



THE MARRIAGE DEBT

A DARK MAFIA ROMANCE

NEW YORK TIMES & USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

CLARISSA WILD

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Contents

[Other Books by Clarissa Wild](#)

[Description](#)

[Playlist](#)

[Author's Note](#)

[Prologue](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Chapter 17](#)

[Chapter 18](#)

[Chapter 19](#)

[Chapter 20](#)

[Chapter 21](#)

[Chapter 22](#)

[Chapter 23](#)

[Chapter 24](#)

[Chapter 25](#)

[Chapter 26](#)

[Chapter 27](#)

[Chapter 28](#)

[Chapter 29](#)

[Chapter 30](#)

[Chapter 31](#)

[Chapter 32](#)

[Chapter 33](#)

[Chapter 34](#)

[Chapter 35](#)

[Chapter 36](#)

[Chapter 37](#)

[Chapter 38](#)

[Epilogue](#)

[Sneak Peek Next Book](#)

[Other Books by Clarissa Wild](#)

[About Clarissa Wild](#)

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New Adult

Rowdy Boy

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DESCRIPTION

She ran from the mafia prince.

But he won't stop until she's his wife.

I'm Luca De Vos.

Heir to one of the most powerful mafia empires in the Netherlands.

Notorious mobster with a wicked taste for girls.

But there's only one woman I truly want.

Jill Baas, mafia princess and the only woman who doesn't want me.

She did the unforgivable and ran away.

Now I'll marry her sister.

Until Jill storms right back into my arms on our wedding day...

Begging me to marry her instead.

It's a dream come true for a depraved sinner like me.

Jill Baas—the runaway bride—mine to mark, own, taint.

My wife.

I'll put my ring on her finger...

And turn her world into a living nightmare.

PLAYLIST

Music Playlist

“Bloody Mary (Slowed + Reverbed)” by Lady Gaga

“Play With Fire” by Sam Tinnesz feat. Yacht Money

“Church (slowed)” by Chase Atlantic

“Slow Down (slowed)” by Chase Atlantic

“Goldwing” by Billie Eilish

“NDA” by Billie Eilish

“A Little Wicked” by Valerie Broussard

“(강박) Red Lights” by Stray Kids

“Criminal” by Taemin

“Never Satisfied” by C0RPSE

“E-GIRLS ARE RUINING MY LIFE!” by C0RPSE ft. Savage Ga\$p

“White Rabbit” by Jefferson Airplane

“Goliath” by Woodkid

“Breathe (slowed)” by Fleurie

“Love and War (slowed)” by Fleurie

“Desire” by Meg Myers

“Dinner and Diatribes” by Hozier

“Met Him Last Night” by Demi Levato & Ariana Grande

“Use Me” by PVRIS feat. 070 Shake

“Hush” by AU/RA
“Papi Pacify” by FKA Twigs
“Streets” by Doja Cat
“Use Me (Slowed + Reverb)” by Plaza
“Take Me To Church” by Hozier
“It’s A Long Way Down” by Katie Garfield
“Burn It All Down” by Cody Crump
“WASTED (nightcore) Hvken X Murkish” by Juice WRLD
“Lovely” by Billie Eilish & Khalid

To listen on Youtube, [CLICK HERE.](#)

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The Marriage Debt is a **Dark Mafia Romance**, which includes many possible TW's. For a detailed list, [CLICK HERE](#).

If you don't read this genre, I suggest not reading further.

The Marriage Debt is a full-length, interconnected standalone. That means there are more plot points and side stories that are not immediately resolved for the purpose of future or already-written books.

While The Marriage Debt is a standalone, reading the prequel is recommended (though it's NOT required). [READ THE WEDDING DEBT HERE](#).

Enjoy your dark read!

xx Clarissa

PROLOGUE

Luca

A WEEK ago

LOOKING at myself in the mirror, I adjust my tight suit until it looks perfect.
“This one.”

“Yes, sir,” the seller says, nodding.

“Prepare it for the wedding. I want it spotless and perfect.”

“Of course, sir,” he replies. “Only perfection for the De Vos family.”

Exactly.

Because our family doesn’t take anything less.

Even though I’m going to be marrying something *less* in a week from now.

I sigh to myself and go back into the changing booth. My phone buzzes, so I pick it up. “This better be important.”

“The editorial is going through,” one of my closest guards, Max, tells me.
“It’ll be in the newspaper in a few days as well as on social media.”

“Good. Plaster Jasmine’s name everywhere. Online too. Make sure they put up a photo too.”

“Of course, sir.”

“And call me if you get a lead,” I say, and I click off the conversation and focus on taking off this suit.

Even though I’m marrying a girl I don’t even want, there’s still a fucking smirk on my face.

Because one thing excites me more than making sure everything is going according to plan for this goddamn wedding.

Throwing out the bait ... and hoping the sister, Jill Baas, will bite.

My little runaway bride is caught between her own choices and her obligation to her family.

No fucking way will she be able to resist.

CHAPTER 1



Jill

PRESENT

THE FIRST TIME I met the guy I was *never* supposed to marry, I didn't know what kind of a monster he truly was. What kind of devious plans he'd set in motion to make me completely and utterly his.

And now he'll make me pay the price for running away from him.

I swallow as I stare into the eyes of Luca De Vos.

Heir to one of the most powerful mafia families in the Netherlands ... and my worst nightmare come alive.

A long time ago, our family considered his family friends. But our history is tainted by a bloody debt. One he's now trying to make my sister pay for ... by forcing her to marry him.

“Take me instead,” I say, every word reverberating in my ears like I’ve been sentenced to death.

It’s his filthiest dream come true that I’m here right now in this church, pleading with him to make me his wife instead of her. I hate him. But I love my sister more.

As our gazes connect, the darkness behind those hooded eyes of his has only become more menacing since the last time I saw him three years ago. When I ran like hell to get away from him.

His dark, flowy hair still highlights his square jawline, and the slick suit he’s wearing barely fits his now muscular shoulders. There’s still a small feather earring in his ear, and he’s now added thick skull rings on his fingers. But what draws my attention the most is the vicious, full-lipped smile on his face, growing deeper, and deeper, and deeper.

Until it almost stops my heart.

That same smile once made me run.

After three years, I can still hear his voice in my head when he yelled, “Jill! I will find you! You hear me? I’ll fucking search the end of the world if I have to!”

It turns out, he didn’t have to search far for me.

All he had to do was hit me where it hurts the most.

But I won’t let my sister take the fall for me.

“Take. Me,” I reiterate.

I don’t move from my spot, staring him down to show I mean what I say.

I’m not backing down. Not this time.

His devilish smile brings chills to my spine.

Jasmine's eyes tear up, and she says, "Jill? Don't do this, please."

As Luca takes a step in my direction, she blocks his path with her arms held wide. "No. We were going to marry," Jasmine says. "Jill, go away."

He shoves her away into the bridesmaids. His eyes are focused solely on me like a gun finally finding its target.

I gulp down the nerves and face him with my head held high.

He's much taller than I remember him being.

Or maybe he's finally grown into the man he was meant to be.

Cruel.

Depraved.

And every bit as dangerous as he ever was, if not more.

"What is the meaning of this?" Lex De Vos suddenly jumps up from his seat and marches over to me before Luca can reach me, and he grabs my arm. "After all this time, now you come back?" His strong grip hurts. "You ran from us like a goddamn coward."

He's right. I did.

I ran from Lex De Vos and his son because of what they were planning to do to me. For how they were going to make our family pay for what I did to theirs.

Luca's mother is right behind him, throwing me glares over his shoulder. "We should kill her right now for her insolence."

My eyes widen.

“Absolutely not!” Someone stands up in the crowd, but I recognize the voice before I see his face, and it makes all the hairs on the back of my neck stand up.

My own damn father, who I haven’t seen in three years, is looking me dead in the eyes as he says, “Jill has nothing to do with this. Luca was going to marry Jasmine. That was the deal we made.”

Both my father and mother hurry to the aisle, and the two men and women have a standoff right in front of me.

“Hugo, your daughter is responsible for my son’s death,” Lex crows. “She must be punished for her crimes.”

More audible gasps emanate from the guests.

He’s right. Luca’s brother is dead because of me.

It’s why I was supposed to marry Luca.

Why I ran.

I didn’t mean to kill him. But I can’t keep running away from my own mistakes.

Lex looks incensed and reaches for his gun. “An eye for an eye. I’ll do it outside.”

He attempts to drag me out but stops at the sound of a clicking gun.

Fear settles in my stomach, sweat drops gleaming on my forehead.

“Let. Her. Go.”

It’s not my father’s voice that scatters goose bumps all across my body. It’s Luca’s.

Lex's face is brutal when he turns to look at his son, who has shoved his way through my parents to intervene.

"Please," I mutter. "Don't do this."

"Luca," Lex says through gritted teeth. "Now is not the time for feelings."

"Now is the *only* time," Luca responds. "And I've made my choice."

The whole place grows quiet for a second, the air thick with tension.

"You choose this *whore* who killed your brother over that girl up there?" Lex spits.

I'm offended, but if I rebuke him now, I might not live long.

And from the way Luca holds that gun steadily pointed at both of us, I'm not even sure he wouldn't shoot.

"Hand her over," he growls, his eyes glinting with a kind of rage I've not seen before in any guy, let alone him.

Lex's fingers dig into my skin before he hauls me to Luca and shoves me forward. "Fine. Have it your way. Wife this bitch up. But don't expect me to fix your mess."

Lex grumbles and marches out a door on the side of the church, leaving me in a haze. I'm quickly pulled out of it by my father's firm hands clutching my shoulders from behind.

"Jill," he says, pronouncing my name like he finds it disgusting. "You were foolish enough to come here after you ran like a coward... now do what you came here to do and restore our family's fucking reputation."

My lip quivers as I turn to face Luca, who puts his gun away and holds out his hand.

I exchange looks with him and then with Jasmine, who stands in the back near the altar, shaking her head vehemently. It only solidifies my belief that I've made the right choice.

I killed Liam ... and now I must be the one to pay the price.

I approach Luca, and when our hands touch, electricity shoots up and down my arm.

"No, Jill, don't do it!" Jasmine yells from the back, but one of the bridesmaids quickly holds a hand in front of Jasmine's mouth.

Luca tilts his head, a vicious smile spreading across his face again. "Finally, after all these years, you'll become my wife."

A chill runs up and down my spine at the thought, but I ignore it for the sake of my sister, who is screaming into the hand of the girl behind her. The girl suddenly squeals and tears her hand away while droplets of blood fall to the floor. Jasmine bit her and now runs straight at me, clutching me as she falls into my arms.

"Please, don't do this. Jill," she murmurs, "why did you come back?"

"Because I can't let him do this to you. I have to fix this."

"Enough," Luca spits, tearing us apart with a single hand, ripping her out of my arms. "Go to the dressing room. Give her your dress," he commands Jasmine, and then he turns his attention toward me. "The guests are waiting for a proper wedding, so be ready."

He shoves her toward the side entrance on the opposite side of the door his father just disappeared through. And I stumble behind her, pushed by De Vos guards that ignore anything other than De Vos orders.

When the door is shut behind us, Jasmine and I stare at each other for a few seconds before we collapse into each other's arms.

"Oh, Jill, I've been so worried about you."

"I'm sorry I didn't call you. Easton told me not to talk to anyone when he took me in."

"Easton?" She pushes me back to look at me. "Easton Van Buren? You mean that guy who owns those restaurants our parents like to visit?"

I nod. He's a family friend. Or ... was. "He kept me hidden for three years."

The look on her face darkens. "Luca told Mom and Dad you ran after he tried to force you to get on a plane to marry him."

I pull her in for another hug, and she hiccups against my clothes. "I'm sorry for putting you through all this," I say, and I wipe the tears off her face. "It's my fault you're in this hellish deal to begin with. I'm going to fix this. I promise."

She looks up at me. "But Luca is dangerous," she spills, still clutching my shoulders like she's hanging on tight. "All he ever talked about was finding you. He'll try to destroy you."

I know what he's going to do to me.

What he's desired to do to my body for so long.

All the wicked little games he wants to play finally become a reality.

But what other choice do I have?

I close my eyes as our foreheads collide. "You're my sister. The only one I have in this twisted world. I can't let him ruin that too."

She sniffs and sucks in a breath. "You're sure about this?"

I nod. “I want you to live your life. Be happy. Don’t lose yourself in the family business. Take care of yourself. Okay?”

She nods a few times. “I promise.”

A sudden knock on the door pulls us out of the calm.

“Hurry up!” It’s one of the De Vos guards. “Or we’ll come in there and help you ourselves.”

“Fuck.” Jasmine quickly turns around and points at her back. “Unzip me. Quick.”

I do what she asks, and she peels off the mermaid dress while I take off my shoes.

“Two minutes!” someone outside the door barks.

We swiftly exchange my beige skirt and black top for her mermaid dress. It fits me snugly, though my breasts almost spill out of the tiny cup when she helps me zip up. After putting on her pumps, I lift my head and notice myself in the mirror for the very first time since I stepped into this room.

The woman standing in front of me in the pretty princess dress with all the sparkles in the world, whose face is beaming with determination, is me. But her eyes are filled with tears.

I blink them away as Jasmine steps behind me to apply the final lacy heart-belt around my belly, sealing me in.

“There ...” she murmurs, and we both look in the mirror. “You look gorgeous.”

I swallow down the bitter pill that today will be my wedding day.

Of all the ways I imagined my own wedding, this wasn’t what I expected.

“This dress looks so much better on you than it does on me,” Jasmine adds.

Only because I was the one who was meant to marry a De Vos.

The one who was supposed to carry on the legacy and rule the empire.

Together with the only boy who deserved it all.

Liam.

But all of it turned to dust the moment he died, and from the ashes, a monster was born.

Luca.

The guard bursts into the room.

“Enough. Let’s go,” he barks, whisking me away from Jasmine.

He shoves me toward the big hall where people are still waiting in their seats for the wedding they were promised. Tears well up in my eyes, but I swallow them back down, forcing myself to stay strong.

With my head held high, I step toward the big hall and into the light coming from the mosaic windows in the top corners of the church. The music starts as I approach the benches, where people anxiously await my long, tedious walk to the altar. The dark look in Luca’s eyes twists my heart into knots.

Still, I bravely step forward, past my parents, who sit idly by as their lost daughter finally returns to take the crown. But this is not a crown of power that I’m about to accept. It’s a crown of obedience ... a crown he will use to ruin me in every way he can possibly imagine.

With every step of the way, that wickedly twisted grin grows on his face.

It’s as if he wants me to know, without using any words, that he’ll enjoy making my life a living hell.

I walk up the steps. My face is a blank slate—cold, stonehearted, and empty of any kind of emotion. I refuse to give Luca any as I stand beside him and wait for the ceremony to begin.

When he grabs my hand, a hot flash flutters through my body, but I ignore it and stay put even though I want nothing more than to jerk my hand away from his.

My eyes can't help but take in his fancy, fitted black suit and those shiny shoes that complement the outfit. For a moment, I almost forget he isn't a gentleman but a criminal intent on stealing the only thing I ever valued.

My freedom.

And now, after years of trying to make me his, of trying to make me pay for my crime, he wins.

CHAPTER 2



Jill

THREE YEARS AGO, age 18

WHILE I DRIVE as fast as I can, memories flash through my head of Luca fighting his brother. His knife still glints in the dark, blinding my view of the road.

“You’re not my fucking brother anymore!”

All because of me.

Fuck.

I wish I’d never left the house.

“JILL!” Luca’s voice echoes in my mind. *“DON’T YOU FUCKING RUN AWAY FROM ME!”*

I’ll never get him out of my head, no matter how hard I try.

What else was I supposed to do but grab Liam and drive off with him? I had to do something to stop them from fighting.

But when I look at Liam sitting in the passenger seat next to me, something doesn't feel right.

Even though I saved him from Luca's wrath, the pain in his eyes confuses me.

But there's no time to think about what happened between us.

"I'll fight it out with him, brother to brother," Liam says.

"But what if you lose?" I ask, barely paying attention to the road anymore.

"Then I'll lose, and he gets what he wants ..."

The way he looks at me with those beautiful eyes of his unravels me. There is no darkness to be found.

Until he says the word, "You."

Lightning suddenly strikes, blinding me. The car veers off the road.

It all happens so fast.

In a second, we hit the water. The crash is as loud as a gunshot.

Within a few more seconds, the car begins to fill with water and submerges.

Screaming is no use. No one can hear me.

The water is closing in fast.

I manage to break free from my belt, but Liam is floating in his seat, unconscious.

Why, why, why?

My fingers can't find enough strength to free him, and my oxygen is fading fast. I search for the hammer, and I smash the window when I finally find it. I try to push Liam out one last time, but it's not working. His clothes are stuck on the window. And with the last bit of my energy, I swim out of the car without him, despite the guilt eating me alive.

Despite the fact that I know he won't survive.

But I don't want to die down there with him.

I want to live.

No matter the cost.



LUCA

FOUR DAYS after Liam's death

GOODBYE, Liam.

It's written on his tombstone, but there is no casket.

No body.

Nothing.

It's as if he suddenly vanished into thin air after our messed-up fight.

Even though I know he didn't.

Jill drove off with him and crashed her car off a cliff ... straight into the water. His body might still be there.

I stand over the grave with my parents. There's only a photograph of what was once my brother.

None of this feels real as I stare at the people around me. It was only days ago that I last saw him alive ...

When he was kissing Jill.

My hands ball into fists as I gaze up at her, fury blazing in my eyes.

She drove him to his death. Literally.

All because she couldn't handle me giving her the best orgasm she'd ever had, so she decided to kiss my brother instead.

Fuck.

Even though taking the crown from my brother, the perfect son, was all I ever fucking wanted, I won't ever forgive her for killing him.



PRESENT

ALL THESE YEARS, I've waited until she'd finally fall into my clutches to pay for her crimes. I searched for her in vain when she disappeared, but now Jill Baas will be all mine.

I can't believe she actually fucking came back to save her goddamn sister. Luck has never been on my side, but today, I own it.

Nothing compares to her hand locked in mine as I pull her closer onto the altar where I will make her my wife. Well, maybe one thing will ... my cock locked in her wet, aching pussy.

But first, I'll put my ring on her finger and make her submit.

Jasmine seemed like an easy win, but Jill? She's a fiery one, and I can't fucking wait to have a chance at taming her.

Her sister was just a distraction for me, a toy I could play with while my parents made more money off deals made by the Baas family. Of course they agreed to marry the girl off to me in exchange for the debt created when my brother died by Jill's hands.

But I never expected Jill to show up and take care of matters herself.

What a fucking magical twist this wedding has taken.

Nothing, and I mean nothing, can steal this wicked smile off my face as I look her in the eyes, and say, "Jill ..."

"Luca," she hisses back so loudly it's like she wants to bite my head off.

I know she hates me, but I don't care. She destroyed my family and me, and now it's my turn to annihilate her.

The notary my father hired, a mafia man who's known to do marriages with unwilling brides, clears his throat. "Dearly beloved. We have gathered here today to celebrate the union of Luca De Vos and Jas—Jill Baas." He clears his throat again. "To join this man and this woman in holy matrimony."

Jill briefly glances to the back, where Jasmine is seated and crying her eyes out in silence.

But I want all of her attention.

All of it.

So I squeeze her hand, and whisper, “Look at me.”

She sneers, “I don’t want to.”

I lower my eyes. “Did you forget I’m carrying more than just a huge dick?”

Her pupils dilate, and it’s the best thing ever. God, even after three years, nothing has changed. I still can’t get used to how gorgeous she looks when she’s all riled up because of me.

The notary flips through the pages, forcing us both to shut up. “Luca, do you take this woman to be your wife, to live together in holy matrimony, to love her, to honor her, to comfort her, and to keep her in sickness and in health, forsaking all others, for as long as you both shall live?”

I don’t take my eyes off hers even though she’s almost spitting fire at me. “I do.”

“And Jill, do you take this man to be your husband, to live together in holy matrimony, to love him, to honor him, to comfort him, and to keep him in sickness and in health, forsaking all others, for as long as you both shall live?”

Jill grinds her teeth and gazes at her parents, who do nothing but stoically stare ahead. Of course, they don’t care about her or her feelings. She betrayed them.

By running away from her obligations, she ran away from fate itself.

And fate always catches up with you one way or another.

“We’re waiting,” I say, raising a brow at her.

Too fucking late for second thoughts.

She was already mine the second she stepped into this church.

And now I'll take what always belonged to me.

I pull out my gun and point it at Jasmine's head. The entire room gasps.

"Say it," I say through gritted teeth.

Jill blinks away a single tear that still manages to roll down her cheek. "I ... do."

The word spills out of her mouth as slowly as the tear falls to the floor.

At that moment, it's as if the earth stands still, and all that's left is my eyes connecting with hers as she begs me without words to spare whatever is left of her dignity.

A smirk forms on my face as I pull back the gun and tuck it back where it belongs. Everyone in the audience, especially Jasmine, breathes a sigh of relief. And I don't know whether I'm happy or a little bit disappointed that she didn't actually give me an excuse to shoot.

After all, my heart enjoys nothing more than hurting that family as much as they have hurt mine.

The little girl carrying the glitter steps forward with a pillow holding two golden rings in her hands. Jill's face turns white as snow as the girl brings the rings forward and waits until we have both picked one up.

I don't stop staring at Jill, not even as her whole body begins to shake at the thought of having to put that ring around the same finger that will be inside her pretty little pussy later.

But we'll get there soon.

“With this ring, I promise to give you *everything* I have to give,” I say, my tongue darting out to wet my lips.

Her hand reluctantly rises to meet mine, her eyes quickly darting to her sister like she’s saying a final goodbye. I grasp ahold of her whole hand and squeeze it to make her look at me. No one gets her attention except me as I push the ring onto her finger, sealing my ownership over her.

She almost squashes my ring in her fist as I hold my hand out for her.

Grinding her teeth, she mutters, “With this ring, I promise to make your life a living hell.”

Her mother gasps, but I can only laugh.

It’s endearing she thinks *I’ll* be the one to regret my decision.

Oh no, little bunny ... our fun has only just begun.

As she pushes it onto my ring finger, I lean in to whisper into her ear, “The second you ran away from me, you chose your own fate, Jill. And now I will never, *ever* let you go again.”

I can feel the rage burning off her body like a blazing fire, and it makes me as hard as a rock. I can’t fucking wait to go home, rip this tight wedding dress off her pretty little body and make her scream.

Suddenly, she leans in, catching me off guard as she tears the gun away from me and points it at me. “Make me the fastest fucking widow,” she spits.

CLICK!

The gun goes off.

But the fact that no bullets exit makes everyone, including Jill, stare in complete shock.

Except for me, of course.

I smile at the thought she actually believed she could kill me ... and that she wanted to. Still the same spicy girl as I remember.

I snatch the gun from her hand and grab ahold of her wrist, forcing her to crash into me. “You thought I loaded that thing with actual fucking bullets?”

“I’m disappointed in you,” my mother seethes under her breath, and she gets up and walks off into the same door my father disappeared through.

It doesn’t matter to me, and I don’t fucking care who she’s disappointed in. I already knew long ago they preferred my brother over me. He was the perfect one, and I’m the fallen son who wants nothing more than to watch the world burn.

But right now? I want nothing more than to watch Jill’s eyes burn with a fire so bright it could set this whole church aflame.

“Fuck you.”

Jill spits in my face.

I close my eyes for a brief second and wipe it away before I throw her a final devilish glance.

“Yes ... *wife*. I will fuck you as I wish in every goddamn orifice.” Then I pick her up and throw her over my shoulder.

She screams while I march toward the exit, but I ignore it.

I have other things on my mind that involve getting her chained up and on her knees.

Her side of the family gets up to watch us leave, mournful looks adorn their eyes, but none of them dare to say a word, let alone act. They know their place.

Their family owes ours, and this is the price they'll pay.

I don't care about their judgmental looks.

All I care about is that I'm going to make her pay for what she did ... and mark her as mine.

CHAPTER 3



Jill

A RECEPTION HAS NEVER FELT like a prison party until the day I got married.

Everyone is huddled in their own corner in the De Vos mansion, clutching their champagne glasses while eerily staring at the opposite side of the room where the other side of the family is standing. It's a sullen, bleak party with no semblance of festivities whatsoever.

Lights are flickering all around us as the music blasts through the speakers, but no one is dancing. It's like they're all waiting for something ... or someone to start.

I stare down at the drink in front of me and all the delicious food that's going untouched. My stomach can't handle a single bite. All I can think about is running away through the door in the back leading out into the forest beyond.

Maybe if I run hard, I'll make it out.

But then I look at my family and at Jasmine, who's standing in the corner, watching me every other second to see what I'll do. And it reminds me of the reason I came here.

If I go, he'll take her instead.

I can't let that happen.

The De Vos family has a vendetta against mine, and they won't rest until the debt is repaid, whether it's with a ring or by blood.

I jolt up and down when a hand suddenly lands on my shoulder. "Jill. Or should I say Mrs. De Vos." It's Lex, Luca's father. "Come walk with me. I'd like to show you something."

I swallow and put down my champagne to follow him into a hallway and out of that snore-fest. But the longer I walk with him, the more the silence begins to overwhelm me. There's a clear tension between us, especially when he stops to gaze at me.

"I wanted to show you something," he says, opening a door. "In here."

A staircase leads downstairs into the dark basement.

The mere thought of going down there gives me the creeps.

Why does he want me to go down there?

Is he planning to do something to me?

I look back at the party, where Luca is standing with a champagne glass in his hands.

"Don't worry. My son knows," he says. "I'll go first."

He goes down the stairs and looks back up at me until I finally decide to make the first step. I follow him down into the grimy-looking basement. It's

too dark to see anything.

Until he switches on the light.

Revealing a cage right in front of me.

There's a giant, muscular, half-naked man hiding in the corner behind the bars.

"What ... What is this?" I mutter, unable to look away because of all the scars on his body.

Lex grabs an iron poke and stuffs it through the bars, prodding the man.

Lunging up from the ground, he growls like a beast, fisting the bars while shaking the cage. I jump back at the size of him so close to me, wild eyes penetrating my soul as my heart races.

"That," Lex says as he fishes something from a mini fridge, "is the Beast."

The beast?

What in the actual fuck?

"He works for me and me alone," Lex says, putting actual raw meat on the iron poke and shoving it inside.

The man snatches the raw meat off and stuffs it into his mouth like it's nothing, and the mere sight makes bile rise in my throat.

But then Lex turns to look at me. "And when I tell him to catch someone, he will do it."

Chills run up and down my spine.

He steps closer. "Do you understand what I mean, girl?"

I shudder in place. "Yes."

He leans in to tuck a hair behind my ear. “Good.”

And then he passes me and goes back upstairs, leaving me with the Beast.

I’m too stunned to move.

Who would do this to a fellow human being?

Then again, the De Vos family is vile enough to do just this.

When the Beast looks up at me, my pupils dilate, and I make a run for it up the stairs.

Lex laughs as he turns off the light from upstairs. “C’mon, let’s go back to the party.”

And when he places a hand on my back, I try hard to fight back the tears.

Because that wasn’t just a warning ... it was a threat.

I go back to the main hallway where the party is while Lex disappears into the bathroom. I don’t want to be anywhere near him for the rest of the night.

I grab my champagne glass and chug it back in one go.

Luca approaches me from the side, his hand barely grazing my shoulder. He leans in, his bristly shaven beard prickling against my neck as he whispers, “Dance with me.”

I close my eyes and put my resolve away as he tugs me toward the middle of the floor. My gown barely allows for movement, but he guides me through every step, one hand firmly clutching my hand while the other rests on my waist. There is not an inch of a smile on either of our faces.

Why are we doing this?

He twirls me around and pulls me back into his arms so hard I almost fall, but he catches me and leaves me dangling on one foot. With a simple push, he has me back on my feet, drawing circles on the floor in slow-motion. One misstep, and my heel lands on his toes. His face scrunches up, and he drags me in and whispers, “I know what you’re trying to do, but it won’t work.”

“What am I trying to do?” I respond, raising a petty brow.

He continues to pull me around the dance floor like he intends to keep people around us fooled. “You can’t hurt me. But if you try, I will make sure you get it back twice as painful.”

I shudder from the threat. “Of course you would. You enjoy seeing me in agony, you sadistic bastard. You’re just like your father.”

He smirks. “Your insults are like music to my ears.” He leans in so close I can feel his breath on my skin. “But I’m nothing like my father, and I’ll be claiming far more from your filthy mouth once we get out of here.”

My body heats like he just lit a fire with a match, but I want none of it.

He’s always had a way with words, and I know he’s only trying to set me off so I’ll do something reckless.

“Would you believe me if I said I didn’t step on your foot on purpose?” I say, hoping to ease the tension.

“Would you believe me if I said I hope you did?” he whispers back. “Lie to me even once and your punishment will be painful.”

“It’s not a lie,” I hiss back.

The smirk on his face deepens. “Then we should work on your dancing skills.”

He twirls me around some more, and some of my female cousins and others from the Baas family are literally swooning over him like he's some goddamn Casanova, and it makes me want to slap them.

Luca notices them too, and there's a wicked smile on his face as he raises his brows at me. "Jealous?"

I laugh, maybe a little too loud. "You wish."

Suddenly, he drops me, and I'm bending over backward with nothing but his arm around my waist to stop me from falling. He leans over me, his finger tracing a line from my neck down to my belly until I shiver from the electrical current going straight toward that spot between my legs.

"I'm not the only one who's been craving something wicked," he muses, gazing at me with those sinfully dark eyes of his and all the desire hiding behind them.

"All those years spent running away from me ... only to land right back where you belong," he says, licking his lips.

"Not because of you," I spit. "I came back to save my sister."

"Of course ... You don't mind stepping in for her," he says, pulling me in so close I can barely breathe. "But you know being my wife comes at a price."

I can almost taste the liquor on his tongue and feel his dark eyes roaming my skin like he wants nothing more than to rip off my dress and lick me in front of everyone.

And when he pulls me back up, his lips instantly land on mine.

I'm dazed and confused from the feel of his warm, sultry lips claiming me so hard they force every thought out of my mind. And it takes me three

seconds to realize what's happening and just how much his kiss has captured my soul.

So I bite him.

He retracts his mouth, his hand lifting to touch his bleeding lip. The vicious smile is gone from his face. "After all this time, you still won't kiss *me*."



LUCA

TWENTY MINUTES before Liam's death

LYING on the hood of my car, I take a deep drag from my smoke as I look up at the stormy night sky. I don't even fucking care that my clothes are getting soaked as hell in the rain. I'd almost say it's beautiful out here, all serene and shit.

But I know damn well this night will end in chaos.

Chaos born from a flame I ignited with my own damn fingers.

I bring them to my nose and take a whiff. They still smell like Jill's wet, aching pussy.

I groan out loud. The scent still makes me hard as fuck.

Not to mention, the memory of giving her an orgasm as sweet as sin will forever be engraved in my brain.

I may regret toying with her one day, but not tonight. Climbing into her window was the best decision I ever fucking made.

And I definitely won't be the only one who remembers.

Because I drew a fucking bloody heart on her chest with my goddamn knife and then gave her the best fucking orgasm of her life.

I know damn well it will never fucking happen again. But at least I can savor the moment.

Because after tonight ... she'll belong to my brother. He'll be the one to marry her and call her *his* wife.

Fuck.

"Don't tell anyone about this. Ever."

That's what I told her. Because I want her to take our little secret to the fucking grave.

But I also want her to remember me.

To know that I was the fucking first.

I ruined her before anyone else ever could.

A filthy smirk forms on my lips.

Despite my parents choosing him to be the one to marry her, I got the first fucking taste and touch. And no one will ever know before Liam puts his ring around her finger.

I jump off the hood and sigh out loud as I get back in the car and start the engine, working the wheels until they spin fast. I'm high as fuck, but I don't care as I race off the dirt track and get back on the road. Back home. Back to that mobster den where I belong.

But when I finally get there and get out of the car, something up high in the tree house near my parents' property makes me stop dead in my tracks.

Jill ... kissing Liam.

And rage becomes me as I draw out my knife, ready to attack my own goddamn brother ... and her. "You're kissing *him*?!"



JILL

PRESENT

THE LOOK on Luca's face darkens. "Fine. I'll have my way with you soon enough."

He shoves me away toward my family, who are eagerly waiting for me to return. But when my father steps forward to claim a dance with me, my mood instantly sours again.

He clutches my waist and pushes me onto the dance floor, his grip impossible to escape. "Keep it civil, Jill," he says through gritted teeth. "You chose to come back. Now take the fucking responsibility for your actions."

"I'm trying," I hiss. "But Luca is an asshole."

He yanks me closer. "Keep the guy happy. I don't fucking care what it takes."

I blink away the tears forming in my eyes. “Don’t you care at all what happens to me?”

“I did before you ran away like a goddamn coward.”

His words hurt, but not as much as the look of disdain in his eyes.

“You ruined every chance I had for a good partnership with the De Vos family, and you almost ruined your sister too,” he balks. “If you didn’t want to deal with the consequences, you shouldn’t have killed Liam.”

“I didn’t kill him,” I snap. “It was an accident. I almost died too. I didn’t intentionally drive off that cliff.”

His eyes twitch. “It wouldn’t surprise me if you did.”

I get sick to my stomach from the implication.

I try to jerk free from his grip, but he’s much stronger than I am. “Why would I ever want to do that? All I wanted was to be free. This is the opposite.”

“You enjoyed three years of freedom when you ran. Be happy they didn’t kill you on the spot. Show some fucking gratitude.” My father looks me dead in the eyes. “Make Luca happy, or you’ll pay the price.”

I look away, shuddering in place.

The price.

My life.

While my father spins me around on the floor, pretending we’re finishing up our father-daughter dance, my eyes skim over the rest of my family. Jasmine’s tearful eyes make it hard for me to keep it together. I swallow

down my own as hers begin to run, and she turns her head and rushes off into the backyard of the venue.

My breath hitches in my throat, and I attempt to tear away from my father's grip to follow her outside. I jerk one hand free, but the second I do, Luca's already grabbed me, taking me from my father's hands.

"Missed me?" he muses.

"Let me go," I hiss.

He raises a single brow. "We're already way past that point."

"I need to speak to my sister," I say.

He pushes me up against him, forcing me to dance. "No."

I frown. "She's crying. I have to talk to her."

"Why? You really are attached to your sister, aren't you? Sometimes I wondered if I should've been jealous of your relationship with her." He leans in to whisper, "Or maybe you just want me to fuck both of you in a trio."

What the ...?

I shove him away even though his grip on my waist keeps me close. So I raise my hand and slap him right across the face.

The whole crowd goes silent. Everybody's watching us.

When I remove my hand, his cheek begins to glow.

Contempt fills the void in his eyes, almost turning them blood red with rage.

He snorts, and growls, “You should not have done that.” And he spins me around and forces me to face the crowd while his arm is right around my neck. His mouth is near my ear, his tongue slithering out to lick the rim. “When you give me pain, it only turns me on.”

“You’re a monster,” I say through gritted teeth, refusing to cry in front of these people, let alone for him.

I can feel his muscles clench behind me, the grip of his arm around my neck growing stronger, tighter as I struggle to breathe. “You’re not going anywhere except to my goddamn house as *my* fucking wife.”

Suddenly, he spins me around and whisks me up into his arms. I squeal as he throws me over his shoulder. Without saying another word, he marches off with me.

“Mom! Dad!” I yell, but they ignore me.

Luca walks to the exit while the door leading to the garden is farther and farther away.

“No, wait!” But he doesn’t listen, doesn’t even acknowledge my words.

The door is slammed right in my face, and the cold air hits me like a brick as Luca hastens down the stairs and marches across the gravel path. I kick his stomach and punch his back, but every one of my hits is ignored as though he can’t even feel the pain anymore.

And when he puts me down and shoves me into a vehicle, shutting the door tight, it’s like an airlock has tightened all around me, suffocating the life out of me. In here, no one can hear me scream. I’m trapped, far away from the guests mingling inside the building and far away from my sister, who is out there crying her eyes out with no one to console her.

It’s impossible.

It's cruel beyond imagination.

And the man responsible hops into the seat right beside me, locking the door the second he's inside.

When I look at him, I feel only one thing besides hatred.

Guilt.

Guilt that I ever gave him my most precious prize.

My freedom.

My life.

All I had to give.

Given to a man who wants to destroy every inch of me.

CHAPTER 4



Luca

I USED to dream of this day long ago.

Now all I can think of is all the ways I'll make her beg.

The air is thick with tension as I inch closer and drape my arm over her shoulder, but she swiftly moves aside and swats my hand off. My nostrils flare from the blatant show of disobedience.

I grab her chin and make her look at me. "Stop resisting. It's already too late for that."

"Just because you married me doesn't make me yours," she says with a look of disdain in her eyes.

And it makes me want to grab her and pin her down right here in this goddamn car. But I don't like people snooping in my business, and the driver is watching us from his rearview mirror.

So I release her again and look the other way.

She'll come to her senses sooner rather than later.

"You wouldn't even let me say goodbye," she says after a while.

I look at her as the light cascading into the window hits her bare neckline, making me all the more aware of the fact that I've wanted nothing more than to ravage her since the second I saw her.

But she doesn't want me in that way.

Fuck.

After all these years, nothing has changed about my desire to own her.

And she ... she hasn't changed a bit, with those rose-colored cheeks, those full, heart-shaped lips, and that shoulder-length blond bob and bangs. Still the same pretty little bunny hopping right back into my fucked-up life.

But some part of her is different. Distant. Bitter.

Like she's lost her will to care.

As the teardrops roll down her cheeks, I slide aside her hair. I never thought I'd care, but it stirs something inside me that I can't ignore.

Is she crying because of what I've done to her? Because I stole her freedom? Or because I never allowed her to say goodbye?

My hand balls into a fist, my nails digging into my palm. I shouldn't feel guilty. She deserves this. She deserves every ounce of pain, every ounce of misery, and every ounce of guilt she feels.

So then why am I the one with the stinging heart?

Suddenly, she turns her face to me, her wide, innocent-looking eyes boring into my soul as if she knows exactly what I'm thinking.

Fuck.

I retract my hand and look out the window.

“Maybe I’ll let you see her again,” I say through gritted teeth.

Her breathing grows more rapid. I can hear it. “I don’t believe you. You’re still a vicious monster. You haven’t changed one bit. You’re just like you were when we were kids.”

Rage becomes me, but I swallow all the anger and hatred back down.

“Yet I still made you my wife.” A proud smile tugs at my lips, but it’s only brief.

“Made. Exactly. But I didn’t choose you,” she retorts.

I stare her down so hard she retreats farther into the corner of the car. “You *chose* to come to the church and save your sister. You *chose* to take her place and marry me.”

“What other choice did I have?” she replies, tilting her head. “I would never, *ever* let you put your depraved hands on her.”

I snort. “Depraved?” I grab her throat. “You haven’t even seen the worst yet.”

My fingers squeeze, and she sucks in a breath, but it hitches halfway down. “You only prove my point.”

“You think it hurts to hear you say that? Wrong. I know what I am and what I like.” I shove her back in her seat. “It’s about fucking time you learned too.”

After she’s regained her composure, she says, “Learned what? I’m not the one forcing marriage onto girls just because of a vendetta.”

I grab her wrist and push her against the window, leaning in so close I can smell her fear. “What you and I have goes far beyond a vendetta, Jill. Or did you forget that night I came into your room?”

Her cheeks flush, and I know she remembers how I touched her ... how I made her yield to the feel of my fingers on her little clit. How she mewled with delight from the handle of my knife shoved up her goddamn pussy.



AN HOUR before Liam's death

THE SECOND I found out my brother was supposed to marry Jill, I jumped out of my window and went straight to her home.

I couldn't stop myself.

Couldn't fight the urge to climb up her house and enter her room, soaking wet from the storm.

All I wanted was ...

Her.

Pinned to the wall, breathing raggedly mere inches away from me.

Right. Fucking. Now.

And I still can't fucking stop myself from claiming her.

From wanting to make her bleed with this fucking knife in my hand.

From toying with her pussy until she falls apart in front of me.

“So tight ... so perfect,” I murmur as my fingers slip in and out of her. She’s moaning and bucking against my hand. “So desperate for me.”

“Don’t,” she murmurs.

Leaning into her, I whisper into her ear, “Say it like you mean it.” I smile. “You can’t, can you?”

I grow stiff against her body as I slowly lower my knife down her neck. I move it across the towel and slide underneath, tracing her slit with the tip.

“Are you scared of me, little bunny?” I ask.

She shakes her head, but I don’t believe her, and the mere thought of her fearing me is such a fucking turn-on.

I twist the knife around so the dull end is facing her pussy. “I might be vicious, but I’m not cruel.”

Then I thrust the handle of the knife inside.



PRESENT

I LEAN in to whisper into her ear, “Remember how hard you moaned when I made you come?”

The memory alone makes my cock hard as a rock.

“Stop,” she hisses, and she jerks her hand away. “I’ve wanted nothing more than to forget that night ever happened.”

I'd be lying if I said that didn't hurt. "Keep telling yourself that." I sit up straight again and roll my eyes.

Her cheeks only flush more. "You used me. Just because you wanted me does not mean I wanted you."

"Your pussy told another story," I retort, throwing her a simple glance that makes her eyes widen.

I love getting her all worked up. What can I say? I'm fucked up in the head but mostly fucked up because of my addiction to her.

"I was young and dumb," she spits back, turning her head so she doesn't have to look at me and get all flustered from the memories.

But looking away won't make her forget about me. And I won't fucking let her.

"So why did you want to marry me again? Or is all of this just out of spite, to taunt me because you hate me so much for denying you?"

"It's more than that, and you know it," I reply, licking my lips at the thought of finally having my way with her and making her mine.

"Oh, please." She rolls her eyes. "As if you didn't hate his guts and weren't happy to take his place."

Sudden rage overcomes me, and I grab her cheeks and force her to look at me. "Do *not* talk about my brother like that."

"Why? Am I getting too close to the truth?" She gazes up at me with a courageous look in her eyes.

It's about time I snuffed out some of that resistance.

My brother meant everything to this family and to our business. He was all the things I could never be. And I fucking knew this long ago.

He'd be the one to rule, and I was the one who was going to go rogue. But his death made me the only successor, and I'll be damned if I let this opportunity go to waste.

I lean into her as she looks out the window, determined of her win, and whisper, "You'll regret everything you said soon enough."

Just as her eyes turn to meet mine, the car stops. We've finally arrived at the building that leads up to the luxurious penthouse I call my home. The driver steps out, all while my eyes remain hooked onto hers, neither of us daring to look away. Not even as the driver opens my door and then hers.

When she attempts to climb out, I grasp her wrist. "No games. You run ... you lose."

"I already lost the second I said 'yes' to you," she seethes, jerking her wrist free. "Now, are you going to let me go up, or do you want to carry me there?"

I can't fucking wait to bury myself in that sassy mouth of hers.

Clearing my throat, I adjust my blazer before I step out of the car and shut the door behind me. Jill stands in front of the building, looking up in awe at its magnitude. I doubt her father ever owned such a prestigious place. I know they did well with all the deals with the Americans, but it's my family's connections that drive the business here in the Netherlands. Which makes us an invaluable partner to them. One they can't afford to lose. And they'll do anything, and I mean anything, to keep our relations ... civil.

Lucky fucking me.

I walk over to her. "Impressive, isn't it?" I hold out my hand.

She looks at it like it's dirty. "Now you want to pretend to be all chivalrous?"

"I'm not pretending. I'm showing you my best side," I say. "But don't get used to it."

The annoyed look on her face is priceless.

I lead her up the staircase and open the door for her. "After you."

She rolls her eyes as if she doesn't know whether to hate me or hate herself for thinking I might be kinder than she thought.

Well, that kindness will end the second she's inside my home.

If only she knew all the wicked, dirty things I had in mind since the second she crashed the wedding.

"Good morning, sir," the receptionist says. "I hope your wedding went well."

"It was perfect, thank you," I respond.

"Not the woman I presumed you would come home with," she adds.

"No, I'm her sister," Jill sneers. "I hate his guts and only married him to save her."

The receptionist laughs. "Sounds like you'll have your hands full with this one, sir."

"Oh, yes ... I definitely will," I reply, pushing Jill toward the elevator.

She looks wholly confused as we step inside. "Why doesn't she care?"

Grabbing her arms, I pull her close right before the doors shut. "Jill, do you think I wouldn't take precautions?" I lift her chin with my index finger. "I

own everyone who works here.”

She swallows, visibly shaken by the power I hold.

“And now, I own you.”

I lean in and attempt to kiss her again, but she turns her head, denying me.

So I grab her waist and shove her against the elevator wall, not allowing her a second to breathe as I invade her space, planting my hand against the wall right beside her head. “Deny me, fight me, I don’t care, but I *will* have what I want.”

There’s disdain in her eyes, the kind that fills me with seething hatred. Not for her but for myself. Because a part of me, a long time ago, wanted so desperately for her to desire me.

But I no longer need that anymore. “Submit to me, and maybe I won’t destroy you.”

She looks up at me from underneath her lashes. “I will never bow down to you.”

A vicious smile spreads on my face. “You seem to be under the impression you have a choice.” I plant another hand against the wall behind her. “My ring is on your finger. You are my wife, Jill, from now until the day we die. And do you know what comes with that?” I push her chin up again to meet my gaze. “Marital duties.”

Her eyes widen.

The doors open.

And in a split second, she decides to make a run for it.

I don’t know where she got the idea she could escape.

But if she wants a chase so badly ... she can have one.

CHAPTER 5



Jill

I RUN as fast as I can through the corridors of this massive building, but there's not an emergency exit in sight. All the doors I try to open are locked. I bang on one, but it doesn't open.

Does no one live here?

Panic floods my veins as I run as fast as I can, but this stupid mermaid dress is holding me back, and I can't take it off. Because when I glance over my shoulder, Luca is right there, following my every footstep with a wicked smile on his face. His stride is casual like he isn't afraid I'll ever outrun him, and that brings a chill to my bones.

How can a guy as fucked up as him be so aloof and arrogant at the same time?

Every step he takes is faster than the one before, and his smile only grows deeper, like he's enjoying the chase, and it makes me want to scream.

But would anyone care to open their door and take me in?

“Help!” I yell in the hopes that someone, anyone, would hear.

Luca laughs. “Yell as loud as you like, bunny.”

Bunny.

I still hate the name as much as I hate him.

The way his eyes glint makes goose bumps scatter across my skin, and I kick off my shoes and run harder. But my long, bejeweled dress makes me stumble and fall to the floor.

Before I can get up, he’s pounced on me.

“No, get off me!” I roll to my back, but he pins me down by my wrists and sits on top of me.

“No, I don’t think I will,” he muses, smiling like the asshole he’s always been. “You shouldn’t have run from me, Jill.”

Anger gets the best of me, and I spit in his face again.

His lip twitches, rage spilling from his eyes when he looks at me, but he doesn’t even wipe it off his cheek.

Instead, he leans in so close I can feel his breath on my skin as his dick pokes me in the belly. “Next time, I will make you lick that off.”

“You’re a monster,” I say through gritted teeth.

“Monster ... or husband you don’t know how to handle?” he retorts, winking.

Fuck, if I didn’t know just how bad he can get, I’d almost say it was hot.

“Fuck you,” I hiss. “I’ll just keep on running and alerting the neighbors until someone takes me in and calls the police.”

He grins and shakes his head. “Oh, Jill, you really think lowly of me.” He smiles wickedly at my confusion. He lowers himself so we’re eye to eye, his veiny hands still pressed firmly on my wrists so I can’t try anything. “I don’t just own the penthouse. I own the entire. Fucking. Building.”

Jesus. The entire building? How rich is this fucker?

“Yeah, right,” I scoff. “Your daddy bought it for you.”

His dark hair swipes across my forehead like a curtain. “My father bought a lot for his family, but this building isn’t one of them.”

He gets up, and I finally feel like I can breathe again. But the feeling doesn’t last long as he grabs my wrist and drags me through the corridor.

“In case you haven’t noticed, my father has no control over what I do.”

He shoves me toward the only door in the back. With walls all around, I have nowhere else to go. And I’m trapped between a closed door and him as he stalks toward me.

“Or over what I crave ...” Luca adds, every one of his steps making me much more aware of just how little power I have left and how much of it is in his hands.

“Don’t hurt me,” I say, shaking my head.

A lopsided grin forms on his face. “You think I want to hurt you?” His tongue darts out to wet his top lip. “No, Jill, I want to *devour* you.”

For a second there, I can’t stop focusing on his tongue, reminding me of the way he kissed me the first time he came into my room. But then I remember this is the same guy who married me out of spite.

I can’t ever want him like I did back then. Not ever.

I hold my breath and close my eyes, expecting to be punished for running away and defying him. He inches closer and closer until his breath is right underneath my ear, and those same delectable lips are hovering over my skin.

“You know I’ve dreamed of this day,” he whispers. “Of seeing you with my ring on your finger ... of ripping this beautiful dress off your body.”

When his lips graze my skin, electricity courses through my body.

“You are mine now. You belong to me and me alone. And I will use your body in every way I desire until you beg me for mercy.”

I swallow hard.

Especially when he smiles against my ear, expecting a kiss.

My heart beats in my throat as the seconds feel like an eternity.

CLICK!

The door holding me captive between his arms parts ways, and I stumble backward. A key dangles in his hand, the familiar smirk on his face making me want to punch him.

“Welcome to my penthouse,” he says as he closes the door behind me and the lock clicks back into place. “Your home for the rest of your life.”

I step backward, away from him, my eyes searching the room for an exit. But I’m stupefied and completely overwhelmed by the extravagance all around me. Pristine white couches that seem untouched, a fireplace in the corner, a marble countertop in the kitchen, a giant amount of space, and walls covered with expensive-looking paintings. Everywhere I look are nouveau-art collections, statues in the middle of the room, and there’s even

a giant bonsai in the corner. But my eyes are completely drawn to the giant paneled windows to the right with a grand view of Rotterdam.

My heart releases a sigh from the beauty.

A long time ago, I dreamed of a place like this.

Way back before we moved across the world, back before the world got complicated and I wanted nothing more than to escape. Before I realized all dreams come at a price.

A price I wasn't willing to pay until today.

I close my eyes and touch the windows, wishing I could push them open and fly away like a bird, but I know that isn't possible. And if I died now, what would happen to Jasmine? Would he take her as a prize instead? I can't take that risk.

When he's right behind me, my eyes burst open. His finger gently twirls around a lock of my hair while his other hand slowly inches closer to caress my cheek and go all the way down my neck, and it sends shivers down my spine.

"Did I tell you yet you look beautiful in this dress?" he murmurs, and he plants a soft, delicate kiss on my shoulder.

I stare back at him through the reflection in the glass as I try to remain unmoved by this sudden show of affection. "It wasn't made for me," I hiss. "It's just a dress you wanted my *sister* to wear."

With fiery eyes, he looks up into mine through the glass. "But I never once wanted to marry her as badly as I wanted to marry you."

I snort, shaking my head a little. "Pathetic."

His hand snakes around my neck as he pushes me closer to the glass with his body alone. “No. Obsessive,” he replies, planting one hand on my waist while the other coils around my throat. “And if you desire it, I will buy every dress on this earth until I find the one that fits your body,” he says with a low, rumbling voice as he presses up against me until his hard-on grows against my butt. My pussy clenches out of my control. “And when I do, I’ll rip it to shreds and fuck you right here against this window for the world to see.”

He spins me around on my heels, forcing me to look at him.

“Make no mistake, Jill. You are mine.” He leans in so close I can feel his breath on my skin as he plants both hands against the window behind me. “And I will mark your body in every way I know how.” My eyes close, and I suck in a breath, expecting a kiss that never comes. Instead, he hovers close to my ear, teeth bared, and whispers, “Starting right now.”

Suddenly, he picks me up, making me shriek out loud as he throws me over his shoulder like a goddamn caveman.

“Where are you taking me?”

He barges through the giant penthouse and heads into a room in the back, turning on the light. The room is dark with its curtains already shut, but I can clearly make out the red tapestries from where I’m hanging.

“What is this place?” I mutter.

“Your room,” he responds, closing the door behind us and locking us inside.

“My bedroom.”

When he puts me down, I can look around a little better. A crystal chandelier lights the room. Kinky pictures hang from the wall—girls being tied up, spanked, or drooling with a ball in their mouth—and it all makes

me blush like crazy. In the corner of the room is a strange black and red chair with metal hooks and straps, and in the middle of the room stands a big, raised red and black metal framed bed. And a little farther along near the bed, four thick metal hooks hang from the ceiling, giving me chills.

I gulp.

In shock, my hand slaps against my mouth, but I quickly remove it, hoping Luca didn't see.

Too late.

The grin on his face is unmistakable. "Spotted my hooks?" he muses, twirling a chain of keys around his finger like it's all one big joke to him. "Afraid I might hang you there?"

I admit, it terrifies me, and I'd probably do just about anything he'd want me to so I don't end up in there. And I know he knows. I can see it on his face. Fucker.

His tongue quickly darts out to wet his lips before he saunters to the chair in the back and sits down, facing me with his knees wide, his gaze threatening and dominant.

I swallow down the lump in my throat when he tilts his head.

"Come."

There's a certain gravity in his voice that's hard to ignore.

If I defy him, he might throw me in that hole or worse...

I shiver at the thought.

I don't think I want to find out if I don't obey.

So I walk over to him with my head held high.

Luca taps his black pants with two fingers, the fabric straining against his half-hard dick. It doesn't escape my notice, and I hate that I focus on it.

"Closer," he says.

I close my eyes and sigh but still step ahead.

I know what I am to him.

A plaything.

A toy he bought in exchange for my family's silence.

And now it's my job to oblige.

But when I open my eyes, I want nothing more than to run far away.

"Remember this?" That same knife he used on me all those years ago is still glinting as sharp as ever as the tip pokes against his index finger.

"How could I forget?" I retort with sass. "You took something from me that wasn't yours to take."

He smirks in a self-indulgent way. "And I'll keep on taking everything you have to give." Suddenly, he jumps forward and slices through the top half of the dress, cutting through the seams far enough to make half of it drop down across my chest.

There goes the expensive wedding dress my sister probably picked by hand.

All that's left between Luca and my naked chest is my flimsy bra.

"When is it enough?" I ask, making a fist to try to curb my emotions.

He tilts his head, toying with the knife near his cheek. "When I'm satisfied."

That last word almost comes out in a hungry rumble, and for some reason, it makes me look at the bulge in his pants again.

Fuck.

I quickly look away again, but it's hard when I know he noticed.

"Look at me," he says, commanding my attention. "Do you think I'm satisfied?"

I don't know what he wants from me or what he expects from me, but the answer is probably, "No."

"Exactly." He lunges forward again, cutting through the last piece of fabric so it peels away between my breasts, leaving only a small piece near the edge, covering half my nipples. And the second they become visible, his hand instantly moves to his package, adjusting it while groaning, the sound hitting me hard.

It's been so long since I last saw him, since I last heard him speak, let alone groan.

It reminds me of the last time he kissed me when he slid open my towel and touched my freshly showered skin like it always belonged to him.

And I knew back then what I still know now ... this boy brings out the worst in me.

The part I never dared to let out.

"Does it make you feel good to degrade me?" I ask, forcing myself not to look at his clearly tented pants.

"Oh, you don't even know just how hard it makes me."

I gulp, pushing the blush to stay at bay.

Fuck. It isn't working.

“Bunny.”

He leans forward, tilting the knife up to meet my gaze. I shudder as he drags it along my chest down to my breasts, circling them to push the fabric aside. “You don’t wanna know how long I’ve fantasized about sucking these nipples until they’re taut.”

When he slides the knife across my peaked nipples, I say a prayer.

“To make you beg for more as I fuck your every hole,” he murmurs, grabbing my waist to pull me closer. “To make you regret you ever said no.”

When the knife punctures my skin, right between both breasts, I bite my lip to stop myself from expressing the pain. I refuse to let him see it as he refuses to take his eyes off mine, desperate to watch me fall apart.

But I won’t break for him.

Not even as he draws blood, sliding the knife around until it’s formed a heart on my chest. Blood drops roll down onto the pretty dress, staining it forever.

And all he can do is smile like the sadistic bastard he is. “Just like I promised ... Your heart belongs to me.”

“You may have made me your wife, but my heart will *never* be yours,” I hiss in a moment of pure bravery.

His eye twitches, and the look on his face darkens. I know it’s dangerous. I can still feel the knife edging into my skin, but he won’t kill me. He wants me too much to ever try.

He grabs my wrist, forcing me closer. "I don't need your heart if I have your body and soul," he retorts, and he pulls my arm in such a painful way that I have to follow his lead until I'm down on the floor on my knees. "Good girls know their place."

I spit in his face. "Fuck you."

"No ... but I will fuck you," he groans. "And you will say 'yes, please' when I do, just like a good fucking wife would. You heard your father. Make me happy."

I frown as he fists the knife while clutching the chair in a subtle threat. But I already feel the pain on my chest. I know what he's capable of, and I'm not afraid.

"So what, you're just gonna force your way in if I don't?"

He tilts his head, grinding his teeth. "Would you prefer it that way, bunny?" He leans in and grabs my chin. "Because I can be rough with you if you want." His thumb grazes my bottom lip, dragging it down, his voice lowering with every sentence he speaks. "If that's what you need."

What I need? It's too late for that.

I sold my soul to the devil to save my sister, and this is the price I pay.

He wants my pussy ... the one thing I've never given to any man.

And I don't want to give that to him.

"Now, are you going to straddle me, or do you want me to come and fuck you while you're on all fours?" he growls, his grip suddenly coarse against my skin.

I swat him away, but it only makes him laugh.

“You shouldn’t have shown up to that wedding, Jill, if you didn’t want me to make you mine.” He leans back in the chair again and slowly unzips his pants. “Because now I will never be satisfied with anything but your aching pussy around my throbbing cock.”

And when he pulls it out, I am not prepared.

Oh, my God.

The size of it catches me off guard. Not just the length but the girth too.

But most of all... the two piercings in his cock.

One at the base, near his pubic bone, a circular ring, and another bigger ring through the top of his head.

And the sight makes me so dizzy I almost faint.

But the arrogant smirk on his face keeps me in the present. “What ... never seen a Prince Albert?”

My eyes widen as I’m a bit stupefied. “A what?”

He laughs and grabs my face, tipping up my chin. “You really do your nickname justice, bunny.”

Bunny. A small, innocent, fuzzy creature.

Everything I don’t want to be, but it’s everything he wished for.

And when I look up into his eyes, I know I have no other choice. Do this or risk giving my sister this fate.

No.

I’d rather die than let that happen.

But Luca ... Luca would see it as a personal victory if he found out I’m...

Don't think like that. You're in control. You've got this. You chose this, now stick with it and do what you gotta do.

I swallow back my nerves and ignore the rage boiling to the surface as he lowers my bottom lip enough to make an o-shape of my mouth.

A smile spreads on his lips, one so wicked it could stop hearts without effort. "I'm going to have a lot of fun with you. Now be a good little bunny and open your mouth wide."

CHAPTER 6



Luca

THE FIERY LOOK in her eyes is all I ever dreamed of.

Day and night, when she disappeared on me, all I could see in my mind were those sparkling eyes begging me to come and find them in the dark.

And now she's here, right in front of me, with my ring around her finger and those pretty little lips ready for the taking.

Whatever I tell her to do, nothing is off-limits. Not with me, not in this house, and definitely not when it comes to her body.

I own her now.

And she'd better make me the happiest fucking man on the planet.

Or I'll destroy everything she loves with the snap of a finger.

She inches forward slowly on hands and knees, her eyes peering up into mine with a doe-like innocence, and I can't wait to fuck that fake innocence

right out of her. She's pretending, always has. Always pretending to be a saint while underneath that veneer is a vixen waiting to come out and play.

I'll coax it out of her, make her want for more than she could ever hope to desire. And I'll deny her every last ounce of pleasure until she begs me for it.

She crawls closer and closer until her face is right in front of the tip, and the sight of her wetting her pretty little lips makes me even harder than before. Veins protrude the skin, and her eyes widen the second my dick bobs up and down. A devilish smile spreads on my lips.

"What's wrong, Jill? Afraid I might destroy your throat?" I murmur, and I lean in to grab her chin to guide her forward. "Don't worry, you won't need it for anything other than pleasing me anyway."

She throws me a damning look, but her lips still part when I push them down.

"That's it, bunny. Show me how much you're willing to do."

"You're sick," she whispers.

I tilt my head and lean back in the chair while admiring her lips mere inches away from my pre-cum. "Tell me something I don't know. Now lick."

Her tongue dips out, and she tips her face up to look me in the eyes, but the second her tongue hits my length, goose bumps erupt all over my body. Fuck. Nothing, and I mean nothing, compares to the feel of her tongue swiveling around my dick. I've waited so long for this day—dreamed of it every single night she wasn't mine—and now I finally have her for the taking.

Fuck, I want more. It's not enough.

“Take it into your mouth, bunny,” I say, admiring how diligently she’s lapping me up.

She takes a second to swallow and glances at my length like she’s gathering courage, and I’d be lying if I said it didn’t stroke my ego. I just want her to stroke something else.

“Put some effort into it,” I growl. “Satisfy me.”

She looks up at me with contempt again, only to inch closer and open her mouth fully, wrapping those sweet little lips all around the tip. I groan with delight when she lowers them a little. Every inch is taking too much time. It’s like she’s gradually easing herself into it, but I’m impatient, and I want so much more from her.

“Lower,” I growl, glaring down at her while she tries her best to suck me off. “Use your tongue like you use it to talk.”

She stops for a second to mouth, “Fuck you.”

So I lean in and grab her by the hair, forcing her head back. “Ask me nicely, and I just might do it.”

The annoyed look on her face makes the little devil inside me come out. “Now be a good little bunny and lick.”

I push her head back over my dick so far she gags. Teardrops form in her eyes, and when I let go, she immediately pulls back to suck in the air and cough.

“Jesus,” she mutters.

“Luca will do,” I respond, grinning like a fucker.

I can’t say I hated the sound of her choking on my length. I could get used to it.

When she looks at me with saliva running down her lips, I add, “What’s wrong, bunny? You look a little overwhelmed.”

She quickly gobbles up the spit and immediately lunges back in to lick me, a little too fervently if you ask me. She’s really going for it this time, sucking and licking me like there’s no tomorrow, and I love this filthy side of her. My balls start to strain at the feel of her tongue circling my length, and it makes me want nothing more than to shoot my cum right in her throat.

But something holds me back.

Something glimmering in her eyes as she looks up at me while trying not to gag.

Fear.

My eyes narrow, and I grab her head and push her down again all the way to the base, but it makes her gag so hard she pulls back and falls down onto her ass, coughing out loud.

“Hmm ...”

She looks me up and down, her gaze flicking between my dick and my eyes as if she’s trying to decide whether she’s going to do this. If she *can* do this.

Interesting.

I lean forward while she’s on her ass breathing out loud. “It’s almost as if you’ve never done this before.”

She shudders in place. “I-I have, but I’ve never—”

“Never had such a huge one?” I raise a brow. I don’t want to hear about her previous experience. In fact, I wish I could erase them all and be the first to

give her all of it. But she went missing for years, and we can't take back those years, no matter how much I'd like to try.

She swallows and nods a little.

What she needs is a little motivation.



JILL

HE SUDDENLY LUNGES to the cabinet next to him and fishes something out of the drawer. He's so quick I don't see what it is until he's already pushed it around my neck and locked it in place. My hand instantly moves to my throat, clutching whatever it is he put there, and only then do I realize what it is.

A collar.

With a tiny bunny attached at the end of a loop.

"No, no, no, take this off," I say, scratching at it in the hopes that I can tear it away, but it won't budge.

He twirls the only key around his finger, showing off the power he holds with a smirk on his face. The kind that makes me scoot back on hands and knees while he reaches into the drawer to take out something else.

A leash.

I shake my head. "Get that thing away from me."

I crawl back as far as possible until I hit the wall with my back while he approaches ever so slyly. His length is still as hard as ever, glistening with

saliva and pre-cum, the mere sight making me gulp. I've never seen anyone this huge, but more importantly ... I've never licked one the way I just did.

How do I pretend to know what I'm doing when I have no clue?

I can't let him find out about my inexperience because he'll use it against me.

He steps closer and closer until he's right in front of me, and I'm begging him with my eyes to have mercy even though I'd never say the words out loud. It's what he wants the most, me begging, and I refuse to give that to him.

But dammit, the second he leans over, I'm about ready.

"Please ..." I murmur, desperate as I look up into his eyes while he clicks the leash in place around the collar.

"Please what, bunny?" he muses, tipping up my chin.

When I don't say another word, he smiles, and says, "Please ... me."

He grips the leash with a fist and tugs hard, pulling me up along the wall until I'm standing.

"You're despicable," I say through gritted teeth.

"And you're in need of a little education," he muses. His tongue dips out to lick his lips. "You thought I'd be satisfied with a little bit of sucking?" He pulls the leash to force me closer until his mouth is right beside my ear. "I need your full submission, bunny."

Goose bumps scatter across my skin. No man has ever spoken to me like that before.

Then again, Luca is no man.

He's a monster, and that's all he'll ever be to me.

"You act all tough and smart-ass, but it's all a disguise, and I see right through it, Jill," he says, his hand slowly sliding farther up my thigh until it becomes hard to breathe. "You're hiding something, and I'll find out what it is," he whispers, his grip on the leash growing tighter as he pushes himself up against me, hard-on poking my thigh as he breathes into my ear. "And if you won't tell me your secrets, I guess I'll have to fuck them out of you."

My whole body zings when his fingers reach my panties, and I try so hard not to react, but it's hard when he tugs them aside and slips underneath. I hold my breath, but the second he touches my slit, I'm done for.

A breathy gasp leaves my lips as he circles my clit, sliding slowly between my slit like he's enjoying the feel of my flesh around his finger. He groans against my ear, baring his teeth to nibble on my earlobe, and I'd be lying if I said it didn't turn me on.

"I remember the way you trembled for me the first time I did this to you, Jill," he murmurs, expertly swiveling across my pussy. "I remember every shiver, every breath, every moan ..." He fists the leash harder and pulls me even closer, forcing me to feel his dick poke into my thigh like a looming promise. "How wet you were for me when I fucked you with my knife."

My eyes burst open as his finger presses against my clit.

"Do you remember too, Jill?" He slides his finger farther and farther between my slit until he finds my entrance again, and when he thrusts in, I gasp.

"You will give it all to me again, and again, and again," he groans, fucking me with his finger.

Oh, God. It's been so long ago, but I remember it as if it happened yesterday.

He snuck into my room through the window at my parents' house, all wet and hungry-looking. Every move he made only pushed me more into a corner until I had nowhere left to go.

And when he got his hands on me, it was like everything else ceased to matter.

Even as he plunged the handle of a knife into my pussy, I still wished for more.

More of him, more of his greedy touches, needy for his all-consuming love.

For all those years, he loathed me, bullied me until I finally gave up.

Even back then, he'd do anything to own me.

And now I'm his, exactly how he planned, and I can't even say no.

I can't say no to the onslaught of emotions swirling through my body as he thrusts in and out, as he pulls the leash tighter until I can barely breathe, and presses his devilish lips onto my neck and actually ... kisses me.

CHAPTER 7



Jill

OH, God.

“That’s it, bunny. Give it all to me,” he whispers, planting another deliciously soft and delicate kiss right below my ear, almost as if to tempt me to tilt my head and let him take control.

And that’s just it. I’m almost there, almost ready to let go.

But it’s wrong, so wrong.

Why can’t I stop feeling this way? Why can’t I stop the pleasure from building in my body?

He stops thrusting his finger into me, and he moves to my clit where I forget everything and anything I’m supposed to be. All I feel is his fingers all over me and my body begging for a climax.

“Show me that face again, bunny. Come all over my hand like a good little slut.”

I'm so delirious from the way he touches me that I don't even care that he just called me a slut.

He fingers me so expertly that I'm losing all control over my own damn body. There's nothing I can do to stop the desire from growing, and growing, and growing until ...

A moan escapes my mouth, and the arrogant grin that follows on his face is making it so much harder to swallow. But it's too late. He flicks my clit until an orgasm rolls over my entire body. My pussy contracts as more unstoppable orgasmic waves course through me, and I can't fucking breathe.

My knees buckle, his body and the leash attached to the collar around my neck keeping me from falling to the floor.

He smiles and lets out a chuckle near my ear, his dick poking me in the thigh as it bobs up and down just from him watching me come. I take a much-needed breath. He immediately tugs the leash, growling, "Now tell me again how despicable I am."

I swallow away the lump in my throat when he looks me dead in the eyes, his cock still hard as a rock. I don't even know how to respond.

"Cat got your tongue?" he says, winking.

I frown. "Shut up."

"You could just admit that you enjoyed that," he says, biting his bottom lip. "Maybe I'll give you more if you do."

"Fuck you," I spit back, suddenly regaining my fire.

"I think I will," he groans. "But not until after I'm done exploring every hole your body has to offer."

Fuck. I can't let him do that. I can't let him find out ...

"You already got what you wanted," I say in a moment of clarity. "I'm wearing your leash. You made me come. Isn't that enough?"

The tips of his lips quirk up into a smile. "Oh, bunny, I don't have nearly enough of you, and I never will." The darkness in his eyes makes all the hairs on my body stand up. "Now should I take your ass here against the wall, on the bed, or on the floor? So many options."

I gulp, adrenaline shooting through my veins. "Fine, I'll do it."

His eyes narrow. "You'll do what?"

"I'll suck your dick."

He blinks a couple of times and then laughs. "You tried that already."

"I didn't," I respond, trying to lie my way through this. "I was teasing."

He lowers his eyes at me, inspecting me like he doesn't believe what I'm saying.

"I'll do it right this time," I add, swallowing away my nerves. "I'll ... please you."

His dick bobs up and down, and his tongue darts out to wet his lips again. He pushes me down onto the floor slowly until I'm right in front of his bouncing dick. "Show me then."

His size is still impressive, still fear-inducing, but I can't let him notice that. So I lean forward and take him into my mouth, licking the tip until he finally relaxes the leash a little. The metal ring feels strange against my tongue, but the saltiness of his pre-cum masks the metallic taste. I never expected it to taste like this.

Or that it would make my pussy clench.

I ignore the feeling and push on, licking as best as I can even though I'm not experienced at all. All I know is stuff I learned online and from sneakily listening to the things Easton, the guy who harbored me for three years, did to his wife, Charlotte.

But none of that could've ever prepared me for what it's like to feel a dick in my mouth. Let alone one this huge. I can't take him all the way, no matter how hard I try. Saliva drips from my mouth as I suck him off, hoping it'll please him, hoping it'll be enough. Because if he already feels this big in my mouth, I can't possibly fathom what it would feel like down there.

The mere thought of him taking me makes my pussy clench again.

Not from fear ... but from excitement.

And that scares me.

Because when I look up into his dark, lustful eyes, I can't look away anymore. Every inch of his desire pours out in his movements, the groans that emanate from his body, and the way he arches his back and tightens his fist around the leash. And for some reason, I don't *want* to look anywhere else.

There is something viscerally powerful about watching someone come undone from something you're doing. And for some reason, that alone makes my tongue swivel around his dick as I explore each ridge and every vein until I've made it my own. Because this man, no matter how much I hate him, has his ring around my finger and his collar around my neck. And if this is how it's going to be, I might as well learn the ropes.

Without emotions, without feelings, without desires.

Lock your heart, seal it away, while you watch this man pleasure himself with your mouth.

Until that same groan leaves his lips again, and my body responds with a throbbing clit.

Fuck.

Ignore it. Ignore it.

It doesn't mean anything.

“Yeah, lick it good, bunny,” he moans in a way I’ve never heard him speak. I swallow and attempt to take a breath, but he immediately thrusts into my mouth so deep it makes tears well up in my eyes.

“I didn’t say you could take a break,” he adds.

The more my tongue swirls around his length, the harder he begins to pump, and I find it hard not to gag. But every whimper that leaves my mouth only makes his smirk grow deeper, and I don’t want to give him that satisfaction.

But it’s so damn difficult when he starts to thrust in and out, and I fight the gag reflex as much as I can even though the sounds I make only seem to turn him on even more.

The metal ring at the tip hits the back of my throat, and a teardrop rolls down my cheek as I clutch my knees so hard my nails dig into my skin.

He twists the leash and pulls, forcing me to look up. “Look at me while I fuck your mouth, bunny.”

And I do. I can’t look away from the darkness peering back at me and the frenzied desire in his eyes as he lays claim to me like he’s waited his entire

life for this. And something about that is such an incredible thing to witness that I'm swept away by my own lust and let him do whatever he wants.

Even if it's wrong, even if he's the one man I should hate more than anyone on this earth, I can't fucking stop the wetness from pooling between my legs. And as he arches his back once more, he buries himself deep inside, making my eyes roll into the back of my head.

A loud roar emanates from his throat, and then I feel it ... the hot, salty cum spurting onto my tongue.

Oh, my God.

He just came inside my mouth.

And he keeps on coming, and coming, and coming, all while clutching the leash close to his body, forcing my mouth to stay close.

Fuck. I can't take it. It's so much I start to choke.

"Swallow," he growls.

But I can't. I fucking can't. It's too much, and with everything I have, I pull away from him and heave as the cum drips from my mouth and lands on the floor.

He grunts and grips the leash tight, tilting my head up. "Good girls don't spit, Jill. Didn't you learn that in the three years you were hiding? You must've paid them back in some way." He grabs his dick and swipes it across my cheek. "But you'll learn soon enough not to spoil what I give you." He licks his bottom lip and leans over to whisper, "Lick. It. Up."

My eyes widen. "What?"

He tilts his head. "You heard me." He flicks his finger and points at the floor where I dropped his cum.

He can't be serious. He wants me to ... lick the floor?

"Maybe I'll tie you up and come in your pussy next time so you won't be able to release it," he says.

"No," I say, a little too quickly.

He raises his brow. "No?" A chuckle follows. "We'll see about that."

Shit.

"I'll do it," I quickly say, and without thinking, I lower, past his half-hard dick, all the way down to his boots. And while I'm still panting, my tongue dips out to lap up the saltiness straight from the floor.

"Good. Clean up the mess you made," he says, watching me do it. "I like this side of you, bunny. Eager to please."

I feel so dirty doing this, yet I continue anyway. What other choice do I have? As my father said, make Luca happy, or else ...

So I close my eyes and lick up the floor until not a trace remains of my refusal to swallow.

"Good girl," Luca murmurs as he tugs the leash again to pull me back up to my feet.

I know he can see the hatred in my eyes, and I know he doesn't give a shit. But I still want him to know.

"You can keep up the charade all you like," he says, and a sudden swipe of his finger along my slit makes me suddenly aware of how sensitive I've become. Just one swipe is enough for my entire body to zing.

He's so close I can feel his breath on my skin as he hovers near my lips, almost close enough to ... kiss. "I know deep down you want me."

The air is thick with tension, every second feeling like it lasts an eternity as he stands before me with our mouths only inches away from each other.

Instead, he brings his finger to his mouth and licks up my juices right in front of me.

God. Why does he have to be such a goddamn infuriating jerk and sexy at the same time?

“And one of these days, I’m going to make you say it, *wife*,” he murmurs, swirling his tongue along the tip of his finger in a way that it resembles him licking ... a clit.

My clit.

And the mere sight makes me swallow with greed.

But then he pulls away, zips up, and releases the leash, leaving me barren and with a certain kind of need I can’t pinpoint. And without saying another word, he opens the door and walks out, closing it behind him.

Click.

The lock slipping into place is the only noise I hear before I’m left with nothing but the silence of my own rampaging heart, wishing it could scream.

CHAPTER 8



Luca

CLUTCHING MY GLASS OF RUM, I stare through the windows of my penthouse at the beautiful view. Watching the common folk go through their life down below has always been one of my favorite things to do. But today, it barely manages to brighten my sour mood.

“Something wrong, sir?” asks my most trusted guard, Marco. He comes inside and places a new set of guns and knives on the table for me to inspect.

When I part my lips to respond, there’s that scream again, and it interrupts my train of thought.

“Want me to give her some meds to shut her up?” he asks.

I turn to face him, and I point my glass at him. “Never, ever suggest that again.”

He averts his eyes in submission. “Of course, sir. My apologies.”

I stare him down for another second before taking a big sip of my rum. "Are these from the new shipment?" I put down my rum and pick up one of the guns.

"Yes, sir. Our seller told us this is a new line."

I play with it a little, tugging on the handle. Checking the chamber is empty, I pull the trigger.

"I like this one. I think I'll keep it with me for now," I reply, and he places the bullets on the table for me.

"I can order more if you like," Marco says.

"I want to test these out first before we do," I answer. "But keep them on our side. Pay them extra for the wait."

"Of course," he says.

Another squeal makes us both look up at Jill's door.

"Perhaps she wants some food?" he asks.

"No," I respond.

We've had more than enough at the party. And still I don't feel satisfied.

I used to love bingeing on food, liquor, cigarettes, and drugs. Anything I could get my hands on. But now that I have her in my clutches, nothing will ever come close.

Ecstasy.

That's what she gives me.

Like snorting cocaine straight out of the bag.

She's addictive, the right kind, and I don't know how to stop myself from consuming her until nothing is left.

All I want right now is to go back in there and fuck her every orifice until she screams my name.

But doing so would make her despise me. Hate me. Loathe me.

And the thought of that ... stops me.

She already hates me enough.

Fuck.

My hand turns into a fist against the window, and I bang on it.
“Goddammit!”

“Is there anything else I can do for you, sir?” Marco asks.

“Leave me,” I growl. “I need to think.”

“As you wish.” He nods and exits the penthouse to go back to his own room farther down the hallway. Marco never questions my authority, and he knows not to try.

But she ... she defies me every step of the way.

And I'd be lying if I said it didn't turn me on.

She's right. I am sick.

But I don't fucking care.

I take another sip of my rum.

Jill is my wife now. And I'll be damned if I don't enjoy every last inch of her body like it always belonged to me.

As I overlook the city, my soon-to-be empire, my eyes land on the bookshelf in the corner of the room. I get up and walk to the dusty shelves where a crown lies on the top. I take it off and stare at it. I'd forgotten I even got it from her parents when she ran away. A promise, to me.

She would be found ... and she would marry me.

Oh, the way things have turned out since then.

This little kid's crown is filled with memories of lies and obsession.

Even back when we were little, I wanted to torment her and invade her every thought. I couldn't get enough. No matter how sick and twisted I became, I still chased after her, no matter how much she hated me.

All it did was make me want ... more.

But now she's finally here in my goddamn penthouse as my wife. My fucking princess.



AGE 9

ONCE UPON A TIME, there was a girl with a crown too heavy for her head ... and a prince more than willing to take over for her.

When Jill is least expecting it, I snatch the crown off her head and run off with it.

"No, give that back!" she shrieks.

But all it does is make me laugh as I dangle the crown around my finger.

I love seeing her get all worked up, but what I love more is when she chases me.

“C’mon then. I dare you to get it back,” I taunt.

Rage almost spews from her eyes like a fucking laser. “Give. It. Back.”

What is she going to do? I can’t wait to find out.

When she approaches me, I keep backing away, wondering how far she’s willing to go. How close she’s willing to get.

“Stop,” she says through gritted teeth.

A grin spreads across my face. “No.”

She runs straight at me, catching me off guard. But I avoid her and twirl the crown around so she can’t grab it. “Missed.”

This is so much more fun than whatever boring game Jasmine and Jill were playing.

She groans, visibly frustrated. “Luca!”

“Jill!” I repeat, egging her on. I love it when she gets this annoyed with me. There’s something about seeing all those emotions light up on her face like fireworks.

“C’mon, Luca ...” Jasmine scoffs, sighing loudly as if it’ll make me stop.

“What, *Jasmine*?” I retort as she follows us around the garden in that dumb pink dress.

“It’s not funny!” Jill yells, still chasing after me, but I win every single time she tries to snatch the crown out of my hands.

Suddenly, she stops and says, “Why do you do this? Huh?”

Because I like it, that's why.

But I'm not gonna tell her that.

"Because you look stupid," I quip.

The shocked look on her face is amazing. "I do not!"

"Only queens and princesses wear crowns," I say. "And you're neither."

Now that's really gonna piss her off.

Her voice gets even louder as she spews, "I *am* a queen!"

I hold up a finger. "Queens are only queens if they're married to a king." I put the crown on my own head. "Maybe I'll be one now."

Jasmine laughs but immediately hides her smile behind her hand when Jill notices.

"C'mon then, Jill. You wanted to be a queen," I add, bowing for her.

She throws me a look of disgust. "What? You want me to be *your* queen?"

I tilt my head. "A queen isn't a queen if she isn't married."

She turns and sticks up her nose like only a snooty little princess would. "I would rather marry a slug than you."

A slug?

Better than me?

"A slug?" I can't even stop the laughter from rolling off my tongue.

Jasmine tugs at Jill's arm. "Let's do something else."

"No, I want my crown back," Jill replies. "He can't bully me."

Bully her? Is that what she thinks I'm doing?

Fine, I'll show her.

When the two aren't looking, I dive into the grass and find the slimiest slug I can find. I approach her with the crown in my hands, hiding the slug underneath.

"I'll give it back ..." I lie.

When she holds out her hand, I place the slug on her palm instead.

The shriek that follows is the loudest one I've ever heard, and it makes me laugh so hard I can't even catch my breath.

Toying with Jill Baas is the best thing ever, and I don't think I'll ever get enough.

Ever.



PRESENT

BEFORE I GO into the venue with my father, I adjust my suit and take a deep breath. Inside, a new De Vos partner is waiting for me, and I give him a handshake. "Luca De Vos. I'm overseeing business right now."

"Impressive. You've changed," the partner says, inspecting my outfit like he hasn't seen Armani before. "The last time I saw you, you were only a little kid."

"Much has changed," my father says, jumping in for me. "Come, sit with us."

“Of course,” the partner says. “I’m eager to negotiate the terms of our agreement.”

We walk to our seats in this high-end restaurant on the top floor of the building. My father rented out the entire place for this deal. It’s not every day we get to circumvent the Baas family’s connections.

“I assume everything is going as planned?” my father says as we sit down, and the server brings us a bottle of their most expensive wine.

“Yes, we’ve received your donation and are moving along with the shipment,” he responds as the server fills up our glasses. My father shoos him away. “But the Baas family will not be thrilled.”

“Baas has offered you too little for the hard work you do,” my father responds. “You deserve what we have to offer.”

The man takes a couple of sips from his wine. “And I’m sure you’ll gladly take the fall should things go south.” He eyes us both while leaning back in his seat.

I clear my throat and sit up straight. “We can handle the Baas family. You bring us the goods we need, and we’ll deal with the rest.”

The man looks at both of us and takes another sip. “I admit, I have had my doubts.”

“No need. I have it covered,” I respond. “The Baas family owes me.”

The man narrows his eyes at me. “You sure have some balls jumping in for your father like that.”

“And I thought you were smarter than to insult a potential business partner.”

We stare each other down.

I know he thinks he's dealing with my father.

But my father did not bring *me* here.

I brought *him* here.

Suddenly, the man erupts into laughter, and the tension is broken. "I'm just messing with you. Don't worry."

I nod, uninterested in his clear taunts. "Shall we discuss business?"

The man clears his throat and picks up his wine. "Right. Let's get on with it."



WHEN THE DEAL is made and the man has left, my father and I take a break on the restaurant's balcony. With a tumbler filled with rum, I lean over the edge and stare out into the beauty of the cityscape.

"You did well in there," my father says, and he pats me on the back. "I'm proud of you, boy."

"Thanks," I reply even though it does nothing for me.

I used to vie for his attention and try to steal it away from my brother. Good or bad behavior, I didn't care as long as he looked at me. But now, all I feel is resentment. Every compliment is doused in regret. As if he begrudges the fact that I'm not my brother and he'll have to be content with that. And it made me hate him and hate myself for wanting his approval.

But I've learned along the way that not giving a shit is much easier than caring. Ignoring any emotions I have is the only way to get what I want: Power.

“I mean it,” my father adds, taking a sip of his wine.

The proud look on his face catches me off guard.

“What?” I laugh.

“It’s not every day I see my son take control.” He smiles. “And to think you were such a troubled teen before.”

I roll my eyes and look away. This is exactly what I mean with the offhand comments.

“Luca, I know you never liked me because I chose your brother over you,” he adds. “But your brother isn’t here anymore, and you’ve stepped up by becoming the man I always dreamed he’d be.”

He thinks it’s a compliment, but it’s not. Far from it.

Suddenly, he coughs in a violent manner, and when I look, he’s already pulled out a napkin. I watch him heave and cough something up. He hides it in the napkin, clearly afraid of what it means when he shows the truth. When our family appears weak.

But there’s an obvious red stain.

Blood.

The blood of someone whose life is waning day by day.

The look he gives me deepens, darkens in a way that only happens when he’s serious about something. When he’s not afraid to show his cards to get his way.

Because we both know what this means.

What the consequence is when the leader of a family gets deadly sick.

With all the vultures outside, waiting and watching for any sign of distress.

Any sign of weakness.

It's our greatest downfall.

"The business cannot fail. Our family depends on it. You *must* take over," he says. "It's time."

I nod, glugging down the rest of the rum with ease, and I throw the glass over the balcony into the water. "I'm ready."

"I know you are," he says, stepping closer while clutching the railing. "But you have to understand the risks."

I laugh. "I know the risks. We're mobsters."

He clutches my shoulder. "Stop joking. This is serious business."

His voice has me on edge, a sliver of me contemplating whether or not I'll shout back. But what's the point? He doesn't care.

"We *cannot* fail. This is our family name and legacy on the line," he says. "You must succeed and bring the Baas family to their knees. For all the hurt they've caused this family. Destroy them or make them surrender."

I nod, and he clutches the nape of my neck like he always did in the small moments he was actually content. He sighs and looks out over the horizon again. "Oh, if only your brother could've seen you now. He'd be proud."

I snort. I doubt it. And I doubt I'd be standing here today if it wasn't for his death.

"Liam ... I miss you, boy. You would've made the perfect heir."

My nostrils twitch as I clutch the banister.

Fuck this.

I turn and march off.

“Luca? Where are you going?” my father asks. “Oh, c’mon. Can’t you indulge your father for once?”

“I have. But the rum is gone, so I am, too,” I bark, raising that same middle finger I know he disapproves of.

But even as I’m finally ready to take over the De Vos business, I will never stop being the Luca he despises. And that brings the biggest smile of all to my face.

And as I leave, I make a promise to myself to never fucking care about anything anyone thinks of me ever again.

Except maybe that one girl sitting in my bedroom at home.

That one girl I’m headed back to with all my seething hatred.

Time to go fuck it out of my system.

CHAPTER 9



Jill

SWEAT DROPS ROLL down my forehead, but I ignore them as they tumble onto my cheek. With the only wire I managed to tear out of the fake flowers in the vase near the window, I'm prying away at the lock around my neck.

It's already late in the evening, and I've been left on my own for hours. But I haven't closed one eye. I've been staring at myself in the mirror for the last few hours since Luca was gone, hoping I can get this collar off before he comes back. But my hands are shaking, and every muscle in my body hurts from trying.

"Fuck!" I groan, stopping for a second to take a breather.

I can't catch a fucking break.

Closing my eyes, I sigh. I have no clue what I'm doing. I've never had to break out of a place before, let alone get a collar off my neck.

Who in their right mind even does this to a person?

A monster, that's who.

And that monster could come back any moment now.

I have to think. I chose to make this deal, but there are more ways to make sure my sister is safe, and one of them is running and taking her with me. But what else can I do to make sure I get out of this house unscathed?

I look at the door lock and decide to pry it open instead. I can't waste any more time on this collar. I'll deal with that thing once I get out. First, I need this damn door open, so I can escape.

I stuff the wire into the lock and fold it, pushing it around to find the right shape. After being busy for so long, I now understand why picking a lock is such a tough job, but I'm not giving up. Even though I've never done this before, I have nothing to lose at this point.

Suddenly, a door slams shut.

I stop. Drop the wire. Suck in a breath.

Nerves are killing me.

Footsteps come closer.

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck!

There's no more time.

He's here.

I scramble and rush to the curtains, where I pick up a vase from the floor, chucking out the remaining fake flowers that I destroyed for the wire. I hold it close to my heart as I try to calm down while the footsteps loom closer and closer ...

Click.

I peek behind the curtain.

The door handle moves.

I quickly move back and take in another deep breath, preparing myself.

If I can't escape quietly, I'll have to try by force.

C'mon, Jill, you can do this.

You've seen fighting before. Your father's men did it all the time even though he never brought you to any of the dangerous stuff. And don't forget about Easton and his trigger-happy guards. You know how violence works. Now do it.

I swallow back the nerves and brace myself.

The door snaps shut softly.

Shoes tap across the floor as someone stalks toward me.

It has to be him. He wouldn't allow anyone else in my room, I'm sure of it.

One more step. Two. Three.

In a swift motion, I spin on my heels and lunge forward, attempting to throw the vase as hard as I can.

But the second I spot those sparkling dark eyes homing in on mine, I stop midair.

His hand wraps around my wrist, the vase dangling between us.

A vicious smirk slowly spreads on his face. "Easy there, bunny." He grabs the vase with his other hand and forces me to put it down. "Don't want to hurt yourself there."

"Let me go," I growl, trying to jerk my wrist free from his grip, but it won't work.

“No, I don’t think I will,” he responds.

“Fuck you,” I hiss.

“Oh, I *will* do that,” he says.

“Over my dead body,” I growl back, emblazoned by the attack.

His face suddenly darkens, and there’s a moment of silence between us as tension fills the air.

“I’ve killed men for less.”

I swallow at the obvious threat, but he’s not the first mobster I’ve dealt with, and he knows. “So has my father.”

A vicious smile spreads on his lips. “Your father is weak. A coward.”

I spit on his expensive suit.

It takes him a while to wipe it off, but he does finally release my wrist.

“For someone whose father sold her off like cattle, you sure are happy to defend him.”

“He never wanted any of this,” I retort. “And when he’s collected enough men and firepower, he’ll come save me and put a bullet in your head.”

He laughs out loud but stops halfway through, looking dead serious. “Your father disowned you.”

I push away that thought even though I know he’s right. Father must care about me, right? Even if only a little, I know he wouldn’t want this for his daughter. He only resorted to this last option because he had nothing else he could trade the De Vos family for the death of their son.

“You think you’re a mafia princess, but he happily gave you away to keep your sister safe,” he responds.

I point at my chest. “That was my choice.”

But as I attempt to push past him, he corners me between the window and the curtain, planting his hand against the glass. “Did I say you could leave?”

My hands twitch with rage. He can’t control me, not even if he tries.

His hand rises, and I expect a slap for my attempted murder and defiance, so I close my eyes.

But then the softest of caresses on my cheek makes me gasp for air. When I open my eyes again, he’s so close I can barely breathe. His hand snakes around my neck, my hair tumbling down my shoulders as he tilts my head back. He leans in, the scent of his intoxicating cologne penetrating my nostrils. As his nose and lips hover close to my skin, I whimper, and I hate what he does to me.

Why does my body respond this way to him?

I don’t understand. Why can’t I control myself?

“Oh, bunny ...I think you’ve missed me as much as I’ve missed you.” The way he groans sets my body on fire.

His mouth puckers against my neck, and my breath hitches in my throat. The warmth of his lips against my cool skin is making me feel light-headed. In heat.

“And I can’t wait to fucking ravage you all over again,” he groans, smiling against my skin. “But first, you need to be—” Suddenly, he spins me on my heels so my back is turned to him, clutches my wrists, and pins them up against the windows along with my breasts. Everything is on full display.

“Punished.”

I shriek as he rips down the rest of the mermaid wedding dress that still clings to my body, tearing it to pieces. Pearls and sequins roll across the floor, but he pays no attention as he presses up against me. I’m half-naked in front of the window for all the world to see.

But everything stops mattering when his hard-on pokes me in the ass. The only fabric between us is my flimsy underwear and his pants.

“You’ve been bad, bunny, trying to throw a vase at my head? Not very classy,” he says.

“Says the guy who decided to marry out of spite,” I hiss.

SLAP!

The sudden slap to my ass makes an unwelcome moan leave my mouth.

“Did you forget you were the one who begged me to marry you instead?”

My nipples harden against the cold glass.

“I didn’t ask you to collar me like a dog,” I spit back.

Another smack has me fighting to stop the sounds from slipping out.

“And I didn’t ask to be threatened by my wife, but here we are,” he retorts, slapping me again. “Pets who misbehave deserve to be locked up.”

Another slap to my bum has my knees buckling underneath me. It’s impossible to stop the spankings from reverberating between my legs, one after the other until all I feel is the hot sting of his touch on my skin ... until it’s impossible to separate pain from pleasure.

When he pauses, I breathe out a soft sigh.

“Now, are you ready to tell me the full truth of what you were doing in here?” he says.

I bite through the pain, ignoring him despite knowing the consequence is more...

SLAP! SLAP!

Sizzling, burning, exciting pain.

And I feel it everywhere ... not just on my ass but in my pussy too, and I don't know how to switch it off. It feels so wrong, so immoral that he's doing this... but more because I'm fighting the arousal.

“Answer me, bunny,” he growls, raising his hand. “I can play this game all night long.”

“Yeah, I bet you enjoy hurting people,” I retort.

I know it's a low blow, but what else do I have at this point? He's already stolen my freedom, part of my innocence, and now my dignity too.

He grabs ahold of my ass, one hand still firmly on my wrists, pressing me down against the window. “Hurting people? Yes.” He slaps me again. “Hurting *you*?” A half-groan, half-laugh rolls from his tongue. “No. I'm just having fun.”

SLAP!

The last one is harder than the ones before, and a moan spills out of me.

He leans in to whisper, “And I think you are too.”

I'll never admit how it makes me feel when he touches me. “Shut up,” I growl.

He snorts against my neck. “You have an awful lot of bite for a soft, innocent little girl.” His nose briefly pauses near my hair, and I hear him sniff. “But you smell like a fuckable little slut.”

I gulp and immediately worry he heard it. I hate what he does to me, how vulgar he is to me ... like I’m nothing more than an average girl to him who he dragged home so he can lock up and throw away the key while using her for his every dirty fantasy.

Somehow, that thought makes my clit throb.

Fuck. No. Don’t ever go there.

Suddenly, he bends me over, shoving my face down onto the glass as he lifts my ass up in the sky. “Now let me have a taste.”

A shriek is choked in the back of my throat as he rips off my panties, the last thing standing between us. Now I’m fully naked and exposed in front of the window overlooking the parking lot. But it all stops mattering the second he swipes his index finger down, circling my clit before sliding back up along my entrance again, taking with him ample amounts of wetness. Fuck.

“You’re already wet,” he murmurs, and when I look over my shoulder, he brings his finger to his mouth and sucks on it.

And oh my God, the sight of him casually licking his finger while staring at me starts a fire in me that I don’t know how to put out. The mischievous look on his face doesn’t help at all, especially since the way he looks at me hasn’t changed one bit. No wonder I had so much trouble fighting him off when he first came into my room and did ... this.

A blush spreads on my cheeks, and I quickly look away before I make it any more difficult for myself.

“What’s wrong, Jill?” he asks, and a sudden jerk on the leash around my neck has me looking up right into his eyes through the reflection in the window. “Scared you might start to remember how good it felt when I touched you?”

“Never,” I respond.

He groans, grasping my thighs, and I hear a zipper going down. “Guess I’ll have to fuck your moans right out of you.”

Something hard pushes up against my entrance with a warm tip, and all my alarm bells go off.

I swiftly spin on my heels and go to my knees right before he enters me.

His muscles clench as I face his giant dick again, the rings bouncing up and down along with his length as I look up at him.

“What’s this?” he growls.

“I’ll suck,” I say. “Just like before.”

His eyes narrow, and he steps away, zipping up again. Clutching my leash, he pulls me with him. “I think the fuck not. You’re trying to avoid being fucked, aren’t you?”

I shake my head, but it doesn’t seem to faze him as he pulls me along by my leash to the middle of the bedroom.

“Please,” I mutter, hoping I can still fix this, but it only eggs him on more, judging from the insufferable smirk on his face.

“It’s still our wedding night, Jill. And your wifely duties don’t end with your mouth around my dick,” he muses as he tugs at the leash to tilt my head up. “Stand.”

I do what he says even though it's humiliating to stand here in the nude in front of him. But when he releases the leash to step back and look at me for a moment, the blush is right back on my face. He bites his lip while taking ample time to gaze at every inch of my body like he's trying to engrave it onto his brain.

"Gorgeous," he mumbles under his breath.

Fuck. Why can't I stop this blush from turning my cheeks red?

I wish I could say those words do nothing for me. But I'd be a liar.

No one has ever said the words he says to me or treated me the way he has.

And I must always remember that.

"What do you want, Luca?" I ask.

He stares at me, his eyes haunted with questions I don't know the answers to. "You know what I want." He taps his lips with his index finger. "Kiss. Me."

I shudder from the thought. Not because I'm repulsed by the idea, but because it goes against every fiber of my being to show him an ounce of affection.

I know what his kisses can do.

I've felt it firsthand.

But kissing him back? That means love. And I don't dish that out easily.

"No."

His brow rises. "It's just a kiss."

"It's never *just a kiss*," I rebuke. "I will never *want* you."

His jaw tenses, and his fingers tighten into a fist. “I don’t care if you want me,” he spits back. “All I care about is destroying your family and making the world mine.” He steps closer again, planting a single finger underneath my chin to make me look up into his eyes. “And if you don’t give me what I need, I might as well go grab someone else who might be more eager.”

His eyes flicker with greed, and I don’t have to ask to know what he’s thinking.

The one thing that escaped his grasp.

My sister.

CHAPTER 10



Jill

TEARS well up in my eyes. “No.”

He wouldn’t.

But the dead serious look on his face tells me differently.

I immediately sink to my knees with my hands locked in front of me like a beggar. “Please don’t take anyone else ... I’ll do it.”

He tilts his head and moves his shoe closer to my body. “Do what?” he rasps.

“Everything. Anything you want.” It comes out in a single breath and stings like a knife to the heart. But what other choice do I have? “I give in.”

It’s silent for a moment as I stare at his shiny black shoe, wondering where the hell he’s been that’s made him so enraged. Because there is clearly more behind all of this than he’d ever tell me.

But maybe, if I give in, he'll slowly show me more of his weaknesses, allowing me to take advantage.

"Up," he says, his voice dark, heady, like he's both angered and lusty at the same time, and I recognize the feeling all too well.

As I stand again, he stares me down, only to move to his drawer. He pulls out a rope, which makes me swallow. My eyes search the cabinet, hoping to find anything I can use to defend myself if I need to. A letter opener. And I can't stop looking at it, hovering closer, and closer, and closer, my body trembling with every inch as I reach for it and—

BANG!

I tense up and stop all motion as the bullet grazes the cabinet, flicking the letter opener off, leaving smoke and a burnt edge of wood in its wake. When my eyes find Luca's again, they are filled with amusement.

"You want me to be rough?" he growls. "You got it." He tucks the gun back into his pocket and waltzes toward me like it was no big deal he shot a gun mere inches away from me.

He pulls a long bar with straps from the drawer and comes closer, bending over right in front of me.

"Spread."

He tugs my legs apart and secures the straps around my ankles while I'm frozen in place. Next, he throws a bunch of ropes around my waist and wrists. It doesn't process with me what he's doing until it's too late. Until he's tied up my wrists and my belly and attached it to a pulley from the ceiling hooks.

"What are you doing?" I mutter.

Without warning, he tugs the rope, and I shriek when it lifts me into the air. He ties the rope around two hooks, securing my body so my wrists are above my head, my waist is locked in place, and my legs are spread far apart while I hang parallel from the ceiling.



LUCA

I LOOK up at her dangling from the ceiling, her legs spread wide, exactly how I like it.

It's not the first time I've tied a girl up. I've always enjoyed trying out the extremes, see how far I can go and how far they can bend ...

But none of those times were with Jill, and I have to admit it's beyond thrilling to see her like this.

Tied up and slowly spinning while every orifice is open to me and ready for the taking.

I circle around her to take a look from every angle, taking in the view to memorize it fully for my spank bank. I've never seen a more appetizing sight than this one, not even in all the fantasies I had about her, and I've had plenty.

So many, in fact, that I lost count of the number of girls I fucked and pretended were her.

But now she's here, in the flesh, completely naked and left for me to enjoy like the spoils of a long-drawn-out war.

And I *will* enjoy her body thoroughly.

My hand slides across her belly, and she twitches in place.

“What is this? I didn’t agree to this,” she murmurs as my hand slides farther up her body until they meet her tits, and she sucks in a breath when I grab one of them.

“This? This is my filthy, dirty fantasy come to life, Jill,” I reply, squeezing her tit until she gasps. “And you did agree. Remember what you said? *Everything and anything I want*. And I’ll enjoy every single second of that promise as if it was my last.”

“You’re insane,” she hisses.

I grab both her nipples and pinch them until she squeals, the sound like music to my ears.

“No, just obsessed,” I reply.

“With what? Revenge?” she quips. “Because I get it already. You hate me.”

“No ...” I say, and I release her nipples only to slide slowly across her navel and down between her legs. “With you.”

Her cheeks turn red with desire as I swipe my hand along her pussy and spread her juices all over. “And I think you’re only lying to yourself when you say you’re not as equally obsessed with me,” I add. “But we’ll get there.”

When I stick a wet finger inside her, she mewls, and it makes me pause.

Of all the groans and moans I’ve heard in my life, this wasn’t one I expected to come from her mouth. So sensitive.

Too sensitive.

And for some reason, my mind instantly goes to the moment she saw my cock for the very first time. I was distracted by how delicious she looked with that collar around her neck and that mouth begging me to fuck it raw, but now that I think of it ...

Her eyes widened.

And she was clearly inexperienced.

I pull my finger out of her, and her body immediately relaxes. But one single touch of her clit makes her whole body bob up and down even though I've touched her before.

I pause as it hits me.

Good God.

"Jill ..." I clutch her leg and spin her around to face me. "Are you a virgin?"

Her pupils dilate as her lips part. "No. No, I'm not."

My eyes narrow. "Hmm ..." I don't believe one single word. "Why don't you prove it to me?"

"How?" she asks. "I swear, I'm not."

I spin her around again before she can say anything else to spoil the mood. Whether it's the truth or not, I'm taking what's mine, and I'll make her tell the truth.

"I'll find out," I say, grasping both her thighs as she looks up to see what I'm doing. "One way or another."

And I dive between her legs and press a kiss to her sweet pussy.

"What are you doing? Oh my God, I—"

“Shh ...” I murmur against her skin. “Stay still unless you want me to get rough.”

Even after the first kiss, I can already tell she’s sensitive beyond imagination. And when I plant another kiss on her slit, she writhes with delight, and it makes my cock harden against my pants.

So I open my mouth and drop my tongue onto her clit, circling it while applying pressure until she lets out a heady moan.

“That’s it, bunny. Let me have a taste of what you have to offer,” I groan, licking her while I hold her thighs in place.

Fuck, she tastes divine. My cock strains in my pants until it hurts, and I free myself by unzipping and letting my length spill out of its constraints. Every kiss I apply is another one that makes her squirm, and I love the way her face scrunches up when I touch her clit.

Even if she won’t admit it, she definitely seems to be enjoying me ravaging her.

And if she won’t give me a fucking kiss on the mouth, I’ll give her a fucking kiss between the legs instead.

“Why are you doing this?” she asks, her breath heavy, needy as her pussy drips down onto the floor.

I lap her up and look up from underneath my eyelashes the second she lifts her head. “Because I want to.”

“Why do you want this?” she mutters, confused. “I thought you wanted me to—”

“I want you. All of you,” I interject, sliding my tongue into her. “Every inch. Every taste. Every moan.”

And as I thrust inside with my tongue, I can definitely feel some resistance, but the moan that follows makes my cock bounce up and down with excitement.

Fuck, I can't wait to bury myself deep inside that wet little hole of hers.

Sooner or later, she's going to beg me to do it.

But until then ... I'll tease her.

Kiss her.

Bite her.

Groan at her.

Make her come.

Until she can't stand it any longer and spreads those legs for me willingly.

"Oh, God ..." she mutters as I lick harder and harder.

"Luca will do," I reply as I continue sucking and kissing.

Her whole body begins to heat, her muscles tightening around me while my nails dig into her thighs to keep her from choking me with her legs. Girls like her would definitely try. Our families would teach us that much. There isn't anything an enemy wouldn't do to get their hands on your power and wealth. And right now ... I am that enemy.

But she couldn't hurt me.

Not even if she actually wanted to.

And right now, I doubt she wants anything else besides my tongue diving between her legs. Fuck, it's so goddamn hot. I can't control myself, and I start rubbing myself right in front of her all while licking her senseless.

“Please, let me down,” she mutters.

“Not until after you’ve come ... Maybe ten times,” I reply, winking when she looks up in horror.

“Ten?!”

“If you don’t tell me what I want to know, I might add ten more,” I say.

“No, I can’t tell you,” she says, shaking her head.

I lick her clit until she squirms. “Your throbbing pussy begs to differ.”

“No, don’t make me,” she murmurs, delirious as I keep lapping her up. “I can’t handle it.”

“Always so uptight ... it’s about time someone fucked that timidness out of you.”

She gasps as I bury my tongue inside her again, desperate for a taste. The way she rolls over my tongue, her wetness dripping down my chin, makes me so fucking horny I start to moan along with her.

“That’s it, Jill. Let go of all your inhibitions and come for me,” I say as she’s on the verge of breaking. “Do it. Come against my tongue, and I’ll reward you with more.”

When the tip of my tongue flicks her clit a few times, it swells, and I can feel the pulsations of her orgasm right through my very own fucking mouth, and it’s the biggest fucking turn-on I’ve ever felt.

I keep going, licking and sucking her clit until she clenches her legs again and another one rolls right through her.

“That’s it, bunny. Relax and feel the ecstasy,” I say, planting one hand on her belly while the other is furiously stroking my length.

I can't get enough of how she tastes, how she feels underneath my mouth, how her body almost moves in sync with my tongue as I rhythmically flick her to another orgasm.

Every pulse of her clit makes me that much more aroused, and my cock throbs with need. I spread pre-cum all over my dick as lube, thrusting into my own damn hand as I kiss her hard.

One second I allow her to breathe and ask, "Are you ready to tell me who fucked you?"

She shakes her head, but I can see the hesitation in her eyes.

"Fine. More."

One. Two. Three. Four. Five.

More and more orgasms follow, but I'm not done yet.

Not even as the tears roll down her cheeks from all the climaxes she's endured.

"Tell me who your boyfriend was," I say, my tongue twirling around her red and swollen clit.

"Please ..." she murmurs.

"Please ... more?" I ask, licking my lips at the thought.

Her eyes widen. "I don't think I can take it."

"Yes, you can," I reply, tapping her sensitive pussy. "But if you want it to end ... all you have to do is tell me who your boyfriend was."

When my mouth hovers over her clit again, she yells, "Okay, fine! I'll tell you, but he wasn't my boyfriend."

A few heavy breaths follow while I pause and listen to what she has to say.

“His name is Nick.”

Nick.

Just the name makes me want to punch throats.

“Where does he live?” I growl.

“I don’t know.”

I slap her ass, and it awakens a side of her I could only ever dream of, as the moan that slips out of her throat is nothing short of animalistic.

Amazing.

My tongue circles around her mound, ready to dive in again, when she finally answers.

“I don’t know! I swear!” she says. “He works for Easton Van Buren.”

That guy runs those restaurants our parents used to dine at together frequently. Interesting. Is that who hid her from us?

The mere thought has me clenching my fists.

“You got what you wanted ... now put me down,” Jill says, breaking my train of thought.

I forget all about my rage the second I look at the naked body hanging before me, her supple flesh begging me to lick and kiss every inch.

“I don’t think so,” I respond, and I cover her clit with my mouth again.

She gasps. “But you said—”

I look up into her dumbstruck eyes. “What I want is *you* and only you.” I smile against her wetness. “And I never said *when* it would end. Only that it would.”

The red-hot rage almost bursts out of her like she’s a fire-breathing dragon. “Asshole!”

I laugh and continue licking her. “If you ask nicely, I might lick that too.”

The look of disbelief that follows makes me smile like a bastard.

I know she hates me, but she loves my mouth and all the wicked things I can and will do to her body. It’s only a matter of time before she admits that out loud.

So I keep kissing and licking her over and over, all while stroking myself, and I don’t fucking stop. Not even as she’s moaning like a whore, as beads of sweat cover her body, as wetness drips down her thighs and ass, and as her eyes roll into the back of her head.

I’m not fucking done with claiming all the orgasms she has to give.

And on the tenth, I grasp her legs, spin her around, and roar as I come as hard as the accumulated orgasms she’s had. I flick the head of my dick, spurting my juices all over her face and mouth. Covering every inch of her in my filth, I leave nothing unscathed. When I’m finally done nutting, I bring a finger to her face and drag my cum all the way down to her tits, marking her as mine.

“Mine,” I growl, and I pinch her nipple and tug until she squeals.

Then I lean over to plant a kiss on her other nipple, taking it into my mouth to suck and nibble. Her whole body quivers, and when I release her nipple from between my teeth, I move away again to look at her as she hangs from the ceiling with an oversexed look on her face.

With a giant, dirty smile on my face, I lean in and look her straight in the eyes as I whisper, “Good girl. If you behave, I might treat you to more.”

“Fuck y—”

I slap the rope so hard she spins around while I burst out into laughter as I zip up.

“Have fun waiting for me,” I say.

“What? Where are you going?” she mutters with panic in her eyes as she keeps twirling around. “Don’t leave me hanging here!”

“I’ll be back for more soon, bunny, don’t you worry.” I open the door and look back at her slowly spinning around. “Time to go pay someone a visit.”

Her eyes widen, and her pupils dilate at the same time. “Wait ... what? No. No!”

But I slam the door shut before she can throw me any more insults.

It’s too late for her to take back what she said.

One way or another, I’ll find out if she’s lying.

And if I can’t get the truth from her mouth, then I’ll get it from that fucker Nick instead.

CHAPTER 11



Jill

A YEAR ago

I SEW the new button to Easton's suit and cut the string, patting down the jacket while holding it up to make sure it looks okay.

Seems like my “silly juvenile” interest, as my father called it, in fashion and cutting up clothes and making my own new ones paid off in the end. I didn't expect to make a living from it, but I won't look a gift horse in the mouth either. Easton Van Buren, one of our family friends, took me in when I was on the run and had nowhere to go, so I'm eternally grateful. He kept me safe from both Luca's and my family for years. I have a roof over my head, food in my mouth, and I'm happy to say I can be of use to someone.

With a smile, I carry the new suit to Easton's closet and put it where it belongs so he doesn't have to go look for it for his next meeting. He's got too much on his mind anyway to be troubled by these trivial things. And it's my pleasure to take those trivial things off his plate.

I hum a gentle song as I leave the room, closing the door behind me, but when I turn around, I squeal at the two big eyes staring back at me.

“Nick,” I say, poking him in the side. “Don’t creep up on me like that.”

He laughs. “Sorry. Didn’t mean to scare you.”

My heart is still racing, but not because of the scare. There’s something in the way he looks at me that makes it impossible for me to look away.

“Uh, were you looking for something?” I ask.

He shakes his head. “Just doing my rounds, you know.”

Right. He’s a guard after all.

I nod a few times, unsure of how to answer. It’s always awkward like this when we talk. Like neither of us knows what to say.

I clutch my arm. “Well, I’ve still got some work to do for the charity.”

When I attempt to walk past him, he moves to the same side, and we both end up hopping back and forth, trying to decide which way I’m going to pass. I laugh, and he does too, and I stop to say, “Okay, so who’s going where?”

He plants himself against the wall. “Ladies first.”

Even though he’s always been a gentleman, it still makes me blush.

I don’t know why.

I never used to be like this around Easton’s main guard, but ever since I’ve been busy with his wife Charlotte’s charity, something about our dynamic has changed. Every time I go there, Nick is there too, and I don’t know if it’s because Easton told him to guard Charlotte or if it’s because of ... me.

I swallow and walk past him, rubbing my lips together to stop the warmth from spreading. “See you later,” I say.

“I hope so.”

I almost stumble across the hallway.

He hopes so?

When I glance at him over my shoulder, he winks.

Oh, God.

I walk away until I’m behind a wall and then stop to clutch my own body with my eyes closed, holding my breath.

Nope, do not go there. You are not ready for any of that. You don’t even like Nick.

I open my eyes again and sigh out loud.

I really have to stop making him think he has a chance, but it’s tough because I hate disappointing people. And I also hate it when guys try to make me fawn.

Because if there is one thing I learned, it’s that men can’t be trusted.

Men use. They betray. They hurt.

And when they’re done with you, they discard you like you never meant anything.

And I refuse to deal with that kind of heartbreak.

So I walk away with my head held high, determined not to let myself be swayed by anything or anyone, no matter how handsome or kind they are to me.

I'd rather not have anyone at all than have someone shatter my heart.



LUCA

PRESENT

IT WAS easy enough to track the fucker down. There aren't that many guys named Nick working for a dude named Easton Van Buren. Especially not when that same employer is one of the most notorious hotel-restaurant chain owners here in the Netherlands.

Our parents regularly had business dinners at his restaurants, and he's a family friend. Or was, before I knew he harbored Jill.

Out of all the places she could go, that asshole was nowhere near safe.

I expected a guy like him who's used to working with mobsters to make smarter decisions.

He'll deal with my wrath later.

First, I'll have to deal with his employee, Jill's fucking ex-boyfriend Nick. Just the thought of him touching her ... kissing her, makes me trigger happy to the point where I'm about ready to get out of this car with my knife in one hand and my gun in the other and slice his heart out.

I had my men track Nick's movements for an hour after they spotted him at one of Easton's restaurants. He's all by himself now, strutting around some local bakeries with a small bag in his hands.

“Off to do some groceries during lunchtime, eh?” I mumble to myself as I stare at him through the car window. I snap my fingers at my driver. “Stop there. He’ll go into the park. We’ll ambush him there.”

My driver nods, and the two men I brought check their guns for bullets and add a silencer.

Good. I don’t want to make noise if I can avoid it.

Our family thrives by being invisible to the public, and it’s best kept that way.

But fuck me, shit like this makes it difficult to maintain my self-control.

When Nick opens up his bag and pulls out a sandwich, he walks into the park up ahead, just like I thought he would.

“Let’s go,” I say. We throw the doors open, and we all jump out. I quickly run into the bushes and push through them to reach him from behind while my men follow my trail. Nick doesn’t seem to notice we’re tracking him as he’s too busy chomping down on his sandwich to notice his surroundings.

Never, ever let your guard down.

“One, two ...” I mumble at my men. “Three!”

We all jump out of the bushes at the same time and lock him in, one arm around his neck, the other around his mouth. His sandwich falls from his hands onto the bench while we drag him back into the bushes with us. As my men hold him down, I point my gun at his head and pull the safety back to make him stop thrashing.

“Make a sound, and I’ll put a bullet in your brain,” I say.

His eyes widen when they lock on mine.

“Are you going to cooperate?”

He nods, after which one of my men takes his hand off Nick’s mouth.

“What the fuck do you want from me?” he growls. “Who are you?”

“Who I am doesn’t fucking matter to you,” I say. “What matters is that I know who you are ... and that we both know the same girl.”

His lips part. “Jill.”

They obviously know she’s missing.

He suddenly begins to fight off my men who hold him down. “You motherfucker, you kidnapped her, didn’t you? Let her fucking go!”

I push the gun further into his skin to make sure he remembers who’s in control. “Relax, or do you want me to kill you already?”

He spits, but it lands on my coat, and I wipe it off with ease. “You’ll pay for this.”

“Good luck trying,” I reply. “You won’t ever see us again.”

The fire in his eyes reminds me of my own. “What did she ever do to you?”

I snort. “Oh, you’d like to know that, wouldn’t you?” I tap the knife against his skin. “Lucky for you, I won’t bother you with all the nasty details. I just want one thing from you ... information.”

“Fuck you. I’m not a traitor,” Nick replies. “Shoot me if that’s what you want.”

I laugh. “I don’t fucking care about Easton. He’ll get what he deserves later. I want to know what you did with Jill.”

Nick swallows. “What the fuck are you talking about?”

I shove him down and point my knife at his eye. “You were her fucking boyfriend, weren’t you? Answer me!”

He frowns. “No.”

I shove the knife farther into his skin until he begins to bleed. “Don’t lie to me, or I swear to God, I’ll cut out your fucking eye.”

“She’s not, and she never was!” he barks back. “We were friends. That’s all.”

“Bullshit,” I spit back, grabbing his collar with both hands now. “Tell me the fucking truth. You fucked her, didn’t you?”

“It’s the goddamn truth,” he responds. “She wouldn’t even let me get close.”

I pause and look at him for a moment. He doesn’t look away, doesn’t flinch when he speaks, and his voice is constant and unwavering, not like someone who lies.

Is he ... serious?

“So you never kissed her?”

“I’ve never even touched her,” Nick replies. “What the fuck did she tell you? Is that why you ambushed me?!”

My nostril begins to twitch.

“Why does it matter to you anyway what she did before you took her captive? Let her fucking go!”

I release his collar and shove him back to the ground, then get up to think while my men hold him so he won’t run.

Jill gave me his name for a reason, but I don't spot any hint of a lie in this man's words.

Only in hers.

And there is only one fucking reason.

I twist the knife against my index finger, and it punctures my own damn skin, but the pain only excites me.

Because right now, only one thing is on my mind.

Jill lied to me when I forced her to talk by making her come over and over, and I finally realize why.

To stop me from finding out she's a virgin.

A wicked grin spreads on my face.

Amazing. Almost as devious as my own plans.

Oh, little bunny ...

I've taught you well.

"Look, whatever problems you have, I'm sure Easton can figure out something," Nick suddenly says. "Let her go."

"He can't fix my problems," I respond with my back turned toward him. "And I'm not interested in negotiations."

"You're making a big fucking mistake. I'll never stop fucking looking for her nor will Easton. You think this was worth it?"

"Yes," I mutter, staring at the blood drops rolling down my hand. "Because I'm a sick, twisted bastard who only wants one thing."

"Jill," he says through gritted teeth. "She'll never love you."

“Funny, she said the same thing when she sucked my dick the other day.”

The fury in his eyes is like fuel to my fucked-up heart.

“You’ll pay for what you did to her!” he yells as I move through the bushes and pick up that sandwich he dropped. Onion, lettuce, and tuna. Disgusting. Just like his obvious affection for *my* bunny.

“What do you want us to do with him, sir?” my men ask as I walk back to them.

I tilt my head and stare him down. “Let him go.”

My men frown just as hard as Nick. “What?”

“You heard me.” I chuck the sandwich at his body. “Eat your fucking lunch. And then go tell your fucking boss neither of you will ever see your precious fucking Jill again.”

My men knock him out with a quick flick of their gun and then run off with me back to our car. The guy will wake up in a few with a roaring headache, but that’s the least of his worries ... and mine.

Because I have a rendezvous to attend with a lusty, little liar.

CHAPTER 12



Jill

WHEN SOMEONE COMES into my room, I'm not at all prepared for the fact that it isn't Luca.

A woman with a big ponytail and a nose ring steps inside, her clothes resembling that of a housekeeper. She pays no attention to me whatsoever even though I'm still hanging from the ceiling.

Naked.

My cheeks have never been more red than they are now, but she keeps her head down as she puts clothes into his drawers and makes up the bed.

"Um ... hello?" I say, feeling invisible.

She looks up and smiles. "Hello, Mrs. De Vos."

Mrs. De Vos.

It sounds so strange and totally unnatural. Like I'm living in a surreal world where fiction has become a reality. A nightmarish world I really wish I

could escape.

“I’m Lita, the housekeeper and Luca’s personal cook.” She laughs a little.
“How can I help you?”

“Can you get me down, please?” I ask hesitantly.

She stops folding more clothes and looks up. “I’m sorry, Mr. De Vos specifically told me not to intervene.”

I frown. “You know I’m being held captive, right?”

She raises her brow. “You’re his wife, aren’t you?”

“Yes, but ... well, it’s complicated.”

“But you *chose* to get married to him,” she adds. It almost sounds like she’s declaring me insane, and I wouldn’t blame her for thinking that.

Heck, I’m insane for agreeing to any of this.

“That’s ... true.” I sigh out loud, but it ends in a cough from my dry throat. I really didn’t help my own case there. “I was only trying to save my sister.”

When she walks off, I say, “Wait! Please.” She glances over her shoulder, so I ask, “I’m really, really hungry and thirsty. Could you please bring me something? Anything?”

She smiles. “Of course! I’ll be back in a minute.”

Then she closes the door, and just like that, I’m left to myself again, dangling from the ceiling like one of those artworks standing all around his house. It’s almost as if he views me as just another piece he managed to buy.

When the door opens again, Lita steps in, holding a plate filled with delicious-looking food. “Luca didn’t tell me what you liked, so I got

freaked out and made way too much, so it's good that you asked."

"That looks divine," I respond, my mouth already watering. "But ... how am I supposed to eat it?"

She puts down the plate and picks up a chocolate-covered strawberry. "Easy. I'll feed you."

My whole body freezes from the shame, but the second she plops it into my mouth, I forget what I was about to say.

"Good?"

"Oh, my God," I mutter, chewing fast so I can have another one. "You made these yourself?"

"Yup. And his cleaner. And personal shopper. And assistant." She laughs. "Pretty much everything and anything he needs."

Wow. Wish I had someone like that.

A slice of pancake is shoved in my mouth, and it's like a cloud from heaven. "Jesus."

She smiles broadly. "You like it?"

"This is what I used to eat back in the States before we moved to the Netherlands," I reply.

"I've got more where that came from."

Lita shoves a perfect piece of bacon into my mouth that is just too delicious.

"Do you have a drink too?" I ask after swallowing.

"Of course!" She shows me a glass of milk and a cup of hot steaming tea. "Didn't know which one you'd prefer, so I brought both." She gazes up at

the contraption I'm hanging in. "But from the looks of it, I think milk is the better choice with a straw."

"Can't you get me down?" I ask, hoping she might change her mind.

"No can do, sorry," she says, laughing it off like it's normal. "Luca specifically said no one was allowed to touch you."

For some reason, that makes me blush even more than the fact that I'm hanging here horizontally from the ceiling, naked.

"Not even you?" I say.

She shakes her head, which tells me enough.

"Fucking asshole," I say through gritted teeth. But when I see the look on her face, I lighten up a little. "Sorry. I don't mean to be snappy. He's the asshole, not you."

"It's okay, I understand," she replies, smiling gently. "I expect that from the woman who married a guy like him." She adds a wink.

"So you know he's a part of the mafia, right?"

"Yep," she says. "But it pays the bills. And he pays loads." She rolls her eyes. "So much that I sometimes wonder if I should give some of it back."

Well, she's a lot more frugal than I'd be if I was working for someone as dangerous as Luca De Vos.

"Anyway, how about that milk?" she says, and she slips a straw into the glass. "This should work."

My dry throat is grateful. Especially after being ravaged by Luca.

My cheeks immediately turn red again from the memory alone.

“Thanks,” I mutter, willing the blush away.

“If you’re still hungry, let me know,” Lita says. “I can always make more.”

I smile. “You’re really nice.”

She raises a brow. “Something you didn’t expect?” She laughs and glances up at the ropes without exorbitantly gazing at my naked body. “I get it. Luca’s not an easy guy to please, and he has ... interesting taste. But he’s a mobster, and what he wants happens. Period.”

Tell me about it.

She leans against the cabinet. “It’s very noble of you that you married him to save your sister. I don’t think I would have done the same, considering the lengths Luca would go to to make you his.”

I frown. “How do you know?”

She pushes herself off the cabinet and folds her arms. “All I’d ever heard him talk about was you. Even when he was planning the wedding with Jasmine, he couldn’t stop talking about the fact that he was never going to stop looking for you.”

I’m stunned by what she says, so much so that I don’t know how to respond.

“Well anyway, if you need me, just call my name. I’m sure one of Luca’s men will hear you as the house is never unguarded.”

Damn. There goes my plan to escape when I’m finally out of this damn rope.

“Thanks for the food. And the talking. I appreciate it,” I say. “Makes me feel less insane.”

“Glad I could help,” she says, and she walks off before I can ask her to please hand me the knife so I can cut myself out of this mess.

She probably wouldn’t have given it to me anyway.

Luca’s rule is law, and people who work for him obey or get the boot.

And who knows what happens to them after that. I’m sure a mobster wouldn’t let someone walk off to go and tell the world what goes on behind closed doors. Our families only succeeded in becoming so powerful because we hid from the public eye for so long.

In fact, he’s out there right now, trying to find the one person I hoped to never involve.

Poor Nick.

My stomach twists from the thought of seeing him hurt.

I shouldn’t have said his name or implicated him.

Now Luca wants nothing more than to destroy him for even looking at me.

All because I had to tell that lie so Luca would stop.

Even though he didn’t until I’d already come ten times.

Fuck.

Sudden stomping in another room pulls me from my thoughts. I recognize the walk. It definitely isn’t a guard. It’s him.

My heart beats faster and faster as he approaches, and I brace myself against the ceiling, hoping I can dish out some kind of jab with my foot even though any kind of movement makes me twirl around.

BANG!

The door is kicked open and thrust into the wall, and Luca stands in the doorway with a sinister look on his face. The smile that slowly creeps onto his lips makes me gulp.

“Miss me, bunny?” he says, his voice so dark it makes goose bumps erupt on my skin.

CHAPTER 13



Jill

HEAT WASHES over my body as he closes the door and stalks toward me, licking his lips achingly slow. I don't know why I focus on it as much as I do.

But I have to keep my thoughts from swaying. He left me hanging here just to go and hurt Nick. But Nick is innocent and doesn't deserve his wrath. It's all my fault.

"Please tell me you didn't hurt him," I say.

Luca smiles wickedly. "Shouldn't have sent me to that fucker if you were that worried about him." He tips up my chin. "But don't worry, bunny. I kept Nick alive."

The adrenaline surging through my body becomes a little less volatile, but I'm not any less worried. "Where is he?"

"Back where he belongs," Luca answers.

My eyes widen. "You let him go?"

“Of course.” The smile on his face deepens. “I keep enemies like Easton Van Buren close.”

I swallow. So he knows.

“But don’t worry ...” He makes a fist. “I’ll make them all pay for hiding you from us.”

I panic. “Please don’t.” I shake my head. “They were only trying to help me.”

Luca grabs the ropes, dragging me closer. “And here my father was, thinking he could trust Van Buren.”

“They’re good people, Luca,” I reply. “Please, don’t hurt them. They have nothing to do with our family feud.”

“Family feud?” He laughs. “You think that’s what this is?” He hovers right in front of my face, looking me dead in the eyes. “No, bunny. This is war.”

I jerk around in the ropes, but it’s no use. Every time I try to free myself, all it does is bury the rope further into my skin. Fuck.

“Give up, Jill.”

“Just because you put a ring on my finger and a collar around my neck does not mean I’ll stop trying to get away from you.”

“Hate me that much?” he says with a denigrating tone. “Aw, I’m almost offended.” He plants a hand on my chest and stills my body while staring deep into my eyes. “If I didn’t know it was a lie.”

I swallow away the lump in my throat. I still can’t get used to feeling his hands on my naked skin, and the way my body responds to his touch is insufferable.

“Just like I know you lied to me about Nick.”

Luca’s hand slides down my chest between my breasts, making me painfully aware just how little control I have ... not just over what happens but also over my own damn body.

“You demanded I gave you a name,” I retort. “I wish I never did.”

A sudden pinch to my nipples is so hard to ignore, but I try my best to swallow the squeal.

“Because you kept insisting you weren’t a virgin.”

I close my lips and look away, unable to face him because I know the truth.

He leans in to whisper into my ear. “You lied, didn’t you?” I shudder. “You *are* a virgin.”

He grabs my other nipple too and twists it. “C’mon, bunny, admit it,” he whispers in my ear. “Admit it, and maybe I’ll go easy on you.”

“Please ...” I mutter.

“Please what, Jill? Don’t hurt your friends? Hmm?” he murmurs. “Maybe I should go over to Easton now if you don’t tell me the truth.”

“No, don’t!” I reply. I can’t let them get hurt. “Fine. Yes. I am a virgin.”

I hate saying it out loud. I hate the gravity of these words.

But I can’t keep lying. It’ll only end up hurting more people.

But now that it’s out, my entire body starts heating up at the thought of what he’ll do to me now that he knows.

Now that he realizes he was the first to touch me.

The only one.

Oh, God.

I can feel him smile against my ear. “Good girl.”

I wish it did nothing for me. That it didn’t make my heart thump. That it didn’t make me whimper. That it didn’t make my pussy clench.

But I’d be lying, and every lie I tell is one he’ll make me pay for.

When his hands leave my breasts and my skin comes in contact with the cold air, tears well up in my eyes.

Suddenly, he tugs at the ropes, and my body is lifted only to be pulled down again all the way to the floor until I can finally stand. The weightlessness did a number on me as my knees immediately buckle. But Luca is there to catch me before I fall, his hands wrapping around my body like a sweet embrace from the devil himself.

“Whoa ... easy there,” he says, his hand steady and strong against my shivering cold back. “Lean against me.”

I shake my head but do it anyway because the only other choice is to fall on my ass and hurt myself.

“It takes a few minutes to adjust.” He caresses my back like I’m some kind of pet to him, and it confuses me so much.

One moment, he’s evil incarnate, pure danger, and then the next, he’s delicate with me.

This duality in his personality messes with my head.

My body floods with warmth from the sudden kindness, and it only brings more tears to my eyes.

“Why are you doing this?” I can’t help but let the words slip out.

“Because good girls deserve a reward for telling the truth.”

I sigh against his shoulder as he caresses me, wishing this moment wouldn't end. If he'd been like this since the start, since we first met, maybe I wouldn't have been so ... bitter.

I sniff to stop the tears from flowing, but some still manage to run down my cheeks.

He leans back and looks me in the eyes. “Can you stand?”

I nod as he pushes back gently.

“Stay still.”

He slowly undoes the ropes around my wrists and chucks them in a corner like they meant nothing to him. Then he moves down to my ankles, removing the bar that kept my legs spread too until I'm free again. But he doesn't remove the collar, and I don't know how to feel about that.

He stands again and focuses solely on the red marks where the fiber of the rope edged into my flesh. “We'll have to take better care of that next time.”

Next time? There's gonna be a next time of being tied to the ceiling?

Oh, God. I hope not because the last time already did a number on me. If that's going to happen more ... I don't think I can handle all the ways he could make me come.

His hand suddenly touches my face, breaking the spell. I'm completely frozen when he strokes my cheek with his ringed fingers and picks up my tear with his thumb.

“Why are you crying, bunny?”

I grind my teeth, refusing to tell, refusing to show.

He tilts his head and throws me a dominant look. "Tell me."

"I never wanted to tell you I'm a virgin," I say, my hands turning into fists because of how upset I am at myself that I couldn't keep it a secret.

He grabs my chin. "It's cute that you thought you could keep that a secret from me."

My eyes narrow, and I sneer, "I'm not a piece of meat you can buy. My virginity shouldn't matter."

He leans in to whisper into my ear. "*Nothing* matters more to me than being the first to claim you and make you come." His hand is suddenly down between my legs, forcing me to remember how good it felt when he touched me there. "Because I'm going to be the last."

Something about that statement makes me suck in a breath and hold it.

Good God.

What has this man done to me?

"You already claimed me," I say, my words almost choked by my own breath faltering.

"Not every inch." He cups my pussy and presses his middle finger onto my clit. "But I will. Don't worry, bunny. When I do, you'll definitely know." He groans, the sound making me wet as he circles his finger. "And I can't fucking wait to be the first to fuck this pretty little pussy and fill it to the brim."

He comes closer and closer, his lips hovering close to my skin, and when he presses the softest kiss against my neck, I almost fall apart right there and then.

Why is it so easy for him to make me want him? I hate it.

He groans against my skin. “So you never let anyone even touch you?”

I shake my head.

“No one? Ever?”

It’s like he can’t believe it, but it’s true.

“So when I came into your room the night my brother died, I was the first and last to touch you?”

I nod, but it only makes him groan harder to the point even I find it hard not to moan along as he cups my slit and makes me wet all over again.

“God ... it’s too good to be true,” he murmurs. “My bunny, a fucking virgin.” He laughs. “You filthy little liar ... All mine.”

Suddenly, he lifts me into his arms, and I squeal from the sudden motion. He hauls me to a door in the back of the room and kicks it open. He carries me to a shower and puts me down right in the middle, turning on the faucet.

The hot water pouring down from the jets onto my skin makes my nipples instantly harden. His hungry eyes dart down to my breasts, and his tongue dips out to wet his lips.

Still, he doesn’t make a move.

Even though I thought he would, now that he knows the truth.

Is he going to let me shower?

“Are you going to leave?” I ask.

“No,” Luca says, his brow arching.

Guess not.

“I don’t trust you on your own yet,” he adds.

I roll my eyes.

Figures.

But he keeps looking at me like I'm a piece of meat, and it's hard to even move, let alone wash myself.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" I ask in a moment of bravery.

"Like what?" he says with a lopsided grin, clutching the shower doors. "Tell me, Jill, what do I look like to you?"

I look up into his smoldering eyes. "Like a wolf."

His grip on the doors tighten. "And what does that make you?"

I swallow as the water gushes down onto my body. "Prey."

The wicked grin on his face grows bigger, more menacing. "Exactly. And this wolf is hungry for more ..."

I plant my body against the wall, my teeth clattering from the thought of him touching me again. I don't think I'll be able to stop myself, let alone him, if I let him come close.

But do I even have a choice?

I'm his captive wife. The one who chose to be here in exchange for a debt.

And I made a promise to my father that I'd make him happy ... at all cost.

"Don't cry now, bunny. It makes you less pretty," he says.

"Like you ever thought I was pretty," I quip.

His eyes narrow. "Why wouldn't I? You were always the most beautiful girl I'd ever met and still are."

I gulp from his words. He's never said anything like that to me.

Does he mean it? Or is he only saying it to make me complacent?

"Don't lie to me," I say.

"Why would I lie?" he replies, fishing his knife from his pocket to toy with it, but to me, it's only a reminder of who's in charge.

He's dangerous. I should stop, but I don't want to back down. "You told me I looked hideous in the dresses I made back when we were young."

He laughs. "Jill, really? We were kids." He throws the knife like it's a juggling pin. "I'm surprised you remember, though."

"Because you bullied me," I retort.

His eyes suddenly fixate on me like they're trying to bore a hole into my head. "Has no one ever told you *why* boys bully?"

"Because they're dicks," I retort, but it only makes him laugh.

"Call me a dick. It doesn't matter to me." He stops throwing the knife and holds it tight in his hand. "The only thing that matters is that you belong to me now."

"Does anything I say ever matter to you?" I ask.

His nostrils flare as he brings the knife to his mouth and licks the tip. "You don't even know how much."

I don't know what to say to that.

He's so damn twisted, yet he can even make licking a blade look hot.

It's quiet for a few seconds as the water rushes down on my skin, filling me with a warmth that's not even close to the heat surging through my body

when he looks at me like that. Like he wants to eat me alive and then some.

“What are you thinking about?” Luca asks, tucking the knife back into his pocket.

I look up from underneath my dripping lashes. “You.”

The showerhead rains down, creating a curtain between us, but I can see his dark, scorching eyes right through the veil.

A hand drifts through.

Then another.

His clothes get soaked as he steps inside the shower with me, planting one hand against the wall while the other grabs my chin, forcing me to look up into his lustful, hungry eyes.

“You weren’t so eager to escape when I had you pinned to the wall like this back when I snuck into your room three years ago,” he says, and he leans in closer and closer until my breath falters. “Back when I gave you the best orgasm you could ever wish for.”

My entire body quivers from the memory alone.

“I know you remember,” he says. “And I know you’ve thought about it. About my fingers there, between your legs. The handle of my knife inside your pussy. My hands on your body, my tongue licking your skin.”

My lips shudder as his are so dangerously close to mine I can almost taste them.

“You know you liked it,” he murmurs.

I have to do something, say something. I have to stop this before he ... kisses me.

Before he breaks me.

“Because you still had a sliver of humanity back then,” I reply. “But now? Nothing.”

He leans back, the look on his face turning darker and darker until nothing’s left of that lust I felt seconds ago. Something in his eyes has changed. Like he suddenly remembers how much he should hate me.

“I’m just another girl to you, another girl you can fuck, just like all the others before me. You never wanted me. You just crave what you can’t have,” I add. “But my heart will never be yours.”

A nail to the coffin as his eyes begin to twitch and his grip on my chin vanishes.

“You’re wrong,” he says through gritted teeth.

As violent as he barged into the room before, he pushes himself off the wall and marches out of the bathroom with soaked clothes, leaving me hot and naked underneath the pouring water.

God.

I was *this* close.

CHAPTER 14



Luca

AFTER LOCKING her in the room, I storm back to the living room. Nothing can quench the fire raging inside. With a loud roar, I thrust my fist into the statue of the naked woman I bought two years ago. A piece of her tit breaks off, but I don't even fucking care.

The pain in my knuckles is sharp, but I bite through it. Pain is the only way I know how to deal with my anger, how we were taught to deal with it.

If I've known one thing for a very long time, it's that my family's way of dealing with emotions was anything but healthy.

But we don't choose our family.

We only choose how we react.

And I reacted by bringing in as much distraction as I could. Cigarettes, liquor, drugs, possessions. Women.

Anything I could get my hands on, especially during my younger years.

Back when we both still lived with our parents, and Jill only saw glimpses of my life.

Glimpses of a guy addicted to the temporary buzz.

But that's just the surface. She never saw what was underneath.

What truly lies hidden in this wretched, shriveled-up heart of mine.



THREE YEARS AGO, age 18

“Is that the girl you texted?” Jill asks.

“Yeah, so?” I reply, taking the girl’s coat. I grab her hand and drag her with me. “C’mon, Gillian. Let’s go.”

“What?” Jill frowns as I pull her toward the stairs. “I thought you were supposed to—”

“You have Jasmine now. Entertain yourself,” I retort.

“You know what our parents—”

“I don’t care,” I interject, barking a little too harshly, which makes her sink into her seat. Still, I can’t get over the sour look on her face, and it pisses me off even more.

“You want to come lie in my bed too?” I ask, letting my tongue run along my lips.

Her eyes widen and twitch as she tries to hide her shame. “No, no, no. No, thank you.”

Entertain them. That's what my parents told my brother and me when the Baas family came back to our home after our dinner party at a restaurant.

But when my brother went upstairs with Jasmine and left me alone with Jill, I should've known it would get too hot underneath my feet.

So I called Gillian over for a hookup. Big fucking deal.

Fuck Jill and that golden horse she rode in on.

Gillian runs up the stairs behind me, giggling loudly. The second we get to my room, I lock the door, and she's immediately on me like my lips are made of honey. But her kisses are raw, harsh, like a girl desperate to swallow, and it's making me want to shove her away.

"What the fuck was that for?" she snarls.

"Nothing. Just calm the fuck down." I roll my eyes and walk to my bed to sit down, but the girl immediately follows me and throws her legs on mine, grabbing my face to lick my earlobe, and I fucking hate it.

But why? Why the fuck can't I enjoy myself and this random girl I invited over?

I asked her to come. I wanted someone to fuck.

But then why can't I enjoy it like I should?

I'm a De Vos, for crying out loud. We don't play fair, and we fuck whoever we damn well want to. So then why is something bothering me so much?

I close my eyes and fall onto the bed. With my eyes closed, all I see is the image of a pretty blond girl dancing in front of me, seductive lips pursed, ready for the taking, her innocent eyes luring me in, begging me to come take her cherry.

Jill.

My eyes burst open, and I sit up straight in bed.

“What’s wrong?” Gillian asks as she sits up too and throws her arms around my neck.

“Nothing,” I say, glancing at her over my shoulder, wondering if I’m losing my shit because there’s a beautiful girl right here with me, and all I can think about is someone else.

I definitely am.

Jill isn’t and won’t ever be interested in me.

This girl is.

But then why can’t I fucking get Jill to disappear from my head?

I groan to myself as the girl behind me presses more kisses below my ear, trying to tempt me. “Come lie down with me. Spoil me. Use me.”

But the more I think about doing just that, the more guilt floods over me.

Because Jill is downstairs, sitting all by herself, waiting until my parents are done talking to hers.

And my mind immediately wanders to her again. To how she grabbed a pillow from the couch and chucked it at my face. The glorious grin on her face, and how badly it made me want to grab her by the throat and pin her to the couch.

I swallow.

I don’t even know why I threw that pillow back at her.

Or why I loved seeing the look of amazement on her face as we kept throwing them back and forth.

And when she fell on top of me, it almost felt like the world stood still. As if, for a second, I could pretend she didn't hate my guts. Her body pressed up against mine made me stiff, and all I wanted at that moment was to rip off her clothes and thrust inside.

Fuck.

"C'mon," the girl behind me says, pulling me from my thoughts. "Let's have some fun."

She kisses me, and I lean back to try to enjoy it, but all I can think of is just how upset Jill looked when she saw me bring this girl inside.

I texted this girl to come over because I didn't know what the fuck to do with myself ... or the giant boner I got when Jill fell on top of me minutes ago.

The way she accidentally stumbled after we threw cushions back and forth in an innocent game really got me silent. Her eyes peered straight into mine as her whole body leaned on mine, and every inch of my body wanted to hold her there.

Wanted to kiss her.

Touch her.

Grope her.

Fuck her.

Fuck.

I groan again as the girl pulls away from me.

Fucking Jill Baas.

Even when I tell myself I don't want her, all I can think about is her. She's screwing with my mind, and it's exactly why I brought this girl over.

But fuck me, that image of her lying on top of me will never leave my mind.

Right as I turn around to focus on the girl I invited over, she pulls off her shirt and out bounces these giant, gorgeous tits that would make any guy's dick hard as a rock.

I can't lie and say that it doesn't do it for me. But it's tainted by that goddamn image of Jill swirling through my head, and it's ruining everything I want to do.

"Fuck, no, wait." I get up from the bed and march to the window to take a breath. "I can't fucking do this."

"But you asked me to come over," she says, sounding disappointed as hell.

"I know." I sigh as I rub my forehead. "Fuck."

As I turn around, she quickly puts on her top again. Even though it's on the wrong way, I don't say anything. I don't want to embarrass her further.

"It happens," she says. "No hard feelings, right?"

"Right," I say, but I don't feel at all good about any of this.

Because if I can't even fuck a girl without feeling guilty ... what the fuck has Jill Baas done to me?

I clear my throat and turn around. "Let's get you back home."



PRESENT

IF JILL only knew the effect she had on me, even back then...

Someone knocks on the front door, pulling me from my thoughts. "Yes?"

"Sir, are you okay?" Max, one of my guards, asks as he steps in. "I heard some noise in here."

"I'm fine," I reply, holding my hand under the faucet to cool off and see if I need bandages.

"Okay, sir," he replies as I fetch bandages from my office.

My guards have learned not to intervene or judge my responses. As long as I tell them I'm fine, there's no need for them to know why I smashed my own statue.

"Sir, your mother called. She's downstairs and says she wants to speak to you."

"Let her come up," I reply, sighing. I'm really not looking forward to talking with her right now. But my parents still have the majority of the business under their wing, and until they make me the sole owner, I have to keep them happy. For now.

After a few minutes, another knock on the door follows. One short tap, then two long ones. My mother's signature knock and the one she uses before she starts berating my father.

"Come in," I sneer as I wrap the bandage around my hand and secure it with some tape.

The door is pushed open, the click-clacking of her heels on my expensive flooring a nuisance to my ears. “What a warm welcome for your mother.”

I grab a glass and fill it with water, chugging it down in one go before I say, “Why are you here?”

“I just wanted to see how you two were getting along,” she muses, walking about my penthouse.

I turn around and clutch the counter. “Does it matter?”

She touches everything she passes—from the furniture to the flowers Lita bought to “cheer up” the house to the statue I just broke. It’s like she’s inspecting everything and deeming it unworthy with a single tip of the finger.

“Hello? Is someone there?” It’s Jill, shouting from my room. Dammit. “Please let me out.”

My mother stares at her door and then at me and sighs. “You disappoint me, Luca.”

What else is new?

“Did you really lock her up?”

I raise my brow. “What else was I supposed to do?”

“She’s your wife, not your pet,” she says, rubbing her forehead. “You must make her like you.”

“She hates me.”

She stares me down as I start pacing. “Make her happy.”

“Happy?” I snort. “She wants to kill me. Especially now that I’ve threatened the one guy who cared about her.”

My mother throws me the look, the one that oozes disappointment, and it makes me want to throw my knife at her eyeballs. “Be careful.”

“I know.”

“No, I don’t think you do,” she says. “If you put this family in danger—”

“I haven’t,” I interject, throwing her an equally threatening look back. “I’ve taken care of it.”

Her nostrils flare. “That girl in there is your wife. You two must learn to coexist for this deal to hold and for our family to reap the benefits.”

“Why do you suddenly care about any kind of relationship with the Baas family?” I ask. “You despise them.”

“Luca ...” She makes a tsk sound. “Who do you think taught you to keep your friends close but your enemies closer?” She smirks. “Our family ties must appear strong to the outside world. Never weak. And there will always be someone out there trying to find any sign of weakness and destroy our empire.” She makes a fist and shows it to me like it’s my marriage she’s holding in the palm of her hand. “Make her happy. Give her what she wants.”

“Like what?” I quip.

“Food she likes. Clothes. Hobbies. Anything.”

“So you want me to bribe her,” I retort.

“Warmth. Attention. Adoration,” she adds without breaking eye contact. “Give her whatever her heart needs, and it will belong to you.” She licks her lips. “Your father did it with me when I hated him, and now I love him for it.”

Sure, she did.

After she realized he was rich.

But that won't hold up for Jill. And my mother's forgetting one thing.

"She killed my brother," I reply through gritted teeth.

She steps closer to me and adjusts my collar. "She deserves every ounce of your wrath. But the Baas family are still our partners, and we must keep them on our side for now."

I take in a deep breath and sigh. Of course. It's always been about the business for my mother. Even my brother's death.

"But make no mistake," she says, planting her hands flat on my chest. "They will pay for what they've done. And when they're gone for good, you're free to do whatever you like to that pretty little girl." A wretched smile forms on her thin lips. She turns and walks off. "I'm going to the hospital with your father."

"Why?" I frown.

"Oh, just some tests." She waves it off like it's no big deal, but I know it's because of the cancer diagnosis. With the amount of blood he's been coughing up lately, I doubt there's much they can do.

"There's going to be a new business dinner Saturday night. Baas will be there," my mother adds, throwing me a stern look. "Bring her."

She slams the door shut and leaves me to my own thoughts.

My own emotions that I've tried hard to keep buried.

I thought I could use Jill as a toy, but it turns out she's going to have to perform her wifely duties in more ways than just with her mouth and pussy.

And something tells me she won't be willing to play the good wife.

CHAPTER 15



Jill

I'VE BEEN LOCKED in this room for days on end. I don't know how long because there is no clock anywhere, and my phone was taken from me the second I ended up in Luca's clutches.

There's nothing but a small television to keep me company. Looking out the window is equally dreadful. All the people down there on the streets are blissfully going about their lives while I'm stuck up here in this ivory tower, hoping I'll someday get the chance to escape ... and to tear this goddamn collar off my neck.

But then there's that voice in my head whispering to me again.

You chose this.

If only I hadn't done what I did three years ago.

I never should've dragged Liam away from Luca and into my car.

If I hadn't, he would have won the fight and would still be alive.

Things would've been much different now.

I could've married him.

I sigh to myself and shove the curtain aside to look outside at the bustling streets below. Even if this is the backside of the building, it still has that kind of view you can only buy with a ton of cash.

Tap, tap!

Two knocks on the door make me flick my head sideways. The only visitor I've had since Luca last came in was Lita with her delicious food, and it always brings a smile to my face when she comes. But she never knocks.

"Who is it?"

"Me."

My skin prickles at the sound of his voice.

Luca.

Of course it's him.

I don't respond, but he comes in anyway, and the moment our eyes lock, that same smirk forms on his lips again. "How are you feeling?"

I frown. "Since when do you care?"

He closes the door and leans against it, running his fingers through his black hair. "I never stopped caring."

I snort. "Yeah, right, says the dude keeping me locked up in here."

He pushes himself off the door and steps closer. "You know you give me no choice."

I cringe. “Wow, so now you try to pin your guilt on me? No thanks, I’m not here to be your scapegoat.”

He stops halfway through the room and narrows his eyes at me, fists clenched. “Don’t ever forget *you* were the one who killed *my* brother. You deserve every bit of punishment.”

Our eyes connect, and a fire almost combusts between us. “He would’ve lived if you hadn’t started that fight with him.”

Luca marches toward me and grabs me by my collar. “That fight wouldn’t have started if you hadn’t kissed him.”

Oh, please. “You’re using me as an excuse. You already hated his guts because your parents chose him to be the successor instead of you.”

His nostrils flare as he’s so close I can almost feel his breath on my skin. “I saw the face you made after you kissed him. What was it again—oh, right—disgust.” He grabs a strand of my hair and tucks it behind my ear, the soft touch making me shiver. “Something you never felt when I touched you ...” He leans in farther until he’s right below my chin, and when I suck in a breath, he plants a kiss on my neck right above the collar. “When I kissed you like this.”

“Keep going, and I’ll fucking look at you like that,” I hiss.

He slowly pulls away and gazes at me from underneath his eyelashes with contempt. The air is thick with tension as we stare each other down from mere inches away.

“You lied. You always lie. Why?” he asks, but it sounds more like a growl. “What are you trying to protect? Your heart?” He plants a hand on the window beside my head. “Because, make no mistake, I will make it mine, and I don’t care how long it fucking takes.”

I swallow down the lump in my throat. "Over my dead body."

"Is that how far you're willing to take this?"

"I only said I'd be your wife. I didn't say I'd love you," I reply.

"What use is a loveless marriage?" he quips.

"That's your problem, not mine," I say. "You wanted to see me punished for your brother's death? This is it."

Guess he didn't expect it to be his punishment, too.

His eyes twitch, and he grabs my arm and shoves me against the window so hard I'm afraid it might crack. "*You* chose to marry me."

"Did I? You could've married my sister, the easy-going girl who was happy to fulfill her family obligations. Yet you decided to go against your father's wishes to kill me when I crashed the wedding ... and then picked me instead." I fold my arms. "Sounds like you were the one who desperately wanted me."

His eyes are almost ablaze, and it makes me feel so victorious that I could scream.

He grunts with disdain and turns, marching to the door again. But then he spins on his heels, pointing at me with rage in his eyes. "I will keep you locked up in here forever if I have to."

The smile vanishes from my face. "You wouldn't."

Pride settles on his face. "That's the price you pay."

"For not loving you?" Tears well up in my eyes.

"For killing my brother."

I swallow the tears away. Of course he'd say that. "That's low, even for you."

"Fucking try me," he growls. "You're messing with the wrong brother, Jill."

He attempts to leave, but I can't let him do this to me. I can't stay here.

"Please!" I grab his arm and make him stop as he opens the door. "Don't lock me up. Please. Just let me out."

He pulls away and turns to face me right as he's about to exit, staring me down without saying a word.

"Please ... don't do this to me," I add. "If you once felt anything for me, please."

I don't know what else to say. I know I deserve his anger, but I don't deserve to spend the rest of my life in this golden cage. "I can't spend another minute locked up in this room."

He still looks at me with those dark eyes until even I feel the weight of his power and lower my eyes in defeat. "I'll do anything."

"Anything?"

When I nod, he tips up my chin to make me look at him. "You will do whatever I tell you to do."

I have to force my inner voice to shut up and not take control, but when I look at him, it's hard because all I want to do is defy him. Push him. Make him regret he ever wanted me.

Instead, I nod.

"Good." The smile that appears on his face looks exactly like the one he gave me years ago, back when he knew he'd stolen my first orgasm. My

first kiss. My first everything. He'll never settle for anything less.

"We're going out Saturday."

Out? As in, outside the penthouse, together?

My heart starts to palpitate.

Out together in public ... with *him*.

Luca De Vos.

My husband.

The one guy who wants nothing more than for the world to know I belong to him.

Oh, God.

His fingers clench around my chin, and he pulls me in to plant a kiss on my cheek, his lips slowly sliding sideways as he turns my head to whisper, "And if you behave ... I might give you what you want."

"Freedom?" I mutter.

"A chance to see Jasmine."

My eyes widen as my heart almost comes to a stop.

Then he pulls away and winks. "I'll have Lita bring you what you need to prepare."

What I need to prepare?

Before I can ask what he means, he walks out and closes the door behind him, locking it away just like I've done to my heart. But I'll stay low, keep my head down, make him think I've become easy just for the sake of more freedom.

And then ... when he least expects it, I'll run.

CHAPTER 16



Luca

FRIDAY

“I DIDN’T KNOW EXACTLY what kind of fabrics you meant, sir, but I tried my best and bought what they had available at the market,” Lita says. She puts down a bunch of bags on the table and shows them to me. “You said not to spare.”

“Thank you, Lita,” I reply, inspecting the fabrics.

“Are you sure I shouldn’t have just bought a few dresses instead?”

I throw her a stern look.

“Sorry, sir. I don’t mean to question you,” she adds.

“Jill will be happy with this,” I say. “Bring it to her.”

Lita nods and takes the bags off the table while I sit back and watch the door Jill is trapped behind with a smile on my face.

I need to make her happy? Fine, I'll make her fucking happy.



JILL

WHEN THERE'S a knock on my door, my eyes light up. "Come in." I don't even wait to say it. That's how starved I am of connection.

But when I see Lita's face, my smile dissipates.

"Sorry to sour your mood," she says, laughing.

"No, no, you're amazing. I'm glad you're here," I say, getting off the bed.

"I was just expecting—"

"Someone else," she fills in for me with a wink. "I get it."

A blush creeps onto my face. "No, no, not like that."

"Of course, honey," she muses. "I don't judge."

Oh, God. Why does that make me blush even more?

Stop it, just stop, Jill.

Lita puts some bags on the table in the room.

"What is it?" I ask, curiously stepping closer.

"Go ahead. Take a look," she says, proudly standing to the side with her hands against her side.

When I open the bags, my jaw drops and my heart skips a beat. The most beautiful fabrics are inside, and I can't stop myself from taking them out

and touching them. “Oh my God, these are beautiful! Where did you get these?”

“It took me a while to find the right shop. But I’m good with finding pretty much anything he asks for.”

“*He ...?*” I mutter. “*Luca* asked for this?”

She nods and walks out of the room, only to come back with a sewing machine. “I picked this up too from the market.”

“Wow.” I watch her put it on the table, and I can’t stop myself from touching that too. It’s vintage but workable. And it even came with all the supplies I’d need to ...

“But why?” I ask, turning my head.

“He wants you to make your own dress.”

My own dress?

My face lights up at the thought.

I used to love making clothes. It’s all I ever did when I was young and even when I worked for Easton.

She places a hand on my shoulder. “He wants it ready by tomorrow.”

A-ha. So it’s a challenge.

“Are we going somewhere special?” I ask.

Lita shrugs. “I don’t know. Ask him. I’m just the girl who cleans and runs errands for him.” She laughs. “Anyway, if you need anything else, just tell him, and he’ll send me to get it.”

I sit down behind the sewing machine, feeling a little overwhelmed at all of this.

“Lita,” I say as she opens the door. “Thanks. You don’t know how much this means to me.”

She smiles. “I’m glad you like it, but ... thank him. It was his idea.”

She exits the room, leaving me to do my thing.

But all I can do is stare at the beautiful fabrics in front of me and all the ways I can make the perfect dress. I don’t care that it’s probably because Luca wants to show me off. Because doing this beats watching television by a million miles.

My face turns red at the thought that he did this all for me. I’m glad no one is here to see it.

It feels like a challenge.

“Well, challenge fucking accepted, *husband*.”



LUCA

SATURDAY

I TAKE a sip of my drink, but as I swallow, the door handle to my bedroom clicks.

I unlocked her room with a purpose in mind.

For a moment, nothing happens as though Jill is waiting for me to get her. But I want her to make the decision herself. I want her to choose to come to me ... to choose to bow down and obey in order to gain more freedom.

Because if I can't get her heart, at least I'll get her fucking submission.

The second she peers out, I forget all about our fight. I even forget we're supposed to be enemies and that I'm supposed to destroy both her family and her resolve.

In fact, my jaw, along with the empty glass in my hand, drops at the sight of her stepping out of the room in a flowy, pink gown with silver embellishments going from her waist up to her shoulders, flaring out like a fire blazing out from her heart.

Exactly the kind of dress she'd create and wear to a simple dinner party with her own damn family.

But all I can say when she steps forward, twiddling with her fingers like she's not sure she should've ever stepped out of that room, is, "Beautiful."

She freezes, her cheeks slowly filling with a red glow. The arteries in her neck, above the collar, pulse as she looks out the window, trying to catch her bearings.

But I see her.

I see her like no one else ever saw her.

I see the pretty girl creating her own dresses and the gorgeous, confident woman she's grown up to be.

I see it all, and she can't ever hide it or the rush she feels when I look at her.

Because I see that too.

I pick up the glass and quickly put it back on the table. As she walks off to the window to stare at the people outside like she's trying to hide from me, I follow her. She flinches as I plant a hand on her waist, her body tensing.

"I mean it," I say, looking at her through the reflection of the glass.

"Are you only saying that to make me feel good?" she asks.

I shake my head. "You were always so creative with your outfits."

"I thought you hated them," she retorts.

I snort. "I hated how it made people look at you."

She sighs as she looks at herself in the window.

"Why did you give those fabrics to me?"

My hand slides down her waist to her thighs, the feel of her body turning me on already. "Can't I give my *wife* a gift?"

She sighs out loud.

"Tell me what you're thinking," I say, almost unable to keep my hands to myself.

"If I did that, you wouldn't let me out of the house anymore," she says through gritted teeth.

We stare at each other through the window, and a tear wells up in her eyes. I slide my hand across her cheek and brush it off.

Then I fish a key from my pocket and unlock the collar with it, pulling it away from her neck.

She gasps in shock as the collar drops to the floor, and her hand instinctively reaches for her throat to feel her bare skin.

“If you stopped hating me so much, it would be easier,” I say, and I lean in to press a kiss right below her ear while maintaining eye contact. “And if you behave ... I may not have to put it back on again.”

Every kiss I plant makes her lips part a little farther as damp fog spreads on the glass. My hand slowly slides up her waist while the other snakes around her chin as I tilt her head to whisper into her ear, “We could be so fucking good, you and me together.” One hand clasps around her neck while the other grasps her breast until she whimpers. “With you as my queen, we could rule the fucking country. Maybe even the world.”

“Like you don’t hate me as much as I hate you,” she hisses. “I don’t *want* to rule this world. That’s what *you* want.”

When I squeeze her tit, a tiny moan escapes her mouth. “Tell me what you desire then. Tell me, and I might give it to you.”

Her teeth clatter as she struggles to keep the moans inside while I plant kisses below her ear, keeping eye contact at all times. “Freedom.”

The mere mention of that word turns my body frigid.

I pull away from her and clear my throat, running my fingers through my hair. “Fine. Let’s go.”

She spins on her heels. “What? Now? For real?”

I use two fingers to beckon her to follow me, and she does the second I open the front door. We walk out into the long hallway, and I go into the elevator, turning around to watch her chase after me on high heels in that picture-perfect dress that makes me want to ravage her.

When the doors close and we’re left alone with nothing but the numbers on the wall lighting on whenever we reach a floor, I can’t think of anything else but shoving her against the wall and fucking her right here, right now.

I turn my head to look at her while she's desperately trying to look anywhere but at me. Her sweaty chest and blushed cheeks tell me enough.

She wants me as badly as I want her.

If only her conscience wasn't in the way of the sweet relief she could feel from my touch. My kisses. My licks. My cock.

Fuck, just thinking about it makes me hard as a rock.

Her eyes slowly inch down my suit, and she holds her breath the second they reach the rim of my pants ... and the obviously visible bulge.

Her tongue darts out, and she quickly looks away, but I saw. I definitely saw.

The elevator dings and settles on the ground floor, breaking the spell. The doors open, and she steps out with haste, breathing shallow breaths from the tight dress constricting her body. Or maybe it's because it really was too hot in there with just the two of us.

A lopsided grin forms on my face as I walk her to the exit.

"So we're really doing this?" she asks.

"Yes, we're leaving," I say as we go through the revolving doors.

When she steps out, she sucks in a breath of fresh air, and her skin instantly erupts into goose bumps from the cold. A full smile still spreads on her lips as she looks up at the dark night sky, marveling at the stars. "Beautiful."

I never pegged her to be the stargazing type, but I'll remember this.

I walk up to the limo where my driver is already holding open the door.
"Let's go."

The smile immediately dissipates from her round, angelic face when she looks down again and sees the limo. “Oh ...”

“What?” I muse, my tongue sliding along my canine teeth. “You didn’t think I’d actually let you go, did you?”

The look on her face sours, but even her disappointment can’t dampen my mood. She looks beyond gorgeous, and I can’t fucking wait to show her off to her family in this dress and with my fucking ring on her finger. Because I want them to know I fucking own her now ... and it won’t be long before I’ll own them too.

“Come,” I say, holding out my hand. “You’ll see your family if you do.”

“And what if I don’t?” she says, shaking in her shoes. “What if I run? Would you stop me?”

I tilt my head, and a laugh escapes my mouth. “Do you think I’d let you?”

“I won’t want for anything else. Ever.”

My nostrils flare. “Get. In.”

She sucks in a breath and then marches to the car with her head held high, flipping her hair at me like she’s upset I told her the truth. But she already knew the answer before she even asked.

People like us ... we don’t make mistakes.

We can’t afford to.

And if she decides to run ... she knows what’ll happen.

To her.

To her family.

To everyone she ever cared about.

And that's exactly the thing she wants me to know, the thing she'll use against me. Because it proves that she is my captive, my unwilling bride, and that I'm merely using her as a toy to play with.

She's not wrong.

But that doesn't make it any less rage-inducing, especially when she has this smug look on her face. I made it difficult for myself by picking her.

Sighing, I get into the car after her and shut the door, then make sure it's locked. I don't want her escaping while we're on the highway even though she knows how fucking dangerous that is. It's just the kind of thing she'd do to make a point.

I shake my head and look out the window.

"You lied to me," she says.

Not even one second of rest. How does she keep doing it?

I turn my head, and she continues, "You asked me what I wanted the most, and when I said freedom, you said 'let's go.' You lied to me."

"I didn't lie." My brow rises. "We're going somewhere."

She makes a face and leans in to slap me, but I grasp her wrist midway in the air.

"I thought I told you to play nice tonight. Or do you want us to turn back around?" I lean in. "Do you want me to lock you up in that room again? Or should I make you sleep hanging from the ceiling? Because I can, and I will."

She gulps and shakes her head, so I release her wrist. She starts staring out the window like she's trying to forget she's even here. As though she's imagining herself out there between the common people, doing some relaxed shopping and living a normal, happy life. The look on her face is a mixture between melancholy and jealousy, like she wants nothing more than to disappear.

I envy that.

I envy her ability to turn her back on everything because I can't ever imagine anything other than this life.

In this world, we are the killers, the bad guys, the criminals.

And I'm the prince more than willing to inherit it all.

My fist clenches, but I release it when she looks at me, her eyes full of disdain.

I fucking hate it.

When did I suddenly decide to care? I don't.

Fuck.

Stop.

I grunt to myself and look away again.

When the car finally stops at the restaurant, I blow out a sigh of relief. My driver unlocks the doors, and I quickly open mine, holding out my hand to her.

She reluctantly takes it, but only after throwing me another glare.

Of course, she'd never pass up a moment to show me just how much she despises me.

She steps out and hits one of her heels on the sidewalk, collapsing straight into me. I manage to catch her in my arms. "Careful there."

"Don't act like you care all of a sudden," she hisses, and she shoves herself off me.

I quickly grasp her waist and pull her close. "I never said I didn't."

"Yet you still seem to want to punish me every second of the day," she hisses.

I nod and wink. "An appropriate punishment for murdering someone, don't you think?"

"Murder?" She frowns, jerking herself free from my grip. "I didn't *murder* anyone. It was an accident, and you know it."

"But I don't, do I?" My eyes narrow. "I wasn't there, remember?"

Her nostrils flare. "Exactly. But I *was* there. And I almost died that day too. But you seem to forget that, just like everyone else."

"Shouldn't have driven off in that car with him," I quip.

"I never wanted anything bad to happen to Liam." She points at my chest. "You shouldn't have threatened him."

"Our fight was nothing but brotherly rivalry over the company. My business, not yours," I retort.

She only gets more and more in my face, and I don't know if I hate it or love it. "You made it my business when you climbed into my window and told me I was supposed to marry him."

"Yeah ..." I scoff.

I remember it all too well.

The night I gave her that mind-blowing orgasm.

After I had my way with her, I told her why I'd come to her room in the first place.

That my parents had chosen my brother instead of me to be the next heir.

Her fucking dream come true.

"That was the biggest mistake of my life." I step back a little to calm myself before I lose it. "Just like you."

"What's that supposed to mean?" she asks, but I've already turned around to walk toward the restaurant.

"Hello?" She starts chasing me across the pavement. "Answer me."

I walk off toward the restaurant alone to collect my thoughts. "No."

"Why not?" I like how she follows me out of her own damn free will just out of curiosity. "You can't just drop something like that without an explanation."

"I can, and I will."

When she attempts to block my entry, I grab her wrist and drag her close.

"You will never stop tormenting me, will you?"

"Me? Torment *you*?" She snorts. "Good one."

"You haven't stopped being snippy since we got here," I say.

"And you haven't stopped being a dick to me since we got married, but here we are."

I lean in to look into her scared little eyes. She can pretend she's big and bad all she wants, but when it comes to it, she still cowers in front of me

like a little bunny in front of a wolf.

“Have you ever stopped to wonder why?”

Her eyes search mine, but when her lips part, nothing but a mere whimper leaves her mouth.

So I say, “Thought so.” And I push open the door behind her and pull her inside. “We’re done talking. We have a dinner to attend, and I can’t fucking wait to show you off to your own goddamn family.” When we’re inside, I swiftly spin her on her heels and corner her against a wall, just out of sight of her family. “You’ll behave like a fucking good girl.” I point a finger at her. “Or I will punish you after. Understand?”

Her lip curls up in defiance. “Woof.”

I tilt my head and smirk as I grab her chin and make her look at me. “Bunnies don’t bark, Jill.”

“Fine,” she spits. “But don’t expect me to pretend to be happy.”

I bite my lip. “I don’t need you to pretend. I’ve got that covered. Don’t worry.”

When I turn around, she asks, “What’s that supposed to mean?”

A devilish smirk spreads on my lips as I look at the table where my guests are already eagerly awaiting our arrival. “You’ll see.”

CHAPTER 17



Jill

I'M SUDDENLY at a loss for words. My own damn family is sitting there at that giant table in the middle of the restaurant. And not only that, but Lex and Anne are there too. All generous smiles on their faces while they talk to each other like everything is all fine and dandy. Like they forgot they literally let me walk down the aisle to marry a monster to pay for a blood debt.

Fuck.

I'm frozen in place against this wall, wondering if I should attempt to run, but I know Luca brought his guards, and they must be right outside this front door.

I never thought I'd actually see my family again and definitely not at some frivolous dinner with the De Vos family. But I guess I can't look a gift horse in the mouth. At least now I get to talk to Jasmine and see how she is.

So I take in a breath to gather my courage and make my way over there.

But the second I step beside Luca, holding my breath because I'm looking straight into my father's eyes, Luca grabs my hand and pulls me in for a kiss.

Not a kiss on the cheeks or the forehead.

No ... a full-on kiss on the lips.

And not just any kiss ... a daring, coaxing, completely overwhelming and dominant kiss that says, "you belong to me and no one else." It's an all-consuming kiss so powerful that it makes my knees wobble and my heart rate shoot up as I struggle to stay put. The kiss makes it impossible for me to focus on anything other than his lips on mine, and everything else seems to disappear.

Until he takes his mouth off mine again, and all I'm left with is an insatiable hunger for more.

The moment seems to last an eternity as his dark, intense eyes gaze down at me while he holds me tight, the smile on his face only growing at the sight of my swollen, red lips, my blush giving away just how badly he's got me under his spell.

Only when he releases me from his grip and greets my family and his do I realize this was our first real kiss since we got married.

And it was all to show me off to our families.

To tell them ... she's *mine*.

My hand instinctively reaches for my tingling lips.

Did it even mean anything?

Why do I even care?

When my father finally notices me, the conversations grow quiet, and all eyes are on me. My train of thought is interrupted by his booming voice.

“Jill. I’m surprised you actually came.”

“Of course she came,” Luca says as he pulls out a seat for me. “She’s my wife. She needs to learn the business.”

Lex snorts. “I thought you just wanted her as a toy.”

His toy.

Dangling from the ceiling.

Licking his barbell.

The mind-blowing kiss.

It all flashes right past my eyes, distracting me so much that I’ve stopped moving.

“Lex,” Anne hisses, poking him under the table.

My mother clears her throat. “Let’s not sour the mood.” The smile on her face reminds me of the Wicked Witch of the West. “Jill. Just sit. It’s fine.”

I clear my throat and attempt to get over the obvious attempt at character assassination by Luca’s father.

“So how are the newlyweds doing?” my father asks as Luca sits down beside me. “Enjoying the married life?”

“It’s only been a few days,” Jasmine says.

“More than enough time before the honeymoon period ends,” Lex says, snorting.

“Honeymoon period?” I mutter, confused.

“It means you hate him now,” Jasmine explains.

A-ha.

“Father, don’t you have a toast to do?” Luca says as the server quickly pours us some drinks.

Lex clears his throat. “Right. To new contracts, renewed partnership, and new beginnings.” He holds his glass high, and the rest of the family tips their glasses, and even we play along.

“So how is business going, Lex?” my father muses. “I’ve heard you guys have gone through a transition of sorts. Is that true?”

Lex coughs while holding a napkin close to his mouth. I don’t know why, but the way Luca looks away has me suspicious. “Yes, I think it’s about time my son took over. I’m ready to start enjoying the riches of life.” He chuckles, and so does the rest of my family, and it all feels awkward as hell.

“Sounds like you amassed quite a bit of wealth from all our ventures,” my father says.

“Can’t complain,” Lex responds.

“Exactly,” my father says, and it’s as if someone lit a fire on top of a frozen lake. That’s how chilly the room gets.

Lex stares him down. “Wouldn’t have done it without all my connections, of course.”

My father sighs. “Of course.”

I breathe a sigh of relief. These two have been at each other’s throats ever since Liam ... passed.

“Well, I’m so glad our families are together again,” my mother says.

I can't help but wonder what things would've been like if I hadn't gone to the De Vos house to talk to Liam. If I hadn't ...

Anne clears her throat. "Apart from my son, of course."

I grab my glass and quickly chug down the drink, but it's too much, and I cough up some of the liquid.

"Oh, honey, you're making a mess," my mother says, patting me down with a tissue, but when she's done, she grabs my wrist, and whispers, "Stop embarrassing me."

"What did you just say?" I reply.

"Is there a problem?" Luca raises his brow at both me and my mother and butts in so much she releases my wrist just because of the way he stares her down. "If you have something to tell *my* wife, you can tell me."

"No, there's no problem at all," she says, laughing it off. "I was just telling her how proud I was of her."

Liar.

"She looks gorgeous."

"You can say it to my face, you know," I say.

"Did *you* buy this then?" My mother raises her brow at me.

"No. I bought the fabrics," Luca says.

"See?" my mother sneers.

"*She* made the dress," he quips.

She looks mortified, and it is quite honestly the best thing I've seen all night.

“And I’ll buy her a thousand more of these fabrics if it means you’ll finally see your own damn daughter for who she is.”

My mother isn’t the only one who’s flabbergasted.

The entire table has gone silent from Luca’s comment, but he doesn’t seem at all bothered.

In fact, the smug grin on his face only grows.

“Let’s order some food. I’m hungry.” He rubs his hands together, and for some reason, I can’t stop staring at the veins in his arms. “Server!”

There’s no time to respond to anything going on as the server comes to take our orders, and everyone continues to pick their dish and order more drinks like Luca didn’t just try to one-up my mother in front of me.

I can’t keep up.

“Thanks for taking her off my back,” I murmur sideways.

“My pleasure,” Luca responds, and for some reason, that word makes all my sensitive bits tingle.

I don’t think he meant it in a civilized way.

Not that this dinner is any kind of civil.

“How are you doing?” my sister suddenly asks, breaking me from my thoughts.

“I’m fine,” I lie. I don’t want her to worry.

She grabs my hand, and it forces me to look at her. “Tell me the truth, Jill.”

I shake my head. “I’m fine. Honestly.”

“You don’t look fine. Is Luca treating you okay?”

My lips part, but I don't know how to respond.

"If he's hurting you, I swear to God, I'll—"

"You'll do what, Jasmine?" Luca suddenly butts in, making me hyperaware of the fact I can't say anything to her without there being consequences.

But she refuses to back down. "She's your wife."

"Exactly," he rebukes, narrowing his eyes. "Mine."

The way he says that last word, like he doesn't just own my hand but my entire fucking soul and body too, makes goose bumps spread on my body.

"Treat her right," Jasmine says. "Our family won't accept any less."

"Oh, I'll treat her right, don't you worry about that," Luca says, picking up the knife off the table to play with it, and I can't help but notice the way he looks at her. "But it almost sounds like you're jealous, Jasmine."

I quickly grasp his hand and make him look at me. "Please."

"Please what?" He raises a brow, his hand tightening up under my grip. "Take her too?"

My eyes widen. "You wouldn't."

He leans in and whispers, "Try me."

"You wish," Jasmine tells him, snorting.

"Stop this, both of you," I intervene, trying to push both of them away. "I didn't come here to start a fight."

"Tell that to your sister," Luca replies, running his fingers through his dark, luscious hair.

“He just came here to show you off and pretend everything is fine,” Jasmine retorts, folding her arms.

Luca picks up his glass and takes a big sip. “So what if I did?”

He smashes the glass down as both of us gaze at him. I’m flabbergasted he’d admit that out loud. “Now pick the meat,” Luca suddenly says.

“Huh?” I mutter, completely confused.

For a second, I wonder if he means ... *his* meat.

He points at the menu in front of me. “The steak is juicy.”

“Oh,” I reply, trying not to laugh.

“What?” he asks, taking another sip of his drink.

I try not to look at him, but he makes it terribly hard with the way he looks at me, like he wants to lick every inch of my body just to show me I’m his. “Nothing.”

His eyes narrow. “What’s so funny?”

“It’s nothing, really,” I say.

He puts down his glass and slides his hand under the table. When his fingers curl around my knee, I freeze. “Tell me, Jill.”

“I told you it was nothing. I was lost in thought, that’s all,” I answer.

But his hand only keeps sliding farther up, and up, and up underneath my dress. I shudder in place when he gets closer and closer to my panties until it becomes hard to breathe.

“Go on then. Pick your dinner,” Luca says, focusing solely on me.

But as I point at the steak he mentioned, his hand slides across my panties, and I struggle not to whimper in front of my entire family.

Fuck.

“That one, please,” I say to the server when he comes to take the menu again.

Luca leans in, and whispers, “Good girl.”

But he doesn’t stop.

In fact, he only presses down harder, pushing his finger against my clit, and I gasp in response.

“What’s wrong, darling?” my mother says.

My eyes widen as I struggle to breathe. “Nothing. Nothing’s wrong.”

I laugh it off, but all I can feel is the heat rising behind my cheeks as Luca begins to circle my clit. I can’t bear to look at him because I know he must be sporting that same greedy grin again that gets my heart fluttery and my pussy clenching.

But when he touches me like this, how do I resist?

“Jill is just very excited for the ... meat,” Luca muses, flicking my clit like it’s the most normal thing in the world to do when you’re out to dinner with your family.

“Meat? Didn’t you say you were going vegetarian?” my mother quips.

My lips part, but I can’t respond because Luca slid aside my panties and swiveled right across my pussy.

“I ... I ...”

“She’s changed her mind. It’s been three years,” Luca fills in for me. “She missed the taste too much.”

He’s playing with me. Not only physically but mentally and emotionally too. And judging from the smirk on his face, he’s enjoying this way too much.

And oh God ... I hate that I am too.

Because the way he swirls around in my panties should be forbidden.

Why is he doing this?

Why now?

I have to stop him.

I nudge my legs together, but he swats them open with ease, pinching my clit so hard I have to bite my lip to stop a squeal from coming out.

“No denying me, bunny,” he whispers into my ear. “Don’t make a sound. Don’t let them see just how badly you like to be owned.”

“Don’t do this,” I whisper back, but it’s so hard when he’s touching me in all the right places.

And when he shoves a finger inside, I literally gasp. “Your wet pussy wants me to.”

I struggle not to react as the waiters bring in the plates filled with food one by one while our families are talking around us like they don’t notice a thing.

Luca swirls around inside, spreading my wetness all over before continuing to build the pressure on my clit. “That’s it, bunny. Let go of all your inhibitions.”

“What if they see?” I mutter back.

“They won’t if you don’t let them,” he says with a grin.

My father cuts up his ribs into pieces he can pick up, my mother slices into her fish with a delicate hand, and my sister is silently chomping on her beans while I’m trying to maintain my composure. Luca’s steak stew arrives now, but he keeps on playing with me like it comes easy to him. With one hand, he grabs his fork and stabs a piece of potato, stuffing it into his mouth, while his other hand continues the onslaught between my legs.

The more he eats, the more he gets fired up.

Especially when my food arrives.

Everyone’s eating their food and happily chatting like nothing’s going on. But as far as they know, nothing *is* going on. And I don’t want *them* to know. The thought of them seeing what Luca is doing is killing me, but when I look at him, I know that’s exactly why he’s doing it.

Fuck.

“Jill, I thought you liked steak?” Mom asks. “You’re not hungry?”

I gulp, trying not to react as Luca increases his pace, almost as if he’s deliberately trying to make it harder for me to respond.

Am I hungry?

Yes. No.

Not for food.

Hungry for ...

Him.

I turn my head, my body shaking as our eyes connect. Desire builds inside, and I'm struggling to even breathe. All I can think about is that finger swirling around my most sensitive part while his hard-on is probably bursting out of his pants, and all I want to do is reach for it and play with him like he's playing with me.

His dark, lusty eyes lure me in as he fingers me so good I swear it feels like I'm going to die at this table right here right now.

I can't focus on anything, let alone cutting that steak sitting right in front of my nose.

Luca is flicking my clit like he's on a mission to make me ...

Oh, no.

I can't do that here.

I can't. It's impossible. It's immoral. Everyone's watching. Everyone will know. I can't, it's—

Too late.

I gasp as the orgasmic waves fill my body with heat and desire, and all thoughts of food go out the window. And as I sit here, toes curled and nails digging into the table, the tiniest of moans still manages to escape my mouth.

And all eyes are on me while mine struggle not to roll back into my head.

Oh, God.

Everyone saw.

Everyone heard.

CHAPTER 18



Jill

MY ENTIRE FACE TURNS RED.

“Is something wrong, honey?” my mom asks, raising her brow in that way she only does when she’s masking her annoyance.

I gasp as Luca pulls his fingers away, and my legs tighten from the feel of his hand sliding away again as though nothing ever happened.

I don’t even know how to respond as Luca brings his hand to his mouth and, in full view of literally our entire family, sucks on his fingers all while gazing at me.

“Yeah, Jill, something wrong?” he muses, wearing a dark smile on his face.

Oh, my fucking God.

If I could smack that smug grin off, I would.

But that would mean admitting something happened.

Something forbidden and totally inappropriate.

And so goddamn hot that I'm sweating profusely in this dress, so much so that I scoot my chair back and stand, muttering, "I ... I have to go ... powder my nose."

"Powder your nose?" Jasmine responds, snorting.

"Yeah, go powder your nose, Jill," Luca adds, winking as he looks at me.

I immediately look away, only to face the rest of the people at this table with incredible shame. And they're all looking at me like I've lost my mind. Maybe I have.

I slowly slip away from the table, running halfway to the bathroom, before I close the door behind me and take a moment to breathe and think about what the fuck just happened.

My pussy still throbs, and I can still feel his fingers between my legs.

Fuck.

I look around the room at the dim neon lights hanging from the wall, the statue of a naked woman next to the door, and the exotic velvety purple wallpaper that has turned blueish from the sultry lighting. The place looks oddly ... sensual.

Not the kind of bathroom you'd expect in this high-end restaurant.

I try to catch my bearings, but nothing helps, so I walk to the sink and turn on the faucet to splash my face to cool down the heat spreading in my body.

All I can think of is how good it felt when he did that ... and how badly I wanted to grab him too.

What is wrong with me?

When I raise my head to look at myself again, Luca is right there, staring at me through the mirror.

I squeal.

“Luca!”

There’s a devilish smile on his face that only deepens the second I spot him. Like he enjoys seeing me jolt up and down from the scare.

“What are you doing here? This is the girls’ bathroom,” I say, trying to keep my cool, but it’s hard when he’s so close to me.

And it especially becomes hard to breathe when he presses his body against mine, his hard-on pressing up against my ass as he plants both hands on the sink.

“I just came ...” Goose bumps scatter on my skin. “To see how you were doing.”

His voice is low, gravelly, on the verge of a growl, and it sets off a desire I didn’t know I had.

Fuck.

Something tells me he isn’t just here to check on me.

But to take pleasure in seeing me all worked up.

He did this just to show me he could.

To show everyone who has the power.

Who owns me.

And I won’t forget.

No matter how damn hard he makes it.



LUCA

I COULDN'T STOP myself from following her.

After the way she just exploded into complete bliss on that chair right there, how could I not?

Witnessing something like that, in public, in front of her own damn family, is nothing short of magic.

Fuck the food, this is the crème de la crème.

The icing on the fucking cake.

Nothing can compare to seeing her fall apart for me in full view of everyone who ever thought they could keep me away from her.

Jill belongs to me and no one else, and I will make it everyone's business.

I lean in and take a whiff of her intoxicating scent. "You smell delicious after coming so hard."

"You embarrassed me," she hisses.

Our eyes connect through the mirror. Hers blaze with a fire I rarely see, but the type I can appreciate.

"In front of everyone."

I push aside her hair and slide my index finger down her cheek as we look at each other. "You made sure they didn't know ... just how good it felt."

I plant a delicate but fiery kiss on her neck, taking ample time to enjoy the taste of her skin on my lips. She shudders, visibly affected by my show of appreciation.

“I like it when you’re a good girl, Jill,” I murmur.

“Why? Because it’s easier to pretend you own me?”

Pretend? Fuck no.

I grip her neck and force her to look at me. “I don’t play pretend. I fucking own, Jill. And I own your body and soul.” My tongue darts out to lick her earlobe. “The only one pretending here is you.”

“What the hell does that mean?” she quips, trying her very best not to whimper.

“You’re telling yourself you don’t like what I do,” I reply, intensifying my grip on her neck as I suck on her earlobe between words. “You fake your way through hating me.”

“You make it easy when you do that to me,” she spits.

“Do what?” I narrow my eyes as my hand slides from the sink to her waist, dipping between her thighs again to claim what rightfully belongs to me. “Make you squirm in your seat until you come so hard you can’t contain your moans?”

“Why here? We’re at a family dinner,” she says through gritted teeth, but her breathing is becoming more ragged every second I spend nibbling her ear. When I slide up her dress and grab her pussy, her face turns red.

“I don’t fucking care where and when. You belong to me, and I’ll have my fucking woman wherever I fucking want.”

My words make her eyes widen, or maybe it's my hand that's snaked its way underneath her dress, right into her panties. One swipe and I know I'm right.

"You're wet as fuck for me, Jill."

"I just—"

She swallows her words, and it makes me smirk.

Always the uptight Goody Two-shoes, even now. "You just what, Jill? Came? You can't say it out loud, can you?" I swipe my finger along her pussy, just like I did underneath the table, and it doesn't take long to make her thighs clench.

"Your parents were always so strict with you, weren't they? You weren't allowed to even talk about sex, let alone think about it."

She swallows away the lump in her throat as she struggles to stop the moans from tumbling off her tongue.

She's so easy to please, yet so rough around the edges, like any touch will set her off. And I'm starting to wonder if she ever even ...

I pull my hand from her panties, grab her hand, and bring it down between her legs. Her eyes immediately fixate on mine as I look at her through the mirror, clutching her hand in place while I swirl it around. "Touch yourself, Jill. Do it like you used to ... before I first came into your room to do it for you."

She whimpers, struggling to do what I ask as if it's all too embarrassing to do in front of me. But I've seen that face she makes before, the one that makes me fucking hard.

“Don’t look away,” I say, looking her in the eyes as I help her play with herself. “Let me see you fall apart.”

“I can’t,” she mutters. “Why now? We already did this in there and—”

My grip on her throat tightens. “And it’s never fucking enough for me. I want to see you fall apart from my fingers every damn day for the rest of my life. I will never fucking have enough. Not here. Not anywhere. I want to imprint this image into my brain so I can enjoy it for the rest of my life.”

The blush on her face only grows, but I don’t care if she’s embarrassed by the idea of showing her most vulnerable parts.

I want all of her.

Not just the parts she’s willing to give.

I want every inch of her, even the parts she hates.

Even the parts she was taught to suppress.

The hunger. The defiance. The greed. The lust.

I want it all and more, so much fucking more.

So I circle my hand over hers and push down on her fingers until she touches her own clit right through her panties. The mirror fogs from her rapid breaths as I force her to play with herself, my dick getting harder and harder in my pants from the sheer sight of her unraveling right in front of me.

Still, her movements are rigid and not at all focused on the good spots, but I know she has them.

“C’mon, Jill. Show me what you can do,” I whisper in her ear, pressing my cock up against her ass. “Pleasure yourself for me.”

“I don’t think I can do it again,” she murmurs.

“Yes, you can,” I growl, still helping her. “You can come again and again and again ...”

“When is it enough?” she whimpers.

“When I’ve had my fill,” I reply, and I quickly push aside her panties and shove her hand over her pussy. “Now show me what you like.”

“What I like?” she asks.

“Yeah ...” I plant a soft but hungry kiss underneath her ear, only looking up to meet her gaze. “So I can do it to you when we get home. Unless you want me to do it again in front of your entire family?”

“No!” she says. “I’ll do it.”

She swallows again, her legs clenching as she starts rubbing herself.

Finally, she understands the message.

There is no denying me.

“Good. That’s it, bunny. Show me how good it feels.”

She swirls her finger around, her body erupting into goose bumps as she flicks her clit. Still, she looks like a statue, her fingers circling around with no control as she sighs out loud.

And it only makes me question her honesty more and more...

When she fake-moans, I grab her hand and stop her, looking her dead in the eyes. “Remember when I first touched you in your room?”

She nods.

“I asked you if you’d ever done this before, and you said yes.”

Her eyes widen.

“That was a lie, wasn’t it?”

She shakes her head, so I grab her ass and spank her hard.

“Don’t lie to me.”

I spank her again and again until she clenches her thighs and says, “Yes!”

I pause midair, glaring at her through the mirror. “Yes, what?”

“Yes ... I lied.”

My God.

So I wasn’t just fucking dealing with a virgin.

I was playing with a girl who had never even played with herself before.

My fingers and my knife were the first to touch that beautiful pussy.

“You took my ... first,” she says, blinking rapidly.

Her first ... *everything*.

Fuck. I can’t believe it.

It’s too good to be true, but it is.

“Why did you lie?”

“I didn’t want to look weak,” she replies after a few seconds.

“You think you’re weak?” I growl, and I twist her around so we’re face-to-face, and I grab her chin. “You are not weak, Jill. You’re my wife.” I lift her chin up so she looks at me. “And I don’t marry weaklings.”

She bites her lip, defiantly ... hungry, as if she's begging me to take her.
"Are you mad?"

"Mad?" A devilish smirk forms on my lips. Since when does she care about my feelings? "It can't get any better than this."

I lift her in my arms and set her down on the sink, ripping down her panties with ease. She squeals, but I cover her mouth with mine. I'm done waiting until she kisses me. I'm taking what's mine now.

She doesn't protest as I lick the seam of her lips to force my way inside and probe the roof of her mouth. My hands clutch her waist as I part her legs to move in closer and kiss her deeper, harder, faster. I can't stop myself from ravaging her anymore, from groaning as I explore her mouth with my tongue and taste her on my lips. My dick almost bursts out of my pants just from this kiss, and I'm almost ready to pull it out and shove it straight into her.

But then I remember ...

My own deepest, darkest wish.

I don't just fucking want her.

I want her to fucking want *me*.

So I tear away from her lips and stare at her for a moment, at that beautiful round face, those precious eyes, and those pretty red lips begging for more. God, after waiting to have her for so long, I can barely control myself around her. Especially when she looks at me like she wants more of where that came from.

Still, I step back. If I knew back then what I know now.

I'm her first.

Not just her first kiss or her first touch ... but her first *ever* orgasm.

It all belongs to me.

I tainted her.

Ruined her.

And fuck me if that isn't the sexiest thing in the entire fucking world.

"Why did you stop?" she murmurs.

"Stay there," I growl, forcing myself to stay put in the middle of the bathroom. "Open your legs."

"I don't understand—"

She stops talking the second I unzip my pants and pull out my cock. Her hungry eyes immediately home in on it, and my dick bobs up and down from the sheer desire in her eyes.

Fuck me, what I wouldn't give to ram into her throat right now.

But I have to control myself.

"Don't move," I say, swallowing hard as I rub the pre-cum all over my length.

She gulps from the sight of me stroking myself slowly, her breathing growing more rapid the longer I continue. I know she secretly likes watching me, wondering about all the things I could do to her, even if she'll never admit it.

But I see her. I see all the things she tries to hide from the world.

And I will make sure she knows too.

"Touch yourself," I say.

Her eyes widen. “Wha—?”

“You heard me,” I interject. “Touch yourself like I just touched you.”

Her cheeks flush with redness. “I don’t know—”

“Yes, you do. I just showed you how.” I stop stroking myself and wait for a second until she finally gets the memo and moves her hands down between her legs. “That’s it, bunny. Show me how you pleasure yourself.”

I know it’s her first time, but she has to learn how to let go, and I’m here for it.

I want to see her unravel, watch her plummet from the sky like a goddamn angel falling from heaven. And I will be there to fucking catch her like the devil down below.

When she starts rubbing herself, I do too, going the same rhythm, fighting the urge to blow my load. Not yet, not fucking yet. Even though the pressure in my balls is rising, and I want nothing more than to squirt it all over her.

Wait. Stroke. Wait. Stroke. Agonizingly slow. Drip. Drip. Drip. More pre-cum falls to the floor. But I keep going, and I don’t care how filthy this place becomes when I’m done.

My eyes are on her fingers, flicking back and forth across her pussy. Her cheeks turn redder with every passing second as her breathing comes in shallow pants. She’s doing exactly what I told her, exactly the way I showed her, alternating slow swirls with fast ones until her fingers are covered in her own juices.

“Lick your fingers,” I say.

She stares at me in shock like I’m asking the impossible. “No, I—”

“Do it,” I say, staring right back at her.

I’m not asking.

It’s not a request.

It’s a demand.

To see how far she’d go to please me and keep me happy and entertained.

A test ... to see if she’s exactly what I hoped for. Everything I ever dreamed of.

And when she brings her fingers to her mouth, and her tongue dips out to have a taste, I know I picked the right girl.

“Good little bunny ... Do you taste how hot you are for me?” I ask.

She nods and slips her hands between her legs again, unable to stop now that she’s had a feel. And it brings the wickedest of smiles to my face to think that I brought her down. That I was the one who showed her just how deviant she can be.

“Now make yourself come, just like I did under the table,” I murmur, still jerking off right in front of her. “Only this time, I want you to moan.”

She gasps, still circling her clit, but her cheeks glow again. “I can’t.”

“Yes, you can,” I reply. “You’ve done it before.”

“What if they hear?”

My eyes narrow as I swathe more pre-cum over my length. “Exactly. The. Point.”

She swallows hard. But I don’t relent.

“I won’t stop until you give me what I want, Jill,” I murmur, jerking off to the sight of her playing with herself, my cock bobbing up and down from the sheer excitement. “Look at my cock and fantasize about it the way I fantasized about fucking your pussy.”

“Why do you want me to do this?” she asks, all heady from her own touches.

“Because I want to watch you fall apart. Over and over again. And I want you to do it yourself. I want you to become the person you were meant to be,” I reply. “My filthy little fuck bunny.”

My words almost send her over the edge right there as she gasps for air while flicking her clit so hard wetness begins to flow. And my tongue dips out in response, licking my lips like the ravenous wolf I am, wishing I could bury my face in that innocent little pussy right there.

But I don’t want her innocent anymore.

I want to turn her into a lusty little whore ... only for me.

“That’s it, Jill. When I come, you come,” I say, running my hand over the tip. “Look at me and this long, hard cock waiting for you to beg.”

She shakes her head. “I’ve never done this—”

“Focus on the feeling,” I interject.

“I don’t know what I’m doing,” she says. “It’s not allowed—”

“Like hell it isn’t,” I growl. “We’re not kids anymore. We’re grown adults now. We can do whatever the fuck we want. Fuck your parents and fuck what they taught you. I decide what’s allowed now.”

She gulps, visibly shaken. But she doesn’t ever stop touching herself, not even as she doubts the very thing she clearly enjoys so much.

“Now play with yourself until you feel the heat rise and let it go,” I say. “Just like when I strung you up from the ceiling and licked you until you screamed.”

“Oh, God,” she murmurs, the sheer memory making goose bumps appear on her skin.

A dirty grin spreads on my lips. I know she remembers. It’s impossible to forget what I did ... and what I can do to her if she’d only let me.

I’m so turned on by what she’s doing to herself, by how she’s looking at my dick with carnal hunger in her eyes, I’m struggling to keep it together. Until she finally lets go of that moan she’s been holding for so long, and a gush of wetness flows out of her.

I groan along with her and let myself go. My seed squirts out in huge jets, right onto her body. It splatters all over her legs and hands and onto her pussy she tried so hard to keep pristine. Tainted by yours truly, a devious mark of ownership.

And when I’m done spraying her with my cum, I release myself and march up to her with it dangling half-hard between my legs. Her eyes can barely focus on anything else but the ring going through the tip, but I’m way more interested in her heavy breathing.

“You came ...” I murmur, and when she can’t even look at me without blushing, I tip up her chin and make her look. “Did it feel good, bunny?”

She nods, embarrassed I’d even ask.

But I don’t let her look away. “Now you know why your parents tried to stop you from even trying.” I lean in to whisper into her ear, “And I’ll make you do this over and over again until you get the point.”

She sucks in a breath. “Why?”

“Because I want you, and everyone else you know, to know you’re mine.”
When I lean back again, the wicked grin on my face sets her off.

“You’re a vile human being,” she says. “You only did that so my family would hear?”

Hmm ... I’d be lying if I said it wasn’t true.

But it’s not the only truth.

“What do you think?” I reply.

I can’t help myself.

I have to always taunt her. Something about her enraged face gets me wild.

But she shoves me aside and jumps off the sink.

She attempts to grab a tissue, but I snatch her wrist. “No.”

She frowns. “I’m covered in your jizz.”

“Exactly. Mine.”

We stare at each other for a moment.

I lean in, and say, “And I want everyone to *know*.”

“I can’t go out there like this.”

Bending over, I grab her panties and slide them up her legs, taking it agonizingly slow so she feels my fingers as I touch her thighs and pull the panties up, sealing the deal when they cover her pussy.

With a snap, they secure in place, right on top of the warm, salty, dripping cum. And I plant my hand on top and rub it in nicely, making her squirm from my touch.

“My fucking bunny ... and no one else’s.”

“All this ... because of your need to prove yourself,” she says through gritted teeth. She pushes past me, patting down her dress in a hurry. “I can’t believe I just did that. Never fucking mind.” She barges toward the door.

What the fuck is she talking about? Proving myself?

Fuck, that’s not the only reason, though I am damn fucking proud of myself that I managed to get her to finger herself and that I didn’t try to destroy her.

“Where are you going?” I ask. “Dinner isn’t over yet.”

“Away from you and your stupid games. I should’ve known better than to think you could ever change.”

“Change?” I scoff. “When did I ever give that impression?”

“You didn’t,” she says, clutching the handle. “But I was dumb and thought maybe, just maybe, if I gave in and did what you wanted, you could’ve been more like your brother.”

My eyes begin to twitch, and the smile on my face from seconds ago vanishes into thin air.

But before I can even say a motherfucking word, she’s already exited the door and left me to seethe in my own bubbling rage.

CHAPTER 19



Jill

I DON'T EVEN SAY goodbye to my family or tell anyone where I'm going before I march out the front door. What am I supposed to tell them? I don't even know where I'm going. I just needed to get away from there. Away from the situation. Away from ... him.

Because that boy in there manages to burn down every inch of self-worth I have left.

Nothing matters to him.

Not my feelings, not my wishes, not even my dignity.

Right in front of my own damn family ... and I let him.

I shake my head and continue walking, despite the cold.

I should've known better than to let him seduce me into doing it again myself.

Oh my God, just the thought of my fingers on my pussy felt so wrong, yet I did it anyway ... because he told me to. Because he was there, watching me, jerking off, and something in me ... snapped.

It's like all lights went off and all that was left was the lust between us.

Fuck.

It was so wrong.

But what else was I supposed to do?

Why does he have to make it so hard on me to be his wife?

Every time he touches me, it sends off fireworks in my body, but the second I start to even enjoy it, he ruins everything.

I can't let go like that anymore. I can't let him ... get close. Even if he is my husband, and I have to abide by his every whim.

But every time I give in to his demands, he still manages to creep closer and closer to the one thing I promised myself I would never give to him.

No. I have to stop.

"Where do you think you're going?" someone suddenly says.

A few feet away from me, a man in a suit casually taps his feet on the ground.

Panic swirls in my veins. "Who are you?"

"Who do you think?" he responds.

Luca's guard, probably. Fuck. They really are everywhere.

No wonder he casually let me stroll out of the restaurant. He knew I couldn't go anywhere without bumping into one of his men. Even when I

think I'm free for a moment, I'm still trapped.

"Go back inside," the man growls.

"I'd rather die," I spit.

I hear the familiar click of a gun as he fishes something out of his suit. "I can arrange that if you don't do what I tell you," the man says.

A shiver rolls over my spine.

"Don't even think about it," a dark voice behind me barks.

Luca's familiar face springs out in the streetlight illuminating the road as he walks closer and places a hand on my shoulder. Cold to the touch. Frigid enough to make me tense up.

"I'll take care of her," he says. "Call the driver. Get him to pick us up."

"Yes, sir," the man replies, and he quickly tucks away his gun.

"And go back inside and guard my family," Luca tells him.

"Of course, sir." The man nods and quickly walks past us, back to the restaurant doors that I so gratefully left behind.

But I should've known better than to ever think I could escape this mafia world. But most of all ... Luca fucking De Vos, my fucking husband.

"What are you doing out here?" Luca asks.

"What does it look like?" I sneer, full of resentment.

He clutches my wrist. "Stop playing coy."

"Why can't you just let me take a breather?" I mutter.

"You know why," he replies.

I jerk my wrist out of his grip. “You don’t even trust me.”

“Do you think I can?”

I don’t even have to look at him to know he’s raising a brow at me.

“Never mind,” I retort, and I push away from him, determined to continue walking even though he follows my every footstep.

“What are you going to do? Ignore me?” he asks.

“If it helps,” I quip.

He snorts. “You know you can’t get rid of me.”

“Maybe if I wish for it hard enough, it’ll magically happen.”

“Wow,” he scoffs. “You sure are good at lying to yourself about what you really want.”

I keep my head high as I walk through the dark of night. “I do.”

“Sure. Or maybe you just hate the fact that you loved moaning for me.”

I spin on my heels and point at him. “Don’t.”

“Why?” He tilts his head. “Too much truth for you?”

I step closer and push my finger into his chest. “Stop it. Stop trying to change the narrative.”

“I’m not doing anything.” He grabs my finger. “Why do you try to hate me so much?”

“I’m not *trying*,” I hiss back.

“Yes, you are.” Suddenly, he reaches for my face, and he caresses me so gently I’m caught off guard ... and my entire face heats.

He smirks. “You’re blushing.”

“No, I’m not.”

“You’re thinking about what we did in the bathroom?” he muses.

“No,” I say, but the heat only spreads further and further until I feel it everywhere, just like when I touched myself.

Oh, God. I’m so embarrassed we did that in a public bathroom with our family sitting outside at the table mere feet away. They could probably hear everything.

“You’re constantly telling yourself you shouldn’t like me,” he says.

“I’m telling myself you’re insufferable for making me do all of that,” I retort. “And in front of our family too.”

He wraps an arm around my waist, pulling me closer. “So what if they did? I want them to hear. You’re *my* fucking wife, and I’ll please you any goddamn way I want.”

Fuck me, I’d almost say that was hot ... if it didn’t come from the one person I should hate more than anything.

“You’re using me as a toy. Like something you can show off,” I spit. “I’m a human being, Luca. I have feelings.”

“And you think I don’t?” he quips, nostrils flaring.

For a moment, I stare at him in silence. “What—?”

Suddenly, he grips both my arms and forces me to look at him. “After I gave you the best orgasm you could ever have, you compare me to my fucking brother.”

Best orgasm? What an ego.

“Your brother was a better version of you.”

The fire in his eyes rages on, and it feeds my soul. Maybe it’s because I’m vicious, or maybe, just maybe, I want him to hurt the way I’ve been hurt.

He stares me down for a moment, letting my words sink in. “My brother was a coward who wanted to run away from responsibility. He didn’t even want you.”

I’d be lying if I said that didn’t hurt me. “At least he would’ve treated me better than you are.”

He stares at me for a moment, my own hurt reflected in his eyes as though he’s made it his.

“I’m done fucking talking about my brother.”

He’s done talking, but he won’t ever be done punishing me.

He grabs my arm and drags me along. He stops in the middle of the street as a car comes riding down the lane. It comes to a halt right next to us, missing my body by a hair, and Luca opens the door.

“Get in,” Luca growls.

I ignore him and go straight for the jugular. “You’re angry with Liam because he stole a kiss from me, aren’t you? And you’re taking it out on me.”

“I’m not angry with him,” he spits. “I’m angry with *you*.”

Tears well up in my eyes. “Why?”

“Did you forget you killed him?”

“So all of this ... all that dirty stuff you do ... it’s all *just* to punish me for killing him?” *Liar*. “And you wonder why I ran away from you and your

family all those years ago.”

His eyes almost shoot fire. “Get. In.”

I do what he asks, but not without a protesting glare. I know how he feels about me. He hates my guts, but the feeling is mutual. I wish I could stop longing for a better life. One where I wouldn’t have to hate the man who put a ring on my finger and made me his.

To him, I am nothing but an object to own.

A prize taken from the battlefield.

And he’s the victor reigning over the blood and bones of his own damn family.

When he gets inside the car and shuts the door, nothing but silence is left.

But I’ve spoken all the words I wanted to say. It all means ... nothing.

Nothing to him or his ice-cold heart.

And I have to stop letting him into mine.

CHAPTER 20



Luca

THE DISGUSTED LOOK on Jill's face makes it incredibly hard to feel anything other than rage.

She makes my blood boil, and not in a good way. She's a strongheaded vixen who doesn't even know the kind of power she holds, and fuck me, it's infuriating as hell.

We're both fuming in the car, refusing to speak with one another, and it feels like a goddamn volcano is about to burst.

I want to get home as fast as possible and leave this mess behind. I have enough to worry about as it is.

I look sideways at the girl stewing in her own juice beside me. We're one and the same. If only she could see. But nothing I can say will change her mind.

Nothing I do will ever make her ...

I groan to myself and look away again, rubbing my forehead.

When the car stops, she immediately opens the door and kicks off her shoes.

“Why are you taking off your shoes?” I ask.

“They hurt my feet. And now that the dinner is over, there’s no point in wearing them,” she responds as I get out too.

“I asked you to wear them,” I reply, looking at her over the hood of the car. “You can impress me.”

“*Impress* you?” She throws me a confused look that immediately turns sour. “Do you enjoy playing with my heart?”

I shrug. “I have nothing else to play with right now.”

She rolls her eyes. “Right. So you married me out of boredom. Got it.” She picks up her shoes and marches inside.

I rub my face. All this time, I thought I was a sadist, but fuck me, I must be one fucking depraved, starving masochist.

My phone rings, so I pick it up.

“Luca! Why the hell aren’t you here?” It’s my father, and he’s whisper-yelling through the phone like he’s trying to be quiet.

Obviously, he’s still at the restaurant. “I had to escort Jill home. She couldn’t handle it and tried to escape.”

“Do I need to call my men to let the fucking Beast out?”

Fuck. Just the mere mention of that word makes my skin crawl.

The Beast is the only pet my father ever had.

Not an animal, but a human being ... caged, used only as a weapon.

Nothing I would ever want set loose on my bunny.

“No, she’s fine,” I reply. “I have her.”

“Your mother warned you to make her submit before it’s too late,” he says through gritted teeth.

“I know. Don’t fucking tell me what to do,” I growl. “I’ll handle it.”

“Don’t you speak to me like that—”

“Do you want someone to take over your empire after you’re under the ground?” I bark. “Then let me handle it.”

I click off the conversation before he can say anything else.

I know I’m not the son my parents wished for, but they’d better damn well be happy they still have me and that I’m willing and capable of taking over their empire.

Shoving my phone back into my pocket, I go inside the building and follow the elevator up to my floor. I can still smell her scent inside this small cubicle, drawing me back to the penthouse like a trail of breadcrumbs left only for me.

The scent of her perfume lures me inside, and I close the door behind me, listening to the sound. I know she’s in here. My guards make sure she never goes anywhere unattended. And the thought of having to hunt for her gets me riled up like nothing else.

“Bunny ... where are you?” I ask, stalking around, looking underneath and behind all the furniture.

There’s not a peep, which tells me she’s hiding from me.

But I will find her ... I always do.

“Oh, Jill, you know these games only turn me on,” I say, my voice cracking with lust.

When I go into my room, she’s not there, but I can smell her scent from miles away. Suddenly, the door is pushed into my face, and she charges at me. Without a second thought, I grasp her hands and shove her up against the wall, pinning them above her head so she can’t hurt anyone with them.

“Bad bunny,” I growl. “What were you thinking?”

“That I could knock you out?”

I laugh. “Like you could hurt me. There’s a difference between wanting something ... and taking it.” I wrap one hand around her neck, squeezing to remind her who’s in charge.

“That’s what you do,” she splutters with difficulty. “You take and take, but you don’t deserve anything, and especially not my heart.”

Her words wound my soul, and I hate it.

But she just admitted that her heart is at stake here.

Is that why she ran from the restaurant?

My tongue darts out to wet my lips. “So you admit you feel something for me?”

“Hate,” she spits. “Hate is what I feel for you.”

I’d be lying if I said it didn’t feel like a knife straight into the heart.

Fuck.

Lucky for me, I never had one to begin with.

I release her neck and walk to the cabinet to fish something out.

“And?” she mutters behind me like she’s waiting for me to react.

Always trying to fish something out of me ... something that doesn’t exist.

At least, that’s what I tell myself as I march right back to her and clasp the collar around her neck again.

“What? No!” she says, clawing at it while I tuck the key into my pocket. “I didn’t agree to this! You said you’d take it off!”

“And I also said I might put it back on.” I lift the charm with the tip of my finger. “Because this collar was made for you, bunny.”

Her face contorts in a beautifully twisted way. “I fucking hate you.”

The viciousness in her voice doesn’t match the look on her face. She’s yearning for something. I just can’t tell what.

I snort. “Keep saying that, and I might actually believe it someday.” I clutch the collar tightly, dragging her closer to me. “Just like I know someday you will beg me to make love to you.”

I swiftly spin her around and throw her on the bed, where there’s a chain hanging from the bedpost. I attach it to her collar, tucking that key into my pocket too.

“What are you doing?” she mutters, clutching the chain, jerking at it. “I knew I couldn’t trust you. See, that’s the thing with you. You only take. Use. Discard,” she retorts. Tears stain her eyes, but she refuses to let them fall. “I will never stop hating you for it.”

Mistrust.

Hate.

All the things I never wanted her to associate with me.

But there is no fucking way I can ever flip this around.

All she'll ever do is hate me.

And all the lust and desire swirling inside me ceases to exist.

Fuck.

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck!

I hop off the bed, running my fingers through my hair, but the feeling doesn't go away. In fact, the rage only gets worse, and worse, and worse.

Rage, not against her ... but against myself.

Because no matter how hard I fucking try to make her want me, the wanting hasn't ever gone beyond lust. But my fucking wife doesn't want anything to do with me.

This isn't how I imagined my marriage to her would be, what I dreamed about the moment I put a ring on her finger and called her my wife.

Fuck!

Before she can say anything else, I storm out of the room and slam the door shut.



JILL

I DON'T CARE what he says or how badly I wanted to save my sister.

I am getting the fuck out of here.

I know I told everyone that I'd marry him. I wanted to spare her from having to deal with him. But this? Him toying with my body and emotions like they mean nothing to him? I can't handle it anymore.

So I toil and toil with the little hairpin I fished from my hair until finally the chain around my collar gives way and the lock falls to the bed. My jaw drops. I actually did it. A big, fat smile forms on my lips, and I force myself to keep the squeal inside as I jump off the bed.

The collar is still there, but at least I'm no longer chained to the bed.

I'm not staying here for another second.

When I've put on some shoes, I open the door and peer outside. The penthouse seems empty, and I don't see Luca anywhere. But I can hear the shower running.

No time like now.

I search every nook and cranny of the penthouse until I finally find a spare key hidden underneath a crown in his bookcase.

The same crown I once wore when my sister, Luca, and I played back when we were young.

Did my parents give him this too?

I gaze at it for a moment, contempt filling my heart.

After tormenting me for so many years, of course he'd keep this as a memento.

I throw it away and use the key to open the front door and sprint through the hallway. I don't go to the elevator. Too much time. They'll catch me down in the hall. No, I take the stairs, jumping several flights as I make my way to the bottom floor of the building.

A rush of excitement forces energy through my bones. I know it's not right. I know I made a vow, but I don't care. I'll find a way to get my sister out of my parents' claws and bring her somewhere safe. Maybe Easton can help hide her too, and then we can both run together.

I nod to myself as I jump the final flight of stairs and burst out the door. The front door is unguarded. Only one person sits at the front desk, and she stares at me with blank eyes like she can't believe I'm actually here.

Then she picks up a phone.

I run like hell through the revolving doors and out into the open, out ... into freedom.

CHAPTER 21



Jill

FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES, I've been running through the city with no idea where I am and not a clue where I'm headed. I thought I knew where Luca lived, but I was wrong. This place seems so unfamiliar to me, and I don't have a phone to check a map because Luca took it. I could ask someone, but I'm too scared they're in some way connected to the De Vos family or mine. I can't risk getting caught.

I'm wandering aimlessly through the city. Shadows lurk in every corner, freaking me out.

Maybe it wasn't such a good idea to run without being prepared.

When it feels like one of the shadows begins to follow me, I ramp up the pace.

My heart is racing in my chest as I flee from whoever's following me, hoping no one will find me. But if I know Luca well enough, he has spies all over the city.

Never alone, never really free, even when I run.

Still, I run harder, and harder, and harder.

No matter how out of breath it makes me, no matter how much my feet start to hurt from the high heels on my soles, and no matter how exhausted I get, I keep running. Because running is the only thing that reminds me of being alive.

And I will live, goddammit.

I head into an alley down the road. I have to find a street that I recognize so I can find my way around and make an escape. Or better yet, find any of Easton's establishments and hide inside until I can contact him there and ask him to help me get my freedom back.

Bolstered by the mere idea, I rush through the alley and come out on a street near the docks. There aren't many people here, and the grimy look of the buildings gives me the creeps.

Still, I push on because that shadow was still behind me.

What if he's one of Luca's spies?

I have to shake him off.

I run across the street to the harbor and follow the road up to a warehouse that's lit. Maybe I can go inside and find someone to lend me their phone. Then I can call Easton and find a safe harbor. Then get my sister.

But when I open a door, there's nothing but a few crackheads smoking around a dim light, and when they all gaze up and notice me, I freeze.

"Uh ..."

I feel like I stumbled into a private meeting.

This isn't the best idea I had.

"What the fuck doe jij hier?" one of them says in Dutch.

What the fuck are you doing here?

"Sorry, wrong building," I mutter.

When I turn around, someone blocks my way. A junkie with matted hair, torn clothes, and a mean look on his face makes me stumble back.

"Hmm ... English, huh?" he says. When I attempt to pass him, he keeps blocking me. "Hey now, no need to leave," he says, blowing out smoke in my face until I cough. "Want a drag?"

"No, thanks," I say, trying to stay friendly. "I got lost, that's all."

"Lost?" One of the crackheads in the back laughs. "We're all lost in here, girl. Come take a drag. We won't bite."

"Ja, we bijten niet," another one says in Dutch, which means the same thing.

"No, thanks. I'd like to leave," I say, but he refuses to let me open the door.

Fuck.

I don't like where this is going.

"C'mon, sit down. We could use a little company from a girl like you," he says, looking up and down my dress like he's never seen anything like it before. "You look like you can afford some time off."

One in the back opens his mouth. "Hey, vind je haar niet lijken op die mafia gasten? Je weet wel ... De Vos en Baas."

My eyes widen.

One of them just asked another if I look familiar ... if I look like a De Vos or Baas.

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. This is not looking good.

“Ja, nu dat je het zegt,” another one says.

Now that you say it.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about, but I have people waiting for me, and I need to go. Now,” I say with my head held high, but my voice is quaky as hell.

When the matted-hair guy grabs my arm, I stomp on his foot. “Don’t touch me.”

The mean face turns to rage. “You hurt me,” he growls. “You think that’s okay?”

I jerk the door, but it won’t budge. Right then, the smelly dude wraps his arms around my waist and drags me back to where the others are sitting.

I scream, but he covers my mouth with his filthy hands. “Don’t fucking scream. It’s not necessary. We only wanna share.”

“Yeah ... share ... that sounds nice,” one of them says.

Oh, fuck no.

These dudes are completely out of their minds on these drugs.

“Get off me!” I yell, fighting him every step of the way. “I didn’t ask for this!”

“Yeah, well you busted in on us. It’s only fair of you to come join us now,” one of them says.

Another one gets up. “But I don’t think I just want her to have a taste of the goods ...” The viciousness in his voice makes all the hairs on the back of my neck stand up.

This is not good. Not fucking good.

“Yeah, c’mere girl. We can have fun, and you can run off in those expensive shoes back to where you came from after we’re done,” another one says.

“No, let me out of here!” I say as one of them pulls me onto his lap.

“What’s that around your neck? A collar?”

I squeal when the guy wraps an arm around my waist, and tears stain my eyes.

“Relax, girl. It won’t hurt if you stop struggling.”

I fight him off, but it’s no use. It’s five against one, and I’m no match, despite the fact that they’re all drugged out of their minds.

Suddenly, the door slams open. A raised boot is all I see as a light shines inside. I block my eyes to keep it from blinding me. But a word still manages to squeak its way out of my throat. “Help.”

Something black and metallic is raised in the light.

BANG. BANG. BANG. BANG. BANG.

Five shots.

One long squeal emanates from my throat as I duck for cover onto the floor, and blood splatters all around me.

It all happens so fast that it barely registers with me until the gunshots have stopped, and all that’s left are the lifeless bodies of the five men who tried to grope me. And me, on the floor in front of them, covered in blood.

I wish it was the first time I've seen blood, but it's not, and the sight doesn't make me fearful.

It's what I've grown used to in this mafia world.

Men taking what they want, regardless of who gets hurt.

And if you get in their way ... you die.



YEARS ago

GUNSHOTS RICOCHET against the walls of our home. My father is out there. I can hear his voice as he yells orders at the men who work for us.

Men I'm supposed to trust with my life as I sit here in the closet with my mother and my sister, waiting for this fight to blow over.

Waiting for my father to win.

There is nothing but bloodshed out there.

Nothing but dead bodies and men who want to steal us to settle a debt.

My father can handle them, right?

This isn't the first time they've come for us. He's done it before, and he'll do it again.

But my mother's strong grip on my shoulder tells me enough. Even she is scared.

"Vera! Stay put!" my father yells, the sound of his voice making us all jolt up.

He's still alive.

But his voice cracks as though he's in pain.

Shit. I have to help him.

Without thinking, I push past my mother and throw open the closet door.

"Jill, no!" my mother's shrill voice begs, but I still run for the door.

When I open it, there's a man's back right in front of me.

He's looking right at me over his shoulder.

It's not my father, and the vicious smile on his face makes all the blood drain from my face.

I shriek as he spins around to grasp me.

BANG!

I close my eyes.

Blood sprays on my face.

FLOP!

It's the sound of a body dropping to the floor.

I'm too scared to open my eyes.

"Jill." My father's voice forces me to look.

The man lies facedown on the floor in our hallway, our home.

And my father's gun smokes from the trail left behind of this murder.

"Get back inside, and don't come out until I say so," my father barks at me, and he grabs the handle and shuts the door.

Now I understand what he meant when he said it was important that we moved away to another country.

He wants to keep us safe.

But I know it's not the men out there who are a danger to our lives.

It's this mobster family.

Nowhere is safe.



PRESENT

I BLINK a couple of times to remind myself I'm awake as the gun is lowered. The light turns softer until I finally see the one face that instantly makes me cry.

"Luca ..." I mutter as a tear runs down my cheek.

One of the men on the ground groans, so Luca swiftly walks up to him, fishing a knife from his pocket. The same knife from all those years ago. The one he's carried with him for so many years to torment whoever he wanted, including me.

He grabs the man's head by the hair and rams it into his throat.

I flinch and crawl away, covering my mouth with my hand to stop the bile from rising.

One final groan and the guy is gone for good.

Luca swiftly pulls out his knife and wipes it on a napkin before chucking that on top of the body. He walks toward me in such a calm and collected manner it momentarily makes me forget I'm surrounded by dead bodies.

Then he homes in on me.

The dark, violent look on his face reminds me of my father when he first killed someone in front of me. But that was to save his family and to destroy enemies.

This?

This savagery was only meant to save me from my own mistake.

A bloody show of power by a cruel knight in not-so-shining armor.

So then why is my heart all fluttery?

And without even so much as looking at them, Luca goes to his knees in front of me, and asks, "Are you okay?"

CHAPTER 22



Jill

I NOD, but I don't even know what to say. Luca looks at me with such intensity in his eyes, as though nothing else matters but him and me. Not the fact that I ran, not these dead bodies scattered around us, or the pool of blood I'm resting in. Nothing.

He brings his hand up to my cheek and wipes away the tear rolling down in such a gentle way that I almost forget he shot five people point-blank.

"Don't cry, bunny ... I'm here," he says, and he holds out a hand. His hair is still dripping wet from the shower. "C'mon."

I grab his hand, and he helps me up from the concrete floor. But the blood is still caked in my dress and my hair, and the mere sight of it makes me want to jump into the water across the road.

"It won't come off," I say in a frenzied attempt to wipe it away.

"We'll get you cleaned up at home," Luca replies, tucking his gun back into its holster. "Are you sure you're not hurt?" He grabs my shoulders and

makes me look at him, which makes me hyperaware of the fact that I ran away from him.

“I ...” I look away.

He tips up my chin. “Don’t *ever* run away from me again.”

Resentment boils up inside me, but I feel guilty as hell when I look down and see all of these bodies. They died because of me.

“Jill?” Luca says.

He killed five men point-blank, and it doesn’t even seem to faze him.

“You killed them,” I murmur, unable to look away from the onslaught in this warehouse.

Who were they? No one ends up in the gutter like this by their own volition, right? Do they have family that will miss them? Do they leave behind kids?

Luca grabs my collar and forces me to look at him. “I’d kill every last motherfucker on this planet before anyone ever takes you from me.”

I swallow. Hard.

“They deserved what they had coming for them,” he says through gritted teeth.

So he saw what they planned to do. More tears well up in my eyes. All of this is my fault.

“I’m sorry, I wasn’t thinking—”

“Hey,” Luca interjects. “Don’t feel guilty.” He leans in to get on my level, staring into the depths of my soul as though it comes easy to him. “I was the one who killed them. And I would do it again, and again, and again, if it means keeping you safe. No one touches *my* wife.”

Something about that makes me shiver, his words lighting a fire in my chest that I desperately cling to, the same flutters I felt before when he killed those men ... for me.

What is this?

Have I suddenly gotten used to his sadistic needs?

Or is it because I'm in awe that someone would go through all this trouble, all this murder, just for me?

A cold rush of wind comes in through the door and onto my blood-covered skin. Someone storms inside, completely out of breath. I recognize him as one of Luca's guards, and he has the same size shadow as the one following me earlier. It must've been him.

"Nicely timed," Luca grumbles.

"She ran so fast," he says between breaths. "I didn't even notice she was gone until it was too late."

"You're lucky I heard her scream," Luca snarls back.

He heard me?

So he was searching for me all along.

"I'll deal with you when we get home," Luca spits at his guard.

No. No one else deserves to be blamed for my actions. I don't want any more fighting because of me. And I don't want anyone else getting killed because of what I did.

So I grab Luca's face and make him focus on me. "Blame me. I was the one who ran."

Luca places his hand on top of mine. “Don’t try to run from a man like me,” he says, his voice low, gravelly. “I will always find you. And if anyone even so much as tries to hurt you, they will die a painful death.”

The obsession in his voice is hard not to notice. He says it with such conviction that it’s hard to stop the goose bumps from covering my body from head to toe.

His grip on my hand intensifies as he turns around and pulls me with him. “Let’s go get you cleaned up.”



LUCA

I BRING her home in my car. She hasn’t stopped holding my hand like she’s afraid I might disappear. She hasn’t said a word since she got inside, but she didn’t protest either.

Her eyes are hollow and filled with confusion.

As though she’s wondering why she didn’t run in the opposite direction.

She should’ve been more careful.

Just the thought of those filthy fuckers getting their hands on her makes my fist ball. I should’ve cut off their dicks and fed it to them for having the mere idea they could even touch my fucking bunny.

But I had to control myself for her sake.

She’s not used to this kind of violence.

Her father kept her out of harm's way for most of her life. Maybe she saw one or two people killed, occasionally. But there wasn't ever a spree or a slaughtering, or even an all-out gang war.

I have.

I've seen it all and even took part in it all.

My father made my brother and me watch as he took the head of one of his enemies just for trying to undercut his prices. We were only kids.

Still, it shaped me into the fearless man I am today, one fit to rule the empire he built.

If only I could make her understand the importance of sticking together.

In this world, no one is better off alone, especially not pretty girls like her.

Men would kill to have her.

I would, and I fucking did.

My grip on her hand grows stronger as hers begins to wane.

I won't let her slip out, despite the fact that she's been distant since I found her.

I know she must be wondering if this was the last time she got out and saw the world for what it truly was. Tainted. Vicious.

When I look at her, I don't feel the hatred I should feel or the need to punish her.

She tries to escape my grasp, yet all I can focus on are those soulful eyes and those shiny, kiss-worthy lips.

All mine.

Even when she doesn't want to be mine.

I have her body. I have her finger and her crown.

But what I don't have is her heart.

I will fucking *make* it mine, no matter what it takes.

When we're finally home, I help her out of the car and carry her in my arms to the front door of the building. Her body is still covered in blood, and the receptionist does a double take when she spots us.

"She's fine. Call off the rest of my men," I say.

She nods and immediately picks up the phone while I step into the elevator.

I'll have to up security around and inside the building.

Don't want her trying these dangerous fucking things again. The streets aren't safe for rich mobsters like us. People from all sides want our lives. Our families have too much blood on their hands.

"You don't have to carry me," she mutters under her breath. "I'm not made of porcelain."

I look down into her big eyes and the spats of blood on her cheeks. Too much filth for a porcelain doll.

"I'm carrying you because I *want* to," I reply.

She starts to blush and looks away.

As the elevator reaches my floor, I march through the hallway and slam the door to my penthouse shut with my foot before heading straight to my biggest bathroom. It's a separate room from the one in my bedroom with a big bath, a sauna, and a massage area.

I set her down on a wooden lounge chair near the massage table and go to my knees in front of her to inspect her thoroughly. I take off her shoes to look at her feet, then check underneath her skirt to make sure there are no wounds ... because if there are ... I will cut down every last one of those motherfucker's family members as well.

"I'm not hurt," she says, fumbling with her dress. "I just feel so ..." She shudders. "Icky."

"C'mon," I say, and I get up while lifting the dress. "Let's get this off you."

She stands up momentarily so I can peel away the dress, but when I throw it in a corner, she wobbles again so I ease her back down. "Easy there." I make sure she won't get up again by throwing her the look. "Sit."

She licks her lips and averts her eyes while tucking her hair behind her ear, but I can tell she's hiding. Especially when she covers her body with her arms. Even though there is nothing that I haven't already seen, she's still trying to hide.

Sighing, I go to the bath and turn on the faucet to fill it up with warm water.

Grabbing her hands, I make her stand. I lower myself until I'm at her waist and peel down her underwear, the last remaining piece of fabric. As it touches the floor, her thighs erupt into goose bumps.

The dress is ruined, but she still looks as gorgeous as she ever did, especially from this level. Still as appetizing as ever, and the mere sight of her naked flesh and soft pussy makes me want to bite and lick.

But I contain myself and focus on getting her into the bath and grabbing a sponge to clean her with.

"Why are you doing this?" she asks after a while.

I pause mid-stroke with the sponge and let it rest on her arm. “You’re my wife. It’s not just my duty to seduce you. It’s my job to take care of every part of you.”

There come the goose bumps again and that same blush covering her entire face.

She looks away, but I softly grab her collar and make her look at me. “You think I’m a monster, but the real monsters are out there.”

Her eyes fill with tears. “You just came to get your toy back.”

My grip on her collar tightens as I kneel beside the bath. “You are more than a toy to me.”

“How? When you try to show me off to my family by playing with me under the table and in the bathroom just so they know I’m yours?”

“Not just them,” I reply. “I want *you* to know as well. And I want you to know that I’m not letting you go. No matter how hard you try, I will not let go of what belongs to me.”

She sucks in a breath, biting her bottom lip. She’s trying so hard not to let it affect her that it physically hurts to watch.

“Why do you care so much?” she asks. “You could’ve married any other girl. Any one of them would’ve fallen to their knees for you.”

“But not you,” I respond, looking into her eyes. “Maybe that’s exactly why.”

“So you’re a masochist,” she says.

I snort. “Maybe that’s the one thing we have in common then.”

Her eyes widen, and she immediately turns red as a beet again. “I ... am not,” she stutters.

“Is that why you moan every time I touch you?” I tilt my head. “Because that sure sounds like someone who hate-loves pain.”

She rolls her eyes and looks away, but I know she got the point.

“Why do you think I passed on the opportunity to marry your sister?” I ask. “She would’ve been the easier option compared to you.”

“Thanks,” she scoffs.

“You know it’s true.”

“But you don’t do easy.”

“Exactly.” I tilt my head to look at her, but she keeps looking away like she’s hiding herself, and it pisses me off. “I’ve wanted for nothing else, nothing ... but to own you,” I say, and I grab her face with both hands. “But you’ve wanted nothing more than my fucking brother. That motherfucker died for you.”

“And that’s why you do all of this,” she hisses. “To punish me for your brother’s death.”

I take in a deep breath. “That’s what I thought too.”

Now she finally looks at me without me having to force her to.

“What do you mean?”

I pick up the sponge and sink it into the water before slathering it all over her arm again, watching every drop of water roll down her skin, and at that moment, I want nothing more than to lick each one of them.

“I want to,” I answer, thinking of all the ways I could make her hurt and beg. “Believe me.”

“Do it then,” she says, her eyes boring into mine. “I chose to run away.”

“Is that what you expect me to do?” I ask. “Is it what you want?”

“Since when do you care about what I want?” she sneers.

I grab her hand and press a kiss onto the top, which immediately grabs her attention ... and makes the air lock in her throat.

“You think you know me, but you don’t,” I say as I look up at her from underneath my eyelashes.

“I know you hate me as much as I hate you,” she responds.

“I never said I hated you ...” I reply, leaning over the tub so she can’t look away. “I hate what you’ve done to me. What you make me do.” I grab her face and inch closer and closer. “How greedy you make me.”

Her lips are wet, the steam rising from the bath drawing smoke between us. But nothing can keep me away from her.

Nothing.

Not even my own damn stone-cold heart.

“I *want* to hate you,” I murmur so close to her lips I can almost taste them. “So badly ...”

“Hate is all you’ve ever shown me,” she murmurs back, her eyes completely transfixed on mine.

“If I hadn’t, there would’ve been nothing left of you.”

She sucks in a breath, her body freezing in the hot bath, her nipples growing taut as I hover so close to her face I can feel every one of her twitches just from the vibrations in the air.

“Show me then. Show me what it means not to hate.”

I press my top lip against hers, and whisper, “Kiss me and find out.”

One second.

That’s all it takes for our lips to collide and for her mouth to finally crave mine as I have craved hers. I’ve claimed her lips before, but she’s never given them to me freely. Willingly. Hungrily.

And fuck me, that makes me hungry for more.

The way she kisses me back wakes the hunter inside me.

I groan against her lips as I coax them to open, desperate for a taste. And when she does, our tongues entangle, and I kiss her deep and hard, wanting to draw out her soul.

I’ve kissed girls before, but none of them ever made me this lusty, this greedy for more.

I lean up and get closer and closer until I’m halfway into the tub with my arms, but I don’t care. The warmth only heats me up even more as I circle my tongue around and lick the roof of her mouth.

She tastes pure, divine, like everything I could ever want to ruin.

The more I have, the more I want to take, and take, and take until there’s nothing left.

I want to break every last inch of her until all she’ll ever want is me.

All I wanted was to punish her for my brother's death, for destroying my family, for fleeing from me in that car and running away from the airport when she was supposed to marry me, for k—

I pull away from her mouth and stare at her for a moment. Her lips are swollen and red, still pouted from the kiss, and so fucking delicious looking that it almost makes me want to have another taste.

But all I can think of is the only thing that brought us here.

The one lie I've been telling myself all this time.

That I feel ... nothing.

Because my heart is fucking racing in my throat.

What the fuck?

No, fuck no. It's not true. It's not real.

I get up again and quickly spin on my heels so I don't have to look at that pretty fucking face and her gorgeous naked body because it'll only make me want to jump in there and devour her.

I've never felt anything for anyone before.

Yet ...

My fists ball.

"I have to go," I say under my breath.

"Wait!" She raises her hand, but I ignore it and storm off with sweat rolling down my back and a rock-hard dick tenting my pants.

I'll take care of that later.

CHAPTER 23



Jill

HATE.

The thought sounded so easy at first. When Luca first put this ring on my finger, all I wished for was to rip it off and chuck it in the nearest ocean.

But now that I look at it in the mirror, I don't know what to think anymore.

My heart is still beating in my throat, my body still hot from the bath.

Or maybe I'm telling myself it was the warm water that did the trick.

Because I can't stomach the idea that I'm hot for his hands on my face and his lips on my mouth.

My finger instinctively reaches for my lips, remembering the way he kissed me so violently passionate that it still takes my breath away just thinking about it.

I didn't know kisses could be like this.

Or that a guy like him could make me feel so confused.

I frown and look away from my own reflection, embarrassed by the girl I've become.

Old Jill would never allow these feelings to take over. Old Jill would've brushed it off as stupid hormones, just like I did when he first jumped into my room through the window and gave me my first orgasm with that same fucking knife he kills his enemies with.

I swallow away the lump in my throat.

To imagine a simple kiss could take all the bad memories away and make them feel distant. As though nothing else matters except his mouth on mine and the desperate need to—

No, don't fucking go there, Jill. You know he isn't right for you. He's only using you as a plaything, as nothing but a prize he stole from the Baas family.

But then why did he say he *wanted* to hate me like he doesn't already?

It doesn't make any sense.

I pace around in my room while I wait for Luca's return. The only rooms I'm allowed to go into are the bedroom, the bathroom, and the kitchen and living room area. All the other doors are locked. He's also increased security around the place, so I doubt I'd be able to make a second escape.

Not that I want to try again. What happened in the warehouse scared me off.

Luca is out there right now doing some mafia business while I'm left without answers.

What did he mean when he said I don't know him?

What is he trying to tell me?

And why do I care so much?

I sigh to myself.

He must be using my own insecurities against me to make me fall for him. That's what he truly wants, right? My heart. It's what he told me from the start.

And here I am, almost handing it to him on a platter because of one head-spinning kiss.

I slap myself. Hard.

"Don't be so fucking stupid, Jill. If you're going to give him your heart ... use it as a weapon."

A weapon. Hmm ...

A devious smile forms on my lips.

I could do that.

I could definitely use my heart.

I'll make him fall so hard he'll never see it coming.



LUCA

HOURS later

“SIR, we have a problem,” Max, my guard, tells me as I’m on the phone with a potential buyer.

“One sec,” I tell him before I lower the phone and raise my brow at Max. “This better be important.”

“We’ve gotten reports from our spies around town that Van Buren’s men are moving around a lot of boxes all over the area.”

“And?”

“It’s not food,” he says, and he holds up a photo he took of the boxes.

There’s a clear firearm warning on them.

My jaw slowly lowers.

Then I bring the phone back to my ear. “We’ll have to continue this conversation another time. I will let you know when you’ll receive the delivery, and then we can talk about more.”

I exit the phone call and tuck the phone into my pants. I was on my way back home from another business meeting my father was trying to haul me to weeks ago. I only just closed the car door when Max came up to me.

“Get some men to follow them. I need all the details. Where, when, what, everything. Don’t get spotted. And call me when you know more.”

“Yes, sir,” Max says, and he immediately walks off to meet with the others in their room upstairs near the penthouse. *Always keep security close*, my father constantly said.

Suddenly, my phone rings again, and I’m expecting the same client to call again asking about that overdue shipment. “Hi, let’s continue where we—”

“Hey, it’s me. I’ve got news.”

My eyes widen at the sound of my private detective's voice, and I brace myself against the car seating. "And?"

"Meet me at the terminal. We're flying out in an hour."

Fuck.

This is fucking happening right now.

I haven't prepared for any of this. It's too quick.

There's no time to pack, no time to even say bye to Jill.

I'll have to come up with an excuse and get Lita to take care of her while I'm gone. My guards will make sure Jill can't escape. She'll forgive me for my abrupt departure later.

I have more important things to do right now.



JILL

WHEN I LEAVE THE ROOM, there's no one here, which is ... odd.

I've never actually been alone in Luca's home.

It's quite a big penthouse too, now that I finally have a chance to stroll around. The paintings on the walls are as breathtaking as the view. Kinky, too, just like Luca's personality, with nudity taking the centerpiece in almost all of the artworks scattered throughout his home.

Suddenly, the door opens, and in walks Lita with a whole bag of groceries.

"Hey," she says. "You're out."

Out ... as in, out of the room.

Why does she make it sound so normal?

“Yeah,” I reply awkwardly.

“So I take it you and Luca are getting along better now?”

I don’t know how to respond. Instead, I shut down with my mouth hanging open.

Lita laughs. “It’s fine. You don’t have to tell me.”

She packs the groceries into the fridge and then grabs a cutting board and a knife.

“Oh, are you cooking?” I ask.

“Of course,” she replies. “Can’t let you go hungry, now, can I?”

I nod, wondering what other amazing dishes she’s got up her sleeve.

But another important question is looming in the back of my mind. “Um ... weird question. Do you happen to know where Luca is?”

She pauses mid-slice through a cucumber. “Oh, well, he’s off to do some business for a few days. He’ll be back later.”

I frown, confused.

Off to do some business for a few days?

“He didn’t tell you?”

I shake my head.

“Oh ... that’s odd,” she says, shrugging her shoulders. “Well, no wonder he asked me to keep an eye on you.”

I cringe. “So you’re my babysitter basically.”

“Luca wants to make sure you have everything you need,” Lita replies, adding a smile.

“So he is really gone? He didn’t even say goodbye,” I mutter to myself, wandering off to look out the window to see if I can still spot him.

When he left so abruptly while I was in the tub, I thought he’d be back in no time to finish what he started. I was prepared. I was ready to face him head-on. To give him what he wanted in order to steal something back.

But now that’ll all have to wait, and it really throws me off track.

“Did he say *where* he went off to?” I ask as Lita peels some potatoes.

“No, he said he’d be gone for a couple of days and that it was important. But he’ll be back in no time, you’ll see.”

“Hmm ...” I look out onto the streets, but there’s no sight of his car anywhere.

“He’s probably on the plane by now,” she adds.

What could be so important that he couldn’t even tell me?

It can’t be the regular stuff, a drug deal, or meeting a new client or supplier. He wouldn’t hurry off like that without saying anything. It has to be something bigger than that. But what?

I sigh to myself, racking my brain over and over, trying to figure this out.

That’s when my eyes settle on one thing.

The door leading to his office.

I get up and head toward it while Lita is busy unpacking more food and cutting up veggies. I jerk the door handle softly, hoping no one will hear me as I slip inside. But the door is locked. Of course, he wants to keep me out.

Whatever it is he's hiding in there, it can't be good.

And maybe, just maybe, it'll tell me why he suddenly ran off without even saying goodbye.

But how the fuck do I get in without a key and with Lita watching me?

I sigh again and plant my forehead against the wood.

"What are you doing?"

Lita's sudden voice makes me spin on my heels.

"Nothing. I was just ... looking for the toilet."

She points at another door in the hallway. "There."

"Thanks," I say, walking to it like a zombie.

"You know he doesn't want anyone going into his office, right?" she says, making me stop in my tracks.

I nod. "Yeah, I just ... you know. I'm curious about this place. Now that I'm out of my room, I thought I could explore."

I go straight into the bathroom, where I lock myself in and sit down on the closed seat with the light turned on, so no one will think I'm up to no good.

Even though I am.

Because he's hiding something.

I just know it.

And I'm almost certain I'll find something, anything, in that locked office of his.

Something I may be able to use against him.

A devious smile spreads on my lips.

All I gotta do now is ... wait.

CHAPTER 24



Luca

DAYS later

WHEN THE PLANE has finally landed on safe soil again, I am anything but at peace. My fingers thrum on my knee, my patience thin. After everything I've learned these past couple of days, I haven't spent a minute without worry. Even though there's still so much more work to be done, I couldn't fucking stay there.

It wouldn't be useful anyway.

I sigh to myself as the car drives past all the familiar houses.

I can't fucking wait to be home again.

To forget everything.

To touch my bunny again and kiss those velvety fucking lips of hers.

She always has a way of making me feel good again especially when I'm frazzled.

As I go into the building and enter the elevator, my phone buzzes. I check only to find a warning from one of my home detectors. Someone broke into my office.

Hmm ... whoever could that be?

I roll my eyes.

Of course she'd start snooping around once I let Lita off the hook. Just thirty minutes ago, I texted her and told her she was done for the day, so I could have some private time with Jill.

And here my little bunny is fucking snooping where she shouldn't be.

I waltz through the corridor and burst into my own penthouse, searching for her.

"Jill?" I coax, raising a brow to see if she'll respond.

Is she planning another trap for me?

I rub my forehead. "Jill. I know you're in my office. There's no use in hiding."

After a few seconds of non-responsiveness, I barge into the room, only to find her snooping through my papers as though she didn't even hear me.

I slam my hand into the door.

She looks up, unsurprised that I caught her in the act.

"What are you doing?" I ask.

"What does it look like?" Her sassiness brings a smile to my face.

“I didn’t give you permission to come in here, and you know that. I don’t appreciate you going through my stuff when I’m out of town.”

“And I don’t appreciate being kept like a pet, but here we are,” she retorts, shrugging it off like she did nothing wrong.

I march up to her and grab her wrist when she’s about to reach for a particularly confidential drawer. “Ah.”

She spins on her heels to look me in the eyes. “What are you trying to hide? You think I don’t know you’re a mobster?” She laughs. “Like my parents aren’t in the same business.”

“I don’t care what your parents do. What I do is my business and my business alone,” I reply.

“Oh, so I’m your wife, but I can’t know anything about what you do?” She raises her brow. “Typical.”

I try not to be offended, but it still makes me clench my teeth when she says that. “How did you break in here?”

With a smug face, she replies, “I grew up with a father who tried to keep secrets from his daughters. It’s not the first time I picked a lock, trust me.”

When I grab her waist tight, I notice she’s clenching her fist behind her back, so I grab it and push it open until something metallic drops to the floor. A hairpin.

My eyes narrow. “Inventive.”

“I’ve got my ways,” she replies.

“Gone for years, yet the shadiness never left you,” I quip.

“Like you and your family aren’t equally as shady,” she spits.

I plant my hands on the desk so she can't escape. "I guess we both deserve each other."

"You think? Or are you just saying that to make yourself feel better about the fact that you forced me into this marriage?"

She seems feisty today. "Here we go again."

"I made the choice, yes, but I would never have if you hadn't—"

"Taken your sister," I fill in for her. "And why do you think I did that?" I raise a brow at her, the smirk on my face feeling permanent.

"Because you wanted revenge on our family," she replies.

I laugh, shaking my head as I look down at my own feet, unable to look her in the eyes when we both know she's wrong.

"For your brother," she adds.

"If you keep bringing up my brother, this marriage will only get worse for you," I say, licking my top teeth. "Take that as a warning."

She sucks in a breath. "But you—"

I grab her throat. "My family wanted revenge. You're lucky they didn't want your blood and were happy to marry you to me instead." I lean in closer and closer until our lips are mere inches away again. "Now ... are you ready to act like my fucking wife?"

Her lips part, her body straining against mine. "You only use me for your own pleasure ... just to make me pay." Her words sting, but her voice crackles and changes in pitch the closer my lips hover to hers.

"Or maybe ... I'm playing with you for both our enjoyment," I reply, our breaths mingling as I lean in for a kiss.

At first, it's agonizingly slow, as I want her to know this isn't just to punish her or to torment her. It's amazing to push her buttons and watch her explode in rage. But there is something else I love even more. Watching her fall apart because of all the things I do to her. With my mouth as I kiss her lips, with my tongue as it swivels around inside her mouth, with my hands as they move from the desk to her waist and down her legs to peel up the sparkly gold dress she's wearing.

It makes me pause and look down. "You're wearing ... something interesting." I smirk. She looks beautiful. "Why?"

"Because it looks nice," she replies, her lips still swollen from my kiss.

"Very nice..." I bite my lip in hunger. She really does know how to make me want her. Knows what makes me want to rip all the clothes off her body. And it doesn't feel like a coincidence.

My hand slides underneath the dress. "You put this on for me, didn't you?"

The blush that creeps onto her face already gives it away. "No, I just want to look—"

I plant a finger on her lips. "Stop lying."

She swallows.

"I hate liars," I say, looking down at her.

"Then you hate yourself," she says.

That fucking stings like a knife to the goddamn heart. Why? Because I know it's fucking true. But the fact that she knows hurts more.

She turns around, but I won't let her walk away.

Instead, I pin her against the desk, my hand slipping around her throat again. I can do whatever I want when she's turned her back on me, too. In fact, it's even more enjoyable watching her through the large mirror behind my desk.

I want to do bad things to her, especially when she tells me I should hate myself. She makes it impossible not to. Because I *want* her more than anything, and I always told myself it's because she's a vixen, a bad girl in need of punishment for all the shit she did.

But now I finally have her, and it's still not enough.

I want more.

More of everything.

More of her body, her pussy, her lips.

I want it all ...

But what I want the most is for her to fucking want me back.

And she's using it against me.

"You make me want to do bad things, Jill ..." I whisper in her ear as her head tilts back. "Things you can't even fucking imagine."

"Tell me," she whispers.

My hand wraps around her throat as the other slides up between her tits until I reach her face and part her lips with my fingers, pushing them down until my fingers enter her mouth and slide onto her tongue.

I'm not afraid she'll bite.

In fact ... I'm daring her to.

“I want to bury my cock inside your tight little ass right here on this desk,” I whisper into her ear. “Thrust it up your puckered hole until you moan my name. Shove it into your mouth when you’re on your knees ... fuck this pretty little throat until I come. And even that’s not enough.”

She gasps as I squeeze her throat while my dick grows harder and harder against her ass.

“I want to fuck you day and night, tie you down on the bed, rope you to the ceiling, chain you to my floor. I want to slather you in my seed and make you choke on it.”

She shudders, her body covered with goose bumps as she wriggles her ass against my length, clearly turned on. It’s everything I always dreamed to do to her but couldn’t because she wasn’t mine.

But here she is, my fucking wife, ripe for the taking.

And I’m done fucking waiting until she’s ready.

CHAPTER 25



Jill

HIS FINGERS SLIDE in and out of my mouth as his other hand curls over the collar around my neck, and I don't even mind. Even though he's cornered me, caught me in the act of trying to snoop into his business and find something I could use against him.

I should bite, fight, kick him.

Instead, I'm like a meek little lamb pushing herself up against her wolf.

Teasing him.

Coaxing the fangs to come out and bite me.

I know it's dangerous. Playing with his feelings is like playing with fire, but what other choice do I have when he left me none?

I don't protest as he hovers over my ear and presses a kiss right below.

The rumbling sound of his groan sets me off.

"Fuck me then."

It comes out in a single breath, but the gravity of my words don't go unnoticed for either of us. I don't say it lightly, and I know what it means. What I'm asking.

For him to take my virginity. To completely, utterly, irrevocably become his.

And the mere thought makes my entire body erupt into goose bumps.

I never thought it'd be like this, and with Luca. I always thought his brother would be the one. But now that I'm here, married to Luca, all I want is for those fingers of his to grab me, hold me, touch me, use me. I hate him, hate what he does, hate how he makes me lust for him so easily when I shouldn't.

His mouth forms into a grin near my ear. "I won't allow you to take that back."

As my lips part, he kisses me again, sinking his teeth into my shoulder until I let go of the gasp I was holding. He doesn't puncture my skin, but the pain is real, visceral. I'm watching him through the mirror, but when he gazes right up into my eyes like a goddamn animal, I finally realize the consequence of my own words.

The grip on my throat tightens as he suddenly brings his other hand down to my dress and dives underneath, inching the fabric up as he goes. Sweat builds up on my back as he reaches my panties and pulls them aside with ease, and I hiss when he strokes my slit with two fingers.

"So sensitive still ... Can you really handle me, little bunny?"

"I can handle more than you think," I say through gritted teeth.

He slaps my ass. Hard.

I bite my tongue.

“I’m eager to find out and test that idea,” he muses, slapping my ass again so hard I bump into the desk. He’s watching me through the mirror, every slap making me all the more aware of how badly I want him to do it.

“Because I think you’re still lying to yourself and me.”

“I’m n—”

He shoves me down onto the desk headfirst.

Fuck. It’s happening.

I’m about to lose my virginity.

“You asked for it, Jill. Now let me fuck your tight little ass.”

My eyes widen.

My ass?

“Wait, what?”

He snorts as he fishes something out of his desk drawer. Lube.

And it makes my pupils dilate.

“You asked for it ... now let me fucking give it to you.”

“I thought you were going to—”

I gasp when the cold liquid hits my ass, and he rubs it in.

“Oh, my God,” I mutter. “This wasn’t what—”

He pushes a finger inside.

Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

It's so tight yet such a turn-on.

"It's exactly what I told you I would do to you," he growls, pushing in farther. "Now take it like a good girl and moan for me."

I can't help it. The noise just slips out the farther he sticks his finger inside.

It feels so wrong, so immoral for him to be inside my ass right now.

I thought he would take my virginity, but I never expected him to take my ass instead.

"Does that feel good, little bunny?" he groans, thrusting in and out of my ass.

It feels so wrong to admit it, even when it does.

SLAP!

The rude awakening makes me moan out loud.

"Answer me!"

"Yes," I mewl.

It feels so wrong to say it out loud while he's toying with me like this. I'm so embarrassed.

Suddenly, his zipper is pulled down. My face turns red.

The tip touches my back entrance, and I can feel the cold metal of his rings nudge against my skin.

Oh, God.

It's really happening.

"Wait, but I thought you were going to fuck me in the pu—"

“I told you I was going to take every one of your fucking orifices before I’d fuck your every hole and make you beg.” More cold lube is squirted over my back entrance and across his length.

I glance at him over my shoulder. “Please ...”

“Please, what, bunny?”

“I’m afraid it’ll hurt,” I reply.

“Only a little.” There’s a devious smirk on his face that I’d almost describe as sexy. “And I’m going to enjoy every second of your submission.”

I swallow down the lump in my throat as he bends over me, the tip pushing against my entrance, and whispers into my ear, “Are you ready, bunny?”

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck!

I give a slight nod, but I don’t know if I really am. He’s huge, and the mere thought of him inside me already makes me squirm.

“Because I’m not gonna hold back,” he adds.

When our eyes connect through the mirror, he plants both hands on my ass and spreads the cheeks until my hole is open wide. “Just how I like it,” he groans.

He buries every inch of himself inside me, agonizingly slow. Every ridge of his cock, the rings on his shaft, the veins throbbing inside, I feel it all. The sensation of something filling me up is overwhelming, making me let out a guttural moan.

“That’s it, bunny. Feel my cock owning every fucking inch of you,” Luca says, going in deep, deeper, even deeper, and when he finally reaches the base, my eyes almost roll into the back of my head. “This ass belongs to me now. And soon, your pussy will too.”

I gasp when he slides back out with ease, only to thrust back in again, this time with much more energy. I gasp each time he hits the base, the length of him filling me up whole.

I thought it would hurt, that I'd hate the very feel of him inside my ass.

But I was wrong, so wrong.

Because it feels so goddamn good it's almost illegal.

God, the way he thrusts inside is just like how he touched my clit, but better, more fulfilling, more everything. And it makes me hungry, needy in a way that I never thought I would.

"F-Fuck," I hiss as he pushes in again.

"Oh yes, bunny. I will fuck you," Luca groans, and he grabs my wrist and pins it to my back. "And you will fucking scream my name before we're done."

THRUST!

My jaw opens wide, but the only sound that leaves is a simple mewl as he plunges into me, each stroke faster than the one before, and I can't stop the wetness from pooling between my legs. I've never felt anything like this before, and when he slaps my ass at the same time, I'm done for.

As I grab the desk with my free hand, he immediately grabs it and brings it to my back too.

"Don't move," he growls, and when I look up, he rips off his tie and wraps it around my wrists, sealing them in.

I have no chance to respond because he immediately thrusts in and out again, making it impossible for me to react with anything other than moans.

“You thought I’d be gentle? That I’d be a good husband and treat you right?” he growls, fucking me harder until the whole desk begins to wobble. “Wrong. I don’t make love. I fuck.”

Tears well up in my eyes because of how hard he fucks me. Because of how wet it makes me when he talks like that. When he fucks like this.

He’s a fucking animal.

A monster.

And I can do nothing but moan with delight when he rams into my ass.

His hands are on my waist as he plows into me, slapping me between thrusts to coax out sound.

“More, Jill. Moan for me,” he says, his voice hot and heady. “Show me what kind of a slut you really are,” he says.

I should despise him, but all I want is for him to fuck me raw.

What is wrong with me?

No, I should hate him.

He did this to me.

“Fuck you,” I hiss even though my clit is throbbing with need from the way he fucks my ass.

“Oh, the naughty girl is finally back to play,” he says, chuckling while still plunging into me. “Tell me how much you hate me then. It only turns me on.” Suddenly, he grabs my hair and forces me to look at him through the mirror. “Look at me while I ride you, Jill. Look at me while I own this fucking asshole.”

“I hate you,” I say, but it comes out weak.

I am weak.

I'm weak for giving in.

Weak for letting him take me over.

But what other choice did I have?

He smirks and slaps my ass so hard I squeal. "It's easier to fuck you when you do."

"Liam never would have treated me like this," I spit.

It's out before I know it.

But the look on his face makes me instantly regret it.

Like fire and fury molten into one, and he's stopped mid-thrust as though he's contemplating whether to kill me on the spot.

Shit.

"My brother ..." Luca hisses, looking up at me from underneath his dark lashes. "Would never have given you what you need." He leans over my body and grabs my face, forcing me to look at myself. "Surrender."

What?

What does he mean?

"Sweet fucking release," he adds, and without warning, he buries himself to the hilt so fast I groan out loud and feel myself explode.

What the fuck, what the fuck, what the fuck?

Did I just ... come?

From ass-fucking?

The waves ripple over me, and there's no mistake. I recognize this feeling from all the times before when he did it to my clit.

But he didn't even touch me there.

Oh God ... is that even possible?

Is that what he means?

Is this what he's been holding back?

His eyes are violent, greedy, crazed. Like a lover high on drugs.

High on me.

And I can tell from the devilish half-smirk on his face he knows what he just did.

His finger traces a line up from my back all the way to my neck, every touch so sensitive that it sets my senses on fire. And he swipes aside my hair to whisper, "That."

Fuck. Me.

He pulls out, leaving me bereft and wishing for more.

And that ... that makes me hate myself even more.

"You felt that," I mutter out of breath.

He slaps my ass, making me squeal out loud. "Of course I did, bunny. Best feeling there is. Making my woman come from my dick." He grabs my wrists and pulls me up from the desk, only to position himself right between my cheeks again.

"And there's more where that came from ..." he muses, looking at me in the mirror as he thrusts back inside my ass again.

My mouth forms an o-shape as he buries deep inside me.

A dirty smile forms on his face as though he enjoys the mere sight of seeing me break. Of course he does. He's a sadistic bastard who will do anything to see my downfall.

But as he presses a kiss down onto my neck below the collar, the heat rises in my body, and I can't help but whisper, "Please ..."

"Please what?" he whispers. "More?"

He thrusts harder and harder until I can barely even breathe, let alone say anything. With his hand wrapped around my throat, he forces me to watch him plunge into my ass, owning that too.

There is nothing this man won't claim.

No line he wouldn't cross to make me submit.

His eyes dart back and forth between my eyes and my tits which bounce up and down from the sheer force of his thrusts, and I'd be lying if I said it didn't turn me on.

There's always been something special about the way he looks at me.

Like I'm the only girl alive after the entire world has been set on fire and turned to ashes.

Like he'd kill each last motherfucking enemy on his way to get to me.

And that ... is nothing short of pure sexiness.

No wonder I always found it so hard to resist.

When his other hand dives down between my legs to circle my clit, my eyes actually roll into the back of my head. He knows exactly where to touch me to make me wish he never stopped. That's how good he is at toying with

me. Within seconds, he already has me on the next level, ready to explode again.

“You wanna come?” Luca groans, thrusting in slowly, deeply.

I moan in response, almost unable to form any kind of syllables.

“Tell me who owns you,” he growls into my ear. “Say it out loud.”

“Luca!” It comes out in a breathy, loud moan.

My defeat.

Handed to him on a platter.

Fuck.

I close my eyes, but he immediately grabs my collar, and says, “Look at me while I fuck this ass. *My ass.*”

Luca’s gravelly voice sends me over the edge, and as he plunges into me, flicking my clit, the sensations become too much, and I come all over his fingers, whimpering like the slut he told me I was.

He doesn’t stop fucking me until his balls tighten against me, and he roars out loud. Hot cum jets into me, and I can feel it fill me up to the brim with warmth. After a few more spurts, he pulls out, my pussy still throbbing, aching for more than what he just gave me.

Like a true addiction.

If I had known it would be like this ... that it would feel like this ...

It’s a miracle I managed to last this long without.

And I can’t even fucking imagine what it’ll be like for him to claim my pussy too.

But I swallow down that thought as Luca's hand is still around my neck. His tongue dips out to leave a trail as he moves up to my ear, whispering, "Mine."

Fuck.

Sometimes, he makes me forget I should hate him.

He presses a kiss on my cheek and turns my face around until I'm facing him. "And now your ass belongs to me too."

Fuck.

I never even imagined it was possible, but he proved me wrong.

I thought I could use my virginity against him, but now I've handed him my ass on a platter instead.

I feel so dirty for letting myself be used.

For enjoying it the way I did.

"All you ever do is take," I say, salty that he made me like it so much.

Luca tilts my chin up and claims another greedy kiss, one that makes my head spin. "I won't ever stop until I've taken your pussy ... and then your fucking heart."

I pull my lips away from his even though they're swollen and hungry for more. "Why? You hate me. You hate my guts for what I did to your brother. For what I did ..."

"To me," he fills in for me, his voice darkening the more he speaks. "So you know I won't ever be satisfied until I've taken everything you have to give."

“You already broke me,” I say as he reaches behind me to unlock my wrists from their binds. “You have your revenge.”

“You think this is about revenge?” His eyes narrow as he pulls away the tie, and I rub my sore wrists. “You really don’t know, do you?”

“You’re trying to ruin me beyond repair. Well, you’ve succeeded,” I reply, a tear welling up in my eye.

“I told you what would happen if you tempted me,” he says, licking his lips. “You asked me to fuck you ... and I gave you what you wanted.”

What I wanted.

What I asked for.

Suddenly, I remember why.

I look down at his pocket.

At the one place he’s stashed the only key to this place.

I should’ve taken the chance when he wasn’t looking and was distracted by my body. That’s why I did it, why I told him to fuck me. So why didn’t I do what I was supposed to do, what I told myself I would?

Suddenly, his lips are on mine, stealing my breath away as well as the tiny voice inside my head telling me to fight him off and steal his key.

It’s my only chance at freedom.

My only chance at an escape from him.

But his lips ... God, his lips know how to seduce me into giving up.

“It’s never enough,” Luca murmurs against my lips. “Even when you’re completely mine, it’s never fucking enough.”

What does he mean? And why is he kissing me like this when he just got what he wanted all along? Is there something more going on than he—

BANG!

The loud noise makes my pupils dilate, and I jolt up and down. “What was that?”

I pull down my dress to ensure no one sees me if a guard walks in. Luca’s muscles tense against me, his strong arms wrapping around my waist as he looks around, completely on edge.

“This wasn’t supposed to happen ... was it?” I mutter as he shoves his dick back into his pants and zips up.

Another bang makes him turn around.

It sounded like a gunshot.

“This’ll have to wait. Stay here.” The concern in his voice has me on edge.

Luca immediately runs off, leaving me completely in the dark and with a heart filled with turmoil.

What did he mean when he said it was never enough?

There’s no time to ask. Within seconds, there’s another bang.

This isn’t random anymore. It’s definitely gunshots.

Someone must be trying to break in.

Oh, my God. Is it my family? Have they had enough of the De Voses’ games? Are they coming to rescue me?

I can’t stop my feet from moving in the direction of the sound, desperate to know what’s going on. Curiosity overtakes the need to stay safe, huddled up

in Luca's office as I walk out the door.

The living room is filled with smoke. The sound of gunshots fills the room.

My heart beats in my throat as I step forward and stumble across the body of a guard.

A dead fucking guard.

Shit.

Blood pours from his head wound, and I go to my knees to check his pulse, but it's definitely gone.

BANG!

I duck for cover behind the kitchen counter.

What the fuck? That was much closer than I thought they were.

They must be right near the front door, whoever they are.

And the mere thought of getting out of this difficult situation has my heart racing. Adrenaline surges through my body as I lift my head and look around the corner.

Smoke covers the area until another shot lights up the hallway.

Someone grunts.

THUD!

Something fell to the floor ... or someone.

Was it Luca?

The thought makes my heart stop.

"You're all alone." It's Luca. "Get out now or die a slow and painful death."

Who is he talking to?

I hold my breath and take a step in the direction of the hallway. I need to know who's there. What if it's my father? I can't let him sacrifice himself for me.

Another shot is audible, but it doesn't stop me from inching closer and closer.

"Let her go."

I stop in my tracks.

My heart almost stops beating as my jaw drops.

That voice ...

I peer around the corner, and in an instant, our eyes connect.

Nick.

CHAPTER 26



Luca

BULLETS AND BLOODSTAINS are embedded in the walls, bodies of both my guards and the enemy littering the floor.

Whoever the fuck this asshole is, he came prepared.

But not fucking prepared enough.

I click in a new magazine and aim at the area I last saw movement. Each last one of them that dared to get close got a bullet through their brain. I know there are more. I don't know where they are, but I'll lure them out.

"You want her? Come get her," I growl.

The silence is deafening until...

"There you are," I say through gritted teeth as he appears from behind the corner of my guard room, blood pooling near the door.

No fucking wonder they didn't detect him and alerted me before it was too late.

He came in through the side entrance and killed them one by one, stealth mode.

The only motherfucker standing between them and my penthouse was Max. He's still right in front of the door, coughing up blood.

Fuck.

I'm gonna have a tough time replacing these loyal men.

This fucker is gonna pay if Max dies.

But the look on that asshole's face makes me do a double take. Because he isn't fucking looking at me ... he's looking at something behind me.

I turn my head only for a moment. Just one fucking moment to see what he's seeing.

Jill. Staring at him with a wide-open mouth and giant eyes.

"Nick!" Jill yells, right as I turn to face him again.

"Stay back!" I bark.

BANG!

A bullet flies right past my face, grazing my skin until it bleeds. My hand instinctively reaches for my face, touching the red-hot blood and the scar this wound will undoubtedly leave on my face.

He's got a gun pointed straight at my head.

"I told you, you'd fucking pay for what you did to her," he growls.

"No, don't shoot!" Jill's voice repeats in my head as I point my gun right back at him, her plea fueling me to protect her and kill him.

As he aims, I pluck my knife from my pocket and chuck it right at him.

“Gah!” His groan sounds painful and loud, annoying to the ear.

The knife buried itself into his shin, and he’s collapsed underneath his own weight.

BANG!

The gun goes off.

The bullet misses me by a hair.

It shoots straight down into the penthouse and zooms right past Jill, who ducks for cover on the floor.

Fuck, he almost hit her.

“You motherfucker,” I growl, storming at him so fast it feels as though my muscles are on steroids.

I’ve never felt angrier than I do now as I grab his collar and throw him to the ground so I can knock his gun from his hand.

“You fucking shot at her!” I bark in his face.

“I was aiming at you, motherfucker! Let her go.”

“I told you to fucking run back to your boss. This isn’t a fucking playdate with toy guns,” I say, getting up close and personal. “Did he put you up to this?”

“Easton doesn’t know I’m here,” he says through gritted teeth.

I laugh in his face. “Bad decision. Shouldn’t have come here if you wanted to live.”

I point my gun between his eyes.

“Stop!” Jill’s shriek instantly makes me look at her even though right now I want nothing more than to ace this fucker for even attempting to get close to her, let alone the fact that she almost died.

Fuck, the mere thought of anyone shooting her turns my entire body into pure, seething rage.

I should cut off his fingers, pull out his eyes, feed him his own goddamn tongue for what he did. I want to. More than anything, I want to make this motherfucker pay for murdering my guards, for trying to assassinate me, for almost getting my precious bunny killed.

But something stops me the second my index finger pushes the trigger.

“LUCA!”

Her voice.

“Please.”

Her saying my name, begging.

God.

How I yearned to hear her say those two things.

Just. For. Me.

But she isn’t saying them for me.

She’s saying them to stop me from killing him.

To save him.

Fuck.

“Please, don’t kill him,” she pleads.

I look over my shoulder, unable to ignore her. She's clutching the shot-up doorpost, her sparkly, golden dress covered in bloodstains from the guard lying on the floor right in my penthouse. She must've checked him to see if he was dead. Always so caring, even when she shouldn't be.

This fucker almost shot her.

He wants to take her from me so badly he'd risk killing her in the process.

And here she is pleading for *his* life?

"Do it," Nick growls at me, and when I turn my head, he's already grabbed ahold of the gun, shoving it even harder into his own damn skin. "Do it then. You want her? I won't ever fucking stop until she's safe and away from you."

Away from me.

Like I'm the most dangerous thing on the planet.

Me.

I should fucking kill him.

Do it and prove to her what kind of monster you really are.

My teeth grit as I bury the gun into his brain, seconds feeling like hours.

"Please!"

Her voice is the only thing that breaks through the barrier and silences the screams in my head.

I hate him. I fucking hate him so much I want to stab him a thousand times just for daring to touch her.

But I don't fucking hate her, and I don't want her to fucking hate me.

I grumble out loud as I close my eyes for a second and turn around to rip my knife from his shin. Nick groans in pain, blood pouring from his wound. I bring the knife to his throat as I take the gun away, the blade cutting into his skin until it bleeds.

“You’re going to fucking leave. Right now. And if I ever see your face again, I will scrape it off with this fucking knife and feed it to your fucking mother. Understood?”

He swallows, sweat drops rolling down his forehead.

I slowly get off him, still pointing my gun at him as I tuck my trusty knife back into my pocket. The dude seems unsure of what to do as he lies there propped up on his elbows on the floor. He clearly didn’t account for this.

“Get up,” I growl.

He does what I tell him, but not without throwing me the most daring looks. “You won’t get away with this.”

“Shut the fuck up,” I bark. “You should be happy I let you keep your fucking balls after trying to shoot her.”

“Don’t listen to him, Jill,” Nick says, completely bypassing me. “I was aiming for him. Don’t let him get into your head.”

“Do you have a fucking death wish?” I say, stepping closer again with my gun aimed at his head.

“Stop,” Jill says, and she grabs my hand.

My nostrils flare because I fucking hate his guts, but I still lower my gun for her.

“Fine. Have it your way,” Nick growls. “Easton and I will come back for you, Jill.”

“No, don’t,” she says, stepping forward even more. “I chose this to save Jasmine. I wanted to marry him.”

Nick’s eyes widen, and his fists ball. “What?”

“Please just leave ...” she says. “It’s too much to explain. Just know that I’m here because of my own choice.”

The look on his face slowly begins to unravel. “I don’t—”

“Believe me,” she says, and she holds up her hand to show her ring.

He’s at a loss of words, that’s for sure.

And the sight makes me feel something I rarely feel.

Pride.

“Nick. Don’t come back for me. And tell Easton and Charlotte I’m fine. Please,” Jill says. “I don’t want you or anyone else to get hurt.”

“What about you?” he says, throwing me a glare. “You’re gonna let this fucker own you? Put a collar around your neck?”

He eyes the bunny symbol dangling from her neck, and I suddenly feel fiercely protective.

She blushes as my grip on her hand grows tighter. “You don’t get to fucking decide that for her. Now leave. I don’t give second chances so fucking count yourself lucky she likes you.”

His jaw tenses as though he’s preparing to say more, but he swallows it back down and turns around, marching off to the elevator. Our eyes connect a final time before the doors close, and all that’s left are the pools of blood and the dead bodies littering the floor.

Jill's grip on my hand wanes as she immediately checks Max's pulse. "He's alive."

I fish my phone from my pocket and call my father. "I need your help."



HOURS later

AFTER NICK HAD LEFT, I immediately secured more guards from our family connections to keep the building safe and to clean up all the dead bodies without anyone, especially the cops, seeing us.

Meanwhile, Max has been taken to the specialized clinic that doesn't ask questions and only treats patients. I've been told he'll wake up with a very sore chest, but other than that, he should be out of the danger zone.

I'll need to call a renovator for the building as soon as possible to fix all the damage, but that part can wait until tomorrow.

Right now, I'm angry so many had to die for a single fucker with a crazy idea.

Nick really thought he could take Jill from my clutches.

No one steals my fucking bunny, no one.

After everything is done and peace has returned, at least for now, I go back to my penthouse and take a short shower to rinse off the blood. I told Jill to take a shower and then locked her up in her room so she couldn't escape. Even though she told Nick she chose this ... I still don't trust her not to run.

When I've dried off and put on fresh clothes, I open her door and sit down on my couch for a much-needed rest. The silence is deafening as she exits the bedroom and goes to the kitchen without speaking a single word.

Sighing, I get up and head over to her.

She's hovering over the kitchen counter, staring at a glass of water she hasn't touched in a while.

"Are you okay?" I ask.

Rain begins to pitter-patter against the windows.

When she doesn't respond, I place a hand on her shoulder, and she jolts up and down.

"I'm fine," she replies, but her eyes show the truth her lips are hiding from me.

"Don't lie," I say, stepping closer so I can wrap my arms around her waist. "You don't have to pretend to be tough with me."

She glances at me over her shoulder with an uncertain look in her eyes as they scour over my face until they widen. She turns around between my arms and brings her hand to my face. The soft touch of her fingers on my skin silences me and makes me forget everything that just transpired.

"You're still bleeding," Jill murmurs.

I even forgot that.

"Must've opened up again when I took that shower," I say. "It's nothing. Just a scrape."

"Of a bullet," she says, sliding her finger across the wound until I hiss in pain.

I didn't expect it to hurt this much now that I'm no longer running on pure adrenaline.

"Where do you keep your supplies?" she asks.

"My office," I say.

She grabs my hand and tugs me along. "Come. Let's go fix you up."

I'm too obsessed with the fact that her hand is locked in mine to even notice the fact that I'm letting her drag me to my own damn office. She grabs my chair and scoots it in front of my desk, the same desk I fucked her on only hours ago, and points at it as if to tell me to sit down.

She knows better than anyone else not to give me commands.

Still, I sit, wondering what she's planning to do.

"Where is it?" she asks.

I point at a cabinet in the back. "Third drawer."

She opens it and takes out a box filled with medicine and gauze. Emergency supplies in case I'd be locked up in here fending for my life.

She sits down in front of me on the other chair and opens the box to take out some gauze, tape, alcohol, and a cotton pad. It's deathly quiet between us, the rain falling against the windows the only sound filling the room.

Jill dips the pad into the alcohol and rubs it over my wound, which hurts like a motherfucker, but I keep the hisses to myself by digging my nails into my knees instead.

"It's quite a gash," she says, rubbing the gauze on it. "Does it hurt?"

"I can take it," I reply.

“I’m not asking if you can take it,” she responds, looking me in the eyes. “I know you can. I’m asking if it hurts.”

“Only if I think about it.” I lick my lips. “Why are you doing this?”

She shrugs and proceeds to cut some tape. “You help me. I help you.”

I grasp her wrist and force her to stop. “Tell me the real reason.”

She pauses, her lips parted. “To thank you.” She swallows, unable to look me in the eyes. “For not killing Nick.”

The mere mention of his name makes me want to grab an axe and chase after him. But I don’t. Because she’s with me. Not with him.

She *chose* to be here.

She *chose* me over him.

“I could have,” I say.

I definitely would have if he’d kept talking to her.

“But you didn’t,” she says. “Why?”

“Because you begged me not to,” I reply.

She pauses to look at me. The compassionate look on her face is something I haven’t seen before. At least not directed at me. And it silences the beast inside me that wants to chase after that fucker just for attempting to snatch her away.

“Thank you,” she says, blushing. “That means a lot.”

My brows furrow. “Is that why you’re helping me now? Out of guilt?”

I don’t want to sour the mood, but I know damn well what kind of relationship we have. What I forced her to be. “I thought you hated me.”

“So? I can’t help the people I hate?”

Laughter spills out of my mouth. “That’s a really strange way to show you hate someone, Jill.”

“Yeah, well, it’s just as strange as kissing and fucking someone you hate.”

Fucking. Just that one word triggers all the delicious memories of her tight ass wrapped around my length. The first time I took her and made her my own. I even made her come from my cock. And I can’t fucking wait to be the one to claim her virginity too. To be the first to enter that tight, wet pussy and come inside.

I would’ve done it right there on that fucking desk if it wasn’t for that fucker ruining our fun with those loose shots.

But now that he’s out of the picture, all I can focus on are those pretty pink lips and the collar around her neck, signifying my ownership over this beautiful fucking girl.

Our eyes connect, and the moment feels like it lasts an eternity. Neither of us moves away from the other.

“I don’t hate you,” I say, my voice as heavy as my heart, as I release her from my grip. “God knows I fucking tried.”

“You said that before,” she mutters. “But I thought you were messing with me. Just like you were when we were kids.”

My eyes narrow. “When?”

She sticks the gauze with a little tape to my wound and then sighs. “Stop pretending you don’t know. You were such a bully to me. From day one, even when we were little kids. You stole my crown and kept taunting me again and again every time we met. You even invited that girl over just to

shove it in my face that you were hooking up. Not to mention that poor bunny I tried to save that you just—”

I plant a finger on her lips.

Everything she said is true. And she still doesn't see.

Me.

“You don't know me. At all.”

I get up and grab her hand, dragging her to the back door in my office. I open the door and grab her shoulders to push her forward. “Look.”

Her pupils dilate, and her jaw drops. Because in there, in that mid-size closet with a tiny window, a whole fucking pen filled with expensive bowls and beds and playthings exist. Along with a fuzzy little creature hiding in the cotton ball-shaped bed in the corner.

That bunny.

CHAPTER 27



Jill

AGE 14

I LOOK at the bunny chewing off something that's on its foot. It seems stuck, and I don't want it to suffer, so I get up close really gently to try to help it. There's wire stuck around its little paws. No wonder it's so agitated.

"What have you got there?"

Luca's voice makes me shriek and fall on my butt. "Oh my God, don't scare me like that!"

When I look up, the bunny is gone. Of course it ran off the second it heard my shriek. Dammit.

Luca snorts. "Chicken."

Enraged he'd scare me like that, I punch his foot. He cries out in pain. "Fuck! Why'd you have to do that?!"

“That’s what you get for scaring me,” I retort, but my eyes immediately widen the second I notice where the bunny went. “Look at what you did!”

It’s right there, in the water up ahead.

Shit.

“What is it?” Luca asks, peering into the water like he doesn’t realize what he just did.

Asshole.

“A bunny. It got stuck, and I almost had it pulled out until you scared it away,” I hiss.

What do I do now?

I can’t just let it die in the water.

“A bunny?” he scoffs. “That’s why you’re behind the fence? Because of some bunny?”

How dare he? I get up and put my hands against my side. “It’s not just a bunny. And it deserves help.”

He shrugs it off like it means nothing. “Bunnies can swim.”

“Not when their paws might be broken,” I reply, watching the bunny try to claw its way up a branch. “And if you’re not going to help me, back off and leave me alone.”

I return my attention to the bunny, but Luca is not walking away even when I hoped he would. I try to reach for the bunny, but it’s no use. I can’t get close enough without ruining my dress. My mother will kill me if I get it wet at this fancy party.

Suddenly, Luca pushes me aside and pokes the bunny with a stick.

“Hey!” I try to push him.

Right then, the bunny falls into the water.

My heart beats in my throat, and I hold my breath.

Luca holds the stick like a dam to stop the bunny from washing away.

“Don’t hurt it!” I yell at him, but he shoves me away. “Asshole.”

He quickly flicks the bunny to the edge, out of the water. It’s soaked and crying, and he holds it close while looking at its paw. He rips off the wire and doesn’t stop looking while brushing down its fur like he’s searching for something.

“There. It’s fine,” he says.

My eyes fill with tears as he turns to face me. Maybe he isn’t such an asshole after all. “Thank you.”

His face suddenly turns sour. “I didn’t do it for you.”

Whatever. I take it back. He is an asshole.

Still, I can’t stop the grin from spreading. “Fine. As long as the bunny is safe.”

I try to take the bunny from him, but he steps away.

Goddammit. Of course this is all just another way to taunt me. “Luca ... C’mon. Let me have it.”

A vicious smirk spreads on his lips. “No.”

Rage bubbles up to the surface. “I found it first.”

He only clutches the bunny closer. “And I saved it.”

What?

After all my effort, he now tries to make this about him?

He's only using this against me.

"Luca ..." I growl. "Give. Me. The. Bunny."

"No." He picks up the stick again and holds it out to me like he wants to strike me with it. "Finders keepers. It's my bunny now."

My jaw drops as nothing short of pure rage fills my body. "Luca!"

The stupid grin on his face is the one thing that always stops me from turning a blind eye. "Come and get it."



PRESENT

I'M FLABBERGASTED at the sight of two soft, wobbly ears sticking out above a cottony pillow.

Is that ... a bunny?

Without thinking, I hop toward it and grab it as it's just about to open its eyes. The scraggy, old-looking bunny isn't skittish at all, but meek as I hold it in my arms and look at it.

It doesn't look like any random bunny Luca picked up from a store.

It looks exactly like the bunny I remember from years ago.

The one that I tried to help get out of the water while Luca snatched it away from me.

I immediately check its paw, and sure enough, there's the scar from the wire.

That same bunny is still here, living in this closet filled with toys and a playhouse all for him.

All this time ... Luca took care of it. Fed it. Played with it. Gave it love and affection.

While I thought he only took it to torment me and eventually had ... killed it.

I cuddle the bunny close and take in its smell. It reminds me of all those years ago, back when we were stupid kids doing stupid things. If only I knew back then what I know now ...

What kind of a man was hiding behind the monster he'd so viciously crafted.

I turn around to face Luca. He stands there with his hands in his pockets, watching me unravel.

My lips quiver. "Why?"

His voice is just as unwavering as his gaze. "You *know* why."

I shake my head.

It can't be true. It just can't.

He can't have done this for me.

"But you said you didn't save this bunny for me," I say, my voice getting more unhinged with each word that slips off my lips.

His stance grows rigid. "Sometimes, I lie."

Sometimes, I lie.

The words strike me like the lightning that struck the night Liam died.

He's said that before.

Way back when ... the night he snuck into my room to claim my first kiss.

My first orgasm.

My first everything.

And threatened me not to tell anyone.

I always thought it was all a lie to get into my pants, to claim me before anyone else, because Luca was vicious, and I couldn't picture him as anything other than that same vicious monster.

But I was wrong.

So wrong.

Tears well up in my eyes as my whole body trembles. "You said that too when you climbed through my window. When you—"

"Stole your first kiss," he says, stepping closer.

I shake my head. "All those things you said that night were lies."

"Were they, bunny?"

Bunny.

The name he calls me ... All because of this little creature he saved for me.

Suddenly, I become hyperaware of every speck of rain hitting the windows around us. Because the sound is the only thing keeping me here in the

present instead of digging inside my memories to unlock the truth hidden beneath his lies.

But I can't escape the one thing that threads the past and present together.

Luca.

With his dark, wavy hair, those penetrative, hooded eyes, and that killer body of his ... It's even more impossible than ever to look away.

"No," I say, but the word is barely audible as my throat feels clamped up.

It can't be true. It just can't ...

"Yes," he says, approaching me slowly. "It's all true, even if I tried to deny it, over and over."

He can't be ...

"I've been in love with you since we first met."

I step back, but I can barely keep my footing as I stumble against the pen. I quickly put the bunny down and step out of the pen as my body veers farther and farther away from Luca and the danger surrounding him.

Never before have I been as frightened as I am now.

Not because of how badly he could hurt me.

But because of how much truth there is to what he says.

To what I feel inside my heart when I look at him.

When he kisses me.

But it doesn't make any sense. "You bullied me. Hated me."

He walks closer and closer, cornering me into the wall of this closet. “For years, I watched you look up to my own damn brother with those lovestruck eyes.”

I try to move back, but there’s no escaping him.

Not this time.

“I tried to chase you away, tried to make you hate me, so it’d be easier to let go.” He plants a flat hand against the wall behind me. “I even invited random girls over so I could forget about you.”

“That blonde with the big tits you booty-called...” I mutter, remembering the time he brought her home the night he was supposed to entertain my sister and me.

“I didn’t fuck her,” he answers, tilting his head as he looks into my eyes. “I couldn’t stop thinking about you.”

I can barely breathe.

“I tried everything. And you know what it did? Only make me hunger for more even though I knew what I could do to you if I got my hands on you.” He grabs a strand of my hair and twirls it around his finger. “I hated myself for it.”

He ... hated *himself*?

All the little wheels in my head are spinning as I dig in my memories, trying to find the clues. All the times he yelled, fought, stormed away enraged. It was all right there in front of me, all along. But I refused to see because I was so focused on him toying with me that I didn’t see the bigger picture. The reason behind all the lies and torment.

Luca's face and those kissable lips are right in front of mine, and I'm unable to look away.

"Do you know what it does to a man to watch the only woman he wants lust after another?" he asks, his veiny hand tightening into a fist.

"I ... I ..." I don't even know what to say.

I instinctively touch my lips.

"I was the first," he says, his voice gravelly, raw, and filled with emotions. "The first to kiss those lips."

"But you told me not to tell anyone," I murmur.

His jaw tenses. "Because I knew you were supposed to marry *him*."

I always thought it was a fairy tale I'd spun up in my head, that Luca actually wanted me, because all he ever showed me was hatred and disgust, and it blinded me from the truth.

The one truth I ignored for so long ... from the day I drove away from him in my car after he caught me kissing his brother.

"Why do you think I climbed in through your window in the fucking rain?" he says.

I suck in a breath, but my throat feels like it's completely shut.

Rain splashes up against the windows just like it did that night.

That night he took everything from me.

All the puzzle pieces click into place.

My lips part, and the words nearly float out, "You ... were jealous of him."

He grabs my face and holds my cheek like I'm a precious jewel. "You made me want something I couldn't fucking have, and I knew it. And when I took it anyway, you fucking hated me for it."

My heart beats in my throat as he's so close I can feel his breath on my skin.

His voice filled with so much anger as he says, "I never should've told you Liam was supposed to marry you."

Thunder strikes, making me jolt up and down.

"All this time, I thought you were punishing me for his death," I say, my lip quivering.

"I thought so too," he replies.

"But that isn't true, is it?"

He shakes his head. A simple move that barely scratches the surface of just how much my world has caved underneath my feet.

Another bolt of lightning lights the sky, filling the room with a flash of brightness, illuminating the sparkle in his eyes and the dark shadows that followed him for so long.

"You *kissed* him."

That's it.

That's the reason behind all the lies.

And even when I knew, deep down, it was true ... I lied to myself and told myself it wasn't.

Because if it was ... I couldn't face myself knowing what it meant.

How deep his obsession with me really went.

And just how much his affection really affected me.

I called him my monster ... but he just wanted to win.

Even if it meant chasing away the one he truly wanted ... me.

So when my parents decided to marry me to Liam, it was an easy way out for me. A way to pretend nothing ever happened between Luca and me. To make sure that it was the right choice, that Liam was really what I wanted, what I needed, what I ... craved.

“... I needed to know,” I say.

Luca’s hand slides down my cheek, his thumb grazing my lip, pulling it down agonizingly slow. “How it felt to destroy me too.”

Tears well up in my eyes. “I didn’t mean to.”

His fingers slide down to my chin, and he tips it up so he can stare me down with those beautifully haunted eyes of his. “Did he kiss you the way you wanted?” He leans in and presses his lips onto mine so softly that I almost melt into a puddle. “Did he make your heart pounce and your pussy throb?” Another slow and deep kiss makes me close my eyes, ready for more. “Did he kiss you the way I would have kissed you?”

Suddenly, he pulls away and leaves me bereft with inescapable emotions swirling through my body. Not the kind that makes you moan, but the kind that makes you sigh.

Something I only ever felt with ... Luca.

After he looks at me over his shoulder with a tempting gaze, he walks out of the closet, leaving me in here with a pounding heart while staring down at a small bunny nibbling on some food.

All this time, I thought I was going insane, that what I felt when he first kissed me was just my raging hormones betraying me, and he took advantage of that.

But I was wrong.

So wrong.

I fought so hard not to feel anything to fit in, to make my parents proud, that I ignored everything that took me off the path that led me to Liam. And it hurt the only guy who ever cared enough about me and what I wanted.

I hurt Luca so much he wanted nothing more than to hurt me as much as I had hurt him.

I stumble through the closet and head out into the living room, where he's peering out the window, looking down onto the rainy street below like he's admiring the dark empire that he'll soon inherit. But there is nothing but frustration in his eyes.

He's got all he ever wanted. Money. Power. All the sex he could ever want just with one snap of the finger.

But it's never going to be enough until ... my heart is his.

I swallow, flushing away my pride, my honor, my dignity ... so I can finally focus on the one thing that truly matters, the one thing that's kept us fighting all this time.

Us.

"When I kissed Liam, I felt nothing."

He looks up at me, the anguish still filling his dark-stained eyes as his heart bleeds into mine.

“But when you kiss me ... I feel *everything* I’m not supposed to feel.”

He turns, his muscles straining against his black suit as he loosens a button at the top of his shirt, and it’s then that I realize I’ve never actually seen what’s underneath. And the thought of finding out titillates me more than I ever thought it would.

And as he looks me dead in the eye, he says, “Tell me what I want to hear.”

“Show me what it means. Please.” My voice is hoarse with emotions. “Kiss me.”

He pulls off his jacket, the fabric straining against his thick muscles. His eyes don’t stop gazing straight into mine as he drops it to the floor. One by one, he unfastens the buttons of his shirt until that too is peeled away, revealing all the rippling muscles and tattoo-covered skin underneath, and to say that I’m not prepared for the holy hotness is an understatement.

I expected a lot of things from Luca De Vos, but to add this kind of ripped body to that thick, bulging cock in his pants is just too much.

“It was easy to play with you when you hated me.”

A smirk forms on his lips as his tongue dips out to lick them, the bulge in his pants only growing harder and harder. Is it because of me? Because of the way I look at him?

“But when you don’t? That’s when things get real.”

I gulp down the lump in my throat.

“I’m going to ask you again ... Are you sure? Because I am not going to fucking hold back if you choose this. I don’t love gently. My love is hard and rough and all things unholy,” he says, his voice raw. Goose bumps scatter across my skin just from hearing him talk.

I nod, clutching my hands into fists, equal parts terrified and curious of what might happen.

But I need to know what this could be.

If Luca could be more than just my evil husband.

If I feel more for him than the lust I've been experiencing for so long.

And if this could be more than just revenge and hatred between us ...

Maybe we could be fucking good together, just like he said.

But am I really ready?

His eyes lower, like a tiger ready to pounce. "Use. Your. Words."

I swallow away the last drop of fear. "Make my heart yours."

CHAPTER 28



Luca

FOR ALL THESE YEARS, I hated her for even existing, and I could never understand why, but now I do. She made me feel something I didn't want to feel. Not just lust but also a kind of greed that's indescribable, and it made me do horrible fucking things. Torture, kill, maim, as long as it meant I got to keep her, even if it was in a cage.

But she didn't want me the way I wanted her.

I'm a bad guy, a mobster ... the devil himself.

And she was a perfect little angel.

Until she killed my brother and gave me the only excuse I needed to do all the depraved things to her I always wanted to. If I caught her and made her mine, I could play with her, use her, fuck her, make her pay.

But that was all a story I told myself to make it easier for me to make her body mine without involving my own shriveled-up heart.

I snorted her up like heroin but never felt the high.

Because she wasn't truly mine, and it never felt real.

All she wanted was to run away from me, fight me, use my weakness against me, and I hated it. Every kiss I took felt like a betrayal. I could never have what I truly wanted all along. Her fucking heart.

It was everything to me, everything I ever fought for, hated her for.

And now it's being offered to me on a platter, willingly. Freely.

Vigor rushes through my body as I stalk toward her, shoving aside a chair standing in my way with ease.

The way she looks at me is indescribable, so full of wonder, like she's realizing for the first time that I could be more to her than her captor, and the thought riles me up like nothing else.

The second I've closed the gap between us, I grab her face and kiss her harder than I ever have before. Harder than I ever could have imagined, my tongue diving in deep, ready to claim everything she has to offer. And for the first time in forever, she doesn't fight or push back, doesn't bite or revolt.

Instead, she opens her mouth and allows me in, kissing me back with equal greediness, and it turns me on so much that my cock tents against my pants.

For years, I've dreamed of this moment, jerked off to the fantasy every night. She finally lets me be the one for her, and I'm going to enjoy it thoroughly.

I'll show her who I can really be.

I shove her up against the wall and pin her by her throat, kissing her so fast she can barely keep up. Her lips are red and yearning for me when I leave her a second to breathe before diving in again. The way she looks at my

naked chest makes me horny as fuck as I let my hands roam freely across her dress, the same dress I fucked her in only hours ago.

But none of that came close to what I'm about to do to her now.

I know she only offered herself to me to try to trick me into letting her go.

But this time, there's no escaping my love, no escaping my ownership over her.

I am laying myself bare for her.

Right here, this is me, in all my fucked-up glory.

And all I've ever wanted was to be good enough for her.

"How does it feel when I kiss you?" I murmur against her skin, dragging my lips down her neck until I reach her collar, and I tug that too so we're eye to eye. "Do you hate me more now that you know what I'd do for you?"

"I never knew," she murmurs.

"Because I didn't *want* you to know."

Her lips part, her body squirming against mine. "Why?"

I fish my knife from my pocket and hold it up in front of her. "Because my family doesn't do love. We fuck. We fight. We win. We conquer. But you ... you make me feel something I'm not supposed to feel. Weakness."

"Love is *not* weak," she replies as I slide the knife along her cheek, still obsessed with the idea of making her bleed.

"Love is like a drug to me," I say, puncturing her skin right above her collar. "*You are like heroin to me.*"

She gasps as the blood oozes out of her skin, warm droplets rolling down. I lick my canines from the hunger it brings out inside me. Her hand rises to touch the wound, her pupils dilating like she's shocked I'd do this to her, even after confessing why I did what I did to her.

But what she doesn't realize is that this is exactly who I am.

Exactly what I need.

What *she* asked for.

"Are you scared?" I ask, just as I did before. When we were still young and on the cusp of discovering who we were and what we were really capable of.

She's shivering in place, her shoulders rising and falling with every breath like she's trying to understand. Understand what it means to be loved by me. What it means to fall for someone like me.

"No," she says.

It comes out in a single breathy whisper. But I heard.

I grasp her hand, pinning one of them to the wall while shoving my knife into the other.

It takes her a while to realize that I released the knife and gave her complete rein.

I gave her the one tool to free herself.

The one thing she can use to destroy me and end all of this.

Strike me. Puncture my fucking heart.

"What are you doing?" she murmurs.

“Giving you a choice,” I retort.

Something I’ve never given her until this day.

It’s now or never. A single moment of clarity in the insanity that’s become me.

“I could—”

“Kill me,” I fill in for her, and I lean in, tilting my head, offering her the easiest way to end it all.

“But why?”

“I’m not afraid of death,” I reply, still looking her in the eyes. “I’ve hurt you, so now’s your chance.”

Her lips quiver as hard as the hand holding the knife does.

So I grab her wrist and point the knife at my chest. “Last chance, bunny. My heart’s right there, beating only for you. Now take it. It’s yours.”

I lean in, but she keeps pulling the knife away farther and farther.

“It’s the only way to stop me,” I whisper into her ear as her hand holding the knife rises above us, hovering dangerously close to my back. “Now choose.”

And as she presses the blade against my skin, I plant my mouth over the wound on her neck, licking up her blood. If I’m going to die, I want her blood to be the last thing I taste.

She moans as I sink my teeth in.

The knife clatters to the floor.

It’s the only signal I need to know what she truly wants.

And I wrap both hands around her body and pick her up, slamming her into the wall before covering her mouth with mine. Her hands lock behind my neck, kissing me with just as much passion and heat, and it's the biggest turn-on I've ever felt.

I didn't think I could want her more than I already did, but I was wrong.

Nothing is more exciting than finally claiming the woman you've desired for so long who wants you just as much.

"Tell me what I want to hear. Say the words, bunny," I groan against her lips.

"Fuck me," she whimpers.

"Your virginity is mine," I reply, kissing her like a madman. "Do you know how many times I've fantasized about fucking you right here against this wall?" I groan into her mouth. "On my couch, in my car, under my shower, and against the fucking window for all the world to see."

I tear down her panties, ripping them to shreds, and I shove up her dress. "How many times I've wanted to tear down these walls and destroy everything in sight at the thought of another man having you?"

I rip down my zipper and take out my throbbing cock.

"No one else had me," she says, the words like a fucking serenade to my ears. "No one but you."

With a filthy smirk on my face, I spread her legs and shove her up against the wall in my arms. "Good, because I'd murder them all for even daring to touch what belongs to me."

I bury myself inside her pussy for the very first time, watching her face unravel, those sweet lips parting for me and only me. But the largest moan

she's ever made is cut off by my mouth claiming hers.

I can't fucking get enough of her taste, her lusty groans, and this sweet, wet pussy wrapping itself around my cock.

There is nothing better than this, nothing that could even remotely come close when she kisses me back while I thrust in and out of her. My tongue invades her mouth, claiming every inch of her, and it's still not enough as I groan, wishing I could fuck her like this every damn second of the day.

"Tell me how it feels to have my cock inside you," I whisper against her lips.

"Oh, my fuck—" Her words are interrupted by her own moans. "So good."

I grin like the proud fucker I am. "Do you hate me for making you want it so much?"

Her lips are red and swollen, inching ever closer to mine, desperate for more. "I tried, but I don't hate you ..."

"You should've tried harder," I reply, planting kisses all over her chin and neckline while fucking her deep and slow until her face scrunches up from delight.

"You're wrong for me, all things bad ..." she murmurs while I cover her neck in sultry kisses, and a delectable moan escapes her mouth. "But you make me want you so much."

Her words are like a drug to me.

In a ravenous frenzy, I pick her up and carry her all the way to the couch, still inside her. I plant her down on her back and rip her dress from top to bottom until all the buttons and wires are destroyed, and her tits spill out. She seems shocked, but I'll fucking make it right.

“No, the dress—”

“I’ll buy you more fabrics, don’t fucking worry,” I say, and I immediately dive in and take one of her nipples into my mouth, sucking on it until it’s taut and hard.

I lean up straight, pulling out of her just so I can witness her cheeks turn red from missing my length inside her. But I also want to take a moment to appreciate this delicious body that’s all mine for the taking.

This body that no one has ever touched before ... except me.

“I fucking fantasized about you, Jill. Even when you wore your handmade dresses,” I say, letting my thumb slide down her red-hot lips. “I came so many times just thinking about ripping them off.”

My hand travels down her body slowly, between her tits, watching every inch of her skin light up at the touch of my thumb.

“Over and over again, I’d picture you in front of me ... begging me to take you ...”

When I reach her navel, she shudders.

“With my hand around your throat.”

I grab her throat, leaning over to press a single kiss to her lips.

“Even when we were only just eighteen—”

“Before,” I interrupt.

Our eyes connect in a moment of pure sin, hers heavenly ... mine devilish.

“Even then?” she murmurs.

I look down at her with hunger pulsing through my very veins. “Always.”

And I thrust in without warning, watching her explode from inches away, up close and personal, the view more magnificent than anything else I've ever witnessed.

Every stroke is slow and hard because I want to enjoy this to the fullest. The sound of her tiny mewls has me on edge, but I don't want to blow my load just yet. As I arch my back, I go a little harder every time her lips part a little more.

My hands are on her tits, pinching her nipples until finally she lets out that moan.

"No one but me has touched these nipples."

I reach farther down her body, and while I'm still thrusting in and out, I circle her clit with my thumb until her eyes almost roll into the back of her head.

"No one but me has touched this clit."

I play with her until her breathing grows heavy and her pussy tightens around my shaft. I want to watch her unravel, to know it's me and my hard-on doing this to her.

And I want *her* to know.

I want her to know that no one on this fucking planet can give her as much pleasure as I can.

"No one but me has fucked this pussy," I say, thrusting in and out while she's on the verge of exploding.

When she finally comes, I pounce down on her and grab both her hands, pinning them above her head so she can't hide that beautiful, orgasmic face of hers.

“And no one but me has made you come before.”

Knowing it's true makes me feel invincible.

But saying it out loud makes me feel like a fucking god.

The face she makes sends me over the edge, and I come right along with her, busting a nut inside this filthy little pussy that's all mine.

“Yes,” she murmurs, still riding that sweet wave of bliss. “God, yes.”

It's the sound of approval. Of my woman completely and utterly satisfied. And I'd be lying if I said it didn't bring a grin to my face.

I lift her in my arms, and she squeals almost in delight, leaving behind her clothes.

“What are you doing?”

“Fucking you the way you should be fucked,” I growl. “And I'm not nearly done with you yet.”

I carry her back to my bedroom. *Our* playroom. Where I throw her on the bed and grab a new chain from my drawer. The mere sight makes her eyes widen. The other one is still attached to my bed, so I take it off and chuck it in the corner.

“I thought you wouldn't—”

I crawl on the bed and press my finger onto her lips. “I told you who I am ... what I do ...” I tie it around her collar and lock her to the bed, just like before, but this time I don't intend to leave. “You asked for this. Begged me to show you what it's like ... What it means when I make love.”

I grab her legs, cuffing her ankles to each corner of the bed. She eyes me with mistrust, but she doesn't protest as I crawl on top of her, grab her

hands, and pin them to the bed, where there are more hidden cuffs that I tie around her wrists.

“Are you scared of me, bunny?” I ask, the fear in her eyes making my cock bounce and glisten with pre-cum.

“I’m only scared of what happens if I say no ...” she says, her voice as daring as the look in her eyes.

Because she knows damn well I’m not tying her up to keep her from running.

I’m tying her up because it brings out the beast inside me.

I slide off the bed and watch as she wriggles around in the bed, trying to hide her unease.

But nothing evades my eye.

And it definitely doesn’t elude my cock either as I fish something else out of the drawer.

Another gleaming, sharp knife.

Her eyes glimmer at the sight.

A devious smirk spreads on my lips before I crawl back on top of her again and point it at her nipples.

“Scared *now*?” I ask.

She shakes her head, but the goose bumps covering her skin tell me the truth.

“You won’t kill me,” she whispers.

I draw the same heart shape I made when we were young on her chest. “You’re right ... I won’t ...” I puncture her skin until it bleeds. “But that doesn’t mean I can’t make you bleed.”

I dive in and suck the blood off her chest, drawing a line all the way down to her navel with just my tongue. My blade follows the same path, slipping down to her pussy where I draw a circle around her clit, before shoving the handle of the knife inside again.

She gasps as I dive down between her legs—the blade still perched up between her pussy—and start to lick her clit until it grows again.

“Oh God ...” she mewls.

“Luca is good enough,” I murmur, applying ample licks and kisses until she’s writhing around on the bed.

Her breathing is growing more and more unhinged as I suck and circle her clit with my tongue, all while thrusting the handle of the knife inside her.

“Fuck,” she moans.

Her clit throbs against my tongue, and I greedily pull out the knife and lap up her wetness. The harder I lick, the more she begins to writhe underneath me until finally she explodes and gushes against my mouth. The sounds she’s producing make it so fucking hard to stop myself from coming all over the damn sheets.

I quickly slide up and cover her mouth with mine, letting her have a taste of her own sweet juices. “See how good you taste?” I murmur.

I lean back up and thrust into her when she least expects it so I can see that same o-shaped mouth again that I love so much. And with my hands on her throat, I fuck her hard and fast, leaving no room for pause.

With her, I'm like a goddamn beast, and I wouldn't have it any other fucking way.

All I want is to fuck her until she comes again and again and again, slathering her in my own cum over and over until I'm spent, and we're both out of air.

Inside her, on top of her, cover her pussy, her tits, her mouth, her face.

I want her to drown in me the way I've drowned in her.

And if that makes me a fucking monster, then so be it.

At least this monster loves her like no one else ever fucking could.

"Do you like it when I bury myself inside you, bunny?" I groan, thrusting in to the base.

"Oh God, yes," she mewls, high on the ride, just like me.

I grab my knife and draw a line down her navel, just like before, while her vigilant eyes watch me. Her pussy is gushing even when there's an imminent threat of danger. I can do so many things to her with this knife, yet here she is, all sweaty and hot for my cock.

"Are you a good little slut?" I groan, pricking her with the knife.

She sucks in a breath when the point punctures her skin.

"You can take it, bunny. I know you can," I say.

And when I thrust in deep, I carve a letter right above her mound.

L.

Her moan drowns out the cry in her voice.

Again, another thrust.

U.

The look in her eyes is a mixture of panic and pure orgasmic enjoyment, and it riles me up beyond belief, so I thrust in deep.

C.

She gasps, her fingers scrunching up the blanket underneath.

A.

“What does it say?” I growl.

“Luca,” she responds, completely delirious from the conflicting sensations.

I circle her clit with my thumb. “Who does this pussy belong to?”

“You.”

I throw the knife aside and thrust my dick inside so hard, her eyes roll into the back of her head, and the loudest moan escapes her throat.

“Yes, that’s it, bunny. Come all over my cock like a good girl,” I groan.

And as she falls apart underneath me, I keep circling her clit and thrusting while I pick up a tiny drop of blood from the carving and bring it to my mouth. My tongue dips out to take a lick, and the taste sends me into ecstasy.

Groaning out loud, I grasp her by the waist, arch my back, and come inside her, filling her up to the brim. It’s the best feeling in the world, not just to take what finally belongs to me, but that she’s giving it to me freely ... willingly ... knowing what kind of a monster I really am.

I lean over her and press a sultry kiss to her neck, and her body tilts up to meet mine, so I drag my lips all the way to hers and claim her mouth too.

“You asked for it. I’ve shown you who I am, Jill,” I whisper. “Do you regret that decision?”

Her lips shudder, but she still softly shakes her head.

“It won’t ever be enough,” I whisper, sliding my hand down her tits. “I need it all.” My hand dives below her navel and touches the bloody marks on her body. “But now I’ve marked you as mine. No one else can ever have you.”

She swallows. “I don’t want anyone else.”

I pause, hovering so close to her that her ragged breath doesn’t go unnoticed. I stare into her eyes, her cheeks rosy, those lips ready for the taking.

It’s like she was made for me.

“I won’t allow you to take that back,” I say, and I press my lips onto hers, moaning straight into her mouth. With a lopsided smile, I whisper, “I stole your cherry, and now I’ve fucking stolen your heart.”

She smiles. She actually fucking smiles.

I always thought I didn’t have a fucking heart.

Until it started beating harder and harder ... for her.

CHAPTER 29



Jill

MY FIRST TIME.

Jesus Christ.

I still can't get it out of my mind that I'm no longer a virgin.

And that I let Luca take it all.

But I don't regret giving it to him.

In fact, the first time he plunged in was the most amazing feeling in the whole damn world.

If I'd known sex was like that, I would've done it a long time ago.

When both our heartbeats slow down and our breathing syncs, Luca presses another deep, sultry kiss to my lips that makes my head spin. Every time he kisses me, it feels like my soul leaves my body, and my heart almost jumps out of my chest.

Is this what love should feel like?

Have I really fallen for the one man I should've avoided?

The one man I should have hated for all eternity?

Hate.

It once sounded so easy, so visceral. But now, when I look into his dark, penetrative eyes that glimmer with hope, it seems like a distant memory.

I don't know what I'm supposed to feel. If it's okay to have these feelings for a man who only hurts, betrays, kills. If it's okay to indulge in sin with this oh-so sinful man.

God, I don't remember things being this complicated.

Luca leans up and undoes the shackles around my wrists and the chain around my neck, then leans back to free my ankles too. But I don't punch or kick or do anything to fight as he pounces back down on me and places the sweetest of kisses on the top of my lip.

“Mine.”

The soft whisper is enough to coat my body in goose bumps.

But I hiss when the pain comes flooding back in. I almost forgot that he actually marked me.

I lean up and look at my wound, which glows red with caked blood. But the lines are very clear ... and they'll definitely form a scar.

“I told you what I would do for you,” Luca says, grasping my collar to bring my face closer to his. “Now you know why I tried to push you away. It's impossible for me to behave and not be a savage.”

My eyes can't help travel down his ripped abs all the way to that V-line, where his thick, long flaccid dick dangles between his legs. That thing was

inside me ... and I loved every fucking second of it even though it was depraved as hell.

I suck on my bottom lip. “Don’t behave. I ... I like you this way.”

I don’t know why. It just slipped out of me, and even I am surprised I said that out loud.

Is this who I really am, too?

Is this what I like?

What I could never say I wanted out loud?

He lies down beside me, hand on the pillow, knuckles folded, and gazes at me with half-closed eyes filled with satisfaction, and something about that makes my heart sigh. His hand rises, his cold rings grazing my face, making it so damn hard to breathe.

“Does it hurt?” he asks.

It takes me a few seconds to respond because I was too busy looking at him to even notice the pain. But when I do, all it does is remind me of where his hands have been, how he fucked me as he drew those letters into my skin, and it still makes my pussy throb.

What is wrong with me?

I shake my head. “It just stings a little.”

Suddenly, he gets off the bed and scoops me up in his arms, surprising me so much that I let out a squeal. “Where are we going?”

“I’m going to clean you up.”

He puts me down on the same chair he sat on the first time I licked him, and it brings back memories that make me blush hard. Luckily, he doesn’t see as

he turns around to grab a box of medical supplies from his cabinet. The same cabinet where he keeps all his toys.

“You sure have a lot of convenient stuff in there,” I say, trying to lighten the mood, which is hard when you’re both naked.

“I’m prepared.”

That backfired.

Hard.

Because I’m blushing more than ever when he kneels, actually fucking kneels, in front of my naked body and parts my legs to have access. He dips a cotton swab into the bottle of alcohol and holds it in front of the wound.

“This might sting a little more,” he murmurs, but it doesn’t hurt nearly as much as I thought it would when he dabs it against my skin. “But it’s my turn to take care of you now.”

He cleans each letter meticulously, as though it’s a precious painting he wants to restore. I never knew he could be so gentle. And when he briefly glances up into my eyes with that devious smirk on his face, all it does is make me blush harder and harder.

Fuck. I really have fallen, haven’t I?

“You’re blushing,” he says.

“What?” I turn my head. “No, I’m not.”

“Yeah, you were.” He grabs my collar and turns it so I’m forced to look at him. “And you look beautiful when you do.”

Fuck me. It used to be easy to put all the things he said away in my mind when I still believed he hated me. But now ... now it’s like he can reach

straight into my chest and make my heart beat for me.

“I don’t understand why you suddenly care,” I murmur.

He lowers his gaze, looking at me in a demanding way. “I’ve *always* cared.”

The brush of the swab doesn’t even faze me anymore. All I can focus on are how gorgeous those dark eyes of his are and just how wrong I was all these years about my own feelings for him.

Maybe I didn’t hate him for stealing all the things I never wanted to give ... But only hated him for making me feel things I didn’t want to feel for him.

I swallow down the lump in my throat when he leans up on my knees and arches his back to meet my gaze from down below, huddling between my legs, lips perked, my head lowering to get closer to his. And the kiss that follows is nothing short of sweet bliss.

A low, resonating groan emanating from deep within his chest makes my clit throb again. And when he smiles against my lips, I know for sure. The devil stole my heart and made it his.



LUCA

I WAKE up to the sound of my phone buzzing.

My hands are still firmly curled around Jill’s waist, her body easing into mine as she sleeps tight. I don’t want this moment to end, but the phone keeps buzzing, and it’s my job to pick up.

Groaning, I turn to grab it.

“He’s on the move.”

I sit up straight in bed. It’s my private detective.

“Where?”

“Inside the city.”

“What?! And you didn’t tell me?” I say through gritted teeth as I get up and grab some pants to put on.

“I called as soon as possible, once my men detected him, but you weren’t picking up.”

“It’s the middle of the fucking night,” I growl back.

I hastily put on my things with one hand, keeping an eye on Jill so she doesn’t wake up. She’s not going to like it, but now that it’s happening, I have no choice but to leave.

“What are you going to do?” he asks.

“I’ll figure it out,” I reply, and I shut off the phone.

Of course he wouldn’t ever involve himself. He knows better than to barge in to mafia business.

And it leaves me no choice but to handle this myself.

Fuck.

I’m going to have to resort to plan B.

Shit’s about to go down, and someone’s gonna get hurt.



JILL

HOURS LATER, I wake up in shock and sit up straight.

I didn't even realize I'd fallen asleep.

One second, Luca carries me to his bed and curls his arm around me to hold me tight, making me feel like I'm on cloud nine, and the next, I'm dreaming of him killing every damn fucker who ever tried to hurt me. For just a moment, I could forget about who we are and believe in the story of us.

I blink a couple of times to gather my bearings. It's the middle of the night, and the rain is still pitter-pattering against the window. But the bed beside me is empty. Cold. As though Luca has been gone for quite a while.

Where did he go?

I get out of bed, only to realize I'm still very much naked.

Clutching the blanket, I quickly grab some clothes from the closet that fit me. An oversized hoodie and a pair of sweatpants that Lita probably bought in my size at Luca's request.

I open the door and peer out. Everything is still pitch black.

"Luca?" I call out.

There's no response. Not a single sound.

I walk out and check the living room and the kitchen, as well as the bathroom, but there's really no one here except me.

What is going on? Why did he leave so suddenly in the middle of the night?

When I turn my head, there's that door again, luring me in.

His office.

The one place I haven't fully explored yet.

I swallow and go back into my room to grab another pin. Even though I'm not supposed to, there's no one here to reprimand me, so I shove the bobby pin into the lock and wriggle it around just like before.

It doesn't take me long to open it.

I know Luca doesn't want me to snoop, but I can't stop myself from opening the door and stepping inside. If he's gone, this is my only shot at finding out if he is being truthful to me ... or if he's still a liar through and through.

My body is a bundle of nerves as I sneak inside and quietly peek around to make sure the place is really abandoned. I even make a stop at the bunny's room, giving it a few pets as it chews on its freshly cut carrot. Someone's been in here recently, but it's deserted now.

No time to waste.

I immediately march to his desk and open every drawer I can find. I brush past a bunch of papers, old records, photographs of people, business, clients, drugs, all of it is there. But on the bottom, a particular photograph captures my attention.

As I pull it out, my hand begins to shake violently.

The photo drops to the floor.

A shriek catches in my throat and comes out shrill and empty, like the song of a dying swan.

On the cold, hard floor below me lies a picture with the face of a man I thought was long gone.

But his bushy-bearded chin, long, grown-out hair, and strong facial features have matured beyond death's grasp.

A man whose eyes are filled with tears of betrayal, whose penetrative gaze could tear out my soul with a single deadpan at the camera.

Liam.

CHAPTER 30



Luca

I'M DRIVING as fast as I can, chasing the horizon, going far beyond the speed limit as I race down the streets to get there in time.

My phone buzzes continuously on the seat next to me.

It's one of my guards, but I know he isn't calling me without reason.

Jill.

I contemplate picking up, but what will happen if I do?

Whatever comes out of his mouth will make me unhinged.

I grumble out loud, grinding my teeth as I shift the gear into the highest possible and hit the gas.

No fucking time to find out.

It's now or never.



JILL

TEN MINUTES ago

WITH TEARS ROLLING down my cheeks, I pick up the photo from the floor and stare at it.

My fingers graze across Liam's face, my lips quivering at the thought of touching him. Of touching the man he's become.

Three years.

Three years have passed since I last saw his face, and here he is, right in front of me.

All grown up.

Just like me.

Alive.

My heart feels like it hasn't beaten since I first laid eyes on this picture.

I want to bend over and scream.

Instead, I slam the picture down on the desk and rummage through the drawer. I tear it out of the track and throw all the contents out onto the floor in a rampage. I don't stop until the entire desk is empty and all the evidence flies around me like the dead leaves tumbling off the trees in autumn. And I am weeping, bending through the knees, crawling through the remnants of my own dead, broken heart.

Plenty of tears roll down onto the papers as I gather the pictures and splay them out onto the floor below me. At least a dozen if not more of Liam walking around in a place I don't recognize, at sea, catching fish, in the mountains, digging holes, looking awfully scruffy and ... at peace.

How?

But more importantly ... why?

My brazen, hot tears stain the pictures, and I roar out loud in broiling rage as I get up from the floor and stampede through the penthouse.

All this time. All this fucking time, he was alive.

And Luca knew.

He fucking knew.

And he didn't tell me.

In my rage, I throw around furniture, but nothing eases the pain in my heart or stops the uncontrollable sobs from tearing through my soul. Until I come across a mirror and stare at myself, lifting the oversized sweater to touch the markings on my skin.

His ownership over me.

Scars of betrayal.

I scratch at the word until I bleed, screaming out loud until I've smashed the fucking mirror too.

Then I stuff Liam's picture in my pocket, pick up the knife I dropped when Luca fucked me, and march to the door. "Let me the fuck out right now!"

Suddenly, the door opens and in steps a burly guard I've never seen before. Probably one of Lex's men here to guard the place after most of Luca's men

got killed in the shoot-out with Nick the other day.

“What the hell is going on in here?” he growls.

“Didn’t Luca ever tell you not to put your nose where it doesn’t belong?” I reply, stepping closer and closer.

“Get back,” he commands, the look on his face vicious. “Stay inside.”

“Get out of my way,” I respond. “Don’t make me hurt you.”

He laughs. “I’d like to see you try.”

When he lunges at me with a gun in his hands, I duck and slide, and I stab him in the thigh.

He cries out in pain and falls to the floor, roaring out loud. I snatch his gun away from him and knock him in the back of the head. He drops down onto the floor, out cold.

I didn’t want to shoot him. It feels wrong, especially because he’s only paid to do this and didn’t do anything bad to me.

Still, I warned him.

I walk into the hallway and go inside the guard room on the left. It’s filled with monitors and equipment to keep an eye on the building, with cameras inside the lobby and outside to make sure no one gets in unnoticed.

But what I’m more interested in are the items on the desk. Car keys and a phone.

I snatch them up and tuck them into my pants, marching out the door again.

On my way to the elevator, I fish the phone from my pocket and dial a landline to my parents' house. I don’t know if Jasmine still lives there, but

it's worth a shot. I don't know how much time I have to tell her everything I know before Luca comes back. But if he does, I'll be prepared.

I clutch the knife in one hand and the phone in the other, waiting for the elevator to finally reach the ground floor. It feels like it takes forever. The phone rings and rings and rings ... and rings.

So I jam back down and redial her number, only to get the same amount of beeping.

"C'mon, Jasmine!"

Why isn't she picking up?

I try again with no luck, and panic is really beginning to settle in my bones now.

Fuck. I can't waste this much time.

The chime from the elevator as I arrive on the ground floor makes my heart rate shoot up. The doors open. Behind the desk is that same receptionist, and she's looking at me like she isn't at all surprised to see me here.

"What are you doing here?" she mutters, almost ready to press that emergency button.

So I hold out the knife and say, "I wouldn't do that if I were you."

She holds up her hands, shuddering. "Don't hurt me."

"I won't if you leave. Now," I reply coldheartedly.

She nods, still shaking as she gets off her stool and runs out the door on her high heels.

I quickly leave the building too while I keep pressing the car key button in the hopes one of them beeps. A few feet away from the door, a red car does,

so I hop inside, start the car, and race off.

I don't pay attention to the speed limit. All I'm focused on is trying to get to Jasmine as fast as possible. Because I don't know where the fuck Luca is headed, but I do know one thing—he knew Liam was alive. And wherever he's going can't be good.

I hit the gas and text while driving even though I know I'm not supposed to.

CALL ME!

JILL.

All caps lock because I have no time for words. I just need her to know it's urgent and that it's me calling from some random guy's phone.

While driving, I keep an eye out on the phone, but no one is calling. Yet. And my nerves are almost killing me.

What do I do? Fuck!

Enraged, I dial the only number I never wished to call.

“Pick up, asshole!” I growl, watching Luca's name appear on the screen.

No matter how many times it rings, he won't pick up either, so I chuck the phone at the passenger seat and focus on getting to my parents' house as fast as possible.

But when I get there, I only just manage to avoid crashing into another car. I jump out and slam the door shut, only to freeze at the sight of a man in a hoodie dragging Jasmine to another car, her hair flowing wildly in the wind as the rain pours down on all of us.

Liam?!

As he shoves her into a car, I shriek, but neither of them hears me.
“Jasmine!”

Liam’s already inside by the time I get to them, and when he hits the gas, the car shoots off. Only then does Jasmine finally turn around and look at me. Her eyes light up like fireballs in the night.

I squeal. “Jasmine!”

Where is he taking her?

Did he come back just for her?

Is it even Liam or just someone who reminds me of him?

No time for questions I don’t have answers to anyway. I head back to the car and jump inside to follow their trail. They’re not far up ahead, so maybe I can catch up if I’m quick enough.

Even though I’m horrible at driving, I refuse to give up.

Suddenly, the phone next to me rings. Luca’s face appears on the screen.

I pick up. “You fucking lied to me!”

“Jill, I know you’re in a car. Stop. Go home, now.”

“YOU TOLD ME LIAM WAS DEAD!”

“I can explain—”

I cut him off before he tries.

I can’t listen to his voice without trying to kill people on the road, and I don’t want that on my conscience too now that I’ve finally gotten rid of that one death-stain on my record.

Luca is a motherfucking liar, and this conversation was all the proof I needed.

With tears staining my eyes, I chase the car in front of me. Jasmine looks at me over her shoulder and mouths my name.

“I’m coming for you, Jasmine,” I say even though I know she can’t hear me. Whether it’s Liam or someone else, I will make sure she’s safe.

We’re driving along the same road I drove past all those years ago, and the heavy rain on the window is giving me flashbacks. The car stops abruptly along the road, and I struggle to park without getting lost in dark memories.

Even though it’s pouring outside, I still jump out and head straight for the car in front of me, clutching the knife I took with me firmly in my hands.

But as Jasmine steps out, so does the driver, and I am not prepared.

It wasn’t Liam who was driving. It was Luca.

And we’re at the same cliff where my whole life was destroyed in a single devastating second.

At the very edge of the cliff, a man leans over to peer at the water that I almost drowned in three years ago.

Jasmine approaches the man, her hands clasped together, while Luca stays back.

But when that man finally turns around to face her, I am not prepared.

At all.

My voice is mousy soft as I mutter, “Liam?”

CHAPTER 31



Luca

TWENTY MINUTES ago

I PUSH OPEN the elevator doors and rush through the hallway while the phone against my ear continues to beep. Finally, Liam picks up.

“Don’t come here, or I swear to fuck—”

“Too late, motherfucker, I’m here.” His voice is manic. Not at all like the brother I remember.

“What the fuck do you want?” I growl as I go through the revolving doors.

“You know what I fucking want.”

He sounds like me.

“No. We’re going to fucking talk. Right now,” I say as I head out into the street where I hop into my car. No fucking time to wait for a driver.

“I’m done talking. I’m tired of waiting. I need this to end,” he replies. He definitely sounds unhinged.

“I have Jasmine,” I reply.

This quiets him for a moment.

Even though it’s not true yet, it will be soon.

“And she wants to talk to you.”

Liam growls, “Fine. Meet me at the cliff.”



JILL

PRESENT

ALL THESE YEARS OF GUILT, anger, and fear collapsed into one moment in time, dissipating into a black hole like a star at the end of its life.

I almost can’t believe my own eyes, yet there he is in the living flesh.

My body instantly gravitates toward him, my legs almost carried by the wind itself.

“Liam?” Jasmine mutters. “How is this even possible? I thought ... I thought you were dead.”

The horror in her voice is one I recognize all too well.

“How?”

He walks to her and grabs her hand. Luca's body twitches and tenses as he homes in on every move his brother makes.

"I don't know," Liam says. "It's too much to tell you. But I've been dying to see you."

She shakes her head. "I don't understand what's happening. Luca told me that I needed to come here with him to save Jill."

The moment she mentions my name, Liam's eyes widen, and he searches the area. "Is she here?"

I step out from behind a bush and reveal myself. I'm not at all prepared for those beautiful soul-struck eyes to burn into mine, nor the fury blazing behind them.

And when he opens his mouth and speaks, I know for sure it's him. "Jill ..."

The sound of his voice brings me to tears and commands me to walk toward him.

"JILL, NO!" Luca yells, the visceral, animalistic sound coming from his throat making me hesitate to get close.

"Stay out of this!" Liam growls at him.

Luca suddenly jumps between us, arms wide, gun at the ready. "You want her? You'll have to go through me."

The mere sight of him in front of me makes me want to spew lava at him. After all the lies, how dare Luca still try to keep me away from Liam? "Get out of the way," I snarl.

"No." He looks at me over his shoulder, the look of pure determination in his eyes hard to stomach.

“How long did you think you could keep this a secret from me?” I ask, my nails digging into my hands.

“I wanted to explain over the phone before you cut me off,” he retorts, trying to grasp my hand. “We have to go. NOW.”

“No!” I jerk my hand free and shove him away. “I’m not going anywhere with you.”

After all the things he said, all the ways he made me believe my own feelings for him, he turns around and betrays me in the worst way possible.

I can’t forgive him for this.

I stare him down. “Get out of my way.”

“Luca, you heard her,” Liam says.

“Don’t listen to him, Jill,” Luca says, throwing me a damning look. “I’m trying to protect you.”

“By keeping me from the only person who could’ve made it all okay again.” I blink away the tears. I don’t want to spend them on him. “All these years, I thought I’d killed him. I paid for that. And now it turns out he’s alive, and you never even told me. You let me live with that guilt.” My hands palm into fists. “I fucking hate you.”

His face contorts with pain. “I’m doing this for your own good.”

“You don’t know what’s good for me,” I say, incensed. “Now let me fucking talk to him.”

I push past him, despite him trying to keep me away. But he keeps guarding me from the side. And that damn gun is still pointed at his brother.

Does he hate his brother that much?

Or is he afraid Liam has come back to steal the crown?

“He’s your brother, Luca,” I spit at him. “I thought you’d changed.”

“Oh, he has,” Liam responds, stepping into a puddle created by the rain. “Three years I hid. Did you know he’s been tracking me?”

I shake my head.

“Taking picture after picture after picture,” he says, getting closer and closer until he’s right in front of me. “Even after we’d already talked.”

“You talked?” I gasp.

I can’t believe this. How long has this been going on?

“When?” I shout at Luca, but then it hits me. Those few days Lita had to come babysit me and Luca mysteriously vanished. My hand slides in front of my mouth. “You were gone. I thought it was business, but you were talking to Liam? And you came home and pretended everything was normal?”

“Tell her the fucking truth!” Luca barks out loud at his own damn brother.

“I don’t need to, little brother. You’re doing all the work for me,” Liam muses as he steps closer.

Luca’s gun clicks. “Take one step closer, and I’ll fucking blow your head off.”

I throw him a look. “Stop. You’re only making this worse for yourself.”

“Yeah, Luca. You’re not making a case for yourself here. Having a private detective stalk your own damn brother.”

“Don’t twist what happened,” Luca growls back. “I’ve been looking for you for years, and I told you.”

“To finish what you started,” Liam says through gritted teeth.

“You’re wrong,” Luca spits. “Don’t listen to him, Jill. He’s trying to get you to hate me out of revenge.”

“I do hate you!” I yell back, tears rolling down my cheeks. “Do you know how it felt to be the one responsible for his death? What I had to sacrifice?” I look him up and down, lift my hand, and take off the ring. “I even fucking married you. But that debt is settled now. I don’t owe you anything anymore.”

I chuck the ring at his chest, and it clatters onto the ground. Luca’s face is filled with gut-wrenching emotions, but my heart hurts equally bad.

Because I gave it all to him.

He made me bleed.

Carved his name into my skin.

Made me believe I could love him.

“You’re bleeding,” Liam says. I’m so distracted by the emotions raging through my head that I don’t even know what he means until I follow his eyes down my pants at the markings Luca left for me. The ones I scratched open.

Fuck.

Liam immediately lunges at me and pulls down the sweatpants before I can protest, showing both Luca and Jasmine what I did to myself. What he did to me. Even though I tried hard to erase his name from my skin, his name is still visible.

Jasmine gasps. “Oh my God...”

“You even *marked* her?” Liam makes a disgusted face at his brother.

Luca’s hold on the gun only grows stronger as he keeps it pointed right at Liam. “Get the fuck away from her!”

“No, the only one who should be kept away from her is you,” Jasmine says, stepping between us. “You went too far.”

“I brought you here to fucking distract him,” Luca growls. “Do your fucking job!”

“What?” I mutter. *What does he mean?*

“You only brought me here so you could draw Liam out and kill him, didn’t you?” Jasmine says, folding her arms. She suddenly jumps at Luca, trying to snatch the gun from his hand, but he keeps it high up in the air.

“Get out of my fucking way,” Luca barks, and he shoves her aside so hard she falls to the ground.

In a single second, Liam suddenly pounces onto Luca, punching him in the face so hard blood splatters around. I shriek as the two roll around on the muddy ground, fighting over his gun. Liam grabs Luca’s wrist, slamming it into the ground. When it’s finally knocked away, Liam’s hands wrap around his throat. “Now it’s your turn to fucking die.”

It’s so fucking hard to watch that I have to close my eyes.

Ugh!

A groan.

Liam.

My eyes burst open. Liam rolls around through the mud, clutching his junk. Luca kneed him. Hard.

Luca is already back up on his feet, bleeding from his nose and lip. He stomps on his brother and kicks him in the stomach. “I warned you to stay the fuck away!”

I do the only thing I can think of to stop this madness once and for all.

I approach Luca from behind, tears staining my eyes, as I fish his own damn knife from my pocket and ram it into his side.

He roars in pain and stops, then turns to look at me, the pain in his eyes indescribable.

Pure misery.

Thunder strikes through the sky, the flash distracting us all.

Because in a single second, Liam’s gotten up, snatched the gun off the ground, and grabbed my arm, knocking both the knife from my hand and the wind out of my lungs.

And as he clutches my body close to his, he moves backward fast, toward the edge of the cliff.

Chills run down my spine, the cold rain hitting hard.

Liam isn’t trying to save me.

The gun isn’t pointed at Luca.

It’s pointed at my head.

CHAPTER 32



Luca

DAYS ago

I STARE at the pictures in my hand while the car drives across an idyllic road through the mountains. The view outside doesn't amaze me as much as seeing these images in front of me. It's still hard to believe they're real.

That Liam is alive.

And not just that, but he's thriving.

Surviving on his own without any help from any of his family members or friends.

They don't even know he still exists.

A knot forms in my stomach.

I'm going to have to tell all of them soon. Especially Jill.

I rub my forehead.

It's going to be tough. Tougher than anything I've ever done before.

But I'm here with a purpose, and I refuse to give up. If there's even a chance, I have to try.

When the car finally stops, the detective looks at me and says, "Be prepared for anything and everything."

I nod, looking out at the cabin down in the woods. "He really lives off-grid."

After taking a deep breath, I get out of the car and walk into the forest until there's a strange sound.

THWACK!

THWACK!

Rhythmic strokes. Someone's chopping wood.

My feet rustle the leaves on the ground. A sweaty, half-naked buff man with long hair looks up. His eyes connect with mine, and at that moment, I know for sure ...

I have finally found my brother.

"Liam," I say.

His eyes narrow. Violently.

With the axe in his hands, he approaches me. Not down low. High up. Threatening.

"Who the fuck are you, and why do I feel like I know you?"



JILL

PRESENT

“I DIDN’T RECOGNIZE my own damn brother when I first saw him ... but I’d recognize the one girl who tried to murder me in a heartbeat,” Liam growls.

“What?” I mutter, unable to believe what’s happening.

Why is Liam pointing a gun at my head?

“JILL!” Luca’s ear-piercing scream catches everyone off guard as he crawls up from the ground, clutching his side.

“Liam! No!” Jasmine shrieks, her eyes homing in on the gun. “Why are you doing this!?”

Luca groans in agony. “Tell her what happened, Liam. Tell her what you’re really doing here. She deserves to know why you’re going to kill her.”

Kill me? Liam?

He could never.

Right?

My whole body begins to shake, and I suddenly feel sick to my stomach.

“But I swear on her fucking grave I will chase you into your own,” Luca growls, standing up straight, despite the pain.

The pain I caused him.

“Like that’ll change a thing,” Liam says. “She’s still going to die.”

Die?

Now?

Here?

At his hands?

Thunder strikes, hitting the water behind us, and I suddenly become intensely aware of exactly where we are. The same place where I drove off the cliff three years ago. The same place I once thought I’d lost Liam forever. The same place he’s now threatening to ... end my life.

“I don’t understand,” I mutter. “Finally, we have you back, and now—”

“I was never gone to begin with,” Liam interrupts. “But my memory was, for three fucking years. I died that day you drove me off that cliff, Jill,” he growls at me. “Do you know what happens to a man when he’s starved of oxygen for as long as I was?”

Tears run freely down my cheeks. “Please ...”

He ignores my pleas. “I couldn’t fucking remember a thing. Three years filled with anxiety. I couldn’t sleep without nightmares, couldn’t live without headaches and constant rage. Ever since that one fucking night.”

His fingers almost dig into my skin, as does the gun, and I don’t know what to do except ask questions, hoping it’ll keep him going. My lips part. “How did you survive?”

“A bunch of fishermen were fishing in the area and saw me floating to the surface, so they jumped in to get me out.”

Oh, my God.

When we were both drowning, I was only able to save myself, but I still lost consciousness. All I know is that some random car stopped, and a guy came to drag me out of the water.

But by the time the emergency people came to help, they could no longer find Liam's body. And everyone assumed he'd drowned and sank to the bottom.

I'm so confused right now. It's too much to take in at once. "But you weren't at the hospit—"

"I told them not to take me there," he interrupts. "I didn't have any fucking memories, but I did know this city was fucking dangerous and that I wanted nothing to do with it. All this time, I've lived far away from the danger. Even though I had no fucking memories, I was content living a normal life and working hard to survive."

Guilt eats me alive, and right now, I don't even know if it's that bad to die at his hands.

Maybe I deserve it.

"My memories never came back," he says, looking up at Luca, who's desperately clinging to himself, despite the blood pouring from his wound. "Until that fucker found me and forced it all back in. And that's when I finally understood the burning rage in my veins."

Luca.

All this time, I thought Luca was the one threatening to hurt Jasmine and then his own brother.

But he was just trying to keep Liam away from me.

The gun clicks.

“Thanks for coming here, Jill. That makes things a lot easier for me.”

Oh God, what have I done?

Luca roars, snatching the knife off the ground before grabbing my sister and holding the knife over her throat. Jasmine’s shriek reverberates in my fucking bones.

“If you kill Jill, I’ll kill Jasmine,” Luca growls.

I shake my head at Luca, but he’s relentless.

“Please, don’t do this. Both of you,” Jasmine pleads.

“I’m sorry, Jasmine, but my brother leaves me no choice,” Luca says through gritted teeth.

“Let her go. *Now*,” Liam growls, his voice so low it makes all the hairs on the back of my neck stand up.

What happened to the Liam I once knew, full of joy, full of kindness and wonder? The guy who wanted nothing more than to escape this dark and fucked-up life?

“This isn’t you,” I tell Liam. “Please, stop.”

“This is me, Jill. This is what you made of me. The old Liam you knew is dead.”

“It doesn’t have to be this way, Liam,” Luca says. “I’ll let Jasmine go when you let Jill go.”

“Don’t pretend you suddenly have feelings,” Liam bites back at him. “You don’t feel anything for Jill. Nothing compared to what I felt for Jasmine.”

Jasmine seems shocked at his admission like she didn’t know he was pining after her years ago.

“You have no fucking clue,” Luca retorts, the blade sinking into Jasmine’s skin. “I would *kill* for her.”

“You’d kill her own damn sister,” Liam says gruffly. “She’d never forgive you, right, Jill?”

I’m so in shock I don’t even know how to respond.

“I’d rather have her hate me for the rest of our lives than lose her.”

My eyes widen.

It feels like someone reached inside my chest and kick-started my heart.

“I’ll fucking do it,” Luca says, drawing blood. Jasmine whimpers in fear. “You know I will.”

Liam and Luca both look like lions ready to fight. Suddenly, Liam roars and throws the gun away. “Let her go!”

Fuck.

That was intense.

Luca shoves Jasmine aside, farther away from us. “Run. Hard.”

“What? No!” Jasmine shouts back. “I’m not leaving you two here with my sister.”

“Do you know why I told you to come with me? Because I used you as bait,” Luca growls, making me gasp. “He *wants* you.”

Jasmine shakes her head, confused. “No, I don’t care. I’m not leaving Jill.”

“Shouldn’t have done that, Luca.”

Suddenly, Liam grabs my throat and turns me around. My body dangles above the dropoff. “Someone needs to pay for my pain.”

“NO!” Luca screams.

Liam holds me up high so my feet no longer touch the ground. His grip is so strong I can’t breathe. Life ebbs away from me.

OOMPF!

Liam’s knees collapse with my throat still in his hands. I struggle against his grip, impending doom down below.

He grunts in pain, reaching for his thigh.

A knife is stuck in his flesh, blood oozing out.

His grip loosens. Too much.

I fall.

Fast.

“JILL!”

CHAPTER 33



Luca

I LUNGE AT THE EDGE, grasping her wrist just in time before she tumbles to her death. But my own legs are halfway across the ridge, and I'm almost falling off too.

"Luca! Jill!" Jasmine's terrified voice echoes across the ledge.

I'm holding on by a thread, my fingers interlocked with hers as I desperately try to hold on. Even as the rock begins to give way.

No matter what, I won't let go.

"Luca!" Jill screams in panic. "Please!"

"I've got you!" I yell back.

"What the fuck, Luca," Liam grunts, clearly in pain, but I don't give a shit about him right now.

Because if Jill dies, I have nothing worth living for anymore.

“Hold on,” I growl at her, giving it my all to pull her back, but the more I pull, the more the ledge caves in. The water has eroded its stability, and with us both hanging by a single point, the ground is crumbling underneath us from our sheer weight.

Liam crawls toward me, and I throw him a look. “Don’t you fucking get close!”

I turn my head to Jill, trying one last time to pull us both up. But the earth caves in beneath me, and I fall off, holding on with just my hand now.

“Luca!” Jill squeals.

It fucking hurts, and I can feel my wrist dislocating. I won’t last long.

I look down at the only girl I ever cared about and say, “You have to climb up.”

“No! I’m not risking your life too!”

“Do what I say!”

She shakes her head. “I’ll never make it. Please ... Luca.” Tears form in her eyes, and I dread the words she’s about to speak. Because I know, better than anyone else, what she’s thinking right now.

“Let me go.”

The words strike harder than any knife or bullet ever could.

“No,” I bark back, grinding my teeth.

“Let me go, or you’ll die with me!” she yells, her shoulder-length, blond bob flaring in the strong wind. “Please! Save yourself! Don’t worry about me.”

“I will *never* give up,” I growl back, putting in all my strength to keep us suspended in time for a little while longer. “I can’t.”

“Why? Why can’t you just let go?” she begs.

I look her dead in the eyes, adrenaline coursing through my veins. “Because I fucking love you.”

Her pupils dilate, and the fire that once blazed behind those eyes is gone.

Just like all the hatred I once felt in my heart.

“Luca,” Liam groans, crawling closer.

“LIAM!” Jasmine’s picked up the gun behind me and points it at Liam with tears staining her eyes. “Whatever you’re thinking—don’t!”

But all I can focus on is Jill. Her fingers begin to loosen, slowly but surely, and I cannot fucking hold on no matter how hard I try.

“Luca,” she says, a soft smile forming on her face. It’s a smile of death. “I’m sorry.”

Her fingers release mine.

I grasp.

My fingers hook underneath her collar, and I hold on for life.

Snap.

There she goes, falling, the collar still lodged firmly in my hand.

Without a second thought, I jump right after her, throwing the collar away so I can catch her instead.

Her peaceful face changes to complete shock when I grab her midair and hold her tightly against my body, wrapping my arms around her in a

cocoon, protecting her with all I have left to give.

My life to save hers.

Jasmine peers over the edge and shrieks, “JILL!”

But it’s too late.

We’re already on our way down faster than the wind can take us. And right before we hit the water, I look up at the horrified look on Liam’s face.

“LUCA, NO!” he yells, his hand reaching down to me.

Too fucking late.



JILL

WHEN MY BODY hits the water, everything suddenly goes silent. The air stops moving in my lungs, but I’m strangely okay with it. Seconds feel like minutes, maybe hours. There is nothing but darkness, and it’s almost serene, as quiet as I imagine the afterlife to be.

Am I dead?

Or merely floating in empty space?

The cold engulfs my body, and I curl up into the arms holding me tight.

But when they flinch, my eyes instantly burst open.

Luca.

He's floating right beside me in the vast emptiness of the water, his emotionless face frozen in time. The memory of us falling and him grabbing me springs to the forefront of my mind.

I released his hand.

On purpose.

Because I knew he'd never be able to lift me before the cliff gave way.

And then he decided to jump in after me.

History is about to repeat itself.

No, I won't let it happen.

In a moment of clarity, I grab his arms and lift him up while swimming as hard as I can toward the surface. His body isn't easy to carry against the harsh flow of the tides, but a surge of adrenaline helps me to push through until I finally crack the surface tension of the water and suck in a fresh breath of air.

It feels like revival, a rebirth after death.

And I drag Luca up to the surface and lift his head.

But there is no sound.

No breath.

No nothing.

"Luca!" I yell, slapping him to try to wake him, but there's no response.

I hold him as best as I can while swimming to the shoreline, wet clothes sticking to my body, dragging me down. But I refuse to give up as I push

my muscles to the limit, coughing up sloshes of water I've accidentally swallowed.

Fuck.

When my feet land on the gravelly sand, I force myself to lift Luca above the water and drag him all the way to the muddy ground where I lay him down.

"Luca, wake up!" I yell, tears filling my eyes.

I push open his eyelids, but there is nothing behind them. No fire. No soul.

Nothing but raindrops pitter-pattering down on his cold, blank face.

The sight tears open a wound in my heart.

I press my ear to his chest.

Nothing.

Not a single thump.

The lack of sound is like a void, sucking me in.

I plant my hands on his chest, crossed, one over the other, and start applying chest compressions.

"C'mon, Luca!" I yell, pausing only to tilt his chin, pinch his nose, and breathe into his mouth.

His chest rises and falls.

Then nothing.

I apply more compressions, shoving my hands into his chest until sweat beads down my forehead.

“JILL!”

My sister’s voice in the distance doesn’t even manage to tear my attention away from Luca’s lifeless body.

“Jill, oh my God, you’re alive. I thought you’d drowned,” she yells, crying while rushing over to us. The second she spots Luca, she stops in her tracks, though. “Is Luca—?”

“No,” I reply, unable to cope with the mere idea, let alone it being a fact.

“Oh, my God,” Jasmine says, her voice choking in her throat.

I keep applying compressions to Luca’s chest even though I know every second is another one lost.

“Keep Liam away from here,” I tell her.

“Liam’s gone,” she says.

My ears perk up like a dog’s. “What?”

“After you two fell, he ran.”

I frown, confused, but there’s no time to think about any of it.

Luca’s still here, and I’m fighting for his life, and goddammit, if I give up now, I will never forgive myself.

“I’ll call Dad’s clinic,” Jasmine says, fishing her phone from her pocket.

The clinic, the only place that takes in us mobster folks without asking questions.

Smart move if we want Luca to survive and not end up in jail.

I know it’s tough for her because he held a knife to her throat. But this story is far more complicated than could ever be explained in a single sentence,

and she knows.

Nothing is more important right now than making sure he lives. “Luca, goddammit, I need you to stay!” I growl.

My sister walks off to the cars, probably to talk with the paramedics and give me some privacy. The thought makes bile rise in my throat. Because you only give privacy to people who need to grieve.

“You didn’t give up on me, and I won’t give up on you,” I tell Luca through gritted teeth.

After a while, I pinch his nose again and blow more air into his mouth.

“Don’t leave me! Please!” I beg, my voice sounding more like a clamped cry for help as tears roll down my cheeks and fall onto his lips. “I love you.”

I press a soft kiss to his lips, wishing I could’ve told him sooner. If he’d only told me where he was going and what he was going to do, I could’ve helped him and Liam.

But that’s exactly *why* he didn’t tell me.

“Get the fuck away from her!”

His voice as he yelled at his brother reverberates over and over in my head.

He was willing to lie to me and attack his own brother, make me feel like he’d betrayed me, just to save me from Liam’s wrath.

Just to save me from the mere idea that Liam hated me.

This is the extent of his love.

All this time, he was trying to protect *me*.

Suddenly, water explodes from Luca's mouth, and he coughs and heaves so loudly that it makes me fall back on my ass in the wet sand.

I stare at him for a few seconds as he sucks in the air until I finally realize that what I'm hearing is his gasping breaths.

"Luca!" I immediately crawl to him on hands and knees and tilt his head to the side to allow more water to flow out as he coughs and heaves.

When it's all out, I help him up by lifting his head onto my lap. And even though he's in terrible shape and we're not out of the woods yet, I still can't help but smile. Because he's here—breathing—and when I grasp his wrist, I definitely feel a pulse.

"Luca ..." I mutter, swiping his hair off his lips and eyes. "You're alive."

His eyes flutter open slowly as his hand drunkenly moves to my face for the softest of caresses that melt the last remaining icicle stuck to my heart. "Thanks to you."

Now I really can't contain the tears.

"Don't cry, bunny," he murmurs, mud caking his skin. "I'm here." My hand falls into his as he continues to pet my cheek with the other like he's in awe. "You saved me."

"No, you saved me," I say, looking down at his half-lopped smile. "You almost died."

"I would have ... for you," he replies, his voice hoarse from all the water.

"No, don't you dare say that," I say as he scoots up my lap farther so he can look me in the eyes. "I couldn't live with that. I couldn't live with another death on my ha—"

He plants a finger on my lips, silencing me. “Bunny. I’m alive. Liam is alive. You didn’t kill *anyone*.”

His words drop a burden off my shoulders that I couldn’t even feel anymore after so many years.

But my God.

It’s like I can finally breathe again for the first time in a long time.

But I still feel guilty for all the things I said and did up there on that cliff. And I feel even guiltier for trusting Liam, for thrusting a knife into the only person who ever tried to fight for me.

“I should’ve trusted you,” I say. “And I’m sorry for stabbing you.”

He laughs, but it comes out as a chortle, and rapid coughs follow. “I deserved that.”

“I thought you were going to hurt him,” I say, averting my eyes. “But it turns out he wanted to hurt me more.”

Luca softly tilts my chin. “He doesn’t know better, can’t see past his rage. Just like I didn’t know better. But I do now.”

Even though my clothes are soaked, and the cold rain is clattering down on top of us, my cheeks fill with heat and warmth.

“Why did you jump after me?” I ask. “I made my choice, knowing what it would cost.”

He leans up farther, cupping my face. “You wanted to save me more than you wanted to save yourself ... But I’m not afraid of death. The only thing I’m afraid of is not having you. I can’t live without you.”

My lips part, but the words feel so distant now that he's right here in front of me, alive, staring straight into my soul. No amount of words can ever describe what I feel inside my heart.

"Did you mean it?" he says, leaning in farther and farther until our lips are only inches away.

"Mean what?" I mutter.

"When you said you loved me."

My face turns white as snow. "You heard?"

A wicked smile forms on his lips, one that still manages to make my heart flutter. "Of course, I heard. It's the only thing that kept me going." He grabs a strand of my hair and nudges it behind my ear, his finger lingering on my skin like he refuses to let go. "But you didn't answer my question."

I nod a few times. It's the easiest admission ever, despite my reservations only hours ago.

"I'm sorry I didn't realize sooner," I whisper, more tears rolling down onto his face, mixing with the rain.

His voice is rough on the edges, just like his soul. "Say it again."

"I love you."

Love.

The one word I couldn't possibly fathom to hear from Luca's mouth or mine mere weeks ago.

And now the mere idea makes my heart sing.

His smile is bittersweet as he picks up a tear with his thumb and swipes it away. "It was worth the wait, every single second."

“But—”

“Your love is what I risked it all for,” he interrupts. “It’s all I needed. I’m not asking for anything else.”

All he needed.

All he ever wanted.

And it turns out, after all this time, I finally understand that it’s exactly what I desired, too.

Because when he grabs my face and presses his wet lips to mine, all the turmoil in my head ceases to exist.

There is only ... us.

“I love you, Jill.”

CHAPTER 34



Luca

I SPEND two days in the clinic, two more than I initially wanted, but they wanted to make sure I wasn't going to dry-drown. Besides, my knife wound needed to be patched up. Luckily, Jasmine kept the knife so they could see the actual size and knew exactly how deep it went.

She even gave it back to me and then excused herself.

I'll apologize to her later for everything that went down.

First, I have to talk to my girl.

But this fucking wheelchair is damn hard to control as I try to roll out the door. The fucking doctors don't want me walking just yet.

"Hey, where do you think you're going?" Jill asks, laughing as she steps out of the bathroom and meets me halfway down the hall.

"Getting out of here before they tie me to the bed."

She snorts. "Thought you'd be into that kinky shit."

“Only if you join in on the fun,” I reply, winking.

The familiar sight of that embarrassed flush on her cheeks still makes me grin. “Maybe when we’re home.”

My eyes light up. “Oh, that’s a promise.”

She rolls her eyes at me, but she can’t hide the cheeky smile underneath. “C’mon. Let’s wait until you’re officially discharged.”

She rolls my wheelchair back into the room and shuts the door. “Besides, I still have some questions, and your parents are probably worried sick now that Jasmine told them what happened.”

I look at my phone, which has been buzzing nonstop all day. I haven’t found the energy yet to pick up.

“Wanna talk to them?”

“Pass,” I reply.

“You have to tell them about Liam someday.”

“Someday ... is not today,” I retort, smirking.

She folds her arms. “He’s their son. If you don’t tell them, Jasmine might tell our parents, and then yours will find out soon enough.”

My eyes twitch. She really knows how to get under my skin.

I guess that’s what happens when you let someone get close.

“Fine, I’ll contact them tomorrow,” I reply, and I wheel my way to her as she sits down on my bed and block her from getting up. “Now tell me what those burning questions were.”

She sucks in a breath. “Well, I just wanna know about that night. How did you know Liam was going to be there at the cliff? And why my sister?” She clutches her own hands close to her chest. “There’s so much I don’t understand.”

I grab her hands and make her look at me. “I didn’t want to use your sister as bait, but he left me no choice when he threatened to come for you.”

She swallows. “So you’d been talking with him all along.”

“Yes,” I say. “He first made his intentions clear when I went to see him those few days you were alone. I just didn’t think he’d act on them so quickly.”

When I first talked to Liam, I thought he was playing tricks on me, pretending he didn’t recognize me to get away with the fact that he’d fled.

But after talking with him, I realized his memory was gone.

Not just the memory of what had happened to him, but every goddamn memory he’d ever had of his life.

Of our family.

Of me.

But there was one thing he remembered.

Anger.

And when I dropped Jill’s name ... it was like a light switch went off in his head.

“I had a private detective trace him, and when he finally found him and took pictures, I knew for sure. That’s when he made contact and made it possible for us to meet.”

“The pictures from your drawer in your office,” she mutters.

“No wonder you suddenly decided to escape.” I tilt my head. “But I figured you’d find them sooner or later.”

“Yeah, I even had to knock out a guard,” she replies, making me snort. “I knew there was still something you were hiding from me. I just didn’t know what. But now I do.”

“It’s not like I knew for years. I’d been talking with Liam since I first went to see him in Germany those few days. He’d lost all his memories of us and didn’t even recognize me. I didn’t know what to do with it, but I ended up telling him about his life because I didn’t want him to suffer alone.”

She frowns, looking away, visibly conflicted. “He’d already suffered enough.”

“So have you,” I say, tilting my head so I can look her in the eyes. “That’s why I didn’t want to tell you about him.”

“I thought ...” Her cheeks turn bright red. “I thought you didn’t want me to know because you were afraid I’d run back into his arms and make you fight over me again.” She sighs. “Guess that turned out well.”

I snort. “No. I wasn’t threatened by him.” I place a hand on her knee. “I *know* you’re mine. But I wasn’t going to let him hurt you either.”

“Did he say he was going to—?”

“Yes,” I reply. “Absolutely.”

She rubs her lips together, pushing back the tears. I lean up the best I can, fighting the pain, and caress her cheek. “That’s why I didn’t want to tell you. Because I knew it would break you.”

She shakes her head. "I'm fine. I just ... at the time, I was so mad that you didn't tell me he was still alive."

"I'm sorry," I say.

It's the first time in a long time when I say those words and actually mean it.

"But if you'd known, you wouldn't have stopped searching until you found him. And he would have killed you," I add.

The silence that follows is deafening and hard to take, even for my fucked heart.

"I'd rather have you hate me if it meant I could keep you safe," I say through gritted teeth.

She looks at me, a single tear rolling down her cheek, which I swipe away with my thumb. Suddenly, she collapses into my body, wrapping her arms around me, and I struggle to stay standing with this wound still hurting my insides.

"Oh, shit, I forgot," she mutters, leaning back. "Sorry. Are you okay?"

"It's fine. I can handle a little pain," I jest, but I still sit down in the chair before I hurt myself further.

"I really am sorry for stabbing you," she says.

"You saw us fighting, and you thought I was the bad guy. It's understandable," I reply. "Besides, I threatened your sister too. I deserved it."

"But still ..." She looks away again, distant, then sighs.

"I'm surprised you even knew where I was going," I say.

Somehow, somehow, she tracked me down.

Even though there was a guard at the penthouse, she still managed to beat him in a fight. Feisty little bunny.

“After I escaped the penthouse, I called Jasmine and you, but neither of you picked up, so I figured I’d go to my parents' house to check on her,” she replies. “But then I saw someone shoving Jasmine into a car to kidnap her, and I thought it was Liam at first, but then I found out it was you.”

I laugh. “Yeah, that sounds like something I’d do.”

“Seriously, and using her as bait?” She raises her brows. “That’s a low one, even for you.”

I don’t regret that choice. “I did what I had to do to lure him away from you.”

“Lure him?” She frowns.

“Why do you think I abruptly left the bed?” I reply. “My private detective called me when one of his men followed him to the city. He was on his way to the building.”

“The penthouse? Oh, wow ...”

“I know, it’s a lot to take. I always assumed he’d go straight for Jasmine once his memories came back. But that night really changed him. Made him angry to the point of obsession.”

“With me,” she adds, gulping down the nerves.

I squeeze her knee. “I don’t think you have to worry about him anymore.”

“Why not?” She anxiously looks at the door and the window. “He’s still out there, somewhere. Waiting for another chance.”

“I saw the way he looked at me when I fell off that cliff, and it hurt to watch. He doesn’t want me dead. Despite the fact that he wanted to kill you, I don’t think he knew what he was doing. Or what the consequences were. That he’d also hurt me in the process.”

“So what are you saying?”

“Hurting you means hurting me.”

Her lips part. “Oh ...”

I nod now that she’s finally getting it.

“And as long as you’re with me, I don’t think he’ll be back,” I say as I part her legs with my hands, scooting closer.

“That’s convenient for you,” she retorts, playfully raising her brow.

“I know, quite the hassle, having to keep you near me,” I quip. “So where am I supposed to lie down now that you’re sitting on *my* bed? On top of you? Because I *will* do it.”

She snorts, rolling her eyes. “Oh my God, stop.”

I grab her hand and press a kiss on top. “Luca will do.”

“Luca!”

My mother’s voice makes me turn my head like a goddamn owl.

“What the hell—?”

She runs in to hug me so hard my throat is locked in her elbow. “Jesus Christ, woman,” I growl when she finally releases me.

My father steps in and growls back, “Don’t you greet your mother that way, boy.”

“We’ve been calling you for days, and you never picked up!” my mother yells.

I frown. “How did you know where I was?”

My mother looks at Jill. “Your sister kindly told us the truth.” Then turns her head to me and folds her arms. “I can’t believe you didn’t tell us you and Jill had a fight.”

A fight?

What the fuck is she talking about?

“Yeah, she told us you two fought, and then both fell off a cliff. Again.” Mom rolls her eyes at Jill. “Luckily, *she* wasn’t driving a car this time, or you would’ve both died.”

What the hell?

“What did Jasmine tell you, exactly?” Jill asks.

So she doesn’t know either?

“Your parents called us. She told them you had a falling out and that you’d called her all distressed to come and pick her up at that same cliff.” She sighs, visibly shaken by the mere idea of losing her second son too. “I’m just glad you’re both okay.”

Well, I guess that’s a relief. She actually cares about Jill for once.

“Can’t have my son bury a goddamn wife this early in his career. Imagine the fucking vultures waiting in line,” my father scoffs.

Of course. Why would they care about anything other than the business?

I try to turn around, but the twist tears at the wound, and I hiss from the pain.

“Yikes, what happened to your side?”

“Uh ... fell on a branch,” I lie.

If we’re going with this story ... I’m going to spin it in my favor.

Jill looks at me with an awkward smile on her face.

“So, have you two settled your argument?” my mother asks, eyeing Jill. “Or do I need to find my son in the hospital again in the future?”

I block her view by parking my wheelchair in front of Jill. “It was my fault. I told her I’d never let her out of her room.”

My father laughs out loud. “Once a De Vos, always a De Vos.”

“Lex ...” my mother sneers. “You can’t be serious.”

“What? Like we didn’t have the same problem.”

“And we figured it out too,” my mom retorts.

“We have,” Jill interjects, and she throws me a look. “We’ve figured it out. Right, Luca?”

“Yes,” he replies quickly, looking up into her eyes. “We’ve talked it out. She can go wherever she likes. In and out of the penthouse.”

She blinks a couple of times as if she didn’t hear me.

“I don’t want any more problems getting out,” my father says. “Our family must not—”

“Appear weak,” I fill in for him. “I know. I’ll be up from this chair in no time. Don’t worry.”

“You’d better. I need you back up and running in a couple of days. There are more partners we need to meet.” He briefly throws a look at Jill. “Can

she be trusted?”

He wants to know whose side she’s on.

De Vos or Baas.

But I’ve had enough of this fucking game. Now that my brother isn’t dead, they have no reason to continue this feud.

“You can trust Jill. She’s on our side.”

My father’s eyes narrow. “Are you sure?”

“What does he mean?” Jill whispers behind me.

“Trust me,” I whisper back, hoping he doesn’t hear.

“Fine then, if you say so. Bring her to our next meeting,” my father says. “I expect you to bring your A game if you’re gonna take over for me.”

“Take over?” Jill murmurs, so I squeeze her hand to make her shut up.

“Heal quickly,” my mother says, approaching for a very unflattering kiss on the forehead. “We’ll talk soon.”

When they’re finally gone, Jill breathes a sigh of relief.

“I can’t believe that fooled them,” she says. “But why did Jasmine lie?”

“Probably to give Liam time to run,” I explain.

“Oh, right ...” she murmurs. “I remember him telling me about it once. That he wanted nothing more than to escape the family and live a normal life.”

“If he gets what he wants, maybe he’ll leave us alone too,” I reply, spinning around to face her again. “And then we’ll both have what we wanted.”

“Well, he wanted Jasmine too, right?” she asks. “What if he comes back to claim her?”

I shrug. “Who knows. She’s adult enough to make her own decisions. He’s not like me.” I place my hands on the bed beside her while forcing my way between her legs again. “He doesn’t just take what he wants.”

My hands slide up her thighs, going higher and higher until her muscles tense and her cheeks get all rosy again, just the way I like it. And I don’t stop there, not even when my thumb circles her clit, knowing full well the kind of chain-reaction it sets off in her body.

“What are you doing?” she huffs.

“Claiming my woman,” I say, my dick tenting in my pants at the mere sight of her quivering in front of me.

“But we’re in a clinic,” she says, all giddy.

“I don’t care where we are,” I reply, rubbing her clit until she’s all hot and bothered. “Are you mine?”

She nods, clearly having trouble even responding.

“But—”

I push my thumb against her clit to shut her up. “No buts.”

My hand slides up her pants, and I unbutton it and unzip it, but when I come across the scars I gave her, I stop. It’s the first time since she ravaged them that I’ve had a close look. She scratched at the letters, making them barely visible.

My lips curl down from the sight.

“I’m sorry. I know it’s ugly, but I couldn’t stand the sight after—”

“Don’t,” I say, letting my fingers travel across the scars. “Don’t ever call yourself ugly.”

I look up into her eyes so she knows I mean it.

We’ll fix this soon enough.

But for now, I’ll make do with showing her just how much I crave her as my hand travels down her pussy.

Suddenly, someone knocks on the door again, and she abruptly closes her legs for me and zips up again, pretending like nothing ever happened.

“What?” I bark, a little too annoyed because they interrupted my game.

“Excuse me.” A woman steps inside. “I just wanted to let you know that the doctor has approved you for discharge from the clinic.”

“Discharge?” Jill says with a happy voice, and she jumps off the bed. There goes my plan. “Great. Then we finally get to go home.”

Home?

“Yup,” the nurse responds.

I immediately get up even though both of them look at me like I’m nuts.

“Are you sure you wanna do that?” Jill asks.

“I’m done sitting in this chair.” Despite the pain, I walk toward her and grab her waist, pulling her close. “And I’m done hearing anyone worry about my health.”

The nurse laughs awkwardly. “All right then. I’ll leave you two to pack.”

She closes the door again as I lean in to whisper into Jill’s ear, “What did you say just now?”

“What?” she whispers, confused.

“Something about ... home.” A wicked smile forms on my lips the second her cheeks begin to flush. I tilt her chin up. “You consider my house your home?”

“If I’m allowed to roam the place freely, without needing anyone’s approval ... maybe,” she replies.

I lean in closer, pressing my lips onto hers and claiming her mouth until that familiar drawn-out sigh that she does whenever her heart begins to pound slips out again. The one sound I’ll never get enough of. “Deal.”

CHAPTER 35



Jill

WHEN WE'RE FINALLY in the penthouse again, I breathe a sigh of relief. I didn't think I'd make it back here alive. Or that this place would be so ... clean.

The cleaners and renovators did an amazing job getting it all done. All the shards of glass from the mirror I shattered are gone, as well as all the bullet holes left by the fight between Luca and Nick.

What a difference two days make.

I've been staying at the same clinic as Luca because he didn't want me to leave his side. Not that I could. There were family guards around the clinic, making sure no one unwanted came in to endanger us while he was at his weakest.

Luca closes the door behind us. "Finally. We're alone."

I can't help but spin on my heels and look at him. There's an animalistic look on his face that's hard to ignore. "Why are you looking at me like

that?”

“You *know* why,” he says, stalking toward me. “For two fucking days, I’ve been wasting away in that hospital bed, unable to do anything while you sat there on your chair, looking at me like you were worried.”

When he scrapes past a table with his waist, he cringes.

“I am worried,” I reply, and I immediately run to the fridge and take out some ice cubes. “Here.” I lift his shirt and rub them against the wound.

The look on his face darkens. “I don’t want you to fucking worry.”

He grabs my wrist and lifts it in the air while I’m still clutching the ice cubes. “I want you to fucking see me.”

“I do see you,” I reply, confused.

He steps closer until we’re only inches away. “No. You still think I’m in pain and in danger, don’t you?”

I shake my head, but I’m lying to him and me.

He pushes me all the way to the middle of the room, still clutching my wrist. I don’t dare to let go of the ice cubes. “You’re so wrong. After all this time, you still don’t understand.”

“I don’t want you to—”

He plants his finger on my lips and drags it down. “There is only one thing that destroys a man like me. And it’s not having what I desire the most.”

My whole body heats up when he’s so close to me, but it doesn’t feel right. He just came out of the clinic, still busted up because of me.

“Listen to me, Jill. I’m stitched up. I feel fine,” he says, gripping my waist to pull me closer. “But I’m done waiting to have you.”

My breath clamps in my throat, and I'm getting all flustered from the mere idea of doing anything with him when he's still recovering. But when he plucks the ice cubes from my hand and smashes his lips on mine, I'm light-headed from the adrenaline surging through my body.

"Close your eyes," he murmurs against my lips.

I oblige, willfully, greedily, like I've been longing for his commands.

The air whooshes back as he walks away, and I'm left feeling bereft of touch.

And then the guilt washes over me again.

How could I want him so badly when I'm the one who wounded him? It's not right for me to—

Suddenly, his mouth claims mine again with full fervor, and I'm completely overtaken by the sudden lust overwhelming my body. But the sharp icy cold sting hitting my lips causes me to lean back. "What is that?"

"Open your mouth."

I do what he says, even though my eyes are still closed.

His tongue swivels inside, and I'm mesmerized by the sheer control he exudes while placing the ice cube inside my mouth. It's both hot and cold at the same time, the mixture of sensations almost too much for me.

"Suck," he whispers against my lips.

I gleefully do what he asks, sucking on the cold ice cube as though my life depends on it.

"Arms up," he says, his voice low but composed.

When I do what he says, another cold zap against the back of my arms makes me suck in a hard breath. The second ice cube is slid down along the inside, causing goose bumps to scatter across my skin. He reaches my tank top and pushes it aside with ease until my boob spills out. The cold ice cube slides over my breast all the way to my nipple, and it makes me swallow a shriek.

“Cold, bunny?”

Bunny.

I used to hate that nickname so much, but now ...

Now it makes me want.

Deeply.

Hard.

“Good.”

Luca tugs at my sweatpants and slips his hand inside, along with the second ice cube. I try not to squeal, but it’s hard when the ice slides down my slit, right on top of my clit.

I moan against the cube in my mouth.

“I don’t like it when you think I’m weak, Jill.” Luca groans as he plays with my clit and alternates his finger with the ice, driving me insane. “It makes me want to punish you.”

I mewl with delight when he pushes the cube inside me. “Fuck.”

“Hmm ... what’s that?” he whispers, circling me until he’s behind me, and he wraps one hand around my throat while the other roams freely across my

pussy lips. And I can feel the ice cube melt inside. “You want me to fuck you?”

He tilts my head to the side and claims my mouth from behind, sliding his tongue in, expertly swerving around mine until he’s stolen the ice cube again. “Beg.”

“Please ...” I murmur.

It used to be so hard for me, but now it comes easy.

Just like my need for him.

All my resistance—gone.

Just because of the way he kisses me.

Because he doesn’t just kiss. He owns.

Every inch of me is ready to yield. Ready to bend to his will.

And he knows. He loves every way he can make my body bend. The control he has over me is a kick to him—a complete and utter loss of inhibitions—and that’s what he wants. I realize now it’s all I’ve ever desired ... to relinquish my soul and feel like I belong.

Like my heart matters so much someone would kill for it.

Die for it.

Just like he would.

Fuck.

“I want you dripping wet, bunny,” he says, and I writhe up against him. “I will never, ever stop claiming what I want from you,” he groans in my ear. “Do you understand what that means?”

I nod in delirium from his hands still swiveling across my clit, and the ice cube firmly lodged inside me.

“Just like I told you before ... I want your submission.”

“Yes,” I mewl.

His hand curls around my throat. “Now tell me again what you told me two days ago. After our fall.”

My lips part, air squeezing out, as the memory sends me into a panic.

“Relax,” he commands, shoving his finger up my pussy, reminding me I’m here, right now, with him. Safe.

“Say it, say the words you know I want to hear, Jill, and you’re mine. Forever.”

“I love you,” I whisper.

It’s the only thing that he’s always wanted.

The only thing he could never steal.

The one thing I had left to offer.

That day, I gave it to him freely, willingly, knowing what it would cost me.

I’d do it all over again in a heartbeat.

He grins against my neck, the feel of his teeth against my skin exhilarating.

“Good ... because I’m not going to stop giving you a goddamn earth-shattering orgasm every single day for the rest of your life for as long as we both fucking live. Understand?”

Oh, God.

I nod a couple of times as he presses his thumb against my clit.

“Good girl ...”

His hand leaves my panties, leaving me hungry for more, and he moves away again.

“Wait there.”

I still haven’t opened my eyes, simply because he hasn’t told me to, but man, is it hard when he’s being so coy.

Suddenly, his breath hits my mouth, his hands—no, something metallic—clasps around my neck.

I gasp, my fingers instinctively moving up to touch it.

“You chucked my ring away,” he says.

“I-I’m sorry,” I mutter, feeling the guilt wash over me again.

“This new collar means more than that ring ever will,” he murmurs. “I love you. And I want you to remember that when I fuck your brains out and call you a slut.”

Fuck.

That made my pussy throb.

I nod even though I’m anxious from the thought of having another collar around my neck, an object of control to keep me from escaping. From having a choice.

He presses a soft but smoking-hot kiss at the left side of my lip. Then he grabs my hand and places something inside. “Open your eyes.”

When I do so, they instantly widen. He pushed a key into my hand.

“I’m keeping this,” he says, clutching the one that has a bunny emblem on it. The one that belongs to the collar I can’t stop touching. There’s a bunny engraved in the metal too, and the sides are embellished with fluffy pink feathers.

He circles around me again, wrapping his arm around me as he slides aside my hair to whisper in my ear. “The key in your hand is yours.”

“What does it open?” I ask.

“Everything inside this house,” he says, planting an indulging kiss beneath the collar. “I’m giving you what you wanted more than anything,” he whispers. “Freedom.”

I almost drop the key right there and then.

He’s giving me freedom?

True freedom to go wherever I want?

“For how long?”

“Forever.”

I swallow. Hard.

“I’m not going to tell you to stay. I want you to choose, Jill,” he whispers, sliding his hand down over my sweatpants, covering my pussy like it was always his to begin with. And I’d be lying if I said it wasn’t true. “Even though you belong to me, bunny.” He pauses, the sound of his breaths near my ear making me hyperaware of my own arousal. “But know that I will never, ever stop chasing you.”

“Never?” I mutter. The thought of him stalking me, watching me, is somehow a turn-on rather than a scare.

And it makes me wonder what he'd do if I did.

“Never,” he reiterates, a wicked smile forming on his face. One I recognize all too well.

One I crave more than anything.

He groans like an animal when he adds, “Now run, little bunny ... run.”

Fuck. Me.

CHAPTER 36



Luca

WHEN SHE STARTS RUNNING, the sound of her pounding heart sets my whole body aflame.

All I can focus on is that giddy grin on her face as she shoves the key into the lock and opens the front door, ready to burst out. But I'm equally ready for the chase.

Never before has it been this thrilling, this exciting to run after her as she sprints through the halls because this time I know what she chose.

And it wasn't what she always thought she wanted.

She fucking chose me.

Every time she glances at me over her shoulder and throws me that devilish look, it puts me in a frenzy, and I grunt as I chase after her while she races for the elevator.

Adrenaline pushes me to my limits, and I can barely feel the pain in my waist.

Because this hunt ... this is what I live for.

What I'd die for.

And when she steps into that elevator and presses the buttons like a madman, I sprint harder than I ever have and jump in. The sound of her shriek is the last audible thing before the doors close.

Pure lust is coursing through my veins as I gaze at this little fucking bunny on the run, cowering meekly in the corner of the elevator, her breathing as ragged as mine.

I can smell her scent from miles away, and it fucking lures me in.

"Mine," I growl as I approach her.

She looks up into my eyes, full of hunger and wonder of what I'll do to her.

This is who we are. The bunny and the wolf.

The chase is what makes us feel alive.

And there is nothing on this earth that gets me more excited than the thought of claiming my girl over and over again.



JILL

I SUCK IN THE OXYGEN, but it still won't help me breathe. Luca has me cornered, and I just pressed all the fucking buttons. We're gonna be here for a while.

I gulp as he steps closer and closer, whimpering when he suddenly grabs my throat and pins me to the mirrored wall.

“Not fast enough, bunny.” His voice is so low and gravelly that it makes my pussy throb.

Something about him running after me like this excites a part in me I didn’t even know existed until he forced me to marry him. There’s just something viscerally sexy about a chase. All the dirty things he could do to me swirl through my head and culminate in this one moment when he hungrily stares me down, burning up the heat coursing through my veins.

And when his hand dives between my legs, a delicious moan slips out of my mouth. But there is no shame to be found.

“You’re mine now,” he groans, and he spins me around and shoves me against the mirrors, swatting my legs so they part. Within a second, he’s slid his fingers between my slit and swiped them along my pussy. Even with my pants still on, I can feel myself getting soaking wet, especially with that cold ice cube melting inside.

“That’s it, bunny, moan for me,” Luca murmurs against my neck.

God.

Who made this man so fucking sexy?

We’re going straight to hell, and I don’t even care.

All I want is for him to take me.

Use me.

Claim me.

Make me his.

And when he rips down my pants and panties in one go, I whimper under his touch.

“You’re a horny little slut, aren’t you?” he whispers in my ear, his tongue darting out to lick my earlobe. “I can fix that.”

He swipes his fingers along my pussy, rubbing my clit the way he knows exactly how to make me all needy. My knees are already buckling, and wetness pools between my legs. He taps my clit and shoves a finger inside, only to pull it back out again to remind me of how much I’m willing to beg if he doesn’t give it to me.

“Now tell me exactly why you ran,” he murmurs, looking me dead in the eyes through the mirror. “And I’ll fucking give this pussy what it wants so badly.”

“I ran because I love the chase,” I respond.

WHACK!

The slap to my ass reverberates in my pussy, and it makes me even hornier than before.

God, if this is wrong, I don’t want to be right.

“Good little slut,” Luca groans, sticking his fingers right back inside my pussy again, thrusting them in and out until my eyes roll into the back of my head.

He grabs a fistful of my hair and tilts my head. “Look at yourself. Look into those needy eyes and watch yourself while you come on my fingers.”

He thrusts and thrusts, fingering me like an expert, circling my clit until I’m about to explode.

“Oh, God ...”

“God can’t hear us here, bunny,” Luca groans, pushing his hard-on against my thigh, making me all the more aware of how much I want him to fuck me raw. “Now what do we say?”

“Please,” I whimper, letting all my self-control fly out the door.

The elevator is still beeping loudly as we near the first floor. We haven’t even made a single round yet, and I’m already on the brink.

“Please, what?” Luca growls. “Give me what I want.”

“Please ... make me come.”

It feels so filthy and sinful to say it out loud, but I love it.

I love what he does to me.

How easy it comes to him.

And just how much he enjoys it when I do.

“Fuck, you don’t know how much I love hearing you say that,” he groans into my ear, setting my body on fire.

With his index finger, he expertly rubs my clit and shoves two fingers in and out until I’m practically drooling over the mirror.

“Look at me,” Luca groans, watching me through the mirror. “Look at me watching you fall apart from my fucking fingers.”

His dirty words are too much, and I explode all over him in blissful ecstasy.

Right as the elevator beeps and comes to a stop. The doors open.

And the woman at the front desk stares at us.

My entire face burns with shame.

“Keep your eyes on me,” Luca growls, still plunging his fingers into me like he doesn’t care.

“But she sees us,” I whisper, trying my best not to be affected.

“I don’t care. Let her watch. She’ll never experience the kind of satisfaction I’ll give you,” he replies. Grabbing my collar, he tilts my head and smashes his lips on my mouth, kissing away what little resistance I had left. His tongue swivels across the seam of my mouth, coaxing me to open and let him in.

And he rips open his zipper and tears it down, pulling out his length right in full view of the woman. From the corner of my eye, I can see her flush, and she picks up a stack of books to hold over her face while she walks to the bathroom, pretending she didn’t see us.

“This isn’t the first time my employees have seen me ravage you, and it won’t be the last,” he growls. And he grabs my waist and plunges inside with no warning.

My mouth forms an o-shape as I fight the urge to moan out loud from the sheer size of him inside me. I’ll never get used to how good it feels and how needy it makes me.

Because fuck me, I’m about ready to beg for this man’s cock to consume my soul.

“You’re so fucking wet for me, bunny,” he murmurs into my ear, plowing into me. “So needy and lusty too.”

He smacks my ass loudly, harshly, until I can no longer contain the sound.

“Fight me, bunny. Try to escape. It only gets me harder,” he groans, smacking my ass so hard it burns bright red.

The sting is making me want to turn around and twist his nipples in revenge, but I don't even get that far.

He immediately pins my wrists above my head and thrusts in even faster.

“Good little bunny, I love it when you're feisty like that.”

Luca pulls out and allows me a second to breathe before burying himself to the base.

The mere feel of him deep inside me, his Prince Albert rubbing against my walls, makes me mewl.

“That's it. Let me hear you. Scream my name,” he murmurs.

“Fuck!” I yell as he slams into me, hitting that one spot that makes me crumple and beg. “Please, Luca.”

One more thrust and waves wash over me. Another orgasm fucked right out of me.

He roars out loud, and warmth fills me, cum spilling out. Right now, nothing is hotter than the sounds he makes after he's had his way with me.

Jesus fucking Christ.

“I'm not done with you yet,” he groans, and he spins me around only to shove me down by my shoulders, pinning my hands to the golden bar that lines the walls.

He rams the buttons so the doors close again, and the elevator slowly moves back up to the top level. Then he fishes something metallic from his pocket, something that makes my pupils dilate.

Cuffs.

Oh, no.

“Yes, bunny,” he says before clasping them around my wrist and the bar. “I told you what it means to love me and every sinister, dark part of my fucked-up soul.” He swipes his tip along my lips. “Now taste yourself. Clean my cock like a good little slut.”

I’m still shivering from my orgasm when he pushes past my lips, and I have no control over the moans that splutter from my mouth. I can’t stop myself from licking him, even when he’s got me tied up like that.

In fact, the more I think about it, the wetter I get as he begins to slide in and out of my mouth, lathering my own juices and his cum all over my tongue.

It feels filthy, wrong, and all kinds of bad, yet I want nothing more than for him to use me until I can’t even stand anymore.

“That’s it, bunny, suck my cock like a good girl,” he groans, and the look of satisfaction on his face gets me so excited.

He tilts his head back and moans, his length growing bigger and bigger inside my mouth.

Is he ready to go again?

Holy shit, that’s fast.

I greedily lick him off, but there is no stopping his greed as he begins to thrust into my mouth. When I choke, he pulls out for a second so I can cough, only to plunge back in again, over and over.

“Do you taste your own desire?” he says.

I nod greedily. My wrists strain against the cuffs as he claims my mouth, tears staining my eyes. But I’m wet and throbbing with need. If that means I’m fucked up, then I don’t care. I want to be fucked up together with him.

“You want it so badly, little bunny?” His voice is low and heady. “Look at me.”

I nod again, looking up into his possessive eyes just like he commands. The way he looks at me is so overpowering that it makes me quiver with need.

“I’m gonna come down your throat, and you’re going to love it,” he groans, thrusting in so far that my nose is buried in his body, and his balls squeeze against my chin. “I want to make your fucking mouth pregnant.”

My eyes roll into the back of my head as I gag on his length, the metal loops bouncing up and down deep inside me.

That’s when he roars out loud. His cum jets into the back of my throat, forcing me to swallow. “Swallow, bunny,” he groans, depositing everything he has into my mouth, his words sending me over the edge. “Good girl.”

He pulls his thick, long dick out of me, and I cough up the remaining cum only to swallow it back down. It feels so wrong to enjoy the taste, but I do because it’s his.

And when he leans over, wrapping his hand around my throat, and smashes his lips onto mine, I’m completely lost to him.

“Jill,” he moans into my mouth as he struggles to undo the cuffs around my wrists without looking. “Tell me how it feels when I do this.”

What? Does it even matter?

“Why?” I ask, leaning away, my lips pink and swollen, wanting nothing more than for him to kiss me or die trying.

The cuffs drop to the floor. The elevator beeps, and the doors open again.

He grabs my face with both hands. “Because you’re mine. And I care about what’s mine.”

Mine.

I forget everything I was ever taught about right and wrong.

Everything I ever thought I wanted.

Because there is nothing I want more ... than this.



LUCA

“I LOVE IT,” she responds, looking up at me with those innocent-looking eyes. But I know better now. All the innocence has been fucked out of her. “Because I love you.”

She doesn’t even know half the things I’m capable of. Or all the ways I fantasize about playing with her.

“Even this?” My eyes narrow.

She nods, pressing a soft, heavenly kiss on the side of my lips. “I want more.”

Fuck me. There is nothing on this planet I love hearing more than her approval and her desire to explore what I have to offer.

I kiss her hard, tasting myself on her tongue, but I don’t even fucking care. That’s how in love I am with this girl. This girl I can finally call mine.

With my index finger underneath her chin, I make her stand and look at me. “You’re mine and mine alone ... Tell me.”

“I’m yours,” she replies.

She doesn't have to say it twice.

I pick her up, and she squeals as I throw her over my shoulder and carry her out of the elevator.

"Wait, what about your wound?"

I slap her ass so hard she squeals again.

"I know my limits," I growl back, slapping her other ass cheek for good measure. "It's about time we learned yours."

CHAPTER 37



Jill

A WEEK later

AS WE GET into the car, Luca suddenly hands me my phone out of the blue. “I want you to have it back.”

“Why now all of a sudden?” I ask as he starts the engine and hits the gas.

“Because I trust you,” he says, the smile on his face making my heart thump faster and faster.

I narrow my eyes as he keeps his on the road. “Is this a trick?”

“No trick. But ... I do want you to call someone.” He glances at me for a second before shifting his gaze to the road ahead again. “I don’t want anyone bothering us anymore. Call Easton and his little postboy.”

“Nick,” I fill in for him. “I thought you hated them and never wanted me to talk to them.”

“I do, but you don’t,” he replies. “You’re my wife, Jill. And I want my fucking wife to be happy.”

Something about that statement makes me super giddy, and I slam my lips together to stop the laughter from coming out because I don’t want to embarrass Luca.

“Don’t make me change my mind, Bunny,” he says.

“All right, all right, I’ll do it,” I say, quickly flicking open the call app. “It’s been so long since I last talked to them. What do I even say?”

“Whatever you want,” Luca answers, throwing me a sexy side glance. “I know you’ll make the right choice.”

“But you’re going to be mad at me if I say I want them back in my life,” I say.

He tilts his head. “No. But I am disappointed I won’t be able to gut him like a fish.” My eyes widen, and he immediately starts laughing. “Relax, I’m just trying to get to you.” He places a hand on my knee, squeezing tight. “But he did hide you from me.”

I blush. “Because I asked him to. So please don’t punish him for it.”

He pecks me on the cheek. “Because you begged so nicely ... I won’t.”

I breathe a sigh of relief.

“Now go on. Talk to Easton,” he says, throwing a look at the phone.

“What about Nick?”

Luca’s tongue dips out to lick his top lip. “He knows you belong to me.”

Something about that kind of mad possessiveness has me swooning all over again. “Ten minutes,” Luca says.

“Ten?” I gasp. “That’s not nearly enough.”

“It’s enough for now,” he replies. “Besides, you’ll have plenty more time to call them later.”

I roll my eyes, but still call Easton’s number. It feels like forever before he picks up. Before I hear the voice of the man who saved me from the clutches of the De Vos family three years ago.

“Hey, it’s me. Jill,” I say.

“Jill,” he murmurs. “Nick told me what happened. I thought we’d never see you again. Are you okay?”

“I’m fine,” I reply. “Better than ever, actually.”

“If you need help, just say the word, and I will do everything in my power to come and get you.”

I blush, not knowing how to even answer, let alone explain. “No, no. Luca’s not keeping me a prisoner. Not anymore, at least.” When I glance at Luca, he throws me back a devious smirk.

“Nick told me he forced you to marry him and that he put a collar around your neck,” Easton says.

Now my blush worsens even more. “That part is actually true. But I don’t want it off,” I immediately add. “This is how he shows me he loves me ... and I’m going to stay with him,” I say. “I just wanted you to know that I’m okay. You don’t have to worry about me anymore.”

“Are you sure?” Easton asks.

“Yes. Absolutely.”

“So you’re not being forced to tell me this?”

I laugh. “No.”

“What about his parents? They forced you to marry him, didn’t they?”

“No. This time, I was the one who chose this.”

“I should’ve never have let them into my restaurant to do their business,” he growls.

“No, wait. Don’t write them off. I don’t want there to be animosity.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, I just want things to go back to normal, you know,” I reply, clearing my throat. “And they used to do business at your restaurants and hotels. Maybe it will make them warm up to each other again.”

He sighs into the phone. “If it means a lot to you, maybe I could let them do business at my restaurants again.”

“Is that Jill?” I gasp in shock at the sound of Nick’s voice through the phone. “I want to speak with her.”

Some rustles and rummaging ensue.

“Jill?” he says. “What do you want? Did your boyfriend put you up to this?”

“No, well, yes, but I wanted to contact Easton too.”

“Why? So your boyfriend can force you to tell him not to bother saving you? So he can force you to bow down to him and wear that collar around your neck?”

My hand instinctively rises to touch my neck. “You don’t understa—”

“I knew it. He still acts like he owns you.”

“I chose this. Willingly.”

“Is he sitting next to you right now?” Nick asks. “Because I swear to God —”

“Stop. I know you’re angry, but I love him.”

“You *love* him?” The hurt is clearly coming through his voice. “Like for real?”

“I do.” I throw a glance at Luca, who is keeping an eye on me, even while driving.

“I want to believe you. But the last time you said those words, he was threatening to kill me.”

“I. Love. Him.”

It’s silent for a few seconds.

“Nick. Please, stop fighting,” I beg. “It’s over. I’m not coming back.”

“Fine. If you’re happy.” He sighs, but I still appreciate it, even if he’ll only do it for me. “But I don’t ever want to see that fucker, and if he ever hurts you, I’ll come and rain down fucking hell on him. Got it?”

“Thank you,” I reply.

More silence ensues. “Guess he got what he wanted after all. I just hope you did too.”

More rustling sounds follow, and then I hear Easton’s familiar voice again.

“Well, that was ... interesting.”

“I think he thought something was between us, but there wasn’t. I feel bad for him.”

“Don’t be. He’ll find the one eventually,” Easton replies. “We all do.”

“I hope so. He deserves it,” I say.

“He’ll get over it,” Easton says.

I sigh. “Well, anyway, tell Charlotte I said hi. And don’t worry about me, okay?”

“I will. And don’t forget, you can come over anytime you want,” Easton replies. “The door is always open.”

I smile. “Thanks. That means a lot. I’ll drop by soon.”

I lower my phone and end the call, but Luca is looking at me like he means business, and it’s freaking me out. “What?”

The car stops, and he parks it right in front of his parents' car. “We’re here.”



LUCA

“I DON’T UNDERSTAND why we have to be at this godforsaken house,” my father growls as we stand on the porch and wait for someone to open the door.

“I haven’t been here in so long,” Jill says, gulping like she’s afraid of her own family. “I didn’t actually expect to ever be back here.”

“I hope I never have to fucking come back here,” my mother complains, throwing her hair back.

“Does that mean I won’t be able to see my sister ever again either?” Jill suddenly asks.

My parents look at her like she’s a fucking traitor for even saying it out loud, but I understand. She and her sister have a very close bond.

“You can see her whenever you want,” I say, and I throw a look at my parents too. “And your parents too.”

She smiles and looks up at me. “Are you sure this is a good idea?”

Grabbing her hand, I bring it to my lips, pressing down a soft kiss. “Trust me.”

She rubs her lips together, trying to hide a smile. “You know it’s hard for me to say no when you look at me like that.”

My brows rise. “I know. Perks of being a devil boy.”

My father frowns and opens his mouth, but then the front door opens, and the moment is gone.

“Welcome,” the maid says, opening the door wide.

My parents seem confused she was expecting us all, but I had Jill contact her in advance and keep it a secret.

“Well ... so nice to see you all here.” Mrs. Baas’s voice makes us both look up. She’s holding a plate of what looks like freshly baked cookies in her hands. “C’mon, let’s sit and talk in the living room.”

As Jill follows her mother, I stay behind and point a finger at my parents. “Behave.”

“Don’t you fucking talk to me like that, you piece of—”

My dad's violent coughs take over, and he grabs another napkin from his pocket and spits something into it. More blood.

"I don't think you're in the position to make the damn rules anymore," I retort. "So unless you want to watch your goddamn empire being burnt to the ground, I suggest you calm the fuck down and actually give this a fucking chance. You want me to take over the company? Then you'll let me run the show the way I fucking want to."

They both look at me like they want to burn me at the stake, but I don't care.

I know my priorities. It's about time I used theirs to my advantage.

"Now be nice to her parents and just sit down and have a nice cup of fucking coffee," I say, running my fingers through my hair. "She's *my* wife, and they're her fucking family." I look at my mom in particular. "You wanted me to be nice. This is me being nice."

She narrows her eyes at me. "Fine. Let's go." She barges right past me with that snooty look on her face, her perfume leaving a trail down the hall as she throws her scarf around her neck.

"You'd better know what you're doing," my father growls in that low tone of his.

"I do, so sit down and listen for once in your goddamn life," I respond.

He grunts but still steps forward, shoving me out of the way.

Despite being a weak old man, he still has a lot of spite left inside him. Enough to destroy everything in his path. But I won't let him.

We go into the living room where it's chilly, and I don't mean the fucking temperature. Hugo, Vera, and Jasmine sit on a couch on one side of the

coffee table while Anne sits on the opposite one, far away from them.

“Have some coffee and a cookie,” Jill offers Anne, probably to shut her up. “My mom made them by hand.”

“Yes, Dad. We don’t want to offend the family, now do we?” I say, tilting my head at him. “Sit down and have a cookie.”

His face is so red he looks like a bomb about to blow, but I don’t fucking care as he sits down beside my mother anyway.

“So, to what do we owe this ... pleasure?” Jill’s mom asks.

My parents throw me a look. The entire room is silent, and it’s very telling.

I beckon Jill to come over and sit on my lap. “I’m done with these fucking games, so I’m going to give it to you straight,” I tell the rest.

My father is throwing me darts with his eyes, but I don’t care. I’m done with this charade.

“My family has been scheming to steal the Baas contacts and burn your business to the ground.”

“WHAT?!” Hugo immediately stands and towers over the table.

“What do you mean?” Jill asks, turning to me. “Is this why you wouldn’t tell me?”

“You would’ve hated my family and me if I did,” I respond. “But it’s important that everyone knows.”

“LUCA!” my father barks, getting up too, but to shout at me instead. “You betray your own fam—”

Hugo interrupts him, pointing fingers. “How fucking—”

“I’m not finished yet,” I say in a calm, collected tone to both of them.

“All this time, I thought we were partners. After all the sacrifices I made to keep this friendship from being destroyed,” Hugo growls at my parents. “Get out of my fucking house.”

“DAD!” Jasmine roars, commanding his attention.

No one expected a little bird like her to squawk that loudly.

“Listen to what Luca has to say,” she adds.

“You’re in on their little scheme?” he asks her, his tone threatening, even at his own daughter.

“I’m not, but this is more important than your petty fight,” Jasmine says.

“Petty?!” My mother gets up too now, crumbling the cookie in her hand. “My son died, and you call that petty?”

“So that’s what this is all about? That’s why you’re so intent on destroying our family, our livelihood?” Vera jumps into the fray too. “We already sacrificed our daughter to your family, and it still isn’t enough for you?”

“Blood must be paid in blood,” my father says through gritted teeth.

They’re all eye to eye now, and I doubt it’ll take a minute longer before any of them starts throwing the coffee around.

“EVERYBODY SIT THE FUCK DOWN.” My loud voice immediately throws all ire onto me, but I’m prepared for their rage. I’ve faced worse. “I’m not fucking finished yet.”

“I don’t fucking care what else you’re going to say,” my father barks, attempting to leave.

“Liam is *alive*.”

Everyone holds their breath. Even my father.

In fact, I don't think I've ever seen him flinch, but he did just that.

"*Alive?*" My mother's face turns to shreds as tears freely roll down her cheeks.

"Do not mess with your mother's heart, Luca." My father grabs my shoulders. "Or I swear to God—"

"I saw him with my own goddamn eyes," I respond. "He survived the crash. He's alive."

"Where?" he asks, shaking me. "How long have you known?"

"Couple of weeks," I reply.

"And you didn't tell us?!" my parents say in sync.

"Because I knew you'd abuse the situation," I reply.

This really gets them riled up. I can tell from the way they're throwing daggers with their eyes alone. If we weren't at someone else's house, real daggers might have flown across the room at this point.

"He's *my* son," my mother growls at me, trembling vigorously.

"I am too. Now take a sip," I tell her, pointing at the coffee. "And you? Sit," I tell my father.

Even after throwing me a damning look, he still sits because everyone here knows I hold all the cards now.

"Liam's gone now," I say.

"What? Why? Where?" my mother asks while wailing. "Why wouldn't he come to see us?"

“Because he doesn’t want to,” I reply, staring both of my parents down dead in the eyes. “Because he hates you both. And you will never, *ever* see him.”

My mother almost chokes on her coffee while my father doesn’t even touch his.

“I don’t believe you,” he says.

“It’s true,” Jasmine suddenly says. All eyes are on her now. “I saw it in his eyes. He hates everyone and doesn’t want to see any of you.” There’s a certain sadness on Jasmine’s face when she looks at her mother. “I’m sorry for not telling you guys. I didn’t want to start another war.”

“War?” Vera says. “Oh, honey ...” They hug tight.

“How? How is this even possible?” my mother asks, staring at her coffee like it’ll tell her the truth.

“He survived the crash and decided to disappear,” Jill replies, swallowing because we both know she’s leaving some crucial details out.

“But why won’t he even tell his own parents?”

“Because he’s forgotten almost everything about us. He doesn’t want to remember, and I won’t force him,” I reply.

My father shakes his head. “We didn’t do anything to make him hate—”

“We’re a goddamn mafia family,” I interject.

“How about you wanted to force him to marry the only girl he never wanted?” Jill says, her nails digging into her knees. “Me.”

I pet her back to relieve some tension, and it works.

Everyone’s eyes are on her now. It’s about time they listened to her demands.

“When he drowned, the guy you all knew vanished and was replaced with a monster,” Jill says.

“How do you even know? Did you see him too?” my mother asks. “Did you talk to him? What did he say?”

Jill’s face darkens as I grab her hand and squeeze tight. “Tell them,” I whisper into her ear.

“He tried to kill me.”

CHAPTER 38



Luca

VERA AND HUGO gasp in shock.

My mother shakes her head. “What? No, this has got to be a lie—”

“Why do you think we were at that same cliff again, Mother?” I say through gritted teeth.

“It’s true, I was there,” Jasmine says, looking down. “I was the one who called for help that night. Luca used me as bait to lure Liam out because he was intent on killing—”

“BAIT?” Vera shrieks.

“You used my daughter!?” Hugo yells at me. “Wasn’t taking one of them enough for you? Goddammit!”

“She’s alive, isn’t she?” I quip, raising a brow. “I did what I had to do to stop my murderous brother from killing your other daughter.”

This shuts them up pretty quickly.

My mother's lips part. "But why—?"

"Because she's my fucking wife," I say, looking at each one of them. "And I'd kill any motherfucker on the planet if it means keeping her safe. Even my own goddamn brother."

Even Hugo is taken aback by my sudden admittance of adoration for his daughter.

"But Liam didn't die. He's on the run, and I'd like to keep it that way," I continue. "I don't want him to return and risk losing Jill, nor do I want to take his only chance at a normal life far away from this mess."

"So what now?" my father growls. "You just expect us to move on?"

"Yes," I reply, grabbing Jill's hand to hold it tight. "I do, in fact. And you know what else I expect from you? That you're going to end this feud. Right here, right now."

"Wha—" my mother scoffs, but it ends in a laugh.

"The debt you wanted them to repay no longer exists," I say in a low tone.

"My son is still gone," my father rebukes.

"He chose to leave," Jill replies. "Just like I chose to replace my sister when you forced her to marry Luca so you wouldn't destroy my family." She throws them fiery looks, and I'm all here for that burn. "Yet even after I married him, you still decided to go after their business."

That really got them quiet.

"You owe us," Hugo suddenly says out of the blue.

"You took my daughter like she was yours to take," Vera adds, leaning over to grasp Jill's knee. "But your son is alive, so there is no debt. This

marriage needs to be nullified.”

Jill pushes her mother’s hand off. “No.”

Vera and Hugo throw her confused looks. “But you hate him,” Vera says.

“I don’t hate him.” Jill looks at me, and we exchange lust-ridden smiles.

“It’s more of a hate-to-love-him kind of thing.”

My mother laughs, swiping away her tears. “This is some Freudian mess. Vera, do you have wine? This coffee is not going to do it for me.”

“Wine is reserved for friends,” Vera snaps back.

“I think we’re all friends here ... right?” Jill retorts, raising her brow.

“Because none of you have a reason to hate the other anymore.”

“Well, he did try to destroy our business,” Vera says, eyeing my father.

“Enough,” I interrupt. “What’s done is done. It’s over now.” I look at my father. “You’ve already built enough wealth. You don’t need more. You will stop fucking with their business and be actual partners again.”

“Or what?” he growls. “My own damn son trying to threaten me?”

“You want me to take over your business when you’re gone? Better start appreciating what I’m giving you here. A fresh start.” I fish a napkin from my pocket and hand it to him. “Or do you want to be left without a wife and only regrets on your deathbed?”

His whole face turns white as snow.

“Because I know my mother. If the money is gone ... there is no more reason for her to stay,” I quip.

My mother is too mortified to respond, but I know their love language. It isn’t as savagely sexy as mine and Jill’s. It’s based on power. My mother

only yielded to my father when she realized what kind of materialistic things he could offer her.

But all of that would vanish, along with her, should the business crumble.

My father's face darkens as his lips turn upside down. "Outplayed by my own fucking son."

He coughs into the napkin and throws it onto the table, so everyone can see the blood. "That's what you want, isn't it? If we're sharing secrets now, might as well throw this one in too."

"Is that ... blood?" Vera asks, making a disgusted face.

"Yes. Yes, it is," Hugo answers. "You're sick, Lex?"

"Don't act like you care," Lex spits.

"I would if you wouldn't try to destroy my family for once," Hugo responds.

Vera clutches her husband's arm. "Stop. It's enough."

"Please, can *everyone* just stop? Look at the pain you've all caused," Jasmine says. "Can't you all start over? You know, with a blank slate?"

"Only if our livelihood is no longer threatened," Vera says. "Or our family."

My father and mother both look away in shame for what they've done. Or maybe just because now their dirty little secret is out, and they can't hide behind it anymore.

"My parents will stop trying to steal your business, and they'll start being actual partners again," I tell Hugo. "You have my word."

"Yours?" He raises a brow at me.

“My father doesn’t have long to live. All his assets and the business will be handed over to me. And since he wants me to keep it going ... I’m the one who calls the shots now.”

Because that’s just it.

The simple fact that’s given me all the power I need.

My father’s only wish is for his legacy to continue, but he needs me to do it.

And I wouldn’t care if it all bleeds to death.

Not unless he does exactly what I want him and my mother to do.

So I take a big sip of my coffee while gazing over the room, enjoying as this last chess piece is put into place.

“Now, what’s it going to be?” I muse.

“Fine. We’ll be equal partners again,” my father says under his breath, not at all pleased, but I care as much about his feelings as he cares about anyone else’s. None.

“And?” I say, squinting at him and my mother.

“We apologize for ever trying to ruin you,” my mother says.

“Dad?” I look him straight in the eyes.

I want him to submit.

Openly.

Willingly.

Knowing it was me who enforced it.

“Fine. I apologize for what I’ve done to your family.”

I used to want to watch the Baas family burn to the ground. But now that I've heard my father grovel ... God, it feels so fucking good to hear him bleed and suffer for the pain he's caused. So fucking good that it brings chills to my bones.

"Thank you," Vera responds. "That means a lot. If it's true."

"Oh, it's true," I say. "They don't want their business jeopardized, do they?"

"No," my mother responds, looking away from me.

I don't care if she hates me now.

All of this was worth it to see the looks on their faces.

Vera taps Hugo on the leg. "Fine, we accept your apology," he says.

"Thank you, Luca and Jill, for bringing all of this to our attention," Vera adds.

"I didn't do it for you," I reply.

"Neither did I," Jill adds. "But I want Jasmine to have a clean slate when she takes over the business after you're both under the ground."

Her parents look at her like they're too shocked to even react. "What, but we're your—"

"You threatened to have me killed if I didn't make Luca happy," Jill interrupts, staring straight into her father's eyes.

"Did you?" Vera throws Hugo a damning look. "How dare you, that's our daughter!"

"What choice did I have? They were relentless after Liam's death, and you know that."

Her mother sighs. “But Liam’s not dead, so this debt does not hold up.” She looks at me now. “So you’re going to return Jill to us.”

“I refuse,” I reply.

Now I’ve caught their ire, but I’m prepared.

“Like I said ... I’d take on the entire fucking world before anyone ever takes her from me.” I grab Jill’s arms and hold her close to me. “She’s mine and mine alone.”

Vera’s lips part. “But—”

“I’m his wife,” Jill says. “I *want* to be his.”

Oh. Fuck me. The mere sound of her saying those words makes my cock throb in my pants.

“Why?” Hugo frowns.

“Because I love him ...” Jill’s face turns red, so I tilt her chin and make her look at me.

“And I love you.” I claim her mouth in full frontal view of both our fucking parents because I want them to fucking know it’s the goddamn truth.

But I have more up my sleeve, and it’s about time we left. “C’mon,” I say, getting up and grabbing Jill’s hand to whisk her out of this nightmare.

“Where are you going?” her mother asks.

“Out with my wife,” I say as I tug her along. “Have fun. Try not to kill each other.”

Before anyone else can complain, I quickly open the door and rush us outside.

“Shouldn’t we stay with them?” Jill asks.

“No. I have more planned for today.”

“Like what?” she asks.

“You’ll find out soon enough,” I say as I push her into my car and close the door.



JILL

HE HOPS inside and starts the engine.

“I’m so glad we’re out of there,” I muse.

“Same, bunny, but probably for different reasons.” A devious-looking smirk spreads on his cheeks.

“What do you mean?” I ask.

“With you on my lap and your lips on my mouth, it’s very hard to keep my focus,” he replies.

My cheeks flush with warmth as my eyes are fucking glued to his hands sliding over his belt, his zipper being pulled down, his length spilling out over the edge of his boxers, his hand gripping the rock-hard length.

I lick my lips at the sight.

“All that talking has me greedy for something else,” he says, his voice low and gravelly as his free hand wraps around my neck. “You.”

I embrace the feel of his fingers digging into my skin, my thighs clenching together as the throbbing begins.

“Now bend over and suck, little bunny.”

He drags my head toward his crotch, not giving me even a second to adjust with my mouth before thrusting inside. The feel of metal hitting the back of my throat makes my eyes roll into the back of my head.

“Good little fuck bunny. You got what you wanted. Now, I get what I need,” he grunts, pushing my head down until my tongue hits the base.

When he finally pulls back again, I gasp for air, and he suddenly hits the gas.

“Are we going home?” I ask, thinking about all the ways he could use me there.

He bites his lip, and my pussy thumps in response. “Nope. It’s a surprise.”

“A surprise?” My eyes widen. “Where?”

“If I told you, it wouldn’t be a surprise,” he replies, the car going faster and faster while his hand still grips my head. “But I’m not letting you stop. Not until I’m done fucking your mouth and filling up your throat.” He slams inside again, slathering my tongue with pre-cum, driving me wild with lust. “Now buckle up, bunny. It’s going to be a long ride.”

EPILOGUE

Jill

“KEEP YOUR EYES CLOSED,” Luca says.

“You already told me that a million times,” I say, still not knowing where the hell I am even though it’s been more than five hours already. “We’ve even been on a plane! What kind of surprise is this?”

He laughs. “Almost there. Watch your head.”

I lower my head as he helps me into a car, sliding inside before shutting the door.

This whole trip has gotten me anxious, and I hate that he’s not telling me why we’re going all the way out here, wherever here is. I didn’t have any time to prepare, nor did I bring any luggage.

Then again, knowing Luca, maybe I won’t need it at all. I gulp.

“So five hours ... where does that take me?” I mutter.

“Always such a nosy bunny,” he says. His hand snakes around my thigh as he leans in to whisper, “You’ll find out soon enough.”

God, everything that comes out of his mouth sounds raunchy even when it isn’t meant like that at all.

But when he plants a deliciously sultry kiss underneath my ear, all the butterflies begin to spread again.

“I can’t wait to tear these clothes off your body,” he groans, making me all the more aware of that blindfold around my head.

“You’re not making this easier,” I reply.

“I don’t do easy,” he says, grinning against my skin as his hand dives between my legs. “And neither do you, considering you fell for me.”

“The driver might see you,” I murmur as he begins to toy with my pussy.

Luca groans. “I hired him not to care.”

He keeps going and going until I’m all hot and flustered, and my clit throbs.

After a while, the car comes to a stop, and his hand vanishes, leaving me bereft and full of wantonness. The trunk is opened, and something is hauled out. The driver gets out too and helps carry it. I don’t need to see to know that something’s going on, and it’s putting me on edge.

“Luca?” I say, hoping he might hear.

Suddenly, the door on my side opens up, and he grabs my hand and tugs me out in one go. “C’mon.”

He pulls me along, grabbing both hands to guide my way across some stones where soft sands lie between.

“Be careful where you step,” he says.

Not only that but it's also hot and humid out here. Totally unlike the Netherlands. "Where are we?"

"Just a few more steps until you find out," he says. "Wait here."

I listen to the sounds. A door is opened. He walks me in. The floor is made of wood that echoes. It smells like fresh lime in here. The feeling warm and ... cozy for some reason.

"Here," he says, and he stops walking.

He circles around me, and I can feel his hand on my thighs, sliding up my body, along the curve of my breasts, up my neck, all the way to the back of my head, where he slowly unravels the blindfold.

When it falls to the floor, my jaw drops too.

In front of me, two doors are opened, showing a magical view of luscious palm trees and a sandy beach leading to a beautiful pristine ocean.

"Oh, my God ..." I mutter.

"Welcome to our private little hut in the Canary Islands," he whispers into my ear, clutching my waist from the back. "Do you like it?"

"I love it!" A big smile forms on my face. "How did you plan all this?"

"You're nosy, and I know that. But I cheated," he explains as I take a small tour around the hut, checking out all the amazing furniture and luxurious-looking food. I even take a bite of a date filled with cheese, and it's freaking delicious.

"You cheated? What do you mean?"

He grabs a champagne bottle sitting in ice and pours it into two glasses. "This was all planned ahead of time. Back when I was first supposed to

marry you.”

I look up and stop eating. “Wait, you mean you were planning on bringing my sister here?” I almost get jealous at the thought, but then I remember that I took her place. And I’m sure glad that I did now that I’m here.

“No,” Luca responds, taking the date from my hand and stuffing it into his mouth. “Three years ago.”

My lips part, but I don’t know what to say.

He planned all this *three years ago*?

All this time, when his family tried to get me on a plane, and I escaped, I thought they’d only planned on marrying us there. Not that we’d actually get a ...

“Oh,” I mutter, my eyes widening as the realization hits me. “This is—”

“Our honeymoon,” Luca fills in for me as he hands me a glass of champagne and holds it out for a toast. “The one I wanted to give to you.” He lowers his eyes at me in that same way he always does just before he’s about to chase me around the penthouse. And the mere sight of those eyes makes me want to flee. “Before you decided to run away from me.”

I swallow and take the glass from his hand. We toast. The air is crackling with tension.

I bring the glass to my lips and take a sip while sweat drops roll down my back.

Right as I put it down on the table, he grabs my wrist. “Don’t run just yet, bunny.”

My whole body freezes as he fishes something from his pocket. A letter.

“This is for you,” he says.

With a frown, I take it and open the envelope. I don’t know what I’m expecting, but it’s definitely not a love letter, knowing Luca.

But when my eyes read the words on the paper, I gasp in shock and almost drop the paper.

It’s a proof of purchase of a building in the city where we live with my name on it.

“What is this?” I mutter.

“Consider it a late wedding gift.”

Why would he buy me property unless—

“For your new business,” he says as he puts down his glass and steps closer, a key dangling between his fingers. “Where you can create all the dresses and outfits you ever dreamed of.”

Oh, my God. I can’t believe it.

I choke up at the thought.

He’d really do this for me?

He holds up the key in front of my face so daringly close like a piece of candy that I want to snatch it away just because I can.

But the moment I do, he pulls back, and that familiar smirk appears again. The same one he had on his face when he first stole my crown when I was only a little girl and ran away with it.

Back then, I didn’t know how far boys like him would go to get what they wanted.

“What’s the catch?” I ask, putting down the paper.

“Saying thank you is a start,” he muses, narrowing the gap between us.

“Well, thank you,” I say.

He shakes his head a little. “Not enough, bunny.”

“What more do you want?”

But I already know the answer, and the thought fills me with exhilaration.

He leans in, chest pressed up against mine, his cock hardening against my thighs. “That your heart and body only bleed for me.”

He pulls the knife out of his pocket, caressing my cheek with it, and it feels like my whole body ignites in flames.

“It’s about time we fixed that name scar and made it whole again,” he says.

I hold my breath as the knife slowly travels down to my navel. “The doors are open. What if I scream? What if someone catches us?”

His tongue darts out to wet those delicious lips of his. “This is a private beach, so the only one catching you will be me.”

He really thought of everything.

Fuck.

I swallow, but I still can’t stop myself from taunting the wolf. “And what if I decide to give my heart to someone else?”

I know what it does to him when I say that.

How possessive it makes him.

It’s exactly what I want.

He looks me dead in the eyes as he says, “Then I suggest you start running ... now.”

Now.

My feet are lightning fast as they move across the wood.

He’s mere inches away, but I escape his grasp.

On the beach, my feet dig into the sand.

One glance over my shoulder.

There he is, right in my footsteps, in one hand a knife, the other a chain.

If there’s anyone else on this beach right now, they’d call the police.

But we’re all alone, and there’s no one here to rescue me, the damsel in distress, the little bunny darting away from the wolf himself.

And when he suddenly lunges forward and catches me, I fall headfirst into the sand.

He immediately straddles me and leans over, his hard-on poking me in the ass. “Not fast enough, little bunny.” His breathing is loud, heavy, and hot as he whispers into my ear, “I got you, and I’m never fucking letting go.”

And as I turn my head to look into his smoldering eyes, I fall head over heels with this beast of a man. This beast clasps a chain to my collar and calls me his.

The knife at my throat makes me swallow as it slides down my back, cutting through what little fabric still covers my body in this hot and humid land. His hand grips my ass and slaps it so hard I squeal.

“Are you happy, little bunny?”

“Yes!” I squeal when he slaps me again.

“Good. It’s about time I got my reward,” Luca muses as he zips down while still on top of me, the mere sound setting me off. He fists the chain in the palm of his hand and tugs, forcing my head to tilt up, right as he positions himself between my legs.

And when he thrusts inside, my eyes roll into the back of my head. Heaven.

“Now be a good little slut, Mrs. De Vos, and enjoy me fucking your brains out.”

###

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SNEAK PEEK NEXT BOOK



Chapter 1

Liam

NEVER IN MY life did I think the only girl I ever fucking craved would point a gun at my head.

Her blond hair sways in the storm, raindrops clattering down on her face, which is now more beautiful than ever. She still looks exactly like she did in my memories, with those almond green eyes, that sharp nose, and pink, plump heart-shaped lips. Kissable. To die for.

“Whatever you’re thinking—don’t!” she yells at me, sweat drops rolling down her forehead.

My hand forms a fist at the thought that she’d ever shoot me.

But I wouldn’t put it past her either after all the things I’ve done.

My eyes flicker to the scene behind her, to my brother, Luca, clutching her sister Jill’s hand as they hold on to the ledge for dear life. I’m torn between running over to help him ... and watching her fall to her death.

But something inside me stops me from moving.

Jasmine's eyes flame with rage as she holds the gun steady even though the rest of her body shakes vigorously in the cold rain pouring down on us.

"Luca ... I'm sorry," Jill says behind her, her fingers slipping away.

A satisfying end to a miserable story as Luca loses his grip, and she tumbles down.

But then my brother does the unthinkable.

He jumps right after her.

My pupils dilate, and in an instant, Jasmine spins around and shrieks, noticing them both missing. She runs to the edge, still clutching the gun as she goes to her knees, and yells, "JILL!"

Instinct pushes me to the ledge, and as I peer over, I watch my own brother dive to his death.

"LUCA, NO!" I scream, the pain immediate, like a knife to the heart.

Because he was and still is my fucking brother. And it was my own selfish need for vengeance that made him fall.

If I hadn't tried to throw Jill over the ledge, he wouldn't have lunged after her.

Too fucking late.

SPLASH!

Their bodies hit the water. Hard. And I'm left with an indescribable agony tearing out my soul.

"Jill!" Jasmine cries out in pain, her voice going through marrow and bone.

I crawl away from the ledge, swallowing the tears as I get up, unable to face the consequences of my own actions.

Jasmine turns to face me, rage becoming her. “You ... You did this!”

My jaw clenches as I step back farther and farther away from her, from the ledge my brother just threw himself off to save his wife, the same fucking woman who caused all of my misery.

Jasmine gets up, swiping the tears off her cheeks as she points the gun at me, trying her best to aim with shaky hands.

I won’t force her to make this choice.

Not today.

Not ever.

“Don’t make me do this,” Jasmine growls.

I shake my head. “I won’t. But I won’t ever stop. Not until I have what I came for.” My tongue dips out to lick my lips. “You.”

And as I take one last look at the only woman I’ve ever wanted, I turn and run.



JASMINE

A DAY later

MY SISTER TENDS TO LUCA, who's moping around in the hospital bed, while I stare out the window. He hates being there, but I think he's lucky he survived after catching Jill mid-fall. And I don't think he'll be stuck here for long, which is good.

But all I can think about is Liam.

He's out there, somewhere, waiting for another shot at killing my sister.

Waiting for another chance to take me.

I swallow, but it still feels like my throat is clamped up.

It's only been two days since I found out Liam was still alive. Two days since we all found out Jill hadn't actually killed him by accident. Two days and my entire world feels like it's been turned upside down.

Because I don't think he came back just to get revenge.

Clutching the windowsill, I feel tears welling up in my eyes as I remember the words he said on that hill.

"I won't. But I won't ever stop. Not until I have what I came for. You."

The mere memory of his words makes my body explode in goose bumps.

How could I not have known? Was I so blind?

Or did he just say that to manipulate me?

I shake off the jitters.

I can't let his words get to me. He was gone for three years and only came back to try to kill my sister. I turn my head to look at her as she gleefully accepts a demanding kiss from Luca, who is still the same oversexed guy he ever was, even after almost dying.

And it almost makes me jealous.

Almost.

But love isn't for me.

I'm the girl who's supposed to take over my parents' not-so-legal business.

Love has no place in this harsh world we belong to. At least not the gentle kind.

Sighing, I turn to look out the window again. I never thought any of this would ever happen. Or that it would affect me so deeply. My heart aches and I don't know why.

But all I can think of are those soul-crushing eyes and that voice that'll haunt me in my dreams.

I stare outside at the people walking across the pavement and the cars driving by until one of them stops near a red light. And a guy with dark eyes peers up through the window from the back seat. Straight at me.

My lips part.

My breath hitches in my throat.

No, it can't be true, can it?

Those eyes ... I'd recognize them among a million others.

Liam.



LIAM

I LOOK at the hospital as the cab comes to a stop in front of a red light. When my gaze rises to the top floor where a girl stands in the windows, my heart momentarily stops beating.

Because it's her.

The girl who haunts my every waking thought.

Jasmine.

Our eyes connect in blazing recognition, and in an instant, I feel all the love I once felt for her crushed into a single atom. And I fucking remember all the ways I wanted to make her mine, even when she did not.

Her eyes are filled with shock and awe. And something else ... fear.

Fear for what's to come.

Fear for what I might do.

What I'm capable of.

And when I lift the key up from my neck and hold it up to the window, her jaw drops.

The light springs to green, and the cab begins to drive. Two seconds is all it takes for her face to disappear from my view.

But I know she saw me ... And we both know there is no going back now.

One day, I will claim what's mine.

And she will offer it to me out of her own free will.



JASMINE

AFTER SAYING goodbye to Jill and Luca, I rush home as fast as I can and run to the yard behind our house, scooping up the freshly dug ground with my bare hands until I hit hard wood. With dirt-ridden fingers, I lift out the old box. The one I'd been hiding for years. The one only two people know about. Myself ... and Liam.

Because that key he held up in front of the car window wasn't just any key.

It was one of two keys that opens this tiny box.

With shaky hands, I fish my own keys from my pocket and search until I find the one, prodding it into the lock that opens with ease.

Inside are small papers.

Promises we made to each other.

Promises we intended to keep.

An old one from five years ago reads: 'If our parents force us to marry, we'll be kind to each other.'

Beneath that, our thumbprints, in blood.

I remember signing this, blissfully unaware of how fate would twist us in a direction no one could ever imagine. Back when all of us believed Liam and I were going to be the ones to take over our parents' companies as the oldest heirs.

I fish out another one that reads: 'We will always let each other have what we want. No matter the cost.'

On the edge of the little paper is a muddy spot. A fingerprint.

The hairs on the back of my neck stand up straight.

Because beneath all the other tiny little papers filled with promises we once made is a new one. A torn paper etched with harsh lines made by pure blood.

NO MATTER THE COST, Jasmine.

There's only one thing I want more than your sister's death.

You.

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ABOUT CLARISSA WILD

Clarissa Wild is a New York Times & USA Today Bestselling author of Dark Romance and Contemporary Romance novels. She is an avid reader and writer of swoony stories about dangerous men and feisty women. Her other loves include her hilarious husband, her cutie pie son, her two crazy but cute dogs, and her ninja cat that sometimes thinks he's a dog too. In her free time, she enjoys watching all sorts of movies, playing video games, reading tons of books, and cooking her favorite meals.

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