuddled on the couch. She and I will have two to three children. They—if they’re lucky—will inherit their mother’s looks, her brains, her sweet smile. The mysteriously alluring aura around her that makes her so special.

She’s mine. There’s no question about it.

The commitment doesn’t scare me. I’m all in.

It’s *his* title that surrenders me momentarily speechless.

He’s her father.

That’s why she’s been acting out of character today.

The short text she sent me earlier wasn’t when I started getting worried.

As I stood in my window and watched over the street all morning, I didn’t see her leave the building for her jog. I left the camera rolling while I snuck up to the terrace every thirty minutes. There’d been no sign of her.

My hackles rose, and the contents of her message verified my doubts. Ever since, my eyes hadn’t missed a single human or pet leaving our apartment building. I spied each car driving out of our parking lot, waiting for Prue’s Prius to show up.

Until she showed up, and another surge of jealousy pummeled me, hard. The ugly emotion rearing its head was so foreign, I confused it with rage for a moment.

The rational part of me insisted she wasn’t cheating on me. My virginal, innocent Prue. The sweet young woman who batted her eyelashes at me and gave me what she’d kept from the rest of the world. She couldn’t have gone out on a date the same day we were supposed to go to dinner together.

Then again, I did leave the conscious version of her alone for two days. I did it.

Thank fuck the green-eyed monster poisoning me didn’t stop me from finding out the truth. From lurking outside the café. From creeping up behind her.

From recording this as evidence.

“She’ll forgive me for having her back.” I glower at him.

What he doesn't take into account, what his idiot of a friend missed, is me. How—to my complete and utter surprise, too—I realize I'm willing to do anything for his daughter.

“Prue?” He's looking at her, and I can't have her get lost in his evil claws.

“Don't.” I turn my head to her profile, gripping her tighter.

Her eyes are still locked on the seething bastard. The way she trembles in my hold, I can't tell if it's because she's angry or terrified or both.

Both infuriate me. I need her to be peaceful and content. I need her to know nothing bad will happen to her as long as I'm alive.

“Prue,” I repeat, louder this time. “Look at me.”

My change of tone does the trick. She severs the venomous connection with—for lack of a better word—the sperm donor, looking at me with those wide, brown eyes.

“Yes?” she says, allowing her muscles to relax and melt into my body. To trust me.

“Weak fucking cunt,” her dad snorts. “Just like your mother. Will do anything for a dick.”

“Shut up.” My growl has the asshole flinching.

I leverage on his temporary shock to look back at Prue. Her head is bowed, probably from being degraded in public by this human scum. Another thing I won't have.

With a firm finger under her chin, I press and force her gaze off the fucking floor.

“Is it true?” I lower my voice, not interested in having other people overhear me or for this guy to butt in. “Is this...man”—I snarl—“your father?”

She swallows. “He is.”

My next question might come off as condescending when it really isn't. But I have to make sure. “Confirmed by a paternity test?”

“Yes. I'm her dad, dickwad.”

Asshole's voice grates on my nerves, and I grind my teeth.

Prue is all that matters. Prue.

“You guys done eye fucking yet, or can you transfer your old man two grand as a start?”

Faster than the speed of light, I twist, knocking off the table separating me and him to the floor. My fingers fist around the collar of his shirt, dragging this incompetent asshole to me until we're nose to nose.

My breaths are feral, my eyes seeing red.

A gentle hand rests on my strained shoulder, causing my muscles to ripple. “Theo, please...”

“Not now, Prue.” I try to tame my fury when addressing her. She doesn't deserve it. Which makes it an effort to utter, “Please.”

“You still have a long way to go until you learn how to put her in her place.” His rancid beer breath repulses me. But his attitude toward women is what truly has me physically repulsed. “A few backhanded slaps, a punch to the stomach where no one can see... That usually does the trick.”

I'm driven by impulses, kneeling him until he tumbles to the floor. I'm right there on top of him, my body caging him in, blocking his failed attempts to swing a punch at me.

“You're tempting me,” I whisper, my voice hoarse and ragged with rage. “Fucking tempting me, and you won't like the results. You can be sure of that.”

“I need the money.” Prue’s dad turns into a weak, begging lump of flesh and bones. “I lost everything by betting on the wrong baseball teams. I don’t have any savings. Anything. Even the detective helped me as a favor because I promised him...”

He promised him Prue’s hard-earned money.

“I missed the part where that’s my problem. Or Prue’s.”

“Prue, do I need to involve the police?” I hear a woman on top of the chattering around me.

I don’t care about my reputation at this point. I don’t care if anyone whips out their phones to record me.

His disrespect and blackmailing of the woman I—fuck, I fucking *love*—clouds my judgment. Drives me into a fit of retaliation, to do anything in my power to save her.

“Don’t, please don’t.”

Prue, on the other hand, Prue, my angel cares. Prue cares a lot.

“Theo saved me,” she says louder than needed for the sake of the cameras, I’m willing to bet. “I was attacked and threatened, and Theo helped me.”

My heart wreaks havoc in its cage. Beating on it, pushing to be let out and running to the one it needs to survive.

Before the situation blows completely out of control, I have one more thing to say to the asshole beneath me.

While my actions are being hidden from view, I move my free hand to where his liver is. I press hard on it, getting a sick kick out of watching him convulse on the floor.

The pain has to be insufferable, especially for a guy who likes to drink. A lot. He doesn’t have to tell me. I see it. All the signs point out to it—his thinning hair, bloodshot eyes, and yellow-tinted skin.

“Do I have your attention now, or do you want to add anything clever, asshole?”

“Y-yes, you do.”

After Prue’s declaration, he’s aware his pleas for help will fall on a dozen or so pairs of deaf ears.

“You stay away from Prue.” Each word is annunciated slowly, menacingly. “You don’t come near her. You don’t threaten her. You don’t send anyone after her. So help me God, if I so much—”

“Theo, let’s go,” my angel whispers to me from somewhere in the distance.

My business with him isn’t finished. “—if I so much as suspect *anything*, have no doubt the recording on my phone will find its way to the police. In case they don’t lock you up, *I* will come for you. *I’ll* find out where you live, where you hang out. You’ll have to constantly look over your shoulder. To wonder real fucking hard whether the liquor you’re about to gulp on or the food you eat are poisoned. Do you hear what I’m saying to you?”

The mustard color on his face changes into white. His mouth quivers.

I have him.

“Good thing we reached an understanding,” I growl before getting up.

Prue—who came to my rescue just as fiercely as I came to hers—jumps into my arms. In my peripheral vision, I see the phones.

Then I hear them clapping and cheering.

A part of me should be relieved no one thinks I’m a monster. I sure as fuck don’t want to move to another city again, away from Prue.

She matters. She’s important. Her health, both her body and mind, are important. That’s why I’m relieved.

I pick her up, and her legs wrap around me.

“Ready to go home, Three?” Her blush makes me bold. Makes me forget about the shit in my past, because somehow, I’m confident she’ll embrace it. That she might even love it. “Or better yet, Five?”

“Still Three.” Prue’s warmth seeps into my body, calming the adrenaline coursing through my veins. “But yes, let’s go home.

And also...”

She leans in closer, her lips brushing my ear. “Yes?”

Her soft breaths harden my cock. The caresses of her hands on my nape are as if she’s stroking my heart.

“I’m so *fucking* desperate to show you how grateful I am. My body is yours, Dr. Wentworth. You’re free to do as you will.”

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Prue

One of the first things I notice about Theo's apartment is how barren the space is of his presence.

I'd have imagined dark, heavy wood furniture to match the leather sofas. To smell remnants of the fresh paint because he'd chosen a dark shade of brown for the walls.

A photo from his graduation, maybe?

Yet there's none of it.

Maybe he's been too wrapped up in work to complete any renovations.

Oh, to hell. Why do I wonder about the décor of his apartment?

I don't.

Because once the click on Theo's lock snaps behind me, there's only him.

He's on me in a second, one hand curled around my nape in a vise grip, the other digging into my hips.

"So beautiful." Theo pushes me into the wall, slamming my back against it. "My Prue. Mine."

I'm not scared of his explosive energy, of the vein pulsing in his throat. He takes up the entire air around me, and I thrive being suffocated under his dominating control.

His menacing aura is a show of affection. The shadow he casts on me is a declaration that he'll never leave my side.

I'm the little bird he traps in his predatorial claws, and I'm intoxicated in the trap he's made especially for me. I want more of him, more of the heady feeling he exudes.

My eyes flutter as I soak up his violent energy, willing him to put it to use.

To take a bite of his prey.

But I can't be a willing, consenting bird. I want to be chased, to fear him, and I have to act the part.

I scoot back, melding my body into the wall.

"Please." I gaze at him beneath my lashes.

His lips quirk to the side. Devious, feeding off my obvious trepidation.

"There's no talking your way out of it." He glides closer, rocking his erection against my belly. "No walking away from this."

I let out a short cry.

His smirk deepens.

"You asked how I knew you were there." Theo's menacing aura thickens, condensing around him despite the light filtering through the windows. "I followed you. I looked out the window because something felt off. Then I followed you."

The newfound knowledge has my knees buckling and my breasts heavy. This isn't right.

He invades my privacy, practically *stalks* me, and I'm turned on by it.

Levitating from it.

Walking on air and gliding on top of cotton candy clouds.

Before I get lost in the fantasy altogether, there's a question begging to be asked.

"W-why? Why me?"

His eyes narrow a fraction, breathing fire.

He's a complicated, intriguing man. His answer, though? So plain. So honest. "You're mine."

The hand on my waist sneaks up to my breasts, pinching and torturing my nipple. No amount of fabric can come between Theo and his pain-inflicting methods. He's decided that my nipple will hurt, and it will.

"Ow!" I yell as the pain blends into pleasure, as my arousal begins to dampen my panties. "Please, don't."

His smirk evaporates, his mouth setting into a thin line. "You tell me to stop, and I will."

"I don't..." I murmur, then groan while trying to escape the sting from his hand switching between my nipples. While he demands the other one to swell and be erect for him as well. "I don't want you to stop, and it scares me. Like you do."

"Do I?" The evil gleam flashes behind his eyes. "Do I scare you, little lamb? When I follow you around? When I stalk you?"

I swallow, my gulp loud in the otherwise silent room. My thighs clench to ease the pain Theo inadvertently causes. It doesn't help. Nothing will help me against his erotic onslaught.

His fingers dig into my neck, making my breath hitch in my throat.

"You know our deal, Prue."

He relieves my breast of the torture he inflicted to slither a hand between me and the wall. Grabbing my ass in a punishing grip, he thrusts me into his rock-hard cock.

"I asked you a simple yes or no question. Use your voice and answer the question."

"Yes," I hiccup the reply.

"Yes, what?"

Our eyes aren't those of lovers. And it's the most loved I've ever been.

"I love it. That you stalk me, I mean."

His white teeth sink into his bottom lip, his satisfaction written on his face, in his growl, in the harsh grip.

"Very well." One second Theo is on me. The next, he pulls back.

It's alarming how I miss his shadow, the pain, his warmth.

His calculating glare never leaves me. My eyes, my mouth, my heaving breaths, my hips, and even my toes are each subjected to his assessment.

While the wheels turn in his head as he considers what to do with me, I shiver. And when I glance down at the hard length in his jeans, I don't need to be a mind reader to tell that, too, satisfies him.

"Turn around." His order is clipped.

There's no need for my verbal response. Only my obedience. I whirl until I face the wall, standing there with my hands at my sides.

"Good girl. Now, sandals off."

I do it, kicking them to the side.

I feel him on me even before his fingers wrap around my throat. His powerful presence exudes dominant energy that can't be ignored.

"Have you ever sucked cock?" he asks in a tone that reminds me of the one he used at his clinic.

Cold, distant. Interested strictly for the sake of studying me and writing it down on his form.

“Ever put your lips on another man’s dick?” Theo unzips my dress from behind, pushing the sleeves and stripping me of it.

“Tasted their precum? Swallowed their seed?”

My mouth shuts down at his crassness. My fists clench as does my pussy.

Theo doesn’t ask for my words this time. He tugs at the pins holding my hair in a chignon, tossing them to the floor. They land with soft *clinks* that almost get swallowed by the roars of my beating heart.

“Has anyone shoved their cock so far down your throat that you gagged?” My bra goes next, and I gasp when he tears my panties in half in one violent tug. “That you lost control of your jaw and had spit running down your chin?”

No one’s ever said those things to me. Not even close. Talking like this, *thinking* those things, it’s wrong.

A part of me I buried deep down, however, has been craving to hear them. To be spoken to like a desired woman, a woman to consume.

I haven’t known exactly what would make me light up from the inside out. The obscenities that’d have tingles erupting on every inch of my body.

And now I don’t have to. Because Theo knows. Theo sees into my soul, zones in on the darkness I’ve never let out, wraps his strong fingers around it, and brings my fantasies out in the open.

“No,” I whisper to the wall. “I haven’t.”

“Until today.” The pull on my hair is so fierce, the roots burn. Theo’s teeth are at my shoulder, biting me as if he’s trying to draw blood.

I’m led by my reflexes, by their demand to get away from the fierce pain. I turn my head to the side, gluing my naked chest to the wall, twitching and wriggling.

He won’t let me escape. He only presses himself tighter against me.

“Today…” Theo doesn’t let up an inch, grinding his erection on my ass, pushing me further into the wall. “Today, I’ll take your virgin mouth. You’ll learn how I like to be sucked and…”

Theo shoves a hand between my hips and the wall, forcing me to move off it and let him in. Let his hand dip into my pussy and push a finger into me.

“And you’ll love it,” he promises while he finger-fucks me in a torturously slow rhythm. “You’ll crawl and kneel for me day and night, begging to have my cock in your mouth.”

He presses his thumb on my clit, silently demanding that I hurt.

“You’ll pray for my cock, Prue. You’ll pray for it like it’s your fucking God.”

I’m twisted. Sick. Madly in lust and incredibly unhinged to be turned on by his blasphemy.

And I accept my depravity. Conform to it.

I’m falling harder for Theo with each passing second for the liberation he offers.

Fearing him at the same time, too.

“Don’t hurt me.” My whisper comes out contorted given how hard my face is smashed against the wall. “Please.”

“Another man—“ Theo whirls me around, winding his hand in my hair again and ordering me to kneel with his free hand pressing on my shoulder. ”—a plain, boring, *safe* man wouldn’t hurt you.”

He applies more pressure when my knees lock, coercing me to a kneeling position.

“They’d buy the lie of innocence you’ve worked so hard to uphold.”

Under his furious glare, I surrender, dropping to the floor. There’s no mistaking the desire pulsing through Theo, the outline of his shaft large and menacing. I remember what he felt like in my pussy. His thick girth, the swelling, the throbbing.

Yet I’ve never been this up close to one, not even the ones I saw in my studies or when I worked at a hospital.

I'm terrified to have it rammed into my mouth. To be this intimate with someone, regardless of my desire for him.

"I'm not like other men." If Theo notices my eyes widening and my quickened breaths, he doesn't let on. Or he just doesn't care to. "I see you. See through you. I'll fuck your mouth, give you what you want. Every inch of it."

With his hand tangled in my hair and my body submitted to him entirely, I have no other choice. I don't want one, either.

In this space where reality and fiction meet, I'm still aware of my surroundings. Fully able to recognize Theo won't harm me. His harshness, the force with which he pulls my hair, it's only because I consented.

But man, do I love the rush from this make-believe game. Wanting his touch to be wrong.

"Yes." I blink once instead of bobbing my head.

He doesn't praise me for agreeing. Doesn't offer a caress or a shift in his expression to suggest my compliance satisfies him.

Features etched in stone, jaw locked and eyes hard, he orders me, "Take me out."

It's another first for me, another part of me that'll be his forever. My hands aren't steady as I reach for his belt buckle, and I move slowly.

Too slow.

He bends to grip my chin, his forehead pressing to mine. "*Take me out* doesn't mean play with my belt. It doesn't mean stare at how hard I am for you, even though I like it. The worry on your face is a fucking aphrodisiac. But I don't want it now. I said take me out, and I meant to take my goddamn dick out, so I can put it in your mouth. Understood?"

"Yes." When my fingers work on his belt the second time, I'm not fumbling.

Belt open, button undone and fly of his jeans yanked down, I hook my fingers on the waistband of his black briefs.

"Now," he snaps.

I yield, moving the fabric over his cock and pushing his briefs and jeans below his balls. Theo's massive cock jerks, its vein pulsing. A bead of precum glistens at the tip.

Theo grabs the base, tilting his hips forward while pushing my head toward him.

"Open up." His virile scent carries to me, the silky texture slapping against my lips. "Be a good girl, and open the fuck up."

The hunger and eagerness to have him in my mouth overcomes my trepidation. I let my bottom lip drop, opening for Theo, moaning for him.

"That's a start," he groans, forcing himself past my lips.

My eyes pinch shut.

"Look at me, Prue. Don't hide those big, beautiful eyes from me when I'm inside you." He thrusts forward. "When I take my pleasure from you."

My eyelashes flutter as I blink. I gaze up at Theo, overwhelmed by his height, his broad shoulders, by how he looks much taller when I'm at his mercy.

I'm taken aback by it and drawn to it in tandem. To the hunger rolling off him, the depravity overflowing out of his pores.

I want to focus on his taste, memorize the ridges and texture of him. But he doesn't let me.

"Wider." My lips stretch around him as he pushes deeper. "I'm not even halfway in, Prue. I already told you I'm going to hit the back of your throat every fucking time, and I have no intention of backing down."

His size already fills me up. There's no more space. No way I can get all of him in. The thought has panic flaring in my chest and my hands gripping his jean-clad thighs.

"Hollow your cheeks." A sliver of empathy slips into his tone, there and gone once I do as he says. He presses my head further and another inch of his moves farther in. "Good girl. Such a good girl."

When he slides inside until my mouth almost touches his groin, I start to gag. My eyes water. From where I kneel, with my ability to speak robbed from me, I silently plead with him to hold back.

“You want this to stop, you pinch my thigh.”

He waits. And waits. I stroke his thighs. Begging him to do the opposite of stop.

“This is how I like it, Prue.” His fingers clench on the back of my head. “I told you I’ll make you cry, promised you you’d choke on me. That’s how I like to be sucked. That’s how I’ll come right down your sensitive little throat.”

Tears trickle from the corners of my eyes. Theo doesn’t comfort me, only drags his hips back to pound into my mouth again. And again. And again.

“Yeah, baby, just like that. Flatten your tongue. Purse your lips and suck.” A feral growl erupts between his lips, and he rolls his eyes for a second before returning to lock them on mine. “Jesus, you’re a natural.”

As he continues to pummel into my mouth, as his thrusts turn harsher as if he’s brutalizing my mouth, I realize I love it. I yearn for him every time he draws back, digging my fingers into his thighs to keep him close.

My arousal trickles down my thigh. I sway toward him, licking and sucking and reveling in the choking noises my throat makes.

“I knew you’d love sucking me.” Theo rides my face like he did my pussy. “Look at you, so beautiful with your spit. With your tears. And to know I did it, I put them there.”

I hum in agreement. Then gag on him.

“Helpless. But not really, right?” He doesn’t wait for my reply, thrusting himself in me while he continues to speak. “Because I’m here for you. I’ll always be here for you. You’ll never be alone.”

He’s right.

I’m degraded but not humiliated. On my knees while I hold the power over this man, his lust and affection. He was willing to ruin his reputation for me when he beat Zeke up.

He’s here for me. He cares.

I don’t cry because of the strain of swallowing his girth anymore. My tears have turned into emotional outpours cascading down my cheeks and to my chin, blending into my saliva.

It’s weird, what I’m feeling. My heart is warm from the love for him, and my pussy is burning to have him inside me at the same time.

I have no words to describe it. I just have this desire, and I don’t fight it.

I cave. I yield. I submit.

To him.

My eyes speak for me, and Theo hears it.

“Oh, fuck, Prue.” The rich essence of his voice is strained, and his cock becomes impossibly larger. “Fuck, I’m going to come right in that pretty mouth of yours. Swallow it, every fucking drop.”

He doesn’t ask me if I’m ready. It’s not necessary.

Whatever he has to give me, I want it.

A few more uncontrolled thrusts later, and he comes into my mouth.

Hot, salty fluid lands in my throat, on my tongue. I try to take all of it, but there’s so much. Whatever I can’t swallow seeps out of my mouth, adding to the mess my face has become.

Theo pulls out, but not because he’s gone soft.

No, he’s still hard when he drops to the floor in front of me.

My arousal doesn't shield me from my embarrassment. He's here, in my face while I'm marred by tears, saliva, and his cum.

I cast my eyes to the floor, raising my hand to wipe my chin.

"Not happening." Theo grips my wrist, moving it to the side of my body, tipping my head up. "Don't you *ever* hide from me."

And just when I think he can't surprise me anymore, Theo curls his fingers around the side of my neck, leans over, and kisses me.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Theo

Making a woman cry has never been my kink. I lied when I told Prue I got off on spit and tears and a woman gagging on my dick.

I do, because of her.

She's the one who plants these cravings in my head. The unconventional, depraved scenarios she's been starring in every single night since I met her.

Just like I didn't know sucking a woman's clit, then coming in her mouth while she sleeps would be something I liked.

Wherever I go, work or the building's gym, I have to suppress my hard-on. I can't stop thinking about her dreaming face with my cum in her mouth.

She does it to me. I get fucking high on that shit. And I'm not the least bit sorry.

After watching her surrender just now, letting me pound into her mouth and beg for more...I'm gone for her. She owns me, possesses me.

My cock is hard as if I didn't just ejaculate so much of my seed into her mouth it's leaking out. The taste of my cum on Prue's lips mixed with her spit and her tears breaks whatever subtlety has been left in me.

I pull away from our kiss. My fingers lock and clench on her neck, making her wheeze the air she inhales and exhales.

"On your back." A single, powerful command.

She casts her eyes to where my palm grips her. I'm not sure if it's a look of *I like this, don't stop* or *I can't when you're strangling me*.

Either way, the muscles in my lower stomach coil tighter. She doesn't disobey me verbally. A part of her succumbs to the fear of being under my command.

She stood up to her dad, to the people in the café.

She doesn't give a shit about anyone.

Except me.

I lick my lips, reluctantly letting go of her throat. The good, naked, and at-my-mercy girl she is, she does what she was told to. She draws her legs beneath her, lying down on her back.

The warm glow of Los Angeles's sunshine illuminates her perfect body. Her aroused nipples, the dampness leaking to her inner thighs as she lies on the floor next to the door.

"Is this okay?" she whispers, her dainty fingers resting on her hip bones, flexing on them.

Showing me how nervous she is.

Fuck.

I get rid of my shoes, jeans, and boxer briefs, pulling the back collar of my white T-shirt and whipping it off my body.

“Remember how I said I’m going to claim each and every one of your holes?” I lean on top of her.

My legs are between hers, my chest almost touching hers as I balance on one forearm and my mouth moves in a hot, wet trail across her neck.

“Yes.” Shivers rake across her body, her back arching, her hard nipples grazing my chest. “But I…”

“Quiet.” My teeth clamp on the juncture between her shoulder and neck. “This wasn’t me asking for approval. It was a reminder of what you agreed to, a warning of what I’m about to do to you.”

I pinch her clit and twist it, my fingers deliverers of pain. She screams, and I swallow the satisfying sound in my mouth, slanting my lips to absorb every bit of it.

“Unless you tell me to stop, Three, your body is mine.” My smirk when I lift from her is venomous.

The gasping, glossy-eyed woman beneath me is obsessed with my brand of toxic.

“I won’t tear into your ass today.” I run my knuckles along the side of her face. “I will, however, prep it for my cock. Soon enough, your asshole, like the rest of you, will be mine. When I deem you ready, I’m taking it.”

“It’s yours.” She has no idea how it’ll feel. It unnerves her, I hear it in her voice. Regardless of how she’s feeling, she trusts me. Giving into me with more words. “I’m yours, Theo. You terrify me, and turn me on, and…please don’t stop.”

The pressure in my groin maddens me. The need to be inside Prue borderline blinds me.

To make it hard, painful. Satisfying for her. I lift, reach for my discarded jeans, and slide my belt out of the loops.

Her gaze lowers to the belt I left on the floor. Then to my cock, soaked in her spit, ready to come in her again.

“I’m using it to bind you,” I address her unspoken question, picking it up. “Your ankles today. So you’ll feel every inch of me when I shove myself inside your dripping cunt.”

“Yes.” Prue looks absolutely feral. Wild. Her pussy clenches and unclenches, her eyes begging louder than her voice, her fingers digging into my floor. “Please.”

“So I can hike your ass up when I fuck you hard.” The tension and intensity in the room reach new peaks the more I detail how I’m going to own her body. “Have it close to me so I can finger-fuck your asshole.”

She gapes at me, pressing her hips up in a silent plea.

I love watching her beg for me in her sleep.

I love driving her mad in her waking hours, too. Same, if not more.

“Stretch your back hole.” With a firm hand that I flatten on her stomach, I push her back to the floor. “Make it nice and ready to take my dick in a few days.”

The scent of Prue’s cunt brings me back to the nights I spent eating her out while she was unconscious, calling to me. Everything connects immaculately as I look at her.

We’re connected.

“Before that, though.” I bring my face to her pussy, breathing her in. “Going to lick and suck this clit. Have my tongue inside you.”

My eyes find hers. I push her swollen, glistening lips open, keeping my gaze on Prue and raise an eyebrow.

“Just a little.”

I grab her thighs, keeping them open.

“Just enough. I’m so fucking hungry for you, Prue.”

I dip my tongue out, flicking it on the fluttering mound.

“Starved.”

Prue's gasp sounds like a scream. My name on her lips is whispered in half-agony, half-delirium. When I lave my tongue from her asshole to her clit, her long cry of pleasure beats against the walls, thundering through my body.

My whole world is Prue.

It'll be even more of her with my fingers in her asshole and the head of my cock in her womb.

Her mumbles of, "No, no, no," don't stop me from getting up. From gripping her ankles and cinching my belt around them. From placing her feet on my left shoulder and folding an arm around her legs.

I don't hold back when I spank her ass, getting harder as red spreads across her flesh.

"What I'm doing to you, Prue..." As I squeeze the base of my cock, a measure of relief surges through me, and I groan. "Is for me to decide. Not you."

Blond hair splays on my floor. Brown wanton eyes pierce me right down to my soul.

"Only you," she mouths.

"When I want to lick your pussy, I'll eat you out."

Prue's pussy sucks me in the second I position myself at her tight entrance.

"When I want to fuck you into oblivion, I'll rut into you." Her heat sheathes me, her juices helping my thick, pulsing length slide inside her. "Whatever I want to do to you—unless you say stop—that's what I'll do."

It doesn't escape me how she can't say no when I touch her late at night. But she will. Nothing will come between us. In the short time we've known each other, we've built a strong bond. An unbreakable one.

There's no denying we were meant to be. We're each other's fate.

I don't say any of it. She has to see it in my ravenous gaze, in the heat of my touch, and the sadistic territorial monster I've become around her.

"You own me," she whispers, all by herself. "I'm yours. My body is yours. My soul is yours. Just...please."

Her nipples point to the ceiling, goosebumps raking her skin even though the temperature of the room is getting hotter and hotter.

"You're so beautiful when you beg for me."

My teeth find her calf, preparing to bite.

"But you're even prettier when you're scared of me."

An instant later, I push into the sweetest, hottest pussy in this whole goddamn universe. And bite her.

Fuck, I'll never get used to what her agonized screams do to me.

I let go and keep fucking her. Prue lies there, not meeting my thrusts but taking them. Her round tits bounce, rocking as hard as I pummel into her.

"Your ass comes next." I put my index and middle finger below my mouth, spitting on them.

Saliva drips to the last knuckle, down to the base. A smirk forms on my face.

Because that's exactly how deep I'll be going inside her.

I slow my pummeling, focus on swirling my fingers on the rim. Letting her get used to me. She's tight. Scared. If I open her up like this, I could cause harm.

Pain, that I do. Harm? Never.

"Let go." I probe my finger pads, massaging her clenching muscles, soothing them. "Be a good girl, and let me in."

Her need to please me overcomes her stress, and she eases the pressure.

"You're doing well, pretty girl." The first knuckles of my two fingers slide into her. I push deeper, slipping the second in. "I'm proud of you."

Her elated sigh releases the rest of the tension in her, allowing me to fill her ass up.

“Taking it like a good slut, aren’t you?” I return to dragging my cock in and out of her, faster, harder, timing it with the pace my fingers fuck her ass.

Dominating her.

Prue’s eyes narrow, a hurt expression flashing across her features.

“Wipe that look off your face.” I don’t hold back while I talk. While sweat gathers on my forehead, dripping down my temples the harder I pound into her. “You’re the only woman I call that. And I’m the only man who’ll call you that. Because you’ll be dirty and debauched for me and no one else. You’re my filthy slut just as you’re my treasured princess. Got it?”

I feel her walls closing in on me before her expression morphs into that of elation.

“Yes. Theo, I—I’m going to…”

She moans, the sound vibrating in my chest, singeing my groin.

“Do it.” I drive into her, bottoming out every time. “Look at me while you milk my cock with your orgasm. Make me come, little one.”

My command tips Prue over the edge. Screams of agony and pleasure leave her mouth, her climax undulates through her in waves and waves.

Her cunt and ass squeeze me, pulsing, triggering my own orgasm.

I growl her name, yelling it. My final strokes lack finesse, stabbing at her, driving into both of her holes as deep as I can.

They’re everything I want to give her. All of me.

Both our hearts slow by the time I extract myself from her enveloping warmth.

“My beautiful girl.” I release her ankles, discarding the belt.

I kiss her toes, sucking one into my mouth, then trail my lips across the rest of her. Ankles, calves, thighs. I move up her body, flipping her to the side as I stretch myself alongside her. Fitting her back into my chest, her body into the cocoon I’ll always be for her.

“You followed me,” she whispers, the realization dawning on her again. The words are soft-spoken, but her concern is ever-present. “You really stalked me…”

A barrel of questions wait to burst out of her. I’m not sure she knows which one to utter first. Not only about my stalking her.

So I offer her the best reply I have for now.

“Yes, I have.” I tuck a strand of hair behind her ear, exposing her flushed, sweaty cheek. My lips brush across her salty skin.

“I’ll do that and so much more to protect you. I’ll look after you. You’re safe with me.”

“Theo, I—“

“I’ll also answer each and every one of your questions.” Ignoring my exhaustion, I rise to my feet, slinking an arm beneath her. She deserves to be loved up in a soft bed.

“Under the covers.” I level her with a stern gaze. “You’re my slut when I’m balls deep inside you. When I’m out of my mind in-lust with you. Any other time, you’re my tender, treasured queen.”

Her searching fingers trace a path up my chest, lacing around my neck. Her small smile reflects her agreement.

I take it as a yes. Then I take her to my bedroom.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Prue

“I’m sorry about the last couple of days.” Theo’s quiet, sincere apology rings in the room as though he shouted it.

The man I’ve come to know over the last week is many things.

He’s self-assured. His steps are calculated.

And there’s not an ounce of him, not any I’ve witnessed, that bleeds a trickle of remorse.

Yet here he is, the unapologetic man, apologizing. To me.

Before I say anything, I scoot closer to him on his king-size bed. My palms flatten on his naked, rippling chest.

Even lying down, our height difference is noticeable. In a cute way. Like he can encapsulate me, hug me, embrace me, and I won’t be crushed.

I tilt my head up while he angles down until we meet in the middle. A sated smile rises lazily on my lips. The harsh line of Theo’s lips smooths over, his version of happy.

I’m limbless at his side, but it doesn’t block my senses from feeling the invisible ropes tying us together. The remnants of the explosive sex we had, besides the soreness in my pussy and ass.

I suck in a long, labored breath, searching for my place in this madness. Trying to figure out who I am when I’m near Theo.

I’m myself. More open and uninhibited, yet I’m undoubtedly me.

What we have brings me, the real me, joy.

But my goals don’t end with mindless happiness. I can’t fall for just anyone.

I’m not desperate, not needy. I’m worthy of love from someone who offers me his heart and his honesty. There’s no doubt in my mind the man I’m falling for holds a treasure of secrets, locked tight and buried away. I’m not sure what they are.

One of them I’ve already been made aware of. He follows me.

He used the word *stalk*.

I should be wary of him.

I’m not. I’m flattered. I’m grateful.

His actions saved me. My dad turned out to be a miserable excuse for not just a father, but a human in general as well. And Theo was there to catch me, then teach him a violent lesson.

Honestly, though, I would’ve been okay with it regardless. I’m too far gone to be mad, to throw accusations or resent him for watching over me. At the end of the day, it’s what I want—a relationship with him. With someone who’s equally crazy about me as I am about him.

So, that’s one secret down.

How many others are there?

Instead of being too forward, instead of assuming, I opt for being an adult and allowing him the space to express himself.

I simply ask him, “What about the last two days?”

Rough knuckles of a gentle hand run across my temple to my cheek, over dried tears, and traces of spit. Theo’s thumb drags across my lips, reverent and cherishing.

“For canceling our lunch breaks.” His hoarse voice, his bedroom voice, sends chills down my spine. I shiver all over. “I’ve missed you. I’ve missed this. Us.”

My lips twitch. The doubts, self-recrimination. The not being good enough for him. All of it has been for nothing.

I refuse to cry. Bottling my bodily reaction and just scratching his wall of a chest. “I’ve missed you too.”

“I’m sorry about that.” He leans in, feathering kisses on one corner of my mouth, then the other.

“You have to understand.” When he returns to look at me, his eyes smolder. “I had to do it the right way. Tell you why I left San Francisco. About my past. What might come back to haunt me. It wasn’t fair to start a relationship…”

The word, the tiny four-syllable word, knocks the air out of me.

I pinch my lips, knead my eyebrows together, whatever I can to mask the shock and hope. A relationship can mean a lot of things. Friendly, casual, neighborly…

Although I’m hoping, truly hoping, Theo means it’s what I want it to be.

A serious one.

“Those eyes. They talk.” Theo strokes the space beneath my eyes.

He sees through me. In fact, there’s very little he misses. He engulfs my palms in his, plastering them to his chest.

To his beating heart. “Do I look like a man who’ll tell you you’re mine, and ask you out to fuck with your head?”

“No.” I’m too vulnerable around him. Too open and raw. Incapable of lying. “You… I didn’t understand, Theo.”

“I know, and I apologize for that too. And for not waiting to fuck you hard *after* we had the talk.” His fingers squeeze mine. “About our relationship.”

“What…” My whisper is broken. This isn’t like me.

No matter how emotional I am, I’m not a little girl anymore. I’m not desperate for scraps of affection. The man who wants to be with me needs to know that outside the bedroom, he and I are on even ground.

Theo said he’ll treat me as such. I don’t blame him for the annoyance simmering in me. But I need to solidify it with my actions.

I blink away the lump of excitement about our *relationship*, narrowing my eyes.

And I start over. “What is it? I mean, how bad can it be when everyone around you adores you?”

On the rare occasions I snuck glances into his clinic, I witnessed a couple of women leaving his clinic. Wide smiles, telling his administrator how they feel safe under his care.

We were interrupted twice on our lunch breaks by pregnant women who work in our building. Random women asking for his advice. And he’s only been there for a *week*.

He doesn’t say anything, and it gets me thinking.

Something from his past, the reason why he needed to talk…

“You told me there haven’t been others on your exam table.” I hate the hurt slithering to my voice. “Did you lie, Theo?”

“Never.” The swift grip he has on my chin is as strong as it’s surprising. His tenacious gaze penetrates and scalds, glowering and loving all at once. “Never in my fourteen years of practice have I looked, imagined, or touched a patient inappropriately. You’re the exception, Prue. The exception to pretty much everything in my life.”

He leaves no room for doubt, and I believe him. Oh, I believe him hard. My soul, my bones, my head, and my heart combined are confident I’m not being manipulated or lied to.

“What then?”

“Ten years ago, nearing the end of my OB-GYN residency at a hospital in Seattle, a few women approached me.” Theo’s jaw firms, his teeth grinding as fury overtakes his features. “Patients complaining about the director of my department, Professor Jason Fox. I don’t know how two decided to come forward to me one after the other. I only know they trusted me since I was the oldest resident, and, as they said, I didn’t look like a pervert,” he growls. “Like *he* was, abusing one woman after the other.”

“What?” My shriek is loud. And furious. “His patients? Without their permission?”

“They claimed he did. Accused him of crossing a line, grazing his fingers on their breasts too long, had his head way too close to their vulvas, so close that they could feel his breath on them. Rubbed them instead of examining them. Both of their stories sounded eerily and disturbingly similar. Too similar to think they made it up.”

“Theo,” I whisper after hearing the disgust in his voice. “I consented. Every step of the way.”

“I know. Thank you for reminding me, but that isn’t the worst of my issues.”

Rage and disappointment in himself roll off of him as if it happened yesterday. He rakes a hand through his thick hair. I stay silent, absorbing his feelings, allowing him to go through them.

“I had a hard time believing them, despite everything pointing out that I should. I didn’t want to believe it.” For the second time today, Theo’s regret rises to the surface. A staggering amount of it. “I promised them I’d investigate it, and I did goddamn nothing other than study Dr. Fox on our morning rounds. I thought perverts should have a look, a tell giving them away. When he showed none, I...fuck. I dropped it.”

My hands on his chest resume stroking him, soothing the beast in him.

“Stop.” He grabs me again, pulling my hands away, pressing them to my breastbone. “I don’t deserve your pity or mercy. I went against the Hippocratic Oath, have been a horrible man, and caused harm to women who asked for my help. To women who were hurting in the department I worked in.”

“You wanted to trust your...Was he your mentor?” My need to find the logic in it, of what took the man I—I *love*, I can’t hide it anymore—so long to stand by these women. “Is that what it was?”

“Yes, he’d been my mentor since I’d started my residency.” His thumbs stroke my wrists, the last bit of tenderness in him. And he saves it for me.

“His place in my life shouldn’t have played a part in my reaction.” Theo closes his eyes, inhaling through his nose. When those onyx pupils land on me again, he steals my breath with the intensity in them. “The third woman, Kris Chapman, came to see me crying. Broken. She was fucking broken because that sick fuck drew a forced orgasm out of her. When she accused him of it, he had the audacity to tell her she wanted it. That it was the word of a director against hers.”

My insides burn, vindictiveness eclipsing my vision. “What a sick fucking bastard.”

“Yes, he is.” Theo guides my hands to my belly, leaving them there.

He skims gentle, caring fingers on my chest, soothing me instead of vice versa.

“I confronted him the second Ms. Chapman went home. I did what I never dared to dream of—stormed into his office, roared, slammed my hands on his desk, demanded answers. I was driven by madness, too furious to remember to record his confession. Not that he did.” Theo’s breaths are strained before he says, “He lied. Said they asked for it, that he always gets the kinkiest ones.”

Bile rises in my throat, and I swallow and swallow to keep it down.

“What did you do?”

A part of me wishes he punched the sick doctor. Another part of me, the logical one, knows doing so would've ended his career, and he'd have been charged with assaulting the bastard.

"What happened to the director?" I can't remember his name, I'm so mad.

"Practically nothing, and I hate myself for it. Hitting him would've accomplished nothing other than ruining my life," Theo says what I imagined he would. "So I didn't do a damn thing."

I'm not disappointed in him. He, on the other hand, a decade later, is powerless against hating himself for it.

"The next day, I rounded up the three women and asked them to meet me in my apartment." Theo's eyes are torn as he nears the end of his story. "I laid out their options for them. They could choose to file a complaint with the hospital's administrators or with the police or both. I made sure they knew I'd be there every step of the way to back them up."

Then his lips curve in a smile. A heart-wrenching, soul-quenching smile.

"Without solid evidence, they decided the hospital's administrators would be their best shot. That even if he didn't go to jail, at least his name would be tarnished, and he wouldn't be able to hurt other women." He sighs, and it's a long and tormented one. "The hospital swore they'd investigate it, thanked them for their time, and we parted ways. Eventually, what they did was believe Jason's denial and his attack on my character. He convinced them I rallied those women and put words in their mouths, so he'd get fired and I'd climb the ranks."

"Theo." I lean in to kiss him, and he lets me. Mostly, I guess, because I'm crying. "I'm so sorry."

"Nothing to be sorry for. Not for me, anyway. Being fired and driven to finish my residency in another hospital is nothing. Opening a new clinic in another state, that doesn't compare to what those women went through. And besides..."

He presses his lips, his speech trailing off.

"Besides what?"

"It's going to come off as morbid and disgusting, but here's the honest truth, Prue. I was relieved my mother passed away when I was twenty-two, and my father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's before any of it happened. None of them knew about me being let go. My dad struggled with the new home I moved him into, but other than that, nothing."

He says there's nothing to feel sorry for. He's strong and resilient. A powerhouse of a man. And still, all of this—so much of it—it's a lot for any human to carry by themselves.

Theo's been doing it for the past ten years. At what cost, though?

At least he talked to someone. I'm sure a bunch of people knew the cold facts. Yet when I look into his eyes, I'm sure no one knows the depths of his agony, the remorse. He shares those feelings with me, and I'll gladly be his outlet, whenever he needs me.

"Anyway, yeah. It wasn't a big deal." He finds a space to care for me, wiping my tears, pressing his lips to my eyes. "The women and the two others who approached me the week after were broken again when no one believed them. They were deflated and didn't want to go to the Seattle police department to endure the same humiliation."

"So that was that?"

"Yes, unfortunately. I didn't want to force them, pressure them into something they weren't ready to do. And you have to remember, there was no social media back then or the #MeToo movement. Our sad situation was what it was. He tried to taint my name once he got word of my clinic in San Francisco, whispering to doctors in the area how I was at the bottom of the residency program, that the only reason for his good—past—evaluation was because he felt sorry for me."

"You could've sued him!" I practically shout. "He would have deserved it, too."

"Not worth it. I had my patients, and they never bought his shit."

"You were happy there, then."

His lips twitch, his fingers caressing my hair. “I had my peace, yes.”

“Then why did you move here?” I realize how insensitive my question is and rush to correct myself. “Not that I’m complaining.”

Theo offers me a look saying he knows. “He opened a clinic in San Francisco. I took it as my cue for the fresh start I’d been considering for a while. I needed the change in scenery and...it brought me to you. Objectively speaking, I should thank him.”

The stars in my eyes are inevitable. Despite the horrendous, heartbreaking story, I’m grateful his path brought him here.

“You said he might come after you.” I’m reminded of Theo’s earlier warning. “He’ll do that? How? He doesn’t have anything against you.”

“A former patient of mine called me. Said he approached her, tried to convince her to change from her current doctor to come see him. I imagine he didn’t stop with her. What he’ll do next is anyone’s bet. I wanted you to have the full picture, from me, in case he tries something. And...fuck, Prue.”

“What?”

His palm captures my cheek, demanding my full attention, which he has. Ever since I first met him, I’ve been captivated by him.

“You said you haven’t, but I need you to rethink it. Long and hard. Did you, at any point, feel violated in my clinic? Be honest. Be brutally honest because if I missed the signs, if I crossed a line, I’ll go with you to the police station myself.” A tortured expression twists his face.

It feels as though there’s more to his pain than our encounter at the clinic. I’m not sure, though, and it’s been a painful enough confession on his part.

I let it go, resulting in me shaking my head.

“Prue, I’ll admit to anything.”

What Theo and I had was nothing like what this man did. I walked into his clinic head over heels for him. We had consensual sex before I stepped foot in there.

He loomed over me, his controlling energy bathing the room and taking up the entire space. Except, unlike the poor women who were subjected to Dr. Fox, I wanted it.

He even gave me a way out.

Truthfully, Theo could magically appear at the edge of my bed in the middle of the night, and I’d still open up and let him rule and dominate my body as he wishes.

I do, however, understand why he’s kept it from me. Why he intended to have this conversation behind closed doors, where we could discuss it. Where I could make up my mind without having to rush back to work.

That was also why he followed me. My lackluster response probably had him thinking I might have regretted what we did, or that he hurt me.

He’s been plagued with similar doubts to those I’ve been having. And I appreciate him all the more for it. For the sensitive human he is behind the persona of this stern man.

“No.” I rest my hand on his, pressing his protective palm tighter on my cheek. “You were perfect. You were intimidating, but not too much. My adrenaline spiked, but deep down I knew the man beneath Mr. Hyde cared for my well-being, for my orgasms. It was...”

I bite my lip, quieting.

“Prue?” The strain on his face smooths over, the ruthless doctor—*my* doctor, returns. “Keep that pretty mouth talking. Or I’ll spank you.”

“It was hot, Dr. Wentworth.” I bow my chin, glancing at him beneath my lashes. “I do have one complaint, though.”

Theo’s hand on my cheek stirs. He’s trying to get away, offer me space. Which I’m not giving him.

I clench my fingers around him, smirking. “You forgot about the Pap test. And renewing my prescription.”

“True.” His hand relaxes.

The sinister smirk on his lips creeps up slowly, matching mine. His cock hardens, pressing against my thigh, and his eyes are

a shade darker. “Well, then, we can’t leave you like that. You’re due for another visit this week, Ms. Bishop. A thorough one.

Much, much more thorough.”

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Prue

“P_{rue}.”

My name is an erotic whisper.

A sensual call.

Theo’s voice.

“Prue.”

I’m having another one of those dreams. Those Theo dreams. Where he’s between my legs, spreading them wider, licking me to oblivion. Fucking me until his cock beats at my womb.

Owning me.

A sharp pain in my clit pulls me violently out of my sleep.

And I realize this is anything but a dream.

Theo’s cavernous, black eyes stare at me from where my thighs connect. His lips are on my clit, and he blows hot breaths on it, sucking it, eating me out as if he’s waited all night to do it.

All I can do is stare.

My sickest, most depraved fantasies have always revolved around spanking, bondage, hair pulling, nipple biting. I’ve never considered someone would be so hungry for me he’d go down on me while I slept.

I feel so...loved. Adored. Sexy.

More so when it comes from a man like Theo. His biceps flex from pulling my legs apart. His full lips wet with my arousal when he lifts his head to swirl his tongue on my clit.

He could have any other woman, but he chose *me*.

God, what a turn-on it is.

“Theo.” My mouth is heavy, cobwebs of sleep making it hard to speak.

Unlike the rest of my body. Every neuron, every cell, is wide awake and brimming with electricity. Drawn to Theo’s infinite pull.

My hands slide lower, seeking purchase in Theo’s messy, full hair. He gives me this ounce of control, letting me drag him toward me. I grind my hips against his face, groaning as I do.

He just uses his tongue, teeth, and lips. His focus is solely on pleasuring me, adamant about drawing an orgasm out of me. And I’m close. So close.

Closer when I get a sense of what *his* hips are doing. As my ravenous fingers tug at his hair, I feel him moving, grinding his hips into the mattress. I imagine his cock ramming into the sheets, how crazed with lust he must be for me to act so out of control.

Then his movements stop. Being stronger than I am, he's able to raise his head an inch despite my hold on him. His sinister lips hover above my pussy, his hot breath lighting my sensitized nerve endings.

"You taste... Fuck." He bites his bottom lip, licking my juices off it sensually.

I choke as I'm subjected to his gaze. The unquenchable need to have his mouth on me is like having his fingers around my throat. His firm palm on my collarbone.

I'm addicted to him. I'm wet. Years of repressed sexual energy explode in his presence. Depraved desires unfurl in my chest. I'm developing an unhealthy obsession with turning my dirty dreams over the past week into reality.

To have his tongue flicking, circling, plunging into me. He's doing it so well so far. The way his mouth latched onto me in my dreams, the same way he woke me up. I might die if he doesn't put it back on me this minute.

The word *please* leaves my mouth a thousand times. My hips jerk up without reaching him, and I groan.

"You like that, don't you?" Theo offers me a shred of relief, flattening his tongue on my pulsing clit and licking while his hips resume rocking into the mattress at a steady pace. "My horny little girl likes waking up to this. To her man taking what's his."

There's no point in lying. He knows everything about me. "I do."

His desire entwines with mine. We're two animals, grunting, moaning. Two moving bodies, searching for each other's heat to be buried into one another.

"Like it when I do this." He sucks my clit harder than he's ever before.

My screams morph into dire cries of pleasure when he licks me with the tip of his tongue fast. The quick laps tease my clit, methodically building a pressure I can hardly contain.

"And this." Theo comes up for air, then bends, using his talented tongue to penetrate my entrance as his fingers slide between us.

They knead, rub, and pat my clit. Still taunting. Still making me squirm from how good it feels without taking me there.

A déjà vu feeling creeps up on me. This isn't how he went down on me in the pool.

This is exactly what I dreamt about, from the way his mouth and tongue work me to how his huffs of air send chills up my spine.

I guess it goes to show the intensity of our connection. I knew what being with him would be like from the very start.

"Theo, please," I beg.

"Does it turn you on, little Prue?" The glint in his eyes is pure evil.

A ruthless predator gleams through them, promising the worst kind of torture while making me come like I never have before.

His thrusts against the bed are harsher. The bed creaks, our bodies swaying with his grinding. He's driving me back toward the headboard as his tongue fucks my entrance.

"Having me fucking hard because you're dripping for me in your sleep?"

I see his other hand sliding lower between his legs, his hips lifting. His arm jerks, his groans on my pussy reverberating through me.

Theo's not embarrassed to do it in front of me, to unleash his most basal instincts. He's bold, knowing what he wants and claiming it here and now.

Taking my eyes off him is an impossible task. So is speaking. Or doing anything other than breathing hard and holding onto Theo for dear life.

"Say it," he roars, his mouth looming an inch from my pussy.

He withholds my pleasure while claiming his. My fingers dig into his scalp, my back arched toward him, and he just hovers there, pumping his erection.

He's punishing me for not responding and this—like everything else he does from breathing to fucking me—is sinfully, painfully sexy.

“Prue.” He strokes himself faster, his inhales and exhales becoming harsher. “It’s your last chance. If you don’t tell me you love having me eat you out in your sleep, I’m going to forbid you to come today. I will, though, jerk off and finish on your pussy every hour on the hour. You’ll have to watch me while your cunt will soak through the sheets without getting the relief you’ll be crying for.”

Filthy images flash before my eyes. Theo kneeling over me, grunting, unloading his cum on my body. While my orgasms are this sadist’s prisoners.

“I do,” I yell through my distress and desperation. “I love having you on me. Whenever you want it. How you want it. Fuck,”—the word, once bitter on my lips, comes out as natural as breathing—“take me however you want, Theo. I’ll keep begging for more.”

“My beautiful whore.” He fixes me with an all-consuming glare that penetrates through my soul. That has me shivering, primed to explode. “Now, you can come.”

His lips demand. His teeth bruise. His tongue rubs my clit, commanding me harder than his words did. A second before I come, my muscles still, and my soul drifts between the world of the living and that of the dead. Tethered to reality by Theo and no one else.

When I release it all...nothing has ever been more glorious.

Theo doesn’t ease up even when my hands drop to the bed, when my legs are nothing more than useless flesh and bone. He swallows my wetness, carrying me back to sanity.

But he’s not done.

“I’m coming on your body, Prue.” Not asking, not trying to prepare me for it.

He’s announcing it as if I have no choice.

As if I want one.

“Then I’m rubbing it into you.” While he strokes, while he pins me to the bed with his cruel gaze, he lines the head of his cock to my swollen lips. “First, though, I need a taste.”

He shoves himself into me in one forced plunge, his pelvis hitting my clit.

“Need to make my cock nice and wet.” His grunts and my shocked gasp burst out of us in tandem. “Before I blow my load on your tits, my sweet,”—his palm cups my cheek, but there’s nothing kind about his fingers biting into my flesh—“innocent, little neighbor.”

The merciless air around him is my aphrodisiac. I keep my eyes open to soak in it, to suck every drop of it into my lungs, my limbs, my blood.

He uses my body as if I were a doll, pounding, driving into me. I want to be his scared little prey, to try and run away, but I can’t when a second orgasm tears me open.

“Fuck.” He pulls out of me as my climax claims me. “Fuck. You’re milking me, Three. Fucking milking me.”

“I’m sorry,” I whisper, watching him pull out and move to straddle my waist on his knees.

“Shut up.” He squeezes the swollen crown of his cock, taking one long breath. “Shut up, and cup my balls.”

His words are degrading. The thing he asked of me is what I’d consider kinky just a week ago. And I love it too. I love that he doesn’t treat me like a virgin, how he’s not holding back.

I obey him blindly, curling my fingers around the heavy sac.

“Harder.” He resumes his harsh stroking, his dark gaze never leaving mine. “Grab me fucking harder, Prue.”

I tighten my fist. His satisfied groan vibrates from his body to mine.

“Good girl.” A drop of sweat trickles down his temple to his locked jaw. “Good fucking girl, Prue. My little cum whore. You’ll be soaked with my orgasm. With me.”

I’m mesmerized by him, by the potency flowing from his pores. He’s everywhere, draining the room of air, filling it with him.

Then his forehead creases, his strokes becoming erratic. He calls out my name and does as promised. White, sticky cum shoots onto my breasts, collarbone, neck, and jaw.

On my lips, too. I lick it, tasting his saltiness on my tongue.

“Beautiful doesn’t begin to describe you, Three.” His sated smirk lights his entire face. “How gorgeous you look, painted in my seed.”

I feel it. Feel it down to my core. “Thank you.”

“Thank *you*.” Theo’s hands trace his cum on my body, massaging it into me. Making me feel used and desired. “Your body. Your heart,”—he places a hand on my chest, softly, reverently—“this is everything I need.”

Scolding myself for being desperate and commanding myself not to cry doesn’t work.

I do. Tears pour out of my eyes, and I’m helpless against holding them back.

“You, on the other hand.” Theo swoops me into his arms, the sinewy muscles holding me close while he begins the walk to his bathroom. “You need a bath. And to start talking.”

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Theo

Brown, glazed eyes search mine. They're clouded by the aftermath of a full day of endless fucking, cuddling, and comfortable silences. Prue gazes at me, her warmth thawing the ice walls around my heart.

"Join me?" she asks for the tenth time, gesturing at the massive tub installed in my en-suite bathroom. "I wish I had one in my apartment, too. Then again, I'm not big on baths."

She's babbling. Floating. Ethereal even while she's disoriented.

"I want this to be about you." I kiss her forehead. The show of affection used to be foreign to me. Around her, it's a goddamn compulsion. "Only you."

My forearms are soaked, water and suds of soap dripping down my hands as I lift the sponge and run it across her shoulder. I've repeated the motion for the past thirty minutes, crouching naked beside her, tending to her.

She listened to me yesterday when I was supposed to be hearing her out. She stroked my old wounds when I should've been the one demolishing her demons.

But I couldn't stop once she asked. I felt obligated to offer her full disclosure about the questions she had for me.

I couldn't keep talking after that, either. I needed inside her, and I was. I bathed her, then fucked her, made love to her. Woke her in the middle of the night, my cock seeking and obliterating her sopping pussy.

Through soreness, I took her, while she constantly leaked my cum and her arousal on the sheets. I pushed every drop back inside.

I haven't talked to her, though. I should've made time. Between endless touches, continuous searching, exploring each other, I should've been the responsible adult. Should've fucked her less, so I could learn more about her.

Because how am I supposed to protect her when I don't know what scarred her heart?

And she is scarred. She hides her past, but it's there.

She thinks no one notices. Puts up a brave face to mask her pain and insecurities.

What's worse? She wears this brave mask to hide her gratitude whenever I compliment or praise her. When I bring up our relationship.

I've noticed her suppressed small smiles, her blinking eyes that ward off emotional tears.

I don't want her to hold back. I want to embrace her because I see her. I see her better than the most thorough MRI scan, only requiring a single glance to pull up a scan of what's going through that beautiful head of hers.

This gentle—and not at all fragile as I first thought—woman has faced life head-on. My bet is she did it on her own. Meeting her father has verified the asshole hasn't been there for her.

Why? Where's her mother in all of this? Does she have other family members other than them? And most importantly, what other burdens can I help her carry?

I'll find out. Immediately.

The water temperature has lowered by now. The bubbles have simmered into small islands scattered around the tub.

Prue's pink nipples are two hard little pebbles floating outside the water. The sight of them fucks with my head, derails my train of thought.

I dunk the sponge in the water, letting it soak. I hover it over her breasts, one then the other, watching as room-temperature droplets trickle down her nipples.

Prue—my Prue—shivers. Her body doesn't quiver in fear but in pleasure. She's high on long minutes sheathed by hot water, being stroked and revered, engulfed by the scent of lavender.

When they pass, she rests her head on the edge of the tub, tilting her head to look at me and smiling.

"It will be about me." Her hand wraps around my wrist, and my cock, the hungry fucker, starts hardening. "Because *I* want you here."

I can't argue with her there.

"Okay." I drop the sponge and stand.

Prue's gaze instantly zones in on my swelling erection. Her jaw slacks, her breaths becoming shallow, making me harder with each of her inhales and exhales.

"I'm not fucking you," I say to both her and myself. "I'm joining you in there, I'm hugging you, and I'm *listening* to you. Are we clear?"

Her throat works to swallow around what must be her arousal. My balls tighten in response to her. My dick painfully throbs.

"Are we clear?" One step forward, and my noticeable erection rests on her mouth. "No. Sex."

I'm testing her. Taunting her. I'm a giver and at the same time a selfish prick when it comes to Prue. Unlike her, taking care of me even when I'm cold and demanding.

Her lips purse together, and she trails soft kisses along the head. She swipes her tongue below it, tasting the underside of my cock.

My resolve cracks. I delve my fingers into her thick, wet hair, watching her open up as I thrust her head onto my dick.

Closer, closer, closer. She's almost there, giving me her warmth, her wet, greedy mouth that sucks me so well, and...

"No." I slide my hand down, tugging on her hair and wrenching her away from me. "No fucking. No sucking me."

"But I..." Prue bats her eyelashes at me, a little trick she learned yesterday to drive me insane. "Please."

Degrading words sit on the tip of my tongue. Something along the lines of *You horny slut, want me to feed you my cum?* Saying it and watching her unravel while I do will undoubtedly have me losing my mind again.

It'll lead to more mindless fucking, to hours of pounding into her.

It'll end up with us parting ways to go to work on Monday when I still know nothing about her. With me not loving her as I should.

No.

I drown my insidious urges for the moment, releasing her hair. I move to the end of the tub, pressing the push button of the drain to let out the cold water. After half of it pours out, I open the faucet so that warm water refills it.

I would've done it, anyway. I intended to as soon as I was done teasing her tits. But thank fuck I waited for the excuse it provided me to put some distance between her mouth and my dick.

"I'll tell you what." While the water keeps flowing in, I motion for her to scoot forward. She does, allowing me to slide in behind her.

My lips rest at the crook of her neck, my arms cinching around her, and my fingers creating small circles on her belly.

“What?” She relaxes into me, her hands pushing the edges of the tub until my cock nestles between the crease separating her butt cheeks.

I bite her shoulder to remind her who owns her. Her whimper riles me up, making me sink my teeth deeper, sending my hands pressing possessively around her.

“I’ll meet you halfway, needy little girl.” *Fuck if I’m not aching for it.* “You can have my cock in you. In exchange, you’ll tell me about yourself.”

Her head twists. Her curious eyes question me. “You said you wouldn’t fuck me.”

“I won’t.” I grab her hips, lifting her and adjusting her butt slightly above my groin. “I’ll be seated deep inside you, bottomed out in your pussy. That’s how we’ll sit here while you tell me more about who Prue Bishop is.”

Cock warming isn’t something I’ve ever practiced. It seemed redundant, just lying in there, useless and throbbing. This type of intimacy hasn’t been something I wanted to explore.

With Prue, though, I’m hungry for it. I’m her sadistic beast who seeks her tears and pain, her desperate lover who needs our bodies melded together all the fucking time.

The strands of her long, blond hair sway in the water as she nods her agreement. I leave one hand on her hip, balancing Prue in the air while holding the base of my cock and pointing it at her.

“Good girl.” One inch at a time, I settle her down on my length, burying myself inside her. “Fuck, baby, you’re tight.”

I suck a tender spot on her neck, and she squirms. “You have a perfect pussy. Made just for me.”

She moans, leaning further into my chest. Her back burns my skin, her pussy clamping me.

My muscles strain as I fight with every last bit of strength I have in me to hold still. Not to pin her to me and piston my hips up, drilling into her so hard she won’t be able to walk tomorrow.

But my softer side recognizes this moment for what it is. Too precious to be ruined with sex.

Yeah, can’t believe my own ears, either.

We’re silent for a beat, connected in the tub, quiet. Letting minutes pass by and doing absolutely nothing in the interim.

I’m not in a hurry to get anywhere. Being here, inside Prue, provides peace I haven’t felt in a while. I stop analyzing it, stop trying to put it in a neat box.

I just feel her. And that’s enough.

Stroking her arms, mumbling praise in her ear, and pressing open-mouth kisses wherever my mouth reaches is enough.

My cock is still hard inside her, throbbing against Prue’s walls. My heart, an organ I’ve largely ignored in the past, beats to the pace Prue’s heart dictates.

Eventually, a sliver of my senses returns to me. So do my words.

“Three.”

“Hmm?” The affectionate nickname has a smile creeping up her face.

“What about you?” When her full bottom lip juts out in a pout and her brow furrows, I elaborate, “What about your past? Your parents? Has your father always been this abusive?”

She freezes, her muscles tensing. “I remember my promise to open up.”

I hope she sees me as well as I see her, without words, without explanations. That she understands I’ll never coerce her to share more than she’s willing to by trading sex.

When I offered her my dick, it was meant to help her ease up, to feel the depth of our connection.

She remains silent, so I explain anyway. “I’ll never force you to talk. But I want to get to know you. Every little detail interests me, anything at all.”

She sucks air into her lungs, filling them while I continue massaging and stroking her wherever my hands reach.

“Can we do it later? This,”—Prue twists to face me, the depleted look in her eyes breaking something inside me—“us, it’s everything that’s right in the world. My past will taint it, and I...please, let’s not do it now.”

“Prue.” I keep an arm fastened around her midriff, the other hand gripping her chin.

I stare deep into her soul. She’s not worried about what the memories will do to the moment we share. She’s avoiding it because of how it’ll change my perspective of her.

“I care about you. Nothing will come between us.”

She tries to wiggle. I press her harder to me.

“You can have a trainwreck of a family. Have a history of running away from home. Could’ve killed a person. I. Don’t. Give. A. Fuck.” I slice her resistance by adding, “You’re mine. I accept you not in spite of what you think your flaws might be, but because of them.”

If she only knew how unconditional my dedication to her is. How obsessed I am with her. I’ve crossed multiple ethical lines for her. Committed felonies—against her—to feed my obsession.

For fuck’s sake, I love her.

Her chin wobbles. Tears brim in her eyes, giving them a golden shade. “Okay.”

“Okay?” I probe, touching, kissing, soothing her.

“Yes.” Her tight-lipped smile is a new tell. She’s nervous and sad and, motherfucker, I need to fix it.

“I’m here for you.” I crush her body into mine, slant my mouth over hers and kiss her.

In this reverent lock of our lips, in the softness of it, I swear to her I’ll always be here. No matter what.

When we come up for air, the color has returned to Prue’s cheeks. She’s ready.

“Okay, so here goes.” She nibbles on her bottom lip, and I pry her teeth off her flesh. “My parents...or, apparently, my mom, left me in a cardboard box at an orphanage in Arizona, where I grew up.”

This one uncomplicated sentence unlocks one piece after the other. Her insistence on maintaining a strong exterior, why she hides her need to belong. Because she hasn’t been. Because she has to pretend she doesn’t care about it.

But I’ve got to her. One word, *mine*, said with as much conviction as I uttered, and I had her. I didn’t realize why it had before.

I do now. I’ll say it for an eternity to see her happy, relaxed.

After she shares the rest of her past, I’ll reassure her that I’ll never turn my back on her. I’ll remind her every single day that I’m her family. I’m hers.

I might even...I *should* come clean to her about my nighttime activities. I will. When the time is right.

“There was no note, no explanation. No birth certificate.” Her hand clings to mine, a grip that’s laden with layers of pain. “She didn’t name me, Theo. For years, up until yesterday, I’d been sure I was a mistake. An easy one to get rid of, to forget.”

My dick pulses inside her. I’m not turned on by her sadness and definitely not looking for ways to get her to stop talking about this charged topic.

It’s my body’s most basal, most primitive way of telling her she’ll never be forgettable. Not to me.

For as long as I live, she’ll be my first thought in the morning. She’ll be everywhere during my waking hours. My last thought before I go to sleep.

“The housemothers who ran the orphanage had been good to me. They’d been strict about our formal studies, about teaching us about humility, chastity...”

I listen, figuring her out one word at a time.

Then I fight a triumphant smile. With me, she sheds off her past. She's blossoming, breaking the shackles of her upbringing. She's not theirs anymore. She's her own person, claiming what she wants, swearing, fucking, orgasming freely. She's also mine.

Prue continues to relay to me how she graduated high school at fifteen, how she wrapped up her BS in nursing in three years and completed her physician assistant program after that. Of how she worked throughout and paid for her education and a private eye to find her parents and failed at it.

The tears begin when she unfolds the story of never being adopted. She'd experienced painful rejection for *years*.

Of course, the cherry on top is the story of her father and his deplorable attempt to blackmail her.

By the time she finishes, her limbs are limp, and she's curled into my embrace.

The water has cooled again, and I slowly slip out of her. I'm about to help us both out and back to the bed, where I'll swear to her up and down her days of being alone are gone.

"Theo?" Her voice stops me mid-movement.

"Yes?" My eyes and hers connect. Mine are full of promises.

Hers are petrified. "Having second thoughts?"

"Why would you ask that?" I flip her in my arms. We're chest to chest, nose to nose. "I would *never*."

Prue rests her hands on my shoulders for balance. "Maybe you're starting to consider why the others passed up on me. Why even my father, after so many years, showed up demanding money instead of his daughter."

Storm clouds gather behind my eyes. And I snap.

"I never worry myself with idiots, never wonder what the fuck's wrong with others," I seethe, breathing fire. "Some people will be good, and that's great. Some will be downright awful, and it's on them. Those who didn't choose you? Fuck them. Zeke? He can go straight to hell. I—"

I'm stuck. I itch to tell her about what a morally broken human I am for breaking into her place and touching her while she sleeps. I can't.

Today has been too much on her as is.

"Look, I'm not a product of society. I have my own set of eyes, ears, and brains. And I want you. No doubts, no regrets. You're mine as I am yours. The rest doesn't matter. Never will."

I kiss her tears away. I hug her through her sobs.

I dry her off and take her to bed, where we spend the rest of the Sunday.

Almost.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Theo

“Say please.”

“Please,” Prue hums as I plop a piece of sushi into the soy sauce, preparing to feed her dinner.

Sure, she can eat on her own. She can do a shitload more by herself. But as long as I’m around, for as long as she lets me, I’m taking care of her.

We each sit on a stool around the counter in my kitchen, bathed in the warm glow of the low-hanging lights.

Well, that’s not the entire truth. Prue doesn’t just glow.

She exudes light. She is the light.

Wearing my T-shirt that reaches her thighs and nothing else, with her hair sprawled in waves down her shoulder and on her chest, she’s my own personal sun. There’s a golden halo surrounding her, emanating deep from within.

I’d like to believe that being here, pampered and looked after, loved, and fucked until she’s boneless, had a hand in it.

I know better, though. She’s had it in her all along.

I’m well aware of what attracted me to Prue the first night I saw her. The hint of darkness, the touch of mystery. Her past follows her around wherever she goes.

But I could see there was plenty beneath it too. And she showed me. Her easy smiles, her enchanting submission, the goodness in her. It was all her.

I didn’t *put* any of her happiness there. I simply lured it out of her, left my arms wide open to accept the other side of her she was too concerned to show.

Safe to be herself around me, no longer afraid to expose her vulnerability, she unraveled for me.

It’s her choice to share her warmth with me, and I’m honored to be the recipient of it.

In her waking hours. And the sleeping ones.

“Good girl.” I edge the food closer to her plump, waiting lips, placing it on her tongue, and marvel at her pout.

“Frowns will get you nowhere.” I grasp the chopsticks tighter, pulling the piece of sushi away.

“Hmph.” Prue’s confusion is adorable. Agonizingly adorable.

“Are we clear?” I raise an eyebrow, not leaving room for argument.

A drop of soy sauce falls in the space between us. I don’t care.

“Yes.” Her eyes narrow.

She wants to come at me, yet she doesn’t.

“Good girl.” I return the sushi to her lips. “Bite. Yes, that’s it. Now, chew.”

Her mouth works as she obeys, but her eyes ask, *Why?*

“Why?” I put the chopsticks aside, adjusting the bulge in my black plaid pajama pants. “You’re a smart girl. I assume you’ve been paying attention when I told you you’re mine.”

Her gaze darkens. A hunger that has nothing to do with food awakens inside her. Prue licks her lips, wetting them, making them so fucking kissable.

“I. Control. You.” The desire in her stirs mine to life. I lean an inch forward, gripping her chin, and bend to growl against her mouth, “I protect you. I take care of you. And if I choose to feed you half of the sushi, if I want to watch your delectable mouth chew what *I* give it, this is what we’ll do.”

A little, seductive whimper is her reply.

“Nod if you understand.”

She does. My little lamb, my beautiful princess with her almond brown eyes, bobs her head twice for me.

“Good girl.”

I steal the air in her lungs, smothering her with my lips. Our teeth clash, our tongues explore and war against one another. I taste the sushi on her lips, the saltiness of the sauce, the sweetness of Prue.

My fingers dig into her jaw, my free hand sinks into the flesh of her hips.

She tries to break free from the pain.

Not happening until I decide I let her.

When my restraint begins to fray, when I’m seconds from bending her over the counter, spanking her ass, and stretching her sore little pussy, that’s when I stop.

Prue has to eat after the day we’ve had.

And having her profile smashed into the sushi while I fuck her doesn’t count.

With one final bite of her bottom lip, I return to my seat.

She fixes her entire attention on me. I do the same.

Her gasps, the marks my fingers left on her jaw, the scent of her arousal, everything about her seduces me.

I ignore it. At least, I pretend I do.

Schooling my features, I grab the chopsticks and angle my hand to pick the half-eaten piece of sushi from the container.

I act as though I’m focused on preparing her bite. My fixation, however, doesn’t leave Prue for a second. She doesn’t think I hear her shallow breaths, catch the movement of her thighs squeezing to appease a pain *I* put there.

The predator she brought out of me is hyper-attentive to his prey. Studying her without looking at her. Anticipating her next move even though she doesn’t know she’ll make it yet.

She’ll refuse food soon enough. I’ll kick the stool from under her, shove her chest to the counter for daring to defy me.

She’ll writhe and scream and never say the word *stop* as I yank up my shirt she’s wearing, lube her ass with my spit and her wetness. Her forbidden back hole will be nice and stretched for me after this weekend, and I’ll slide inside her.

Her pained and pleased screams will rattle the walls. Her tears will slip down her cheeks and slide onto the cool granite.

For the hundredth time this weekend, she’ll come for me.

That’s what I tell myself.

And she proves me wrong.

“Theo. We need to talk about something.”

It doesn’t sound ominous. Prue’s arousal simmers away, and she’s wary. Of me? I’m not sure, but whatever it is, it’ll have to wait until she has food in her stomach.

“Open up for me.” After soaking the sushi in the sauce, I guide it to her swollen, parted lips.

Her tongue pushes out to accept it, her mouth closing in on it.

“Such a good girl,” I praise her as she chews and swallows.

A tiny drop of soy catches on her chin, and as much as I want to lick it off her, I choose another path. The treasuring kind. I pick up a napkin off the counter, dabbing it on the damp skin.

I’ve tended to hundreds of people during my internship, residency, and practice. Doing it has never, ever had this effect on me. Cleaning Prue up is as sexual as sucking her clit.

Nurturing her gets me hard as much as the concept of fucking her.

I’m telling her I love her in other ways than strict ones of setting boundaries and being cruel. I have it in me to be gentle. When she’s being good.

She senses it, too. The tears glistening in the corners of her eyes are her silent thank you.

They mesmerize me. She does.

We remain staring at each other in silence.

“About what I needed to tell you.” She breaks the silence first, wringing her hands in her lap.

“Anything, Prue.” I discard the napkin and unfold myself from the chair to envelop her face in my palms. “You can tell me anything.”

“I know.” Hesitation morphs into gratitude. She tilts her cheek to the right, to the warmth of my touch, but she’s not smiling. “I…”

My grip tightens, my fingers pressuring her scalp in a warning.

“I can’t spend the night.”

My first reaction is to answer with a *Hell no*.

Leaving her every night this week after I made the both of us come was pure torture. Sleeping in a separate bed again is fucking unacceptable.

Now when we’re finally together, she can’t leave. Her dad hasn’t filed a report. The videos of me saving her haven’t made it to the news. There’s no reason for us to worry. No reason for her to be alone.

I shut down the impulse to demand, to usurp every aspect of her life. Me being the dominating side of our relationship doesn’t mean she’s my prisoner or my subject. I sure as hell am not a warden or a king.

I ask then, instead of demanding, “Why?”

The tension in Prue’s shoulders fades. Her lips curve up, and her arms and legs wrap around me and drag me to her. She’s relieved. And I breathe a little easier for making the right call.

“We have a mommy makeover surgery tomorrow, then we’re meeting prospective patients in the afternoon. Michelle, Dr. Waldron, always wants me to be a part of these consultations.” The enthusiasm in her is more prominent as she relays her schedule to me. “I have to be sharp and…”

She grazes her teeth along her plump bottom lip.

“And…?” My fingers massage her scalp as I pull her face close to mine.

“As much as I’d love to wake up to your…”

“My cock.”

“Yes, your cock,” she whispers. So fucking sweet. “Black circles under my eyes and yawning don’t fall under being sharp and presentable.”

Her subtle hint delivers the message. I don’t like it, regardless of how right she is.

“Is that an excuse?” I tease her, knowing full well it isn’t. “Or are you already bored of…”

I continue trapping her head in one hand, slip the other to her bare pussy and drag two fingers inside her.

“...this?”

Prue’s lungs empty as she gasps, her fingernails marking my bare shoulders.

“Hmm?” I graze her walls, pretending as though I don’t.

“Never bored of anything you do.” Prue’s heels dig into my ass. “I swear.”

“Of this, maybe?” I pull her neck to my waiting lips, biting then licking the wounded area.

“No,” she moans, playing along.

I’ll let her go, eventually. Just not that easy and not now.

My thumb rubs circles on her clit, pressing into the hardened nub.

“What about”—when Prue stares at me, I bend to bite her nipple through the shirt—“this?”

“No, no. You,” she groans, and I’m about to tear into her. “You know, Theo, you know what I mean.”

“I do.” Taking control of the situation, I twist my arm back and free the grips her legs have on my waist. I grab her hips with both hands, pulling her forward.

Her feet hit the floor, and I’m about to claim this one last round for the weekend.

While my gaze remains fixed on her gorgeous, floaty eyes, I swipe my arm across the counter. The takeout containers, food, and our water glasses clash and clang on the floor behind me. Liquid splashes on my pants.

I don’t give a fuck. The fucking pants won’t be on me much longer.

“I know another thing, little Prue.”

I push her face to the granite and my pants to the floor. Her shriek when I manhandle her drives me insane with desire.

“I want to fuck you, and you want to be fucked.” My fingers dip to the wet space between her thighs, massaging her without penetrating her. “Which leaves us to this—the only way I’m letting you walk out of here is with a sore cunt.”

“I—” she starts.

Slap.

“No ‘I.’” I squeeze her reddening butt cheek as a warning. “Nothing but *thank you for wanting to shove your cock in me, Theo* from you.”

Prue’s slender fingers claw at the counter, her eyes fixated on me.

“Say it.” My arm rises.

“Thank you—”

The shirt on her sweet body goes up her back when I yank it high.

“For wanting to—”

I kick her knees wider, fisting her hair in my hand. I’m teasing her opening, settling the tip of my dick in her entrance.

“Shove your c-co—”

Another slap.

“Forget what anyone else taught you.” My lips are pressed to her ear, my body pinned against hers. “When you want my dick, you’re gonna ask for it. You can be proper all you want outside these four walls, but not with me. You’re my whore. My beautiful slut. And you’ll behave like one.”

“Your cock,” she groans. “Thank you for wanting to shove your cock in me, Theo.”

“That’s my girl.” In one push, I give her thousands of reasons to be thankful.

Moving inside her is the bliss I haven’t realized I needed my whole life. I rut into her, my balls slapping her pussy, my teeth torturing her shoulder. I feed off her moans, high on her pussy squeezing me whenever I hit the right spot—which is every

fucking time.

“You’re going to come now.” I strum my finger on her clit, pound harder into the hole I’ve been abusing relentlessly over the last couple of days. “Only then do you get to go back to your apartment.”

She doesn’t need any other persuasion. Prue cries out my name and keeps looking at me as her orgasm shakes not just her body but her soul, too. I’m not far behind, thrusting into her erratically as I release my sperm into her womb.

It’s too soon to be thinking about her in these terms. But I’d be lying to myself if I said I didn’t start considering her belly growing, our child coming to life inside her. She’ll be an amazing mother, and we’ll create the family we both need.

My heart rate slows alongside hers. I hug her to my chest, inhaling her scent and holding her so she won’t fall.

I want to tell her I love her. I want to say I don’t want to let her go.

I don’t breathe a word. She has her own life, and I respect that.

So much so that I might not even break into her apartment today.



I’m not sure what time it is. All I know is it’s sometime in the middle of the night.

I’m ravenous, wide fucking awake.

My obsession with Prue dragged me right out of my sleep, and I’m not the least bit sorry about it.

My cock is hard as a fucking rock, my balls in desperate need of release.

Wanting to fuck her isn’t it, though. A part of it, yeah, but not the whole story. My hands crave to touch Prue. My eyes lament the empty space by my side.

I need her. Ache for her.

I promised her I’d let her rest, and I will.

Even when I go see her.

Teeth brushed, wearing jeans and T-shirt, I roam down the stairs and into her apartment barefoot.

And here I am. At her bedside. My shadow clouds over Prue’s naked, peaceful body.

The sheets don’t cover her this time. There’s nothing to shield her against this intruder’s lust.

Being closer to her without touching her doesn’t do shit for my fathomless need. For my all-encompassing obsession.

If anything, the fire inside me rages harder. Crackling in the silence of her apartment.

Whispering, *she’s mine*.

I can touch her. I can lose my clothes, beat off, feed her my cum.

Hell, over the weekend, she practically gave me her permission to do it.

I open my palm, trailing it over her forehead, cheeks, lips. I don’t touch her, though.

Tonight, I want to watch Prue. To absorb her beauty, the faint light of the moon and the way it dances across the dainty features of her face. To marvel at the black and blue marks I left on her skin.

The bulge in my jeans is painful, straining against the zipper, demanding I take care of it.

I ignore it, same as I ignore the rest of the world.

I keep watching Prue. Keep admiring her.

I keep...

“Theo.” My name is nothing more than a breath. The laser focus I have on her, however, ensures I hear her as loud as I would if she were screaming it in my ear. “Theo, please.”

Over the last weekend, she'd been everything I dreamed she would be and a lot more. She consumed me. Satisfied me. Conjured a laugh out of this icy heart of mine.

Answering her plea and serving her is the least I can do to show her my gratitude.

The sheets beneath her make a low whooshing sound as I spread her legs open. Her pussy, already damp and needy, waits for me to take care of it. Of her.

And I do. I wet my lips, lower my face to her center. I lick her from her entrance to her clit, tilting my head to taste her lips.

"Theo." My name again, urgent, as she grasps the sheets in her sleep. "Please, Theo, make me come."

I don't have to see my smirk to know it's a deviant one. My depraved soul could easily live off Prue's begging and pleading until the day I die.

"I love you, Prue," I tell her things I can't say in the light, my voice low and gravelly, laden with honesty. "I love you so fucking much."

Low hums and clenching thighs are what I get in return. They're not enough, though. I want more of those. More of her.

I devour her the way she likes it. Spreading my attention between slow circles and harsh flicks on her clit. Long laves of my tongue from her slit up, going back lower where I tongue-fuck her tight little cunt.

She thrashes and moans, her juices making a mess of my face. My chin is covered in her arousal, my nose smells her growing desire.

Her pleasure expands, swallowing the entire space of the room. There's only Prue grunting, groaning, rocking her hips in her desperation to get closer to my face.

"Please," she resumes begging.

At first, I treat it like it's just another plea like the others that came before it.

Then, she whispers what she has a hard time saying in her waking hours.

"Your cock, please." Her eyes pinch tight. "Please give me your cock, please fuck me. Tear me in half. Anything you want, just put your dick in me."

The growl reverberating in my chest is an inhumane one.

I steel my movements, clinging to what remains of my sanity, evaluating my options.

One, I can ignore her. Eat her out until I drag another orgasm from my sleeping beauty and leave to release my own at my place.

Two, I'll listen to her. She might wake up—who am I kidding, she'll *probably* wake up—and I'm not ready for it. Not yet.

"Don't leave, please don't leave, I'm so close." Her skin prickles, her ass clenches. "I'll say anything, I'll say thank you for shoving your cock in me another million times."

I bite my lip so hard I taste blood on my tongue.

Goddammit, Prue, why do you have to be so perfect that you tear down my restraint?

I'm barely hanging on as is, but I have to. Through it all, I'm sure of one thing—tonight, I'm not fucking her.

I. Am. Not. Fucking. Her.

I part her swollen pussy lips instead, sealing my mouth on her clit. I suck her hard, my eyes roaming on her lustful expression, on her heaving tits.

She shakes and thrashes, getting closer to her climax with me sucking her, licking her, owning her from the space between her legs.

I'm about to come in my jeans when she orgasms on my face. Her thighs squeeze around my ears, her scream slicing into my heart, filling it with her.

“Oh, Theo.” Her whispers and moans slowly quiet as the high wears off, as my tongue cuddles rather than attacks her cunt.

“Baby.” I kiss her swollen mound, her thighs, the cute dip of her navel. Her cheeks, too. “I love you.”

After I place the cover on her sated, little frame, I leave her, ride up the elevator, and beat off three times before I’m able to cool off and am finally able to fall asleep.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Prue

For the first two days of the week, Theo has been constantly on my mind. Every thought has had him laced in it, one way or another.

I fell hard for him before the weekend we spent together. Now, that he's doing everything *so* right? I'm a girl obsessed. Out of my mind in love with him.

Crazy for that man.

He's been there for me even if we haven't been sleeping together. Whenever he could and I let him, he's been there.

At seven a.m. sharp over the last Monday and Tuesday, he showed up at my door. My sexy gynecologist stood there ready for work in a crisp button-down shirt and slacks, holding a breakfast for us to have together.

He came carrying steaming-hot coffee and cinnamon rolls I knew he got at Sweet Stuff—I'd told him it was my favorite, and he'd listened. We shared twenty minutes of bliss around my counter.

Both days, he complimented me on the way I look, said he missed me in his bed. I did too, and I had no trouble admitting it and other truths. I blushed furiously when I relayed the dirty dreams I had about him.

He, of course, reciprocated with his dark, predatorial look.

That and nothing else, because he respected my work ethic.

Theo respected my request for a full-night sleep as well, even though his schedule wasn't as hectic anymore. I know I have these thirty minutes all to myself. Michelle has never forbidden me to take them. I'm the problem. I'm too invested in my job, in constantly learning, sitting in her office.

Analyzing why, for example, she suggested one woman to get a smaller implant. Or why, during surgery, she realized she could give her a bigger one without causing her damage.

I didn't want to miss out on that information while it was fresh in her head. So, on our hectic days, I took bites between questions, then dived right back to work.

Theo came over at night. He'd hug me, kiss me, listen to my stories about my day, then share his.

Our lunches got interrupted by Michelle's schedule, which was why I drank coffee to stay present for our evening dates. And it was so worth it.

We were us, just us. Theo stayed until I dozed off, tucking me into bed, ignoring the bulge in his jeans.

He wasn't the only one who felt the desire stretch and mount between us.

I feel it too. So much.

My door clicks and the lock bolts with the key I gave Theo yesterday when my phone pings with a message.

My heart gallops, thinking it's Theo.

I swipe my phone off the nightstand, unlocking it to read the message.

Franny: *Thought you should know our twelve-thirty consultation got canceled. You can stop saying we're cock-blocking your lunch date with McSpicy.*

Not Theo, but pretty much second best. Theo kept his lunch hour between noon and one blocked out on his schedule in case I have a spare moment other than a quick bite here or there. We can finally see each other in the middle of the day too.

Meaning she's not wrong. Entirely.

Me: *I've never said that!*

Franny: *You thought it, though.*

I chuckle. Franny can be such a weirdo sometimes.



Hiding the truth from Theo over breakfast cost me. I made it, somehow, and it was worth it.

I love the idea of standing here, in front of his clinic, about to surprise him.

I'm stressing over it, too.

My fingers clench nervously around the paper bag I'm holding where two BLT sandwiches and water bottles wait for us. My breathing becomes a little erratic.

It's funny how the heart works.

At home, Theo and I cuddle, talk dirty to each other, touch and kiss and just...everything.

Now, shifting on my feet behind the opaque glass doors, I'm freaking out.

I'm not here as a patient. I'm here for a romantic lunch.

And, hopefully, for a quick fuck to take off the edge.

It should be easy. Then again...ugh. What should I say? *Hi, here's lunch and maybe a midday screw.*

Gosh, I'm pathetic.

I take a deep breath, about to turn around and just wait for tonight when the doors open.

I expect a woman to come out, but no. There's no woman in the doorway.

"Prue."

If Theo is surprised to see me here, he does a great job masking it. His eyes are heated, his voice assured, like he expected me to drop by.

With a single word, he captures me, making me oblivious to the turmoil I battled a second ago.

"Goodbye, Dr. Wentworth." A willowy, dark-haired woman bypasses him, pausing to throw a small smile my way.

He had his head all up in her business a few minutes ago. Touched her clinically, but still intimately in a way. And weirdly, I'm not jealous.

I believed him when he told me he'd never laid a hand on a patient, when he told me I was his. I trust him, fully, irrevocably.

"Goodbye, Hellen," he says to her, though his eyes, dark and stormy, don't leave my face.

"Goodbye. Thank you, Dr. Wentworth." Her heels clink on her way to the elevator.

Then it's quiet again.

"You're here." He pivots to the side, gesturing for me to enter.

"Is this..."

My stupid voice betrays me, making me sound as if I'm desperate for his kindness. I'm not. I'm happy to see him. Excited. Not desperate.

Straightening my spine, I start again. “Is this a good time?”

“Yes.”

A confident yes. A final one. One that says *get the hell in*.

It gives me the kick in the butt I need to follow him into the clinic.

“Hi, Prue,” Bonnie and Vienna greet me in unison.

“Hey.”

“We’re going to eat at the cute Mexican restaurant down the street.” Bonnie, his assistant, lowers her oversized square-frame sunglasses to hide her blue eyes. “Be back at ten to one.”

My cheeks burn up from the way she says it. Like she knows what we’re going to do. Am I that obvious?

“Okay.” Theo, again, doesn’t look away from me.

“Do you need anything before we leave?” Vienna has her black leather purse hiked up over her shoulder. “Want me to order you both lunch?”

“Prue took care of that.” His lips twitch, his eyes casting from mine to the bag in my hand. “Haven’t you?”

He’s been waiting for me. For the past three days, he hasn’t just cleared an hour in his busy schedule. He hasn’t brought food because he’s been waiting for me to come to him.

I blush, the heat burning my skin. “Yes, we’re good.”

“All right, we’ll be heading out.” Bonnie tugs at Vienna’s elbow. “Now.”

“You know what?” Theo surprises the three of us, and we all turn to him. “Take the rest of the day off, both of you. Vienna, call my patients on your way to lunch, say I apologize, but I had a family emergency and reschedule their visits.”

My heart hammers in my chest. Once this hour is over, I won’t be able to stay. I’ll have to get back to work. Technically, he should too.

The fact he doesn’t plan on it can only mean one thing—he has sex on his mind and not the sweet type.

The filthy, messy type.

I shudder inwardly.

“Are you sure?”

“Positive.” He’s stern, adamant. “I’m closed for the day.”

“Okay, Dr. Wentworth.” Vienna fishes her cell from her purse, and Bonnie offers to help while they eat and before they go home.

They say goodbye again and leave.

The sound of heels and low chatter fades in the distance. My eyes lower from the plain lunch my fingers clutch onto to the plain sneakers I’m wearing after the surgery.

I have my heels for the afternoon’s consultations and post-op appointments in Michelle’s office, and damn, maybe I should’ve —

“Eyes on me.” Theo is thunder. A storm.

A force I instantly submit to.

“Good girl.”

He outstretches his arm behind me, shuts the door to his clinic, and pulls me into his chest. His strong finger presses my chin up, making sure I won’t look anywhere else.

“I love seeing you here, in my clinic.” The fire in his tone burns me, sending heat directly to my core. “I’m grateful to have you here. For lunch. For being yourself.”

He reads my mind like no one else.

My insecurities, as much as I try to hide them, are exposed under his inquisitive glare. He assesses them in rapid speed, analyzes how to deal with them, and ends up making me feel better in their absence.

He makes me feel good. Really good.

“Don’t get me wrong.” The strict line of his lips softens, as does his voice. “You want to wear heels, dresses, and makeup? Do your hair in a salon? I’ll never stop you. I’ll take you every fucking way I can, Prue. So long as it’s your choice. Are we clear?”

“Yes, we are.”

“I’m glad.” He releases me, resting his warm palm on the small of my back, guiding me to his clinic. “What are we having for lunch?”

“How do you feel about a BLT?” I glance at him, gliding, almost walking on air.

“How?” Theo motions for me to enter before him, closes the door behind us, and locks it. “I love it. Let’s eat.”

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Prue

We eat fast. As in, inhaling the sandwiches and swallowing them with lots of water kind of fast. I'm not even hungry, but Theo demanded I eat and so I do.

I thought I was hungry earlier. Then I laid my eyes on him, and my hormones eviscerated everything else. Because when Theo shut the door, sat behind his desk, and assumed his doctor role wearing his white coat and a stern expression, I was pretty sure I'd never be hungry again.

But here I am, my tummy full and fluttering. My hands are in my lap, my eyes glazing over to Theo.

I get high on doing what he tells me to, on pleasing him. I finally belong to someone, to the person I love, and I'm not embarrassed to admit anymore that it makes me really happy.

As I wait for him, the both of us are quiet.

The energy in the room is explosive. The sweet, how was your day talk we've had over the past two mornings and afternoons has no place here.

Lust and dirty desires wrap us in invisible cords. Darkness and depravity cloud the air.

I'm not stifled by it. I'm...alleviated.

It's been too long without having him touch me. Boss me around.

My lingering desire morphs more and more into this wicked, uncontrollable entity. It calls for its master. To serve the man, who in return puts me on a pedestal, who thrives by watching me thrive.

Theo throws away what's left of our meal, clearing his desk.

"Go change behind the curtain. Everything off and wait for me with feet up, legs open." He picks up a pen, tapping it against his desk. *Tap, tap, tap.* "Call me when you're ready, and I'll come around to do the Pap test I forgot the last time."

Watching him enveloped by sheer dominance brings back flashbacks of our weekend together. To what we haven't done yet. What we've *adjusted* me for.

Asking for it outright will spoil the moment. Our game.

I have to choose another path.

We're short on time, and I need to get into character, to fear my controlling gynecologist.

"Dr. Wentworth?" Unlike before, I don't care to sound timid. This is my role in this.

"Yes, Ms. Bishop?"

Tap, tap, tap.

"I..." Lips twitching, hands wringing. I feel the tremors slowly building up inside me as I stare into deep, cavernous, all-consuming eyes. "I don't need a Pap test today."

“Oh?” His eyebrow hikes up. The rest of his features are set in stone. “What makes you think you know better than your physician?”

His glacial voice feeds into our joined fantasy. It has me pausing, blinking, opening, and closing my mouth.

Tap, tap, tap.

“Well?” His impatience sends thrill and trepidation straight to my heart. “Words.”

“I have a weird feeling I was hoping you could help me with.” Aware of the seconds flying by, I rush and explain, “Down there. In the other hole.”

Theo’s jaw flexes, and I swear I hear a low, threatening sound rumbling in his chest.

“I’m not a proctologist,” he quips, but there’s no mistaking the understanding dawning behind his eyes. “I’m afraid I can’t help you.”

“Please.”

A blend of needing to speed things up and listening to my instincts overtakes me. I get off the chair and lower to my knees, crawling to him, not caring I might scrape my jeans.

“You’re a good doctor.” I reach Theo’s seat.

He swivels to face me. His impressive girth stretches his charcoal-colored pants, and my eyes hone in on it. I’m terrified of the size of it, unable to imagine it going in back *there*. My fear is short-lived when I remember it’s Theo. He’ll never harm me.

He’ll care for me through it. He can be fearsome and formidable, all the while making sure I end up begging for what he’s giving me.

My mouth waters, my chest constricting as I struggle to breathe.

“Talk.”

“I don’t trust other doctors to help me.” I bat my eyelashes innocently. “You’re so good at what you do. I’m sure you can help me, the only one who can find out why I feel this insane heat there. I trust you.”

“As you should.” His thundering gaze shifts to the side briefly, his flexed hand relaxing as he reaches to pat my hair. Then the mask is back on, the somber doctor’s mask sitting firmly in place. “All right. I’ll have a look at it, see what I can do for you.”

I lean back on my heels, prepping to stand up.

“No, Ms. Bishop.” Theo shakes his head. “Crawl over to the curtain too. It’ll help me start assessing what could be causing you this feeling of...heat. And no, you don’t have a choice on the matter. I don’t want to hear a single argument from you.”

The lump in my throat makes it hard to breathe. The dampness between my legs soaks through my panties as I do as he says, crawling on the floor of his exam room.

His weighted gaze follows me. Without having to look back, I know he’s drilling holes into me. I want to prolong this moment, the intensity of it.

Unfortunately, it’s impossible. We’re on a timeline.

“Stand, Ms. Bishop,” Theo calls for me once I make it there. “I’ve seen what I needed to start my assessment. For the rest, I’ll need you naked and on your hands and knees on the exam table.”

“Yes, Dr. Wentworth.” I start rising to my feet.

“You won’t be wearing a robe for this particular exam.” His words slice through the air. “It’s vital that I see *everything*.”

I whimper. Theo taps the pen on his desk, seemingly bored.

Since we’re foregoing the robe part, I don’t bother hiding behind the curtain. I’m methodical, undressing myself like I would before taking a shower in the privacy of my own home.

“That’s it.” He sounds strained, same as I feel. “On the table. Now.”

When I'm settled on all fours on the scrunching paper beneath me, I hear Theo's chair sliding on the floor.

The footsteps of his dress shoes echo in the clinic, and my body breaks out in tremors, anticipating him.

"Before we begin, on your last visit, I performed the exam without gloves." Theo, my freaking gynecologist, leans to the side, demanding I look at him.

I twist my head back, tucking my hair behind my ear to have an unobstructed view of him. "Yes?"

"We've stocked them since." He jerks his head toward the drawers on the side. "However, I'm concerned they'll get in the way of checking you there."

"You can go bare." The double entendre is clear.

But Theo ignores me. He sticks to his physician role. "All right."

I listen to the sound of a pump being pressed, and when I glance back, I see him rubbing the hand sanitizer on his hands.

"So, you complained about the heat in your rectum." Theo closes the distance between us, his hands firm on my buttocks, stretching me open.

While I can't see where he's looking, it doesn't take a genius to realize his eyes bore into my tight hole. My sacred hole. The forbidden one.

During the years in the orphanage, I'd been warned about how *wrong* this hole is, how doing it back there is foul and filthy.

I don't feel it's foul now. Don't feel it's wrong. I feel Theo staring down into it is one of the hottest things any person will ever experience. To be open and vulnerable and fucking—yes, *fucking*—adored for it.

"Yes, doctor." I inhale, a quivering sucking of air. "How do I relieve this...heat?"

"I have a few ideas." He edges his thumbs closer until they press to the rim. Theo nudges both against my opening, penetrating me, burning me down there. "Does this make it better?"

My fingernails dig into the paper on the table, tearing it, crunching it in my fists. A trail of arousal trickles down my thigh. And my heart, it beats a mile a minute.

"Ms. Bishop?" Deeper probing with one of his expert thumbs.

It hurts. It's too much and not enough at the same time.

"Umm." I blink furiously, searching for an answer to give him. "Better, yeah. Thing is, I tried it. Putting fingers in there."

"You have?" His breaths are ragged, although he doesn't acknowledge it, doesn't stop probing.

I bet he's harder than before. That he has precum dampening his boxer briefs.

His control could snap in a matter of seconds.

He might lose it to the point he fucks my ass without lube.

"Yes." I'm petrified and turned on, wanting to crawl away and yet end up pushing my ass backward into his touch. I describe to him what we've been doing at home. "With lube. Two fingers with lube."

"Don't interrupt the exam, Ms. Bishop." His palm flexes on my ass, pushing me back to the table. "You do not move, you don't help me, not unless I ask you to."

"I'm sorry," I sigh, although I'm really not.

Being subjected to his threats is as sensual as being praised by him.

"You remember where the bad patients find themselves." Theo sinks his thumb in me to the first knuckle as if this isn't an erotic gesture making my insides melt.

"Outside the clinic," I breathe as he drags his thumb in and out of me. "I know. I won't do it again."

"Good girl." He pulls out, and I stay there still as a statue.

“Since you said you’ve tried solving it by using fingers.” A squirt sound is followed by a cold liquid running from my lower back to my crack. I gasp but don’t move. “What I’ll do is stretch you some more using three fingers, to help you accommodate *something* bigger.”

Endorphins surge into my blood, and I soar. The need I have for him, for the depravity Theo offers, consumes my senses, my whole being.

“W-what something?” I can hardly speak while Theo resumes probing me with lube this time.

He’s methodical. Impersonally so.

“Trust me.” He swirls his three fingers inside my ass, then curls them, working on waning my resistance, for me to unclench my ass. “Yes, you’re doing so well. So very well, Ms. Bishop.”

“Thank you.”

There’s no stopping the moan toppling out of my lips. No holding back the tidal wave of arousal. My breasts hang heavy and low, my ass being pleased the way it never has before. I’m so his. So very much his.

“I think those noises you make mean you’re ready for what comes next.”

I feel hollow when he removes his fingers. Hollow and embarrassed for my carnal reactions.

“I’m sorry.”

“No need to be.” I turn to see him squirting the hand sanitizer on his hands again. “It’s completely natural in this type of exam. At least that’s what I hear from my colleagues in proctology.”

He immerses himself in the game fully, playing the part of the sadistic doctor. And I know this has only been an appetizer for him. He’s going to hurt me before he’ll stitch me back together.

“Hold on to the sides of the table, I’m going to lower it now.”

In my peripheral vision, I see Theo walking to the side of the table, pressing a button. Sure enough, I descend until Theo presses the button again.

He walks up to my face, his pitch-black eyes assessing mine. He doesn’t break the scene, but he’s checking on me. And that makes all the difference.

A slight bob of my head is my silent *I’m okay*.

Then my eyes gravitate to his groin. I stop breathing for a moment, freaking out about having this huge thing tearing my ass. In seconds, I become the frightened patient who cowers from him once more.

I whimper. His lips twitch.

“Drop to your forearms,” he states in an impassioned tone, spinning to return to stand at the end of the table.

And I, the obedient, cowardly patient, do as he says.

“Very good. It’ll be easier to insert a penis in you from that angle.”

The medical term adds to the scene, to how not-my-Theo he’s being. I’m subjected to this glacial, manipulative physician and fear trickles into my bones.

A thought crosses my mind while I’m open to him like this.

Is this how he deals with his anger toward himself? With his disappointment in himself for not fighting harder for the women at the other hospital?

No, he’d never do that. I don’t know every crevice of Theo’s soul, but I do know he wouldn’t use me as a tool for his healing. He’s here for me and us.

“I see you’re very wet again.” Theo runs a finger along my inner thigh, stressing his point. “For research purposes, when your boyfriend—the guy who put his fingers in you...Am I correct to assume he’s your boyfriend?”

He's claiming me, even in the scene, he claims me. Heat, real heat, spreads across me from head to toe, and I have to suppress a smile.

"Yes, he's my boyfriend," I affirm, though he's much more than this lukewarm title.

Theo leaves my thigh, and my curiosity propels me to see why. And oh, dear heavens, he's sucking them in his mouth, staring back at me as though it does nothing to him.

"Eyes forward," he commands, and I comply. "So, when he had his fingers up your ass, were you this wet too?"

"Yes." Looking straight ahead, hidden from his reproaching glare, I allow myself a quick smile. "I'm always so very wet for him."

"I see." Neither satisfaction nor approval of me reflects in his voice.

Why would there be? He's my gyno. Doing his...sort of job.

A belt is unbuckled. A fly is yanked.

"Legs spread wide."

My body is hauled back, my hips raised for my doctor.

"Next step is, Ms. Bishop,"—the first squirt of more lube lands directly on my pucker, the second I assume is for Theo's dick—"I'm going to sink my penis in your rectum. I'll stretch your anus, your insides. It should help with this intense heat you're experiencing."

He lines his throbbing, lubed tip to my ass. His hands spread me as far as my body will go. Though he barely pushes me, it already burns.

The pressure on the nerves is nothing like when he had his fingers there.

I don't move. Don't dare defy him. However, I do have to ask, "Will it hurt?"

"I should hope so." He pushes in harder, and my ass clenches to stop him.

The endorphins blend with adrenaline. My fear of him, of the pain he promises, grows and chokes me.

"Don't resist me."

Theo rears back, spanking my butt cheek with his cock, then spreads his wetness on my flesh.

Humiliating me.

My doctor definitely possesses a plethora of methods on how to handle my condition.

"This is the only solution offered by medical literature to grant you relief in that area."

I suck in air, remembering how exquisite it felt to come when his fingers rammed into me and his cock pummeled into my pussy. Slowly, I relax.

"You'll find out soon the lengths I'll go to help my patients." The heat of his palms sears my flesh as he pulls me closer to him, stretching my asshole wider. "In case the treatment I'm administering becomes unbearable, you have my permission to rub your clit. Or you can say *stop*."

"Okay," I whisper.

"Last thing." His chest lowers, the warmth of his body scorching my back. His fingers tangle in my long locks, fisting them. "I'll need to hold your hair. To keep it away from your face."

I slant my head back toward him. To his impassioned expression that contrasts his diabolical eyes. He's removed his white coat, rolled the sleeves up his lean forearms. The two bottom buttons of his white shirt exposing him to me.

Theo's thick cock stands erect. Imposing and thick, the vein on it pulsing.

A sadistic sex lord personified.

“To check the effectiveness of the treatment...” He tugs my hair harder, straining the roots. “Push your ass toward me. Let me in, Ms. Bishop.”

My bottom lip drops, slackening. Terror races through me, promising me pain beyond belief.

“Is it really necessary?” My words are warbled.

“You trust me.” He digs his fingers in my flesh, menacing and demanding. “So you’ll do exactly as I say.”

Not without hardship, I accept it. I thrust my ass back while he presses forward.

He’s big. Huge. Splitting me open without even sinking the crown inside me.

“Please, don’t.”

“Relax.” He pulls on my hair, a physical reminder of his presence. Of his strength. “Push toward me, take every inch of me.”

“It hurts,” I whine.

“It’s supposed to, in the beginning.” His teeth flash as a sick grin grazes his lips for a short instant. “After that, you won’t suffer this inexplicable heat. Trust me. Bite your lip and push.”

“Please, don’t, I—”

My complaining quiets when Theo whips me with his glare. He’s daring me to refuse him, or maybe he’s waiting for me to say *stop*. Or both.

I don’t plan on saying the latter anytime soon.

“It hurts,” I repeat.

“As I mentioned,”—he thrusts forcefully, the head of his dick slipping and nestling in my ass to the sound of my shocked gasp—“it. Should. Hurt.”

Tears leak down my cheeks the deeper he invades me, the tearing almost unbearable.

My juices wet the inside of my thigh despite the pain. My hard nipples graze the rough paper beneath me.

I’m going to leave a mess here. Like he predicted when he cleared his schedule today.

“It hurts,” I mumble for the third time, floaty and used by the doctor behind me.

Theo groans, low and masculine. He’s all the way in, his balls on my dripping pussy, his lean thighs plastered to the back of mine.

My agony is his turn-on. I can ask him to stop, but I don’t want him to.

I’m just scared of what else he might get off on. What he might do after he’s done letting me adjust to his girth.

Or maybe I’m not. Maybe it excites me.

When he doesn’t comfort me by saying it should feel this way, I start freaking out. I straighten my arms, only to be forced back down by the strength of his grip on my hair.

“Don’t resist me. I’m helping you.” The authority in his voice doesn’t feel so clinical anymore. My pussy clenches in response to the cruelty seeping from him. “Make yourself feel good. Finger your clit. Do it.”

The torment of having his cock in my ass eclipses every other emotion. I’m turned on and in love, but it’s as if these parts of me have been dulled out by his invasion.

His orders, though, I hear loud and clear.

I start stroking the hyper-sensitive nub. It doesn’t relieve the burn in my ass entirely, but it helps.

“Better?” he seethes behind clenched teeth. The sharp angles of his face are pulled taut, casting an even darker aura around him. “Less pressure...Ms. Bishop?”

I sniffle, batting my eyelashes to let those last teardrops cascade down on the crumpled paper and the vinyl cover of the table.

Theo doesn't wait for my reply, starting to pump into me.

He doesn't quit, doesn't back off. He thrives on my pain, on pounding into my tightest hole.

On being the one who takes my virginity there, as well. I don't have to hear him say it to know loves owning every part of me.

"I'm better, yes." The last bit of pain finally slips away, morphing into pleasure. "A lot better."

Theo's pounding is a demonstration of his affection for me. "Good."

The tapping sounds I hear now aren't those of a pen hitting a table anymore. It's Theo's pelvis bumping against my ass, of flesh slapping flesh.

The air conditioner prevents us from sweating, but without it, the clinic would've lit up in flames.

"You have a tight little asshole. No wonder it overheated." His hips push me forward, his hands holding me in place by my hair and waist. "The kind of hole to make a man come so hard he'll never want to fuck another woman again."

His smirk tells me what his mouth explains a second later. "It's my professional opinion. But you can tell your boyfriend I said so."

Theo swells inside me, his orgasm nearing. I'm right there too, his thrusting pushing me into an intense, blinding, explosive orgasm.

"Theo," I whisper.

"Shh," he admonishes, but he can't hide his satisfaction any longer. It's in the small wrinkles at the corners of his eyes, at how his lips pull up. "Gonna come in your ass, going to complete"—*grunt*—"the treatment. Like applying balm on the area. You'll leave it there throughout the day, won't wipe it off even when it leaks."

My body, still reeling from my orgasm, relishes the idea. To have his semen there too, inside me, until we see each other tonight. I might come again if he keeps it up.

"Okay." I arch my back, needing the contact, the warmth, all of him. "Whatever you say."

"Good girl."

He drops the role play, hauling me up and sealing his lips on mine. He kisses me, biting me, sucking me in as he fucks me hard and fast.

Theo tugs on my hair more tenderly now. He tilts my head further to allow him better access to my mouth. His tongue dips behind my teeth, his hot breath mingling with mine.

He fucks me mercilessly and fuck, I...I love it. I love him.

I would've said it, too. Except Theo beats me to it.

"I love you, Prue." The confession pours out of him in clipped words, as though he couldn't hold it in a second longer. "You're my goddamn everything. I don't care it's been less than a month. I. Love. You."

"I love you, too. Fuck, fuck, fuck," I groan as another orgasm ripples through me. "I love you too so much."

We don't talk after that. Our eyes lock for another few jerks of his hips, for the length of time his groan pours into my mouth. Then his heat fills me up, and I'm not just Prue anymore.

I'm me and him combined, like two puzzle pieces that were always meant to be together.

With Theo hugging me, stroking me, whispering how much he loves me as he wipes my pussy and my ass tenderly, my days of being a nomad on this planet are gone.

I'm finally home. I really, truly belong.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Theo

After holding Prue, praising her, kissing her softly, and dressing her when she had to go, I stayed behind in the clinic. I aired the room, cleaned up, sanitized it, and went home.

I drove straight to my apartment building.

I just don't go into *my* apartment.

Each moment Prue and I spend together stokes the flames of my obsession for her. But monopolizing her every waking minute isn't possible. She has her career.

Mine matters too. I should catch up on medical articles, on breakthroughs in the OB-GYN field, new treatments, medication, and the like.

Should. Except, I fucking need so much I can't think.

As I walk in using the spare key she gave me, I breathe her in.

Unlike the first time I broke in while she was out jogging, I'm not here to snoop or jack off. She already confided in me, opened up to me about her past.

I'm here to be near her while she's gone. That's it.

I meander to her couch, sitting on the edge. It's where Prue and I lounged over the last couple of evenings, and I pick up her emerald green throw blanket. Where we hugged and shared intimate moments.

It smells of her and me as well. More of her, though, and as I lower my ass to the cushion, I hold it to my face and sniff it, suffocating myself with the woman I love.

The woman who loves me back.

The depravity of what I'm doing doesn't escape me. Neither does my hard-on.

Prue's musky and fresh scent carries into my nose and simmers in my body. Enveloping me in *her* from the inside out.

I see her tormented and lust-filled face, the burn marks on her neck that are no longer there. Feel her pebbled nipples beneath the pads of my fingers and her cunt's chokehold on my dick in that space in time before she comes all over me.

Moving on its own, my fingers grasp at my belt buckle, tearing it open. The pant button and zipper restraining my hard-on are in my way, and I get rid of them. I don't bother taking my briefs off when I shove my hand inside.

I've gone from zero to sixty in half a second, too strung out to do anything other than grab my erection and rub.

My hips jerk up as I lower the throw blanket to my mouth and grip it hard as I would her neck. She'd choke and gasp for oxygen, and it'd be motherfucking glorious.

I'd know, I'd just *know*, that every breath she sucks in is because of me. *For* me.

I'd call her every name in the book while I'd impale her.

“My beautiful slut, my submissive little whore,” I whisper. “I fucking love how you bend for me. Give me that pussy, yeah, let me fuck that, take that, own you.”

Prue would spread her legs wider, scratch my biceps, arch her back to reach me.

Sweat, spit, and our orgasms would be swapped between us.

Skin would break. Blood would be drawn.

The diabolical monster in me rears its twisted head. I have so many plans for her.

For our future.

When I come, her name is on my lips. I’m not a believing man, but for her, I pray. I call her like she’s my god, like she’s the woman I’ve been waiting for my whole life.

Spent and done on her couch, I let myself go and fall asleep.



Four hours later, my eyes fly wide open when my phone rings.

Good thing I didn’t turn on silent mode.

First, because my patients need me. Second, it would’ve been a disaster if Prue walked in here with me sleeping on her couch, holding my cum-covered dick in my hand.

Third and most important, I planned to watch Prue on her way to her car when she gets off work tonight. Her last consultation for the day is set for half-past eight, and there’s no telling who might lurk in the dark.

I should know.

Even though Prue walked to her car at night hundreds of times, she has me now. Her shady dad threatening her heightened my territorial, overprotective feelings.

Yeah, we scared him off, but I’m not sold on him being away for good. The desperate, cruel bastard wouldn’t give up easily. The longer we don’t hear from him, the worst the nagging feeling gets.

I answer the unknown caller, who happens to be one of my new pregnant patients. She tells me about the blood work I sent her to do, and that it came back okay. I congratulate her on the good news, ask her to call Vienna to schedule an ultrasound in two weeks, and hang up.

Once I’m done with the call, I go back to my apartment, shower, and change into black sweats and a T-shirt. Then, finally, I’ll catch up on some reading material.

When seven-thirty rolls around, I drive back to work, parking at the adjacent parking lot, so Prue won’t see my car. She’s already aware of my stalking tendencies. There’s no need to make matters worse by proving to her I do it throughout most of the day.

At the entrance to the building, I wave to Marv and open the door leading to the stairwell.

“Taking the steps?” he asks in his kind tone. The man is way too nice to be working in security. “I hear it’s good for your health, but my knees are too weak for that.”

I grind my teeth, pivoting to face him.

I wear an expression I hope conveys serenity instead of *mind your goddamn business*. Anything to make our encounter civil and forgettable.

Better he fixes his attention back on his newspaper than have him stay alert to the new, aggressive tenant who came here late without his usual work clothes.

“Try swimming.” I smile, exposing my teeth.

“Yeah, good idea.”

Before he can babble some more, I slip behind the door and plaster my back to the wall until I hear the soft click of it closing.

Every ten minutes or so, I poke my head out inconspicuously. She’s not there, and fortunately—and not so surprisingly—Marv doesn’t cast a glance my way.

Covering all my bases, I text her.

Me: *Hey, Three. Any chance of seeing you earlier tonight?*

It takes her a few minutes to answer.

Prue: *I wish. No one canceled.*

Three dots keep blinking, so I wait for more of her.

Prue: *I can’t wait to let you strip me and show you my soaking pantyhose.*

I bite my clenched fist, suppressing a groan. I know she changes from her casual outfit to elegant clothes for those consultations, taking Dr. Waldron’s example. What I didn’t know is she packed a skirt to wear today. And goddamn pantyhose.

She sits there all prudish and innocent while my cum drips from her ass.

As if that’s not enough to drive a man mad, she sends another text.

Prue: *I’ve been so good, Theo. Walked with you dripping out of me all afternoon.*

Jesus. My Prue had been a virgin who shuddered at the excessive use of the word *fucking* less than three weeks ago. Now, she’s starting to match my filthy mouth.

Me: *I’m so proud of you, my dirty slut. Call me when you’re home. I’ll come to scrub it off you, feed you, and bite that tight ass I’ve been thinking about nonstop.*

Prue: *K. Bye.*

My shoulders shake with silent laughter. I get the short answer. She can’t afford to blush and clench her thighs when she’s supposed to be professional.

I don’t need her to rub one out right now, either. I have the rest of our lives to have her moaning and shivering in my arms.

I fish out my phone from my pocket and linger in the dark, ankles crossed, catching up on more reading on my phone. People who work here and opt for the stairs don’t say a word as they run by me, hardly noticing my presence. They’re in a rush to get home, not even alerting Marv of a creep lurking in the building. I know because I check.

At ten to nine, Prue texts me she’s leaving and will text me when she’s home.

I crack the door open, watching the lobby for her. As expected, Marv reads his newspaper, casting his eyes on and off the screens in front of him. A few minutes later, Prue emerges from behind the elevator doors.

Even this late, even though this angle allows me to see her back and nothing more, this woman captivates me.

She glides on her heels, enveloped by a golden halo. Her blond locks flow down in waves to her wine-colored blouse. Her butt sways inside a black pencil skirt as she walks to the parking lot on her heels, and my dick jerks seeing the pantyhose she mentioned.

She adjusts her purse on her shoulder, heading out the front doors.

Watching her spikes my pulse, and my need for her rises.

Every breath she takes has my obsession for her growing, expanding. My need to claim her, possess her doesn’t wane. I want to put a collar around her slender neck, so it’ll be crystal fucking clear she’s mine.

Or a diamond ring on her finger.

Either will work.

Two more short, decisive steps, and she's out of the building. A few more and she'll be safe in her Prius, on the way to see me.

She's almost in her car.

And...what the fuck?

A short guy with a buzzed haircut, wearing jeans and a dark T-shirt walks to stand in front of our office building. He's holding up his phone, taking pictures of her.

Of *my* woman.

The fuck he will.

I barely acknowledge Marv, shove the door open, and step outside. Prue already drove away, and the fucker starts walking to an old, silver Ford sedan at the other side of the parking lot.

Where the building's security cameras won't catch him.

It might've seemed optimal to him when he planned to stalk her, to go undetected. Less than optimal location for him now, seeing as I'm about to beat the shit out of him.

He doesn't notice me coming, doesn't hear the soft pads of my sneakers on the asphalt. The cars driving by do a decent job of camouflaging my approach too.

By the time I'm at his back, it's already too late for him.

"Hello, asshole," I say at his back.

I wait for him to turn around. Look at the fury on my face.

And let him watch as my fist connects with his jaw.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Theo

“What...what the fuck, man?” the man I’m crouching over murmurs.

I don’t have much time. Prue will text me again soon enough. Other people will file out of the building.

But I have to know. “Who sent you?”

“For what?”

On any other day, I don’t look like I might be able to murder someone. I’m lean but not overly pumped. I’m not a man who’s been roughened by life, regardless of the shit Jason has put me through, and the guilt eating at my pores on a daily basis.

I’ve never had the need to kill anyone.

So far.

Except when it comes to Prue.

For her, I’m a protective, raging lunatic. If someone tries to hurt her, they can be damn sure there’ll be retribution. A painful, damaging one.

My fist crashes against his ribs, again and again.

Crack, crack, crack, crack.

The man’s slimmer than I am and about a foot shorter. He groans under repeated blows and tries to scoot toward his car, reaching for the handle.

I punch him again, effectively eviscerating his escape attempt.

“I’m not fucking around, asshole,” I growl, putting my face right up to his. “There’s this quiet alley ten miles down the road. A dark space where people can get *lost*.”

He trembles. I grin.

“Who sent you.” It’s not a question anymore. It’s a command.

“Don’t hurt me, please.” He hugs his body, protecting himself. “I’m Elias, a friend of her father’s. He asked me to look after her, check if she was doing okay. I’m a private detective. Here, see for yourself.”

Elias moves a trembling hand to his pocket, reaches in blindly, and offers me a crumpled business card.

So, this is who her dad sent after her. What are friends for if not to find your daughter so you can terrorize and blackmail the shit out of her?

It doesn’t explain how his friend could afford to drop everything and come over here since Prue isn’t giving either of them a dime. Maybe Elias has some money saved up. Maybe they planned to rob her.

Whatever it is, it stops today.

“Take it. See I’m legit.” Elias waves the card at me.

I don’t glance at it. I don’t care for his credentials.

“The last thing her father wants is to look after her.” I punch Elias’s stomach, coaxing another pained groan out of him. The card falls from his hold to the ground. “Wants to look after her money more like it. To threaten her until she gives it to him.”

“I—I—”

“Shut the fuck up and listen.” My hand on his mouth muffles his sorry-ass excuses. “Pass along the message to her *dad* that she belongs to me. Dr. Theodore Wentworth. Memorize the name. Make sure he remembers it, too.”

“Dr. Theodore Wentworth,” he repeats too easily. Like he’s heard my name before. I file it under the things-I-have-to-worry-about-later pile.

“The next time I so much as *sniff* either of you following her, I won’t go to the police like I threatened Zeke I would.”

At that, his gaze transforms into a terrorized one.

“Yeah, you heard me right,” I seethe, the flames of hell seeping into my words. “Neither of you will be found ever again. Nod if you understand.”

He does, and I delight at how he cringes as the back of his head chafes on the asphalt.

“Get the fuck out of here.” I snatch the business card off the floor, waving it in his face. “I have your full name and number, asshole. Let this be an incentive to never come back here again. Finding you will be so. Fucking. Easy.”

“Swear, I won’t step foot in California ever again.”

“No, you won’t.” I swivel my head, and seeing there’s no one here, I kick Elias in the stomach, reveling in the agonized sound this jerk’s throat produces. “Remember, not you or her loser of a father.”

“We won’t.”

I don’t say anything else. In the warm Los Angeles evening, I watch Elias scramble to his feet and rush to climb into his car. He doesn’t even put on a seatbelt, just peels out of his parking space and dashes forward. Hopefully, to never be seen again.

My pocket vibrates with a message.

Prue.

I’m about to take out my phone, read her sexy words, text her back that I’m coming for her. Right after I wash the man’s greasy smell off me, that is. Before I do, though, something stops me.

Call it a sixth sense. Call it divine intervention.

I call it an inner voice demanding I read what’s printed on the business card in my grip.

I flip it, bringing it closer to my eyes.

My breath gets knocked right out of my lungs.

It’s hard to read the small black letters with only streetlights a few feet away.

It’s hard, but not impossible.

Especially when I recognize the name.

I’m way too familiar with it.

Dr. Jason Fox, Obstetrician-Gynecologist.

Motherfucker.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Prue

My heart sinks low in my chest. From there it dips downward, slipping fast into my belly.

If I give Theo's text another thought, the most sensitive part of me will fall right down to the floor.

And when I read it again, the beating, disappointed organ does just that.

Theo: *Sorry, Three. Something came up. I'll have to postpone our date for tomorrow morning. I'll make it up to you. I love you.*

True, most of what he wrote is sweet. More than I can expect from a cold man like him. I shouldn't bite my nails and stress over this last-minute cancellation.

Shouldn't hug my knees to my chest on my couch, reading it over and over, obsessing over where he'd have to go at this hour out of nowhere. Especially since I know it's not to see a patient, or he wouldn't have been so secretive about it.

Least of all, I shouldn't resent the feeling of his cum on me. I don't. Not a lot.

It's funny how the mind works. How you think the anxiety of being left behind has finally disappeared, lets you have your moments of peace you've been craving your whole life.

Only to find out it's been patiently lurking in the corner of your mind, biding its time.

It's a master of deception, blending in the shadows, lurking, growing slowly in anticipation of the slightest trigger.

In those days, weeks, or months, it gains in strength and when it comes barreling down on your soul's doorstep, it's everywhere. It lets itself inside uninvited and smashes to pieces all the plates and glasses you worked so hard on rearranging in its absence.

That's what's going on in my heart now.

Calamity.

Instead of believing something went wrong and being compassionate for whatever has Theo canceling at the last minute, other, more depressing thoughts emerge.

He used the family emergency excuse earlier today to be with me.

Is *something came up* also some sort of code for fucking someone else?

I'm not even mad about it. Because then the question *did I disappoint him?* joins this little game of self-deprecation meets fear of abandonment.

He said he loved you.

He does.

But what if I'm not enough? I can't deny my lack of experience. During sex, Theo dominates me, knows what he's doing, what he wants, and how to get it.

I, on the other hand, follow his lead. My body dictates my reactions, Theo's commands and looks direct my movements.

I thought he was satisfied.

I might've read the signs wrong.

I might...

Sigh.

No, I don't want to go there.

What we have is more than just sex. Theo is all in, laying his heart out on the table for me to take. He wouldn't go to someone else and throw what we have away for sex.

With another long sigh, and after over thirty minutes of getting lost in my own head, I text him back.

Me: *I love you too.*

I pause, reconsidering my message. Theo wouldn't have left me like this had I sent him such a cryptic message. He would've cared, would've tried to understand why I'm struggling, and would've been there for me. He loves me.

Me: *What can I do to help?*

He doesn't make me wait for his reply.

Theo: *You're too good for me. There's nothing you can do for now, baby.*

Theo: *On second thought, there is. Wait for me in your bed tonight. I'll be there tomorrow morning.*

The debilitating ache spurred by my trauma begins to evaporate at his message. He's not disappointed in my...performance. He's not avoiding me or anything remotely close to it.

It feels silly now. Childish, too. This jumping to conclusions, my innate lack of trust and believing I'm wanted.

Sure, a few other clinics offered me a job with them and higher pay. Professionally, I'm sought out. And that's fine.

That isn't why I'm tormented over it.

Theo, my boyfriend, loves me for me. The day he leaves, he'll leave *me*, the human being, the soul, the beating heart.

Worrying about him walking away is my issue to work on. When I say I trust him, I have to mean it wholeheartedly.

Sticking to this back and forth of *he loves me, he loves me not* will wear me out in the long run and will offend Theo time and again until he really gives up on me.

This is where it ends. I believe he loves me, that he's faithful. That I'm more than enough. That we both deserve the happiness we found in one another.

As simple and as complicated as it is, from now on, it's the absolute truth.

A content smile curls my lips, and I sit up, straightening my spine. My fingers tap a *yes* I don't send.

Because Theo's second text comes up a second before I can hit send.

Theo: *No clothes. Legs spread and hands crossed behind your head.*

Theo: *You won't say a word when I walk in, won't even acknowledge my presence. You'll look up at the ceiling and be quiet.*

Liquid pools between my thighs. The silence of the apartment is no more. I hear the constant beat of my heart. The blood rushing behind my ears. My heaving, lust-laden breaths.

Having him between my legs, his body touching my underwear, his hands seeking the wetness in my pantyhose. All my thoughts gravitate toward him.

I squeeze my thighs, grinding them against each other. Rubbing Theo into my skin without the help of my fingers.

When he's here, that's when I'll come.

A difficult task with his relentless texts.

Theo: *You'll wonder how I'll take you.*

Theo: *I might lick you to an orgasm, have you wet and ready for me to pound into you. Or I'll free my cock and push inside you. I won't have to touch you to know you're wet. The stain on the sheets will tell me you don't need prepping. I'll wrap my fingers around your delicate neck, allow you to inhale the air I breathe out and nothing else.*

Theo: *Third option, I'll have one look at your parted lips and decide to fuck you there first. Have your mouth sucking me and your throat coughing and splattering from gagging on it.*

Theo: *And while I stand at the edge of your bed and contemplate it, you'll be helpless. Tied with invisible rope to the bed by the sheer force of my command, worried and scared and so fucking wet for me.*

Theo: *And baby, you'll have every inch of me.*

Grasping the arm of the couch with one hand and the phone with the other, I'm mesmerized by the erotic, dominating texts, and I moan.

Theo: *Until then, until I'm back, be a good girl for me. Wash up and go to bed. You'll need your strength tomorrow morning.*

The way he knows how to talk to my soul. No other person could've made me feel like a vessel to be used and wrapped up in a cloud of cotton candy in the span of five minutes. And loved. So goddamn loved.

Me: *I can't wait. I miss you already.*

Theo: *Me too, little Prue. See you soon.*

As if he can read my mind, he repeats his message from earlier: *I promise to tell you everything when we're together again. Trust me.*

And I do. I really do.

CHAPTER THIRTY

Theo

Knock, knock, knock.
K

Most people don't expect someone banging on their door after midnight on a workday.

Most people don't believe said someone will take the first flight available from LA to San Francisco out of sheer fury. Or pay a detective a grand over his usual rate so he'll pull every string he has for their address.

Then again, I'm not just someone.

I'm a man who fell hard for a girl. Who swore to protect her. Who'd die before anyone laid their filthy hands on her or have her hurt in any way.

And that includes Dr. Jason Fox.

Dana helped me figure out on the way over here why he's still pissed at me. Dr. Fox's plan to fill his schedule with my old client list failed miserably. The kind of crash-and-burn karma serves narcissistic, abusive assholes such as him.

She was more than happy to relay to me how she—without slandering him—warned other women against the reputable doctor. She praised the gynecologist I referred her to, Dr. Duval, adding *for all we know, the reviews online were paid for*.

Hearing it satisfied me greatly.

Not hurting his pocket, I'm sure he doesn't care about that, anyway. He's been running a private practice for decades and was the director of the OB-GYN unit in a reputable hospital. He's lectured in front of thousands of doctors and published dozens of articles on his research.

He's set for life with no wife or kids to share the wealth with.

The blow to his ego is what gets me off. He came after me, and he failed. And he, the invincible Dr. Fox, is revolted by the concept of losing.

He deserves it, moreover after what he's planned to do to Prue. I don't know what yet, but I have every intention of finding out.

That and how he found out I was dating Prue, who her nefarious dad was, and the ways to contact him.

Yeah, he's going to tell me everything. And unlike the last time, I'm going to record every word that comes out of his despicable mouth.

Then we're going to play, him and me.

It's going to be a night he won't forget anytime soon.

My fist slams on his door another three times, rattling the heavy wood.

"One second," my old mentor says, the sound of his feet shuffling permeates from inside the house. "No need to wake up the entire goddamn neighborhood."

To think I used to admire the bass of his voice, the authority in it. I despise it now. Now, and for the longest time, I've wanted to throttle him so he wouldn't speak another word ever again.

"Who's there?" With him closer, his voice betrays his age. The ten years I haven't seen him. There's a slight crack in his tone, a mild shiver that hasn't been there before.

Fuck pitying him. He won't see an ounce of mercy from me.

The days of him playing his sick games are over.

No one threatens what's mine and gets away with it.

"Open up, Jason." I don't mention my name. Don't have to. "You've been busy sticking your repulsive nose into my business for a while now. It's time we talked about boundaries, don't you think?"

"Go away, Theo."

"No, I don't think I'm going anywhere." Leaning closer to the door, I say in my most menacing voice, "Unless you want your new neighbors to hear they live next to a sexual predator. Let's see how that works out for you."

A lock turns. Another one. And the door is being pulled open.

There he is, in all his nauseating glory. My old mentor. The devil himself.

Prue's sweet face—the woman I'm doing this for—flashes through my mind.

I remember her at our first meeting that I choreographed at the pool. I stalked her, rented an apartment in her building, and pretended I was just another new neighbor.

I see her on my exam room table, being such a good girl for me.

How she moaned for me in her sleep.

For the millionth time, I worry I might be like him.

But I'm not. No.

I might've slithered my way into her life. I might've misused the safe space of my clinic. And I'm still in the wrong for not confessing to her about what I'd done to her over all those nights.

And yet, I'm nothing like him. Prue and I, we're different. Our love has never been meant to be the Hallmark type. Our romance isn't your uncomplicated story of boy meets girl, boy falls in love with girl, they kiss, hold hands, and live their happily ever after ending.

Each of us is damaged, *unique*. We love each other.

We were meant to be.

We're us.

I'm positive beyond any shadow of a doubt that when I come clean to Prue about what I've been doing to her night after night, she won't forgive me easily for lying. She won't be mad about my actions, however.

I've done everything because of my love and obsession for her. Only her.

What Jason had done was nothing like it.

He'd betrayed his patients, tried to ruin them.

Like I'm about to ruin him.

"What do you want?" he spits out.

I don't answer right away. I let my menacing glare roam across him. To intimidate him.

Karma, apparently, hasn't stopped when she messed up his plans. It's as though it has ravaged his body, his face, his stature. Despite the lack of light around us—the lamp inside Jason's house sheds enough light to illuminate the monster in the doorway—I see how much he's changed.

The six-foot-tall man's back hunches, cutting off about three to four inches of his height. His dark-gray hair turned white, and bald spots decorate his head.

Deep wrinkles appear on his forehead, the corners of his eyes, above his top lip. Age spots decorate his scrawny arms, neck, and face.

His clothes match the rest of him. Three brown stains taint what used to be a white T-shirt. Could be beer, could be food, could be both. The flannel shorts he's wearing sag down his slim waist, about to drop to the floor any minute now.

Yeah, karma did a serious job on him.

Yet it doesn't seem the man himself has gotten the hint that he should sit the fuck down.

He should've never come after Prue. Never.

Because I don't count on karma to finish the job.

I'm payback. I'm vengeance. I'm Prue's shield against the fiends of this world, especially this one who wants to hurt me through her.

"I don't have time for your stupid games," he snarls. "What. Do. You. Want?"

The bastard continues to act like he has the upper hand.

Cute. Real fucking cute.

"To come inside."

"It's late, and—"

"Move." I don't ask for permission. Don't fucking need it.

Something he should get used to, and fast.

Without waiting for him to add another word, I sidestep him, brushing his shoulder as I walk inside. I cut through the foyer, standing in his living room like I belong there.

My eyebrows knead together, my nose scrunching in disgust as the strong smell of rotten food infiltrates my nostrils. Hands on my hips, I scan the mess around me, curiosity pulling me to search for the source.

Dirty plates and cups are everywhere—the carpet, the end tables, on the freaking mantel. Shirts, sweatpants, and underwear are strewn on the old leather couches. I spot a pair of boxers hanging from the corner of his TV set.

There's litter wherever my eyes land. He's not a hoarder—the place is practically empty of his possessions—he's just a disgusting slob.

He wasn't anything like this. His clinic had been spotless, his old house impeccable.

He sure can afford a cleaner, so what the fuck is this?

On second thought, no, I don't care.

"Tell me what you really want and then get lost, you and your judgmental expression."

I spin at a pace that suits me, making it blatantly clear I'm not intimidated by him or playing by his rules.

It's my motherfucking show.

The sight of him, smug and entitled, throws me back to the day in his clinic when I confronted him.

How he knew he had the upper hand on me and the women. How he *knew* unless I had hard evidence, no one would believe any of us and how he thrived on it.

My blood boils to a burning point, and I fist my hands and put them on my hips. It's either that or punching his throat over and over until his miserable life is drawn out of him.

"Since we're not playing games..."

“We’re not,” he growls, leaning against the wall. Another futile attempt to appear as if he’s not intimidated when it’s obvious he is. “Out with it so you can fuck right off.”

“Why Prue?” I prowls forward and hold myself back. Three feet separate us, a safe distance so I don’t choke him before I extract every bit of information out of him. “How did you find her and her dad?”

He cackles. He fucking cackles.

And I lose it.

He’s still laughing like a witch when I jump him. My arms bracket him into the tight cage I created, my eyes spitting fire at him.

Now he finally gets it. Now he cowers from me, trying to melt into the wall.

When Prue and I did this dance, a whole other set of emotions raged through me. Lust, love, the need to claim.

Here, with him, the one thing I feel is what wolves must feel before they rip off a buffalo’s head.

A sick sense of satisfaction. The anticipation of tasting blood on my tongue.

“Tell me.”

I don’t yell.

The threat in my voice does the job and opens Jason’s mouth just fine.

“I saw your video. In the coffee shop.” He elaborates when one of my eyebrows kicks up. I thought no one posted it. “Google alerts, Theo. Someone somewhere tagged you.”

Dozens of curse words are on the tip of my tongue. I bite the inside of my cheek, locking down the show of emotion. I don’t have plans to kill Jason, and I refuse to give him any more ammunition on me to use in the future.

“And you figured you’d contact the guy I beat up.” I grab the front of his shirt, yanking him toward me and making him rattle in the process. “The enemy of your enemy?”

“Yes.”

“Louder.” I shake him. “Say it so I can hear it, same as when you bragged about harming those other women.”

“Yes! I hired a detective to find him.” Jason presses his lips together, squinting his eyes, regaining some of his confidence. “That’s what you wanted to hear?”

I hit the wall near his ear, wiping the false bravado off his face. “Then what?”

“He wanted her money; I wanted you to suffer.”

Rage rolls off me in my waves, and Jason has the wits to keep it simple instead of rubbing his so-called brilliant plan in my face.

“He couldn’t afford his detective friend any longer since her money wasn’t guaranteed. I offered to pay for their attempts to dig shit on Prue. The woman you call your girlfriend.”

“He agreed?” I don’t need the answer for myself. I need it for the recording.

“You’ve seen her dad. He doesn’t care about her. To top it off, the both of you humiliated him.” He blinks a couple of times when I tug harder on his shirt, almost tearing it. “He wanted that and more. To hurt her and you physically for the money and his bruised ego.”

Though I can’t see myself at the moment, I have a good idea of the picture Jason and I make. I’m the motherfucking Tyrannosaurus Rex in *Jurassic Park*, huffing humid air at the SUV’s windows, moments from devouring the people inside.

I should wrap this up. Should run out of this madhouse. Hop into the car I leased at the airport, drive down to LA, and crawl into Prue’s bed. I should fuck her raw, drown her in pleasure, forget any of this shit ever happened.

Proof. I have to have as much of it as possible on tape.

“And you had no qualms about harming an innocent person.” I may act surprised, talking slowly, sounding incredulous.

I’m not. I’m aware of Jason’s damaged soul. But I have to have him recorded.

“Yeah.”

“Because you wanted to get to me.” My muscles clench, eager to be put to use. “The three of you agreed Elias would stalk her, find ways to humiliate her, and if he couldn’t, then beat her up. Her and I.”

“Yes. I gave him my card when I drove down there, told him whatever the cost is, I’ll shoulder it. All because of *you*,” Jason whispers, his loathing of me shining through his voice. “You outsmarted me. No one outsmarts me.”

I have all the incriminating information I need.

My common sense starts repeating this mantra in my head, saying, *Get out, get out, get out, get—*
Crack.

Jason’s nose sprays blood on my knuckles, his chin, his shirt.

“You bastard, I’ll sue you for this!” he roars, breathing hard as more red drops fly from his nose. “I’ll sue you for everything you have. I’ll fucking ruin you.”

“No, you won’t.” I grin, malicious and eerily content. Not rushing this moment, I take a couple of steps back, removing my phone from the pocket of my jeans. Jason’s eyes widen. “I came here for more than just answers. I flew over here the second Elias accidentally handed me *your* card to correct the mistake I made years ago. To record your confession.”

“Theo, please.” In a matter of seconds, I’ve stripped him of his dignity.

And I smirk.

Jason falls to his knees, clasping his hands in a prayer motion. “Look at me. I’m old. I won’t survive jail.”

I kick him in the stomach. For the heck of it.

He collapses to the floor, hugging his wounded middle.

“Please,” he begs, the pathetic bastard. “Please.”

As much as I enjoy watching him grovel, there’s more to life than my personal satisfaction.

“I’m about to lay out your future, Jason. This is how your life will look going forward.” I press my foot gently to his sternum, flopping him on his back. “First, you’re not allowed to think, talk about, or even dream of Prue. You see her name online or in the news for whatever reason, you change the channel. She’s a ghost where you’re concerned. Off fucking limits.”

“Yes, yes. Nothing, she doesn’t exist.”

His pleading bores me.

I want to be back in my love’s arms, spanking her, worshipping her, having my cock inside her until the world ends. Just her and me.

“Second, you’ll call the detective you contacted to find me and have him locate every woman you assaulted in your clinic.” My sneaker presses harder on him, and he coughs. “I understand they were nothing to a piece of shit like you, so you won’t remember all of them, but try, asshole. You’ll email me at least twenty names and screenshots of money transactions of \$30K each.”

“Thirty? That’s insane, you can’t be—“

More weight on his chest shuts him the fuck up.

“Thirty. Thousand,” I grind out the words. He doesn’t fool me, he can afford it easily. “It needs to be anonymous, too. You don’t contact them, you don’t trigger them.”

“Fine, fine.” Jason shrivels, deflating, turning into a shadow of himself. “If that’s all, go away already.”

“Last but not least.” Since it’s crucial he knows how serious I am, I raise my foot, the tip of my sneaker connecting to his stomach once more. “Your days of treating women are over. I want your website taken down, your number changed, and for you to stop harassing my old patients. You’re done. Tell me you understand.”

“I do.” He wipes his bleeding nose, turning his head to the wall and away from me. “Now, leave.”

He’s not the reason why I spin on my heel and head to the door.

I decide it’s time to go. Time to return to Prue.

My bones call out for her, my heart needs to rejoin hers. My head is poisoned with the shit I’ve done and the memories this encounter resurrected, and only Prue can cure me.

I’m coming home, Three.

“Enjoy your retirement, you fucking monster.” I slam the door behind me.

This is how it ends. Finally. My final goodbye to this horrendous chapter of my life, giving space to a brighter future.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

Theo

I'm bone tired.

Since there are no flights back to LA this late at night, I drove back. Spending five-plus hours behind the wheel, cruising through the 101 on the way home has drained the last of my adrenaline. I lock my car, heading to the parking garage's elevators. All I can think of is crawling into Prue's bed, of losing myself in her.

Of hugging her. Loving her.

To forget this fucking night ever happened.

I ride up to Prue's floor, holding the key to her apartment firmly between my fingers. When I'm in her place, I kick off my sneakers at the entrance, padding to her bedroom.

I tower above her, standing at the edge of her bed, skimming my fingers along her naked body without really touching her.

Watching her sleep wakes me up faster than any cold shower or coffee ever could.

Closed eyes. Long, dark lashes fanning on soft cheeks. Luscious, thick blond hair sprawled on the white pillow. An elegant neck where Prue's pulse beats slowly.

She's lying on her back, legs partly open, not an inch of her skin hidden from me.

"Such a good girl," I murmur silently. "Waiting for me, just like I told you to. My good little girl."

Today has been a lot. Laying into Jason. Finally getting the closure I so desperately needed for myself and his patients. The kick I got from acting as Prue's protector.

I detonated in Jason's living room.

I threw the poison that'd been festering in me at his feet and left it there to rot. The more time I spent behind the wheel, the more I accepted it.

This part of my life was over. Prue was safe.

My demons have been lulled to sleep. Until now.

A new burst of predatorial energy surges inside me. My heart hammers, my teeth grind. My dick throbs. My fists clench so hard my fingernails dig crescents into my palms.

The dormant animal in me bursts into life, demanding to wreak havoc. To claim my woman in any way I wish.

This explosive need to conquer blinds me to everything other than the impulse to *take*.

I don't want to cuddle. Don't feel like catching two hours of shuteye spooning her.

I have to have her. And there's no way I can be gentle about it.

I rip my clothes off. I'm naked and casting an angry shadow over Prue's angelic figure.

My cock jerks, furious and fueled by my obsession with the woman I love.

But I'm not jacking off. Not today.

Claim. Usurp. Own.

“I need you, Prue,” I whisper as I climb onto the bed.

The mattress dips with my weight. Prue, the deep sleeper, doesn’t grumble or move. She’s peaceful, lying there, waiting for me to prove to her who she belongs to.

I straddle her waist, moving on my knees higher up on the bed.

“You have such a beautiful mouth.” My thumb caresses her lips gently, barely touching her.

Testing the waters.

She doesn’t so much as stir.

“That’s my good girl.”

A little more pressure on her bottom lip, and she opens up to me.

My dick, now positioned right above her mouth, has precum wetting the crown.

Coming on her face, her chest, in her mouth, it won’t work for me tonight.

I’m out of my fucking mind with the need to be inside her. Scalding with the desire to put myself in her mouth and pound into her until I black out.

Planting one hand on the side of her face, I bend to press the tip of my cock to her upper lip. I smear the evidence of my arousal on her lip, on the area below her nose. Marking her.

In her sleep, Prue lets out a languid, erotic sigh. The vibrations of the sound reach straight to my balls.

I groan, desperate to thrust behind her teeth. I move back, watching another salty bead, *my* precum, land on her tongue. I’m territorial, insanely so. I press my dick harder on Prue’s lips, massaging my seed into her skin.

The circular motions tease another moan out of her. Her tongue joins too, darting out of her mouth and swiping my swollen shaft.

“Fuck, baby.” I draw back, tugging her bottom lip lower, wide enough for her to be able to take me. “You leave me no choice. No fucking choice.”

A tiny part of me whispers I might regret what I’m doing later. Prue will be upset to wake up to this.

Then I remember the consent she gave me, the open invitation to take her in her sleep.

However the fuck I want to.

Yes, before I do anything like this, there needs to be a clothes-on discussion. I’ll have to confess that I’m the reason she woke up to an unlocked door, to a salty taste in her mouth, to sticky patches of skin.

I need to do all of it.

It’s the right thing to do.

The voice of reason hardly filters through the loud thunder crashing in my ears, past the unfathomable hunger I’m unable to shake.

Prue’s lips bend under my command, parting, relaxing. Her mouth is practically begging me to put my dick inside it. Her tongue stays up, flattening on my cock, soaking my cock with her spit.

I can’t hold back any longer. Not another fucking second.

“Ahh,” I let out a low sigh as I push past her lips, filling her mouth with the first half of my cock. “Good girl, Prue, you swallow my cock so well.”

The pressure in my chest from the night I’ve had loosens. The ball of emotion takes up less space in my body. Having my erection enveloped by Prue’s warmth gives me a sense of tranquility.

As if everything’s right in the world, as long as I’m inside her.

“A few more inches.”

Opening her wider by pressing her teeth down, I lower myself, sinking deep until I’m fully sheathed inside her. I release the base of my cock and feel her lips on my pubic bone, the head hitting the back of her throat.

“That’s it,” I groan. “That’s my good girl. That’s my beautiful cum slut.”

I hold, not grinding my hips slowly or straight up fucking her mouth just yet. With each passing second, I’m diving deeper into a state of complete and utter bliss by simply being inside her.

I’m eternally grateful for this woman. Before her, I’d been content but never truly happy. Fulfilled but never with a real sense of meaning for myself. I’ve been wandering the world aimlessly. By Prue’s side, I’ve found love. I’ve found my purpose.

Seated all the way in her mouth, I release my cock. I caress Prue’s silky hair, trailing my finger pads along her forehead, nose, and cheeks. A smile tugs at my lips.

She belongs with me.

I won’t leave her, won’t disappoint her. I’ll always love her.

Always.

Another moan slips from her throat, reverberating on my dick. My fingers flex on her mattress, the primal need to claim returning in full force.

“Want me to pound into your mouth, baby?” I push my hips forward so Prue’s nose presses against the light trail of hair on my stomach, my length suffocating her.

She moans again.

“Is that it? My horny little girl wanting it rough, to help me”—I pull back—“find relief”—I slowly drag my cock back inside—“of this fucking day?”

She doesn’t answer. But she groans, arching her back. When I turn to look at her tits, I see her hard nipples, taut and so needy.

“Yeah, you want it.” I slide my hand beneath her nape and up her head, grasping her hair to keep her firm in place as I rock my hips at a slow, mindful pace. “I want it too. So fucking bad, baby. I want you so fucking bad.”

The room heats with each thrust, with each of her soft sounds. Prue’s body responds to me, bowing, coughing, and shaking.

I make sure she gets enough air, although at no point do I draw out of her completely.

She’s my source of peace. My place of happiness. My woman.

And I’m just really goddamn attracted to her.

I have no doubt that I’ll always be hard for her, no matter how old I am. Fuck the laws of physics. I won’t be able to piss in a straight line, but I’ll have enough blood swelling my dick to rut into her.

Her mouth is as snug, as hot, and as wet as her pussy. I stroke her jaw with my thumb, pushing her head forward again to meet each one of my thrusts.

I get bolder. I rut harder. I tighten my grip on her, my fingers boring into her scalp, pulling at the roots of her hair, my balls slapping her chin.

A sudden wave of remorse courses through me. It gnaws at my conscience, and the voice from before returns with a vengeance, screaming at me to release her.

To wake Prue the fuck up, apologize, and grovel. She’ll forgive me, and only then can we start over.

But I’m too far gone. In way too deep to stop.

I want Prue so bad, I’m not even careful anymore.

I just pound and pound, making love to her mouth however my horny, overstimulated impulses dictate.

And in those careless moments, is when it happens.

Prue's eyes open.

She's awake.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

Prue

I'm having another one of those dreams. Those sinful, erotic dreams where Theo uses my body for his pleasure. The ones in which he's being sadistic just like he is in real life, hurting me while coaxing immense pleasure out of my compliant body.

I'm soaked between my thighs, my nipples itch, my breasts swollen and heavy. I'm tormented, my desire for Theo hurts me everywhere.

A scream of desperation is stuck in my lungs, clawing to get out, to show my lover how incredibly good he makes me feel.

It's a dream I don't want to wake up from.

I wouldn't have, either.

Except suddenly, I'm struggling to breathe. Something that's not Theo—can't be Theo, since he's not here—blocks my air supply, causing me to cough and gag in my sleep.

My spit must've gone down the wrong way. That has to be it.

No, that's not true. I'm not choking on my saliva.

My lips are stretched around a thick, silky pipe that keeps banging itself in and out of my mouth.

A salty taste fills my mouth. A manly taste.

Theo's.

This isn't a dream.

My eyes fly open.

There's a man on top of me. A man grabbing the back of my head and rutting over and over into my mouth.

The only thing keeping me from losing my shit altogether is realizing who he is. The moonlight filtering inside illuminates Theo's face, his black eyes, the flex of the muscles on his sculpted body that I know so well.

I love him. I gave him a goddamn key.

I gave him verbal consent to have my body however and whenever he wanted.

But a surprise blowjob wasn't what I meant. What the hell is this?

"Shh." Theo must see the panic in my eyes. He massages my scalp, cooing, "Relax, it's me."

I'm not soothed by his comforting words and voice. At all.

I lift my hands, punching and scraping his back, his clenched ass, wherever I can reach.

Having him in my mouth turns me on, there's no question about it. But it doesn't take away from the fact that this isn't okay. That we need to talk this through.

"I'm sorry, Prue. So sorry, baby," he apologizes but doesn't let up his thrusts. I don't quit scratching him.

"I can't stop, not tonight," he groans, voice choked. "I can't fucking help myself around you."

Something about how he talks gets to me. My panic isn't as overwhelming, and I look at him. Really look at him.

Theo's face is twisted in an agonized expression. His lips are pinched, eyes not just lustful, but tormented.

Okay, so he isn't trying to hurt me. This isn't even a kink. Most importantly, he's not taking what I didn't willingly consent to.

And fuck, I even start liking it, despite myself. My clit flutters. My body is liquid heat and white-hot lava.

The way he consumes me, defiles me, possesses me, it almost makes this right.

Almost.

The consent I gave and my traitorous body don't matter. My excuses for Theo don't either. None of it matters.

He should've prepared me for it.

"Get off me," I try to scream around his ruthless cock. It sounds more like a bunch of syllables jacked up together, meaning absolutely nothing.

It doesn't have to. Theo sees me pleading.

Sees and doesn't do anything to put an end to it.

"Don't fight me, baby. You're so beautiful. Look at you, taking my cock like such a good girl." He bends at the waist, his thumb wiping away the tears streaming down my cheeks. "I need you. You're gonna have to keep sucking me, Prue. You make me lose my goddamn mind. I won't be able to stop until I make you swallow my cum."

"Theo," I'm able to articulate when he rears his hips back and his cock rests at my lips. "Please, I—"

"Be a good girl for me." He slams back, and my words die on my tongue. "You can do it. So precious, my cum slut with glistening lips, your spit on your chin."

His words are clipped, his grunts and hard panting blending into them.

"Your mouth opens so wide for me. And I need you."

The more I scratch him, the more his thick, pulsing cock grows inside me. His eyes turn darker, eating up the white around his pupils. His remorse wanes, giving way to the predator I've come to know and love.

"Even while you were sleeping," he growls when I pull my lips in to cover my teeth.

I'm helpless against him. Helpless against hurting him.

And if I'm being completely true, completely honest with myself, I don't want him to stop either.

"Even then you were letting me in, begging me to do it."

I'm not sure why I keep crying, then. Why the tears rain down my cheeks to my temples and hair, a never-ending stream of salt water.

"Please, don't cry." The pain in his voice doesn't match the cruel pace of his pounding. "I need this, Prue, I really do. You have to understand, baby. I'm hard for you. I'm desperate for you. I *need* to use your mouth."

He does. His eyes relate to what his mouth says. He doesn't lie. This is more than feral sex. This is pure, honest intimacy.

I'm his home.

Whatever happened to him tonight, whatever tore him from me, must've impacted him terribly for him to do this. He came to me for help, to have someone to lean on.

I'm not blind to the wrongness of what he's done to me. To the violence of it, to the depravity in his repeated requests. I'm not an idiot, and I'm not naïve.

Yet, I allow it.

If I ever needed Theo as desperately, I have no doubt he'd move mountains for me. Demolish anyone standing in my path of happiness, of peace of mind.

Burn down the world for me.

He beat my father up in a crowded coffee shop, risked being arrested or having the video spread online.

He was willing to have his reputation demolished just so no one would hurt me. Put his career on the line for me, a woman he's known for less than a month.

I have to be here for him. I have to give a part of myself back. To show him I love him exactly as he is—eyes narrowed, fingers now clenching on my cheek as he's gagging me with his cock as he takes and takes.

As he begs me for forgiveness.

He's a beast, but he's my beast. The unhinged man I love and who loves me back.

Finally, I release my arms, dropping them to my sides. No longer hitting him, no longer fighting, I'm giving myself to him to do as he pleases, whatever he needs.

“Christ, yes.” His eyes roll briefly before he returns his gaze to me. “You get me, Prue. Fuck, how you get me.”

He removes his hand from the bed, twisting his upper body back and rubbing my wet clit, coaxing pleasure out of me.

“I'm so grateful for you.” Theo, who's learned every pleasure point in my body, continues to rock his hips while bringing me closer to the edge. “Come for me, baby. I won't do it alone, won't go first. Do it for me.”

It's not long before my limbs strain, my breath catches. I'm falling off the deep end, moaning on his dick, the vibrations of my voice sending Theo right over the edge with me.

He returns to loom over me, fucking my mouth and finding his release a few thrusts later. He shoots his load into my throat, and I swallow as much as I can. The rest drips down my cheeks to my pillow.

“I love you, Prue.” Theo pulls out of me, wiping his cum off my face. “Thank you. For this.”

We stare at each other for, not sure for how long. Could be a couple of minutes, a dozen, half an hour.

Theo catches his breath first. His eyes lighten, the muscles that have been coiled tight relax as his body melts into mine. And I see just how tired he is. Exhausted.

I'm still not pacified, still don't forgive him for how he came onto me today. We'll have to have a conversation, and it'll have to happen tomorrow. After we both return from work to a good night's rest. With a clear head.

Theo doesn't think we need a break, though. He's not done with me. He slithers down my body, peppering kisses on the top of my breasts, his scruff grazing my sensitive flesh as he moves from the right side to the left.

I allow him to do it because it feels nice and because I hope this is where it'll end.

I'm supposed to tell him goodbye for now, to be mad and send him off. I'm too boneless to do any of it.

He needs me. And I love him. I love him regardless of how upset I am.

I love him regardless of the rising concerns, the gnawing fears that this wasn't the first time he's done it.

My heart doesn't listen to my head when it screams at me, *Pushover! Kick him out!*

My heart loves him simply because it does. There's no amount of logic to make me stop loving him.

I would've let him continue kissing my navel, too, if he would've stopped there.

But Theo has to take things one step too far. His hands skim along the inside of my thighs, his lips going lower, heading south.

I grab his hand. “Don't.”

Of course, he doesn't listen. After all, I did give him a free pass to take me any way he likes.

One of his hands snakes to the wet apex between my thighs. I'm quick to strike, grabbing it and pulling it to the side. My strength doesn't match Theo's.

“Stop, Theo. Stop.”

He does. Immediately. And that says something about him. It *means* something.

Maybe my heart isn't terribly wrong about him.

“I'm sorry, Prue. I'm really sorry.” No excuses. No, *What did I do?* or *You're being unreasonable.*

An apology. A sincere one, seeing how he looks at me.

The sun starts rising in the sky outside the window. The hues of pink permeate through the room, casting a warm light on Theo's face. I see the black circles under his eyes better, the bloodshot eyes, the messy hair.

I'll be compassionate later.

"Have you done this before?" My question is on the same no-bullshit level as his apology.

Theo slides to my side, perching on his hand. He sucks in a deep breath, pressing his chest to my body. The silence stretches between us.

"Theo?"

His shoulders slump and remorse paints his face in a horrible shade of gray.

Then he says what I feared he would.

"Long answer or the short one?"

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

Prue

I consider long and hard whether this is a conversation I want to have at what must be no later than six in the morning. Whether I want to do it while I'm trying to wrap my head around what happened here or wait for tomorrow until I get answers.

It'll be twenty-four hours of not hearing from him, of getting lost in my own head.

Of thinking the worst.

I might end up antagonizing him for no reason other than my freaking out. Might end up breaking up with the man I love for no real reason.

Choosing the lesser of two evils, I opt for hearing him out.

"Long answer, please." I sit up, pulling the sheets over my naked body, creating a much-needed barrier between us. "And put on some clothes."

Expression grave, he nods and does what I asked.

"I didn't move to this building from San Francisco. This isn't where I live," he starts, sitting across from me with his legs crossed on the bed. "Originally, I bought a house next to our office building. I slept there for about a week, then moved here. After the last day of renovations, I was about to head there when I saw you walking out of the clinic."

His gaze doesn't waver, fixed on mine. "Seeing you was like a blow to the chest, Prue. You weren't just beautiful. You had something about you. I wouldn't call it love at first sight, but I was drawn to you. Wanted to learn about you. Wanted you to tell me why you're sad and fix it for you. Make life better for you."

My cheeks heat up. He noticed. One glance across our shared hallway, and he read me like an open book—same as he always does—and wanted me still.

I've never had it with anyone else in my personal life. Other kids at the orphanage, prospective parents, at school, then college, none of them showed interest in me, no matter how hard I tried to blend in.

And Theo—shit, why am I crying again—Theo had.

"Prue." He leans over, but then he pauses and holds himself back. "Can I touch you?"

"No." I swipe at my tears with the back of my hand. "Continue."

The dominant man inside him flashes across his face. He's dying to boss me around, so I won't feel this fucking emotional and devastated.

The only thing that'll make things better for me now is the truth.

"Okay. So, I followed you here." My gasp doesn't do a damn thing to fracture through Theo's confidence. "I won't apologize for that. For calling the realtor, for renting the last available apartment in the building. I wasn't being a predator. I didn't plan

on having sex with you. I just wanted to be next to you. And I was. Moving here brought me closer to you. It's how I got to meet you at the pool. I'll never be sorry for how we met."

Frankly, I don't need him to be. I don't resent how fate combined with his obsession was responsible for having our paths cross.

Sure, he could've asked me out like any other man would. But Theo is Theo, and I'm me. It worked out the way it should've.

"I..." I wet my lips. Theo's eyes are drawn there, and I stop. I don't mean to punish him—I just want the butterflies in my belly to quit distracting me. "I'm glad you did it."

"The day after—" he starts.

"I remember." I don't want to get lost in our past. I need to know what happened while I slept, what he did behind my back.

"Was it you, the reason my door had been unlocked so many times?"

"Yes."

"I hadn't forgotten to lock it at night. Or after my jog that weekend."

"No. That was me." His raw honesty melts me despite myself. "I jacked off in your shower while you were out running. That was the first time I broke in here."

Much to my surprise, my resentment lessens. I'm grateful for him not trying to hide the truth or come up with half-lies. Theo doesn't sugarcoat any of it.

I'm sure he knows what it looks like.

Insane. Unhinged. Over the top possessive. *Criminal*.

And yet he doesn't try to save his ass. He tells me everything.

And heck, I must be a little unhinged, too, to sit here and have this adult conversation about it without freaking out. Either that or the years of observing and assisting operations have ingrained in me the quality of being calm under duress.

Maybe it's both.

One thing I'm curious about is, "Have you done this before? With anyone else?"

"No one else." He raises his hand again, about to touch my knee. My eyes narrow and he drops it, frustration having him wrinkle the sheets in a fist. "The things I've done to you..."

Theo's sigh worries me, and I brace myself for what's to come. "Say it."

"I walked into your bedroom at night," he says, his voice clinical, probably to shield himself from how wrong he's been.

"Numerous times. I made you come. I came too. On you. In your mouth."

As the past few weeks click together, my soul takes a serious hit. The pain echoes through my body over and over, a punch in the chest, in the gut, in my ribs. Everywhere.

I'm shaking, hugging my knees.

"I would've let you." I tilt my head, biting my lip to keep the sob inside. "I would've let you come here at night. Would've let you do anything you wanted. Maybe not right away, but that wasn't on you to decide. You just had to ask, Theo. You. Had. To. Ask."

I don't add anything about Dr. Fox's former patients. What Theo did wasn't anything like it. I genuinely would've said yes to everything if we had this conversation earlier. *Much* earlier.

"I know, and I apologize. It's not enough, but it's all I have." For the first time, Theo casts his eyes to his lap. His shoulders rise and fall. Then he finds my eyes again. "I lose it when it comes to you, Prue. I should've done better. And I didn't."

In my head, I go somewhere else.

I travel to those moments we spent together on the bench outside work. To when he took my virginity, touched my body and soul like no one ever had. To our mornings and evenings, to how he was my protector when no one else in the coffee shop offered to help.

There's an abundance of good in him.

I'll forgive him too.

Just not now.

"I need you to leave, Theo."

"Prue, you can't do this." Not waiting for my reply, he leans on his knees, cupping my cheeks, his grip steely and commanding me to listen to him. "We were meant to be together. We were put on this depressing, disappointing, and sometimes wonderful planet to find each other. To love each other."

He presses his forehead to mine, black eyes ensnaring me in his sincere gaze. "I'm screwed up. I've never been that person. I am now because of how much I need you."

"Please, Theo." I pull the sheets higher up my chest. "Please, go away."

He's too close. Too formidable and magnificent, and I want nothing more than to curl into his body, absolve the bad things he did, and remember the good.

"I need space. A few days to let it sink in."

"I'm insanely in love with you. And I'm not letting you go," he keeps talking as though he doesn't hear me. "I swear, I won't repeat what I did. I swear I won't go behind your back again. Won't lie to you, won't betray your trust. You're my soulmate. My queen. You're not leaving me."

"Theo, I won't, but you have to listen—"

My choked plea is cut off.

Theo isn't the one who's behind why I'm silenced, though.

Both our heads twist in the direction of the living room when the lock on the front door clicks. The door bursts open.

Before I see who's there, Theo's feet land on the floor, his firm body covering and protecting me.

"You bitch!" the man whose voice I recognize as my dad screams. "I'm going to fucking kill you!"

Theo growls, a low and rumbling sound that has the hairs on my hands stand on end. He bends his knees, fists at his sides, ready to strike.

"Not if I kill you first, bitch."

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

Theo

Thank fucking fuck he didn't show up here earlier. While I was gone.

As I look at Prue's disgusting excuse for a father, Zeke Peterson, I thank the God I haven't believed in until today. It's been nine hours since I had the talk with his sidekick, Elias. Five hours since I kicked Jason in the gut.

That's nine hours to lose his shit over the threat I made, over the fact the money supply he thought he had coming from Jason and Prue has been cut short.

Nine hours to break in here, terrorize Prue, hurt her.

Kill her.

Something's kept him out of her way. Has shielded my woman while I've been out protecting her from another predator.

Divine intervention. That's what it is.

I guess there is a God out there, after all.

Thank you, old man, I say inwardly.

I'll thank him more thoroughly later. Will get down on my knees and show my gratitude through prayer. Not now.

There's a raging threat in Prue's doorway, and I'm here to take him down.

"What did you say to me?" His speech is slurred, and his walk is wobbly.

I take in his worse broken-down appearance, his tattered blue T-shirt, mustard-yellow cotton pants, and a pair of mismatched boots. He'll be easy to subdue.

To snuff out.

"Theo, be careful," Prue calls from behind me.

He waves his baseball bat at me, stumbles on a rug in the living room, and picks himself up. "What did you say to the father of your g-g-girlfriend?"

Stuttering now. What a fucking embarrassment. This douchebag has a wife, grown kids, and he's here trying to kill his oldest. And failing.

"Don't worry, Three," I tell her without breaking eye contact with the tumbling drunk. "I'll say it as many times as you'll need to hear it. I will never leave you. This loser isn't going to take me from you."

While I talk, the rambling idiot trips over himself again and collapses to the floor.

Unfortunately for Prue and me, he doesn't hit his head on one of the end tables or the edge of the couch. It would've ended this shit-show a lot faster.

Still, I can't complain about the advantage he just gave me.

He's down.

I prowl over to the front door, sidestepping Prue's dad as he leans on one hand, trying to stand up, but he drops back to the floor. Loser.

I close the door, hoping Zeke's shouting hasn't alerted any of the neighbors on Prue's floor. We don't need an audience for what I'm about to do to him.

I might cut off a finger or an ear. Peel the skin off where his eyebrows are.

Maybe even feed it to him.

The murderous rage, the eagerness to dismember and torture—those feelings are unfamiliar to me as love had been right before I met Prue.

They're there regardless.

A world without Prue isn't a world worth living in.

She's mine to protect. Mine to look after. *Mine*.

It's crazy how I've survived forty years without knowing her. In retrospect, I hadn't really slept before I saw her face at the end of each day. I hadn't really tasted food before I shared my meals with her. I hadn't fucked, made love, hadn't fucking orgasmed.

My heart hadn't thumped a single beat before it pulsed for her.

And now he's threatening to steal the air I breathe from me and believe he can get away with it? Not in this lifetime.

I warned him.

Twice.

"Strike three, fucker." I turn to him as I talk, a sinister smirk tugging at my lips. "You're out, done and—"

My breath catches in my throat, my eyes scrambling to make sense of the scene unraveling in front of me.

It can't be real. I blink a few times, squint my eyes, taking everything in.

Yeah, I'm not dreaming.

I bark out surprised laughter, crossing my arms over my chest.

Letting my woman take center stage.

"My mother's address," Prue seethes, crouched over him, her hair wild around her.

She's naked and glorious, pinning her dad to the floor by leaning her knees on his arms.

And wielding a fourteen-inch knife, holding the tip to his chest.

Fucking stunning.

"I'm not telling anything to a whore." He spits on her, his saliva splattering on her face.

Fury zaps through me like a lightning bolt. I pounce forward, my muscles eager to bring him a world of hurt.

Except protecting Prue's honor isn't necessary. She does it all on her own, pressing the knife closer to her dad's chest while covering his mouth to silence his screams.

"I couldn't find a Salina West anywhere." My sweet little girlfriend transforms into a feral beast, baring her teeth at her dad. "So, you're going to tell me her address. The last one you remember, and you're going to do it right fucking now."

I squat next to her. The side glance she throws my way tells me so much more than words ever could.

She forgives me. She loves me. From now to eternity, we're a team.

I send her back a silent message of my own. A thank you for understanding. A vow to be there for her always.

The romantic moment ends as soon as it started, and we're back to the scene.

I'm wound up tight and prepared to help her however I can if and when she needs me.

Although it doesn't feel like she will.

I've learned plenty about Prue in the short while I've been with her. Learned about patience and kindness. About the beauty of giving, the appeal of commanding a woman and bending her to my will.

I've finally discovered what this sappy concept of love is all about and found out I don't hate it one fucking bit.

Apparently, in the process, bits and pieces of me rubbed off on Prue as well.

Or maybe it's been inside her all along.

Pride booms from within me, shining through my eyes. I grin like an idiot, wondering when I have ever felt so entirely complete.

I look at her with adoring eyes, knowing with absolute certainty she would've handled the Jason situation way better than I had a decade ago. She would've helped the patients get their justice far sooner than I have.

The need to touch her becomes an urge I'm helpless against. I reach out and rub her back. Conveying my support, my love, my shoulder to lean on.

"Naked disgusting slut," her dad says when she lifts her hand off his mouth.

He officially reached a hard limit for me. Kudos.

"See, now you're overdoing it, asshole." I bring my knee to his shoulder, fracturing the bone.

It cracks, making a sickening noise, causing him to drop the bat he's been gripping. The pain and surprise evoke more pained screams out of him, and Prue silences them fast with her palm over his mouth.

I don't let go, sinking my knee deeper into the wounded area.

"No one talks to her like that. No one treats her like that. Prue is"—I angle my head to lock eyes with hers, and I say the truest words I've ever spoken—"a queen. Her crown has been missing for the first twenty-six years of her life, but she's found it. By herself. And it's resting on her head and will be there for the rest of her life."

Her chin wobbles, and for a brief moment, the ice in her brown gaze melts.

I give her a small shake of my head. *This isn't over yet.*

She understands my silent communication, returning her violent attention to her father beneath her.

"Address," she growls. "You'll die, anyway. The magic of self-defense, you know?"

I'm jolted by her statement. I'm not about to object to her, though.

Her demons, her past.

Whatever she deems right, that's what she'll do.

"What you do have control over is how painful you want your last moments on this planet to be." Prue's whisper is venomous, enchanting, fucking magnificent, getting my cock hard.

"It's not self-defense when he broke my shoulder." Her vile father tries saving his own ass, except he doesn't sound as vehement as he had earlier. "He'll go to jail for murder."

My gaze darts around Prue's living room. Nothing here is big enough to cause the damage I'd done if we dropped it on him.

Her granite countertop, on the other hand...A man his weight might take a serious, heavy fall if he trips on it. The crash could be a harsh one. Logically, it could cause a fracture.

Yeah, sounds good to me.

"Don't let your itchy-bitsy brain fret about the consequences." I send Prue a reassuring gaze. "Tell us where Prue's mom lives, or trust me, as a physician, I have an armory of methods to chop you up while keeping you alive. It'll be worth the effort to go on an impromptu camping trip and cremate your body."

Prue jabs the edge of the knife harder into him, driving my point home.

Such a good girl.

“Fine, fine, I’ll tell you, you fucking psychos.” He cringes at the sting.

Then rattles the address his dick of a private eye friend brought him.

I memorize it, repeating it twice so Prue knows I have it ingrained in my brain.

“Goodbye, Dad.”

She grabs the knife with both hands, raising them high. Her knowledge of human anatomy shows in the movement. We need

the blow to look like he was running toward her or attacking her.

“I’d say it was nice meeting you. But I’m not a liar.” She presses her lips. “I’m not *you*.”

A piercing scream follows.

Prue’s scream.

“Help us! Oh, God, help us, please! He’s going to kill me!”

She hits him twice, two fatal blows with this butcher’s knife that slice through flesh. One to puncture the heart. The other goes

straight to the lungs.

She gives me her gorgeous, ravenous eyes, breathing hard.

“I did it, Theo.”

“Yeah, baby, you did.” I grab her chin, and my kiss is as aggressive as the raging emotions roaring inside me. “My feral

woman, you did. And I’m so fucking proud of you.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

Theo

Before Zeke bleeds out on Prue's floor, we drag him next to the counter.

I send her to her bedroom to throw on a T-shirt and yoga leggings and to call the police when people start pounding on our door five minutes later, when Zeke already choked on his own blood and can no longer call for help.

The LAPD detectives buy into the half-truths we feed them.

Zeke did break into the apartment. He did threaten Prue's life. He came at her with a bat, but—and that's where we give them our version of events—luckily Prue was quicker than I was, grabbed a knife, and stabbed him before he fell on the counter and broke his shoulder consequently. Before dying.

Everything we say matches the scene displayed in Prue's apartment. They leave to canvas the nearby apartments that corroborate our version of events, what they heard of it through the walls, anyway.

While they're busy conducting their interviews, I guide Prue up to my apartment. I go back and forth between the two floors, leaving Prue under Michelle's supervision. Prue's boss canceled a consultation to drive down here and hug and comfort Prue after my woman called to explain why she wouldn't make it to work today.

Given what we went through this morning, I don't trust anyone around my delicate creature, as feral as she proved herself to be. Besides Michelle.

Watching her hug and comfort Prue soothes my territorial need to shield her from the world and everyone in it.

Even though Prue's not crying or giving off signs of distress, her boss doesn't budge from her side. She implores Prue to take a paid leave and travel somewhere to forget the whole thing.

I'm privy to this part of their conversation because after locking Prue's apartment and watching the detectives leave, I hear Prue saying, "No, really, I don't need a day off."

"Yes, you do."

Her brown eyes dart to mine. The bestiality from before has long faded away.

She looks tired. Young. Painfully young.

The need to cast a protective shield around her and hug her until her pain goes away takes over. I don't go a step near her, though. I lean against the wall, hands in my pockets.

I respect her space until after we finish our earlier conversation.

"Theo, I—"

"He's right, Prue. You're taking two weeks off." Michelle's blue eyes narrow despite the softness in her tone. "End of discussion."

"What about the clinic?" Prue's nose scrunches.

Prue completely disregards the trauma she's experienced, caring about other people instead. I wonder if the huge heart in her chest could truly forgive me, too.

"Don't worry about it." Michelle's teeth flash in a smile. "I'll take two weeks off too. Mr. Waldron has been begging me to go on vacation forever."

"You sure?"

"Positive." She hugs Prue one last time. "I have to get going now. See you next in two weeks?"

Prue exhales, the exhaustion starting to claim her body. "Yes. I'll be back to work then."

"Perfect." Prue's boss turns to me. "Take care of her, McSpicy. I don't want to hear she did anything other than be catered to at a fancy hotel suite."

"Will do." I offer her the courteous smile I save for my patients. Polite, small, reassuring.

"Great."

Michelle closes the door to my apartment.

And it's just the two of us again, Prue and me.

She walks over to one of my leather couches overlooking the city. I join her, intertwining our fingers together in silence.

Sun blasts into our eyes on this late summer morning. I don't look at it long enough to be blinded by it.

In my universe, there's only Prue, and I'm looking at her profile like one would appreciate a Monet painting or Michelangelo's sculptures.

She, on the other hand, has her gaze fixated on where our hands link in her lap.

"I'm still mad at you, Theo," she whispers eventually.

"As you should be." I squeeze her tight. "And I'm sorry."

Her sigh cuts through the loaded silence in the living room moments later.

"I need a few days to think this through." Her voice breaks in a sob. "By myself."

Something disintegrates inside my chest. I think it's my heart.

My lungs too. It's hard for me to breathe. Even harder to accept she might need more than a few days.

That it might last a lifetime.

But I don't press her. She's been through hell and back today.

She needs time and peace.

Reluctantly, I give it to her.

"All right." I lean in, pressing my lips to her temple.

Her smell inks itself into my soul, and I'll hang onto it with my life until she's willing to see me again.

"I love you, Prue."

Her body quivers. She's sobbing, and I can't fucking fix it.

I can't fix it unless I walk away.

Reluctantly, I do.

I walk away from my Prue.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

Prue

The first night without Theo has been one long, agonizing nightmare.

I tossed and turned as sleep evaded me. My eyes were drawn to the ceiling, to two floors up where he was.

The need to run into his bed, cuddle into him, and cry was so palpable I'd been in physical pain. My eyes hurt, my throat hurt. My chest tightened with every breath I took.

Now, in the early morning, things don't look that great either.

The sun doesn't shine as bright without Theo next to me. The cars driving beneath my window chafe the inside of my head.

I didn't just kill my dad. I ripped the man I loved from me.

But then I remind myself it had to be done.

The little girl inside me who ached for love no matter what needs to go. I have to let her go. For my sanity and for my relationship with Theo.

If I want to salvage *us*, I have to put her to rest.

Because even if I forgive him today—which I do—I'll hate him in the long run. Letting him take what he wants without consequences will be bad for us. It'll enable him to do it in the future, and I'll resent him for it.

I'll hate him for it.

And it's the last thing I want.

So, I let him stew.

Until *I* say it's okay.

A knock at my door jolts me back to reality.

Quickly, I slip out of bed—wearing a T-shirt and a pair of sweats this time—and tiptoe to the door.

I asked him to give me space, but...*sigh*. The thought of Theo standing in the hallway has my belly fluttering and my heart doing flip-flops.

My first instinct is to check who's there through the peephole, and I fight against it. If I see him, his fathomless eyes, the bump on his nose, the hard lines of his jaw...I'll lose the battle for sure.

I'll open the door and run into his arms.

I'll listen instead.

With my ear pressed to the door, I try to catch any sound coming from the other side.

When no one answers, I ask, "Theo?"

Nothing.

"Who's there?"

Nothing. Not a word or a grunt.

I finally rise to my toes and look through the peephole.

Again, nothing and no one.

There's no way I imagined it. I might be sleep deprived, but it's not so bad that I'd hallucinate.

Slowly, I turn my locks—all of them—and crack open the door.

A sob tears at me, and I clasp my hand over my mouth.

On the *Welcome* rug just outside my apartment sits two rectangular Tupperware boxes that smell like heaven.

On top of them rests a white note, and I pick it up to read Theo's script handwriting.

Lunch and dinner.

I'm sorry, baby. So fucking sorry. What I've done is wrong, I realize that now.

I'll wait for you until the end of time, and if you'll have me back, I'll spend my entire life groveling for your forgiveness.

You're what matters. You're all that matters.

I only breathe when you're around. My blood runs in my veins because you're near.

You're the much better half of my heart.

Love,

Five.

My chin quivers. The warmth of the day feels a tiny bit warmer.

"I love you too," I whisper to the empty space, carry the boxes inside, and close the door behind me.



Four days have come and gone.

In each and every one of them, Theo knocked on my door at exactly seven o'clock, left food and a loving note, and vanished into thin air.

I get the same *knock, knock, knock*—two fast, one slow—each evening, too. Three bouquets of lilies, roses, carnations, and lilacs wait for me on my doorstep. Full of life and vibrant like my love is.

He leaves notes on them, too, like the one he wrote yesterday:

Three,

The only reason I'm walking this earth is to make you happy.

To make you feel loved and cared for.

To make up for all the years you weren't adored and worshiped.

I'm madly in love with you.

We belong together.

And I'll never give up on you.

On us.

Forever yours,

Five.

Missing him worsens every minute we're apart.

I need him, need to crawl under the skin of the man I love. Talk to him about what happened with my dad since he's the only one who knows the truth about him. Ask him what he thinks about me going to visit my mom, and if he'll join me there.

Theo has such a pivotal part in my life, and with him gone...I'm all alone.

But I get how it's the healthy thing for me.

First, it's vital I learn how to be alone without feeling *lonely*.

One day after the other I have. I'd gone jogging and swimming. Went to a fancy spa for a massage and a facial. Read two books, drank my wine. Bawled my eyes out and ran through a few tissue boxes.

By myself.

Well, not entirely. I *did* eat the meals Theo prepared for me.

Theo...

Which brings me to my second goal. He has to understand he hasn't treated me like a partner should. He can degrade me all he wants. Take me in my sleep. Come in my shower.

Consensually. Respectfully.

And here I am, a couple of hours before the dawn rises on the fifth morning by myself.

I feel like I've accomplished both of my goals.

I'm still sad and fragile, but his actions aren't why I'm deflated. It's what I've done. The loss I experienced. What Zeke forced me to do.

Missing Theo plays a huge part in it too. I'm ready to forgive him. Prepared to love him and let him love me.

To be reunited with my soul mate.

It's time.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

Theo

Beef roast and grilled vegetables for lunch, lasagna for dinner.

That's what's in the containers I carry to Prue this morning. The *fifth* morning without her.

I understand her reasons for kicking me out. Her anger. Her disappointment and hurt.

Each one of my waking and sleeping hours are dedicated to understanding her further. When I work, when I shower, when I take a fucking piss.

It costs me to not be around Prue. To not hug her and tell her Zeke deserves what she did. To be away while she must be mourning the father she'll never have.

It even pains me to ride the elevator and pass by her floor on the way back from work and know I can't stop there. That's how much I miss her.

But I fucked up royally. I acted like I vowed I never would. I broke her trust, made excuses to myself.

I might've even ruined it.

I shake my head as I meander the hallway of her floor. I refuse to accept the concept that our relationship might be beyond repair.

She'll come back to me. Prue belongs with me. I'm her family. I love her, and she loves me. She has to know that.

Has to.

When I reach apartment 3D, Prue's, I stop. I close my eyes, imagining her inside in bed.

I imagine I'm there beside her, hugging her, smelling her hair, grazing my lips on her soft neck. My fingers curling inside her pussy, and my words drive her into one orgasm after the other.

All in due time.

I lower the containers and note to the rug and raise my fist to knock before another long day at work by myself.

But unlike the other four days, today I don't get to do it.

"Theo."

The first time my eyes landed on Prue, there was darkness enveloping her. At least that's what I thought.

I was wrong, though.

Prue is love and light. Bright, iridescent beams shine from her as if she's the embodiment of the sun. It has nothing to do with the white T-shirt and shorts she's wearing and everything to do with her. Simply her.

"Theo?"

"Prue," is the one single word I can utter.

"Could you come in?" Her gaze skitters from my charcoal-gray suit jacket to my white button down. "Or are you headed to work? We can do it later, it's okay—"

“No.” I don’t waste a second fishing my phone out of my pocket.

No fucking way am I missing *this*, sharing Prue’s space, of looking at her lips move. Never.

“Vienna, cancel my visits for today. Actually…” My eyes land on Prue’s.

She wants me to stay. She’s about to forgive me. She needs me to help her heal from what she’s been through.

Fuck my job. Fuck everybody and everyone who isn’t Prue.

“Clear my schedule for the next two weeks. Yes, I said *two weeks*. Make it work. I don’t care how. Bye.”

The smile creeping on Prue’s lips is worth it. Worth every cent I’ll lose. Every complaint and patient lost.

Money comes, money goes. This kind of love is a once in a lifetime kind of thing.

She lets me into her apartment, and I lift the containers, walking in and placing them on the countertop in her kitchen.

Still clinging to her silence, Prue sits on the same couch we sat on six days ago.

I join her, flipping my palm up for her to hold.

She keeps her hands in her lap.

“I’m going to keep it short, Theo.”

An infinite number of arguments rise in my throat. I might’ve misread her intentions when I walked in. But we’re not over. If I have to sit here and beg to her forgiveness morning to night for a year, I’ll do it.

I’m not leaving without her.

“I forgive you.”

I choke. I fucking choke. I press a fist to my mouth until I stop coughing.

“You do?” I finally say.

She tilts her head, her nose scrunching again. Fucking adorable.

Then again, she could flip me off, and I’d think she looked like the most precious woman alive.

She can do no wrong in my eyes.

I. Love. Her.

“I’m not sure how. Or why, but I do.” Her words land in my chest, slither into my heart.

They’re hope. They’re our future.

“Not because I *need* you. I don’t *need* anyone. It’s because…”

I hold on to my silence, waiting for her to explain. The air crackles around us.

I’m dying to take charge and reassure her everything will be fine. That *we* will be fine. I’d be acting on my impulses, and by doing so, I’d ruin it for her.

This has to come from her.

“I love you, I think that’s it.” She lets out a watery laugh. “I love you so much.”

I can’t tolerate her sadness for another second, not when she needs me. I swoop her into my arms, moving her to straddle my hips. My hands find their home on her cheeks, my fingers in the soft mane of her hair.

“I love you too, Prue.”

“You’re not calling me Three.” Her fingers trail along the length of my shirt. “Are you disgusted with me? For killing…him? My father?”

“Fuck no.” I dig my fingers into her scalp, drawing her head to me.

Our foreheads press together, our breaths entangle. We’re us again. From now until the world ends.

“I refuse to call you Three because you won’t be living here anymore. As much as I respect you and the space you might need, you won’t be coming back here. I’ll sleep on the couch if I have to. My home is your new home until we pack up

everything and move to our house.”

Her eyes glimmer. I bet mine do, too.

“Our?”

“Our. What’s mine is yours. All of it.”

Wrinkles appear at the corners of her eyes as she assesses me. I have a feeling I know what this is about.

“This isn’t a payoff to get you to forgive me.” I bow my chin, boring my gaze into hers. “You already have.”

She nods.

“Okay, then.” I kiss her chin. “It’s just how it is. We’re family now.”

“Truthfully, I’m not even mad.” She scoots closer to my chest, making my cock stir in my jeans. “I liked what you did. That you couldn’t help yourself and had to have me in my sleep. I mean, I wish you asked. Then, the more I think about it, the more I imagine you doing these things to me, I get so hot.”

Prue grinds herself on my growing erection, her pussy hot through the layers of clothes separating us. I groan, lowering my hands to her hips. Pulling her closer, moving her faster.

“Is it sick?” She bites her bottom lip, fully aware of what it’s doing to me. “Am I sick?”

“Baby, if you’re sick, I am too.” I hike her ass up in the air, manhandle her to the side and yank down her shorts.

No panties. Fucking perfect.

My impatient little fiend undoes my button, lowers my zipper, and hooks her fingers on the waistband of my briefs. I shake my head, motioning her to raise her arms, so I can remove her shirt.

Only then do I let her free my cock from its confines.

“You mean it?” She’s on me again, fisting my dick and aiming it toward her pussy.

My hands find her hips, urging her down my length.

“I—fuck,” I growl when she takes every inch of me inside her. “So fucking tight, Prue.”

“You what?” she pants as I force her to jump on my cock.

“I mean every word.” I piston my hips to meet hers with every thrust, my biceps bulging with effort. “I’m going to love you, own you, and worship the fuck out of you until the day I die.”

“Yes. Yes, please.” Her skin breaks into delicious goosebumps, her nipples pebbling on her luscious, bouncing tits. “Please, Theo, please.”

I’m confident she’s not talking about my vows to love her forever anymore.

My hands reach down her back, my fingers teasing her tight, sexy asshole.

“Rock your hips, Prue.” I let my thumb probe deeper into her ass, getting harder when she moans and cries my name. “Fuck me. Ride my fucking cock and fuck me.”

She takes instructions well, my sweetest patient, my decadent soulmate.

She grabs my shoulders, her clit rubbing on me as she grinds against me hard and fast.

“Give me your lips,” I demand, scared I’ll lose my mind if she doesn’t. “I need to kiss you. To feel you.”

When her mouth lands on mine and our tongues go to war with one another, I sink my thumb all the way inside her asshole.

She groans into my mouth.

I bite her bottom lip.

The taste of copper fills my mouth, and my tongue dives behind her teeth again.

Every hole of hers is mine.

Scratch that, every *part* of her is mine. Just like I belong to her.

We move together, groaning and thrusting. Two starved animals. Two people who complete one another.

We're our limbs and spit and sweat, and the moment Prue reaches her release, I'm right there behind her, filling her with my semen.

I keep thrusting into her, emptying myself and reveling in watching Prue grow limp in my arms.

"Forever mine." I kiss her gently, softly, leisurely, then trace my lips along her jaw, the curve of her neck.

"Yours," she responds, relaxing into my body, whole and sated. "Always and forever yours."

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

Prue

Sweaty palms. Heart palpitating. Erratic breathing. I'm nervous. Downright panicking.

The penetrating Arizona sun blares into my eyes, but it's getting dark...Inky blotches cover my eyesight, and I...I think I'm going to faint.

Definitely going to faint.

"Prue."

Theo's voice laces itself around my anxiety, choking it with his immense power, suffocating it until there's nothing left.

My vision clears. My knees quit shaking.

He's been doing the same thing for the past two days. Pulling me out of a bad dream into strong, enveloping arms. Rushing to hold me—while he was clothed—in the shower the moment I started crying under the spray of the water.

His head has been between my thighs every morning, kissing, laving his tongue, biting me. Making it better.

Because I told him he could do it.

I gave Theo permission to take care of me however he saw fit. Handed him the keys to be in charge of my mental health, and I don't regret it for a second.

When I asked him for the millionth time whether I was a bad person for killing my father, he didn't huff an exasperated sigh.

He was there, the king of patience, master of compassion. He told me he would've done it if I wouldn't have. That *no one* threatened to touch what was his. That he was proud of me.

At no point, including now, has he disappointed me. Hasn't complained or told me to grow up.

He loves me.

He's mine and I'm his. And as the Metallica song goes, "nothing else matters."

Except for those jitters in my belly before meeting my mom.

The reason I threatened Zeke with her address was simple. I wanted to give her a fair chance. My sperm donor said she snuck in to check on me in the orphanage, and it made her redeemable in my book.

Unless...she's like him.

"Prue," Theo repeats.

Slowly but surely, the colors return to the world. The gravel on the front of her trailer home crunches beneath my feet as I shift on them. The dull-gray door is still closed since we haven't knocked on it.

Theo's woodsy, virile, and comforting cologne curls around me. Protecting me, soothing me.

I turn to look up at his black eyes, the small bump on his nose, his sharp jawline. At the hint of a smile on his otherwise somber expression.

"Theo."

His thumb caresses the inside of my wrist, his fingers tightening their grip around mine.

“Whatever happens, everything will be all right.” He bends to kiss my forehead, lending me his endless strength. “I have you. I always will.”

“Thank you.” I squeeze his hand back and turn to face the door.

I ball my free hand into a fist and knock.

“Who’s there?” a woman calls.

I prepared an answer to that question. Theo helped me practice it and get used to rolling it on my tongue.

But I can’t help that it doesn’t feel any more natural than it had two days ago.

“It’s Prue.” My throat, clogged by emotions, fails me.

I’m a fierce woman. I’ve built myself from nothing. I fear nothing and no one.

I swallow around the suffocating nerves in my throat and try again.

“It’s Prue.”

Theo’s heat and boundless support permeate from him into my heart.

I smile. “Your daughter.”

The front door opens. Then the screen door.

A woman about my height stands before us. She wears a white nightgown over her slender frame.

Her blond hair is rolled up into a messy bun on the top of her head. Her brown eyes are lucid, not bloodshot to indicate she’s a heavy drinker like Zeke suggested.

She doesn’t smell it, either.

Nonetheless, I’m wary. I’m cautious. But I don’t fear her as much as I had *him*.

“Hi.” Unsure of what to do, I give her a small wave.

Her nose scrunches, and my heart falters and stops. She’s going to reject me for the second time in twenty years. She’ll turn around, close the door and—

“Here I was, thinking my biggest failure in life was to leave you at the orphanage.” A smirk curls on her face. “Joke’s on me, I guess. You got the asshole’s looks, may he rest in peace. Or not. Definitely not. Anyway, *that’s*”—she points at my face—“going to haunt me in my dreams.”

My eyes flutter, and I open and close my mouth several times, trying to form a decent response. None of the scenarios I’ve pictured involved her saying what she just said.

I mean, I knew he and I shared a resemblance. Is it that bad, though? Am I that repulsive? Is this why no one adopted me?

“Oh, crap, I apologize. Don’t give me that sad look, I was joking.” Two warm hands grip my biceps, dragging me away from Theo’s grip and into my mother’s embrace. “I make terrible jokes when I’m overwhelmed. I’m truly sorry.”

I hug her back, despite my complete and utter befuddlement.

She’s my mom. I finally have a mother. Who doesn’t hate me.

She smells like sunshine and something citrusy I can’t quite place my finger on. Her cheek is soft against mine, and it’s not long before I feel wetness passing between her skin and mine.

At first, I think it’s just my tears. When a sob escapes her and her shoulders quiver, I realize Salina, Mom, is crying as well.

“You’re much, much more beautiful than Zeke.” She rears back, wiping the dampness beneath her eyes with the back of her hand and gripping my shoulder. “Both on the outside and the inside. I can just tell you’re a good person.”

The questions I have for her are endless. She appears to be such a nice person, so put together. What happened? What made her give me away and never look back?

“You want your answers, I can tell that too.” A soft smile grazes her lips. She cocks her head to look behind me, assessing the tall, broad man who undoubtedly watches our interaction like a hawk. “And you brought a friend with you.”

“Theo Wentworth.” Even after being up since the crack of dawn, he’s graceful as he moves to stand at my side, placing his hand possessively at the back of my neck while offering my mother the other. “Prue’s boyfriend, nice to meet you.”

He didn’t introduce himself as Dr. Theodore Wentworth as most physicians would. Nope. Here, with me and the only family I know of, he’s Theo. My boyfriend.

“Salina West, nice to meet you too,” she says, and it’s obvious she means it. She’s happy we’re here. Relieved.

“Come inside.” She moves to the side, beckoning us to enter. “I’ll explain everything.”

I’m thankful for her offer. It’s about a hundred degrees out here, and we’ve been driving for hours. Theo had.

We follow her into the small living room and sit on the floral loveseat. The place is pretty empty. There’s one coffee table, three lamps strewn around, and two armchairs on either side of the loveseat.

No wind comes through the worn-out white curtains. The fan in the ceiling might be old and creaking, but it works, breathing some air into the stuffy room.

The only thing that bothers me is my silly decision to wear these stifling jeans instead of a dress.

“Anything to drink? Eat? You must be hungry.”

Another wave of tears well behind my eyes at the way she dotes on us. Where was she when I needed her?

Salina and Theo must notice the pain twisting at my expression.

“Water will be fine,” he interjects, and she scurries off to the small kitchen.

While she drops ice cubes into glasses and fills them with tap water, Theo’s palm snakes around my waist. He draws me to him, both of us sweating, and neither of us cares.

“How you holding up?” he whispers into my hair.

“Curious. And sad.” I cling to his navy blue polo shirt.

“That’s okay.” Even when he talks in hushed tones, his dominance overflows from him, soothing me. “You’re entitled to your feelings. Remember?”

“Yes.” My lips seek the warmth of his scruffy neck, and I press them there. “I’m fine. I’m fine.”

“Whatever you feel is fine, Prue,” he reassures me.

Before I have the chance to answer, we hear Mom’s slippers on the linoleum floor. We straighten our spines. Theo doesn’t let me go, his arm remaining firm around me.

Mom eyes him closely, smiling while she arranges the water glasses on the table.

“So, your dad found you?” She takes a seat next to us, her brows kneading together.

A cold shiver shoots up my spine. Surprisingly, not due to any guilt I might’ve harbored for the past forty-eight hours.

She could be onto us. She might see through me. I am her blood, after all.

I stare at her, trying to figure out what she might think she knows.

Theo doesn’t like me to be stressed. The press of his fingers calls me to look at him, at the love in his eyes, the vehement reassurance that he won’t let anything happen to me.

“Yes.” I don’t stutter, leaning into Theo’s strength, tapping into the power I have inside me. “And he attacked me.”

“I’m so sorry, Prue.” She reaches out to me, clasping her hand on mine. “I watched it on the news and hated myself for putting you through what I had to go through because of a stupid drunken moment.”

“What?” My face blanches, and my raging heart stills to a full halt. “He never mentioned it. Did he hit you?”

“He did, in high school. Once we...” Her blue eyes skate to Theo, and her cheeks redden. “Once we started dating, his true face began to show. He was a violent man, a cruel one. He knew I had no one to turn to for help, and he used it. My parents—your grandparents—were strict people. I wasn’t supposed to have a boyfriend in the first place, so to come to them with this? I couldn’t do it. So, he punched me in the stomach or welted my behind with his belt whenever he could. He would also...”

She sighs, biting her bottom lip. Her silence, the gloom surrounding her. She doesn’t have to elaborate on what he did to her.

My brows knead together. The regret that has engulfed me over what I did vanquishes. My soul craves dragging him from the depths of hell and murdering him all over again.

And again. And again.

“He hardly asked for permission. And I hated it. Hated him. Until I got pregnant with you.” Tears well in her eyes as she relives her past. Our past. “Terminating the pregnancy, the one good thing in my life, wasn’t an option. I came clean to my parents about everything. They were furious, threw me out with some cash and a suitcase to another black sheep of the family, my mother’s sister.”

Theo and I don’t utter a word throughout her story. He’s there, though. Listening as intently as I do, as angry as I am.

“This is where she lived.” My mom gestures to the four walls of her small trailer home. “Aunt Maurine and I shared the only bed in the house. Not exactly the ideal place to raise a child. That’s why I...” Her speech breaks, vacillating between sobs and words. “Why I gave you away to the orphanage. You deserved better. That’s also why I didn’t come to get you once you turned eighteen. I haven’t stepped foot near that place because any connection to me would’ve dragged you back to...this.” Another gesture of her arm shows me what she makes of this place.

I don’t mind it. I don’t mind it one freaking bit.

Frankly, I don’t give two shits about the house, about the four walls, or about sleeping on the couch.

I want to tell her what I deserved was a mother. I want to tell her I deserved to have her read bedtime stories to me. How I would’ve given up a lung to watch her smile, do each other’s nails, watch old shows together, and spend Christmas as a family.

All the things I saw in the movies and read about in books and never had for myself.

Would it help, though? Would it change our past? No.

She did what she thought was best, broke the cycle by giving me a fresh start away from her heartbreaking reality. I can’t blame her or judge her for any of it.

I do, however, have more questions. “What changed? Why did you go back to Zeke?”

“I made a mistake. Your grandmother passed away last month. Heart attack.” Her mouth pinches. “Dad died a day later. They were my parents, as harsh as they were. I put off the tutoring classes I give the children in the area and drove back to my hometown to give them a proper burial with the insurance money.”

“Is that why you drank?” I ask, connecting the dots.

“Yes. I’m so sorry, Prue.”

Theo’s hand rubs my waist, up and down. My rock. He says without words that if I could’ve forgiven him, I can forgive her for her slip-up.

And I do. A part of me wishes to resent her for it. The other part, the compassionate side of me, refuses to waste another minute on resentment.

The chain of events that had led me to where I am today wouldn’t have been possible had my mom not told Zeke about me.

I wouldn’t have reconnected with her. And I’m not sad a monster had to die in the process.

That’s why I’m the first to stand up. The first to open my arms for an embrace.

We hug. We cry together, listen to each other’s stories—Theo’s too, and in those moments, we become a family.

An actual family.

Four hours later, Theo and I say our goodbyes and head to his car together.

“It’s surreal.” I shake my head as he peels out of Mom’s driveway. “Freaking surreal.”

Theo places his firm hand on my thigh, casting a glance at me. “What is?”

“This. My life.” A humorless laugh escapes me. “I feel like I’m in a movie or something.”

“Rom-com or horror?”

My laughter at his words becomes a wholehearted one. Theo is hardly the man to take a crack at a joke, so it makes it even funnier when he does.

“A mix of both.” I slide my fingers high up on his jeans. “With a touch of porn.”

“Prue.” Theo arches an eyebrow, warning me.

For once, I don’t heed what he says. I’m being a brat when I free his cock, pretending not to hear him threatening me with punishments when I put him in my mouth.

Soon enough, he gives up the fight. He lets me suck him in the car, tells me how much he loves fucking my mouth, makes me gag by shoving my head lower, and then comes down my throat.

He still spansks me once we get home.

But I’m not complaining.

I’m not complaining at all.

EPILOGUE

Theo

Closed eyes. Long, dark lashes fanning on soft cheeks. Luscious locks paint her white pillow in blond streaks. An elegant neck where Prue's pulse beats slowly.

This time, though, I don't tower above her. I don't undress out of the sweats and T-shirt I slept in.

I sit by her side on the bed. Our bed, in our new home. We've been living here together for almost a year now, driving to and from work together, sharing lunch breaks on what we now call *our* bench.

I fuck her day and night whenever it's just the two of us. Prue loves waking up with either my mouth between her legs or my cock in one of her holes.

I fucking love it, too.

I love *her*.

I love how I'm free to be myself around her. I love how she's lifted a weight that's been sitting on me for years, how the heaviness in my chest feels a little lighter nowadays.

Prue's unconditional acceptance, smiles, and the family she created for us are a constant ray of light.

She melts my ice walls every day.

And it makes me insanely more possessive of her. Her peace of mind and emotional and physical well-being are the reason I wake up in the morning.

My actions, words, and touches all assure her I'm not going anywhere. I'm hers for life, etched into her skin deeper than any tattoo ever would.

We've also broadened our small circle of two. We visit her mother twice a month and have double dates with Bonnie and her husband, Kenneth, or with Michelle and her husband, Drake.

Yes, they still call me McSpicy as an inside joke around the clinic. No, I don't mind.

Prue laughs when they do. Her cheeks redden. Her hand slips into mine.

It's everything I need.

Come to think of it, there is this one other unresolved issue I have to take care of...

My fingers stroke her from her temples to her collarbone, and I flatten my palm there, connecting with the precious heart of hers.

My other hand is preoccupied, grabbing onto a box behind my back.

"Prue."

Her eyes flutter open, drawing me into the sweet, brown depths of her.

"Something wrong?" she asks when I won't elaborate.

I brush away a wayward strand of hair that's clung to her cheek, tucking it behind her ear. "Yeah, actually. There is."

“What?” Worry has her clinging the sheets to her chest and scooting up to lean on the bed’s headboard. “What is it? Theo, you’re freaking me out.”

She’s so cute. So fucking adorable, I can’t help but burrow my hand into her hair, pull her to me, and kiss her. Prue plants a hand on my chest, trying to push me off her. I don’t let go, tasting her mouth, rubbing my tongue on hers, drinking my fill of her.

“Mmm!” is her attempt to speak.

I know exactly what has her bothered like this.

Twelve months after the fact, she’s still worried about someone finding out the real reason behind her father’s demise.

But Jason—despite not knowing what truly went down that day—isn’t trying to stir up shit and throw hints. He could’ve called the LAPD anonymously, suggesting I had something to do with Zeke’s death because I have a history of being violent. But he hasn’t. I have a private detective on a retainer watching him and tapping his home and phone, and so far, nothing.

Besides the corpse of the piece of shit of a person lying six feet under, the only two people who know what happened to Zeke are Prue and me. And neither of us is saying a word about it.

“Theo!” she pouts with her swollen lips. “Tell me what’s wrong before I have a fucking heart attack!”

My lips curve in a smirk. The irrational jolt of pride I get from hearing her use profanity.

“What’s wrong is…” With my eyes locked in a vise grip on hers, I abandon my pre-rehearsed speech and spit out what’s on my heart. “What’s wrong is I’ve walked this earth alone for far too long. What’s wrong is it’s taken you twenty-six fucking years to get to me. What’s wrong, my beautiful, sweet, and feral Prue is that you’re my girlfriend…”

“What? What are you telling me?” she jumps in, her frown deepening as she cuts me off in the middle of the sentence.

“Feral, indeed.” I kiss her scrunched nose. “Let me finish.”

Her trust in me is absolute. She ignores her misguided hurt feelings and nods for me to continue.

“Instead of being my *wife*.”

While Prue gasps, I lift my hidden hand, flipping the lid open with my thumb. The 4-carat Asscher cut engagement ring gleams in the soft light of the early morning.

As do Prue’s eyes.

She’s never asked me for anything other than my heart. I, on the other hand, refuse to settle for anything less than a brilliant diamond ring on her finger. One that would forever remind her of our bond, of my love, of my endless commitment to her.

“I’m not bending down on one knee because you should know by now,”—I pluck the ring out of the velvet box, slowly sliding it on Prue’s ring finger on her left hand—“I’m always, metaphorically, on my knees before you. I’m here to serve you, to adore you, to worship you. Even when I’m the one commanding and dominating you, you’re forever the one to rule my heart.”

“Theo.” Her tone is tender. Her lips wobble. “I love you too. So much. Every piece of me belongs to you, my soul belongs to you. The air I breathe is that much sweeter because you’re around and…fuck.” Another tear escapes her. “I’m not sure what else to say.”

“Say yes.” I press the ring all the way down. It fits perfectly like I knew it would. “Say you’ll marry me, Prue.”

“I will.” She moves with me as I manhandle her to straddle my hips.

I need her touch. I need to feel her, to embed her flesh into mine. To bury myself so deep inside her that I won’t know where I end and she begins.

Prue bends lower, her sweet mouth brushing mine, and she smiles.

“From now to eternity, Theodore Wentworth, I will be your wife.”

The end.

Thank You!

Thank you so much for reading *Stalked*!

If you loved Theo and Prue's sexy shenanigans, I would be eternally grateful for your review ♥

More Books from Eva Marks

Series

Blue Series

Little Beginning, book #0.5

Little Blue, book #1

Little Halloween, book #2

Little Valentine, book #3

Adult Games Series

Toy Shop, book #1

A New Year's Toy, book #2

Standalones

Primal-A dark retelling of Hansel and Gretel

Dad Can't Know-A Dad's Best Friend Novella

I'll Be Watching You

Obsession-An Erotic Horror Novel

Stalked

Their Dark Rose-A Dark, Why Choose Sleeping Beauty Retelling — Coming February 6, 2024. Keep reading for a sneak peek!

Their Dark Rose-A Dark, Why Choose Sleeping Beauty Retelling — Coming February 6, 2024.

PROLOGUE

Eight years ago

“Briar Rose Nightingale. Where is she?” A voice reaches into our classroom.

A man’s voice, sounding as if he’s just outside the door.

Loud like the worst the thunder I’ve ever heard. I can almost imagine what his face might look like. Screaming, eyes angry. Scary.

And he’s coming for me.

No man has ever picked me up from school. Mommy usually sends our woman driver to do it. Never a man. Never her or Daddy or either.

This man’s voice doesn’t make sense.

Who sent him? Why me?

I’m only ten. No one other than Mommy and Daddy’s driver is supposed to pick me up.

My brain tries to make sense of this while Miss Jones walks toward him.

“Who are you?” she asks loud enough that I heard her over everyone in class.

“None of your business, now where is she?” Another angry voice.

I think I recognize that one. This man has a steady voice. One that doesn’t sound like Daddy’s.

His words don’t crack in the middle of my name. He doesn’t sound like he needs his nap. Mom and Dad always do, that’s how I know it’s not them.

Some days—most days—they don’t make sense. Sometimes they even stumble and fall, spilling their dinner all over the kitchen floor. They say it’s the white medicine’s fault. It turns their lips and feet heavy.

One time, I told them they needed better medicine. Mommy and Daddy laughed. I laughed with them because they don’t do it a lot. And I wanted them to keep doing it forever.

But not everyone laughed that day. My parents’ best friends and my godfathers, the three Abbot brothers, frowned. Even Finn didn’t, and he always laughed.

Wait.

At the back of the classroom, I slap my forehead.

These were the voices.

Them.

Mason, Falk, and Finn.

My bottom lip drops. My eyes open so wide it hurts.

They’re here. Not just outside in the hall. In the classroom, pushing past Miss Jones.

“Excuse me, sirs, you can’t just barge in my classroom.” My blond fourth-grade math teacher follows behind them.

“We can do whatever we want.” Finn, the younger of the three snarls at her.

His shortish black hair falls to his hazel-colored eyes. Mason usually tells him he looks messy like that. Most of the times, when he smiles, he does. Not today. His eyes shine, and his face is like a monster’s. Today he’s not messy at all.

I think he’s scary. So scary.

“We’re here to take Briar home,” he shouts. He never shouts.

Why is he shouting?

I don’t know, but when I look at Falk for answers, I lean back further into my seat. His hands are in fists like he’s about to punch someone. His green eyes are so dark as he scans my classroom.

A minute ago, I wanted to jump out of my seat. I wanted to run to Falk’s leg to hug him just to giggle when he groaned.

Now, the tall man with the short hair and bottle-green eyes terrifies me. He looks like he wants to do more damage than just punching someone’s nose.

Like he wants to tear a hole in the floor.

My godfathers are like the big family I’ve never had. All the time but today. This morning, they’re different. Creepy.

Finn still snarls at Miss Jones. He won’t be smiling today like he always does, I just know it. The way he looms over my teacher, he looks as if he’s two seconds from punching her.

As a last resort, I try Mason, the oldest of the three. The one who always makes everyone calm no matter what. Especially Daddy, his best friend from forever.

He’s here too. His neat suit is soaked from walking in the rain and snow. His icy blue eyes are squinted and angry. He has a fresh cut that bleeds across his cheek.

There’s nothing soothing about him either.

I scoot further into my chair until the wood digs into my back. I ignore the pain, focusing on them. These hurt, furious men.

Mason and Falk search for me. Their expressions terrify the rest of my classmates. The other kids either crawl under their tables or hide behind their notebooks.

It’s obvious to everyone that these three are mad. Real mad.

I have no idea why, and I don’t want to find out.

Dad gets this upset when he doesn’t have his white medicine. Mom tells me to hide in my room when he’s that way. She helps him until he *cools off*.

Whatever cooling off means, these three men need it.

Until then, I’m hiding.

As silently as possible, I slide down my chair in the last row, praying they won’t see me. The bell rings signaling class ended. My trembling class stands up, swarming to the door. They won’t help me, either. They make fun of me because my mom and dad are never here.

I don’t have any friends.

Hide, Briar. Hide better.

Despite the need to save myself, I peek from under the table.

“You’re not taking her without Mr. and Mrs. Nightingale’s consent.” Miss Jones grabs Finn’s arm, her fingers gripping into his leather jacket. “You need to leave.”

She’s braver than I am.

She doesn’t even flinch when his tattooed hand slaps her away.

I wish one day I could be like Miss Jones.

“Briar,” Falk’s voice rises above the other kids’ mumbles as they rush out.

He doesn’t yell. He roars. Every now and again he’ll be in a good mood and roar at me. When he does, I run screaming. It’s our personal joke.

Was.

The angry man roars because he wants to eat me alive.

Like monsters do.

“Come over here.” His eyes lock on mine.

He may wear a snow-white sweater. May be in the same dark pants he always wears. But he doesn’t fool me.

This isn’t the Falk I know. He’s the bad guy the fairytales I read warn us about.

And he has his wicked big, red-rimmed eyes set on me. “*This* instant, Briar Rose.”

The name he calls me falls on my ears. Scraping my eardrums.

The sound of it means I’m in trouble.

Worse than trouble.

Because we’re way past cooling down.

He hates me.

They hate me. The three of them.

Their loathing shows in their deep scowls. They’ve never been angry at me until today.

I only know what anger looks like from Daddy. When he misses his medicine, he gets *so* mad.

But Mason, Falk, or Finn don’t inject their medicine. They don’t take medicine at all.

They’re just angry. With me.

If they won’t love me anymore, who will?

My heart aches. It slams against my ribs, hard enough to break them.

My grandparents died before I was born. My only aunt, Mom’s sister, Mallie, hasn’t brought her stepson to play since the incident.

I’m an only child.

Mom hugs me sometimes, but not often.

Whatever I learned about love, I learned it from these people right here.

They can’t hate me. They *can’t*.

I clutch on the plaid blue tie of our uniform, plastering it to my achy heart. As if doing so would keep my little body from ripping in half with pain.

I’m so confused.

The white clock fixed at the front of the class ticks loudly as I stare blankly ahead.

The clock is patient.

Mason used to be patient too. Mason is the one who carries me to the balcony of our Boston penthouse whenever Daddy’s sick and vomits on the floor. He reads to me until my tears stop raining down my cheeks.

He’s lost his patience today.

“Come.” He points his finger to the space next to him. His silver watch gleams beneath his dark gray suit jacket. “Here.”

“She isn’t going anywhere.” Miss Jones’s words are a tiny cry.

I’m sure it hurts to have Finn squeeze her arm tight.

I keep hoping maybe, just maybe, Mom and Dad will magically appear.

They don't.

I'm alone.

Alone.

Alone.

Swallowing down my sob, I jerk my chin up.

I'm confused and hurt. Like Dad when he wakes up late in the morning.

And what does he do when he's confused and mad? He yells.

I can yell too.

"This is my chair. I'm not moving!" My small voice isn't as loud as Mason's or Falk's booming ones. But it is what it is.

"I won't ask you again." Mason breathes out fire.

I sit up straight, crossing my arms over my chest. "You can't make me. Miss Jones said so."

"Briar Rose Nightingale." Falk shoves a table to the side. It crashes on the floor and Miss Jones cries again.

I don't.

Even as I watch Falk get closer and closer, I refuse to cry.

"With God as my witness." His black eyebrows furl. "If you don't get up from that chair right this second..."

Fuck.

Yes, I said a bad word in my head. Mommy and Daddy do that all the time. Daddy even laughs when he hears me cussing.

So I do that. His friends hate it when I do.

Just as they hate me now.

"Briar, please..." A tear runs down Finn's stubbled cheek. "It's been a really long day. Please, let's go home."

My teeth graze my wobbly lip. I'm already sorry for screaming at Falk.

What's going on?

Falk closes his fingers on my wrist. He doesn't tug on it, though.

"We need to go," he whispers cruelly.

I don't want to, but he forces me. He pulls me to him. Demanding my attention.

"I don't understand," I sigh. I'm tired of acting strong. "Where's Daddy? Where's Mommy? Why are you here?"

Mason comes to stand next to us. His tall and wide frame casts a shadow over me, a cold one. I'm annoyed when two fat tears break free from my eyes.

"We have to tell her," he says to Falk while his blue eyes narrow at me. Eyes like his daddy's.

I hear Miss Jones's heavy heels clicking. Her green floral dress disappears as she scurries out the door.

She left me.

Finn didn't. He shows up beside Mason. Scaring me.

"Tell me what?" I wipe my cheeks angrily, shouting, "Where are my parents?"

Neither of them bends to look me in the eye. My teachers do it to make me feel comfortable. The men above me don't. They stay high. Far. So very far.

"You won't be seeing your parents for a long while, Briar." Finn finally crouches, leaning his forearms on my table. "You're coming with us."

"Why?" My fists clench.

Falk tightens his grip on me.

Mason presses his hand to Falk's shoulder. "Careful, you'll break her arm."

Falk turns to Mason, slightly tugging me with him. "Her parents broke a hell of a lot more than an arm."

"It's not her fault." Mason's teeth gnash, making a grinding sound. "We didn't come here to hurt *her*. As much as I don't want to be anywhere near her."

I bite my cheek. They won't see how their words hurt me.

Fuck them.

"No one's going to hurt you," Finn is quick to reassure me I'm safe.

My heart doesn't feel so safe right now.

I shrug his hand off me. Tears—furious this time—flow down my cheeks in rivers.

"I want my mommy! Where's Mommy?"

I haven't needed her in forever. Most of the time, she loves sleeping and her medication. I love reading my books and doing my homework. It's no biggie. Most of the time.

But she has to wake up now. She has to take me away.

Anywhere except here where the ground shakes. Where the men I thought to be our friends hate me.

I bite my cheek harder, bleeding into my mouth.

"Your *mommy*," Finn says in a mean tone. He shakes his head, looks at the floor, and at me again. "She's not here. Your mommy and daddy are in trouble. They got into an accident and took our parents away."

The booming in my heart stops in a second. Dad explained once that the angels took Grandma and Grandpa to heaven. I remember these were his exact words.

Daddy and Mommy aren't angels. That I know of.

Angels don't get so sick and need their medicine every single day.

This has to be a lie. Whatever they're hiding, it's a lie.

I hate being lied to.

"No!" I scream. "They didn't!"

"Yes." Falk yanks on my wrist again. "They did."

"Liar!" My head whips to him.

Some of my blond locks cling to my damp cheek in the process.

"We're not lying." Mason bends at the waist, gripping my chin. "Your dad had too much of his *medicine*. Then he and your mom got into a car to meet our parents at the home they were building. You remember the big house they showed you in pictures?"

I nod, wiping my running nose.

"Bri." His tone is firm. His hand on my cheek is too. "They hit them with their truck. Pinned them to their future house. Our parents are gone."

"No, no, no." I free myself from his hold, shaking my head. I loved their parents. They can't be gone. They can't.

This is a nightmare. Has to be.

"Shut up!" I scream, willing myself to wake up.

"They're dead, Briar," Finn says. "Do you know what *dead* means?"

My chin wobbles, more than before. Being brave and calling them liars turns into a struggle.

"D-Darcy and E-E-Eugene are in heaven?" I repeat what I was told.

Falk growls behind me.

“Yes.” Fin nods, another tear slipping out of the corner of his hazel eye. Darcy, his mommy, said he got the color from his great-grandpa.

Those eyes are supposed to shine with happiness. I hate it when he’s sad.

I raise my little hand to his much larger face, about to swipe it off him.

“Talking time is over.” Falk releases me for a second. “At least one of your parents will be charged with manslaughter. So guess what? You’re stuck with us.”

Manslaughter? What’s manslaughter?

“Falk, look at her.” Mason is angry with Falk. “She has no idea what you’re talking about. And we agreed to not take our anger out on her.”

“She will.” Falk doesn’t care that Mason’s upset. He throws me over his shoulder, striding off.

My plaid blue skirt hikes up. Someone’s hand pulls it down, covering me.

“We’ll continue this at home.” Finn appears at our side, the strap of my blue backpack hides some of the thorn tattoos on his hand.

I’m hopeful at his words. “My home?”

“No. We already told you, your parents are downtown at the police station.” Mason holds the door for Falk to walk through. “We’re bringing you to our home.”

To their huge house in Back Bay so far from my parents?

Where the people who stopped loving me live? Where they can lie to me again?

No!

“Put me down!” I shriek, kicking and punching Falk. “Let me go to Mommy and Daddy!”

The men don’t answer. We walk through my school halls, the kids not caring that I’m being kidnapped. Miss Jones catches up, and her and our principal give me sad eyes.

Maybe they believe Falk’s lies too.

Stupid. Everyone here is stupid.

They won’t help me. Which means fighting is pointless

I’ll have to find a way to save myself later. To get to my parents.

I might be ten, but I’m not dependent like the other kids in my private school. I already take care of my parents when they’re sick. I know how to make my breakfast and dinners all by myself.

Running away to Mom won’t be a problem. I have this.

In a few days, I’ll break free.

It’s nothing but a nightmare. And nightmares always end.

They have to.

Pre-order your copy of *Their Dark Rose* [here](#)