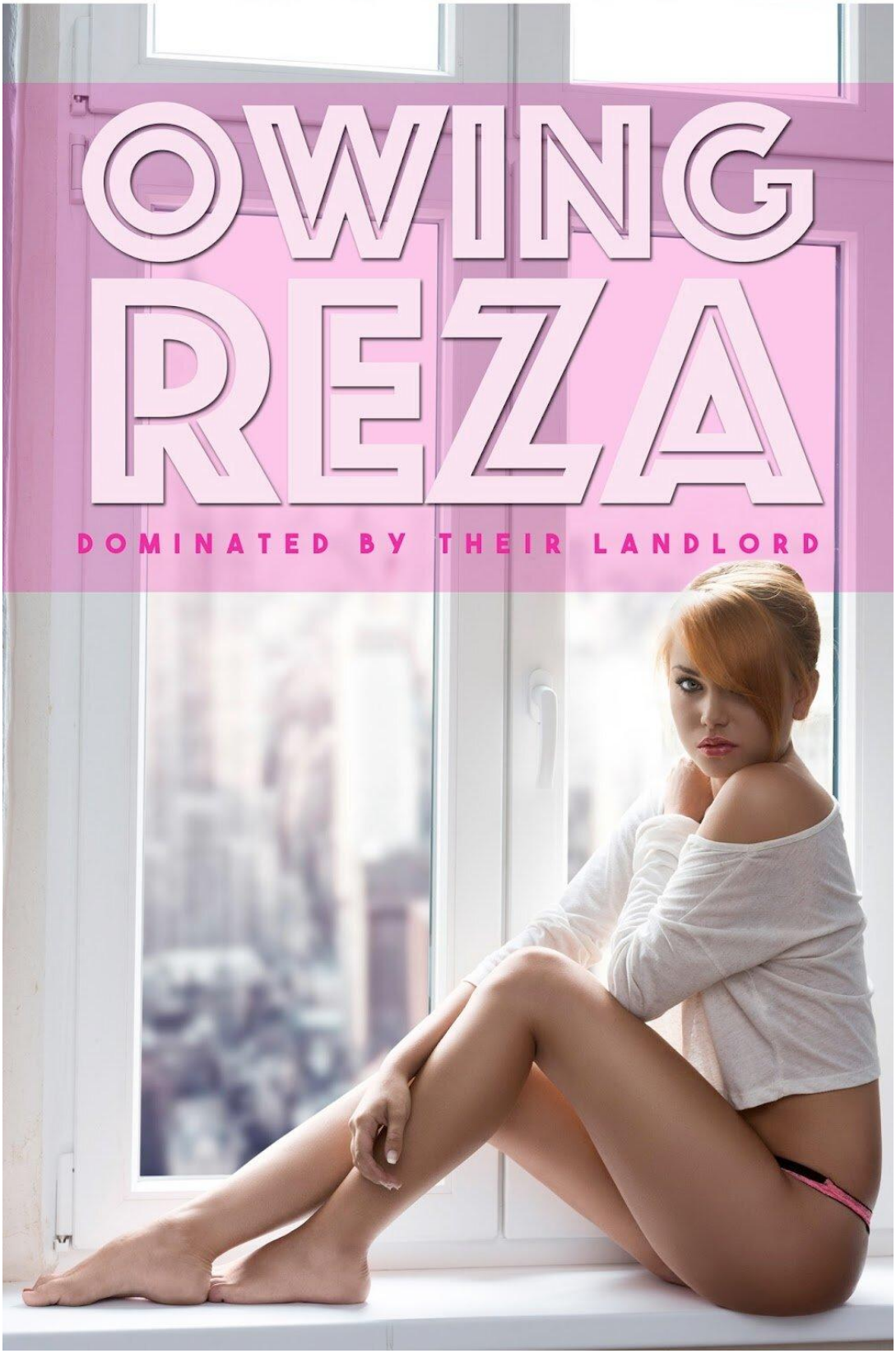
KT MORRISON

# OWING REZA

DOMINATED BY THEIR LANDLORD



# Owing Reza:
# Dominated By Their Landlord

Book 1

KT Morrison

# Chapter 1

Jonny and Charlie, awake on the morning of the first of the month

"Good morning," he said, softly and sweetly, as her eyes fluttered open. He'd been waiting for her to wake.

She smiled, and he cupped his hand to her neck and brushed his thumb along the angle of her jaw. There was happiness there, a sparkle in her emerald eyes, a curl to the corners of her pouting mouth and he cherished it, ached for the moment to last. The smile faltered, the sparkle fizzled; she was fully awake now, and she remembered it was the first of the month.

They lay on the double-size pullout couch in the center of the living room of their eight-hundred-square-foot studio apartment. The sun streamed in from the windows at the foot of the bed, the ceiling higher in the sunken living room than the raised kitchen behind the couch they slept on. They both fell in love with the apartment the moment they saw it two years ago. The rent wasn't cheap but Jonny was making money back then, lots of it, and, God, it was worth it to see the happiness that it put on his Charlie's face.

And that face. The one whose eyes he stared into lovingly right now as his thumb caressed her skin. How could he have not fallen in love with his shy and demure, yet stunningly beautiful wife?

She was a quiet wallflower taking library studies, and he was a flat-broke game designer with unending passion that kept him up all night, and often, when things were at the worst, he would work in the university library for the free wi-fi. And that was where he met Charlie. His ginger-haired, freckle-faced supermodel.

Her self-esteem needed a polishing, but had she recognized her own beauty, would he have ever been good enough for her? Would she have even given him the time of day? She was long, and thin, and leggy, with creamy apricot-speckled skin. Big emerald eyes and a long and crazy mane of hair that she kept tied back and put in a bun. She dressed demurely, like she worked at the Post Office sixty years ago. When he learned she'd been raised in a religious household, it didn't surprise him.

Her entire family lived on a Kansas homestead; Mom and pop and seven siblings, a grandma and grandpa, and a grandma on the other side. Even a great-grandmother for a short while. When she showed him family pictures, Jonny imagined his sweet Charlie took after her maternal grandmother, including her style of dress.

All the better for Jonny, though, because he had a careful eye. He watched that pretty alabaster doll as she read her books on the other side of the Thompson Memorial

Library. Watched her long limbs and her pensive face. His favorite was to see her graceful finger pause over a page in anticipation as she neared the bottom, then perform this elegant and delicate maneuver to flip to the next page. Charlie was always eager to see what was on the next page. Jonny's careful eye registered all that Charlie seemed to want to hide. She was a goddess, and if she dressed like most of the other female students on campus, she would have had all the boys eating out of her hand. But he had Charlie all to himself.

Charlie licked her lips, said, "Morning, Jonny."

He said, "What do you want for breakfast? We could go down to Ruth's Diner. They have the Sunday Morning Special."

Her smile waned, and she said, "We have to stay here."

Jonny inhaled, chewed his lip. He said, "He usually comes at night."

Charlie tucked her hands under her face, said, "He can come at any time."

"I know."

"Hey," she said abruptly, forcing her face into a manufactured, bright expression. "I can make us some pancakes."

"Do we have eggs?"

She frowned, a smile returning. "For pancakes? You don't need eggs for pancakes, silly," she said and kissed his nose.

His arms went around her waist and he pulled her tightly to him and she giggled and squirmed like he was molesting her. He kissed her neck and her collar and her hands went through his hair. "You sure?" he said. "I swear you need eggs for pancakes."

"Nope, buster," she laughed as he blew a raspberry on her neck under her sweet smelling hair.

He held her tight and closed his eyes; wished that things were better, wished that things were like they were when he was on top of the world. He'd get there again. He'd get there soon. They'd just have to ride this turbulence out; grip their arm rests and clamp their jaws shut. There would be blue skies again. "We have any syrup?"

"Shoot, no," she said, her lips pursing and her brow furrowing.

"We don't?"

Her face opened bright again, and she said, "We have butter and honey."

“Mm, perfect,” he said, and he ran a finger along the low V-neck of the soft cotton T-shirt she slept in. He tugged the V low and exposed her bare nipple; the circumference a pale brown until it hued to the same shade as her skin, the tips a darker brown, blushing rosy where the flesh puckered to a concave duct, shallow in the centre. Someday, when things were better, she would feed their babies. For now, he locked his own lips over top, and her soft flesh turned hard and rubbery against his tongue.

He suckled her for a while and her nails scratched his scalp. When he pulled away, he said, “Maybe we should bring that honey down here. I’d rather eat it off you, anyway.”

She giggled and threw her head back, then returned her gaze to his and he watched as it slowly sank from frivolous to serious and she said, “Jonny, it’s the first.”

“I know it is,” he said.

“You can’t have me on the first.”

“I know, Charlie,” he said.

They stared into each other’s eyes for a long while, the moment drawn out in tension and sadness at the inexorable facts of their situation.

She inhaled deeply and his cheek rode on the swell, resting in the warm space between her breasts. “Okay, Jonny-boy,” she sighed. “Get off me… Charlie’s going to make her hubby the biggest batch of pancakes he’s ever seen. I won’t even be able to see him over the top.”

“I love you, Charlie,” he said.

“I love you, Jonny,” she said, and her lips pressed softly on his forehead, right at the peak of his hairline.

She slipped out from under him, and he lay on their bed and watched her. Charlie wore just her old T-shirt that came down to the tops of her thighs, under that she wore a pair of cotton panties. As she rose, stepped out of bed, her T-shirt hung up on her waist and Jonny saw a full unhindered view of her perfect bottom, scored by the pale pink triangle. Charlie felt the coldness there and, still shy and demure, she blurted, “Ope,” and pulled the T-shirt down to cover herself.

She stretched at the side of the bed, thrusting her little fists to the ceiling above, and then wiggling left and right, extending her trembling legs out behind her, first the left, then the right. She groaned and exhaled, then when she was done, she staggered away and put a hand out to steady herself, giggled, turned to Jonny and smiled, said, “Hoo, dizzy.”

He smiled for her, watched her with glowing ardor.

A fist pounded on their front door and both the smiles were wiped clean away from their faces.

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Reza and his friend Demetrius pay Charlie a morning visit. Uncensored images available on my Patreon.

Jonny stayed in bed while a sick dread wormed its way through his stomach, weakening his arms, making his palms sweat. Charlie's bare feet made sticky sounds as she padded across the heavily lacquered parquet floor and up the one step to the open-concept kitchen behind the bed. Two more steps and then came the sound of brass latches unclasped, the knob unlocked, and the door opening. He couldn't look. Knew who it must be, but didn't want to see. It was confirmed when he heard his deep voice.

"There's my sweet angel."

Charlie's quiet voice replied, "Hi."

The deep voice, as if to someone else, said, "What I tell you?"

A new voice from the hall, even deeper, one he didn't know, but instantly recognized as African-American, said, "You ain't lying, man. Your girl hot as shit."

Now Jonny turned in the bed and looked up through the kitchen pass to see the door. The counter blocked the view, but he saw the three people from the waist up. His Charlie, in the apartment, one hand on the door. And in the hall, smiling meanly with narrowed eyes, were two men. Their landlord's son, Reza Khan, and another gentleman, equally intimidating, with black skin and an afro knobbed in tufts like a coral reef.

Reza said, "Invite us in, Charlie."

She said, "Come on in," stepping back so they could enter, facing them, but not looking at their faces, her gaze lowered to their chests. They passed her by, and she quietly shut the door behind them and locked it again. Reza stepped down into the living area and the black man followed, his gaze going up and down and all around, checking out the apartment and their things in it. He said, "Your dad own this whole building?"

Reza said, "Yeah, and a couple more like it."

"Shit man, he do all right, don't he?"

"Not too bad for an immigrant," Reza agreed, as he crossed the room in his expensive shoes, kicked a crumpled pair of Jonny's pants to the corner, then sat down heavily in a red armchair he and Charlie bought at Ikea when things were better. Reza kicked his legs out straight and crossed them, wove his fingers together over his middle and looked to the bed. "Morning, Jonny."

"Hi Reza," he said.

"Hey," he said, nodding, then threw a thumb to his friend, said, "This is Demetrius. He trains with me at the gym… one of my fighters. Welterweight. Jiu-jitsu, boxing, wrestling… Demetrius has a knockout uppercut. He'll be pro in eight months, he's that good."

Charlie stood in the kitchen still, her arms folded across, hiding herself, her toes curled over the top edge of the single step down to their living space.

"Hey man," Demetrius said to Jonny, "how you doing?" He sat himself in an identical chair next to Reza.

"I'm okay," he said.

Reza said, "Me and Demetrius been up all night, down at Kwest." He drew his feet closer now, sat up straight, then leaned forward. "You know Kwest?"

Jonny shook his head. Reza eyed Charlie, and she shook her head as well.

Reza wore Louis Vuitton sneaker boots with loose black laces and he leaned and pulled one off, let it drop to the floor in front of him. "Club on Jameson Street. Just opened. Dude I know DJ-ed last night. This crazy kid from Barcelona. Shit, we had a good time, eh, Demetrius?"

"Word, man."

"Spanish kid has some hook-ups." They slapped hands and smiled knowingly, rumbling deep laughter at some hidden joke.

Reza removed his other boot, held it for a moment, looked at Charlie, then let it drop to the floor.

"Charlie, girl, come on over, don't be shy." He sat back in the chair and pat his thigh for her.

Charlie crossed the room with her arms still folded, and Demetrius watched her long bare legs the whole time.

"Sit, sit, come on," he urged, cupping his hand and wagging his fingers to her.

Charlie came between his legs, then sat on his muscular thigh, her legs kept pressed together, her arms still folded. Reza put an arm around her waist and smiled at her, though she wouldn't look in his eyes.

"You still my girl?"

Charlie nodded, her jaw clenched tightly, her lips pouting.

"And this dude's her husband?" Demetrius said.

Reza didn't take his eyes off Charlie. He said, "Jonny's her husband, but I'm her Daddy. Isn't that right, Charlie?"

She nodded again.

"That's right. I take care of Charlie because Jonny can't. He watches her for me until I need her."

"Why can't he take care of her?" Demetrius asked.

"Jonny's out of work."

Charlie said, "He'll find something. Jonny's amazing."

"What he do?"

Reza said, "Video Game Designer? That right, Jonny?"

"Yeah," he said.

"Hey, cool, man," Demetrius said, leaning forward. "Shit, you ever play that Gods of War?"

"Yeah," Jonny said.

"Dude, the graphics — "

"I know."

Reza said, "You need me this month, Charlie? You need your Daddy?"

Charlie looked to Jonny, her eyes sad and watery, and she nodded again.

"There's my girl," Reza said. "Don't be sad, honey. It's going to be okay. Daddy will take care of you. How much you need?"

She shrugged, her mouth turned to a trembling bow.

Reza took her hand and kissed it, said, “Daddy will take care of you, okay?”

She nodded.

“Okay?” he said again and cocked his head to make her look in his eyes.

“Okay,” she agreed, and now the down-turned mouth formed a weak little Charlie smile.

“Yeah, don’t you worry. Daddy won’t let you live on the streets.”

He sat back and his eyes traveled her body, Charlie’s eyes turning away, feeling self-conscious being looked at. Reza was older than them, probably somewhere in his mid-thirties. He was powerfully built, but not bulky or terribly tall. There was a toxic masculinity that exuded from him. He smelled of musk dabbed with cologne, and he had a thick, dense beard. His hands were large and muscular.

“Hey, Charlie?” Reza said, his voice sounding fun.

“What?”

“I brought you something.”

“What?”

Reza smiled. His hands came together at his jeans and unbuttoned them, then undid his zipper, the whole while watching Charlie’s expression. His hands went to the arms, clutched the ends like a king on his throne, and he said, “Put your hand in there and see.”

# Chapter 2

Charlie ran her hand through her thick, crazy head of hair, scratched her scalp, like she was buying time. But they all knew she would do this.

"Come on," Reza reminded her, flexing his thigh and making her shake.

She put her hand under his shirt, rotated it, ran it under the waistband of his jeans. She inched it deeper and her hand bulged out the front of his denim as it searched down the left side of his pants. It found his cock and the lump of her hand began to flex and jerk as she played with it.

"Take it out," Reza said.

She pulled her hand from the fly, formed in a loose fist around Reza's cock. She lay it down on his pant leg and smoothed her hand along the side. It wasn't hard yet, but it was filling with blood. It struck from the fly, lay heavily on the denim, huge and brown and hairy and uncircumcised. Her fingers played over it, tracing the rising veins and tickling the end, poking a fingertip under his foreskin and stretching it out.

"Kiss me," he said, jutting his bearded jaw towards her. Charlie picked his cock up, squishing it in her grip, and bent to kiss him. Their lips came together and softly smacked. The bold, roaring lion tattoo that scrawled over the left side of Reza's neck charged out from behind the collar of his leather jacket. Charlie sat upright again, watched Reza grow large in her hand. She tugged and stroked and his cock swung around lazily, slowly stiffened, the plump, flared glans rolled back from its foreskin and swelling brightly.

Demetrius couldn't see what was happening but knew, and watched Charlie's slender back while she jerked off his friend. He seemed interested, then leaned forward and regarded Jonny, still sitting up in the pullout bed with the sheets drawn over his legs and around his waist.

"Hey man, so who you ever work for?"

Jonny said, "Game companies?"

"Yeah, you ever work on something I mighta played?"

"Probably not."

"What you ever work on?"

Reza said, “Nothing. Jonny’s a dreamer.” His eyes were lowered, admiring Charlie’s pale perfect hand struggle around his dark, gnarly manhood.

“He designs his own games,” Charlie interjected, also watching the ugly thing in her hand.

“Well, shit man, fuck, I’m a tell people I’m an astronaut, just no one sent me into space yet, you know what I’m saying?” Demetrius said in his booming, deep voice, broken with exuberant laughter. Reza threw his head back and laughed heartily, so hard Jonny could see the backside of his white teeth. Charlie laughed too, her body shaking with a closed-mouth chuckle, her lips smirking high on one side, her eyes lowered to her hand as it continued to work hardness into Reza’s huge cock.

“Okay, Okay,” Reza said, his laugh trailing off. “Come on, Charlie, get over on that bed.” His hand cupped her buttock where it squashed over his thigh, and he helped her to stand. She took a step away and stopped, her hands clasped together, fingers woven through each other, clutching between her thighs.

Reza stood and pulled his arms out of his jacket. “On the bed, Charlie. I want you to take your things off.”

She said, “With him here?” tilting her head in Demetrius’s direction.

“Who… Demetrius…? Yeah. I want you to show him what you’ve got.”

She turned and looked at Jonny over the curve of her shoulder. A worry tinged her brow, but it wasn’t entirely that she didn’t want to undress in front of them, but that Jonny would make things difficult and cause problems. But he didn’t want to do that. He’d put up a fuss over the last few months, but without Reza, they would be on the street or, even worse, crawling back to Kansas to her folks. His parents were out of the question because he had cut them out of his life six years ago when he finished high school.

He looked at Charlie blankly and their eyes held the gaze a long time, her waiting for some sign from him. When none came, she slowly returned to face Demetrius and Reza. “Okay,” she said. Her hands crossed over to either side and grabbed the hem of her tank top and slowly scrolled it up her long thin body, her breasts rising, then bouncing once when the shirt came up and she revealed them to the two men. She tossed the shirt behind her onto the bed and Jonny retrieved it, brought it to his lap.

“Beautiful, isn’t she?” Reza said to Demetrius without looking. Both men’s eyes were locked on her bare breasts and in response, her light brown nipples condensed in front of them and rose out from her body.

Charlie's mouth twisted around as she was very aware and embarrassed by her body's reaction. She put her hands on her hips and swept around behind, dropping onto the curve of her tight rump. The fingers slipped under the panties, along her ass cheeks, her wrists bending and pushing the panties down. Her bare ass was revealed an inch at a time to Jonny. Then the panties slipped down her hips, and she wagged back and forth as she got them to her knees, and let them drop to the floor. She stepped out of them.

The two men eyed her up and down lustily, and she put hands between her legs again to cover herself.

Reza said, "Move those hands, Charlie."

She did, then didn't know where to put them, so she clasped them behind her back, thrusting her breasts out.

Reza took off his leather jacket, said, "That's my Charlie. Way too much woman for Jonny, ain't she?"

"What she doing with him?" Demetrius laughed.

"She believes in him," Reza said, pulling his own shirt up over his head and revealing his bare body.

Charlie said, "I do. I believe in him." She turned and regarded Jonny, smiled weakly, and he smiled back.

When she turned to face Reza again, he had one leg out of his pants, knee bent, cock swinging and bouncing, half-hard. Charlie's eyes lowered to watch it dance as Reza got completely naked.

Reza owned a Mixed Martial Arts training gym, and he hung out there all the time. He even fought, though he still had only amateur status. It gave him a thickly muscled body. Black hair matted his chest, then worked in an angled pattern down the center of his torso, furring his well-defined abs, then becoming a black tangle from which his massive cock sprung, two big balls dangled underneath it. On the side of his body, hard to see from the angle where Jonny sat on the bed, but known to him from seeing him naked before, was a large tattoo of Cyrus the Great, in full medieval gear, starting at his hip and extending over the left side of his chest.

Reza stepped toward Charlie and she looked up to his black-rimmed eyes and he kissed her chin, her neck, and she tilted her head for him so he could do it.

"On the bed, Charlie," he reminded her.

When she turned, Jonny's eyes met hers, and she quickly looked away. She crawled onto the bed, eyes darting up to meet his and then away again, turned and sat with her feet on the floor. Reza came to her knees and nudged them to spread, walked inside her open thighs, his cock swinging in her face. Charlie took it up in a hand and stroked it.

"Put it in your mouth, Charlie."

Eyes lowered to it, head craning back to focus because it was so close, her fingertips squashed his glans and eased his foreskin back, then put it in her mouth. Reza eased himself deeper, his hand gathering up her long wild hair and running his fingers through it.

Her mouth made wet suction noises as he fucked it. Her head bobbed and lolled, and Reza tilted his head so he could watch. He turned behind him then, nodded and pursed his lips to Demetrius and pointed to the bed with his chin. Demetrius lifted himself out of the chair and walked to the bed, unzipping his fly as he went.

"Hey, wait," Jonny said. "Wait…"

Reza took Charlie's face in his hands and he pulled his cock from her mouth and it fell, heavily swinging between his legs. He said, "Hey, Charlie?… I told Demetrius you would suck his cock. You're not going to make me a liar, are you, embarrass me?"

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Charlie turned to Jonny, the back of her hand swiping below her lower lip where it glistened with spittle. The lip pouted and bunched, dragged across her finger as she wiped herself dry. Their eyes held again and she lowered them quickly, cocked her head, pointing an ear toward him as if listening for an objection, but one never came.

Demetrius sat himself on the bed, his expression happy and eager, and he scooted higher so his ass was on her pillow. He rested his back on the headboard, sitting right next to Jonny, close enough to touch. A hand went into his fly and he pulled his cock out and let it go. It hung out of the opening, jet black and almost perfectly unmarred and smooth but for one vein that ran down the center of the topside. It was long and flaccid, hanging out, draping over the V of his open zipper, and the mahogany-colored glans touched the bedding.

One last quick and shy glance from Charlie, then she turned and crawled up the bed, her little breasts hanging down, nipples stretched out.

"That's it," Reza said, standing next to the bed, stroking himself. "That's my Charlie. Show him how good you are."

Charlie lifted Demetrius's cock off the bed, let it drape along her palm, the tip touching her forearm just past her wrist. He was already growing hard. Charlie admired it, gripped it, and loosely stroked it before lowering her mouth. The glans sucked past her lips, the darkness of his cock striking against her white skin. Her cheeks went hollow as she sucked his soft length further into her mouth. Tongue playing around the glans held inside, her other hand went up and down the shaft, from his open fly to her lips. Demetrius grew hard while she worked. His cock stiffened and swelled in her hand, grew longer and thicker. When it was rigid enough to stand upright on its own, she held it and worked her tongue out of her mouth, ran the pointed tip all over the glans, slipping along the coronal ridge, flicking higher to the very point, tracing the two humps that rose around his urethra.

"She's good?" Reza asked Demetrius, looking at him over her back.

Demetrius chuckled and moaned, said, "You ain't lying, mm… girl can suck."

"I taught her," Reza said. "Charlie didn't know what to do when we started."

Charlie's hair tumbled from her shoulder and covered her face. Jonny watched her head bob up and down, her two hands hidden up under the mane of hair.

Reza sat himself behind her, ran a hand over the curve of her ass. Charlie was on her knees, her ass in the air, her elbows planted in the bed between Demetrius's open legs.

Reza put both hands on her, one on each cheek, smoothing and coddling, spreading her wider, exposing and stretching out her anus and labia, eyes lowered, intent on the space between her legs.

Reza winked at Jonny, got his attention, made sure he was watching, then ran his tongue up between Charlie's legs, over her vagina and up across her anus to the flat of her crack where it emerged at the small of her back. She made a muffled squealing sound around Demetrius's cock and her feet arched and her toes curled.

"My Charlie's one sexy little bitch," Reza said to Jonny, then put his tongue back, circling her anus, going around in circles, getting closer and closer to the wrinkled pinpoint aperture. Charlie's legs trembled, and she breathed heavily and wetly around the cock in her mouth. When his tongue penetrated her, slipping its way past her tight seal and inside her body, she snorted and lifted off Demetrius, but her hands stroked her spit furiously up and down his wet, shining cock. Reza's middle finger went up and down her ruffled lips, and it wasn't long before she'd produced her slickness and his finger made wet noises through her flesh, then slipped right inside her.

"Oh, mmm," she gasped and moaned, put her mouth over Demetrius again, her head bobbing up and down.

Reza laughed, got on the bed himself now, on his knees, walked between her feet and lined his hips up to meet her rump. He lifted his heavy cock, dropped it over her rump, made a slight slap and sent a tremor through her soft flesh. Ran it up and down her parted cheeks, drew it back, let it fall so the bare and unprotected tip rested in her glistening folds. He eased himself into her and she made pained but encouraging sounds around Demetrius again. Those toes of hers curled even tighter. His size made a wet belching sound blurt from her tightness, and it made Reza groan. "You're so tight, Charlie," he said under his breath with excited admiration.

Reza got his huge cock halfway inside her before he turned to Jonny and said, "I'm going to come inside her. This a good time of the month?"

Jonny nodded. He wasn't a hundred percent sure of her cycle, but they had been planning on having a baby and knew she wasn't ovulating right now.

"Is it close?" Reza said, easing in and out of her a fraction of an inch, teasing her.

Jonny shook his head.

"Tell me it's close. I like it when it's risky."

Jonny's stomach flipped. He wouldn't tell him that.

Reza shrugged, eased deeper, said, "Your wife is one bad girl, isn't she? Charlie, move your hair so Jonny can see you suck that cock. He's just looking at your hair right now, girl."

Her head continued to bob while Demetrius leaned back on the headboard. He had two hands on her head, guiding her up and down. Charlie reached up and ran her hair back, swept it over her shoulder, and now Jonny's view was unobstructed again. His big, black cock stretched her precious mouth wide. She slipped up and down his long shaft, getting deep but still leaving half his cock dry and untouched except for where she'd gripped it. Her eyes were closed and peaceful, her lips stretched to a thin wet ring around him, her chin forced down to her neck, running thin folds in her delicate skin.

Demetrius began to hump, his ass flexing and driving his cock straight up to his wife's descending mouth.

"Shit, she going to make me come. Bitch going to make me come."

"Come in her mouth," Reza said, slowly reaming her, turning her pussy inside out with his girth. Charlie snorted through her nose and her skin began to glisten with sweat. "She likes it when you come in her mouth."

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Charlie gripped Demetrius's big cock with both hands while he fucked her mouth hard, getting ready to come. She squeezed a little, and stroked, but she was trying to keep him from getting so deep his come went down her throat. His thrusts pumped faster and faster, and his legs started to shake. He speared Charlie with his cock and she made high grunts and groans, her face turning red and her eyes squeezing tight. Then he roared out loud like an animal and thrusted deep, his hands clutching the sides of her head. He thrust and held, released, thrust again, roaring each time.

Charlie trembled, her face turning redder, her breath snorted and scored through her nose. A bubble swelled and popped from a nostril, and semen slipped past the tight seal of her lips and down her chin.

"Aw fuck, aw fuck, aw fuck," Demetrius chanted, and stroked her head as his orgasm abated. Charlie let her lips slip up and off his glans and she turned her head closer to Jonny and spewed mouthfuls of semen on to the bedding. She belched wetly, then began coughing and gagging, spitting more wet onto their bed as she retched.

"That's a good girl," Demetrius crooned, his eyes narrow and lazy as he pet and stroked her hair. She laid his cock up onto his belly and settled her cheek on him. Semen spilled from her lips and from the end of Demetrius's cock still. Under his lifted shirt, the slow thrusting from behind slipped her face up and down Demetrius's bare black belly made wet with his sexual product. As Reza picked up the pace, Charlie's mouth slowly dropped and hung open.

Reza fucked her, making snarling faces of enjoyment, and Demetrius rubbed her shoulders. Charlie grunted and pecked, bit her lip, and kept her eyes closed the whole time. Jonny watched plaintively, his eyes cast down to his beautiful wife in an agonal gaze.

Demetrius studied him. Studied this man who let two men fuck his woman; one in her mouth, one from behind. After a while he said, "How come you got money trouble?"

Reza peeled Charlie's ass wider, watching her pussy wrap his thick cock, let a long string of spit extend from his mouth, stretch thin then drop around where he was connected to Jonny's wife. He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, said, "Kid got sued." Then he inched himself deeper into Charlie and she made pained sounds.

Jonny inhaled and watched the bedspread.

Demetrius said to Jonny, "Shit, man. Sued? What you do?"

Reza said, "Lost his investor's money."

Demetrius stroked Charlie's hair and ran a lock away from her face. Her features scrunched as she was forced to accommodate their landlord's huge size. He said, "Man,

I'm on your side. Nothing in life is guaranteed. They take a risk they invest with some start-up. What you do? A game?"

Jonny nodded.

Reza said, "Wasn't just he lost their money. Jonny was a liar, right, Jonny?" He ran his hand, stretched wide open, up the center of Charlie's bare back, rippling her flesh as he went.

Jonny murmured, "Whatever."

"Yeah, Jonny committed fraud. They gave him a choice. Criminal court or settle in civil court."

Demetrius laughed silently, said, "Yo man, you don't fuck with no white dude's money. You crazy? Shit man, so how much you owe?"

"Eighty-three thousand, five-hundred dollars."

"Was ninety," Reza added, and Jonny nodded. "And the investors were Chinese."

"Ay, dude fucked my uncle for five-grand and he put a tire iron in the back of his skull. So you get off easy."

"He gets off easy, but one day Charlie tells me they can't make rent. I tell them they can leave, I don't care. They both cry. Oh, we can't go back to her parents. We try payment plans, try all sorts of things, but by then it was too late. They were in the hole and Jonny here never let his girl know how bad it was."

"Man, secrets will ruin a relationship, player," Demetrius said.

Nodding his chin over the headboard to the pass-through that went to the kitchen, Reza said, "We sit down over a coffee right up there in his kitchen, and guess what?"

"What?"

"Charlie sucked my cock while Jonny watched."

"Shee-it," Demetrius exhaled.

"Yeah, the three of us come to an agreement and you know…? I'm happy for Charlie. Cause she's so sweet, so pretty, I hate to think of her not getting taken care of. She deserves a man who can provide for her. Look at her face, her body — girl like that shouldn't have these kind of problems. She was my girl she'd just go shopping every day, get her nails and hair done… instead of filing dirty old books down at the library. Girl like Charlie deserves a man. A man how a man should be. So in the end, this is

good for her, you know? She gets something out of it. Like, Jonny, maybe you can't tell from sitting there and watching, but your girl is dripping wet. And you know what else…? I feel her gripping me, feel her pussy getting off on this dick. Yeah, there," he said, eyes rolling up to the ceiling and smiling. "Shit, right there, Jonny, her little pussy is squirming on my cock. She fucking loves it, man."

Reza withdrew his cock again, let the head be held by her tight ring, dropped a line of spit and then massaged it in with his fingertips. Cocking his head to the side so he could watch Charlie's expression, he penetrated her further. Going deeper and deeper, smiling, watching as Charlie's brow grew troubled, her sweet eyes closed tighter, her pouting and pretty mouth turned down and trembled. She breathed heavily through her nose and made soft whimpering sounds in her throat. Reza slipped deeper still, his body getting closer to her, then he put his chest over her back, his hands down on either side of her, on the insides of Demetrius's knees. He whispered loud enough for Jonny to hear, "Charlie likes it, don't she?"

Charlie swallowed her lips, her neck gulping, and she nodded slightly.

"Yeah, she likes this big dick. Didn't know a dick could feel so good, isn't that right?"

She nodded again.

"Now, tell me, Charlie. Tell me you like this big dick."

"I like… ah, like… mmm… this big dick."

"Now, tell me you love it," he said, the muscles of his hips and thighs bulging and flexing as he started to stir that big thing he'd put up inside her.

"Ah," she gasped, "Mm, I l-love it."

"Yeah," Reza growled, hips pumping in and out now, a sticky wet sound popping between them. "Tell Daddy you need his big cock."

She hid her face from Jonny, turned the other direction, her cheek slipping in Demetrius's semen splattered all over his belly. "I need it, Daddy. I need your big cock," she cried to the other side of the room.

# Chapter 3

Charlie bit her upper arm as Reza fucked her from behind.

“She do, she do, man. Look at her take that,” Demetrius said, head cocked back to watch Charlie’s face as she was fucked. He ran her hair back, the motion of Reza’s pounding kept shaking her hair off her shoulder and covering her face. Demetrius’s long black thumb caressed her cheek as she was rocked by their landlord’s thrusting. Her eyes were closed, her brow low and troubled. She alternated baring her teeth, with sucking her lips into her mouth. Soft grunting and whimpering emanated from somewhere inside her neck. The freckled skin of her back took on a wet sheen. The couch/bed squeaked and groaned as Reza’s reaming came quicker and more urgent. He glistened as well, his muscles bulged and flexed, beads of sweat balled up in the long black hair on his chest and stomach, and dropped off his nose, splashing on the small of Charlie’s back.

Reza growled, “This skinny white girl loves her big, Persian Daddy cock, don’t she?”

“Yeah, ah… oh…”

“Jonny doesn’t fuck you like this, does he?”

“No, ah… ah…” Charlie’s cheek made squishing bubble sounds in Demetrius’s semen as Reza fucked her harder and harder.

“My Charlie … was a virgin before Jonny… She only ever been fucked by her husband… mm… Her little pussy is the tightest one around…”

“Ah,” Charlie squeaked and gasped, her face twisting in discomfort.

“She told me Jonny has a little one. First time I fucked her she had to take the next day off work. That right, Charlie?”

“Oh, ah… yes-ss…”

“She works at the library… couldn’t reach the books on the top shelf, I stretched her out so wide.”

“Mm-hmm…”

“She takes it good now. She likes it…”

Charlie's hands turned to claws as she railed. Her nails ran lines into Demetrius's hard muscled belly and he laughed and jumped and grabbed her wrists so she couldn't claw him. "Easy, easy, girl, it's okay…"

"Ah, oh," she wailed and cried, her eyes squinted tight, her teeth bared and gnashing, her head whipping left and right.

Demetrius's big hands closed around her slender wrists and he soothed her, saying, "You get it, girl, go on and get it, you nut for us, show us…"

"Ah, mm, no," she cried, her mouth scrunching up like she was a little kid being offered a spoonful of broccoli.

"That's it, girl," Demetrius whispered.

Jonny's mouth had gone dry. This was the part that he hated. Happened every time too. His heart pounded in his chest, beating right up against his ribs.

She moaned long and low and mournful, her brows up in the middle, her mouth turned down in the corners, then it hit her and she gasped and shouted a long vowel sound.

"Fuckin yes, you fuck," Reza grunted behind her, pounding now like he wanted to hurt her. She was taking everything he could give her. Every inch slipped in and out of Jonny's wife, her salmon pink insides rolling up and down their landlord's massive cock as he gored her.

"Aw, no, ah," she shouted, her chin pointing up and digging into Demetrius's stomach. "Ah, ah, ah," she chanted with each thrust.

Reza suddenly grabbed a handful of her apricot mane and snapped her head back, baring her long, lean throat with its bulging cables and veins. She screamed a joyous affirmation, and Demetrius ran his black hands over her pale shoulders.

Reza pounded triple time now, the wet sounds of their bodies slapping together sounding like applause.

"Ah, fuck… mm, take it," Reza growled, and he stabbed and stabbed. Shoving himself deep inside and holding it, releasing then driving deep again. With each thrust into her, his large, hanging balls rose high, one more than the other. Reza was coming inside Charlie.

He roared and bucked, Charlie gasped and cried, made shouts of ecstasy — swallowing them right after with regret. Semen slipped in a long line from where they were joined and it spun in a long, circling tendril until it touched the inside of Charlie's thigh and stuck there.

The growling and groaning continued, and Reza's hands went all over Charlie's ass and up and down her haunches. He slapped her thigh, made a bright white sound and got her flesh to shake. Then he lay his body on top of her, crushed her into Demetrius's lap and settled his weight on her back as she flattened between them.

"Ha, oh-hoh," Reza moaned with satisfaction. "Fuck, she is one tight lay, Jonny." He eased his hips to the side so Jonny could see his cock still buried in her. She lay flat, but her rump was poised up and skewered by their landlord.

Reza eyed Jonny, his hand falling between his legs. He held his own balls and gently kneaded them, watching Jonny's reaction. Then the hand gripped the length of shining shaft not inside his wife and stroked it from base up into her. Like he was emptying his contents inside her. Then he slipped his cock out, inch by inch, stroking it upward until the rim of his corona parted her pink labia, rippled underneath them and his cock was free, a spewing line of thick white semen following it out.

"Mm, look at that," Reza said. "Eh, Jonny? One of these days, soon, she's gonna pop out a little Iraqi lion, raise one of Reza's proud, well-hung boys." He ran his fingers on either side of her vulva, pressed it tight, made her labia close. He breathed heavily for a few long moments as he admired the woman part of Charlie, then suddenly, lightly, slapped her ass and watched her tight buns jiggle.

"All right," he said, "I got things to do today. Mainly sleep… but I want to get started, not fuck around with you two all day. Jonny, grab my jeans, okay?" he said, and he lay next to Charlie's legs, stretching himself out.

The pants had been pulled off by the red Ikea chair. He reluctantly got out of bed, covering himself. He wore just a T-shirt and a pair of white briefs. He hunched and made his way across the room to where Reza's pants lay on the floor. They caught him. Demetrius noticed it first and his deep voice said, "Damn, that dude likes the way you fuck his girl."

Reza laughed loud, tossing his head back, seeing the bulge in the front of Jonny's underwear. Jonny blushed. Not with embarrassment, but with anger. He snatched the pants from the floor and balled them between his legs, walked back to the bed. Reza whisked them away, and Jonny covered his erection with two cupped hands.

Reza said, "Jonny, don't worry, man. Charlie already told me you had a small dick. We already know."

Demetrius laughed, said, "Hey, man, whose idea was it first?"

"What idea?" Jonny said through pursed lips.

"Who thought of fucking your landlord first?"

Jonny eyed Demetrius, said, “Fuck off.”

Demetrius laughed, threw his hands up in mock surrender, said, “Hey player, just a question. I saw that little dick through your shorts. I was your girl I might take any chance I could to get some real dick is all.”

Reza laughed and lay the back of his head on Charlie’s ass.

Charlie stirred, her head coming off Demetrius’s lap and her eyes peeked around to watch Jonny as he sat back on the bed.

Reza took his wallet from the pocket of his pants and opened it while he lay next to Charlie. He leafed through a thick stack of bills. He said, “Charlie, you’re a good girl, baby. You are so good. God, it pains me to see you like this. Makes me feel better that I can help you… that we came to this agreement. I’d hate to see you suffer.” He pulled a wad of bills and folded them, held them between two fingers and poised them as if waiting for someone to take them. Then he paused, lowered the money said, “Hey, Jonny? Can you grab her shirt for me?”

“Why?”

“Just do it,” he said.

“Why?” he asked again.

Charlie said, “Jonny… just, please take the shirt…”

Charlie’s V-neck shirt lay balled between him and his wife and he took it, clutched it to him.

Reza said, “Can you wipe my dick off for me?”

He said, “No.”

Reza said, “Jonny. Come on…”

Demetrius laughed, and Jonny shook his head no.

Charlie said, “Jonny, please don’t. Just do it. Get him out of here and we can get back to our day.”

He rolled his eyes, exhaled heavily, like a bull. Reza’s cock lay up on his belly, huge and wet and shining, but beginning to deflate, the foreskin rolling up over the glans already.

Jonny leaned over Charlie’s legs and dropped the towel over their landlord’s grotesque monstrosity. Then, reluctantly, he put his hands on it, felt its size in his grip. He ran the

towel up and down the shaft, down between his legs, drying his balls, under them, back up.

He said, "There…?"

Reza looked down at his penis, said, "Thanks, Jonny. That was mostly Charlie on there. Her little pussy loves my cock, man."

"I know," he said, let Reza see him roll his eyes and shake his head.

"Jonny? Hey, look, Charlie is a sweet fuck and all, but you know I have no shortage of girls. You want to go back to Kansas and explain to her folks what a fucking failure you are?"

He looked away and shook his head again.

"I didn't think so. Let's try and keep this fun and stop ruining it for your wife, understand?"

"Yes," he said.

"Louder."

"Yes, I know," he said louder, using all his neck muscles to ease the natural vitriol out of his voice.

"Okay, baby," Reza said now, rolling his head on Charlie's ass and looking up toward her shoulder. He extended the money to her.

She got on one elbow, reached down, and took the wad of cash. It disappeared under her body.

"All right, you two," he said as he got off the bed. He put his feet through the leg of his pants. "That was great. I'll see you two next month. Thanks for the hospitality. Thanks for blowing Demetrius… I put a little something extra in there for you cause you're such a good sport."

Demetrius shifted out from under her, trying to leave her undisturbed. He got his feet on the floor and did his pants up as Reza continued to dress. Charlie turned from them and her eyes went up to watch Jonny. She hid her face in her mane of hair, chewed her lip, squeezed her arms underneath her to hide her face further.

The two men got themselves together, headed up the step to the kitchen. Demetrius paused, leaned back, said, "Hey, nice meeting you two. Good luck with the game, man."

Jonny nodded without smiling. Then they left and closed the door behind them.

* * *

"Are you okay?" she asked him from behind her hair.

"Am I okay? Yeah. Are you okay?"

"Yeah," she mumbled into her arm. Her fingers appeared, tucked a lock of her hair into her mouth, and she chewed it while she stared at him. She said, "Are you mad at me?"

"No. Are you mad at me?"

She shook her head no.

He sighed, took her balled up shirt he'd used to clean Reza's cock and tossed it toward the laundry hamper but missed. "Shit."

"You still want pancakes?" she said.

"I guess," he murmured.

She eased up onto her elbows, turned her back to him, and put her feet on the floor. He saw her wince.

"You sore?" he asked her.

She nodded, then leaned forward and put the wad of bills on the coffee table next to the couch. "Why does he have to do it so hard?"

"I don't know, Charlie," he said. He got to his knees and walked behind her and put his arms around her neck and hugged her. Her hands went to his forearms and caressed him. They hugged for a little while, watching the shadows shift on their parquet floor.

"Charlie?"

"What, baby?"

"Why… Why do you orgasm with him?"

"I don't know, Jonny," she said sullenly. "I don't want to. I just cant help it."

"Does it feel good?"

"Kind of."

"He hurts you?"

“He’s really big down there.”

He breathed against her back and felt her breathe against him.

She said, “Are you upset that he makes me come?”

“A little.”

Her nails lightly scratched along his arms, from elbow to wrist. “Why does it make you so hard to watch him do those things to me?”

He shrugged, sighed, let her go. “Damned if I know, Charlie.” He took the bed sheet and covered her shoulders, reached around to her front and dried her thighs and between her legs. She parted for him, but made uncomfortable sounds when he got too close to her middle. He dried up her slim body, wiped her cheeks for her. When he was done, he pursed his lips to her, and she did the same. They pressed them together and kissed long and quiet, breathing one another in. When she broke away, she said, “I want to make you some pancakes.”

“I want to eat your pancakes,” he said, smiling.

“Okay, baby,” she said, smiling now too. They were easing themselves out of the horror that the first of the month had become. By this afternoon they would be all right again.

Charlie got out of bed and crossed the room naked, her hand covering her ass so Jonny wouldn’t see it. She stopped at her dresser and got some fresh clothes, then slipped into the bathroom. Behind the closed door he could hear her peeing into the toilet, then brushing her teeth. Then the distinct sounds of her opening a cardboard box, then a plastic wrapper.

When she came out she was in underwear and a T-shirt again, the shirt short enough that he could see her panties puffed out with a panty liner.

He said, “It’s your period?”

She looked shocked, then embarrassed, and her hand moved to cover herself between her legs. She said, “No, it’s not, he just… when he comes inside me… I leak a lot.”

“Oh,” Jonny said, an ugly punch to his stomach coming from her frank words.

She shuffled around the kitchen in her bare feet and he went up and joined her, taking a seat at the kitchen table after he’d put the coffee on. She was quiet and shy and she worked without saying anything, but soon she had made them both a stack of pancakes. They sat at the table together and ate them all with honey, washed down with weak black coffee.

After they ate, Charlie got dressed and then she folded up their bed so that it was a couch again, and she sat on it and counted out the bills on the coffee table, laying them out in stacks organized by their denomination.

"Hey, Jonny. He gave me extra. You want to go see a movie?"

"You want to?"

She shrugged and bit her lip, said, "It'd be nice to go do something. We can sneak some snacks in."

He dressed, and they walked down the street to the cinema and he let Charlie choose the movie. It was something meant for girls; romantic and cute and completely forgettable. He could hardly pay attention. He had a lot on his mind. Going to the movie was for Charlie, but what he should be doing for Charlie was putting his ass in his chair by his workstation and getting something done that would pay the bills and chip away at the debt.

He held her hand while she watched the movie, sunk in his chair and stewing and running over game ideas. Charlie laughed and giggled and sometimes she would elbow him when she thought something was really funny. But every so often she would adjust her panties, wiggle in her seat and seem uncomfortable. It stabbed him. Images would flash of her tight pink seal being stretched by Reza's thick cock. The wet sounds her sex made as he fucked her deep repeated in his ears. Then came the reluctant sounds of Charlie's orgasm as she came around his cock, the ahs, the ohs, the mms, the ecstatic squeal that shot out of her when she finally got her release. It burned an acidic hole in his stomach, and yet his cock stiffened in his pants, too. Reza made her come. Hard as she tried to fight it, their large, masculine, well-endowed asshole of a landlord made his wife come when he fucked her.

After the movie, they left the theater hand-in-hand, but in the lobby she said, "Hold on, I want to take that pad off."

He stood outside the ladies' room, watched all the happy couples who laughed, and joked, and kissed, and hadn't run into money problems, and he hated them all. Right now his wife was in the bathroom, discarding a semen-soaked panty liner because her piece-of-shit husband had put them in serious financial trouble.

She smiled sheepishly when she emerged from the ladies' and she took his hand and sighed, "That's better."

When they went out to the daylight she said, "Hey, we have enough we could maybe go to the museum. Does that sound like fun?"

He said, "I should probably get back and do some work."

She nodded, turned to him, said, “I think you should. We’ve only got thirty days before he comes back for more.”

DOMINATED BY THEIR LANDLORD

# REZA'S COMING

KT MORRISON

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

KT Morrison writes stories about women who fall in love with sexy men who aren't their husband, and loving relationships that go too far—couples who open a mysterious door, then struggle to get it closed as trouble pushes through the threshold.

*Visit My Website!*

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REZA'S COMING

A LANDLORD Novellette

*24,000 words*

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# 1

THESE FUCKING WINGS were driving him nuts. He got them rigged, but getting them to flap properly, at least when they rose up high above the character's shoulders, caused so much clipping he wanted to punch his computer screen. He was animating angels for some young Korean-American startup company, paying him one-tenth of what he was worth, but he could work fast and get out the mods they wanted, and more work equals more money.

He'd rigged a lot of this company's models this month. Last month too. Angels, demons, knights on horses; making weapons for them, adding fire to some of their regular weapons. They paid, and that's what it was all about.

It would be close this month. Eight freelance gigs plus development on his own game had stressed him out, pushed him to the limit. Two all-nighters this month, and when he did sleep, it was often only for three or four hours at a time. Today was the 31st, and he was screaming for the finish line, running so fast his feet were on fire. It was close, so close.

He had to pay the interest on the principal of his debt first then make the payments, plus back rent, and, of course, current rent. Charlie covered groceries and the other incidentals. If these Koreans could manage to PayPal him his money tonight, they might just be okay this month.

"Come on, come on," he said, whipping the mouse left and right then attacking the keys, slamming out code on a pop-up menu trying to fix this son of a bitch.

The key rattled in the door behind him, inserted into the lock and twisting then a tapping against the door that he knew would be her pewter cat's face key chain. The door was opened and his beautiful wife came home.

"Fuck it," he sighed, sliding his office chair back from his workstation and watching this dumb angel flap its wings, its lower feathers slicing in and out of its torso and head, the damned son of a bitch thing.

He spun the chair around with the heels of his socks and regarded his Charlie as she came into the kitchen closing the door behind her and putting her purse on the table, plastic bags up on the kitchen counter. He could hear the rattle of dry pasta in boxes inside those bags. He watched her pretty head bob left and right in the kitchen pass-through, him in the lower living room/bedroom, his girl moving around solemnly in their kitchen, opening cupboards and putting things away. She hadn't said hello.

"Hi Charlie," he said.

"Hey," she said quietly without looking through the passage. He got out of the chair and joined her, walking up the two steps to be in the kitchen.

He asked, "What's wrong?"

"Nothing," she said, still not looking at him, holding three boxes of pasta and sliding them onto a shelf just above her head.

"Did something happen?"

"No, Jonny, nothing happened."

"Are you worried?"

She chewed at her lower lip, head nodded forward with her hands resting on their countertop. She looked like she bore an enormous weight.

He asked her, "Is it tomorrow?"

She nodded.

"I think we're going to be okay," he told her.

"Are we?"

He went to her, put his hands on her shoulders and pressed his chest to her back. "Charlie I'm doing everything I can."

"I know you are, Jonny. I know. It's not that you're not trying, it's just—"

"Just that it's not enough?"

"I'm sorry, Jonny."

"Why are *you* sorry?"

She twisted herself so that her rump leaned on the counter and she put her hands on his chest but she couldn't look in his eyes. "I don't want to make this harder for you. I know you don't like pressure."

"It's not that I don't like pressure, Charlie, it's just that I can't possibly do more than what I'm doing."

"I know, Jonny, I watch you, I see what you do."

"We'll get out of this, Charlie, I swear."

She showed him a brighter face, the slightest hint of a smile pulling up the corner of her mouth. "Promise?" she asked him.

"I do, Charlie, I do. You don't have to do anything this month."

"Okay," she said softly, her mouth twisting around, her brow furrowed in pensive demonstration. "You have enough?" she asked him, her voice rising in inflection, sounding hopeful but tinged with realism.

"I will. I just have to finish this angel I'm working on, send it to them, and they'll pay me."

"That's good," she said. Still her pouting little mouth twisted back and forth.

"Hey, look at me, Charlie," he said, his hand coming up, his first knuckle stroking the bottom of her chin. "Look at me. What are you thinking?"

"I want you to make it, Jonny ..."

"Is there a but?"

"If we ... If I ..."

"If you what, Charlie? You mean sleep with him?"

"If I do that thing I do with him, then we can breathe."

"Breathe?"

"You know what I mean, Jonny."

Now she looked up at him, her trembling wet green eyes peering through her brows at her husband. The weight of her unsaid words heavy on her shoulders, being transferred onto his now. He knew what she was saying. If the Koreans sent the payment on time Charlie wouldn't have to do the dirty thing she did with their landlord to make their rent. But it would be another month of sleepless nights, round-the-clock coding and animating, living off of tap water, Kraft Dinner, and hot dogs for protein. If she did the thing that she did the previous months, something they'd all become accustomed to now, he could sleep at night a little. Still work, still put in the hours needed to make money, but maybe it would give a little breathing room. Maybe they could eat out a bit. Maybe they could go see a movie, who knows?

The things she did with their landlord, only one day of the month, did make their lives easier. At least financially. It was hard to take, hard to watch, hard to comprehend his arousal over the predicament. Hard to comprehend his wife's arousal, as unwanted as she claimed it was, over this other man who went inside her. There was a lot of things about this arrangement that challenged his psyche, that stabbed his heart.

JONNY KNEW WHAT SHE MEANT. If she were to be intimate with their landlord tomorrow that would be the fifth time they were together. And then add that one time she used her mouth on him at their kitchen table when they thought that might be a way out of the mess they got themselves into.

Those first few times had been hard. So weird, so awkward, and so dirty. After she had used her mouth on him, she had been sick in the toilet. And after that first night, when Reza took her while Jonny watched, she had cried. Jonny rubbed her back, and she hugged her pillow to her face and sobbed and sobbed. Sobbed until she fell asleep, and then she woke and did it all over again. Got up the next morning and she could barely walk. Had to call in sick that day for work.

If she did that dirty thing with him tomorrow it would be the fifth time. What was one more time now really, anyway? She did it once, what was once more?

If he got close to making the money he needed this month, and then she also did that dirty thing, then maybe next month wouldn't be so scary. They could live a little, buy the things Charlie liked. Ice cream, some real fruit, some real vegetables, they could even get themselves some roast beef, maybe a tenderloin. Charlie would do them up in

the oven and they could live off of leftovers for a good week. Jonny could have roast beef sandwiches for lunch and she could maybe bring some to work, too.

Charlie said, "It's just one day a month that's bad. But if we just scrape by it will be followed by thirty more days of scrimping, thirty more days of poverty. I could trade one day for those thirty. Just think about it, Jonny."

"Think about it?" A disgusted sneer pulled up his mouth. He didn't step away but eased back, and she let her hands come off his chest. He pictured her with Reza and her face showed she wanted it.

He said, "Are you telling me you want to ... want to do it?"

"Jonny, no, don't be crazy. Oh, Jonny, I don't mean that. You know what I mean, you're just wanting to hear the worst."

"It is the worst."

"It's not, Jonny. What I said is true."

He averted his eyes, chin darting away, his face surly but softening. What she said *was* true, and he knew it. It was awful, but it was pragmatic. This decision should be easier than the first time, but it wasn't.

Charlie said, "It's what we do now. This is the way it is. We're a team and I can do this. Maybe just one more month. What you did this last month ...? I saw how hard you worked, I know what you can do. I believe in you. Next month will be better. Next month maybe I won't have to. But right now we have enough to just get by. I was ready for tomorrow. It takes a lot of preparation, and I was ready."

"I'm sorry, Charlie ..."

"Say it again," she whispered with a great big smile peeling her cheeks back. Her arms went around him.

"Sorry, Charlie." It was a pet saying, and he'd stumbled across it accidentally. Something her grandmother had always said to her, a saying from an old TV commercial. He looked it up one night and watched it with her on YouTube. Tried calling her Charlie Tuna after that but she didn't like it.

"Don't be sorry, Jonny," she said. "I love you."

Jonny put his hands on her shoulders and he looked in her eyes. "Next month you won't do it. I swear it, Charlie."

THEIR APARTMENT WASN'T big and Charlie closed herself in the bathroom so she could change. Normally they would feel free enough with each other to take their work clothes off after a long day and put on their pajamas or sweatpants while they talked. But Charlie was constricted, stressed, and he feared that this arrangement was making

her timider. She had gathered up some of her things that she liked to wear at nighttime and brought them into the bathroom with her. She'd been in there for a while.

He worried that she was being pushed too far emotionally. So he set a pot of water on the stove and got it turned to high and while he waited for it to boil he went down to the living room level and slipped across the parquet floor to listen at the bathroom door.

The greatest fear he'd had before spying was hearing soft crying sounds. That would break his heart. If he caught her crying he would have to end this. Whatever it took, he would do it. This arrangement they'd come to was difficult, but for now it was working. If he found his Charlie crying he would have to gather his things up and go to Kansas with her, his head hung low. Her parents would have to know what a failure he was. That would be tough to live with, far tougher than allowing the things he allowed now.

But there were no sounds of crying. He heard the shower, arrived just in time to hear her turning the tap off, hearing the drips from her body as she stepped out from the tub and onto the tile floor, knowing she was naked in there, picturing her bare perfect feet on their tufted pale blue bathmat. There were no sounds of crying; she didn't sound upset, he was even sure that she was humming. Not sure of the tune, but it sounded churchy. Like a hymn.

There was a spritz from an aerosol can, then a sound like the eruption of foam. He took two steps away, then the implication of that sound stopped him. He crept back. Ear pressed to the door, he listened again.

What foam was spritzed from an aerosol can? Answer: Shave foam. Was she shaving her legs? It seemed an odd thing for the nighttime. Yet he heard drawers now opening, the sound of a plastic disposable razor clattering on the counter, other jars and lotions being moved around. Eyes on the pass-through to the kitchen where he saw steam beginning to rise from where the stovetop would be, their water almost ready to boil for tonight's pasta dinner, he heard a scratching. The sound of a brand-new razor passing over stubbly skin.

Incredibly, the sound aroused him. A sudden swelling pushed through the front of his briefs, and he tugged at it to align himself comfortably. Imagined her naked in their bathroom, worried, yet excited. Could picture her beautiful skin with its apricot sprinkling. Her bending at the waist to watch as she shaved that mound between her legs. Why would the idea that she prepared herself for another man be so exciting? There was no denying that all of this from the very beginning had definitely done something to him. It pounded his heart, raced his pulse, hardened him between his legs. Yes, he hated every second of it. Every fingerprint that disgusting man put on his Charlie drove him to fury. Not furious enough, however, that he would put a halt to

this and come to his senses, let his wife off the hook, leave her dignity out of the equation of his failure.

"You okay in there?" he said, face close to the hollow-core door.

The scratching sound of what must be a razor stopped. There was a moment of silence, then Charlie said, "Yeah. Why?"

"Just checking."

Her quiet voice said, "I'm okay."

"What kind of pasta do you want?"

There was a dreadfully long pause.

"Macaroni," she said.

"Okay."

He shifted his weight on the floorboards to make sounds as if he was leaving but instead he listened. After a while, the sounds returned.

*Skritch, skritch, skritch.*

He was sure she was shaving in there. Quietly, he slipped away from the door and returned to the kitchen.

# 2

THE WATER BOILED, and steam billowed in his face. The flap of an already opened box of macaroni was pulled away and the remaining contents spilled into the pot with a dry clatter. The bubbling ceased.

With his back to the stove, Jonny leaned on the handle to the oven door where Charlie's tea towels from home (a gift from her mother during her last visit) were draped. He watched the bathroom door, wanting to see her emerge. Wanting to see her expression. He worried for her.

The process that led to his demure wife assuming the dirty task of servicing their landlord in lieu of rent was a difficult one. Charlie had been so supportive during the legal proceedings, never once believing her husband was guilty. She had his back and accompanied him to the depositions. Dressed like his prim and proper wife with her hair pulled back and her dress shirt buttoned right up to the top button. Holding his hand and patting it until he was called. She couldn't believe the judgment against him. He couldn't tell her the truth. To make things better, he told her they would be fine, he had savings, he would get a job. It made matters worse. Just more lies.

Sure he had savings, but those assets were seized and held in trust for the investors. Behind closed doors—behind her back—a payment plan was arranged. Soon it became obvious they were in a deep financial crisis and his lies would no longer stick. He came clean. Left out the part how he was actually guilty, but told the truth about how he was (they were) cleaned out. The money she earned would also have to go to the investors. They were husband and wife after all. His failure would become her burden.

*And what about getting a job, Jonny?*

*Well, Charlie baby, see, I've been asking around ...*

Yeah, maybe Charlie didn't know the truth of his guilt but word on the gaming street was clear—don't trust Jonny Keen. He was a pariah.

The art of game creation was in his blood, his heart pumped his passion and without it, he wouldn't be alive …

*Charlie, baby, I'll do freelance. I've done it before. I've lived off it before ...*

That was true. Course, you were single then, weren't you, Jonny? Freelance was shit, but he would not work at a Subway, or sling hash at some diner. He had creativity bursting at the seams. Freelance would have to pay the bills. They had freelance, and they had Charlie's meager librarian income. Student loans and rent proved to make it almost impossible.

*We could move, Charlie, I know how much you love the apartment, but ...*

Then her waterworks came and if one thing in the world was his kryptonite, it was seeing that sweet angel shed tears. He swore to her he'd make it work ...

ONLY HE DIDN'T MAKE it work.

Butter melted and ground parmesan added, he stirred the mixture together with the pasta, added a little dash of milk. The door to the bathroom opened and Charlie came out, walked up the two steps to join him in the kitchen.

"Hey," she said again, quiet. She wore a roomy sweatshirt, loose PJ bottoms that stopped mid-calf. "Dinner ready?"

"It is, baby," he said.

He brought two plates to the kitchen table and set the grander portion in front of her. While he sat down she swapped them, giving him the plate with more pasta.

"Not hungry?"

She said, "No, I'm hungry. Thanks, Jonny, I just ... I just want you to have that plate."

"Okay," he said, tearing open the corner of a ketchup pack pilfered from the McDonald's down the street. Charlie kept her gaze down, languidly moved a forkful of his steaming pasta into her pretty mouth.

*No, he did not make it work, did he? And now look at your beautiful wife.*

They'd put Reza off, and he was charming in a menacing way and Jonny assured him he would pay the amount in full the following month. Only he didn't. Bills piled up, freelance payments came late or didn't come at all (and he didn't have time to chase them down), and slowly it became clear to Jonny that Reza knew Jonny was digging himself a large hole and he'd only handed Jonny the shovel with a smile.

Reza said it first. Not right out and plain and clear. Just an insinuation. "If only there were a way to pay me back. If only you had something of value." He stood in their apartment, just the two of them, held a photo of Jonny and Charlie together, standing on the beach in Costa Rica. A sneer followed, narrowed eyes twinkling with evil delight.

*And that was how it began.*

Jonny resisted it at first. No fucking way. But they had to leave then, had to get out of the apartment.

He packed all their belongings and when Charlie came home from work one night, she found him in the hall ready to go. She collapsed on the floor.

*No, Jonny, I can't go back to Kansas. Not like this. I love our apartment ... I'd do anything to keep it.*

CHARLIE ASKED, "What do you want to watch tonight, Jonny?"

With the cable gone all they had left was an internet connection. That was his lifeline for work; a necessity. He downloaded the entire Twilight Zone library. Every episode, every season. "I got something special for you ..."

"What is it?" she said and her face seemed to brighten a tad.

"You'll see," he said, smiling sweetly at her. "After dinner." He was sure she would love the show.

Truth was, in retrospect, he was bluffing that night he'd packed their bags. Having them ready to go in the hall, standing with his coat on, apartment cleaned out ... that was performance. He wouldn't go back to Kansas with her. He wouldn't go to her parents and let them see what a failure he was. He'd made mistakes, sure, and he was paying for them, but the most important thing about Jonny—a guy who never had an easy shake—was his pride. Too proud to declare bankruptcy, too proud to move in with his in-laws. Why, oh why, wasn't he too proud to share his wife?

Told Charlie one morning, *Hey, I invited Reza for dinner tonight*. She said, *Okay*, her face growing a little troubled. He'd already told her how much they owed the landlord.

That day he'd blasted through work like he was on Adderall again. All day long moving like a hummingbird; a jolting live-wire hummingbird with an erection. Yeah, he was scared and nervous—and also surprisingly aroused. Profoundly aroused. That odd development was pushed away from the table; his arousal frightened him.

DINNER WITH REZA that evening had been intimidating. Charlie made a lasagna, the whole time anxiously working in the kitchen, her brow raised with worry.

*Why did he want to have dinner with us, Jonny?*

*I invited him, Charlie.*

*Why, Jonny? We owe him so much money ...*

Reza brought it up. After he picked through his lasagna with elaborate disinterest, he addressed them both and said that time had run its course; they would have to vacate the apartment. Charlie cried. Jonny consoled her. Charlie said they had rights. Reza agreed, however, the amount owing was substantial, and he had no fear, given the young couple's provable financial difficulties, that he would win any sort of contesting of their landlord/tenant contract. Jonny agreed with Reza and Charlie grew bewildered. "I don't want to go home, Jonny. I can't go home."

Jonny had held her hand then, quietly said, "Me neither, Charlie."

Charlie had whispered to him, "Oh Jonny, what are we going to do?"

Reza spoke up then, as if he had a complete understanding of the situation, looking over it like a chessboard. Knowing that Jonny hadn't prepared Charlie, knowing Charlie needed to be coerced, seeing Jonny put his pawn forward. Reza said, "Throughout history, Charlie, there have been many ways a young woman can find herself a way out of what seemed like a difficult situation. Do you know what I'm saying?"

Charlie had said no. But she was paying attention to him now. Charlie had her arms around Jonny at this point, on his lap where she had come to sit and whisper to him. She peeked over her shoulder now as Reza inched his chair forward so he could be closer.

He said, "I know you read, Charlie. I understand you're a librarian. You don't just handle the books, do you? I imagine you read quite a few."

"I have," she'd said.

"Even in the greatest classics what I'm suggesting has been written. As long as there has been literature, there has been the solution of which I'm talking. An age-old solution."

"Yeah?" Charlie said, her voice a frightened and breathy gasp.

Reza inched his chair closer, his elbows on his knees, leaning forward with intent. His hands were close enough now that he could touch Charlie's thigh. He said, "Charlie, you're a beautiful girl. I've admired you for a long time."

"You have?" she said, a certain tinge of fear in her voice.

"Sure," Reza had said. "You hide your charms but a man like me can see them."

"I did, too," Jonny offered.

Reza ignored him, continued, "Now, I date a lot of beautiful women. It's not that you have something to offer that I can't get. But you have a certain sort of beauty that *could* be explored."

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Would you be opposed to going on a date with me?"

She had her arm around Jonny's neck and she squeezed him, her head whipping around so she could look in his eyes. She gasped, sighing, "What's he–"

"It's okay," Jonny had told her, "hear him out."

# 3

CHARLIE'S LIPS, trembling, struggled to speak. Her eyes had darted over his and she stammered, "Jonny? You're not ...? He ... A date ...? You can't ..."

Jonny had put a hand over her trembling fingers on his chest. He tried to calm her. "What else are we going to do?" he said to her with great seriousness.

Now Reza said, "Hey, Charlie. Would you go out with a man like me?"

"I'm married," she whispered.

"If you weren't. If you weren't married, Charlie, would you like to go out with me?"

"I don't know."

"Jonny," Reza said, "tell her it's okay."

Jonny had rubbed the back of her hand, said, "Just tell him, Charlie."

"Tell him what?"

Reza said, "Do you think I'm handsome?"

"Jonny," Charlie gasped and looked away from Reza.

"Tell him, Charlie," Jonny soothed.

Reza repeated, "Many beautiful women find me attractive. Do you think I am attractive?"

"Yes," Charlie said weakly and Jonny rubbed the back of her hand again. Between his legs, he was growing harder.

Reza moved even closer. He said, "Would you prefer to live on the street over spending a night with a man like me?"

Before she could answer, Jonny assured her, "It's okay, Charlie."

"It can't be okay," Charlie whispered but now her eyes were on Reza.

Reza said, "That's all right, Charlie. I don't need it. I have women begging to be with me. I hate to see you in such dire straits, I was merely offering you a glimmer of hope."

"A date? With ... you?"

Reza said, "Sure," and ran the knuckle of his first finger along the outside of her thigh. A spike of rage stabbed through Jonny's heart. His eyes vibrated with violence. But under it all, the pounding of his heart was feeding the thing between his legs.

Charlie lowered her eyes and watched Reza's hand as it grazed along her. "That's all?"

"Honestly, Charlie ... No. I have lots of dates. But if you would date me, if you thought I was worthy of dating, surely you'd be capable of more."

"Oh no," she sighed. "More?"

"Well, Charlie. Both of us are very busy. I run two businesses, monitor this building, and I have a very ... active ... social life. And you ... you have a job, and you have a husband."

"I *do* have a husband."

"So, why would we go through all the dining when all I really want is dessert?"

"Dessert?" she gasped.

Reza said, "You like dessert, don't you?"

"No," she whispered.

But Reza was already moving. He leaned back in the kitchen chair, its metal frame squeaking under his bulk. His two hands came together at his waist, and then the quiet of the kitchen was filled with a tiny sound with enormous implication. The teeth of his zipper coming apart as he ran it down.

Charlie and Jonny both watched, mesmerized by his boldness, his masculinity; they could both feel it. His hand searched inside the fly, brought out his manhood and dropped it. Jonny didn't know he would have such a monster. Didn't figure he was small but hadn't anticipated it would be so fearsome.

The idea that this threatening masculine weapon he saw dangling out of this strange man's fly was also seen by his quiet and shy wife had his pulse in the red zone. So overwhelming he could feel himself on the verge of passing out.

Reza's tool drooled from the open fly, long enough that the tip went below the seat of the chair. It was thick, and it was hairy. Uncircumcised, the drooping folds of his foreskin yawned open like a toothless mouth. Reza regarded them boldly. Impressive manhood presented to them, both his hands curled over the arms of the chair. His head cocked at a haughty angle, his brow lowered, his eyes on Charlie.

"What do you think?" he said.

THEN CHARLIE WAS IN MOTION, jumping up off of Jonny's lap and running to the sink. She had wrapped her hands over the lip, her nails scratching on the stainless steel. She bent over. Jonny ran to her, adjusting his arousal to conceal it, and hugged her.

"No, Jonny, no ..."

"It's terrible, it's so terrible," he said to her.

"I can't ..."

"You don't have to," he said. But he knew that she would. He wanted it, and it would save them. As terrible as it would be, it would allow them to stay. It wouldn't be long until he could get them financially righted. *Or so he'd thought.* He asked her, "Charlie, what else can we do?"

"Nothing," she gasped.

Charlie looked over her shoulder as Reza said, "Please decide. I've got many other things to do tonight."

Jonny took her chin and aimed her face away. So offended, horrified—yet aroused—by the idea that she would be looking at that exposed penis presented to her. Aroused and enraged—and yet humbled. Truly and completely humbled. He didn't have what it took. It was the first glimmer of weakness that he ever had. This man had so much power over them.

Then, without saying a word, Charlie turned from Jonny's hold on her chin, put her eyes on Reza, folded her arms. Jonny hugged her, but she was rigid. She moved away from his embrace and returned to the chair in which Jonny had been sitting. Put herself knee-to-knee with Reza who sat across from her like a king on a throne.

Charlie whispered, "What do you want me to do?"

"I don't know if this is worth it. I want you to audition first. Show me what you can do."

"Audition?"

Jonny said, "Come on now."

"You owe me five months of rent. I will make it four just for the audition. If I like the performance, we can arrange a deal."

"Just tell me what you want," Charlie said.

Reza said, "I told you. I want dessert."

Charlie said, "You want me to eat dessert?"

Reza smiled, a sneer really, pulling up one cheek and narrowing his eyes. He said, "Show me how you love dessert."

Jonny came to stand behind her. He could see the muscles in her back trembling, could see her hands shake as she reached out and rested them on Reza's knees. Then she eased herself off the kitchen chair and got to her knees between his legs.

"That's it," Reza encouraged.

His cock was completely flaccid, hanging heavy and lazy over the edge of the chair. When Charlie reached out and her bare and pretty fingers touched his dark and ugly club, Jonny literally dipped at the knees as if he would faint. It was awful. He had to support himself by leaning on the counter.

Without looking at him, his eyes still lowered to watch Charlie, Reza said, "You see okay from there, Jonny?"

He nodded. Charlie looked up over her shoulder at him. Her expression was sullen and sad, her skin waxen. He could see her lips trembling. He nodded again so that she could see. "What else are we going to do?" he whispered.

Before Jonny, Charlie had been a virgin. He was her first. She was inexperienced, and he had to show her everything. She'd gone down on him before, and it wasn't her favorite thing. But at least she knew the mechanics. Her pale hand lifted Reza's penis,

and it buckled and fell out of her grip and swung. She picked it up again, supporting it with her second hand. Cradled it and lifted so she could put her mouth over the end.

"That's it," Reza said. "You're doing so good."

Jonny's mouth went instantly dry as he watched her take that soft tool past her lips. Gradually, Reza grew harder. His penis lengthening, becoming thicker, gaining enough rigidity that it would stop folding in half and falling out of his wife's hands. When he was almost fully hard, Charlie held it in both hands, watching it, her grip stroking up and down. It was an ugly cock. Veiny, thick and dusky-skinned. Charlie would have never seen an uncircumcised one before and she watched the foreskin peel and pucker. Reza had asked her, *Do you like it?* And when Charlie had said, *It's so big*, Jonny had to sit down. His heart was pounding, his vision had gone white around the edges. His blood pressure must be through the roof.

Reza laughed, said, "You okay, Jonny?"

"No," he said weakly. He lay his palms on his wife's thin back. With her hands still gripping that enormous cock, she had looked over her shoulder at her husband. He tried to be strong but he couldn't. He tried to say her name but he couldn't even speak.

"Sorry," she whispered. "I'm sorry, Jonny."

"I am ... I'm sorry ..."

"It's okay," she whispered.

REZA HAD SAID, "Don't stop, Charlie. You're doing very well. I think we can come to some sort of agreement."

She returned her gaze to Reza, said, "Okay." Then she put her mouth over the fat shining glans, her fingers pulling his foreskin down the shaft, exposing it. Reza let his head fall back, and he groaned. Jonny watched that ginger head of hair bob up and down, her shoulders held up high, her elbows tucked in, her hands gently stroking while her mouth sucked on their landlord.

After a long while, enduring the most god-awful slurping and smacking noises, Reza's face began to take on frightening grimaces. Snarling and squinting. Low growls began to emanate from his chest. He grunted encouragement.

His hips began to thrust off the chair and into her mouth. "Come on, that's it, that's good ..." His teeth were clenched, bared, shining white in his black beard. His thick eyebrows lowered, his eyes narrow mean slits, twinkling light as he took in this horrible visage. A tenant's innocent wife submitting to him, her mouth stretched wide by his size.

Reza's head thrust back into the kitchen chair, he grabbed fistfuls of Charlie's beautiful apricot locks. His big meaty fists clenching and unclenching, then opening and polishing her skull like it was the globe of the world he was going to conquer. His breathing became loud and raspy, and Charlie began to make high squeaks of protest in her throat.

Reza gripped her fiercely. Big hands clenched in fists again, her beautiful hair woven in his grip and through his fingers. He clenched so tight his arms shook. Then he roared, plunged himself deep into her mouth and she snorted through her nose and made soft cries. He thrust and thrust again and Charlie's pale little hands scratched at his thighs like talons. Her little feet curled up in her slippers and her toes kicked on the linoleum. Charlie snorted and gasped for breath but her mouth was still full. Reza was coming in her mouth.

It was so horrible Jonny had covered his face. But he couldn't help watching. Witnessing the most awful thing he'd ever seen through the V of his spread fingers. Reza moaned and groaned and gasped for breath, his back thrust into their kitchen chair.

When he let her hair go, Charlie reeled back from him, wetly belching then coughing. She fell back on her rump and with her heels kicked herself across the floor away from Jonny and away from Reza. Her face was red, her eyes bleary. Her face was smeared wet, semen running out of her mouth. She was gasping for breath too, then erupted in violent coughing and gagging, rolling over onto her stomach and spitting on the floor.

Reza groaned again, long and low, sleepy eyes straight up at their kitchen ceiling while his hands came together and took that enormous wet thing and lay it inside his pants across his belly and zipped it closed, careful not to pinch it. He pulled his shirt down to cover the bulge, slowly sat himself up. He wiped at his mouth with the back of his hand. A vein flitted with his pulse behind the lion tattoo on his neck. He leaned forward on his elbows again, regarded Charlie as she lay on the floor, still spitting. He said, "That wasn't the best blowjob I ever had, but you passed."

Charlie didn't answer, still face down on the floor. Jonny had said, "She passed?"

"She did," he said, looking away from Charlie, now regarding Jonny. "We can find a way for you two to stay here. I want you in my building."

Jonny's heart pounded and despite the arrogance and meanness in Reza's voice, he felt like it was good news and he wanted to share with Charlie. He said to her while she lay on the floor, "Hear that, Charlie?" He saw her head nod. She'd stopped spitting and was on her elbows and knees.

Reza, very seriously as if this was a business negotiation, said, "Yeah, Jonny, we can work this out. The first of the month until it's paid. You understand?"

He nodded, though he didn't really understand.

Reza reached down and grabbed Charlie's bare heel. Her foot curled up and recoiled from his touch.

Reza said to her, "You're very beautiful, you know? I like you a lot. Aren't you happy that you can stay?" Jonny saw that she nodded again.

"Good," Reza exclaimed with a clap of his hands, then with a glance at his watch he got up, said, "I've got to get going, I got a million things to do." Then he stood and held out a hand to Jonny for him to shake it, said curtly, "Jonny."

Jonny didn't even know what to do. It was unlike any business negotiation he'd had before. He extended a hand to Reza's big iron grip and shook.

Before he left, Reza got down on one knee, put a hand on Charlie's back. He got close to her ear and whispered something to her. She nodded, and he soothed her, running his big hand in a circle on her narrow back. Slowly she rose to her knees and rested her open hands across her thighs. Her head was bowed, her face hidden in her mane of thick ginger hair. Reza looked so he could see in her eyes, and then he said, "Okay?"

"Okay," she whispered. He ran his hand in a few more circles, watched her with concern, then he left.

# 4

WHEN THE DOOR clicked behind Reza, Charlie had run off. Out of the kitchen, down the two steps to the family room and into the bathroom. She closed the door, but it wasn't locked. Jonny caught up with her, knocked and let himself in. He found her on her knees arms draped over the toilet seat, head in the bowl.

"Charlie?" he'd whispered.

"Yeah?" she said, her voice an echo in the porcelain bowl.

He didn't know what to say, but he entered, walked to the bowl and sat down between it and the tub and lay his back on the wall, his ear in the cool beaded condensation of the tank. "You okay?" he asked.

"No," she said.

Eased himself forward, took her pale hand where it lay over her elbow and rubbed a thumb up and down her fingers. "Really? You're not okay?"

"I'm fine," she said. She spat into the bowl again and her back heaved.

"Did you throw up?"

Her back began to shake as if she was sobbing. "He ... came in my mouth, Jonny." She sniffed wetly. "Jonny, he came right in my mouth."

He went to her and put his arms around her. His hips thrust back so she wouldn't feel his prominent erection. He hated Reza. He hated himself. Couldn't believe that it was him who put himself in such a horrible situation. Couldn't believe the thing that Charlie had done so that they could stay in their home. He shushed her gently, making soft sounds in her ear, working his nose under her mane of hair and kissing the back of her ear.

"Are you okay?" she asked him now.

He was stunned. "Am *I* okay?"

"Do you hate me?" she whispered into the bowl.

"Baby, I could never hate you," he said and ran his hands up and down her shoulders.

"Are you sure?"

"Charlie, baby, I'm so sure. I love you so much." He held her for a while and felt her breathe. His arousal still did not go away.

Charlie slowly eased herself away from the bowl a little, lifting herself up to be propped on her elbows. Her hands ran her hair back from her face. She said, "Can you get me some bleach?"

"For what?"

"I want to rinse my mouth," she said.

"Not with bleach, Charlie."

"I have to."

"No, Charlie. Let me get you something …"

He rose, went to the cupboard under the sink and brought her an almost full bottle of Listerine left over from their wealthier days. Sat next to her, lay his back against the wall and watched as she took the bottle and upended it.

"Don't drink it," he exclaimed. But she did, swallowing a few mouthfuls of the amber fluid. She barked it all up again into the toilet bowl, lunging herself forward and he went behind her and held back her hair. When she was done coughing and spitting she sipped the Listerine again, this time only spitting it back out.

He'd said, "Are you sure you're okay?"

"I'll be fine," she said. Her hand came up and touched her face, her fingertips working around her lips. She said, "Can you get me ... there's a bag of peas in the freezer, can you bring them to the couch?"

"Sure," he said. "Your mouth is sore?"

She grimaced, looked away and from behind her hair, she whispered, "His thing is just so big, Jonny."

He groaned so she wouldn't hear, sitting back away from her, working himself on his butt toward the door. His arousal was painful and prominent. His heart beat with incredible lust, but his soul was crushed by his weakness and his impotence.

Despite how horrible everything was that he had just witnessed, her dirty but honest appraisal of their landlord's penis had brought him to the brink of an incredible feeling, so awful yet so lubricious. An orgasm had swelled, but his shame pushed it away at the last second. His ruined expulsion pulsed weakly into his underwear.

"WHAT DID you get me to watch?" she asked, her plate cleaned, every last bite consumed, swirling designs drawn in the sauce as she tried to scoop it all up with her fork.

"It's a surprise," he said, taking her dish and going to the sink.

"Just tell me," she said. She gave him a funny pouting face that brightened his spirit.

"You heard of the Twilight Zone?"

"Yeah," she said, her face expectant.

"I downloaded all the episodes. Black-and-white, you love black and white—"

"I do."

"—It's from like the sixties, and it's just crazy, awful, weird horror stories and sci-fi ..."

She smiled.

"Is that okay?" he asked her.

She nodded and sucked her lower lip into her mouth. When it plopped out, she frowned, said, "You didn't ... buy them? ..."

"No, Charlie. They are ... pirate—"

"Pirated, Jonny? You know how I feel ..."

He took both her hands in his and pleaded with her. "Charlie, you know we have no choice. We have no money, what are we supposed to do?"

"It's okay," she said.

"As long as we have each other, right?" he said.

"That's right," she agreed.

Jonny did the dishes. Stood at the sink and scrubbed them with vinegar from a restaurant packet and a tiny drop of Palmolive. They had to make their bottle last. Behind him, in the family room, he heard Charlie. She had padded down in her bare feet and sat on the couch. The TV was on now, and she was flipping through menus, trying to find his computer file folders so they could watch his downloaded Twilight Zone episodes.

When he was done, and the dishes were dry, he came down to the couch to join her. She seemed happy, the nervousness and anxiousness from before appearing to dissipate; his girl behaving like she would normally on a regular night, looking to settle in and watch some TV with him. He sat next to her on the couch and hiked a leg around her back so she could lay in the V of his lap. She did, putting herself sideways, and he stroked her hair.

"Start at the first one," he whispered.

"I know how to do it," she said with mock snark.

"Just push that button there," he joked, pointing to the remote, and she moved it away. She made a mockery of him, thumbing all the buttons that she wasn't supposed to press, plopping up menus on the screen and repeating, "This one? This one? This one?"

She got him laughing.

"HEY, it really is black and white," Charlie said, and she nestled herself tighter to him as the first episode began.

They watched as a man in a flight suit wandered a deserted town, everywhere he goes it's like people have been there moments before but he finds no one. Pots boiling, water dripping in a sink, cigar burning in an ashtray. Eventually, he goes mad and they see that he's an astronaut in training and after prolonged sensory deprivation what they

just watched was the madness in his mind. When it was done he asked her, "You like that?"

"Yeah," she said earnestly, eyes wide. "Wish we had popcorn."

He flinched, wished indeed they had popcorn. Wished this was like the old days when he would maybe right now—having skipped awful macaroni and cheese for dinner—order them a seven-course combo from The Golden Pagoda, the Chinese restaurant down the road. That's the way it used to be. Pick up the phone, order in. They were much happier. Of course, it was all a lie back then. The money coming in was fraudulent.

"Me, too," he said and rubbed his hand over her shoulder. They watched the second episode and the third. Charlie was rapt. She loved it. She looked up to him occasionally and said what she thought was going to happen. *Hey, you think* ... Or, *I bet that guy* ... He loved to see her happy again.

During the fourth episode, she drifted off. Instead of running it back he just filled her in what she had missed. She made it through the sixth and the seventh but it was late when they watched the eighth.

During the eighth episode, she fell right asleep. He'd been working his hand around her body, pressing it into warm comfortable places. Even while she was awake, slipping his hand a little under her sweatshirt to touch her bare skin. Now that she was asleep he eased his hand under her clothing again. This time up under her sweatshirt and angling down, feeling her soft smooth stomach. Dipping lower, fingertips under her pajama pants, finding the trim of her panties. He eased his fingers underneath ...

"What are you doing?"

"Nothing," he said.

"Your hand is in my pants," she said.

"Yeah, so?"

She put her hand over top of his, let him keep it under her pants but pinched his fingers in hers through the cotton. She held it in place and they watched the eighth episode to the end. The whole time all he could think about was the smooth feel of her delicate skin under his touch. He wanted to dip lower. Should have been able to. She was his wife. Plenty of times on this couch, he would just start touching her. She wouldn't object. Used to be she would giggle. Reza had changed them. Now for whatever reason, he felt like he didn't deserve her. That he needed permission. And that he didn't deserve that permission.

So when she slept again, his hand slid lower. Under her panties, ever so slowly, ever so sneakily, touching lower and lower, feeling the warm skin under his fingers become warmer as they reached her center, found the smooth swell of her mound, her cleft in the center. Very smooth. Shaved completely bald, moisturized, prepared ... He was

right. Though he knew he was all along. Now confirmed, he felt another little punch in the stomach.

Tomorrow was the big day. The day the big evil monster came and had his way with her. Only instead of slipping a toilet paper tube laced with razor blades like a Vietcong prostitute might do, his wife had pampered her pretty privates. Shaved them, made them appealing. Welcoming another man's intrusion. He began to swell against her back.

*Charlie liked it ... she fucking A liked it, didn't she?* She liked being taken by that brute. By that arrogant cologne-wearing animal with his big animal cock. His shy pretty wife that was all his and his alone loved being shared. Loved the touch of her other man.

His finger slipped and touched, explored the swelling shapes of his wife's most private spot. She stirred, said, "Jonny?"

"You shaved it," he said.

She sat up, pulling his hand from between her legs. "What are you doing?" she said, turning between his legs to look in his eyes.

"You shaved yourself."

"What? ... So? ..."

"You shaved yourself for him."

She hugged herself, her eyes wanting to look away, lowering instead. "So?"

Jonny said, "So? So what does that mean?"

"What do you think it means?"

"I don't even want to say."

"So, don't say it then."

"I won't."

"Good." She turned, went to lay herself back against him, sat up again. "You know, maybe if you didn't get me into this mess ..."

"I know ..."

"You ever think maybe this is the worst thing that's ever happened in my entire life?"

"Is it?"

"You ever think it is?"

He held her hand.

"Jonny, I don't want to be embarrassed. Okay? We both know what he's going to do to me tomorrow. I brush my teeth before I go to the dentist, it doesn't mean I like going to the dentist."

*It didn't mean that she didn't though, did it?* He shrugged.

He said, "Would you kiss me?"

She bit her lip, eyes turned down then they darted up and his heart burst when their gaze connected. She dug an elbow into him, purposely, smirking and he grunted. She climbed up so that their lips could meet. He kissed her, and all his imaginations about how his wife was falling for the man that she spread her legs for so they could stay in their apartment were washed away. He felt love in her kiss ... her love for him, and his faith restored.

# 5

SINCE THE NEXT DAY, the first of the month, was a Thursday, Charlie had called in sick. Knew she would have to because of the agreement with their landlord.

Jonny fiddled with code, his workstation angled so he could watch The Twilight Zone, Charlie laying on the couch. They'd had breakfast together, pancakes again just like the last first of the month. Charlie was nervous the whole meal, eyes darting to the door.

During the morning she watched six more episodes of The Twilight Zone while Jonny banged out code, her laying on the couch in clean and pretty pajamas, a cushion pulled to cover her stomach. He watched TV while he worked, and when he would glance over at Charlie he would often find her nervously checking the time or looking up at the door. Occasionally there were sounds from elsewhere in the building, bumps, and voices, people passing in the hall. She would pause the show and sit up straight, turn in the couch so her eyes were on the door. It wasn't Reza.

They had lunch together. Two peanut butter sandwiches, sitting on the couch, and Jonny took a break and watched an entire episode with her. Charlie's legs jumped and twitched, her knees bouncing nervously. One time, he reached out and lay a hand on her knee to steady her. She smiled and bit her lip.

In the afternoon he returned to work, a new freelance job came in, and he lay out a contract with them. He also finished a new set of angel wings for the Koreans, though they hadn't paid him yet, sent those off, and then worked on some difficult coding for a problem-solving puzzle.

By dinnertime, Charlie was twisting with agony. Drawn up on the couch, every sound in the building made her jump. She didn't want to eat. He offered to make something and she said no. She held her stomach and pulled her knees up to her chest. Her face twisted with tension.

When the sun went down she began whining. "Do you think he's coming? You think he's going to come, Jonny?"

"Do you want him to, or do you not want him to come?" he said meanly.

"If he doesn't come is he going to kick us out?"

"No, I don't think so. He just ... I don't know ... he'll just come tomorrow ..."

"It has to be the first, Jonny," she cried.

She began pacing. Her bare feet darting back and forth in front of the couch. She would look out the window though they didn't face anywhere that she may see Reza coming. But if it made her feel better ...

Eleven o'clock rolled around and she was moaning. He'd pulled out the bed from the couch so she could sleep but she wasn't able to. He worked while Charlie lay on the

bed with a forearm draped across her eyes. “Oh Jonny, he’s not going to come. We’re going to have to leave ...”

“No, we won’t, Charlie ...”

“We will, Jonny. We will ... All the things I did ...? ... And we still end up on the street ...? Oh, Jonny ...”

“Stop it, Charlie,” he said, making his tone serious and paternal. “What is your problem?”

She darted up in bed. “My problem? My problem? ...”

He turned to face her and as he did a loud and firm knock rattled the apartment door making both of them jump. Charlie let out a shriek, short and clipped, her hand slapping over her mouth to stop it.

Jonny said, “Looks like you got your wish.”

“JONNY, DON’T SAY THAT.” Charlie stood in front of the couch staring at him with tented eyebrows and a look of worry. She rubbed an arm. “Please, don’t ...”

He shrugged, kept his face blank. “Go. Just go get the door. Don’t keep him waiting.”

“Jonny, please ...” she said, but now she was moving. Making her way toward the front door, her head turned to keep her eyes on him. She wanted to see him smile but he wouldn’t do that. She looked away as she made it to the steps, mounted them, and he lost sight of her as she got in the kitchen. The clicking of the bolt and the rattle of the chain came, then he heard the door open. Charlie said, “Hi.”

Reza said, “There’s my Charlie.”

Then something happened between them, maybe an embrace, a hug. Jonny hefted himself out of his office chair feeling like he weighed a thousand pounds. He shuffled his way to the bottom of the steps.

Reza held both of Charlie’s hands in each of his. He looked down at Jonny, said, “Oh hey there, Jonny.”

Jonny said, “It’s awfully late.”

Reza smiled, one side of his beard pulling up a flash of white teeth, then he said, “It is indeed.”

Their landlord was dressed for the evening. He wore a black tailored suit and shining shoes. No tie, a black shirt buttoned right up to the collar.

Jonny checked his watch, it was 11 P.M. “We thought you weren’t coming,” he said.

"And now, here I am," he said. He swung Charlie's arms back and forth gently. At his feet, Jonny noticed there were two shoppers—paper bags with looped twine handles and tissue paper that puffed out like pastel flames.

Reza said, "Come on up, Jonny. Come sit at the table. You stay with me, Charlie."

Jonny rolled his eyes, took the steps slowly, went to the kitchen table and dropped himself down.

Reza asked Charlie, "How did your husband do this month?"

"How did he do ...?"

"Did he let you down?"

Charlie lowered her eyes, said, "No, he worked really hard."

Reza's gaze moved from Charlie over to regard Jonny. He said to Jonny, "Is that true?"

Jonny nodded, not looking at Reza, looking at his wife.

Reza said, "But Charlie is still coming with me? Boy, oh boy ..."

Charlie said, "He made enough money, but we'll be broke if we pay you ..."

Reza regarded Charlie now, his head cocked confidently, eyes going from her feet up to her down-turned face. Then he looked to Jonny, did the same to him, checking him out from top to toe. He said, "I'm going to wager something. Charlie, if Jonny pays me, I'll still support you. I'll support you and you don't have to do the things I want."

She seemed to brighten, not entirely, but enough to lift her eyes. She looked at Reza then over at Jonny. It wasn't exactly excitement. Jonny hoped to see her jump, say *Of course he can*, relieved that she wouldn't have to spread her legs. But instead, she still seemed fraught with worry.

Reza noticed as well, smirking and chuckling. He lifted her chin with his first knuckle and looked in her eye. "Don't worry, Charlie, I'll fuck you next month, I'm sure of it." Then he caressed a shoulder and turned to Jonny. "Well, Jonny boy? Let's have it."

"The money?"

"Pay me my money," he said, confirming what he wanted.

"Jonny ..." Charlie said.

Jonny said, "The whole amount? ..."

"Of course, Jonny. The whole amount."

His shoulders slumped and his head dipped forward with regret. "I can't."

Charlie sighed audibly, and Jonny worried that it wasn't disappointment in her, but that it was excitement.

Charlie said, "Jonny ... I thought you did it this month?"

"Charlie, baby ... the Koreans didn't come through."

Reza said, "Koreans?"

Jonny said to Charlie, “I’m sorry, baby, the Koreans haven’t paid me yet. They should have, but the money didn’t come through. Maybe I could check my account again ...”

Reza snapped his fingers and broke the moment.

“Stay where you are, Jonny. All three of us know what’s going to happen tonight. Okay? Just let it.”

DOWN THE HALL, he heard the squeak of a door open. They all turned their heads to the open apartment door. Footsteps then, and he wondered if someone was coming. But then he heard the metallic clang as the drawer for the garbage chute was opened and something dropped down. Another door opened, more footsteps, then there was talking. It was Mrs. Garcia from apartment 12, and it sounded like she was talking to Hank O’Reilly, a widowed senior citizen and notorious night owl who lived farther down on the far side of the hall. He couldn’t hear what they were saying, but it sounded like gossip.

Jonny said, “Can you close the door?”

Reza was looking in Charlie’s eyes and she had turned her head down. Reza said, “Your apartment is so stuffy.”

Jonny said, “Whatever.”

Reza came to the table, put his hands on the chair opposite Jonny and pulled it away, turned it so he could face Charlie still standing by the open door. He sat down and crossed his legs, said, “I have something special planned for us tonight.”

Charlie whispered, “Special?”

“Yes, we’re going to have a wonderful evening. Can you show me your grooming?”

Charlie said, “My grooming?”

“I’m taking you out.”

Jonny said, “You’re not taking her out, too.”

“Oh, I *am* taking her out ... I have a special night planned, and my date canceled. Now Charlie is my date.”

Charlie dipped at the knees, and she gasped, “I can’t go out.”

Reza said, “Don’t let me down. It would be very bad if the two of you let me down this evening. It’s an important night and I need you there.”

Jonny said, “Without me?”

Without looking at him, Reza said, “What would I need you for?”

“She’s my wife—”

Charlie said, “Can’t he come along?”

"No, he can't. Don't be ridiculous. Charlie, show me your grooming."

Charlie looked around nervously, chewing on her lower lip. She began to rock back and forth, swiveling at the hips, bare feet planted firmly on the floor. One hand went to her tummy and pulled up the bottom hem of her sweatshirt. She hooked a thumb into the front of her pajamas waistband. Slowly she eased it down until it pointed in a V and Jonny and Reza could see that she had shaved her mound.

Jonny said, "Charlie, just close the door."

Reza said, "Charlie, don't close the door. I want the door open."

The voices still continued down the hall, some mild laughter and then some more hushed tones as a particularly juicy bit of detail was related between the two. Charlie folded her arms up again.

Reza said, "Charlie, show me your grooming."

Charlie said, "I did."

"Show me properly."

Now Charlie looked to the right, to the open door, her brow furrowed. She put her hands in her waistband and slipped her pajamas down her hips and to the top of her thighs. She lifted the front of her sweatshirt again with one hand and put her hips forward. They both could clearly see her shaven mound. Her beautiful freckled pale creamy skin, the cleft swell of her sex.

"See?" Charlie said.

Reza said, "Turn around."

"Turn around?" she repeated.

Reza ran his index finger around in a circle. Charlie obeyed. Shuffling her feet in the same spot, she turned so that they could see her bare bottom.

Now Reza said, "Bend over."

She hesitated. They couldn't see her face, but Jonny knew it was twisting up right now. Her arms were folded, her hands tucked in her armpits.

Reza repeated, "Bend over, Charlie."

The conversation in the hall had stopped and there were shuffling footsteps on the carpet again. Charlie watched out the open door. But she obeyed Reza, slowly beginning to bend over.

Reza said, "Pull your cheeks apart, Charlie."

"Oh, no," she gasped. They could barely hear her.

Jonny said, "Reza ..."

Charlie's pale hands came up the backs of her thighs, over the swell of her rump. Her fingertips pressed into her soft flesh there and slowly peeled her creases wide. She showed them her tiny pink anus, the slim ruffled lips of her dry sex. Showed them both

that she had groomed herself very well, not a single stray hair, nor stubble, nor rash. Charlie was flawless between her legs.

Jonny hated that Reza had done it. Had humiliated her in that way. But between his legs, he was completely iron; throbbing steel. He wondered if Reza was the same.

"Now," Reza said, "drop your pants for us, Charlie."

Charlie offered no resistance this time. Growing comfortable with being asked to do dreadful things. She pushed her pajama pants down just a little bit and then they dropped to the floor on their own. She stood and stepped out of them. "Can I turn around?" she whispered.

Reza said, "Please ..."

She shuffled around in a circle again and faced him. Her lower lip had sucked into her mouth and her eyes were wet and blinking. She folded her arms again and Jonny could see, though it was warm, the skin on her thighs had turned to gooseflesh. She shivered.

Reza said, "Now your top."

Jonny said, "Can't she close the door, please?"

Reza said, "I told you, Jonny, your apartment is too stuffy. I like for there to be the flow of air."

Jonny said, "Someone could come by."

Reza laughed, said, "Could you imagine that? What an amazing thing they would see."

They would, and by tomorrow the gossip would be all over the building. Mr. O'Reilly saw that nice young girl in Apartment 4 show her vagina to the landlord while her weird little husband watched. What would they all make of that?

# 6

"PLEASE ..." Charlie whimpered.

Reza said, "The door?"

Jonny said, "She wants you to close it."

Reza ignored him, said, "Now take your top off, Charlie."

The footsteps grew closer, the sound of someone coming down the hall echoing off of the concrete walls.

Reza said, "Please, Charlie."

Charlie tucked her hands in the hem of her shirt, crossing them over in front of her, looking toward the door, her lower lip trembling. Slowly she eased the sweatshirt up, taking forever to do it.

The footsteps stopped outside, and they heard the sound of an apartment door opening then closing.

Charlie's knees were shaking. But she removed her top. Pulled it up over her head and shook her hair out of it. Now she stood in front of them wearing nothing but a white bra. She covered herself, putting one hand between her legs and crossing an arm over her breasts.

Reza said, "The bra, too."

Charlie turned her side to them, folded her arms behind her back and unclasped the bra. She let it fall forward, held it in her hands then quickly tossed it onto the kitchen table and covered her arms across herself again. She clasped her thighs together and slipped her hand between her legs.

Reza said, "Charlie has an incredible body. Doesn't she, Jonny?"

Jonny agreed. "She does."

Reza's eyes went up and down her body and Charlie chewed the inside of her cheek. He said, "Truly incredible. The way she hides it all you wouldn't even know it was there. But look ... Exquisite. Perfection. Charlie, I brought you gifts. They're in those shopping bags. Open the blue one first."

Charlie darted her eyes to Jonny, showing him worry. "What's in there?" she said.

Reza said, "Open it and you will see."

Charlie squatted down completely naked, parted the open top pushing away pastel blue tissue and pulling out a garment box inside. Blazed in gold on the top of the box was the word, GUCCI.

Reza said, "Open it."

Charlie lay the box flat on the floor and squashed her bare breasts against her knees. Her hands worked the ribbon.

Reza and Jonny watched. Reza leaned to Jonny, said calmly, "Look at that body. Not an ounce of fat. Your wife is a thoroughbred."

Jonny's stomach fluttered. Now he was chewing his own lower lip like Charlie. Charlie, on the other hand, was moving quicker. Like a little girl on Christmas morning; getting the ribbon off, trying to open the lid, tossing it aside, parting the tissue paper with the gold seal and pulling out her gift.

She held a cocktail dress by the shoulders. Silk or chiffon, or something elegant. It shimmered in the kitchen lights. It was a deep royal blue, a perfect complement to his wife's creamy skin and apricot hair.

Charlie admired the dress, running her hands underneath it, seeing the way the fabric shone as her hand passed. "It's beautiful," she whispered.

Reza said, "You deserve it. It's nowhere near as beautiful as you, and I can't imagine how breathtaking the two of you will be together."

Charlie said, "Really? Really, it's for me?"

"Please," Reza said, "put it on."

"Can I?" Charlie asked Jonny.

Jonny shrugged his shoulders. "I don't care."

"Jonny ..."

Reza said, "Charlie, that dress is for you. I want you to wear it tonight."

Charlie said, "Where are we going?"

"I have an event. And I want you in that dress, on my arm."

"A date?"

"I'll make it worth your while."

Now Charlie was looking back at him again, "Jonny? ..."

"Go ahead," he said flatly.

Charlie's mouth moved around like she was going to say something but she didn't. She returned her gaze to the dress, her hands moving over it again, smoothing it, examining its tailoring. "It's really beautiful," she sighed quietly. Then, her head darting over her shoulder, sheepishly said to Reza, "I don't have any underwear."

Reza said, "Under a dress as beautiful as that a lady as beautiful as you doesn't wear a thing."

"They don't?" Charlie gasped.

"That dress goes over your bare body."

Charlie examined it again, her head working around, hair hanging down covering her face. She stood upright then, kept her side to them. She turned her back, put her feet through the dress, bent and pulled it up, shimmying her hips from side to side as she pulled it over her body.

Reza stood and walked behind her. There was a short zip at the top of the dress's back and Reza pulled it closed. Charlie jumped, not realizing he'd been so close and she turned, her face frightened.

Reza said, “I guessed on the size. You’re a size 0?”

“I don’t know,” Charlie said.

“You don’t know your dress size?”

Charlie shook her head no.

“It’s shameful how much your husband lets you down.”

“He doesn’t let me down,” Charlie said, her eyes darting form Reza to look at Jonny.

“Turn around,” Reza said, “let me see what you look like.”

“Okay,” she whispered.

Reza took a step back and sat down again. Charlie turned and showed them her dress. It was beautiful, and Charlie was stunning in it. A shimmering metallic blue, swooping shapes that came over her shoulder and crossed over her breasts. The arms were bare, and the skirt was very short. Jonny pointed it out. “The skirt’s a little short, isn’t it? If you’re not wearing panties ...”

Charlie ignored him, Reza saying, “Charlie, look in the other bag.”

Charlie looked sheepish for a moment, standing in front of them in her bare feet and her beautiful dress; she bit her thumbnail and her lips curled on one side, a graceful smile. She said, “Is it shoes?”

Reza said, “Just look in the bag, Charlie.” He was smiling too.

Now Charlie rolled her head around on her shoulders and Jonny couldn’t ignore the smile that he saw on her face. Her fingers worked around like she was counting, touching her thumb to each of the fingertips. Then she resigned, turned, squatted down again.

Reza said, “Look how narrow her waist is, Jonny. You really married out of your league, didn’t you?”

Jonny said, “She is beautiful.”

“Mm-hm. Once she’s revealed.”

They watched as Charlie worked through the second shopping bag. Squatting next to it, her hands pulling out tufts of pink pastel paper and drawing out an object that was obviously a shoe box.

Reza interrupted her, said, “Bring it here.” She stood and held the box at her waist and walked toward them. He said, “Just have a seat across from me,” and he turned the chair so it faced him. She sat down and they were knee-to-knee. “Open the box,” he said.

There was a wide gold organza ribbon, and she untied it, pulled off the lid. Charlie brought out a shoe. Black patent pump speckled with sparkling crystals, the sole a shining bright red.

“You know what that is?” Reza asked.

Charlie turned the shoe over and over, admiring it. She whispered, “No.”

Reza said, “It’s a Louboutin Sexy Strass. Very rare, never worn, but vintage. Those are Swarovski crystals. A very rare and exciting shoe for such a rare and exciting woman.”

“It’s so beautiful,” she said, mesmerized by the shoe, the crystals shining like stars and casting spots of light on Charlie’s perfect face.

“It costs more than what you pay for a month’s rent.”

Charlie gasped, her fingers curled on the shoe and she held it between her breasts. She said, “For a pair of shoes?”

Reza said, “Each shoe.”

Charlie said, “Each shoe?” and she held the shoe out again tenderly braced in her fingertips and admiring it.

Reza reached out and took it from her and tapped her knee. “Give me that pretty foot,” he said.

Charlie set the box on the floor, sat up, rested on the seat back, her hands on either side of her thighs, hands curled over the seat. She looked sheepishly at Jonny, then her gaze darted back to the shoe. She lifted her knee and Reza took her ankle. He put it between his thighs and ran his thumb over her instep. “Such beautiful feet,” he said.

He guided her knee higher, and it was clear that he could see up her skirt and between her legs. Charlie pressed her thighs together. Reza smiled. He examined her feet for a moment, said, “Such pretty toes.” Then he slipped the shoe on her foot as Charlie pointed her toes to receive it. He slid the shoe on then held his hand out, said, “The other.”

She reached down to the box, her knees touching so she wouldn’t expose herself and pulled up the other shoe. Reza repeated the action, taking her ankle and slipping on the shoe.

“Now stand for me,” he said, and he held his hands cupped together, leaning forward and putting his elbows on his knees.

“Okay,” Charlie sighed. Her cheeks had grown rosy with excitement.

She stood, a little wobbly at first but then her legs straightened and strengthened, her muscles bulging above her knee. She took a few steps away and turned and looked over her shoulder at the both of them.

Reza said, “Excellent. Wouldn’t you agree, Jonny?”

“She does look incredible,” he said softly. He hated to see her this way. All that she had exposed now for everyone to see. At one time she had been his and only his. He put a ring on her finger and owned her. Then another man noticed. And dressed like this now, were she to appear in public, every man who put his eyes on her would know her charms.

"THAT'S A LOT OF EXPENSE," Jonny said, "for such a short date."

Charlie said, "Short date?"

Reza stood up, put his hands in his pockets and turned to regard Jonny.

Jonny continued, "Short date." He lay his hand on the kitchen table and drummed his fingers. He said, "It's 11:20 right now. Forty minutes from now will be the second of the month."

Reza said, "So?"

Jonny said, "So? Our deal was for the first of the month."

Charlie said, "Jonny ..."

Reza said, "It is the first of the month."

"Right now it is," Jonny said. "Do what you need to do but once it's midnight, your deal is invalid."

Reza acted unconcerned. He said, "No, it's valid. I'm here on the first and what I'm going to do with her begins now."

"Oh, really?" Jonny said. "So if you came on the first of the month you could stay in our bed for thirty days? Spend every day with us because it still counts because you got here on the first?"

Charlie sighed again, she looked nervously at Reza. He looked to her and gestured impatiently to Jonny without saying anything.

Charlie carefully walked to him in her new high heels. Clicking across their familiar linoleum floors with a new and frightening sound. When she was next to him she squatted down, and he looked at how much of her bare thighs were revealed in Reza's dress.

She whispered to him, "Jonny ... don't do this. Please, don't do this. I don't know what you think you're doing ... no, I do. I get it. You don't have to defend me. We know what the deal is. This isn't a court of law. What he's asking is fair."

"Fair?" he scoffed. "Fair?"

"You know the agreement. There is no letter of the law here. There's nothing to argue ..."

He said quietly, "Well, your honor, I'd like to argue that I think you fucking want to go out with him tonight."

She recoiled, her face startled as though he struck her.

"Jonny ... how could you say that?"

"I don't know," he admitted, looking away from both of them.

She stood now, and he looked up at her and saw her disappointed gaze. He felt humbled again. His petulant outburst as impotent as everything else he did these days.

"Fine," he said. "Go. Go have fucking fun."

Reza chuckled, adjusted his suit jacket, tugging at his lapels. "We will, Jonny. We will have fucking fun." Now he held out his arm, gesturing for Charlie to come and take it, acting like he was some sort of gentleman. Fucking gorilla in a $5000 suit, thinks he knows his manners.

Charlie walked to him, again carefully learning how to walk in such high heels. She put out an arm hooked in an L and he took it, pulled her elbow so that she was close to him. Jonny stood up and came behind them before they left. He said, "When will you be home?"

Charlie threw a look over her shoulder, her brow troubled, she whispered, "I don't know—"

Reza said, "Don't worry, Jonny. She'll be home in one piece before dawn."

Charlie looked to Reza, said, "Before dawn?"

"This is a big event. I have social duties."

Jonny said, "Social duties, Mr. Darcy?"

Reza scowled, said, "Who's that?" and Jonny chuckled to himself, his heart leaping when he saw a twinkling gleam in Charlie's eyes. The corner of her mouth pulled up in a hidden smirk at his Pride And Prejudice joke.

"Never mind," Jonny said, and he rested his hand on the handle of the open door.

"Let's go, Charlie," Reza said, "I'm going to show you the greatest night of your life."

Then that moment between him and his wife was extinguished, that sparkle fizzled as her gaze turned to Reza and her wonderful smile remained for him as well. It was all he could think of as they walked out the door together. He came to the threshold, his toes touching onto the carpet of the hall and watched as the two of them sauntered toward the elevators. Reza was leaning close and whispering things to her. Charlie was leaning toward him and listening. If she laughed he would drop dead on-the-spot right now. She didn't, and they made their way to the elevator banks. He couldn't watch anymore and stepped back into the kitchen and closed the door.

# 7

JONNY STOOD for a long while with his back to the apartment door, wishing to hear footsteps returning, his Charlie opening the door telling him it was all a big joke. She would take off those luxurious items, throw them in the garbage, she would sit with him and they would watch the rest of The Twilight Zone.

He waited long enough he knew that wasn't going to happen. None of this was a dream. All of it was a nightmare of his own concoction. His own real-life Twilight Zone episode. So X-rated that it was never aired.

He heaved himself from the door and headed down the two steps to the family room intending to topple into his chair and lose himself in coding. But he was so heavy, so enervated, when he passed the bed he threw himself on it instead, drew his knees up so he was in the fetal position. He began to moan. The moans pushed away idle thoughts that wanted to ponder all the things she would do without him tonight. He lay like that in absolute spiritual pain for the longest time. As his eyes grew heavy, and he almost escaped the torture, a gentle knock came to the door.

She was home. It was over. The torment was done.

He jumped up from the couch, that languid weight doffed and he was renewed with energy. She was home, she was home, she was home. Reza had taken her downstairs, all the preamble in the kitchen only a taunt. Oh, he had fucked her; he was sure of it. Probably bent her over the console of his Porsche and fucked her from behind. But she was home, she was home, she was home. He jumped the two steps and slid in his socks to the front door.

When he opened it he discovered that it wasn't Charlie at all.

"Hey, man."

Jonny said, "What are you doing here?"

"Came to hang out," Demetrius said. "You invite me in?"

"Invite you in? Why would I invite you in?"

"Do or don't, don't matter. I'm coming in."

No, the gentle knock on his door was a ruse. Instead, it was the Welterweight MMA dynamo that Reza sponsored. Here for a visit.

"Why would you come here?" Jonny said.

Demetrius didn't answer, stepped into the kitchen brushing past Jonny. He wasn't mean or menacing, in fact, his face was held in mirthful exuberance. He wore casual clothes; an oversized sweatshirt that came below his waist, baggy pants, colorful unlaced running shoes. The strap for a pack on his back ran sideways at an angle over his shoulder. He unslung it now, closed the door, taking it out of Jonny's hands.

Demetrius said, "Told you, man. Just come to hang out." He held the backpack against his chest and ran the zipper across. Jonny had a sudden vision of him pulling

out a pistol and putting a bullet between Jonny's eyes, leaving him dead on the kitchen floor, his wife now forever in the arms of the man who hired this killer.

"Check this out, man," Demetrius said, his deep voice indicating something special was coming. But what he brought out was not a gun, it was the colorful box for the fantasy PS4 game Gods Of War.

"God Of War?" Jonny whispered.

"That's the one," he said, trotting down to the family room, expecting Jonny to follow. He stopped at the couch, saw it pulled out to be a bed, said, "Hey, you going to go to sleep?"

Jonny stepped down into the family room, said, "No, I have to work."

Demetrius agreed. "Yeah, you do at that."

Jonny said, "So, maybe you could come back another time. I got too much to do."

"That's okay. You work. I'm just gonna play." He threw his bag onto a chair, went to his knees under the TV, spread the glass doors of the stereo unit, opened his case for the game and popped in the disc.

As Demetrius got up and returned, now going to one of the IKEA chairs, he said, "Go, go sit down. Work. Make some paper."

Jonny watched him a while, watched as he sat down with one of Jonny's controllers and thumbed through menus on his TV. He said, "You here to watch me?"

"Yeah," he said without looking.

"Why?"

Demetrius said, "Reza call me. Said you was talking back."

"Hardly," Jonny said.

"Whatever. He don't like it. He said I come watch you. Make sure you don't show up at the club with a gun. You got a gun, Jonny?"

"No," he said.

Demetrius said, "I told Reza you didn't."

"What if I did? You think I'd go to this club or wherever and do something ... final."

"You any kind of man you would."

Jonny shook his head, unfolded his arms, watched as Demetrius got into the game and began, not paying any attention to him now. He went to his workstation, set himself down, and tried to code.

That lasted for not more than fifteen minutes. The things that Demetrius said raced through his mind. Possibilities. Things a man *should* do. Then came the things another man *was* doing. The way another man owned his wife right now. Sure, just for one day out of thirty-one, but just the same—for one day he turned Jonny into nothing in his wife's life. He knew that Reza would fuck her tonight. Had seen him do it many times. Had seen how rough he was with Charlie. Saw how Charlie could take it though. His

stomach fluttered thinking despite how rough Reza was with her she still would come. Watching your wife orgasm while being pounded by another man was devastating. How the fuck would he code anything right now? Checked his account and saw the money had come in from the Koreans. *Now* it comes in. He turned in his chair and watched the video game for a while.

Demetrius wasn't that good. While he wasn't terrible, there were things that he wasn't doing. Jonny got up and joined him, sat down with his back against the identical IKEA chair next to Demetrius.

Demetrius was on to him, said, "You here to critique?"

"There's things you're missing ..."

"I heard that," he said. "Things you missing, too."

FOR HALF AN HOUR Jonny showed Demetrius better techniques to do the things he wanted to do in God Of War. Demetrius was eager to learn. Resistant at first, then his pride easing and recognizing this was a chance to obtain some knowledge. Jonny explained how the game worked. The big picture. Showed him better techniques, maneuvers that he didn't know ...

Demetrius brought out a baggie from his backpack and took some pills and Jonny asked, "What are those?"

He said, "You don't want any of these. Ain't drugs. Just some BCAAs."

Jonny said, "What do they do?"

Demetrius said, "Just vitamins. Protein synthesis ..."

He let it hang and Jonny realized he didn't really know what they did. In the bag, he also had a bottle of water and he broke the cap and took a long swig, swallowing his pills. He offered Jonny some beef jerky and Jonny took a piece.

"Thanks," he said. "Hey, I have UFC."

"Oh yeah? What fight is tonight?"

"No, not a fight," Jonny said. "The game. We could play head-to-head."

"Fire it up," Demetrius said.

Jonny got it going, and they played for two hours. It was fun because it was two hours he was able to stop thinking about what might be happening. But eventually, his insides had grown so tight and as much as he pushed the thoughts away while beating Demetrius's ass with every player they tried, it got to where he couldn't stand it anymore. At the end of a six-round mega match that Demetrius came very close to actually winning for once, Demetrius said, "You know, man, this was real life I beat your ass."

Jonny said, “I know.”

Demetrius kept his eyes on him, surmising him. Then he said, “But you’re pretty good at this. On TV.”

“I know,” he said, then he sighed. “Reza thought I might be the kind of guy who would do something because he took my girl?”

“Yeah.”

“You know that he’s not really taking my girl, though, right? Not for real. It’s just for money. In lieu of money.”

“Money or not he got your girl tonight. A man do that he knows a good chance someone’s gonna show up cause some shit.”

“He thought I might do that?”

“I can’t believe you don’t.”

“Really?”

“He do what he’s doing to my girl ...? ... Shit, man ... he be dead.”

“Yeah. You can fight.”

“I ain’t encouraging you to do anything about it. Just saying Reza’s a smart man. He know what to expect from other men.”

“Teach me how to fight.”

“You? Teach you how to fight?”

“Yeah. Show me what I should do to Reza.”

Demetrius laughed, put his controller down and stood up. “All right, all right. Show me how you stand.”

Demetrius put up his fists in a very professional looking stance and Jonny tried to imitate it. Then he just threw out a jab so fast he didn’t see it. Didn’t hit him, just tapped his chin.

“You got to close that gap up, son.”

So Jonny did, closing his hands to block his mouth.

“That’s it, that’s it,” Demetrius said then his shoulder flinched and Jonny felt his ribs being slapped with the back of Demetrius’s fingers. “Gotta keep them elbows in, kid.”

“Yeah,” he said, but when he brought his elbows in, Demetrius flashed out a hook and flicked Jonny on the cheek. This time it hurt. “Hey,” he said, stepping away and holding his mouth. “That hurt.”

Demetrius said, “Man, I didn’t even hit you ... this may be why he can take your girl ...”

Jonny lashed out, lunging and throwing a fist. Demetrius lazily swayed to one side, Jonny’s intensity making him laugh. He taunted him, saying, “Jonny got the fire.”

Jonny took a big swing that if he'd connected would have hurt Demetrius. He popped his eyebrows up and down and covered up again starting to take the sparring seriously.

"Hey, Jonny, you know Reza likes your girl ..."

"I know," he said, throwing out a jab that Demetrius slapped away.

"No, man, I mean he really like your girl."

Jonny jabbed again and then tried an uppercut but hurt his knuckles on Demetrius's elbows.

"Yeah, man, we came by her work yesterday, Reza brought her lunch ..."

"What?"

"Yeah, we stop by the library, he bring her sushi ..."

"He did not," he said, whipping his fist now as hard as he could, wishing he would connect.

"He didn't fuck her or nothin, girl at work, but Jonny, you shoulda seen her face light up when she saw him coming ..."

That made Jonny madder than he could ever remember. Now he thrashed, swinging, taking steps, backing Demetrius up, striking wildly and missing. Demetrius bobbed and weaved, laughing the whole time. As he got him backed up to the red IKEA chairs, Jonny, red with fury, slashed his leg up and tried to kick Demetrius in the balls.

Demetrius grabbed his leg, hooking a forearm under his ankle, the other one locking under his knee and then surged forward, throwing Jonny onto his back, Demetrius coming down to land on top of him. Demetrius's legs sprawled out on either side and Jonny couldn't get him off. But now Demetrius was mad. He lifted himself up and away, straddled Jonny around his hips. He didn't say anything but Jonny knew he was going to be hit. Demetrius slapped him right across the mouth. Not too hard that it rattled his brain, hard enough that he felt his lips swell.

Jonny threw his hands up between them, scratching him, pulling at his sweatshirt but Demetrius grabbed his wrists and peeled them away. Demetrius said, "Man, you a little bitch." He got down real low next to his ear and said, "Jonny, you think he got that big cock in your girl right now?" Jonny struggled underneath him.

Demetrius laughed, spread his legs wide again so he couldn't be removed. He chuckled and whispered, "I bet she moaning right now. Bet she moaning and squirming underneath him. You know she liked it, right? Know she liked that cock..."

"Shut up," Jonny grunted, struggling with him, trying to wrestle out of his grip. He could taste his own blood in his mouth.

"Oh Reza, you feel so good," Demetrius said in a high girlish voice, imitating his Charlie. "Ew, you're so big, Reza, my little Jonny has such a tiny pee-pee ..."

"Get fucking off me," he growled.

Demetrius laughed, and in Charlie's voice again, said, "Ah, ah, oh, I'm coming, I'm coming ..."

"Get the fuck off me," Jonny said in his most sincerely vengeful voice. He twisted and writhed under Demetrius, but Demetrius had him pinned.

Now he was gasping in Charlie's voice, "Reza, come inside me, come inside me, I want to feel it ..." He broke off laughing after that and let him go and Jonny squirmed across the floor and sat with his back against the side of his bed. He rubbed his wrists and watched Demetrius hold his belly he was laughing so hard.

"It's not funny," he said. His mouth stung and when he touched his hand to it, he winced. Could feel that it had begun to swell.

Demetrius still laughed, subsiding though, taking deep breaths. Demetrius said, "No, it ain't funny. Ain't funny, man, but you got me laughing."

"Some bodyguard you are," Jonny said. "Provoking me into wanting to do something. Aren't you supposed to protect him?"

Demetrius put his back against the IKEA chair and drew up his knees, draped his arms over them. "Man, I'm telling you ... It ain't in you. Why I come with video games. Take my job serious and all, but you ain't nothing to worry about."

"Until I am," Jonny said.

"Oooh," Demetrius moaned with wide white eyes, twinkling his fingers, taunting him with theatrical fear. Then he said, "No, you ain't. You like it too much."

"No, I don't."

"You do," he said with a shrug. "That a roll of dimes I felt?"

"A roll of—"

"Against the inside of my leg ..."

"—dimes?" Then Jonny said, "Oh," and he shrugged. The taunting had aroused him.

"Hey, don't sweat it. Embrace it, man, that's what I say."

"That's what you say?"

Demetrius patted the spot next to him, indicating for Jonny to come and join him. "Hey, that's your thing. That's cool. You get your bills paid ... I know you twisted up inside but you get off on it."

"I do not." Jonny sat next to him. Demetrius handed him a controller and Jonny took it. As Demetrius scrolled through the game menu, selecting another two-player battle, he said, "Ay, you might deny it, but you happy. I see you happy. I can tell you Reza's happy. I sure as shit know Charlie's happy ..."

"Fuck off."

"Hey, you forget I had her? Forget I put my dick in your wife's happy mouth?"

"Whatever."

Demetrius started over, "Yeah, you happy. Reza's happy. Charlie's happy. Ain't you feel sorry for me? I'm the one that got to work. Come here, babysit your ass." He started the game and their two characters began to brawl.

Jonny said, "You're getting paid."

He could sense Demetrius shrugging, seeing his point. "That's true," Demetrius said.

"Paid to play video games," Jonny said.

"Hey, just like you. Except I actually get paid."

# 8

WHEN JONNY WOKE, the black sky had faded to a threatening gunmetal. He snapped upright with a snort. He was in bed, still clothed. Demetrius had laid a blanket over him. He darted his eyes left and right, whipped his head around. Demetrius was gone. The PlayStation turned off, but the TV left on, a flickering paler shade of gray than the sky. He heard now what woke him. Voices in the hall, a rattling as a key scored the lock. A pewter cat face key chain scraping the door under the handle; a familiar and heart-bursting sound. She really was home.

He jumped out of bed as quickly as he could given the stiffness brought to him by sleep. He made his way to the stairs to the kitchen, and he saw the door swing open. Two black figures tumbled past the threshold of the unlit apartment. She wasn't alone. That should have been obvious, given the voices. He wasn't prepared, though, to see them together.

It was Reza and Charlie. Charlie was laughing. Whatever Reza was saying was so fucking hilarious his shy wife was giggling. She stumbled in first and Reza closed the door behind them. She was dotty on her heels, very unsteady, and she turned in an awkward circle to face their landlord and he thrust himself against her; pinning her to the side of their fridge hard enough that it rattled and a magnet that held their phone bill clattered to the floor. As the bill wafted, seesawing the air to rest on the linoleum, Reza shoved his tongue into Charlie's mouth.

She groaned and inhaled deeply, accepting his tongue. Her hand gripped his thick upper arm and Jonny watched her fingertips dent his expensive suit coat. Their kiss turned to chuckling, Reza's a low animal grumble.

He broke the kiss and looked into her eyes. She looked in his too, and her face broke with a wide smile. He got close to her and whispered something and she giggled again. When her eyes opened, she saw Jonny past Reza's arm, standing and glowering from the family room.

"Oh, Jonny!"

Jonny said, "Looks like you had a good time."

Reza knew he was there and his big hands went down her waist over her thighs, slipping up underneath her skirt and lifting it a little higher. Pulling it so it bunched at the crease of her buttocks; if she still wore no panties, which he was sure she didn't, her pussy would be bare between them.

Charlie squirmed from Reza, her hands coming down now and tugging her skirt low, as low as it would go, which wasn't very. She looked embarrassed. Looked like she'd been caught doing something naughty.

Reza turned around, his hands coming off of her. He slipped them in his pockets, said, "Told you I'd have her home before sunup."

Jonny didn't say anything, continued to stare at the two of them. Concentrating more on his wife. Jonny said, "You have to go to work today, Charlie. You can't call in sick two days in a row."

Her eyes darted downward again, and she said, "I know."

Reza said, "Such a shame you're with a man like Jonny. You were my girl, you wouldn't work at all. I'd send you to the spa today. Sleep in til noon, wake up, two Vietnamese girls rub your back until dinner."

Jonny said, "Fuck off." It made Reza sneer, his eyes twinkling in the morning light, dazzling even in their dim kitchen. "You can go now."

Reza went to the door unaffected by Jonny's false bravado, opened it, turned and said, "What she did last night for me going to make an easy month for you two." He winked at Charlie and she looked away. Then he slipped back into the hall and closed the door behind him.

THEY STARED at each other in the dark. Twenty feet apart, him standing in the center of the family room looking up at her, she made all sorts of pained and funny faces, looking down on him from the kitchen. Her mouth twisted around and he could see her eyes glistening.

"What?" she whined.

"I guess you had a lot of fun, didn't you?"

"Jonny, don't be like that."

"It's, like, five in the morning, Charlie."

"I know, I know ..." she said, and she heaved herself off of the fridge where she'd been leaning. She adjusted her dress again, walked to the top of the stairs on her toes looking very wobbly. She lifted each heel and removed her shoes. Now she came down in her bare feet to the family room, tossed the shoes onto a chair and flicked on a lamp that stood behind it. She said, "Jonny, please, don't be like that ..." Then she turned to come to him and skidded to a stop.

"Jonny, your face!"

He put his hand up and felt his lip and cheek were swollen.

"My God, Jonny. What happened to your face ...?"

She stumbled to him, gripped him with one hand, her other fingers smoothing along his neck as her beautiful emerald eyes wavered, taking in his injury. He took one of her wrists and pulled his face away.

"Does it hurt?" she gasped. "When I touch it?"

"It's fine," he said. "Leave it alone."

"How'd you get hurt?"

"You smell like cigarettes."

She stepped back, her canine pinching her lower lip. "I do?"

He moved toward her, put his nose near her, said, "Cigarettes ... Charlie, you smell like booze ... You smell like weed ... Fucking weed, Charlie?"

Her posture slumped, and she looked away from him, then traipsed heavily toward their bed and threw herself on it.

"Charlie, did you do drugs?"

Charlie said, "What do you mean drugs?"

"Were you drinking?"

She clucked her tongue and reached around behind her trying to find the blanket that Demetrius had thrown over him while he slept. Fingers found it, snatched it and pulled it over her.

Jonny went to her, sat on the edge of the bed. "Hey, talk to me."

"Talk to you? You're being such a jerk right now."

"How can you say I'm being a jerk? You know what it was like for me here tonight?"

"You know what it was like for me?" she said defiantly, eyes meeting his now. It startled him.

He quietly said, "Yeah, I don't think it was hard at all."

"Oh, you don't?" she said, raising one eyebrow.

"Charlie, what's wrong with you?"

"Nothing's wrong with me," she said, flopped back down and tried to pull the blanket to cover herself.

"Hey," he said. Ran a hand up her bare calf and gripped her behind her knee. "Hey, don't be like that. I'm sorry if I was being a jerk. I just had a really terrible night, I guess maybe I'm taking it out on you."

"You are," she said without looking at him.

"Well, sit up and talk to me. Tell me what happened."

Her eyes were open, he could see them blinking. "Come on, Charlie. Don't leave me out."

She slowly sat up, leaned back on one hand. She looked beautiful, but he could see that her hair was a tangled mess. She always had a wild mane but right now her hair was unruly in a different way. Her makeup was gone as well. She left the house wearing very little, and now returned, it seemed she wore none. As if it had been worn off. Her skin shone in the low lamplight, her beautiful speckled creamy skin that he wanted so badly to touch right now. He ran his hand higher up past her knee, between it and the hem of her very short skirt. Her leg felt wonderful.

"You can tell me if you had a good time," he said.

"I don't know, Jonny. I didn't have a bad time. I can tell you that I did not have a bad time. He was good to me."

The fact that Reza was good to her and it was acknowledged by Charlie stung like the slap that had been delivered by Demetrius.

"He was good to you?"

"You know what he can be like. He wasn't like that tonight."

"Where did you go?"

"Mockingbird."

"Mockingbird? What's that?"

"Club on Houston Street. He invested in it. Tonight was their opening night. A soft launch. VIPs only."

"Oh," he said. Picturing her in a throng of the city's very hot young VIPs. Without him. With Reza.

"What kind of club is it?" he asked.

"I don't know," she said. "Like a dance club. And a bar."

"Were you drinking?"

"Is that okay?" she said sheepishly, her chin down, looking up at him through her brows like a scolded kid.

"You just don't drink."

"No. No, I don't."

"So you were drinking?"

She nodded.

"That's okay, Charlie. I don't mind that you were drinking."

"You don't?"

He shook his head for her and forced a smile on his face. About the greatest struggle he could imagine.

She seemed to soften now, said, "I did. It didn't taste like alcohol. It was like pop. But I did get a little woozy."

"How were your high heels?"

She giggled a little, said, "Tricky. I almost fell a couple times."

"Can I kiss you?"

Now she nodded and smiled for him. He felt the tight grip that had held his heart when she walked in the door begin to loosen.

"Can I?"

"You can," she said. She tilted her head back and pointed her chin at him, her eyes narrowed, her lips peeled back in a smile. He went over top of her and took her lips, sucked on them, pried her teeth apart with his tongue. When he felt hers against his, it

was like he swooned. He put one arm around her and cradled her against him, pressed his body as flat to her as he could. He breathed her in. He smelled cigarettes, smelled booze, he smelled weed. He smelled cologne, too.

When their kiss broke, he sat up again and said, "You can tell me if you smoked weed."

"I did," she said. "I did a little bit in the limo."

"In the limo?"

She nodded again and he could see that she was a little nervous telling him that, chewing the inside of her mouth like she did.

"He took a limo?"

"Yeah, we took a limo from here to the club and then back home again. It was me and him and these three other guys—"

"Three other guys? Who?"

"This really big guy from his gym. He was pretty funny. And then, like, this businessman who owns, I think, five restaurants in town. He was kind of dry but I think he's smart. And then there was another young guy, I think he might be kind of mean."

"Mean?"

"I don't know, it was hard to tell. He was always scowling, and he never said anything."

"Oh," Jonny said, trying to picture his poor Charlie, timid as she was, in a fancy limousine with intimidating men. Every time he did, he pictured her on all fours though; a vicious image leaping out of the darkest recesses of his mind, flashing him vile scenes of her taking cocks up her ass and in her mouth.

"You okay?" she said.

He would've said *Okay* but he couldn't speak. So he nodded and kept that funny smile on his face.

"I have to go pee," she said. She stood, still a little wobbly even in bare feet, putting her hands out to the sides to balance herself.

"Ooh," she said then, seeing her shoes on the IKEA chair, "ooh, my shoes," and she stumbled to them, gathering them up in her arms and cradling them to her bosom.

Still having to pee, she crossed the room with her thighs pressed together, bending her legs only at her knees and shuffling. She stumbled to the far side where she kept her clothes in a tiny closet and dropped to the floor. She stood then, opened the door and cleared a space. Stooped down, picked up her shoes and carefully put them on a shelf. Admired them, then reached out and arranged them so they were angled nicely. She admired them again for another moment then closed the door.

Jonny rose off the bed, came behind and braced her, putting two hands on her back to steady her.

"Thanks," she said. "Little dizzy."

He guided her to the bathroom and went in with her. She didn't object, though it was as though she didn't notice him come in. She crossed her arms over and pulled the dress off, swaying her hips from side to side then dragging it up. He watched as her completely naked body was revealed. Felt weak in the knees again.

Dress off, dizzy because her eyes were closed, she swooned and had to throw her hands out on the counter to steady herself, her wedding ring making a loud metallic knock on the Formica.

"You sure you're okay?"

"I'm okay," she said. She took two steps and flipped up the lid of the toilet then turned and plopped herself down. She leaned her elbows on her knees and hung her head forward, her long beautiful ginger hair flowing over her legs. Bright tinkling ensued, a hissing sound underneath.

Her dress lay on the countertop, half in the sink and half spread on the counter. He could see stains on the underside of the skirt, below the waist. What would clearly be described as semen stains. His stomach bounced, and he grimaced. Caught his reflection in the mirror and saw an expression that mirrored exactly how he felt. Torn apart. Jealous, furious, in love, in lust, aroused, humbled ... worthless.

"I'll hang up your dress, okay?" he said

"Mm-kay," she moaned from under her hair, still tinkling away.

Jonny took a free hanger from her closet and ran hidden straps in the neck over the hook so it would stay in place and put it amongst her other things. Hated the idea that the semen stains may touch any of the clothes he might actually recognize her in, and he spread distance between the beautiful blue dress and the clothes she regularly wore. When he returned to the bathroom, they bumped into each other in the doorway.

"Ope," she laughed and covered her mouth.

He took her hand and guided her toward the pullout bed. She crawled up from the foot on all fours and then collapsed.

Jonny returned to the bathroom and flushed the toilet for her. When he got back to the bed her arm was thrashing again trying to find that blanket. She lay completely nude on the bed. She really was an incredible beauty.

He crawled up to join her, taking the blanket and gathering it to himself. He said, "Charlie, turn around. Don't go to sleep."

"Sorry, Jonny I have to sleep. I'm so tired."

"Okay. Just talk to me first. Then I'll let you sleep. I'll sit by you and wake you when you have to go to work."

"I can't go to work today, Jonny."

"Can't go to work? You have to. You have to go to work, Charlie."

"Jonny, I'm so tired. There's no way I can go to work today. Call in sick for me."

"Charlie, are you crazy? You can't skip work again."

"But I *am* sick, Jonny. I have to get up in three hours and go to work ...? I can't do that ..."

"You have to, Charlie. What if you lose your job?"

She groaned. Rolled her head so she could look in his eyes. Stared at him for a while, blinking, then said, "Please, Jonny. I have to sleep. Just call in sick for me."

Now that they were face-to-face—and she seemed vulnerable laying naked on her back, her head angled towards his, her hair spread out around her, eyes narrowed from lack of sleep and drugs and booze—he confronted her with it: "He fucked you?"

She didn't avert her gaze, his words hadn't affected her at all. She stayed staring, blinking. She said, "You know he did."

"I know he did," he said. "Did he use a condom?"

She still held his gaze, said, "No, he never uses condoms, Jonny. You know that, too."

"So he came inside you?"

Now she didn't answer.

"Isn't it close to—"

"It's fine," she said grimly.

He said, "Did he make you come?"

That made her close her eyes. Those narrow slits winking shut, eyelashes fluttering. He watched her breathe.

He repeated, "Charlie, did he make you come?"

She raised her eyebrows but kept her eyes closed. "Yes, he made me come, Jonny."

Didn't know if he expected some victory for dragging that information out of her, but he won, got it from her. Now he didn't want the victory. He changed the subject. "What was the club like?"

"Will you call in sick for me?"

"Fine, I will."

"Will you?" she said high and breathy and hopeful, a slight smile on her sleepy face.

"Yes."

"Okay, the club was crazy, Jonny. There were so many people. The music was so loud, the place was unreal ... It looked like a palace ..."

"Sounds nice."

"It was so nice. It was like a palace but it was all lit up with fluorescent lights ... No, like, neon lights. In purples and pinks. We got everything for free. We had canapés, we had some drinks that came in these little tumblers—"

"Shots?"

"Yeah, shots. They were really sweet."

"And what did you do there?"

"I don't know," she said. "Just talk to people ... and we did some dancing."

"Dancing, Charlie? You don't dance ..."

"No. But there were people there and they taught me. Reza taught me, too. Taught me all kinds of dances and stuff."

"Sit up, Charlie," he said. "Talk to me. It's important."

Her eyes fluttered open again, and she saw his serious face. "Okay," she said. She sat herself up and then scooted so she could rest her back on the couch cushions. She reached her hand out and made grabby fingers, indicating she wanted the blanket he held. He handed it to her, and she lay it to cover herself. It was the worst thing because this whole process of interrogation and her nudity had him throbbing right now. Hard and erect yet so jealous and hurt there was a lump the size of a softball in his throat, just above his heart.

"Charlie, tell me ..."

She cocked her head, said, "Tell you what?"

"Tell me ... how he fucked you."

Now she cocked her head to the other side, regarding him, studying him. "Really?" she asked.

"Please, tell me ..."

"Why would you want to hear that?"

"I have to know."

"You know he did. You can imagine. Do you have to know? Or do you want to know?"

He was a little shaken by her boldness. Analyzing him that way, his usually shy and demure wife willing to do anything he wanted without protest.

"I have a right to know," he said.

"A right to know, Jonny? Why? Because you're my husband?"

"You're my wife."

"I am your wife. So just tell me the truth. Tell me why you want to hear the details."

"You can't keep things from me, Charlie."

"You can't keep things from me either, Jonny."

"What do I keep from you?"

"You've kept a lot from me, Jonny. Isn't it obvious now?"

“Don’t ...”
“So, show me,” she said.
“Show you what?”
“Show me your thing,” she said.
His heart jumped. “My thing?”
“Show it to me, Jonny. I want to see your penis.”
“Why?”
“Why not?” Now her gaze lowered between his legs.
“So what?” he said defiantly, shrugging it off, admitting to his arousal.
“Why does it make you hard, Jonny?”
“I don’t know why it does.”
“I’m right, though? You’re hard?”
“Yeah.”
“Show it to me.”

# 9

JONNY SHOULD HAVE BEEN eager to show her but for some reason he was reluctant. She stared him down until the sound of his heart in his ears beat the lust into his brain.

She'd been with Reza tonight. Reza was much larger. He put a thumb into the front of his sweatpants and tugged them down. He wore no underwear, and his small slender endowment sprung up out of his dense pubic hair. He watched his wife's eyes as she regarded it. A little smirk tugged at one side of her smile.

"I knew you had an erection."

"I do," he said still holding the pants down, feeling his pulse race through his dick, so excited that she was looking at it. It was crazy, this was his wife, and she'd seen it many times.

He said, "You've only seen two in your life?"

Her eyes darted up to his, and the smirk turned to a real smile. She said, "Penises?"

He nodded.

Her eyes darted back down and she huddled up in her blanket. "Yeah, I've only seen two. In real life." She sighed, let her woolen cloak part, her bare arms coming out now. He caught a glimpse of her nude body, her pink sex between her legs. She reached out and took his penis in her hand. He gasped a sharp intake of air and had to close his eyes. His brain had done a somersault. Clear excitement streamed from him and rolled over her thumb.

Charlie said, "You don't like it ... Do you? Like it when Reza does things to me?"

"No," he groaned. "I hate it. I really hate it."

Charlie whispered, "Your penis likes it?"

He said, "My penis likes it."

Charlie chuckled lightly and shook what she had in her hand, squeezed like she was choking it. "Stupid penis," she whispered.

He groaned again, heart pounding even harder now. He said, "You've only seen two?"

"I told you."

"Which one do you like better?"

She didn't answer and his eyes fluttered open. Found his wife looking at him intently, her brow furrowed. She said, "My husband's."

"You don't like his?"

"It's weird. It looks like something that would've been on one of the farm animals back home."

"Like a donkey?"

"Like a big old donkey," she agreed, watching her hand as it started to stroke ever so lightly up and down his shaft.

"Charlie?"

"What?" she said, eyes still lowered on what she was doing to her husband.

"Did he ... Did he come by your work?"

The stroking stopped. She was looking at him again, the intensity returned. "Jonny ..."

"Did he?"

"How did you know?"

"I know everything," he said mysteriously.

"How would you know that?" she said, more to herself than him.

"Did he come by the library?"

"Yeah."

"Did you do anything?"

"Dirty?"

"Yeah."

"No, Jonny."

"You sure."

"I'm sure. He brought me lunch. He brought me sushi and ... he told me to shave," she said, the last part of the sentence making her wince and bite her lip.

"That's why you shaved?"

"He told me not to tell you ..."

Jonny got up on his knees then lowered his lips to hers. She let go of his erection and it sprung up and tapped his belly. He took her lips and she let him, her lips parting, her body leaning back to the seat cushions. His hands slipped the blanket over her shoulders and now she was bare. While they kissed he rose the shirt up his body and threw it aside.

They stared at each other for a moment, eyes wet and blinking, not saying anything. Then her hands went to his waistband that scored across his thighs and she tugged them lower. He rolled to the side and lay next to her and they got his pants right off. Now they were both naked, husband and wife. They lay side-by-side looking in each other's eyes and Jonny stroked her hair.

Her eyes showed great puzzlement, an innocent country girl who loved books, now in the city, learning all its evils. A husband who lied to protect her. A husband who failed her. A new man in her life, at once cruel and also giving. Taking her, dominating her. She was such a frail and fragile thing. So innocent. His lips attacked hers again, and his hand ran sensuous circles on her naked back. He groaned in her mouth when he felt that sweet hand grip his erection again.

"I love you so much, Charlie," he whispered.

“I love you, too, Jonny,” she said. She smelled so different than the Charlie he knew. The Charlie he knew smelled like soap, smelled like clean laundry. Sometimes toothpaste. This Charlie, this dirty Charlie in bed with him, had been with another man tonight. Not just their landlord coming to collect the rent and taking in trade the pleasure between her legs, this woman had gone on a date with him. Gone out and been entertained. Wined and dined and then fucked in a limousine. She was so different. Cigarettes and whiskey in her hair, weed in her mouth and around her ears. His bad girl was very exciting.

He kissed at her neck now, running his tongue behind her ear, tugging on the lobe with his teeth. He kissed lower down her collar, nibbling on her clavicle, lower, finding a nipple and plucking it. Her chest began to heave; an excitement in her as well. His demure wife couldn’t get enough tonight. Nine inches of gnarly Iraqi cock couldn’t sate her. Kissed lower, running his tongue along a rib, cresting to her linea alba and then following it until it rippled over her the belly button set in her tight stomach. Above him, she whispered, “Oh, no, Jonny ...”

But oh, yes, Charlie. It was going to happen. He kissed lower and her hips swayed on the mattress. She brought her arms up, forearms crossing on her face hiding herself away. Her legs opened. He took the point of her hipbone and bit it. She gasped. From there it was a quick and slippery line run with his tongue along the crease of her thigh following it to the warm and exciting heat that he sought.

Now she closed her legs. Closed them around his ears, her creamy thighs pressing against him, not closing off the sounds of her protest. “No, no, no, Jonny ... Oh, please don’t ...”

Her pussy smelled like semen. Another man’s product shot up inside her, now leaking out and spreading through her creases. He smelled cologne. Another man’s cologne. Something musky and spicy. His tongue swiped, flattened wide and spread over all of her delicate folds. He felt his head being squeezed like a vice between her thighs. She started to plead, “Oh, please no, stop ...”

He parted her then, striking his tongue to a point and probing inside her. Tasted copper, her membranes probably scratched and scored by their landlord’s thick hairy cock. It scored in out of her at a tremendous pace tonight. Punishing her poor pink privates. His delicate girl, taking something so big and ugly. He felt himself spew more excitement from his tip, running down his shaft, cold drips falling from his scrotum.

Charlie looked down her bare body at him, watching, her legs parted slightly. Her mouth hung open, trembling, her brow furrowed with multiple thin lines. “Oh, gross, Jonny, don’t ... he came inside me. Jonny, I haven’t showered, I’m still leaking ...”

He resumed his passionate suckling, taking up mouthfuls of her beautiful soft flesh and pulling and sucking, running his tongue through it. Charlie’s mouth fell open

wider, her plump lower lip shining with wet. Her belly began fluttering, heaving up and down. Her breaths came raspy now, and she tucked her hands under her rump and presented her sex to him.

With a hand, he spread one knee wider, wanting to breathe now, wanting room to work. He ran his tongue up and down, stuck it inside as far as it could go, felt a gushing. As he probed deeper, warm product seeped from inside her, running down his chin. His mind reeled backward in a tumbling circle, his heart pounded in his chest. Charlie cried out above him, twisting and writhing, legs open and eager now.

Charlie whispered, "Oh Jonny, oh, keep going, lick it all up, Jonny, clean my ... clean my..."

He looked up, saw her passion-bewildered expression. "Say it," he whispered.

"Clean my ..."

"Pussy ..."

She jerked violently, and her head rocked back. She cried, "Pussy. Oh, my pussy, Jonny ... Clean my pussy, oh, please, clean it ..."

"I ... am," he grunted, a wet muffled sound as she humped his sopping wet face.

"Do it ... good, Jonny. He comes ... ah-a lot. Those big ... balls shoot so much of his stuff into me ... I mm-leak so much after I'm with him ..."

Her trembling fists gathered up the top sheet and pulled as tight as she could. He pounded her with his tongue, he licked her clean, the whole while his once innocent girl encouraging him. What was once considered vile now bringing exultations from her. She gasped and cried breathy affirmations to him. Chanting *Yes, yes, that's it*, even once babbling *Oh, my goodness*.

And then it happened; his Charlie came. Those trembling fists slashing down and pounding into the mattress once, her back arching, her tummy drawn tight as a drum. She moaned until her voice disappeared and just a creak drew out from her throat. Then she collapsed, snorting and heaving.

# 10

NOW HE CLIMBED up the bed with gasping breaths, throwing himself down to join her. Her chest rose and fell in furious heaves, her nipples tightened to extended buds. He ran a hand up her stomach and watched goosebumps hump on her breasts. She covered her face, hid from him. She whispered, “Oh no, Jonny, you shouldn't have done that ...”

“I wanted to ...”

She cried, “Oh, that was so terrible ...”

“I made you come.”

“I … I shouldn't have. That was just so awful ...”

“I'm going to do it every time.”

She didn't answer, and he watched her bare breasts a long time as her breathing returned to normal. At last, she let her hands fall down to her sides, and she turned to him.

He repeated, “I'm going to do it every time.”

She held his gaze with a serious face as long as she could and then finally one corner of her mouth poked up in a smile. Then the more she tried to hide that smile the more it gained control of her face. She covered up again with her hands.

He pried them from her, kissed her forehead. She watched him expectantly.

“What?”

“Nothing,” she said. She cuddled up against him, his penis poking her in her side. Her hand came down while her gaze stayed on his. She took his hardness and stroked it. Her mouth worked around, she licked her lips. Tossed herself on the bed and turned her back to him wiggling her butt. He turned on his side and spooned with her. His hand swept around her front, smoothed over her perfect body down her belly between her legs. Found her wet V, still leaking, slick from his ministrations. He ran his middle finger up and down, under her hood. She moaned.

He said, “So you liked it tonight?”

“Yeah,” she whispered. “I had a lot of fun.”

“I mean when he fucked you.”

“Oh,” she said.

“You liked it?”

She didn't answer but he could feel her nodding. He kissed the back of her ear.

“And he made you come?”

She nodded again.

He said, “We never talk about it. Never talk about—”

“No. We don’t.”

“We should ...”

“Maybe,” she said.

“Before ... it was too weird.”

“It's still weird,” she said.

“Still weird,” he admitted. “But less weird.”

She shrugged, wiggled herself against him. He ran his hand over her hip, slipping behind her, probing now between her labia from behind, his wrist in the hot seam between her ass cheeks. He got her moaning again.

“What did you think the first time?”

“In the kitchen?”

“Yeah, in the kitchen. When he took it out and showed it to you ... What did you think of it?”

“I thought it was fake. I thought it was a joke. For a second I thought maybe you two were playing a joke on me and that was the punch-line. When I knew you weren’t I was freaked out.”

“It’s really big.”

“It’s really big,” she agreed.

“Do you like his size?”

“Yeah, I like his size.”

“You like his cock?”

“It's ugly.”

“But you like it?”

Now she didn't answer, but she turned and he could see her regarding him from the corner of her eye. She opened her legs, lifting one knee high. He dipped himself lower, got his hand at the base of his cock and angled it straight out. He slipped up and down her slippery seam, whispered, “You're not too sore?”

“No, I think I’m getting used to how big he is.”

“Used to it?”

“It doesn’t hurt as much.”

“Does it feel good?”

“Kind of.”

He eased himself inside her and she took him with no protest. No gasp, no tightness, not even a quiet moan. He gave her everything, sinking in until his pubic hair squashed against her rump.

“Do you still like mine?”

“Yeah,” she whispered.

“Can you feel it?”

She nodded quickly.

“You sure?”

“I feel it, Jonny.”

“What does Reza’s feel like?”

“Huge,” she said.

“Really?”

“It stretches me. Right up inside, too, like, in my stomach.”

He ran his hand in a circle just below her belly button. “Here?”

She lay a hand on top of his, warm and damp but loving. “Yes,” she said.

“You like it? I know you do ...”

“I guess I do,” she said as he slowly began to work himself in and out, watching her face as he did.

“Tell me what happened tonight,” he said.

“Okay,” she said but stayed quiet and Jonny saw her mouth working around and her eyes blinking. He was as hard as he could be, his roll of dimes slipping in and out of her wet insides.

“Tell me,” he said.

“In the limo ... In the limo when we were on our way there ...”

“Yeah?”

“We were having fun, and he gave me a glass of champagne. We got stuck in traffic ...”

“You got stuck in traffic, and then ...?”

“He got real close to me and told me to go down on him.”

“Oh no, Charlie.”

“I figured he would ask that.”

“You weren't surprised?”

“I was embarrassed because all those other guys were there.”

“This was in front of those guys?”

“Yeah, they were all watching. They didn't know what he said, but they were all there.”

“You ... you did it?”

“Yeah, you know I did. I have to.”

“I know. So what did you do?”

“I didn't argue. I just did it.”

“How?”

“You sure?”

“God, Charlie, please tell me ...”

Her hips began to swivel, maybe his own excitement bringing some to her now too.

She said, “I got on my knees between his legs. He did his zipper down and then everybody knew what was going to happen.”

“They watched you?”

She nodded and gasped, rump pushing against him. “Yeah, they were watching the whole time. Reza did his zipper open and his big thing was sticking out. I just shut them out, and I did what he wanted.”

“What did you do?”

“I put my mouth over him and I sucked on it.”

“Oh no, Charlie, the other guys ... You didn't ...”

“Like with Demetrius? No ...”

“You sure?”

“I wouldn't lie, Jonny.”

“I know you wouldn't. I hope you wouldn’t.”

“I wouldn’t.”

“So they just watched?”

“The mean guy watched. The older guy who owns the restaurants ...? He played with himself ... And so did the big guy from his gym.”

“They jerked off?”

“I think they jerked off,” she said.

“Did you see their cocks?”

She nodded and licked her lips. “Just through their clothes. They rubbed themselves through their pants.”

“You saw their bulges?”

She nodded again.

“Then what happened?”

“I just kept doing what I was doing, going up and down on Reza, sucking on him, but I was so worried that he was going to make me do it to them, too.”

“You didn't want to?”

“Of course not, Jonny ...”

“Did you ... did you make him come?”

“Ah,” she gasped, eyes closed as if she were recollecting. His intrusion to her insides brought sticky wet sounds from between her legs.

“Did he come in your mouth?”

“Uh-huh,” she breathed.

“He came in your mouth, Charlie?”

“Mm,” she sucked her lips, gasped when he thrust quicker and harder. “He came in my mouth, Jonny, and I swallowed it.”

“You swallowed?”

She nodded, her face furrowing with shame.

“It’s okay, Charlie. What else were you going to do?”

"There was nowhere to spit it out and all those guys were watching me ..."

"You're such a good girl ..."

"I *am* a good girl, Jonny, I *am* ..."

"I know you are, baby, I meant it for real," he said, kissing the point of her jaw under her ear. "Then what?"

"In the limo? That was it. I just got back up and sat down next to him again. The big muscle guy from his gym gave me a napkin to clean myself and a glass of champagne."

Her story had Jonny gasping now, his steely shaft slipping in and out of her, a high bright tickle zipping from his hole to his eyeballs, choking off his breath.

"Then on the dance floor ... when Reza was teaching me to dance ...? It was really packed, like, people all jammed together, and he ... he put his fingers inside me ..."

"What? ... Inside you?"

"Yeah, like, he lifted my dress a little and no one could see and he was behind me ... and I danced on his fingers, like, wiggled my butt against him ...?"

"That's so dirty ..."

"I know," she agreed.

"Did you like it?"

"It felt ... it made me ... come ..."

"You came on the dance floor? With all those people?"

"Yeah," she gasped now, brought his hand over to cover her breast and the hardness of her nipple shocked him.

"Oh my gosh, Charlie, I wish I could have seen that ..."

"You do?"

"Charlie, you're so sexy ..."

"Am I?"

"The sexiest thing ever ..."

"Mmnh," she mumbled as she came again, her insides giving him a rapid succession of squeezes and he could see her tummy trembling.

"Jonny ...? oh, Jonny ...?" she gasped.

"What, Charlie?"

"When he ... mm, when he finally put it in me ... I really, really wanted it ..."

"Where?"

"In my pussy?"

"Where? Where in the city?"

"In the limo ... we were alone a-and I couldn't wait for it. He made me wait like he knew I wanted it ... I thought maybe he wasn't going to do it ..."

"That's okay—"

"I'm sorry, Jonny, I ... I asked him to ..."

"To?"

"To do it, to—"

"Fuck?"

"I-I asked him to f-fuck me, Jonny. I wanted it so bad. I had drinks and a good time and the things he did, Jonny, with his fingers, oh, Jonny, he had me ... we smoked weed because he said he likes to before bed so he can chill and then I smoked, too, and, Jonny, I asked him to please fuck me ..."

"Oh, Charlie ..."

"I'm not good at all Jonny, I'm not ..."

She cried as her head thrashed in the pillow. She was hurt and ashamed but her sex was dripping wet, their hips bashing with wet mucous sounds.

"You're so good, Charlie, so good ... you're doing it for us ..."

"I am Jonny, I am ..."

"It's okay, baby, tell me more."

"He ... he grabbed me and kissed me and we ... we made out and his hands went all over me but I just ... just wanted him inside me so bad ..."

"What did you do?"

"I crawled over ... there was a bar and I lay over that and we knocked all the bottles off and I pulled up—"

"You pulled up your dress?"

"I pulled it up, and I showed him my privates ... why would I do that, Jonny?" she cried.

"You're so amazing, Charlie, you're so hot ..."

"He took his thing out and I watched for it ... got excited, Jonny ... when he pulled it out that ugly skin slid back and that big beautiful bulb on the end came out and then he was dribbling clear stuff out of his pee hole and I thought I was going to die ..."

"Holy, oh baby, you're so hot ..."

"I wanted it in me and I begged him cause I knew all that stuff coming out of him would make his penis all slippery and I needed to feel it ..."

"Oh, shit, Charlie," Jonny roared feeling a freight train coming down his tracks, overloaded and traveling way too fast.

"Then he put it in me slow and careful and I thought I was going to pass out it felt so good, Jonny ..."

"Oh Charlie, oh baby, tell me more ..."

"Then he ... he fucked me, Jonny, he did it so nice and smooth, he made me ... he made me come, Jonny, more than once and I ... I'm just so sorry, Jonny ..."

“Oh shit, oh shit,” he choked. He slapped himself into her like a misfiring piston. Clumsy and inarticulate, just hell-bent on delivering his meager payload. “H-he came in-inside you?” he stammered.

“He came inside me, Jonny, his come is so hot it burns my insides, burns me so deep ...”

That was it. He was exploding. Phosphorescent fireworks went off behind his eyes and his ears rang like he was in a church bell tower. He thrust deep over and over, and Charlie cried and writhed against him and he hoped he could deliver a tenth of the orgasm she’d just given him.

# EPILOGUE

WHEN JONNY AWOKE AGAIN, the sun was shining bright and someone was coming into the apartment. He swiveled and jumped to the edge, throwing his feet down on the floor, his head darting around the room, left over fears from his night with Demetrius stabbing at him from his dreams. He got to his feet, stumbled toward the kitchen.

It wasn't Demetrius nor was it Reza. Standing in his kitchen holding two big white plastic bags was a ginger-haired angel. Sure, maybe her back was a little stooped, her face kind of puffy and held immobile, her eyes hidden by a pair of enormous cheap black sunglasses. But it was the morning of the second day of the month and she was all his.

"Charlie," he gasped, coming more awake now, stumbling up the stairs to join her. "Where were you? What are you doing?"

"Morning, Jonny. I got us some breakfast."

"Breakfast, Charlie? Aw, baby, you shouldn't have ... I would have gone out."

She leaned to accept a kiss on her cheek, then moved to the sink and heaved the shopping bags onto the counter like they weighed fifty pounds apiece. She sighed, "I needed other things, too."

"Other things?"

She held her temples in her cupped palms, hunched over at the sink now. "Advil, seltzer, ice cream, some cola ..."

He came to her and hugged her back. "You're not feeling too good this morning, Charlie?"

He felt her shaking her head, then groaning as it may have made her dizzy.

"Baby, you could have given me a shopping list. I would love to get some things for you."

She turned now, leaned her butt on the counter and that puffy mouth attempted an honest smile. She took her sunglasses off and blinked profusely. She said, "Take a look in the bag."

"What did you get?"

"Just take a look, Jonny."

One bag held her cola and ice cream and pharmaceuticals. The other was the one she indicated. It was a plastic bag as well, but inside he found a steaming paper bag folded over once and stapled. When he popped that staple and opened the bag, the smell of glorious greasy food slapped him in the face like Demetrius. Only this one he welcomed. His knees went a little weak, and he sighed, "Oh my God, that smells so good."

"Doesn't it?" she said behind him.

He turned around, said, "Baby, how did you pay—"

She kind of shrugged and looked away. He didn't need to ask, he knew the answer. It was the money she earned last night doing all the things she told him about in bed. Reza had come through with money.

“Okay,” he said very quietly. He opened the other bag, said, “What else did you get?”

She snatched it from him, reaching out and closing her fist around the top of the bag and taking it. “Never mind,” she said. “I told you.”

“What can't I see?”

They both looked at each other, and he had an idea. “Oh,” he said. “Maybe it wasn't okay that he didn't use a condom?”

“Get some plates,” she said as if she hadn't even heard him.

“Yeah,” he said, taking the cue and brightening himself up as well. He reached up into the cupboard and took down two plates.

Charlie had gone to the Beech-Nut Diner, a place they frequented when things were better, she ordered two Lumberjack Specials and a side order of extra bacon in a styrofoam clamshell. French toast, pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage patty, real maple syrup, real butter ... his hands shook as he made two plates up for them.

“Twilight Zone?”

That was all Charlie needed to say and his heart swelled in his chest. They both had the day off, didn't they? He called in sick for her at 7 AM, left a message that she still wasn't any better and she would need another day. It would be just the two of them. The two of them, a fabulous meal earned on his wife's back, pirated episodes of The Twilight Zone, and not a fucking thing else. He wouldn't even look at his computer today.

While Jonny got the plates together, Charlie trotted down to the lower level and got herself back into a sweatshirt and PJ pants. He met her at the couch as she folded the bed away. The TV was on, the file folder open. He put the food down on the coffee table and they threw themselves on the couch and fired up the next episode. They demolished the food. Every morsel that she brought home in that bag disappeared in the next half an hour.

When it was all gone, he thought he might burst. Even Charlie thrust herself backward in the couch and she arched her back and heaved out an enormous pregnant belly and ran her hands in alternating circles over it. He looked and laughed, and then they realized that it might not actually be that funny. She flattened her tummy again and climbed over to hug him.

He held her for a while and they watched the show. Saw a woman who was terrorized by a twin in her reflection in a bus station mirror. Thought how his Charlie

had a twin, too. Another Charlie that wasn't his and did bad things. Only that one didn't live in a mirror, it lived in the real world.

Vestiges of the other Charlie remained in her hair and around her neck: he smelled her remnants. The faintest traces of smoke, and weed, and alcohol, even Reza's musky cologne. If he tugged her panties down, he might even catch a whiff of her other man's semen still. As Charlie pointed out, Reza produced large volumes.

Charlie leaned forward and took her full glass of pop, sat back and upended it. He watched her throat bulge and jump as she gulped down every last drop, the cola bouncing and chugging in the glass until it was empty.

He laughed. "Charlie ...?"

She leaned forward blinking wetly, her mouth wriggling around. Thumped the glass on the coffee table with a loud wallop. She looked like something was wrong.

"Charlie ...?" he asked again.

Her eyes were tearing, water streaming from them. Then she slapped her hands over her mouth and let out a long but magically ladylike belch. Trying to keep it quiet, but having no alternative than to let it all out. It went on and on and he watched with his mouth open. When it was over she pinched her nose and squinted tears from her eyes, then fanned her face and turned away.

He climbed on top of her, laughing in her ear and she hid her face from him. "How rude," he said.

She laughed, "Oh my, gosh, I shouldn't have done that."

"Are you a bad girl?"

"No," she said.

"There's things I shouldn't do either, and I did them. Am I a bad boy?"

"I don't know," she said, still not looking at him.

He said, "Like last night? You know what I mean ..."

"No," she whispered.

"The thing ... What I did ..."

"I don't know, Jonny."

"Yeah, you do ..."

She shook her head no.

"You telling me you don't remember?"

She shrugged. He sat up and pulled her with him, gripping her sweatshirt and making her sit upright. She looked sullen now, her lower lip pouting.

He said, "Remember ... the things we talked about last night ...?"

She shook her head no again.

"Charlie, yes you do ..."

"Jonny ... I just don't want to talk about it."

"Okay, but you do remember?"

"No, Jonny. I don't remember anything I did or anything I said, okay?" She looked at him firmly, her plump mouth set in a thin line and her eyes upset. She remembered everything.

"Okay, Charlie, baby. I love you."

"I love you, too."

He let her off the hook, pulled her so she lay on top of him and smooched her perfect lips, her long hair falling around his ears. An odor wafted from under her sweatshirt.

She made a face and said, "I should get in the shower."

"I don't want you to. I like you all warm—"

"And stinky?"

"Yeah, kind of. Warm and stinky."

She regarded him, her smile switching from one side to the other, his wife thinking something, narrowing her eyes at him.

"What?" he laughed.

She pushed herself to him, warm air from next to her body breezing across his nose. She giggled breathily.

When he caressed her shoulder, she kissed the back of his hand. She said, "Just hold me. I want to do this all weekend."

"Lay on the couch?"

She smiled warmly, then sat up and stretched. She reached to the table and showed him her empty glass, holding it in his face and wiggling it.

He went to the kitchen, opened the fridge, so happy to see items in there that were frivolous and full of sugar, knowing that later this evening they might get into that ice cream in the freezer. Shit, they might even make a phone call down to The Golden Pagoda.

When he put the pop away and closed the fridge, he looked up and saw the calendar. That grid of thirty-five perfect squares had sudden salacious meaning. It tightened his belly. Each one of those squares would bring them to the next first of the month. He groaned a little, thinking about it. Hating it but also feeling an excitement pulse through him.

Only thirty more days ...

# AFTERWORD

Sign up for my newsletter on my website to get the latest info, sneak peeks at upcoming stories, and even a free story or two down the road!

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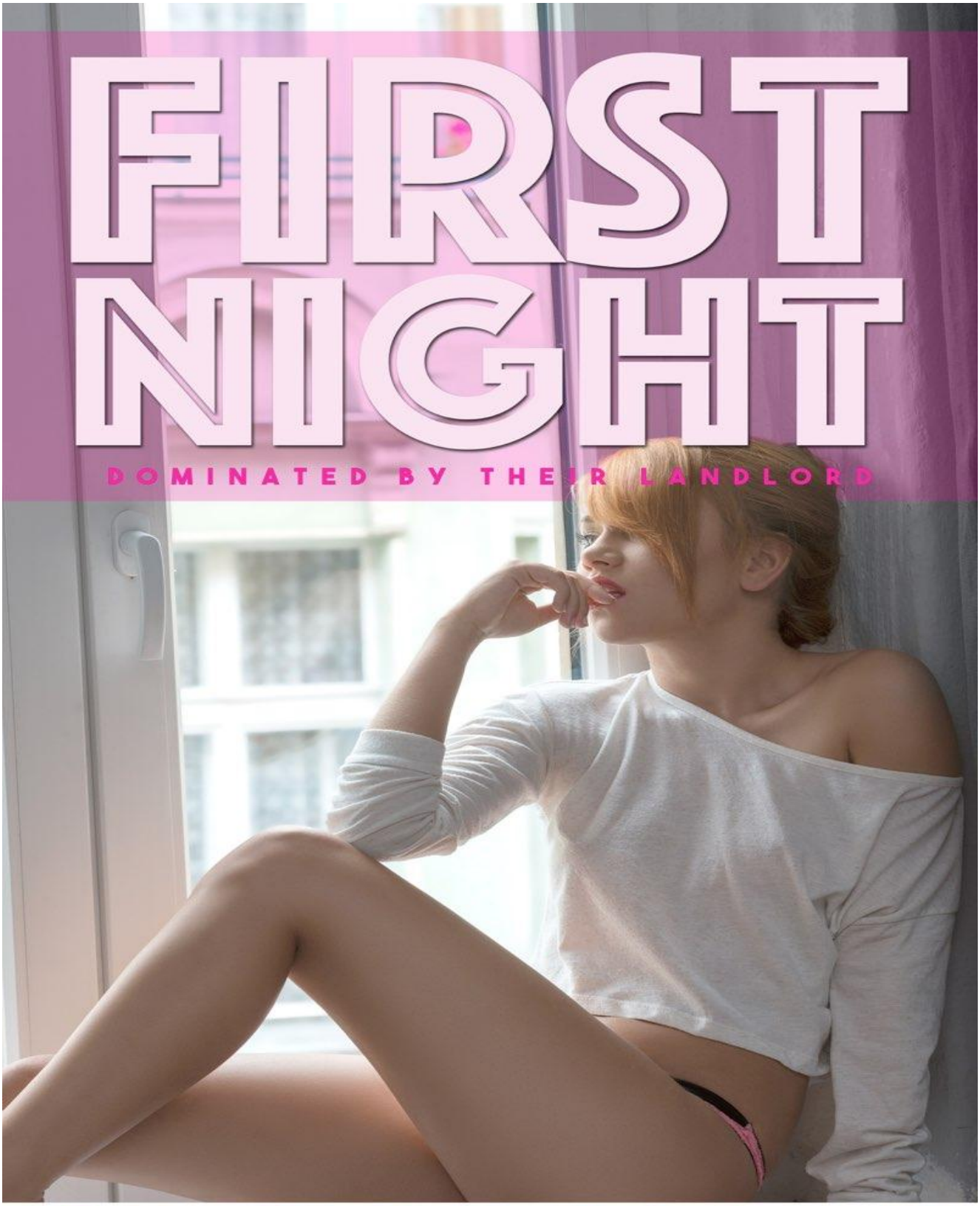
# FIRST NIGHT

DOMINATED BY THEIR LANDLORD



KT MORRISON

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# FIRST NIGHT

DOMINATED BY THEIR LANDLORD

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

KT Morrison writes stories about women who fall in love with sexy men who aren't their husband, and loving relationships that go too far—couples who open a mysterious door, then struggle to get it closed as trouble pushes through the threshold.

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FIRST NIGHT

A LANDLORD Novella

*25,500 words*

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# CHAPTER ONE

JONNY HELD the expensive shoe in his hands, standing in the late afternoon sunshine falling in from the windows that looked out over the city. The shoes their landlord bought his wife. So expensive Jonny thought he'd been lying. Looked them up, saw he wasn't.

The foot that would slip in this shoe was perfection. Petite and narrow, elegantly formed with a sweeping arch and the prettiest toes he'd ever seen. Imagined that foot slipping in the expensive crystal-studded leather, remembering what it looked like when she'd twirled in the kitchen for him and Reza.

She'd been stunning. Her beauty revealed. No longer the bookish farm girl, Reza had let the woman inside her blossom like an orchid, her petals unfurled (in more ways than one), opening and filling the air of the apartment, now redolent with the sweet smell of her charms ... then that flower plunged through with their landlord's garish cock.

It was an ugly thought. But it was true, Charlie was changing. That night on the town with their swarthy master affected her. She'd admitted to Jonny her desires. She had fun with another man. And that man had the funds and the ability to show her the good time Jonny never could. It drove a stake through him. Worse was the dark slippery pleasure he also received. Watching her with another man, and even on the first of this month when he'd only been retold afterward. But told the worst details ...

*Jonny, I asked him to please fuck me ...*

She asked for it. This time she'd fucking asked for it. It crushed him like a medieval torture device, screws turning, pressing the weight, more stones added. And yet the whole time he was erect. The weight pressed against the belly of his cock and it just felt so damn good even though he knew it would eventually kill him. It was crazy. If he loved her so much and valued her so much what excited him about seeing her violated by such a brute?

He went back to the closet—the door left open, the light turned on, the shoe's twin angled on the shelf. Charlie put them in there the last time. He watched her arrange them; heels to the back, toes angled toward the door. She'd been drinking, and she wanted to admire them. Was revealing to him that she loved the gift of those shoes. No one ever bought his wife a gift like that. Especially not Jonny. Not even when he had money though he did splurge on her. Books, and trips, and dinners out. He loved her. But the dress and shoes Reza bought were what a *man* gave a woman.

And boy did Reza know women. Jonny's Charlie was a shy and demure wife—raised on a farm, home-schooled, now a librarian—he'd never an inkling she would

adore such feminine things. But given those gifts, she gasped and squealed like a little girl on Christmas morning.

There was evidence now, too, she'd still been enamored with (at least) the shoes. The sperm-stained dress still hung in the closet, just the way Jonny put it there. It should be dry-cleaned before she ever wore it again, a big yogurt dollop on the skirt and the underside splattered with Reza's sexual product.

But the shoes had been moved.

And Jonny figured his wife had been admiring them again. His wife who'd never acted as though she liked shoes, unlike every other girl he ever met, did actually *like* shoes.

He could picture her, trying them on and seeing what they looked like again. Considering Jonny was always at home, he must've been here. Pictured Charlie then slipping into her closet maybe bundling up the shoes in a towel, bringing them into the bathroom and closing herself in. What would she do then? Slip those perfect feet in them, twist her ankles around and admire them. Then she would stand, watch her reflection in the mirror, flex her calves. Would she be naked? He pictured it. And while she did this solo fashion show, did she recall that evening with Reza? Did she recall the last time she wore them, these goddamn beautiful shoes, she'd had them bobbing over Reza's back while he fucked her?

That horrible thought began a swelling in his shorts. This was a common reaction now, and he hated it. Hated it but somehow was still playing with it. Still exploring its poisonous blade.

He set the shoes together side-by-side and turned them to face the way she left them when he'd witnessed her put them in there. A signal he was on to her. Let her know he knew what she was up to. His bad girl. Never once in his life had she ever seemed like a bad girl but their musclebound Iraqi landlord was definitely making her one.

The arrangement, when initiated, was so difficult, awkward, and uncomfortable. One could never anticipate the two of them would find themselves like this; his wife beginning to enjoy her time with the man she once feared.

The way this whole thing began, one could never have predicted the situation he would find himself in now.

*5 months ago …*

# CHAPTER TWO

"JONNY, I can't. I changed my mind, Jonny, I can't do it ..."

"It's too late now, Charlie. It's too late."

"Why? No, it's not, Jonny."

"It is, Charlie. What you did ... already ... You did that for nothing?"

"He wants more, Jonny. I can't give him more. I don't even want to use my mouth on him again. How can I—"

"Don't, Charlie, don't think about it."

Her nails dug deeply into his forearms. He held the insides of her elbows, pinning her to the wall. Not out of anger, but with enormous love. She was panicking. On the verge of a full-blown panic attack. He'd offered her a Benadryl to calm her down, but she refused.

"Charlie, he's going to be here soon."

Instead of getting her focused that statement frightened her even more. Her mouth twisted into a down-turned bow, her lips began to wriggle and her face went red. Tears swelled in her eyes and she cried, "Tell him not to come, Jonny, please, please, just call him, tell him we'll figure something out."

He gripped her tightly, said, "Charlie, come on. We told him we would do this."

"We told him I would do this—*I'm* the one doing this ..."

"I know, baby, I know, and I love you for it."

"How can I do it? How Jonny? How can you ever look at me again?"

"I don't care, Charlie, I really don't. If you don't want to do it, I understand. But, baby, we've already come so far. We'll be on the tracks again soon, I swear."

"I can't, Jonny. Have him inside me? Oh, please ..."

"I know, baby, I know. I know it's going to be so hard. But it will be over quick, and then we can stay here. Remember? You want to stay here, don't you?"

"I know, I do, Jonny, I really do. I said I would, but now he's coming I just can't."

He hugged her, stopped the hold on her elbows and took her in his arms and squeezed her. "Baby, I'm going to be right here with you. I'm gonna be with you the whole time, nothing bad is going to happen. Okay?"

She whispered into his neck, "I can't ... I can't ... I can't ..."

"You can, baby, you can." He soothed her, his hands going in circles around her slender back. Her body weight slumped against him and he knew that she would do it.

What else would they do? Go back to Kansas? Back to that religious compound? And how would they do that? How would Jonny go to her parents and show them how he didn't deserve their daughter? How would they ever survive that? Being taken by Reza was survivable. The shame of his failure exposed to her stern parents wasn't.

Charlie knew it too. Charlie knew what it would mean. That shame, her husband's shame, would fall on her as well. She was the one who married this guy. He had a feeling they warned her. She didn't listen, Jonny's charms were strong.

They stood in the kitchen, her back pressed to the wall across from the sink, him holding her while she breathed against him heavily.

"There, there," he said again, calming her. "You're okay. It will all be okay, I swear."

"Okay," she whispered.

"Okay?"

Now he felt her nodding, her dainty little chin tapping his collar. "How?"

"How what, baby?"

"How do I do this?" she said solemnly.

"We'll take it one step at a time. I won't let him hurt you."

She made a little gasp, darted her face back. "You think he might hurt me?"

"You know—what you said ..."

"Oh," she said, her eyes turning downward. "His size."

"Or whatever, Charlie. I'll make sure you're okay."

"You have to stay here, Jonny, you have to."

"I will," he agreed. "I definitely will."

"If he says you have to go, then I can't do it."

"Don't worry, baby, I'll be here."

She said, "It has to be here, in the apartment."

He said, "I know. I think that's what he wants, too."

"I mean it, Jonny. He said something about a date ..."

"That was just allegory, Charlie."

"Can we have any rules?"

"Rules like what?"

"I don't know ... Like things he can't do."

"Is there something you don't want to do?"

She whispered, "I don't want to put my mouth on it again."

"You don't?"

She shook her head no. "And I don't like ... You know ..."

"What, Charlie?"

"You know, Jonny ... From behind."

"Charlie," Jonny said, "you don't want him to have anal sex with you?"

"Oh, no, no way, Jonny. I don't like it when *you* do it."

"You don't like it when I do it?" he said, giving her a little smirk, trying to brighten her by sounding offended.

"It hurts," she whispered, and she wrinkled her nose, added, "It feels weird."

Jonny said, "We can tell him."

"*You* tell him."

"You don't want to talk to him?"

"Jonny, I just want to do it and get him out of here. And then after I don't want to talk about it, okay?"

"Not at all?"

She sighed, said, "No way, Jonny. Not at all. Like *not* at all. Okay?"

Jonny said, "You're very brave."

"Oh, please," she sighed.

"I mean it, Charlie. You're the bravest girl I know."

"I'm a real hero," she sighed, and laid her cheek on his chest.

"You are to me."

"That's very nice to say, Jonny."

"Do you feel better now?"

"A little," she said. "I don't think I'm going to have a heart attack just yet, anyway."

He eased her back, rubbed her shoulders with his palms, smiled at her, then kissed her T-shirt between her breasts right over her heart. He said, "I love your little heart."

Her eyes welled like she would cry, and she put her cupped palm over the spot where he just kissed her. "I love you, baby," she said.

"I love you so much, Charlie. We can get through this."

WHEN THE KNOCK finally came on the door, they both jumped.

They'd left their bed pulled out, and Jonny had made it up with fresh bedding while Charlie was closed in the bathroom for half an hour. They sat facing the television side-by-side in their matching red Ikea chairs, upright and stiff, hands clenched over the curved noses of the padded armrests. There was a movie on and he bet that neither of them could tell the other the plot line. The knock on the door brought Charlie half out of the chair, her thighs slapping together. She wore a sweatshirt and sweatpants and bare feet. It was almost dinnertime, and they both had wondered whether Reza would show at all. Maybe it was all a ruse, some sort of joke. Something he wouldn't actually make her go through with. Of course that was crazy, given what he had allowed last month at their kitchen table. He'd come through, too. Given them the money for Charlie's 'audition.'

In the quiet after the knock, Charlie whispered, "Can you get it, Jonny?"

"Yeah," he said, rubbing his hands together. His palms were sweaty. He rose, walked slowly. Before he made it to the door a louder knock came, indicating

someone's impatience. That was a sure sign that it was Reza. It was Reza, and this was really going to happen. He went up the two steps, into the kitchen, slid the chain lock, turned the bolt and opened the door.

Reza was waiting in the hall. Not leering, not anxious, not smiling. Confident, menacing. He stood with his hands in his pockets, his grim face emotionless, his mouth hidden by his thick beard and heavy mustache.

"I thought you might be too afraid to answer," he said in a low and gravelly voice.

"No," he said. "We were waiting."

"That's good," he said, and he walked past Jonny and into the kitchen. His head turned, looking over the kitchen and down into the family room. When he saw what he was looking for he smiled. "Hi, Charlie. There you are. It's been a long month and I've been looking forward to this."

Charlie sat still facing the TV, her side to them. She turned and half-regarded them both and nodded solemnly.

"That's a girl," he said, shrugging out of his coat. He handed it to Jonny.

He didn't know what to do with it, draped it over the back of the kitchen chair and watched as Reza stepped down into their family room. He followed behind.

Hands still in his pockets, Reza stood in the late afternoon sunlight beaming in the window, squinting and regarding the city for a moment, then looking down and studying the bed that Jonny had made for him to fuck his wife on. Jonny saw that he nodded slightly.

He turned then and extended a hand out to Charlie and she looked at it, chewing her lower lip. "Charlie," he urged now, indicating to take his hand by wagging it.

She looked up to Reza, her eyes wide and wet, and said, "Right away?"

"Are you frightened?" he said.

She nodded, her chin dimpling and her mouth turning down.

"Don't be. Come," he said, wagging his hand again.

Now she extended both of hers, and he took one, pulled her to stand before him.

"You are a beauty."

"Don't ..."

"You're the first woman I've ever met who didn't want a compliment. Believe me, Charlie, I'm only stating facts. Turn around for me."

Her eyes darted to Jonny, and she said to him, "Do I have to?"

"Turn around for me, Charlie. I want to look at you."

Charlie complied, crossing her arms in front of her, one hand gripping the other wrist and lowering her eyes. She turned in place and faced out the window away from both of them. Reza put her hands on her and Jonny's heart jumped.

His hands went on her shoulders, smoothed down the outside of her arms then down to her waist. Charlie jerked a little as if she wanted to get out of his reach but was forcing herself to stay. He squeezed her waist, felt how narrow she was, hands slipping over the crest of her buttocks, then rotating his fingers face down and cupping them. He squeezed her ass, and she stepped away.

"Charlie ..." he warned.

"Sorry," she whispered without turning around.

Reza stepped forward and his hands went to her waist again, this time slipping under her waistband and easing the sweatpants down so he could see her skin and the black cotton of her panties. With his thumbs, he guided the pants lower, past the V of the panties and revealing the bare outer curve of her cheeks. Charlie was flinching again.

Reza leaned close to her and whispered, "You have a beautiful ass."

"Thank you," she whispered.

He lowered the sweatpants so that her entire ass and the back of her thighs were revealed.

"Jonny, Jonny, you are one lucky man. I don't think Charlie knows how lucky you are."

"I'm the one that's lucky," Charlie whispered.

"Ah. The loyal wife," he mocked.

CHARLIE SAID, "Don't be mean to me."

"Mean to you? What would make you think I would be mean?"

Even him saying that, incredulous at implied meanness, was irony. It dripped with menace even the way he questioned her. He was a big guy, thickly built with a dense black beard, oily black hair, dark and foreboding eyes. And he had power over them.

Jonny ventured, "I just don't think she wants to be hurt."

"I wouldn't hurt her," he said and then ran the backs of his fingers up her cheek and Charlie closed her eyes. "I'm going to be very good to Charlie. Charlie is going to remember this for a long time."

Charlie said, "Can we just do it?"

Reza sneered, said, "Someone is in a hurry. I like to take my time but I understand your anticipation. Lift up your arms."

The last vestiges of Charlie's strength held hold for a few heartbeats while their eyes met. She would defy him, but only until she didn't. They all knew what was going to happen, her resistance was a show. She sucked that lower lip into her mouth again,

slowly raised her hands up above her head. Her sweatshirt came up and they could see her black panties and her pale tummy.

Reza put the flat palm of his enormous hand on her belly under her T-shirt and he hummed with admiration. “You have the finest, most graceful body.”

His hand eased northward, raising up the sweatshirt, getting to her bra, the other hand joining in. Took the hem of her sweatshirt in both his hands then, and raised them up her outstretched arms, her hair falling out in a beautiful ginger fan winking in the sunlight. He threw the sweatshirt aside. Now Charlie stood before him in only a bra and her panties, her sweatpants pulled down to the tops of her thighs.

Reza circled his arms around her, meeting them in the back and working on the hitch of her bra. Charlie closed her eyes and turned up her nose, pulled her face away, not liking him so close. “That’s it,” he said as the bra sagged with release. He ran his fingers over her shoulders and the bra fell free and down to the floor. Charlie didn’t cover up. Stood there, trembling, her beautiful little breasts completely bared for this frightening man. Her nipples condensed.

“Hmm,” he hummed and took one of his big fingers, ran it over her ribs and up the underside of a breast to touch the point of a nipple. “You’re even more beautiful than I imagined,” he said. “Your pants now.”

“Okay,” she said quietly. Her eyes darted to Jonny, and she thumbed inside the sweatpants and pushed them down far enough that they fell to the floor, pulled her feet out of them, turning them inside out, then swiping them away by stepping on each leg and pulling her foot free.

“Wow, wow, wow,” Reza exhaled. His eyes went over her with serious admiration. He stepped back to get a better look and Charlie wilted in his gaze. He walked around her in a circle, his head swiveling as he went. He unbuttoned his collared shirt, going around three times until it was undone and hanging open. He stopped in front of her, opened the shirt, arched his back and Jonny could see the muscle he had.

He was very thickly furred, coarse black matted hair over big hard plates of muscle. He peeled the shirt off and tossed it so it lay over one of the red chairs. He was shirtless now, showing off his impressive body. Jonny watched Charlie’s eyes as they went up and down and over this other man. There was a tattoo on his neck that you could see even when he was dressed. It looked like the face of a roaring lion. He could see the rest of it now, a lion and scimitars from his neck down over his shoulder. On his side there was a drawing of what looked like a medieval warrior with a big twisted mustache, holding an enormous broadsword planted in the ground between his feet. Behind the soldier, Jonny could see medieval forts and fortresses, and smoke and horses. It was very intricate, which was strange because it was greatly hidden by hair. His shoulders

were big and broad and very round. He wasn't short, but so thickly built that he appeared stocky.

Charlie's eyes still lingered. Reza's hands fell to his belt buckle. Something alligator with a bright shining clasp he unhooked with the flip of a lever. Undid his pants button, slowly pulled down his zipper. Pants opened, he spread the fly and eased them down his hips where they fell to the floor. He wore no underwear and that ghastly tool dangled looking like a dark elephant's trunk. He wore slip on loafers and he peeled them off with his toes and stepped out of them and the pants. Not wearing socks, their landlord now stood completely naked in front of Jonny's wife. Jonny had turned to steel inside his underwear. Was grateful to have his shirt untucked right now.

Reza, the man who in a few minutes would have sex with his wife, on the other hand, hung limp and heavy between his thighs. Jonny noticed that Charlie watched Reza's big uncircumcised thing, watched it sway and saw that she squinted and had her little nose turned up. Her hands clasped together at her crotch worked and twisted, fingers writhing into one another with nerves. Reza smiled, noticing Jonny's wife's gaze lingering on his gnarly, yet glorious manhood. He said, "Now you."

Charlie's eyes came up to Reza's, she said, "Me what?"

Reza bit his lower lip, a smile pulling up high on one side, a flash of white teeth under his thick mustache. He said, "It's your turn. I want to see you ..."

"Okay," she said shakily. She lowered her gaze, demurely averting her eyes for Reza as she revealed herself. Slipping her hands into her panties and sliding them down her hips until they fell to the floor. She stood, but cupped her hands between her legs, hiding her mound.

Reza leaned forward, nudged her hands away with the first knuckle of the big hand, smiling quite wide. "Let's see," he whispered, "let's see."

Charlie revealed herself, her hands turning to fists, her thumb tucked under her fingers, arms thrust straight down at her sides, chewing the inside of her mouth and looking at the ceiling. Reza looked between her legs, saw the ginger patch of hair that covered her there.

"Your skin is beautiful, Charlie. Your hair is exquisite."

Jonny saw her skin turn to goose flesh.

"Okay," she whispered, a hint of impatience in her voice.

"Shall we?" he said, gesturing toward their bed with an outstretched hand.

Charlie shook visibly. Reluctance revealed in shaking hands, tremors that went through her body suddenly. "Oh–okay," she said, her breaths coming rapidly like she was once more on the verge of panic.

Reza walked to her side, rested his hand on the small of her back and stepped her toward the bed, stopping at its side. “You made your bed for me,” he said, looking in her eyes. She stared back, lips trembling, then said, “Jonny made the bed.”

Without looking over, Reza said, “Thank you, Jonny. That’s very thoughtful. Now, Charlie, give me your hand.”

“Why?” she said.

“I want to see your hand.”

“Okay,” she said, and bent her arm at the elbow, presented it to him palm up, still held close to her body.

“That’s it,” he said. “That beautiful hand.”

He admired it for a moment, taking it in his own, running a thumb over her palm. Then he eased it lower and Charlie resisted, but still he guided it lower. He held it at his hip, then with his other hand, took his big penis and dropped it in her palm. Charlie’s face twisted up with disgust. She closed her eyes and her mouth worked from side to side. “You know what to do,” he whispered.

# CHAPTER THREE

"I CAN'T ... I can't do that again," she whimpered.

"Jonny," Reza said, still watching Charlie.

Jonny had been standing, his back now fallen against the family room wall next to the foot of the stairs to the kitchen. He was weak in the knees, but he hefted himself away from the wall and took a step into the room, he said, "Reza ... She doesn't want to do that. Doesn't want to use her mouth again. She doesn't want that, and she doesn't want—"

"Go on," Reza said, still staring at Charlie whose eyes were open now but turned to the ceiling. She held that big wrinkled thing, filling up her hand, folds of skin squeezing between her fingers. The puckered end of it dangled over her index finger.

Jonny continued, "Reza ... She doesn't want it, you know, from behind in her—"

Reza said, "Well that leaves one thing. It's the thing that I came for."

With that, Reza touched her between her legs. Charlie jumped backward, lifting her feet up off the floor one at a time, fell on the bed onto her rump, her breasts shaking.

She said, "Oh no, oh please, don't …"

Reza smiled, and he put a knee on the bed, following after her. Jonny could see that his penis had grown, that sagging thing getting longer, coming to life. It dangled between his legs; it looked like halfway down his thighs.

Charlie watched it swing, her brows pulled up high and frightened. Reza said, "You don't have to do anything you don't want to, Charlie. I liked what you did last month. You know what I'm here for now …"

Jonny said, "Reza, we haven't talked about that. Haven't talked about the deal …"

"You know the deal. One month rent."

"Yeah, but last time she used her mouth. Now you want something … more …"

"Yes?" His eyes stayed on Charlie the whole time.

Jonny said, "Isn't *it* worth more?"

Reza got his other knee on the bed now and Charlie backed herself up to the pillows. Reza walked himself closer to her.

"Jonny," Reza said without looking over, eyes boring between Charlie's legs that she'd clamped together but drawn up, pink sex visible from behind. "I'm not paying you for what I get from Charlie. You're compensated for *my* time. Not Charlie's. For fifteen minutes that you have me … now you know what it's worth …"

Charlie said, "So if I … maybe if I just use my mouth again …?"

"I thought you didn't want that?" He smiled, and before she could answer, he said, "It doesn't matter, anyway. My time is valuable, I know what I'm here for. It's not your mouth. Not this time."

"Okay, okay," she said, then sheepishly added: "Did you bring a condom?"

"I don't wear condoms," he grinned.

The expression on her face twisted in sorrow, her shoulders slumping, eyes rolling as if she'd expected that answer.

Jonny's heart raced and despite the most present thoughts leaping out at him and spreading their arms in disallowance, his mouth opened then closed … and he said nothing.

Reza said, "Aren't you on the pill?"

She shook her head no, brow raised fearfully.

Reza chuckled, eyes lasciviously narrowing on her exposed sex. "Now *this* is exciting."

Reza got closer, extended a hand and draped it over one of her pale thin knees. He eased it to the side and Charlie's other leg followed, keeping her sex closed. With his other hand, he held the opposite knee now, eased them apart. Charlie whimpered again, looking to the ceiling, her hands curled into weak fists that she clutched at her stomach.

Reza said, "You're just perfect everywhere, aren't you, Charlie? That sweet pink slit is as perfect as your beautiful face."

He ran the back of his hairy hand between her legs, over her exposed flaps. Charlie's tummy trembled visibly, fluttering, her nipples hardened, but she made a low moaning sound, then she closed her legs fast, pinching Reza's hand in between them.

"No," she said, "I can't. I just can't …"

She fell to her side, but now she was face to face with that dangling monster. When she regarded it, saw how close it was to her mouth, she reeled back, clawing herself along the pillows to the far side of the bed, getting her feet on the floor then trotted to the bathroom and slammed herself in there.

REZA LAUGHED, still on his knees watching the closed door. He turned and set himself on the bed, leaned back on the pillows. He held his cock in his hand and idly stroked it. It was gaining rigidity, not flopping, but his foreskin still bunched over the glans. He said, "Jonny, find out if she's okay. But tell her she got two minutes. I gotta go. If she doesn't want to do this, that's fine. Believe me, she's beautiful, but she's not the only one in the city that I can fuck."

Jonny said, "Okay, she's just a little worried is all."

"Two minutes, Jonny," he said, and though he was otherwise naked, he still wore a shining gold watch that he now regarded.

"Okay, yeah," Jonny said, then made his way to the bathroom door. He tapped with the point of his index finger, whispered, "Charlie? …"

There was no answer. He did it again, tapping the point of his finger louder. "Charlie? …"

There was a pause, then a quiet: "What?"

"Can I come in?"

"Yeah," she said.

Jonny nodded to Reza, opened the door and slipped into the bathroom, closing it behind him without making a sound. Charlie sat on the lip of the tub, her elbows on her knees, her hands over her face, and her hair hanging down over her legs, hiding her. He went to her, lay his butt on the tile floor and stroked her calf. "You okay?"

"No," she said.

"You're not going to do it?"

"I don't know, Jonny."

"You don't have to. I don't know what we'll do but we'll survive."

She whispered, "I'll do it."

"You will?"

"Just give me a minute," she said, and there was the slightest hint of anger in her voice. She was under so much pressure, his timid wife was getting defensive.

He continued to run his hand up and down her smooth leg, said, "What is it? What made you run?"

"Everything. I'm going to do it, Jonny. I will. I want to stay in this apartment. I thought I was ready but I'm … I guess I'm not as prepared as I hoped …"

"It'll be okay," he said, running his hand up to stroke her knee, "I'm going to be right here with you."

"I want you here," she said, but then: "What are you going to think later?"

"I love you. I watched you last month, nothing changed, did it?"

"No."

"I know why you're doing this. We both know."

He watched her, watched to see her face revealed, but she kept it covered. Her breath scored in and out of the gap between her hands. He sat with her for another minute, said, "He's going to leave."

Now her hands came away, and he saw a determination there. Reluctant but determined. Her jaw firmly set, her eyes narrowed and staring, looking at the spot where the cupboard under the sink met the tile floor.

She said, "I love our apartment. It's our home."

"It is, baby," he said and rose to stand next to her. He held a hand out to help her to stand.

She wiped at her face, sniffed, looked up to him, her eyes wet and glistening. After her mouth twisted from side-to-side a few times, she said, "His thing."

"What?"

"What made me run … That thing between his legs, Jonny … it's too big. That can't go in me, Jonny, it can't."

"It's okay, baby, come here." He took one of her hands in both of his and he helped her to stand, put his arms around her and she leaned her body into him.

"No, Jonny. Did you see it? It's so gross, Jonny. I can't ... I don't think I can do this …"

"You can do it, Charlie. You can do it, and I'm going to be right by your side …"

CHARLIE WHISPERED, "OH, NO," again as they emerged from the bathroom, Jonny's hands carefully cupped over her shoulders, Charlie walking ahead of him. She was still naked, but had her arms folded across her bare breasts. On their bed they saw the man that was their landlord, also completely naked, laying with his back against the pillows, his legs straight out and parted. He was stroking himself.

He looked at them firmly, his brow lowered and stern, said, "You had five seconds left and I was out of here."

Jonny said, "She's okay."

He dipped his chin low and looked up at Charlie through his brow, said, "Are you?"

"I'm ready," she said.

"Good. Come here."

Charlie stepped away from him, his hands instantly cool in her absence. She made quick and small steps to the bed, still covering her chest, and climbed up and sat on her heels.

Reza said, "Are you going to waste my time again?"

"No, I won't."

"Charlie," he said, then got up on his knees and walked toward her until they were close. "I mean it. If you waste my time, I can't be convinced again. Tell me that you want this or I'm leaving."

She raised her chin to him, finding some confidence. "I want this."

"I'm going to take you."

"I know. I want you to."

Reza took the point of her chin between thumb and knuckle, tilted her head, her words had made him smile. His smile was cocky, pulling only to one side, his eyes sparkled as he examined her face. He got closer to her and Charlie closed her eyes. He

kissed her on the lips and when their mouths touched Jonny went weak again, a cord that held him upright severed. He put his hands out to either side to steady himself, feeling dizzy and overwhelmed.

He came to the side of the bed and sat on the very edge of it, putting only one butt cheek down, up near the pillows to stay out of the way. Reza kissed his wife. His mouth worked over hers and though she was stiff and resistant Charlie opened her mouth and let him put his tongue in it. It was awful.

They still kissed when Reza sought out her arms, running his big hands down to her slender wrists, then moving her hands to touch him between his legs. He was engorged but not quite erect. Large and swollen, but still hanging down. Charlie put her fingers around it, and Reza guided her other hand to cup his big hanging balls. Charlie grunted a squeak of protest into Reza's kiss. It made Reza chuckle then he broke away.

"You are a brave girl," he said, and ran her hanging mane away from her face and behind her shoulder.

"That's what Jonny said, too."

He put a hand around her neck, stroked her throat with the pad of his thumb, his other hand spread on her belly, fingers pointing down, and slid lower and lower, and Charlie tried to keep her face firm but her brows began to rise in the middle knowing what he intended to do.

Jonny watched as that hand dipped and touched her in her most private space. Right between the legs, touching her sex, Jonny being the only man to ever have done that intimately. But now his wife felt the touch of someone else. Her body began to shake. She made muffled sounds of protest and her thighs jumped and her hips bucked.

Jonny couldn't tell what he did, but assumed that he'd put a finger inside her because Charlie winced and bared her teeth. And Reza said, "You are very tight." Then he took his hand away, said to Charlie, "Come up and lay down, put your head on a pillow."

"Okay," she said shakily. Reza said to Jonny, "Go up to the kitchen and get me some cooking oil."

"Cooking oil?"

"I didn't bring any lube."

"What kind of cooking oil?"

"Whatever you have. Olive oil."

"We need that for cooking."

"Jonny, go get it and I'll get you some more."

Charlie lay herself on her back, her feet flat on the mattress. She kept her knees together. Reza bent and kissed each of them.

# CHAPTER FOUR

JONNY GOT himself off the bed, tugged at his shirt to hide the arousal, walked backward to the kitchen, saw Reza get over top of her, his big thick muscular arms planting down on either side, his face over top of Charlie's, Charlie's legs opening for him. As he went up the steps into the kitchen, he saw them kiss again.

He banged through the cupboards under the counter to the right of the stove, saw they had no olive oil, only an eighth of a jug of vegetable oil remaining. He snatched it, ran to the pass-through and looked down over the pullout bed. Saw Reza's muscular back and bulging shoulders, couldn't see Charlie underneath him from this angle, only her slender white legs on either side of their landlord. His heart thudded wildly in his chest.

He beat a path back down to the bed, returned to the same spot and sat next to them. He listened to the sounds of their mouths working together, hearing quiet disapproving grunts from Charlie as this other man that she wasn't fond of put his tongue in her mouth.

"I have it," he said quietly.

Reza continued to kiss Charlie's neck and collar, kissing lower and suckling on the point of one of her nipples. They were deflated and unaroused, but as Reza plucked at them they hardened. Charlie grimaced.

Reza cupped a hand on Charlie's small knee, pushed it down so that it was flat and her leg lay on the bed, Jonny could see Reza's enormous tool laying on his wife's belly. He let Charlie's nipple go and her breasts shook.

He looked her in the eye but said to Jonny, "Oil it for me."

"Okay," he said.

He screwed off the cap, poured a little into the cup of his palm then got closer, reached between them, using the dry backside of his hand to trace inside his wife's thigh and spill the contents over her mound. He could feel Reza's hanging testicles rest on his knuckles.

He worked the oil into Charlie and she turned to face him while he did. Their eyes met as he ran his fingers through her familiar folds, spread some of the oil inside her, running his middle finger into her. He mouthed, "Okay?" to her, and she nodded.

Reza said, "Now me."

Jonny extended the jug of oil toward him. Reza still staring at the side of Charlie's face said, "You do it."

"Oil you?"

He said, "Do it, Jonny."

Jonny swallowed dryly, having great difficulty, feeling his throat sticking together. He took Charlie's hand and went to pour some for her to do it. Reza said, "Not Charlie. You."

"I don't want to."

"You will. You can't take care of this beautiful woman. You can't provide for her. And you let her lay on her back for another man to pay your bills. You want her to do *everything*?"

"No."

"Do something then. She can't do it all. Prepare me to enter your wife. You want it to hurt her?" He grinned and licked his lips as Charlie turned her head and they looked at each other.

Reza said to her, "He will ruin you if you let him."

Charlie looked away, looked into Jonny's eyes and said, "Don't, Jonny. Don't do it."

It made Reza chuckle, his thick back shaking with silent laughter as he suspended himself above her, watching her expression. He said, "Charlie, your husband has such nice soft hands."

"Don't do that," she whispered like she was scolding Reza, then her hand worked out from behind his muscular arm and she extended a cupped palm.

Jonny tried pouring another dollop, his hand shaking so wildly that he spilled some on the sheets. But he got her hand oiled. Reza's cock lay on Charlie's stomach, wrinkled and obscene, veins beginning to press out along his shaft, the brightness of Charlie's pale skin making it look even darker than it was. She slipped her hand down, cradled Reza's cock from underneath; gripped it, thumb running over the top, holding it very loosely, and eased her hand slowly up its length toward the tip. It was a long awkward moment where none of them said a thing and the only accompaniment was the sound of their breathing and the rustling of the sheets. Charlie stared at Reza without expression while he smiled.

Reza said, "Pull my foreskin back."

She paused, looking to object. "Okay," she said quietly.

Now she looked between them, watched her hand work as she took his foreskin in between two fingers, slid it rearward until the bulbous glans swelled out of it. Charlie's handling of his member had grown him very hard now. The veins stood out like cables. With her fingertips, Charlie worked the oil around the shape of Reza's glans.

"Get it all around the head," Reza said.

"I am."

"Charlie?"

"What?"

"Press your finger to the tip."

"Why?"

"Do it, Charlie."

With the tip of her index finger, she pressed against the concave swell at the point of Reza's huge erection.

"Run your finger around the hole, Charlie. Tell your husband how hard I am right now. Tell him."

That big threatening weapon was fully prepared to enter his wife now. Charlie pressed against it and it swayed left and right, her fingertip barely mashing the head. She said, "He's really, really hard, Jonny." Then to Reza: "Okay?"

Reza smiled wide until his eyes narrowed to slits. He said, "Okay."

Charlie looked at Jonny, her chin pointing up to see where he sat, her hands coming together to clutch nervously between her breasts, her fingers working together.

Jonny said to her: "I'm right here."

"I love you," she said.

"I love you too, Charlie."

Reza got Charlie's attention again, looking in her eyes, asking her, "Are you ready?"

She nodded.

Reza said, "Bring your knees up."

"Okay," she said, and slowly did what he told her.

Jonny said, "You really didn't bring protection?"

Reza said, "No."

Jonny said, "I don't use condoms either, but I might have one in my dresser."

Reza said to Charlie: "His little condom won't fit me."

She shook her head no.

"What do you do to not get pregnant?" Reza asked her.

"The Rhythm Method. Jonny pulls out."

Reza laughed, said, "Old school. I like it."

Charlie said, "Can you pull out?"

He said, "No."

She blinked and watched him, saw he was serious. Now she wiped at her nose.

Reza said to her, "This might be uncomfortable at first, you're very tight, but I swear to you—look at me," he said and waited until their eyes met again, "you will like it."

"Okay," she whispered very quietly.

Charlie drew her knees higher, her thighs now blocking Jonny's view of that medieval warrior drawn on Reza's side. He said to her, "Put your feet over my back. And put your arms around me, too."

"Okay," she said and Jonny watched as her feet crossed behind Reza's back and then her hands touched Reza's very thick and muscular body. Jonny wondered if she

was fondling him, enjoying his hard body—her nails running over the blades of muscle under his shoulder, up his ribs and over the bulging humps of his thick back, leaving a shimmering trail of cooking oil.

Reza said, "Are you ready?"

"No," she said weakly.

Jonny said, "Charlie ..."

"I'm ready," she whispered. "Yes, I'm ready."

"That's a brave, brave girl," Reza said. He leaned on one arm so his other could line himself up to put it inside her. Charlie's head flicked on the pillow, looked to Jonny, her face twisted with worry and fear.

"You're okay." He smiled for her. He couldn't see between them, Reza's muscular arm blocking the view, but he could definitely see Charlie's face and knew the very moment that big thing pushed into her. Her eyes went wide but still squinted, her brow drew low, her mouth fell open and paused in an O shape, her jaw rigid. She gasped a high squeak. Now his arm came back, and he hovered over her again, kissing at her neck. Jonny watched the muscles of his back work as he eased himself inside her, working his weapon in a small circle. Charlie made lots of faces now, eyes losing focus, gasping, biting her lip, her expression very concerned, then in the next instant showing pain, and then after that making an 'ow' face, and starting the cycle all over again. Reza continued, his hips going around in circles, not putting himself deeper, merely preparing her for his size.

"You okay?" he said again.

"Ow, yeah," she said.

Jonny could see that Reza was now getting deeper, his hips not going in circles but driving forward. Charlie gasped, her nails ran down Reza's sides, then her hands came to cover her face again.

Reza took both her wrists with one hand and cleared her face so he could watch her. He thrust himself a little deeper, and she complained. Now her hips began to wriggle and Jonny watched her toes flex. Charlie whispered, "It's too big."

Reza moved from her now, getting up, and Jonny could see that huge thing was halfway inside his wife. He took her ankles, held them as he eased himself out and then back inside her again, Charlie's head thrusting back, open-mouthed into the pillow

Reza said, "Does it feel good?"

"No," she gasped.

He said, "You feel very good."

Guiding her ankles, he pushed her knees toward her chest. It allowed him to sink even deeper.

Charlie bit her own knee. Jonny watched as her perfect rows of white teeth grabbed a layer of her freckled skin and held it. She snorted through her nose as Reza plunged deeper still.

"YOU PROMISED you wouldn't hurt her, Reza."

"I'm not hurting her, Jonny."

"Yes, you are—look at her face."

Reza did, licking his lips. Charlie still bit a line of flesh over her bent knee; lips pulled back, sneered in a grimace. He said, "I'm looking at her—looking at that beautiful face. But, Jonny, I got a secret for you."

Charlie's head fell back to the pillow, lips sucked in her mouth and eyes squinted shut. Reza inched himself deeper.

Jonny cleared his throat and said quietly, "What is it?"

"You're not going to like it."

"What?"

"Charlie's getting wet."

Charlie grunted and shook her head rapidly.

Reza grinned. "She is, Jonny. You can't tell by her face, but I'm inside her. I know the truth."

"It's okay, Charlie," Jonny said.

"She's warming up, Jonny. She can tell you she doesn't like it all she wants, but her little pussy is loving it."

Charlie gasped with disgust and threw her face to the side, shaking her head no again.

"It's okay, Charlie," Reza soothed her now. "I told you you'd like it. I told you it would feel funny at first but you'd like it. Didn't I?"

Charlie didn't answer, her chest and cheeks growing a cherry broadcast right before his eyes. Reza withdrew and shoved himself back in. Charlie gasped.

Reza said, "She's loosening up, Jonny. It's the way it happens. Little by little, she'll start to like it whether she wants to or not, and then before you know it her walls will be gushing for me." Now his hands touched along Charlie's arms, taking her wrists and opening her chest up. He guided her hands up above her head and pinned them there into the pillows. He was face-to-face over her, her knees bent sharply, her heels dug into his muscular back. He eased himself deeper then withdrew and Charlie moaned.

"Just relax, Charlie. It'll be okay."

"It's too big," she whispered.

"I can feel you stretching for me. Just take a deep breath," he said, looking in her eyes. She met his gaze, and while Jonny was already turned on, there was something in the connection there between them that aroused him further but also angered him profoundly. She was listening to advice from this man. Listening to advice from another man on how to receive his oversized member. It was brutal and ugly, but somehow Charlie's beauty made the moment soar.

"Breathe with me," he said in his low mean voice.

As she inhaled, he slid himself in; as she exhaled, he let himself be pushed out of her. Together they worked on a pace, and the expression of pain disappeared from her face. Soon they were moving together, his back humping, his stomach muscles flexing, Charlie's heels wriggling on his back, her toes clenching and unclenching.

"That's it, ah, that's it, take it for me …"

"Aw, ah," Charlie gasped and blurted, her face going red. The tendons on her neck stood out and Jonny saw her hands form claws at the apex of Reza's muscular grip.

"That's it," Reza encouraged her again, rolling his hips forward and backward. "Listen to that," he said to Jonny without looking. "Listen to her. Tell me she doesn't like it …"

Slick wet mucus sounds began to click between them. Charlie's membranes relaxed and opened now, clinging desperately to Reza's extreme girth yet accommodating him. His Charlie producing enough lubrication to ease the passage of his oversized manhood. Jonny watched, agonal gaze cast between them, seeing where Reza's brutish hairy body met Charlie's alabaster perfection. Smooth skin meeting animal hide. Rolling against one another, that massive thing goring her; not rapidly not aggressively, but inexorably. Sinking deep, withdrawing and dragging her insides with it.

"That's the oil," Jonny said.

"Not just oil, Jonny, trust me," Reza said.

Charlie whimpered, and closed her eyes, but her chest rose and fell with excited breath now. Her stomach rolled with Reza's thrusts, her tummy bunched in thin lines the way her knees were thrust up to her shoulders. Now Reza changed his angle, pushing her knees even higher, almost touching her ears.

"Mm, no …" Charlie moaned, but reluctantly allowed it, even taking her hands from his grip and laying them at her sides, pressed to the bed for balance. The angle of entry, straight up and down, showed Jonny how Charlie's gleaming pink sex stretched to a tight ring around the base of Reza's girth, how he plunged into her, how deep he must go … Deep enough that Charlie blurted, "Ew, oh, stop, mm, careful," and her hands rushed to Reza's hips, her nails digging into him as she held him back from thrusting. Right hand searching, she found his cock, her grip going around the greasy base. "Yeah,

mm, okay, yeah, like that," she sighed, Reza continuing, smiling at Jonny as Charlie held his cock while it thrust in and out.

"Like that, yes?" he growled.

"Mm, yes, mm-hmm," she hummed, eyes closed, face pinched.

"LIKE THAT?" Reza groaned.

"Like that," she repeated in a delicate whisper.

"That feels good?"

Charlie sighed a quick rapid breath, said, "Yeah, feels good …"

"You like it?"

She didn't answer but nodded.

"It feels so good," Reza said, giving it to her smooth and steady.

"Yes, mm, yeah," she gasped

He eased her rump down, knowing that angle was too much for her, settling her so the small of her back rested on the mattress again. He took the ankle closest to Jonny, put it on his own chest, let it scissor across him so both her legs were on the opposite side. She had one leg straight down the bed past Reza's knee, her other knee lifted over and pointed to rest on the mattress on the same side. It exposed her to Reza's intrusion and Jonny's view.

He could see her anus, her slick sex still gulping that thick size. Reza stroked in and out and watched Charlie's face. Jonny did the same, alternating from watching the painful lust in his wife's expression and the pure biological contact between her legs; the spreading of her soft mucous membranes by his blood-engorged tool, his own wrinkled membrane slipping up and over the ridge of his glans as it thrust into her then pulled out so the tip nestled in the twist of her pink folds.

Charlie liked it. There was no denying it. This had started terribly, so awful for his wife's psyche—terrible still now for him as he witnessed the love of his life enjoying the large pleasure of another man. Reza thrust, withdrew, thrust and withdrew, and Charlie writhed. While her hips were twisted away from Jonny, her back still lay on the bed, her head on the pillows.

It built in her. The lust becoming too much to contain, the pleasure spilling over, his wife began to moan. Her breasts jiggled with Reza's pounding, her hands gripped bedsheets, pulled them so they formed tight lines to where he lay next to her. Her nipples condensed like rough stones. She chanted. Humming, complaining, yet urging all the same. Saying yes, gasping no, shaking her head in the negative, nodding it in the

affirmative. Her breaths came quicker and quicker, and Jonny couldn't believe what was happening.

Then it was all positive: *yes, yes, like that, like that, yes, oh, wow, mm, yes* … These exclamations were punctuated with desperate gulps for air. Her clenching hand releasing the bed sheets, looked for something firmer, nails scratching across the mattress, looking for her husband.

"Jonny, oh, mm, Jonny," she gasped.

"I'm here," he said, his voice tiny and weak. He took her searching hand in both of his, she dug her nails in his palm. Reza slipped it in and out of her, his knees planted in the bed, spread wide, his huge tool flashing in and out, her sex made wet sucking sounds, his huge balls drew up tight but still swung back and forth.

"Look at that," he said, and Jonny looked. But Reza meant Charlie, slapping her ass saying again, "Look."

Charlie's chin tilted forward, and she watched Reza's hard belly, the muscles rippling under his dense fur as he stuck his massive manhood in her.

She looked away shouting, "Oh, no, oh, no." She clenched her eyes, squeezed Jonny's hand even harder, and then she was coming. Orgasming, and so outrageously ashamed of her body's betrayal that she tried to hide it. She bit her lips, her face went a brilliant red, a vein stood out in her neck and she snorted wetly through her nose, drawing a long breath … then unable to hide it anymore, let it all go in an animal bellow.

"That's it, that's it, come on that cock," Reza said.

Charlie shook her head trying to convince both of them that she wasn't coming. Veins rose in her arms, tendons and cables, her biceps flexed and bulged. Blades of her shoulder muscles jumped and twitched, and she held her breath again, the whole time Reza feeding it in and out of her. He leaned forward planting his hands on either side of her, in her armpit and by her breasts, his face over her chest; he pumped harder. His ass shaking and jumping, the blades of muscles in his own arms standing out against his sweaty skin.

"Fucking ... take it, fuck," he shouted.

Charlie hollered again; a release, a valve giving up its pressure. Shame laced through her lustful sound.

"It's okay," Jonny said, his voice shaky and unsure.

# CHAPTER FIVE

REZA SLOWED; holding it in her, letting her squeeze it, his hand smoothed the globe of her haunch. Jonny could see the muscles of her sex twitching. Charlie was squeezing what had been put inside her. She softly moaned. Jonny ran his hand up and down her forearm while still holding her fingers.

"Fucking yes," Reza said quietly. He ran a hand over her ribs and squeezed a breast. "Fucking yes," he repeated.

Charlie came to very slowly, eyes fluttering, looking to Jonny and then being completely bashful. Her cheeks were still rosy. Her skin shone in the afternoon light.

"Up," Reza instructed him. Charlie looked to him now, unsure. "On your knees," he clarified. He withdrew his tool, slapped the big thing over her thigh, got out of the way so she could roll over and get on her knees and elbows.

Reza examined her from behind, jabbing her sex with his thumb, mashing her labia, slipping it inside her up to the second knuckle. Charlie squirmed, her hips swaying side to side. While he didn't hold her hand anymore, Jonny reached to her and stroked her shoulder as Reza pushed himself in from behind.

"Ow-ahh, mm," she blurted, feeling that huge thing reentering her body, her head thrusting forward her teeth clamping into the flesh of her forearm.

"Okay?" he asked her again. She just grunted.

Reza stroked in and out, his big hands gripping at the seam where her hip met her thigh. Jonny watched the flesh of her thighs shake as the thrusting renewed, growing quicker and harder, the wet sounds of his wife being gored growing in volume.

Charlie let her arm go and gasped another sound of intense but reluctant pleasure. Jonny soothed her, playing with her hair and rubbing her shoulders. It went on like that, Reza pounding her, Charlie making alternating sounds of pleasure and complaint, her hands gripping sheets, biting her arm, biting the pillow once, too.

After a long while Jonny wished he'd thought to put on music. It was too late now. All he had for company was the dirty sounds of their membranous connection, animal grunts from Reza and the sounds of his wife being fucked by another man. Also present: his own heavy breathing, his heartbeat in his ears, the scrape of the pullout bed's legs on the floor, the thumping of the back of the couch seat against the wall below the kitchen pass-through.

All together, it put him in an outrageous place. A place of unreality. Another man was fucking his wife. Another man was giving it to her really good and Jonny sat back and watched. She took it, took it for the good of their home, for the good of their union, but everything about this was wrong. This was an impossibility. The interlocking pieces of the path that led them here were intricate and sharp edged, little failures, big

transgressions … then big failures. The path he built led them here—to this exciting tragedy.

The truth of it was: in it he discovered his most base pleasure, and in it he discovered the love his wife had and the devotion to their relationship. Charlie hadn't wanted this at all. Yes, she had an orgasm on his huge cock, but it had nothing to do with why she started this. She started because she loved her husband.

He got closer. Put his elbows on the bed with her, pressed his cheek against her shoulder, felt her body as it was rocked while their muscular landlord fucked her.

Reza's breath came faster and sharper, huge leathery lungful's of air heaving and emptying, and Jonny knew it was almost over. So he kissed his wife on the shoulder and he sat back to watch. Put his hands behind him sitting cross-legged, watched this hairy muscular man with his wife's perfect porcelain body, saw that monstrously fat thing between his legs as it went in and out of her, shiny with oil and her wetness.

"Yes, fuck, yes, here it comes," Reza said and his grip on her tightened, squeezing her so she protested. "Fuck, yes, take it," he shouted, their bodies slapping together, Charlie's thighs shaking nonstop.

Now Reza was coming; the sound of a bull in heat. Bellowing and heaving, a deep-chested animal roar. The veins stood out on his arms and he thrust himself deep in her and her chin went to the ceiling, her neck arched impossibly. She cried out. Cried out because she could feel another man ejaculating inside her body, a man that wasn't her husband.

She shouted his name, "Jonny!"

"I'm here," he cried, his face twisting up at her mournful sound (but the thing in his pants completely and impossibly upright). Reza drew back and bucked her harder. Jonny watched her hanging little breasts jiggle. She cried out again.

"Yes," Reza roared once more. He pulled back and thrust, Jonny could see the man's testicles held up high, hugging the sides of the shaft.

He collapsed over her back, his muscular arms an either side of her, his chin on her shoulder blade. Reza groaned, "Holy fuck, ah, fuck, shit …"

Jonny leaned forward and stroked Charlie's upper arm.

"Yes, yes," Reza moaned, his sleepy eyes fluttering, looking around seeing Jonny and then smiling. "This is gonna work out, Jonny. This is gonna work out."

"Okay," he said weakly.

"Yeah," he said as he rose up, still inside her, admiring her back, running his hands up and down over her rib cage and smoothing the globes of her ass. "This is really going to work out," he said, pinching the base of his cock. He pulled it out and Charlie moaned. He took the tip and held it still inside her stroking himself. Jonny could see white forming in the seal where he entered her and drooling out to the bedding.

"Look at that," Reza said, more to himself than Jonny. He played with what emerged with the head of his uncircumcised cock. Then he looked at his watch, exhaled, took it and squeezed it over Charlie's tailbone. More pearly drops splashed on her skin then Reza was lightly spanking her with it, smearing the wet. He backed off the bed, still breathing heavy.

"You okay?" Jonny asked Charlie. She made no sound but he could tell she nodded her head. "Lay back," he said, "lay with me."

Charlie fell to her side and spooned with him. He took sheets, whipped them over to cover her while Reza stood at the side of the bed looking for his clothes. They watched him dress, laying on the bed side-by-side, husband holding wife, while the menace in their life squeezed his muscular body into his expensive clothes.

When he was ready, he said, "This is definitely going to work out. Your wife is perfect." He ran his hands through his hair and scratched at his beard, smoothing points to the ends of his mustache. "Charlie, you're *perfect*," he said right to her. She said nothing.

"Next month, count on it," he said, pointing vaguely toward the bed, and he smiled, said, "Have a good night."

They watched him as he climbed the steps up into the kitchen and listened as he opened the door, closed it behind him and walked down the hall.

JONNY HELD HER, and she said nothing for at least ten minutes. That was all right, he could lay with her like this forever. Listening to her breathe, feeling her against him, knowing the depths she would go to prove their love for each other.

He pushed away something that tickled at him, something reminding him that he enjoyed it too much. To it, he spat back, *She enjoyed it, too!*

And that thought bothered him.

There was no denying her disgust for Reza and their pact with him, but there was no denying, just a moment ago while he fucked her she came. She came hard.

Soon Charlie was stirring, the quiet lacuna over. He rubbed her arm, like trying to put life back in a hypothermia patient. She rocked against him as he stroked up and down. "Was it okay?"

"Yeah," she said.

"Did it hurt?"

"Yes," she said quieter.

"And you sure you're okay?"

"I'm okay, Jonny," she said. Now she turned in his embrace and faced him. "Do you hate me?" she asked him in the most timid and fearful voice imaginable.

"Hate you? Oh my God, Charlie, I told you, I can't hate you. What you're doing is incredible …"

"How can you watch me?"

"Because I love you. The same thing that allows you to do the deed is in me. It's what makes me able to watch you. I watch you because I love you and I love our life together—the same reason you … *surrendered* to him."

Now her eyes welled up and trembled. Her hand came to his cheek, and she scratched him gently watching his eyes. He kissed her, took her lips and ignored the smell of cologne on her skin.

"I love you so much, Jonny."

"I love you, too. This is going to work out. We're going to stay."

"We're going to make it, Jonny," she said as hopefully as he did.

"We are."

They lay and stared at each other for a long while again, just feeling their warm bodies. After a while, Charlie said, "Could you go to the bathroom?"

"You need to be … alone?"

"No, can you get me a towel?"

"Oh," he said, "yeah," wanting to ask why but maybe not wanting to broach the subject. His eyes darted over the sheet-covered shape of her body.

"Please, get me a towel," she said.

"Yes, okay," he said as he rose from the bed, glad that his arousal had dwindled enough to be hidden in the cup of his underwear. He trotted to the bathroom and fished out a dirty towel meant for the laundry. He brought it back, a big beach one that read Costa Rica, bright sunny yellow on an ocean blue background. A relic from their better times.

"Thanks," she said, her hand reaching out from the bed sheets and forming a claw to grab it from him. He thumped down next to her as she took it, put it under the sheets; watched as her hands bunched between her legs, watched the expressions on her face as she tried to clean herself, saw her mouth wriggling around, her eyes rolling up and to the left. Heard—but kind of wished he didn't hear—a greasy splurging down there.

He said, "Is it okay?"

"Is what okay?"

"The timing."

"Yes," she said. "I think so." Then more rubbing, more elbows and knees pushing up, more wet sounds. She whispered to herself, "Gosh, how much comes out of him?"

That simple, barely registered remark had a huge and devastating effect on him. Not only was the man larger, noticeably so, enough that it provoked anxiety and anticipatory fear of his size, now his wife was noticing something else about sex with this other man: the volume of his sexual product. His stomach hurt.

Later that evening Charlie began to ache. They watched TV, sitting quietly together, and, under Charlie's intense instruction, not talking at all about what she did that afternoon. That was rule number one. She got up to get herself a drink and her step hitched.

He asked her: "What's wrong?"

She held her side and said, "It just hurts."

He was next to her in a second, holding her waist. "Did he *rupture* something?"

"No, not like that. It hurts like the *muscles* hurt. And I feel like I have my period."

"Do you have it?"

"No," she said. "Just cramps."

"Let me get you a drink," he said and guided her back to sit on the couch.

Eventually he had to call work and tell them she wouldn't be coming in the next day.

*No, my wife won't be able to make it today. Why? – she had vigorous sex with a well-endowed man while I watched and now she's laying on the couch and her vagina is real sore.*

That's how it was at first with Reza.

*Presently …*

# CHAPTER SIX

TWO VOICES ECHOED in the hall outside the door that sealed his tomb. Both familiar; one deep and booming, voluminous in menace; in retrograde, the other was soft, high and kind. A light and lilting laugh came now, the voices growing closer; his Charlie's laugh, looping and bashful. Jonny moved himself closer to the kitchen door, ice cream scoop still in hand.

The voices grew quieter, like two people getting nearer to one another and sharing thoughts just for themselves. Low rumbling, Charlie calling back quietly, blithely. Giggling now. Then the sounds of fabric: a rustling of cotton, a squeak of leather—were they embracing?

Hushed sounds of farewell, another feminine chuckle, then the keys jangling in the door, her kitty-head key chain like a pendulum below the door lever. Jonny darted back to the kitchen counter on his tip-toes and waited, posed with scoop and Rocky Road carton.

When she came in, he looked to her casually as she stood in their small vestibule hanging up her things, saying, "Hey, look who's home."

"Hi, Jonny," she said.

"How was work?"

"Fine," she said, coming into the kitchen then making a shocked, frowny-face seeing him putting ice cream in a bowl. "You're going to ruin your dinner, Jonny."

"I was hungry," he said.

Up on her toes she kissed his lips and rubbed his back. "Jonny, you're not going to have ice cream for dinner."

"What do you want to eat tonight?"

Arm still around him, she took the bowl and dumped his two rounded scoops back in the container. "We'll have a real dinner tonight."

"How?" he asked her. "We ate through most of the food you bought."

"Leave it to me," she said.

And now he was mad. Seeing her little charming self, rubbing his back and being cute with him and she'd opened her cunt for Reza today at lunch and earned them more grocery money. "Mm-hmm," he hummed, showing her the slightest scorn. "Saw Reza today? *Earned* more money?"

"What do you mean?" she asked, her brow troubled.

"Make a little more cash at lunch today? On your back?"

"No," she whispered, showing him her hurt expression. But he was onto something, he saw it in her trembling eyes. Charlie took the ice cream carton, squeezed the lid on it and walked it to the freezer.

"You can dance around it all you want, Charlie, I know you saw him today."

"No, Jonny …"

"I heard you two in the hall just now."

"Oh."

"Yeah, '*oh*.' So, you're seeing him during the day now? This isn't the first time …"

"It's not like that, it's—"

"Did you fuck him?"

"Jonny …"

"Did you fuck him today?"

Her eyes welled up, took a tinge of pink right before him; his words hurting her. She whispered shakily, "Jonny, don't be crazy."

"Well then, what did you do with him?"

"You're going to ruin it."

"Ruin what? Your afternoon trysts? Where you spread your legs for him behind my back?"

Charlie took a deep trembling breath, said with forced brightness, "You're going to feel so bad, mister."

"What does that mean?"

"You're going to ruin your surprise."

"Oh, am I?"

She nodded, a childish grin tugging at her pretty mouth. "You're going to be apologizing later."

"Why?"

"I don't know," she said suspiciously.

"All right, tell me."

"No," she said defiantly. "I don't feel like it now."

"You're keeping secrets from me. Lying to me."

"What's it going to take for you to calm down?"

"Why don't you tell me what you did with him?"

"Okay." Now her eyes rolled around the room as she came up with the most camouflaged manner to say what she wanted. "Reza and I went to a lawyer today."

It was far worse than what he expected. A hard jab in his stomach. Worse than her meeting him on her lunch break and opening up her legs and doing that thing that she at one time hated. Scratching her nails on Reza's back while he pounded her, hating that she needed it. This was worse.

He stated his greatest fear: "A divorce?"

The beautiful features of her face sagged, her jaw falling, her eyes going wide in horror. "Jonny," she gasped.

"Is it?"

She took two steps to him, encircled him with her arms and held him. "Jonny, how could you?"

"You went to a lawyer …"

"You'll see. You'll see you're being silly. Why would I tell you that was a surprise?"

"Because I never saw it coming."

Her head darted back, and she looked in his eyes. She kissed his cheek. "Surprises are good things, Jonny."

"Tell me. Please, tell me why you went to a lawyer."

She sighed and closed her eyes, moaned, "I wish I didn't say anything."

"How can you do this to me? How can you torture me?"

"Jonny, I did something today that will blow your mind."

"Tell me, please, it's killing me …"

"I'll tell you at dinner."

"Can't you just please tell me now?"

"I will tell you, unequivocally, we're not getting a divorce. I'll tell you at dinner. You have to wait till dinner. I saved us, Jonny, you'll see …"

AT SIX O'CLOCK, three loud knocks came to their apartment door and Jonny was sure it was Reza. His insides clenched tightly.

Charlie's eyes darted to his, and she smiled, saying, "That must be dinner."

It was a relief.

They'd been sitting on the couch watching another episode of The Twilight Zone. They were into the third season now. Not sitting closely this evening—not, as usual, with his arm around her, or her head on his shoulder, or her feet in his lap getting rubbed—tonight they were stiff and awkward and he barely paid attention to what they watched. He knew it was about a ventriloquist and his dummy; a dummy that was more than it seemed. It was alive and evil. Then somewhere along the way he got lost in his own thought. The ventriloquist looked to lock the dummy away, fearing it. And then Jonny saw the dummy as he saw that part of him—that dark part of him that liked watching Charlie being taken by their cruel landlord.

In his imagination, he devised the shape of a box that would contain that part of him, lock his evil dummy away, help them return to where they were before. Though, he began to think, things were worse before. For whatever reason, now his life had structure. He worked hard. More than nine-to-five, seven-days-a-week. And while he would love to go and have free time, he did feel at home in front of his monitor.

Also, in a way, another man was slowly taking charge of his sex life. Gradually giving his wife what Jonny wanted her to have. And in trade for that bizarre sexual satisfaction?—bills were paid, rent was covered, they ate good food again. And, he wondered, should he lock that evil dummy in a box, how long would it take before it clawed its way out? And what kind of vengeful mood would it be in when it emerged?

Charlie trotted up the steps into their kitchen and went to the door, slid the chain out of the lock and opened it.

Not dinner. Not food. His worst fear: it *was* Reza. Standing there with a smile, a large champagne bottle tucked under one arm, the bulbous end wrapped in gold foil.

"Hey, beautiful," he said.

"Oh, Reza," she gasped, then looked sheepishly to Jonny as he sat silently watching from the couch.

"You going to invite me in?" he said, putting up one eyebrow.

"Of course, of course," she laughed nervously. "Come on in."

Reza stepped past her, looked in the kitchen, said, "Food not here yet?"

"No, it's not yet."

Reza seemed irritated, and Jonny watched them through the pass-through, saw the look of anger on his face, heard the knock of the champagne bottle being thumped on the kitchen counter.

Reza tapped his phone now, put it to his ear and turned his back to them. Charlie tiptoed down the steps and joined Jonny on the couch.

"Reza's here," he said, stating the obvious but using his tone to communicate how displeased he was.

Charlie pat his chest and said, "It's part of your surprise."

A strange feeling of hope rose within him. Charlie was good; an angel. Perhaps there was positive news this evening.

He looked in her eyes and said, "What did you do?"

A wide and happy smile spread on her face, her eyes glistened with glee. Another knock came to the door.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

"DINNER'S HERE," she said quietly, then rose and kissed his forehead, whispering, "Don't be a crab. Come and get something to eat."

After a long drawn out sigh he followed, coming up the steps to join her in the kitchen as Reza opened the door.

"You were cutting it close," he said to the young guy standing at the threshold. Black pants and a white smock, padded nylon bag at his hip, its wide black strap crossed over a shoulder next to a bold pheasant in gold stitching emblazoned on the smock's chest.

"The Golden Pheasant?" Jonny said aloud.

Charlie turned and said, "You know it?"

He nodded. Sure. Only the oldest and most celebrated restaurant in the city. Reservations were made months in advance, dinners ringing the cash register at $200 a plate. Not the kind of place offering home deliveries, so the fact Reza could bring service to the apartment was impressive. But he wouldn't tell Charlie. "Yeah, I've heard of it."

The waiter crossed into the kitchen now, Reza extending a hand out to bid him in. "Sorry, Mr. Khan, Chef called me back—she added something special for you, off menu."

"Betsy's a sweetheart," he said, "I'm sure I'll love it."

The bag hoisted up to the counter, he unzipped the top flap and began transferring the contents to the countertop. "Well, Mr. Khan," he said as he worked, "I'm Rainey. I'm here to serve tonight—if you'd like." Plastic bags and containers and foil dishes spread out now, Rainey turned to shake Reza's hand. "Shall we start with the Scottish langoustine?"

"I don't think so, Rainey," Reza said, shaking his hand. "You can leave it on the counter. Take the night off." Now he withdrew the other hand from his pocket and opened a wad of bills.

"Are you sure, Mr. Khan? Would you like me to set up your plates?"

"Leave it to me," Reza said, pressing three fifty-dollar bills to Rainey. "The kitchen is a little cramped for four, anyway."

Rainey said nothing, but looked around the kitchen and out the pass through to the living area, tucking the bills into a pocket on his smock.

"Besides," Reza continued, hoisting the bottle of champagne off the kitchen table, "my friends and I have … personal … matters to discuss. Something of a celebratory nature."

Rainey spied the bottle, said, "A David Sugar? Must be great news."

"It is," Reza said, smiling at Charlie now.

"I'll get out of your way then, let you get eating. Oh—Mr. Khan, this one," he said, holding up a small white plastic bag with a square cardboard carton inside, "this is from Chef, made specially for you. Sea urchin from California, with bergamot caviar. And, you'll celebrate with the Krug, but chef sent a bottle of 2012 Saumur–Champigny, a Clos Rougeard, with her regards."

"Thanks, Rainey, tell her I'll be in touch," Reza said, guiding him to the front door with his emptied bag where they stopped and talked quietly a moment.

Charlie regarded Jonny again, hands in the pockets of her skirt, eyebrows high, expression bright and blithe, but her mouth pursed with a tension.

He said, "If your surprise is I get to have dinner with Reza, I hate to break it to you—"

With a comical scowl she kicked him gently on the ankle and whispered, "Just wait, you."

When he reached over and kissed her, gently holding the back of her neck, Reza returned, ruining the moment. There was a lot he wanted to apologize to his Charlie for. Firstly, for being a dick when she arrived home today, but there was much more. Stuff he couldn't quite fathom, how his inabilities had become somehow fetishized, and while they suffered under Reza for the sake of their home, there was much about it that he secretly enjoyed. And he hated that he did.

"I DON'T KNOW shit about wine," Reza said, palming the bottle the Chef had sent and reading the label. "Anyone object to starting with the champagne?"

Jonny said, "I just really want to know what the good news is …"

"Hey, Jonny," Reza said, noticing him for the first time.

"Hi, Reza."

"Can we tell him now?" Charlie asked Reza hopefully.

"That's up to you, Charlie girl."

Charlie wrung her hands together, then said to Jonny, "C'mon, let's sit at the table." She pulled a chair out for him to sit. As he put himself down, Reza transferred the cartons of food to the table, then went to the cupboard for plates.

"Can you just please tell me," Jonny pleaded as Charlie took a seat next to him. Hands under the seat, she shifted and jerked, the legs squeaking as they scraped the tile, until she faced him. Behind her, Reza removed the foil from the champagne bottle, then unwound the tin wire casing.

Charlie began: "So, Reza … recently Reza had a windfall—"

"A windfall?" Jonny said.

"I sold my penthouse," Reza said. "Glasses?"

Charlie turned in her chair and said, "Um, cupboard. The one next to the fridge. But we don't have any wineglasses." Reza grunted and opened the cupboard. Charlie continued: "Yeah, so, he sold his penthouse, and for a really big profit, right, Reza?"

Reza thumped three short drinking glasses on the kitchen table and said, "Yes."

"He had a …" then she looked up to Reza for confirmation, "a bidding war?"

Reza said, "Three parties interested. They drove the price up one-point-four over asking—and asking was high."

"Right," Charlie said, "so, he … he ended up with a lot more than he expected."

"That's really great," Jonny said morosely.

Charlie faltered, her smile fading, but then it quickly returned; her hands however, wrung together nervously. "He gave me the money to pay off the Chinese."

The cork popped like a gunshot and they both jumped.

Charlie laughed and turned to see Reza pour champagne in her glass.

Jonny's fingers went ice cold, a nausea swelled up within. "What?" he murmured.

As Reza leaned close and poured champagne in Jonny's glass, Charlie said, "I paid the debt off, Jonny. The Chinese are paid in full."

"What? It … you can't … how?" A million questions jumbled inside his husk of a skull. "*You* did it? *You*? He *gave* you the money?"

Reza poured himself a glass as well then sat down next to Charlie, a wide smile pushing up the pointed ends of his mustache. A hand went out and held Charlie's neck, thumb rubbing up and down. Jonny jumped in his chair like another cork popped.

"Charlie, what did you do?" he said.

"We went to the lawyer at lunch today, Jonny, and I signed a promissory note and he gave me the money, and right away the lawyer issued the money to the Chinese guys' lawyers. You're out, Jonny. You don't owe them anymore."

Elbows up on the table, he put his face in his hands and breathed deeply. "But, Charlie—"

"What?" she said abruptly, a tinge of fear and sadness in her voice. He peeked through his fingers and saw her cheeks turn red.

"Charlie. We owe Reza now, don't we? Why would you do that?"

"Interest-free, Jonny. Interest-free. The terms are our own, no one else knows them, our debt is hidden, we can … we can rebuild our credit."

"Interest-free? Seriously?"

Reza nodded, his hand still on Charlie.

Charlie smiled now, seeing him accept the good in what she'd done. She said, "Fourteen-hundred a month, Jonny, for five years, and it's all done. Five years and this will all be over."

Fourteen-hundred a month was easily manageable. What Charlie had done put them in a much better financial position given the circumstances. Reza's hand on her told him the rest of the story. "He can take you whenever he wants, can't he?"

Charlie ignored his question; though she smiled he saw her eyes glistened wetly. The smile disappeared as she sucked her lips between her teeth.

Reza said, "Let's toast Charlie. Jonny, with one stroke of her pen today your wife saved you almost thirty-grand in interest at the rate you were going." He hefted one of their cheap drinking glasses filled with expensive champagne and said, "To Charlie."

Jonny's hand shook as he took up the tumbler, but he raised it to toast his naïve but wonderful wife. "To Charlie," he agreed and took a sip of the champagne.

Charlie took a deep breath and smiled weakly, taking up her own glass and raising it toward him, saying, "To Jonny." She took a long deep drink and set her glass down.

While she was quiet a moment, her eyes lowered to the table watching her hand hold the glass of champagne, all Jonny could think was that Reza could take her anytime he wanted. Did it mean anytime over the next four years? When he'd encouraged Charlie into this arrangement, he never looked far ahead. That evil dummy in him just *needing* to see her with Reza. One time. That was all. Just her mouth. Then it was more. Then it was sex. Just once though. Then once a month—but it was up to them if it occurred. Reza bought 80K worth of Charlie fuck credits today, but he didn't think Charlie saw it that way, only saw that she had done well for her husband.

A smile forced on his face, he reached out and took her wrist, pulled her close to him, hand now held in between both of his. He whispered, "You did good, Charlie. You did so good and I love you."

Relief slumped her posture, and she exhaled, saying, "Really?" A tear spilled from one eye and trickled her cheek but she wiped it away. She whispered, "I'm sorry I didn't tell you, Jonny."

"I would have said no. But it was the right thing, Charlie. You saved us a lot of money."

"Right, Jonny?" she said. "All of what we paid already was just interest."

He kissed her fingers as Reza opened cartons, steam rising from them and curling up in the lampshade that hung over the table.

"That's just part one, Jonny," she said in a cheerful whisper.

"Part one what?"

"Of your surprise," she said, slipping off her chair and getting on her knees before him, taking both his hands in hers now. At the table, Reza removed a small orange lobster-like creature from a carton and examined it.

"There's more?" Jonny said.

Over her shoulder, Charlie cautiously looked at Reza, and he took a long arm of the weird crustacean and moved it as though it waved to her. He winked.

Charlie looked back to Jonny and said, "How would you like to work on your game full-time, Jonny?"

"How?" he asked, his voice rising with disbelief.

She licked her lips and looked at him directly. "I told you Reza sold his penthouse …"

"Yeah," he said with an apprehensive chuckle. "Like, a minute ago …"

"He's going to build a house just outside of the city."

"Good for him," Jonny said.

"He's got the land. He has a contractor …"

"Okay."

"So—now listen, Jonny—he's going to pay all our rent, utilities, internet, cable, everything, even our food—"

"Oh no …"

"He's going to move in with us while his house is built."

"Charlie," Jonny moaned and pulled his hands away from her.

She chased them, rose and stood between his open legs, saying, "Jonny, Jonny, listen, please listen …"

"No way, Charlie."

She held his cheeks in her palms and steadied his face so he would look at her. "Only six months, Jonny. That's all. Listen—look at me. I'll pay the debt, he pays the bills, you have six months to work on your game and *only* your game, baby, *please*, I love you."

Watching her emotions brought tears of love to his own eyes now, and he sniffed wetly. The cost was enormous, but he saw what she would do for him and his love for her grew inestimably. His heart literally swelled in his chest and his mouth fell open, his breath hitched. "W-what?" he stammered.

"Six months, Jonny. You've got six months, okay?" She blinked tears away again. "Six months to make me proud, baby. I've always believed in you … I know you can do it."

He pulled her to him and embraced her so tightly his hands formed shaking fists. Tears were squeezed from his squinted eyes and his eyelashes fluttered.

Across the table, Reza stared at him, smiling balefully.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

WHILE THE FOOD prepared by the celebrated chef at The Golden Pheasant was probably excellent, it rolled in his mouth like tasteless mush, sitting now a quivering bolus in the pit of his stomach. The fizz of the champagne helped, and he welcomed the dullness it brought his mind.

During the meal he held Charlie's hand. Couldn't help stewing over the development and how it came to pass. Charlie made small talk while she ate, light and inane, shot through with her evident self-consciousness. It made him consider what brought it to her—was it a certain shame?

A worry came to him that part of sweet Charlie entered into this parlous contract with their landlord to feed something within her. Jonny might not be the only one with an evil ventriloquist's dummy that needed to be locked away in a sturdy oaken chest. By signing a promissory note in secret with Reza—without her husband's counsel—she had guaranteed herself a long sentence in sexual servitude to their swarthy and obscenely endowed landlord. Was it all love for her Jonny or did his timid girl have a deep itch that Reza relieved?

Eyes on her perfect profile as she ate and tried to make easy the worst situation a young married couple might find themselves, a chilling guilt crept up his back. How could he think of her that way? The sacrifice she made today was enormous and there was no doubt she'd done it because she loved him. That was honest. The feelings she had for Reza were known: she held the opinion he was offensive. Never had she expressed an interest in him before the agreement, and the night she'd been coerced into fellating him, she'd retched afterward and sought the cleansing of bleach to remove his remnants from her pallet.

*However, Jonny, she orgasmed regularly from his thrusting, didn't she?*

But even Charlie was bewildered by that, wasn't that true? Didn't acknowledge it, or even want to talk about it when it was brought up.

*Jonny? – didn't she tell you she asked for it that night in the limo? Begged him to fuck her if I recall.*

She hated that she did, and she was driven to it—Reza had teased her and she expected it …

*Begged him to fuck her, Jonny.*

"I gotta stretch my legs," he said abruptly, and stood up from the table, letting Charlie's hand go.

"Where you gonna go?" Reza laughed, joking about the size of his apartment, he supposed. Now made much smaller by Reza's huge presence.

"Don't you want dessert?" Charlie asked him with a sanguine smile.

"I'm full," he said, and moved his chair away to leave.

"You okay?" she asked him and he didn't answer.

As he stood at the top of the two stairs that led to the living room area, something in him tugged. *Just open the door, Jonny, open it and run out to the street, and run and run and don't stop running till all of this is just a distant memory …*

That was something he would never do, not when Charlie had done so much. Slavery to his console was his six-month sentence. He'd show her. In six months he'd have something. *His game*. A year from now he'd have so much money he'd pay Reza double to get his wife back. Maybe even give ten-grand to Demetrius to put on a ski mask and throw fists at Reza. A grand per punch, a grand for every punch that landed in the chin, mouth, and nose area, maybe even—

A loud yet tuneful knock on the door.

"That'll be for me," Reza grunted from the table where Charlie remained with him sipping champagne.

Great, now he was receiving visitors here. Already standing next to the door, Jonny opened it—

Speak of the devil.

Demetrius said, "Hey, what's up, Jonny?"

"Hey," Jonny said.

Demetrius stood in the hall with another man, a white guy wearing a suit stretched out by his muscular bulk. In one hand, Demetrius held a suitcase, in the other a strap that led to another suitcase, this one behind him on the floor resting on wheels. The muscular man, a handsome sort of guy with thick sandy hair brushed back from his face, curls on his collar on either side of his wide neck.

"That Demetrius?" Reza asked from the kitchen.

"Yeah," Jonny said, stepped aside, waving a hand to invite the two men in.

"Ha ha, hey, look at you, Mr. Domestic," Demetrius said to Reza, brushing past Jonny and trundling the case on wheels, Jonny darting his toes back to avoid having them run over.

"Hey," the bulky guy said, brushing past him, also laden with two bags, one in hand, the other on a strap over his shoulder; just like Demetrius his load also emblazoned with the LV pattern.

Jonny stood at the back of them, watching around as Reza wiped his mouth and beard with a napkin. Charlie stood as well, turning, an expectant smile up to the blonde-haired one, her expression bright.

"Hi, Tate," she whispered.

The one she called Tate took a step toward her, Charlie looking up into his eyes. "Hi, Charlie, how's it going?" he asked her.

"It's good," she sang softly, running her hair behind an ear and tilting her head.

Demetrius said to Reza, "You want this stuff down by the bed?"

Reza grunted, "Yeah, take it down."

As Demetrius passed to go down the stairs, Jonny said, "I guess he's moving in tonight?"

Demetrius laughed, "Sure look like it, don't it, Jonny?" and trotted down the steps.

"Hey," Jonny said, loud enough to get the attention of the guy talking to his wife. He turned away from Charlie and Jonny said, "Down here," gesturing to the living area. As he came to the stairs, Charlie following behind, Jonny put his hand out to shake saying, "I'm Jonny… This is my apartment."

The guy eased the bag on the strap behind his hip, and took Jonny's hand, dwarfing it in an iron grip and shaking, saying, "I know, Jonny, I know all about you. Nice to meet you, I'm Tate."

Jonny nodded, giving him a serious face, letting him go. As he made his way down the steps, Jonny stopped Charlie, putting a hand out and resting it on her middle as she tried to pass.

"Who's your friend?" he said in a low voice.

She said, "Tate? He went out with us that night to the club. He was in the limo."

Ah, the limo. So he would be one of the men who rubbed their cocks through their pants while they watched you blow Reza. "Okay," he said and let her pass, his stomach twisting painfully.

Reza approached and Jonny slipped down ahead of him, joining the others near the couch that was their pullout bed. Demetrius and Tate waited for Reza to tell them what he wanted, and Charlie stood near Tate, her fingers laced together, forearms across her hips.

Reza came around Jonny now, bumping him, saying, "I don't know, I guess just leave my bags outside the closet door. There's, like, no room here at all. Just put 'em down there. My stuff from the penthouse will be in storage, I'll just have you bring things in and out as I need them, week at a time."

Jonny scoffed loud enough Reza turned to regard him.

Tate looked around and said, "Small place for three," and let it hang.

Jonny followed up: "I know. It is. It's so fucking obvious … Why would someone want to stay here when they could rent a luxury apartment, a house, shit, stay at a four-star hotel …?"

Reza could stay anywhere he wanted. He had the resources. He could come and go and still fuck Charlie every day if he wanted. No, him moving in with them was one-hundred times more about fucking *with* Jonny than it was about *fucking* Charlie.

But Reza stayed silent, slowly folding his arms while staring Jonny down with great menace.

"I'm staying here, Jonny, because I care about Charlie. She married a loser but Goddamn if she doesn't believe in him. I'm doing it to show her. Prove me wrong. You've got six months to show the woman you married that you're a man. Prove you deserve her. If she were on the market, I know a dozen *real* men with bank that would sweep her off her feet and give her everything a woman fine as she is deserves. You've got six months to show Charlie the truth. Are you the piece of shit I think you are or the hidden gem she sees? … Tick tock, Jonny."

The room fell deadly silent as Reza continued to glare and no one said a thing. Jonny swallowed dryly and looked away from Reza.

Demetrius burst out, "Oh snap, dude. Jonny should've kept his mouth shut."

Charlie said, "Jonny's not a loser. You'll see."

"THIS IS RIDICULOUS," Reza said, one hand dug behind the seat of their fold-up bed, Charlie on the opposite side doing the same. You have to do this every night?

"It's no big deal," Charlie said, pulling up, and together she and Reza walked the bed as it folded out of the seat like an accordion, amidst the groaning of metal and a twanging of springs.

"It's fucking annoying," Reza said, forcing it down, banging the feet on the floor.

"There's a lock in the middle," Charlie told him, "you swing it around and it holds it in place," as she clicked her lock around.

"Holy fuck," Reza muttered, stooped down looking for the lock on his side.

"Do you see it?"

"No," he grunted.

"Do you need me to come—"

"I got it," he said with irritation, swinging the lock around and standing.

Jonny watched from the other couch, scowling and stewing and not helping.

"Okay?" Charlie said to Reza while he surveyed the bed.

"Fuck," he said, "where are the sheets?"

"In the closet," she told him.

"This is such bullshit," he muttered, stepping around his suitcases and going into the closet. "I don't know how you live like this. Like fucking college students." He flicked the light on and looked around. "Where?" he demanded.

"The column in the middle, third shelf up," Charlie said.

Reza returned with an arm full of bedding, saying, "These?"

"That's them," Charlie said. "Fresh from the wash," saying it brightly, trying to lighten the guy up.

Reza spotted Jonny now and tossed the folded linens onto the bed. "How about you fuckin' help out here, Jonny?"

"Fine," Jonny grumbled and raised himself heavily from the couch, crossing over to the bed. While Jonny and Charlie folded out sheets, snapping them in the air, Reza unbuttoned his shirt and removed it.

"Here," Reza said abruptly, moving around to the other side of the bed where Charlie stood.

"What?" Charlie said, a tinge of fear in her voice. Reza stood next to her, hairy and thickly muscled, tattoos on his side and up his neck, wearing only suit pants. He withdrew his wallet—alligator, matching the belt he wore—and plucked from it a credit card, offering it to Charlie held between two thick fingers.

She took it from him carefully, her body language guarded. "What's this for?" she asked.

"I can't sleep on this thing," he said. "Tomorrow, go out and get a king-size bed."

Charlie said, "We don't want a big bed in our living room."

Reza said, "Too bad. I'm not sleeping on this for six months. Buy a really good one, frame and all, get bedding and pillows too. Have them deliver it. Set it up."

"I have to work tomorrow," Charlie said.

Reza groaned and shook his head at Jonny, indicating that Jonny didn't make enough so his wife didn't work. He said, "You, Jonny. You do it. Go buy a proper bed."

Jonny said, "I have to work, remember? I've got six months …"

"I'll do it," Charlie said, putting the card away in a pocket of her shirt. "I'll go after work."

"Good," Reza said. "And once you sleep on it you're going to thank me."

"I know," Charlie said.

"Go somewhere good. Go to Ashley Bennett out in the West End," Reza said, undoing his belt.

"That's far."

"Take an Uber. Put it on the card."

"Okay. How much can I spend?"

"Huh?" he said, drawing down his fly. "Spend whatever. Get the best. The day I worry about the cost of a bed is the day I take up designing video games." He let his pants drop to the floor, his heavy genitals in a pouch that pulled the waistband of his white underwear to sag at the front. Charlie looked, then looked away at Jonny, keeping her face expressionless.

Reza watched the side of her face as he pulled his briefs down and stepped out of them, his huge, hairy penis swinging between his legs.

Charlie's cheeks went red as she watched Jonny, but she turned and regarded it hanging there, looked up to the ceiling and said, "Can we … Can we watch TV first? Jonny and I like to watch TV before bed."

"Sure. Sounds good," Reza said, stooping to collect his discarded clothes, folding his pants as he returned to the closet, walking past Jonny completely naked.

To Jonny, Charlie said, "Can we put our PJs on?"

Jonny nodded, shifting his thighs as the little thing he had swelled in his underwear. "Yeah," he said.

Reza put a suitcase up on the bed and opened it while Charlie went behind into the closet and came out with her PJs. She looked at Jonny quickly, chewing her lower lip, over to Reza's naked back, then slipped into the bathroom and locked the door.

# CHAPTER NINE

REZA WORE an expensive silk robe with a wide velvet collar, leaving it untied so the tassel ends of the belt dangled and swung just as his exposed penis did. Up in the kitchen now, he picked through a carton of leftovers and finished the champagne. Charlie sat next to Jonny on the other couch, wearing a light shirt and sleeping shorts, Jonny in an old T-shirt and sweats. She regarded him plaintively, head cocked, one bare foot up on the couch seat, chin on a knee.

"It's just for six months," Jonny, she whispered.

"I know," he said, fidgeting with a game controller.

She put a warm hand on his arm and he took it and held it. "Jonny, when … when you see me with him … remember I'm doing it for you."

He nodded.

"I'd do anything for you, Jonny. I love you so much."

He nodded again, eyes welling up; when he turned to face her his arms leaped around her and he embraced her, Charlie's hand stroking his back. "I love you more than anything, Charlie," he whispered.

"We're going to get out of this, Jonny. I know we will. My Jonny won't let me down."

"I won't, Charlie, I swear I won't." He sighed, kissing at her sweet neck.

"What are we watching?" Reza's deep voice said, Jonny looking past Charlie and seeing their landlord coming down the steps naked but for a robe over his shoulders, flowing behind him like a cape. In one hand he held the bottle sent from the chef, two glasses pinched in the other.

Charlie sat back wiping at her cheeks, saying, "The Twilight Zone."

"Cool," Reza said, looking at the paused screen, setting the glasses down and withdrawing a corkscrew from a pocket in his robe.

Jonny pressed play, and the episode began while Reza uncorked the bottle. It was hard to follow along as everything Reza did distracted, but they watched as a husband and wife returned to the husband's childhood home, his controlling mother passed away, looking to prepare it for sale (like Reza's expensive penthouse).

Reza poured two glasses of wine, looking to Jonny and saying, "You didn't want any wine, hey, Jonny?" Jonny shook his head no. Charlie took up the glass intended for her and offered Jonny a sip but he passed.

On the couch, they sat and watched as the episode progressed, Jonny on one end, Reza on the other, Charlie between them. The husband on the show has a hard time letting go of the past and the wife senses the mother's terrible presence (Jonny could definitely feel Reza's presence in his periphery; he could see beyond Charlie's lap, while

Reza's robe closed over, it was still untied, and his thick patch of pubic hair poked up in the gap). Charlie still sipped at the fine wine.

On-screen, the husband becomes so rapt in childhood memories that his deceased mother becomes manifest. Her presence literally transforms the husband into a child (kind of how Reza's sharp words did, belittling him in front of his wife and Demetrius and some man they called Tate).

Reza finished his glass of wine, leaned forward and rested it on the table next to the bottle. When he sat back, he tugged on one side of the robe, exposing a bare, hairy leg and part of his stomach. Jonny noted Charlie's grip tighten on her glass.

Reza took his penis and draped it over his thigh, its wrinkled nose pointing toward Charlie. She took another drink of the wine and tried to focus on the show. The wife challenges the ghostly mother, and she denies any wrongdoing (right—she had *nothing* to do with it). Reza tapped his penis against his leg impatiently and Charlie whispered, "Can I watch the show first?"

Reza took his glass from her and set it on the table next to his, sat back and lay both arms over the back of the couch, embracing Charlie and pulling her to lean against him. She did, nestling into him with his arm around her, his heavy flaccid cock still over his thigh; the wrinkled ugly thing resting in the seam of his hip.

Reza whispered in her ear, and whatever he said had her glancing to Jonny, apprehension squeezing her face. Now Jonny watched in the corner of his eye as Charlie's pale little hand lifted that thing off his leg and squeezed it, tugging on it gently. He was unaroused, his enormous penis pliable and elastic, and Charlie played with it while they watched on the screen as the spectral mother and an infantilized husband chased the wife away, chanting *We don't need you anymore!* (and Jonny would use the next six months to prove he was needed! Needed and oh-so-worthy.)

REZA TURNED to regard Jonny over top of Charlie's ginger hair. "That the end of the show?"

"Yeah," Jonny said, looking over, his eyes lowering to see directly what Charlie did to him with her hand. Saw that garish piece of huge flesh wriggling and swinging from the end of her grip as she tugged and stroked.

"Put on the news," Reza said.

"All right," he said quietly. Then switch the TV over from his hard drive to a news channel on YouTube. Reza hugged Charlie with his arm and kissed the top of her head. He shifted in his seat so that his hips faced her, one knee coming up over her lap. He

stroked her arm as she continued to work him with her little hand, then coddled her breast through her shirt, his eyes lowered to watch his big hand on her narrow chest.

Charlie was reluctant to let him, but knew there was no point in denying him. She folded her shoulders forward as if she didn't want Jonny to see him do it, leaning forward as well so that he couldn't see the thing in her hand. They'd done this so many times you'd think it would be easier for her. The fact it wasn't could be good news or bad news.

It would make more sense if she grew comfortable handling Reza in front of her husband. It had happened quite a few times already. Once again he thought of her shame. She was the kind of girl to feel that way, not be able to come to grips with the darkness that might be inside her. Not know how to handle that little piece of her that desired some of this. Jonny lay his palm in the centre of her back and let her feel that he was here with her.

Her shirt ruffled, Reza's fingers moving around, his hand tugging the shirt higher to slip underneath. Reza whispered, "Open your legs."

Saw then Charlie's knee closest to him angle outward, allowing their landlord to put his hand inside her shorts and touch her between her legs.

"How's this?" he asked Reza finding a live stream on YouTube.

"That's fine," Reza said. "You don't have cable?"

"I cancelled it."

"Reorder it."

"Okay," Jonny said quietly.

Then to Charlie, Reza said, "Come here," and he guided her up to her knees, taking her elbows and rotating her, Charlie putting a foot down on the floor, getting between Reza's knees and facing him. Jonny saw that thing between his legs large and heavy, not fully erect but definitely fatter and extended, still flopped across his leg, the foreskin closed up but the shape of his swelling glans visible underneath. Charlie lowered to her knees onto the floor between Reza's open legs. "That's it, Charlie, just get it good and hard for me."

"Okay," Charlie whispered, her hands clutched together at her chest. When she was squatted down on the floor, Reza leaned forward and pulled her T-shirt up over her head, Charlie lifting her arm so he could do it. Now she was topless and Jonny saw the hardened buds of her nipples that she attempted to hide with her arms.

"What are you waiting for?" he asked her.

"Nothing," she said, eyes turning up to his. She lifted his thing up again, holding it in both hands and looking at it, used her fingers to retract his foreskin, her mouth pursed. She leaned forward, let her tongue sag over her lip and ran it in circles on the underside of Reza's cock head.

“That’s it,” Reza groaned.

Soon she was working, her mouth sinking the whole glans past her lips, tongue swirling around, her cheeks sucked in. Jonny had grown to steel. She bobbed and slurped, Reza watching her, brushing her hair back from her face so he could see better.

He sunk back into the couch seat and let her work for a while. Charlie held it by the base with one hand, her other cradling his big balls. Jonny watched her pale fingers make dented impressions in his very dark scrotum.

While Charlie worked, Reza’s eyes grew sleepy, and then he had a hand fishing inside the pocket of his robe. He withdrew a white paper cylinder, holding it up near his face then smelling it, Jonny realizing it was a rolled joint. From his other pocket Reza withdrew a silver lighter.

Joint poked in his mouth, eyes squinting, two hands came up to light the end while puffing. He closed the lighter with a snap and it disappeared back inside his robe. The whole time Charlie’s head bobbed between his legs, her eyes turned up to see what he did, eyelashes fluttering.

Reza breathed deep, held it, then exhaled a rolling white cloud of skunky stink. Charlie kept sucking, closed her eyes to ward off the smoke’s sting. Reza grew completely stiff in her grip, the end third glistening with his wife’s spit, veins rising up against the skin. When Charlie pulled back, the foreskin rolled over to cover the glans again. Then she stroked, the opening winking at her as she watched the tip of him.

“That’s it, keep going,” he urged her, taking another long drag from the joint. “Jonny, pass me one of those glasses.”

Jonny leaned to the coffee table and took Charlie’s almost empty glass and handed it to Reza, who took it and ashed the joint, making a hot little sizzle that echoed in the glass.

He gestured the joint to Jonny and raised his eyebrows asking him if he wanted to partake. Jonny shook his head no. He would be clear-headed for the next six months. There was much to do.

Reza watched the news through half-lidded eyes while he smoked the joint low. Robe wide open, hairy and naked, the whole time Jonny’s sweet wife bobbing; sucking and stroking his huge hard cock.

# CHAPTER TEN

"IT'S HARD NOW," Charlie said to Reza, holding his cock at the base, the huge thing fully engorged and pointing to the ceiling. The other hand wiped at her spit-soaked mouth; lips pouted and puffy, eyes wet and worried, she said, "You want me to keep going? Want me to make you come?"

"You like it when I come in your mouth?" Reza asked her.

Charlie stayed plain-faced, not answering him. Reza cupped her cheek with a big hand, sighing as he admired her perfect, freckled face.

Reza said, "I love coming in that pretty mouth, Charlie."

She whispered, "You can if you want to."

"You'll swallow it?"

Jonny drew his feet up onto the couch, secretly pushing his erection down and squeezing it between his thighs.

Charlie nodded that she would swallow, her eyes on Reza's.

"Stroke it," Reza instructed her.

As her lips sucked into her mouth, her hand came up and lightly stroked his thick shaft.

"Pull my foreskin down," he said.

One hand on his shaft, she used the fingertips of her other hand to delicately peel back his unsightly skin, exposing his prodigious cock head. Now her eyes darted from it to Reza, looking for her next instruction.

"Put your tongue on it," he said.

The glistening pink point of her tongue parted her lips and pressed to the underside of his cock, slipping up and down where the glans met the shaft.

"That's it … now the hole, lick the hole …"

Charlie angled his cock toward her and ran the tip of her tongue in the deep cup of his urethra. The thing looked as large as a plum.

"Now stroke it again … Stroke it and squeeze my balls …"

Charlie complied, one hand stroking, tongue darting and slipping around his urethra, her other hand lifted and cupped his scrotum, fingers wriggling, squeezing and tugging.

"Mm, that's it," Reza moaned, leaning back and taking another long drag, holding, expelling up to the ceiling. Hand cupping her face again, their eyes on one another, he said, "Or I can fuck you," he said.

Tongue out, stroking and tugging, Charlie nodded her head.

"You like it, don't you? Like it when I fuck you …"

Charlie retracted her tongue, wiped her lower lip with the upper, let his balls hang to wipe at her chin with the back of her hand. She didn't answer but continued to stroke him.

Reza rolled his head on the seat cushion to regard Jonny. "She does, Jonny. Your wife likes it when I fuck her. You know—last time, when we went out?—you know, she begged me to fuck her, Jonny."

"I know," he said, his voice breaking.

"You know?" Reza said, disappointed surprise in his voice.

Charlie said, "I told him. I won't keep secrets."

Reza said, "You did? Such a good and loyal girl. I mean it, Charlie." He stroked her cheek again, Charlie's hand paused holding his erection, and he said, "You are so perfect. Too good for Jonny. Smart, beautiful, honest, pure … You could do so much better …"

"I love my Jonny," she said with a weak smile.

"We'll see," Reza said.

Charlie's features sagged, and she lay Reza's cock up onto his hard, hairy belly, stroking her palm up and down the wide underside. Quiet and blinking, watching her hand on it, finally she said, "Can we go to bed now?"

"You want me to fuck you?"

"Yes," she softly sighed, eyes lowered.

"Say it."

Jaw set firmly, she looked in his eyes, saying, "Take me to bed and fuck me."

"My pleasure," Reza said, a smile spreading his thick black beard as he leaned forward to rise. Charlie stopped him, two hands taking his wrist, one sweeping up to take the joint out of his hand.

"Good girl," he said, standing over her, Charlie on her knees on the floor still. Turned to the side, Jonny looked at his enormous cock poking out of his open robe, slick and glistening, almost straight out, looming over his wife's head. Reza ran his fingers through her hair, turned and walked to the bed, shrugging the robe off his shoulders.

Charlie held the stubby joint to her lips, inhaled and held, eyes to the floor.

Jonny whispered, "You okay?"

She nodded absently, took another long puff, rose and dropped it in her wineglass where it extinguished. Now she stood before him, the same Charlie he knew—caring and innocent but on the apparent verge of frightening transformation. Topless, wearing only shorts, hard cherry buds stretched from her creamy meager bosom. She exhaled plumes of smoke from her nose, saying, "You're sleeping on the couch?"

"I guess so," he said, wafting her smoke away with a hand.

"Sorry," she whispered, helping chase the smoke away with both her hands.

Then she was gone, turning on a heel and crossing the room with her arms folded over her chest. Reza sat in their bed, naked, his arousal poking straight up, the tip resting against his sternum. Charlie passed the foot of the bed, going around the other side. Reza removed his gold watch and set it aside on the table next to the pullout.

Charlie disappeared in the closet, Reza watching after her. When she emerged, she held a blanket clutched to her bare chest. She went to the bed and snatched one of her own pillows then trotted across the room back to Jonny. He drew in a long shaky breath, swelling with love for her, watching her return to him.

"Here, baby," she said, presenting him the blanket and setting the pillow down for him, resting over the couch's arm and patting it once in the middle.

"I love you so much, Charlie," he whispered, taking hold of both her wrists.

"I love you, too, Jonny," she said. Then, "You going to be okay on the couch?"

"*You're* worried about *me*?"

"Yeah," she whispered back to him, brow twisted with incredulity. "Of course."

"You're so special," he said and kissed the inside of one of her wrists.

"You're going to show him, aren't you, Jonny?"

"I sure am," he said firmly.

She pressed her lips to his forehead and let it linger in a long, warm and loving kiss. When she drew away, he took the back of her neck and pulled their lips close together, sealing them with another kiss of his own. The taste of weed, the taste of salt and the scent of cologne from Reza's cock lingered on her lips but he didn't care. She pulled away with a wet smack, a smile stretching her lips wide. They stared at one another and Jonny watched that bright smile wane, her features settling to an expression of reluctant resolve. When she stood and turned, she paused, reached for the bottle of wine on the table and pulled three long drinks, face turned to the ceiling. Bottle set down, she wiped at her mouth and without another word walked to the bed where Reza waited.

FROM THE BOTTOM of the bed she climbed up on all fours. Reza said to her, "I don't want you kissing him before we're together."

"Okay," she said, coming up to sit on her heels at his side. "Sorry."

"That's all right," he said. "Take your shorts off."

Charlie ran her fingers under the waistband, rose up enough to scoop them over her rump, rolled back to sit down and brought her knees up, drawing the shorts down her legs and off her feet. She tossed them aside, then hugged her knees, chin planted, waiting to be told what next.

"Open," Reza said, touching his fingers between her shins, his other hand holding onto his cock. "That's it, perfect," he said as her legs slowly parted. "Sit back and show it to me."

Charlie leaned back on one hand, heels dug in the mattress, legs open, and while she showed Reza her vagina, she shyly covered her breasts with the other forearm. Now she looked between her own legs to see what Reza would; lowered a hand to ruffle her labia, then returned it to cover up her breasts.

"Come to me," Reza instructed in a low voice.

With her legs closed again, she twisted until she was on her knees, walking then till she was beside him.

"Climb over," he said, the hand holding his cock pointing it upright.

She regarded it, then lifted a knee to straddle him, his erection slipping up along the crack of her tight ass.

"Kiss me," he said, looking in her eyes.

She shook her head no.

He spanked an ass cheek, making her flesh jump, said, "Charlie," in a stern tone.

Her hands resting on his muscular shoulders, she lowered her lips to his. Reza leaned to kiss her, both his big hands palming her ass cheeks, parting them, grinding his hips so his cock slipped up and down the crease. Their lips made soft smacking sounds together, both of their eyes closed. Charlie's fingertips pressed harder into his shoulders, and Jonny noted her own hips beginning to roll against the stroking of Reza's cock against her.

One of Reza cupped hands slipped low, the middle finger extending, the tip probing against Charlie's pink stripe. It broke Charlie's kiss, and she gasped at his touch.

"Somebody's wet, Jonny," he said while looking into Charlie's eyes.

She grunted and shook her head no again.

He palmed her ass, pulling her to sit higher, the tip of his uncircumcised cock coming to rest in the nest of her membranes. Now his palms rested on the high crest of her buttocks and he guided her down while his hips thrust up, gradually impaling her. Jonny watched his girth mash her, push all her pinkness in, and Charlie tilted her chin up, sighing, "Ohh, mm, oww …"

Reza worked it up and down, Charlie assisting, raising and sinking in small increments. The shine her insides left on Reza was evident. Charlie *was* wet.

With his hand still bracing the swell of her rump, Reza pumped himself in and out of her, just feeding her half of what he had and Charlie's sex sounded hungry for it; making wet popping and smacking noises. They fucked like that for a while, getting a feel for it, getting warm, and soon Charlie was breathing heavy, the fingers of her ribs pressing out against her pale skin.

The pace grew quicker, the two of them bouncing now, the back of the pullout banging against the wall below the kitchen pass-through. Charlie's long, shaggy, apricot hair swung against her back and their pounding brought breathy gasps from her now. When Reza took a nipple in his mouth she moaned and raked her nails through his hair.

Reza fed her more inches, and it brought muffled grunts of discomfort from Charlie who fell against him now, feeding him her breasts, her two hands spread out on the wall behind him. When his hand stroked her ass, a middle finger slipping along her crack and pressing against the tight rosebud of her anus, her rocking stopped. Her head shook in protest but she said nothing. As his finger probed, Jonny watched Charlie's breaths come now in deep chugs. He inserted the tip of his finger inside.

"Oh, no, no, don't do that," she hissed, raising so she could see his face.

Reza wiggled his hips, sinking more of that wide cock inside her, making her moan a long dry sound.

Most all of Reza's cock inside her, now he sought to penetrate her further. He looked in her eyes and she returned the gaze, hers trembling. He withdrew his hand, brought it to hold her jaw. She took her shook her head no again. Now he pressed his ring finger to her lower lip, fed it to her, and she accepted it, letting him sink it all the way into her mouth.

His thrusting resumed, Charlie riding his hips, titties jiggling, mouth sucking on their landlord's finger. When he plucked it from her mouth she gasped, "No," again, but her body never stopped rolling with his deep fucking.

This time when his hands swooped over her ass cheeks she didn't shake her head, instead digging her nails into his shoulders in anticipation of his finger's penetration. A whine began in her throat as the tip of his finger drew close; when it breached her she let out a wrenching mournful sound.

With half his ring finger inserted in her anus, Reza's grip clamped her ass tightly and his hips powered into her. They got the bed banging against the wall again, the feet scraping the floor. Reza's huge balls slapped up and down, into the sheets and spanking Charlie's ass. The cries built in Charlie until it became an omnipresent wail, warbled with Reza's powerful hammering. He studied her face, watched her as she he gave her pleasure, watched as Jonny's shy and demure wife turned into a simpering harlot on his massive cock.

When the time was right—and Reza seemed to have poor Charlie figured out—his thrusts drove deep, buried it and held; Charlie's back arched, chin thrusted to the ceiling, Jonny reading the grimace on her upturned face, her hands changing from claws to fists, the right one pounding on Reza's collar as she bared her teeth and snorted.

"Oh, mm, ah, mm," she choked through gritted teeth, and while he gored her deeply, he flexed his hips up and down letting her still ride him.

"That's it," he growled, "come for me, Charlie." His free hand spread open on her chest, stroking up and down as she rode out the orgasm, and as it subsided, the hand closed around her neck.

Then he was rolling forward with her still impaled on him, throwing her back so her head hit the mattress, beautiful hair fanned out around her, him over top, legs out wide, Charlie's draped lazily over his hips. The pounding resumed, Jonny seeing that fat cock driving in and out of her, Charlie snorting again, spittle dashing over her lips, two hands coming up to grip Reza's wrist. He tore away one of her hands and thrust it low between them where they were joined.

"Stroke it," he demanded, and Charlie tried to get a hold of his driving shaft. "No. Here," he hissed, pinching the middle of her palm and forcing her fingers to press into the hood of her stretched labia, mashed up above where he penetrated her. Charlie's fingers clumsily rubbed herself and her mouth opened and closed at the shocking pleasure of her own touch. "That's right," Reza told her, "faster now." The grip on her neck released, he planted both hands into the bed on either side of her face, his muscles rippling as he fucked her even harder. "Faster!" he hissed, staring into her tightly clenched face.

"Mm, mmph," she blurted, then swallowed her lips, her brow deeply furrowed. Her hand buzzed over her clit in a blur while he fucked her, two middle fingers mashing down on herself.

"Yeah, fuck, keep going," he growled, pounding hard and fast.

Charlie howled suddenly, eyes bursting open wide but unseeing, and she writhed in the sheets, twisting left and right as Reza made her come again even harder than before.

"Fuck, yes, fuck," he grunted, driving hard and deep with each word for emphasis. Charlie moaned and cried as he did. Her glistening hand came up and covered her face.

Reza said, "You like that, Charlie? You like getting fucked with a real cock?"

Both hands on her face, her head shook from side to side.

Reza said, "Well, your body fucking loves it," and kissed the back of her hand. "Come on, Jonny is watching, let's show him."

REZA SLIPPED his huge hog out of her with a gushing sound and slapped her tummy with it, then stepped to the side of the bed, taking Charlie's knees and rotating her body so she lay crossways on the bed. Jonny squeezed his iron cock through his sweatpants,

his stomach tight and hard but fluttering, his own face pulled into a grimace like Charlie's.

His view of the action now was from behind—Reza's wide, muscular back, his bare ass, and as he spread his legs wider, his low dangling balls swinging from side to side—Charlie's feet over his hips, but as he pressed her knees up to her chest, they bobbed over his shoulders.

Between Reza's legs, Jonny had a clear view of his wife's gored sex, dark pink, shining, and left spread. Reza pushed his cock in and it opened to welcome him. Five months ago she could barely take it, stayed home from work after their encounter, now her sucking hole craved its size.

"Hurry, hurry," Reza urged, shifting his feet, waiting for Charlie to get comfortable.

Her fingers appeared at his waist, and she shifted, wiggling sideways, her pussy stretched fantastically wide by Reza's girth. Jonny heard her voice uttering an okay.

Reza's feet shifted again and then he was pounding once more. Deep, steady; his balls striking her rump, sticking a moment from their damp, then swinging again. The muscles bulged on his back and Jonny could tell he was close. It wasn't more than fifty pumps like that before his arms shook and he thrust deep into her and held. Then out and in again, harder, and he roared, his head thrusting up and down, his testicles rising high, one of them slipping inside his body. Charlie's feet flexed and her toes curled, Reza's legs trembled, then he let out his breath in a freight train roar.

A thin line of bright semen spilled around Charlie's penetration and ran to the floor in one long stream before it became rapid drops. Reza's back swelled and heaved, his breaths bellowed, and when he pulled his cock from Charlie, semen disgorged in a wicked flood. Reza stroked the fat end of his cock up and down her sex and Charlie whimpered with reluctant pleasure. With a shaking hand, Reza stroked himself, wringing out the last of his semen and flicking his cock, dashing white strands over her labia and across her mound. Charlie's hand appeared, slipping through the mess he'd spewed on her, running her fingers through it and massaging her sex, light glinting off her gold wedding band.

It was too much to take. Knees drawn to his chest, muscles flexed in barricade, an unstoppable eruption spurted from Jonny regardless, and he clamped a hand over his mouth to stop his ecstatic sounds from being heard. Once it started it wouldn't stop, one blip at first, then, surrendering, becoming long pulsing streams of his hot semen spilling into his sweatpants.

# CHAPTER ELEVEN

DESPITE THE HORROR he'd witnessed, Jonny slept soundly and didn't wake again until dawn, opening his eyes and being treated to the vision of another man laying in the bed where he should be sleeping. Flat on his back, sheets pulled up to mid-chest, his hairy chest thrust up in a proud hump from the flat horizon of the bed. Reza slept with one forearm across his brow, his thick black beard hiding his remaining features, leaving it very easy to imagine an escaped zoo animal had curled up in his bedding.

Another hump crested the flat line of the pullout. Morning wood. Reza dreaming perhaps of what he'd done to another man's wife while that man watched (Oh, the ways he made her come! Oh, her cries of ecstasy!), or perhaps just a bursting bladder; whatever the means, the man was frightfully engorged, that cannon pumped with plasma and pushing up the sheet past his navel.

One thing missing from this morning's panorama: a second hump under the sheets; a smaller, shapelier form he'd expected to see beyond the unseemly palisade of the man who had contracted his (hopefully) unwitting wife into sexual subjugation. His head darted from the pillow, lifting to look, snorting alertness into his lungs, the hand he held his neck with falling dumbly along his chest. A frightened gasp escaped him—the sudden awful realization the hand that held his neck was not his own. Torso wrenching reflexively on the couch seat, he came face to face with Charlie, asleep behind him.

"Oh, baby," he sighed, touching her cheek while she still dreamed. Sometime in the night she'd returned to him while he slept; climbed over, snuggled under the blanket and fell asleep with her arm around him. Those pouted lips of hers puffed with the silent snore of her sleep.

Drawing the blanket down, he saw she'd dressed in fresh PJs; now in a royal blue tank top and a pair of white cotton panties. With the tip of an index finger he stroked her side, the funny feel of cotton burning a tickle on the pad. Over her rib, across her narrow waist, bumping over the trim of her panty where it crossed her thigh … No flutter in her lashes, he let that finger slip the cotton, low over her hip, tracing the shape of her mound, finding the swell of a panty liner, hearing its crinkle.

Now her eyes opened, narrow slits accepting light, that green sparkle under her lashes as she grew conscious. She smiled a narrow restrained seam.

"Good morning," he whispered.

"Good morning, Jonny," she whispered back, her smile growing more comfortable seeing the warmth in his eyes.

He kissed her, and she dragged her nails on his neck. The hand already between her thighs stroked at her mound with the backs of the knuckles and she flinched warily.

The hand wouldn't take no for an answer and it slipped into her panties, pads of his fingers wedging between the hot flesh of her mound and the gauze of her panty liner.

"Jonny, don't," she whispered but did nothing to stop him.

The cleft of her mound was hot and glutinous, his finger slipping along to separate her cloven halves, finding her labia hot and inviting. The fusty smell of Reza's remains wafted from her tented panties and rolled between them; neither acknowledged it, his Charlie gasping silently at his touch while he examined her face.

"Did he fuck you again, after I fell asleep?"

"No, Jonny."

"He only came inside you once?"

She nodded, eyes wide on his.

"Are you sore?"

"A little."

"Want me to stop?"

She shook her head no, her expression less one of lust and more one of duty: Jonny was her husband.

His finger stroked up and down on her, their eyes darting over one another, and it wasn't long before propitious sounds were conjured from her sex. His other hand tugged the front of his waistband down and his erection sprang out.

Charlie's eyes darted to it, and she giggled mincingly, her hand leaping to cover her mouth. "Oh wow, Jonny," she sighed around the hand.

Wiggling closer, she stroked it, both of them shifting to be comfortable, their knees touching as they faced each other on their sides. "We have to be quiet, Jonny."

"Okay," he said, his massaging fingers parting her legs wider and narrowing her eyes. "You like that?"

"Oh yes, Jonny, shh …"

Between his legs Charlie's hand stroked his meager endowment. Not something he was ashamed of but he had witnessed that same hand on another penis last night, and the other dwarfed his. Charlie's hand formed a ring of three fingers and thumb, her pinky held out of the way to make room for ample stroking. The head of his cock was small and narrow and often obscured by her index knuckle. Reza's cock dominated her fist; made her grip struggle to close. Two hands could be used.

"I look so small in your hand," he whispered.

Her brow furrowed, and she asked: "Your penis?"

"It's so small."

A smile came now, and she laughed. "I love your little boy penis."

"Little boy?" he said a little too loudly.

"Shh-sh, not like that, Jonny—I mean a boy's penis, like a cute boy from school … like you; you're my cute boy from school."

Their foreheads pressed and both their hips ground at what they did to one another with their hands.

"Mine's a boy's … Reza's a man's?"

She groaned. "I don't know, Jonny."

"You used to hate his dick, Charlie."

"I do hate it, Jonny. It's not yours."

The point of his index finger cornered her clit in all her sopping membranes and worked it until she shivered. Then he said, "You come on it."

"Don't," she squeaked.

"Tell me, Charlie. I see you do it, why won't you just admit it?"

"I do admit it, Jonny. I said it before. I don't want to … but he makes me …"

"Come?"

"Yes, he makes me come. Why …?"

"Why what?"

"Why do you … you came when you watched me …"

"How would you know? …"

"I smell it, Jonny …"

"Yeah."

"Why do you get hard … why do you come when you watch him with me?"

"I hate that I do …"

Her back curved, pressing her forehead harder against him. She said, "Are men's …"

"What …?"

"Mm, are men's … bigger?"

Now his back was arching, and the feel of her hand went slippery as he spurted silvery lubricant over her thumb. "What do you m-mean?"

Her hand slicked with greasy ease now. She hissed, "Reza, Demetrius …"

"Yeah?"

"Are all of them … would Tate be big like them …"

"Ah, oh," Jonny flitted on the edge of fainting at the first and narrowest glimpse at a blackness that may be within her; a sliver of shade slashing through the most timid and perfect girl in the world.

She asked him now, seeing his reaction: "You're going to come?"

"Ah, yes, mm, a-ask me …"

"What …?"

He groaned, "Tate …"

"Would his be big?" Her voice a soft, high, and unsure whisper.

"Probably … I bet it is-s …"

"He is?" It came out as a breathy gasp, a surreptitious giveaway that this was good news to his wife; and right there Jonny's love for her galvanized on this secret part of her that she unknowingly revealed, a part she might even hide from herself.

Jonny whispered, "If he *was* big? …" He licked his lips and watched her faraway face, her narrow and glassy eyes, her pouting lips panting with the thrusting of his hand through her dirtied sex …

"Yeah …?"

"Ah, would you come on his cock?"

"Oh, Jonny, oh, no," she whimpered, her eyebrows bowing up in the middle, drawing her smooth brow in a furrowed bunch. But she came. Her hips bucked against him, a thigh folding over to clamp his hand, her mouth parting, eyes closing, a draggy creak drawn up her fine cabled neck.

The sight of her like that, a glimpse inside her dark cave, the way lit by the dull shine of a weak lamp—had him joining her. Watery semen squirting from him with great excitement, Charlie feeling it and thrusting his cock inside his sweatpants to mitigate the mess, her thumb running maddening circles around his urethra while he launched the rest inside his pants.

They bucked and squirmed together, both grunting and writhing from the effort to remain quiet and not wake their landlord while they orgasmed. Then both grabbed the other's wrists to stop their ticklish touching, both of their orgasms leaving their dirty bits hyper-sensitive. Charlie exhaled breathy laughter and Jonny added his too, chuckling through his nose and pressing foreheads again.

"WHY WOULD YOU SAY THAT, JONNY?" she whined, her tone perturbed but her smile unmistakable.

"To make you come," he said, looking in her eyes.

"Oh, Jonny …" She smirked, then sucked her lips into her mouth and clamped them with her teeth, that smile tugging the corners of her smile higher. "Don't say things like that."

Now he smiled, too, eyes darting over hers. "It worked."

She shook her head and rolled her eyes, both her hands shoved in his pants, not to touch him but to clean his ejection off her hands.

"Did we wake him?" he asked her as he rubbed her shoulder.

Still drying, she peeked around Jonny and looked at the bed. "No," she giggled. "He's still sleeping."

Jonny wondered what she thought when she saw the huge hump of his morning arousal, if it provoked something carnal within her, or, like he saw a moment ago, a sense of tragic duty. Could it be both? He supposed it could. Charlie was honest with him at every turn; her selflessness was legitimate, she surrendered to Reza for Jonny's sake, and she hated sex with him but perceived the inkling that something inside her responded to his brute sexuality.

"You going to buy a new bed today?"

She shrugged her shoulders, her hands slipping up to rest on his stomach and chest. "He's paying …" She made a sudden funny face, her chin darting to her neck. Mouth working around, her face pinched like she'd tasted bitter lemon. Now her lips pouted and puckered like she imitated a fish, eyes squinted shut. Mouth open, jaw working side to side, her hand came up and thumb and forefinger inserted into her maw, held in a pincer.

"What are you doing?" he whispered.

She shook her head no, eyes wide open now, rolled up and to the left, speculatively, her index finger scratching at her tongue. Though she tried to hide it, flicking it from her thumb, he saw that she'd removed a long, coarse, black pubic hair. She wrinkled her nose, then kissed his chin. "I have to get ready for work."

"Okay," he whispered. "Want breakfast?"

The thought was sweet, but the truth was they had little in the cupboards right now. They'd feasted this last week on what she'd earned on her back that night in the limo and the club, but they were depleted. Unless Reza left some of last night's dinner untouched, there would be scant choice. The truth was, and he saw it in her virtually blank expression, she would bat her eyes for 'Daddy,' tell him she was hungry and he would give her money for McDonald's or whatever she wanted in her tummy.

She admitted it with: "I'll get something on the way to work."

It occurred to him—he said, "On his credit card?"

She shrugged then climbed over him.

What would he say? Deny her a simple pleasure? Her sacrifice was enormous. Her reward in this endeavor wouldn't be limited to seeing her husband prove Reza wrong. What she did for her husband deserved compensation, consolation, wherever Charlie may find it.

He held her arms as she straddled him, one foot on the floor, her hair hanging down around him. He looked in her eyes and said, "I'm going to make you proud, Charlie."

She smiled, said, "If there's anything in this world I still believe in, it's you, Jonny."

They kissed and breathed a long time, then she pat his chest and sat up. “Shower time,” she whispered. He watched her rise, her long freckled legs dance across their apartment, looking sweet and hot all at once in just a tank and panties. When she put her hand on the door to the bathroom, Reza said, “Where you going?”

LIKE A DEER CAUGHT IN HEADLIGHTS, Charlie paused at the door, hand still on the knob but rolling the point of her shoulder forward to hide her breasts. “I have to get ready for work.”

Reza watched her from the bed, inched up higher with his elbows in the mattress. He breathed deeply. “Come here,” he said.

Charlie looked to object, waffled for a moment, then joined him.

“That’s my girl,” he said, sitting up with his back against the pullout’s cushions. His arousal made a tall ghostly tent between his legs.

“What?” Charlie asked him, on her knees at his side, aware of his erection but looking at it sideways. Reza gripped his cock over the bedsheet and when she regarded it he stroked.

She said, “I have to go to work … and I’m … tender …”

Reza’s other hand crept the bed, worked between her thighs and stroked her sex over her panties. “What’s this?” he asked her, and Jonny heard the crinkling of her panty liner.

“Nothing,” she said.

“That time of the month?”

She shook her head no. “You came inside me and then … I leak.”

“Just change the bedsheets.”

“It tickles when I leak.”

Reza smiled, his hand moving to stroke her cheek, Charlie closing her eyes as he did. Then he took her hand and guided it under the sheets, put it to grip his cock.

With his hands laced behind his head, his hairy muscular chest thrust toward her, he leaned back and let Charlie jerk his cock. Jonny watched the denting of the light fabric as her little hand went up and down his huge column, Charlie on her knees still.

When slick sounds began under the sheet, Reza’s knees moving in and out, his chest heaving with lusty breath, he urged her: “Mm, faster, Charlie.”

She complied, her eyes roaming from Reza’s face to the bumping of her knuckles as she stroked him, the muscles of her shoulder flexing and jumping. He groaned and moaned, his eyes closed, feet moving up and down under the cotton. Charlie went faster and faster, her hand gripping just the glans now, probably rolling it up and down

that huge cock head, her hair shook with her rapid movement. Then Reza was grunting and kicking, his hips driving up to meet her hand and from under the sheets, the motions she made produced slick wet bubbling sounds.

"Mm, ah, mm," Reza, groaned as he shot his semen under the bedding. Charlie continued stroking but slowed, now watching Reza's masculine chest rise and fall with his heavy breaths.

Under the cover, she held his cock for a long while until Reza's eyes opened again and he breathed a deep satisfied sigh. She pulled her hand free, held in a curled claw, palm cupped upright, thick shimmering strands of Reza's semen dangling. He stroked her cheek again while she wiped her hand clean with a bunched up wad of the bed sheet.

"You were my girl, you'd do whatever you want today."

Charlie ignored him, saying toward the bed, "You think I could use the card to buy some breakfast this morning?"

"The card I gave you? Sure, Charlie, buy breakfast, buy whatever. Treat yourself, okay?" he said, now brushing her long curly hair from her face and back over her shoulder.

She nodded a little, whispered, "Okay."

"Okay?"

"Thank you."

"You're welcome, Charlie."

Without saying anything more she backed off the bed, her eyes averted and she closed herself in the bathroom.

The room was quiet a moment, then Reza turned his head toward the couch. "Morning, Jonny."

"Morning."

"How'd you sleep?"

"Just fine."

Reza sat up now, bunching the sheets around his cock and wiping at it. "Dream up your big game?"

"I already know what I'm doing."

"Good for you, Jonny. Good for you." Now Reza rose, stood on the same side of the bed as Jonny completely naked. His cock glistened, hanging half engorged, thick and past halfway down his thigh. "Shit, I gotta piss," he said, handling that big penis, looking at the closed bathroom door. "I can't do this one bathroom thing."

Jonny said, "She won't let you in there. She's very private about her bathroom time."

Reza went to the door and knocked anyway.

From the other side of the door, Charlie's tiny voice said, "I'm in here."

"I know," he said. "Can I come in?"

There was a long pause and Reza began to smile. Finally she said, "No."

Reza winked at Jonny, still squeezing his own dick. "Charlie, I just gotta piss, okay? Let me use the can, I'm bursting."

There was another long pause, the sound of Charlie doing things in there. Reza bounced at the knees, squeezing his cock tight. "Charlie, I'm going to shower at the gym. But if you don't open the door, I'll piss in your kitchen sink …"

"Hold on," she said behind the door. More banging, fissling paper, then the door unlocking and Charlie opening it for Reza. She stood in a short robe, her legs and feet bare.

"Thank you," he said dramatically, walking past her while she stood by the door still like a sentry, her arms folded across her chest.

The toilet seat banged up and then there was a frothing explosion of urine in the bowl as he released his bladder in a torrent through his firehose of a cock. Charlie leaned her back against the open bathroom door and waited. The thunderous splashing went on uncomfortably, ending in spurts and longer jags of resumed streams, then his back muscles flexing as he shook his tool off.

He turned and strolled to the door, touching Charlie's waist as he passed, saying, "All yours, beautiful." Charlie flushed the toilet for him then closed the door again.

The day was off to a very good start for Reza and his face showed it. With a satisfied smile and peaceful eyes, he gathered his clothes, unfolding the pants he wore yesterday and putting his legs through the holes. He zipped up and watched Jonny while he put his arms in his shirtsleeves. "Hey, Jonny?—you change these sheets today, okay?" he said as he nodded to the bed.

Jonny said, "Aren't you getting a new bed?"

He nodded, buttoning up. "Won't come till tomorrow."

"Okay," Jonny agreed.

"I was you," Reza said, slipping his feet into his shoes, "I'd be at that computer already."

"I'll start when you leave."

"You wait for the conditions to be right you're gonna wind up in trouble, kid. You let me get in your head and you're gonna lose that hot wife of yours."

"You're not gonna get in my head," he said.

Reza huffed, smiling. "You need anything?"

"Like what?"

"You got everything you need to show your wife you're not just a dreamer? More monitors, faster computer? You know …?"

"Monitors."

"Yeah? Order what you want. I'll put it on your tab."

"How does the tab work?"

"I'll just tack more months on the end of the term, Jonny. You want more monitors?—sixty months becomes sixty-one months, you get it?"

"You're really getting off on this aren't you?"

Expecting more challenge from him, more superior condescension, a volley, putting the ball back in his court, instead Reza admitted it, saying, "Yes, I am. I'm fucking getting *off* on this, Jonny. Saving me money, too. Cheaper than renting where I would *really* stay, *and* I get to fuck your wife's tight pussy. And I don't know what I'll enjoy better, watching her innocent face when she comes on my cock every night or her eventual realization that she made a big, big mistake marrying you. It's beautiful. She can love me, she can hate me, and it don't matter," he shrugged and smiled gleefully. "It's all your fault I'm in her life because you're a loser."

Jonny said, "I'm not a loser."

Reza laughed, tapped the blank monitor of Jonny's custom rig and said, "Get to work, Jonny."

# AFTERWORD

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KT MORRISON

# REZA'S GAME

DOMINATED BY THEIR LANDLORD

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

KT Morrison writes stories about women who fall in love with sexy men who aren't their husband, and loving relationships that go too far—couples who open a mysterious door, then struggle to get it closed as trouble pushes through the threshold.

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REZA'S GAME

A LANDLORD novel

39,000 words

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# CHAPTER ONE

GATHERED around his feet under the desk were three recently empty cans of Wildcat Energy Drink. The big ones. Acid burned a bright spot the size of a quarter in the center of his chest. How many hours straight had he been awake now?—it was fuzzy. As his fingers danced on the keyboard, banging out code by rote, he calculated. It was almost six in the morning now; the sun turning the night sky a deep navy. He'd been awake since this time yesterday—that was twenty-four hours. Before that, when had he slept? Day before yesterday? Seemed about right. Day before yesterday, in the sunny afternoon, he'd collapsed from exhaustion. Not on the couch or the bed, but the floor. Fell asleep for maybe two hours. Before that though, it might have been forty-eight hours he'd gone without sleep.

It was paying off. What he had created—was still creating—was good. Really good. He'd show Reza, make him eat his words. Most importantly?—he'd make Charlie proud.

While it was paying off, there was an apparent problem. Time. There were only so many hours in a day and his basic milestone calculations showed him he'd be working eight months before he was even ready for a beta, let alone a release. He could hire help, but he had no money, and his rep in the business, even in the business's underground, wasn't good. No one would trust him for back-end and he couldn't pay them up front. He was screwed.

But sleepless nights helped him get closer. It was like he was working three full-time shifts. Sure, it helped with the mechanics, the straightforward tasks of making his game, but sometimes he thought the longer he stayed awake the fuzzier the big picture became. But what could he do?—Work his ass off overtime, that's what.

Behind him lay the reason he would kill himself doing this. His beautiful Charlie slept in a king-size bed with a human gorilla.

Around three this morning Reza had been snoring up a storm—literally sounding like a cartoon bear; and not a friendly one, but a fierce one that, like, Bugs Bunny or whatever would be afraid to wake. On and on it went, and he turned around and saw in the bright light from his monitor, Reza and Charlie curled up in bed together. They spooned; Reza the big spoon, one hairy and tattooed arm draped over the little redheaded spoon. Charlie's eyes were open and as Reza roared behind her again, they opened wide and the two of them both shared a silent laugh. He'd gone then to the bathroom and wadded up squares of toilet paper into makeshift earplugs. He brought them to Charlie and she let him tuck them into her tiny ear holes, still held in her landlord's clutch. When she kissed his wrist while he did it his heart just about burst. He stood at the side of the bed for a long moment making eye contact with her. Both of

them stifling smiles as Reza continued to snore. He kissed her forehead, and she closed her eyes.

Before bed, before the snoring, Reza had fucked her. Took her from behind this time and Jonny watched from his desk using a small cosmetic mirror on a plastic stand. He hated to watch, but he also liked to watch. And if he watched while he worked it tended to put nitrous in his system, get his sore fingers typing faster. So while he faced his monitor and hashed code, he could also see his thin wife on her elbows and knees, Reza with a good grip on her narrow waist, banging her so hard from behind her skinny thighs shook.

Eventually Charlie came, crying that reluctant shameful sound she made when their landlord made her come. It was at the tail end of Charlie's worst window in her cycle, and astonishingly for three days Reza had used a condom with her. He liked danger he said, but he didn't think sure-things were sexy, saying if he came inside her conception would be assured. You know, due to his fertility and virility. It was hard to find a bright spot in their sexual submission to their powerful master but his magnanimity was welcome when they found it, which was rare.

There were *other* perks, of course. Charlie slept in a big comfortable king-size bed and was getting better sleep she told him, when Reza wasn't snoring. To his left was a sixty-inch 4K TV, and they had a full subscription to every channel. At least Charlie got to enjoy it, watching from the couch while he still worked. Jonny hadn't taken a break to sit with her and watch in days. It was still nice just the same to have it on and be in the same room with her while she did. And the fridge was always fully stocked. Meat, vegetables, fruits, cheeses, great snacks, and alcohol, too. Many evenings, before Reza came home, Charlie would lay on the couch behind him, watching TV and calling him to look how round her belly was. Laughing then when he looked over, and she made it balloon out, then complaining how she was eating too much. All in all though, it would seem, that Charlie, despite her griping, was receiving great benefit from the arrangement and he hated to think that. Reza had taken her out for dinner twice, he had Tate driving her to and from work every day, no more public transportation. At home she was being pampered with comforts. And even though she seemed to grumble about sleeping with their well-hung landlord, he had her coming all over his cock, sweating and crying, clutching at the bed sheets. But it was selfish and petty to think of Charlie like that. She was good. She was his wife, and she loved him. This was hard on her and it was a sacrifice she made for them.

And he couldn't wait to win this game, see Reza's face when he took Charlie back. Couldn't wait to see Charlie's face, too—he'd let her down a lot recently, it was going to be great to remind her why she married him.

THERE WAS STIRRING behind him now as the room filled with dawning gray light. One hand still typing, his other reached out to nudge the corner of the mirror's stand and angle it so its circular face filled with Reza and Charlie laying in bed together. They still spooned, but both were awake and Reza grumbled something in Charlie's ear. She reached under her mane and tugged out wadded up paper.

Reza grumbled again near her ear and she nodded, turned around under the covers to face him. She wore a royal blue T-shirt to sleep in and it complemented her shaggy apricot hair. Reza's hand caressed her back, and she kissed his hairy chest. This was nothing new. Reza liked to get a hand job or blowjob when he woke up.

Charlie kissed her way down his stomach muscles, disappearing under the sheets. Reza pulled them back to reveal her, him making eye contact with Jonny in the mirror, knowing he watched. His cock was semi-stiff, flopped up on his stomach, engorged but not squiggled yet with veins. Charlie kissed her way around it, getting both her knees between Reza's outstretched muscular legs. Her lips smacked and sucked to his hip bone then along the line that ran from hip to crotch, settling herself low on the bed, her pointed tongue swirling designs over his fat testicles, lifting them and letting them sag again.

Jonny tried to work, but it was distracting—and he'd also grown painfully hard. Charlie's mouth made soft wet sounds suckling on Reza's scrotum and Jonny's fingers stopped typing, eyes glued to the awful action playing out in the mirror. His wife's hand cradled Reza's cock now while she sucked one large ball past her pouted lips. She stroked the underside of it with the pad of her thumb. Reza groaned a little, made himself more comfortable.

Charlie stroked him, her hand making clumsy up-and-down motions, her grip struggling with his girth. Reza grew hard, his cock lengthening, foreskin remaining covered even though Charlie stroked him without any kind of lubrication. Once he was fully erect, he caught Jonny's eye in the mirror again and this time he smiled.

Jonny got back to work. Focus was difficult with Charlie's mouth sounds but he did his best not to look over. Once in a while he couldn't help it, and every time was the same: Charlie down between his open legs, sucking his balls, gently stroking his cock and rubbing it with her thumb. Jonny's own cock absolutely—painfully—throbbed.

It went on for twenty minutes. After twelve minutes every time the digital clock on his monitor flipped over another minute he would think *Oh, come on*. At the twenty-minute mark, Reza's breaths took on a deep and desperate pace. Now Jonny watched again, Reza's eyes closed as he came close to orgasm.

Charlie still sucked on his balls. It must hurt by now even if she was careful. Maybe Reza liked a little hurt in his testicles. It did seem to get him off, his stomach flattening and then billowing, his breaths coming short and raspy. Reza reached down and took Charlie's hand and helped her fingers to pinch closed his thick foreskin. Then he was grunting and thrusting his hips, snorting through his nostrils while Charlie sucked in one of his balls yet again.

A long, thin line of semen darted onto his chest despite Charlie holding his foreskin closed, but her hand scrambled, knuckling up his thick folds and stopping more from escaping. Jonny watched the foreskin swell and bulge as his cock pumped his thick copious seed into it. Charlie's breaths sounded lusty as well, her with a testicle clamped in her mouth.

When his orgasm abated, and he stopped writhing on the bed, Reza held her wrist and motioned for her to come up his body. Charlie gave a quick glance over her shoulder, her expression fearful—and she caught him watching her. Now she angled her body so Jonny wouldn't see what he knew she was about to do.

She straddled one of Reza's thighs and Jonny got a direct view of her cute white butt bent over and pointed right at him behind her pink and white striped cotton panties. Her ginger hair shook a little as her head bobbed over Reza's cock and he knew she'd just let out all that goo into her mouth.

Reza chuckled with appreciation, stroking her hair, cupping the back of her head. The first time he'd come in her mouth, oh-so-long-ago, she'd retched in the toilet, rinsed with bleach. She was getting a little better, but it still wasn't her favorite thing. Reza produced a large volume, and she always complained to him secretly.

With jerky careful movement, she rose up off him, got to her knees and turned, getting off the bed and heading to the bathroom. She hid her face from Jonny, but in the moment before she disappeared and locked herself in the bathroom, he saw her red-faced, one hand clamped over her mouth. In the bathroom, he heard her spitting into the sink, running the water full blast then the sounds of her brushing her teeth.

Reza still smiled at him from the mirror and he looked back to the monitor and got back to working. Charlie tinkled then flushed, came back out and walked to his side.

"Good morning," she whispered.

"Morning, baby," he said to her, looking up at her sweet, angel face, tugging his T-shirt to conceal his erection pressing his pants out. She dipped her smiling lips to meet his, and they kissed. He bit and sucked at her, and she giggled in his mouth—just mouthwash and toothpaste, no evidence of Reza on her breath.

"You sleep okay?" he asked her when they parted.

"Sometimes," she whispered, her tone cynical, the two of them sharing a joke together at Reza's expense.

She looked at his monitors just showing a bunch of overlapping consoles; boring old code stuff. “How’s it going?”

“I’m on fire, Charlie, I mean it.”

“It’s good?”

“So good, Charlie.”

“I knew it would be, Jonny,” she said, kissed the top of his head. He hooked an arm around her waist and hugged his cheek to her hip.

“It’s a lot of work,” he said quietly.

“You stayed up all night again?”

“Yeah,” he said.

“Jonny, you can’t do that every night. You’ll kill yourself.”

“I have to, Charlie. I have to get us out of this.”

“You can’t if you’re dead, Jonny. You keep drinking these,” she said, nudging one of his empty energy drink cans with her toes, “you’re going to have a heart attack.”

“I have to keep going when I got the inspiration.”

Now she squatted down so they were eye-to-eye and cupped his cheeks in her palms. “Promise me, Jonny—promise me you’ll get some sleep today.”

“I have to keep working, Charlie.”

“Hold your hands out for me, Jonny.”

“Why?”

“Just do it, please.”

He held both hands out flat, palms down, thumbs touching. They shook visibly.

She laughed lightly and held his shaking hands. “Jonny, look at me.” When he did, she said, “You’re going to lay down today, lay down in that big, comfy bed and get some sleep. Promise me.”

“I promise I’ll try.”

“Thank you,” she said, squeezed his hands again, pulled herself up and kissed his forehead. “Want me to make you some breakfast?”

“We still have bacon?”

“I think so,” she said.

He nodded. She bounced on her toes happily and pivoted toward the bed; he stared at the pert round globes of her ass, just barely visible below her loose T-shirt.

Reza regarded her, laying on the bed, head on the pillow, both hands behind his head. The sheets were pulled back, and he was completely naked, legs apart, big, hairy genitals dangling down onto the bedding. “My little lovebirds,” he said.

“You want some breakfast, too?” she asked him.

He said, “No. Just get Tate to get you something on the way in to work.”

“I want to make Jonny breakfast. I can make you something, too.”

"Fine," he said.

She put one knee up on the bed, rubbing her arm nervously. "Hey, Reza …?" she asked him tentatively.

"What?"

"Have you ever thought … you think maybe, you know, have you ever shaved yourself … *down there*?" she said, pointing weakly between his legs.

"No," he scoffed, "I'm a man."

"Yeah. No, I know," she said. "Could you try?"

"I'm hairy," he said. "You know how dumb it would look if I shave just my dick?"

"It hurts my tongue. It scratches."

Reza shrugged.

Charlie touched the front of her panties. "Down here, too. Sometimes. When you're really hard and you go deep—it scratches my … *insides*."

Reza stayed expressionless and held her gaze for a long while and Charlie fidgeted. Finally he said, "Charlie, come over here," and he patted the space next to him on the bed.

She went to him reluctantly, climbing on the bed and walking on hands and knees to join him, her body language petulant. When she sat next to him he held her gaze for a long moment again until he had her full attention.

"What?" she asked him, looking uncomfortable.

"When Tate takes you to work today, I want you to give him a hand job."

Charlie's eyes went wide and her mouth fell open. Her cheeks went an instant fiery red. "*What* …?" she whispered with disbelief. She tugged on a lock of her hair to hide her face from Jonny.

"Give Tate a hand job this morning."

"*What* …? No … I *can't*," she said incredulously.

Jonny sighed, "Reza," running an agitated hand through his hair, looking to complain though he knew it would be no use.

Reza ignored him, said to Charlie, "You like Tate, don't you?"

"No," she said sheepishly and hid her face further from Jonny.

"He likes you."

"He does?"

Reza said, "He's nice."

"He is."

Reza put a hand on her thin bare knee and she flinched a little. "He gives you a ride to work every morning. Why don't you want to do something nice for him?"

Charlie's trembling eyes darted all over Reza's expression and he stared back, his stern face unwavering. He wasn't joking. Charlie continued to look for a break, a smile,

some sort of faltering … but the man stayed grim. Her shoulders began to sag, her posture slumping. She looked away. "Okay."

Reza's thick mustache twitched to one side and his eyes gleamed. "Okay? You'll jerk him off?"

Still looking away from him, Charlie nodded.

"Good. Take off your shirt."

With no further protest, Charlie took off her T-shirt, sitting next to Reza with her little tummy bunched up then holding the balled up shirt to cover her bare little breasts.

Reza shifted, turned to the side table and retrieved a small tube. "Use this," he said, handing it to Charlie.

"What is it?" she asked, looking it over.

"Lube, Charlie. Use it on Tate's cock. And I want you to collect his semen in your shirt."

Her head nodded forward, and she gaped. "*Why?*" she squeaked.

Reza said, "I want to know if you did it or not."

Charlie whined, "Can't you just ask him if I did it?"

Reza said, "Are you always going to be so difficult?"

"No."

"Just makes sure he comes in your T-shirt, okay?"

Charlie's face pinched to a trembling but defeated scowl. She nodded. "Okay."

"And Charlie?"

"What?"

"Do it at the library."

"My work?"

"In the car, parked at the library."

Charlie didn't answer but Jonny knew she would do as she was told. Her chin dipped down until it touched her chest then she scooted herself sideways till she was off the bed. With the things Reza had given her to jerk off Tate clutched to her chest she silently padded into the bathroom without looking at him and closed herself in there.

Jonny was numb, empty. He turned to Reza and Reza smiled. "You're sick," he said to him, and Reza's muscular shoulders shook with a quiet laugh.

# CHAPTER TWO

WHEN TATE ARRIVED to pick up Charlie, she was still in the bathroom. As he would usually do, he came into the kitchen, looked down the pass-through to see if she was ready—she often wasn't—went to the cupboard, took down a mug and poured himself a coffee. Cream from the fridge (though Jonny couldn't see him he only heard the sounds), the tinkling of a spoon, the spoon being dropped in the stainless steel bottom of the sink. Then the big handsome guy was at the pass-through again. Sipping and watching him.

Tate asked him: "Reza already leave?"

Jonny had paused work, the worry about what had been assigned to his wife slowing down his thought processes, choking off the fire that had been roaring through his engine the last few days. "Yeah, left about ten minutes ago. Went to the gym." It was no surprise, it was the man's usual routine. He would wake with Charlie, engage in some sort of oral or manual manipulation, harass Jonny in some manner, pour himself an espresso, put it in a to-go cup, grab the keys for his Porsche, remind Jonny the clock was ticking, then head off to the gym where he would work out then shower.

Tate took a sip of his espresso, nodded his head.

Now the apartment door opened again, and it startled Jonny. He turned to see Demetrius coming in, throwing his knapsack down on the floor next to the fridge.

"Hey, dude, what's happening?" Tate asked him. They engaged in a clasping of hands, a hug, and thumping each other's backs, then some lighthearted ribbing. Jonny tried typing, but all he could concentrate on was the two guys in the kitchen. It sounded as though Demetrius needed a ride into the far side of the city today and arranged to meet Tate here. Jonny's hands began to sweat. Would Charlie give both of them a hand job now? One was bad enough. But then again, if there was one, how bad was two, really? These were the horrible questions he prompted himself with these days. He rubbed his hands together, ran them up the inside of his forearms to try to dry them. The lock on the bathroom door clicked, and Charlie came out.

"Hey, there she is," Tate said, pointing a finger at her through the pass-through with a smile on his face. Demetrius was coming down the stairs with the hands in the pockets of his khaki pants.

"What's up with my man Jonny?" he said.

"Nothing," Jonny said, unable to keep the sullen tone out of his voice.

"Must be something up, I hear you click-clacking."

"Working," he said.

Charlie had gone into the closet to put her things away, came out now and he saw her facing him in his periphery. He turned to face her. They both looked at each other with no expressions. Then Demetrius was there.

"How's this shit coming?" Demetrius asked him, putting a hand on the back of his chair and looking over his shoulder at the screens.

"Can't you tell?" Jonny said, being an asshole since all that was on his screen was a bunch of rambling numbers and letters that he was sure Demetrius could make no sense of.

Demetrius asked, "What's all this going to be when it works?"

"My game."

Now Tate came down the stairs to join them, walking to stand between Demetrius and Charlie. He smiled and nodded at Charlie, and she averted her gaze, looked down at her feet. She inched away, stepping slightly to the side and hugging her own arms. Tate frowned, looking at her with puzzlement.

Jonny clicked the button, and all his code became a brief working interplay in a separate console window on another monitor. He looked up and saw Demetrius watching. He said, "All that shit you saw?—see this guy? That's Player. Player goes round this corner, sees what …?"

Demetrius watched, his face brightening for a moment, saying, "Boo-yah, a dragon. For real?"

"But look what happens?" He WSADd, and arrowed left, arrowed right. "See that? Then the Dragon goes round … Player goes like this … Check that shit out." Demetrius watched on the screen as Jonny's fun and elaborate animation played out the destruction of the dragon. He smiled broadly.

Jonny watched the remainder of his animation playing out in the reflection of Demetrius's dark brown eyes.

Demetrius said, "No shit, Jonny. That's actually pretty fuckin' cool."

Tate was looking, too, but not the kind of guy that would care, checking his watch now and saying, "Charlie, don't we have to get going?"

Charlie nodded, still unable to look at Tate, her hands forming squirming fists at her sides now.

Tate said, "Hey, Charlie, you okay?"

She whispered, "Yeah, why?"

"You're shaking."

She said, "I'm okay. I am. Let's just go."

Demetrius said to her, "Yeah, we gotta go, Tate's taking me out to the gym. We oughtta skedaddle."

Charlie said, "Okay."

Tate asked her: “You got all your things?”

She nodded again. Jonny looked her over, bothered by the worry that had twisted her, looking at her trembling mouth, but then seeing a bright blue bulge of cotton in her purse. It reminded him of what she had to do today and his stomach flipped right over.

Demetrius put his arm around her and escorted her away, saying, “You see your man’s game?”

“Yeah,” she said. “It’s pretty amazing.”

“Didn’t know that boy had it in him,” Demetrius said.

Jonny swiveled his chair to watch them leave. Tate lead the way, Demetrius with his arm around his wife following close behind. Charlie looked over her shoulder before they mounted the steps to the kitchen.

“Goodbye, Jonny.”

“Bye, Charlie.”

She put one foot up on the first step, turned back. “See you tonight.”

“I can’t wait,” he told her, but his own hands had formed fists around the bulging noses of the arms of his chair. He watched her being led up and out of the apartment. Out with those two men. Down to the car and then being driven to work. What would happen? What would she do today? She’d been instructed to do something awful, and he knew she would do it. When she came home tonight, she would know a lot more about Tate than she did right now, and a sharp dagger of worry worked through him. Charlie might deny it but Jonny was sure she had the beginnings of a crush on that big handsome man.

JONNY USED rage to blast through his morning—burning his system out, using up that energy drink like it was nitrous through him, he blazed through code with nothing else on his mind. It had been the only way to get through that first hour. Half-an-hour after his wife left the apartment, it was almost one-hundred percent sure that she had jerked off Tate. She had given another man a hand job. Done it where Jonny couldn’t see, did it without him. That was the kind of thing that would drive him legitimately crazy, ruin his day, knock this recent work freight train off its tracks—and the derailment would be enormous, all his scattered cargo would ruin the city. So instead of thinking, he went on autopilot. But after a few hours, the high-test fuel exhausted itself, the energy drink’s effects going thin and soon his eyes grew heavy and his thoughts became distracted. It was almost noon. Almost lunchtime, though he knew he would work through without eating. But if it was lunchtime that meant it was done. Charlie had put her hands on yet another man’s penis. Charlie had made another man come.

His virginal wife was familiar with yet another man's sexual equipment. And just like he told her, he imagined that Tate would also be quite large. There was an arousal there, something about this that sparked a fiery lust low in his belly. He tried to stifle it, smother it with rational thoughts and jealous anger, but he couldn't admit the glowing warmth of its spark. Between his legs, his arousal grew evident. Then work became impossible.

"Fuck. Fuck, fuck, fuck … fuck this shit," he said and shoved against his desk with his two palms on the edge and rolled his chair back six feet from his workstation. Then he collapsed on his knees, buried his face in his hands. It was all too much. He was running on fumes and he was going to die. His heart pounded in his chest; abused by caffeine and tortured with painful love by the things his wife did to save their home.

He stood, stretched.

Maybe he would eat something. Yeah, maybe that would help. He turned to head to the kitchen, saw the bed, collapsed on it instead. He promised Charlie he would rest today. But how could he rest with the thoughts that raced through his mind?

They were awful images. Awful dreadful things.

He climbed on his elbows and knees to the center of the bed then turned over on his back and stared at the ceiling. Demetrius was there with them. When she offered Tate a hand job would Demetrius get one as well? Would she ask them both to go into the back seat and she would sit in the center and stroke them at the same time? Maybe there would be some kind of race, some sort of prize offered for the one who came last. Maybe the one who came last got to do it inside Charlie. Maybe whoever came first let the other man put it inside Charlie, finish there.

He dug his thumbs into his waistband and eased his track pants down. Maybe if he masturbated, he could chase some of these thoughts away. Maybe if he masturbated, he could get some sleep.

Hand on his cock, he found it slippery already. Just the idea of the unknown was driving him wild. The idea that Charlie had definitely engaged in something this morning but he wasn't quite sure what it was had provoked an excitement. He squeezed himself, more of his clear lubrication spewing from his tip. He stroked. Stroked and pictured Charlie doing the worst things. And the quicker his stroke the worse those images became. He slowed himself. There was something awful about the image of Tate in her vagina and Demetrius in her anus. Something terrible in the way he pictured his wife's face if she experienced that. He slowed his stroke, went slow, tried to imagine just Charlie and Tate now. Charlie's slender hand working over Tate's most definitely large and gnarly manhood. His wife watching, her eyes traveling up and down another man's penis, again much larger than her husband. He stroked slowly and luxuriously, his eyes rolling up in his head …

# CHAPTER THREE

JONNY WOKE to the sound of the apartment door opening and it made him jump. Not sure where he was, what was happening, he scrambled across the bed and got his feet on the floor. His pants were down and he ripped them up to cover himself. He'd fucking fallen asleep. What time was it?—if Charlie was home it had to be almost six.

Head swimming in sleepy cotton, he struggled to stand, but he swooned and his knees buckled—he had to throw his hands out on the bed to stop from falling. Sleep struggled to get a hold of him and he reeled with dizziness; closing his eyes made it worse. But when he found the strength, he got himself upright, saw that the person softly moving around in the kitchen was indeed Charlie, the back of her ginger head seen at the pass-through moving around at the kitchen counter. She moved quietly—had come in wordlessly—and now he wondered if something was wrong. Wondered if some of those dark thoughts he'd had before drifting off to sleep could have really occurred.

"Charlie?" he said up to the kitchen, taking a few shaky steps toward the stairs, hands out to the side should he fall from grogginess or pass out.

"Hi, Jonny," she said from the kitchen, her voice sweet but tentative. Not mad at him, but it was a sign she might be troubled by something.

He checked his watch and saw it was four minutes after six. That was six fucking hours he'd lost today. Six wasted hours he couldn't get back, and frankly he didn't feel better after the sleep, he felt worse. He rubbed his eyes and rubbed his temples. There was a dull ache in the very cherry pit of his skull. Probably a tumor. His neck ached, his back raced with up-and-down low-voltage zaps as his body swayed from side to side. When he opened his eyes, he saw his beautiful young wife at the top of the stairs. She watched him speculatively, lips pulled thin, eyes narrowed. She wore a nice navy sweater and a plaid skirt that came to her knees; she clutched her purse against her stomach protectively.

"Hey," he said and forced a friendly smile for her.

"Are you okay?" she asked and came down one step.

"Do I look bad?" he joked and ran a hand through his clumping hair.

"No, Jonny," she said, coming down one more step. "You look like you're going to pass out."

"Oh," he said. "Yeah, I feel like I'm going to pass out."

"Jonny, I know how hard you're working—baby, I appreciate it so much," she said, and now she came to him and put her arms around him, holding her purse behind his back. "I love you for it, Jonny, but, please, for my sake, slow down a little."

His arms went around her narrow back and he nuzzled his chin into her curly mane, feeling the soft waves of her fragrant hair against his cheek.

"I did, Charlie. I took your advice. I fell asleep this afternoon and … and now I feel worse."

"That's because you're not getting enough sleep, Jonny. Your body wants more that's why you don't feel good."

"I can't, Charlie. I hate this. I hate you … with him."

"Me, too, Jonny, but I can take it. Handle it. You know what I mean."

"I know you can, baby. But I'm going to show you. Show Reza."

She pulled away, a big confident smile on her face. "You don't have to tell me, mister. I'm the one that believes in you."

Fingers digging into his throbbing eye sockets, he said, "You do. I know you do. That's why I'll never let you down."

Her warm hand caressed his cheek, and he chuckled, eyes fluttering open. "Slow down, Jonny. That's all. Take your time and do it right. Okay? I don't want you to suffer while you do this. That's not what it's about. If it takes a little longer …"

He couldn't help groaning and her posture slumped.

"Jonny, it's not like that."

"I know," he whined. But wasn't it? *Take more than six months, Jonny. I'll be our landlord's sex slave for longer, don't worry, I can take it.* Take it? Take it deep, Charlie? But he couldn't say a fucking thing. Truth was he *couldn't* finish in six months. He'd *need* more time. Wasn't that kind then that she offered, asshole? He'd like to think it was, hated to think some secret part of her liked this arrangement enough she wanted it to last longer.

"You're groggy?" she said, looking in his eyes for confirmation.

He nodded.

That big smile happy smile returned, and she said, "You can't go straight back to work. You need to wake up …?"

"Maybe," he said, smiling too, loving to see her getting bubbly with her Charlie energy.

She said, "Order a pizza. Okay? We'll get a pizza, a meat lover's, and fried pickles, and we'll sit on the couch and you'll watch one episode of Twilight Zone with me …"

"Charlie," he chastised, but he was being drawn to the picture she painted.

"One episode, Jonny. One episode."

"Yes," he surrendered happily.

"Oh my God—yes, Jonny?"

"Yes," he said. "I want to."

"I can't believe it," she giggled, and seeing her like this broke his heart and at the same time affirmed why he was doing this. "Jonny, order us dinner. Get all those things I said, get dessert, too. I'm so happy, Jonny," she said, and she reached up and kissed his chin, clutching her purse between them. "Order from Angelo's, okay? I'm going to get cleaned up, get my PJs."

"Okay," he said, fighting with the twisting in his stomach. Angelo's was where Reza liked, he and Charlie had been Domino's customers.

Charlie crossed between the bed and his workstation, went to the closet, gave him a sheepish smile, grabbed her PJs and trotted into the bathroom where she closed herself in. He retrieved his phone from the desk and drew up a phone book to find Angelo's number. Domino's app right there on the screen, but now Charlie was an Angelo's girl. When he called, they put him on hold.

He ended up in the closet with his phone pinched to his ear by his shoulder. Charlie's purse, an expensive one, a Fendi gifted by Reza, sat on a shelf at chest height. The sides were ballooned out as if stuffed for showroom display but Charlie was just not the kind of girl who packed her purse full of stuff. Not that kind of girl at all. What did Charlie carry?—maybe a Chapstick for when it was windy, her pocketbook, phone, small pack of tissue, a hair clip probably, some gum, she liked wintergreen, and certain times of the month, maybe a sanitary pad. He knew what puffed the bag out, and he took it down and tossed it on the bed.

"Angelo's." An abrupt Italian voice in his ear over top of banging and clanging kitchen noises.

"Hey. Delivery, meat lover's, extra-large, you got fried pickles?"

"Fried pickles? Yeah, how many you want?"

He drew the gold zipper on the purse and its mouth opened on its own, pushed out by the stuffed contents within. "How they come?"

"Half dozen, dozen, what you want?"

"A dozen," he said. Blossoming from the zippered grin of the Fendi bag was bunched royal blue cotton. "You guys do brownies?"

"No."

"Tiramisu?"

"Yeah, you want that?"

"Sure," he said, poking at the T-shirt his wife had hidden inside her purse. He added Cokes to the order, and the guy repeated it all back and he affirmed it but hadn't heard a thing, really. Told the guy he'd pay cash, guy said half an hour, he said okay and hung up. Phone tossed on the bed, he studied the T-shirt wadded in his wife's purse and prepared the nerve.

When he was ready he pulled it out. It stayed wadded. When he tugged at its rounded shape, it made stiff crinkling noises and resisted his pull.

"You order pizza?" Charlie asked coming out of the bathroom and trying to tie her hair back in a ponytail. She saw him with the evidence and she said, "What are you doing?"

"WHAT DOES it look like I'm doing?"

"Going through my purse, Jonny," she said with a little menace and she came to stand beside him. He tugged at the stiff fabric again and she stopped him. "Don't do that, don't, please." She reached to take the shirt from him but he held it out where she couldn't get it. "Don't" she said again, looking in his eyes, her jaw set firm. She wasn't messing around.

He still held it away, but they locked their gaze and he felt himself softening. What she did with Tate was inevitable. What Reza asked would be done. Within reason. They could always say no but then there would be consequences. "Why not?" he said.

Up on the bed on her knees, she gripped his arm and walked her fingers to his wrist and then took the balled up shirt from him and held it to her chest. She didn't answer him.

"Why not, Charlie?" he asked again. "I know why it's stiff."

"Keep it together so I can show Reza. Don't break it all apart," she said without looking at him, her vacant stare aimed inside her dark closet. She sat down now and put her feet on the floor.

His heart rate picked up, and now he was mad. "So it's full of Tate's semen?"

She looked up to him, puzzled. "You just said you know why it's stiff."

"You jerked him off?"

She looked down and away again, into the closet.

They stayed like that for near a minute, her with a dirtied shirt against her chest, staring at nothing, him standing over her, listening to his heavy breathing. He sat down next to her, almost touching her and they looked at nothing together.

He said, "You did it? What Reza asked?"

In his periphery, she nodded her head.

"Why do you want to hide it from me?"

"I don't want you to think of me doing that."

He nodded now. "If you don't tell me, it's like you're keeping a secret. We can't have secrets."

"We can't," she agreed.

They were quiet for a while again while Jonny came to grips with the reluctant excitement that built inside him picturing his wife giving a stranger a hand job in broad daylight. It would have been sunny and bright this morning, every detail of what she held in her hand in bright technicolor. Did she watch herself do it? Did she watch it come out of him and squirt into her shirt? He hated that she'd done it, hated that he was getting hard thinking about it, too. "You did it like Reza asked?"

"Yeah," she sighed.

"Did you do Demetrius, too?"

"Demetrius …? No," she said, looking at him sideways. "We dropped him off at the gym. It's on the way to the library."

"Hey, Charlie?—would you look at me …" he asked turning now to face her, and she met his eyes. "All you did was use your hand?"

Her eyes stayed wide and expressive, but her brow lowered a little. "Of course, Jonny. I just did what Reza told me."

After studying her for a moment, he said, "Okay. Can you tell me what happened?"

"Why do you want to hear that, Jonny?"

"Why do you want to leave me out of it?"

Now her shoulders slumped, and she cocked her head, looking at the ceiling. "What do you want to hear?"

"Everything," he said.

Her gaze returned to meet his, and he could see her hand creeping across to his lap and it put a flutter in his stomach. She rested her balled up hand in the crease of his hip. The front of his sweat pants were already tented out, the head of his cock making a rounded impression against the fleecy fabric as it pointed straight up between his legs.

She asked, "When's dinner coming?"

"We have twenty-five minutes. Tell me what you did."

"That's how you want to do it?"

"What do you mean?"

"Reza will be home probably in a couple hours. You want to do it fast before the pizza guy gets here?"

"Just tell me, Charlie."

"You're hard," she said, her eyes looking down at the way he poked his pants up. Her hand moved from his hip to open and touch the tip of his erection with the pads of her fingers.

"I know," he said. "Tell me what you did. Please."

After a long contemplative pause, she huffed, then said, "We didn't stop for breakfast this morning because I ate here. We went out east first and dropped Demetrius off at the gym."

"And Demetrius didn't try anything with you?"

"No," she said. "Then Tate drove me up to the library, and he parked."

"Were you nervous?"

"Of course," she said with some distress and ran her hands through her hair.

"You've never done anything with him before?"

"No, Jonny. I would tell you."

"You like him?"

"What do you mean?"

"You like Tate?"

She shrugged her shoulders and looked away. "He's nice. He's not like the others."

"Not like Reza."

"No, not like Reza at all."

He smiled a little and let her see it then reached over and rested his hand over the curve of her upper thigh. She'd changed into soft, cotton pajama pants, and a baggy T-shirt. "So did you just reach over and grab him?"

She shook her head no. "I just told him. Told him Reza wanted me to do … *that*."

"What did he say?" His hand slipped higher, working underneath her shirt and finding the warm skin of her flat tummy.

"He didn't want me to."

"He didn't?"

Head shaking no again, she said, "He told me he didn't want that."

"Really?"

Now a nod. "Then I felt like he thought I was dirty or something. Like he didn't have any respect for me." Her face got sad.

"Oh, Charlie," he said, drumming his fingers on her navel to cheer her up.

"I got upset."

"You did?"

Nodding again. "Yeah. Then *he* felt bad. Which was nice. I told him to just let me do it."

# CHAPTER FOUR

JONNY LET his hand slip lower, dipping the blade underneath the bunched up drawstring waist, and Charlie sucked her stomach in, let her legs part slightly. “So then what?”

“I told him I had to make him come into my T-shirt and I took it out of my purse to show him. So he just stared at me and I was going to get upset again. But he takes the shirt and tells me to go to into the library. I tell him again what Reza wants and he, like, smiles, and says when he picks me up after work it’ll be ready.”

“What does that mean?”

She was smiling, too, remembering the kind gesture. “He would do it himself. Masturbate into my T-shirt.”

“Oh,” Jonny said, the story taking an unexpected turn, his hand paused just above her hot, bare mound.

“But I told him I better do it.”

“You did?” he said in a strangely bright tone. Somehow aroused that she had a way out but talked Tate into letting her give him a hand job. The tips of his fingers tingled, and that arousal was dampened by a sudden rising fear he didn’t like. “Why?”

“I don’t know. I trust Tate, but I worried it was a trap or a test. Or there was some other way Reza could tell that I didn’t know about. Like he had cameras in Tate’s car, or microphones.”

“Yeah,” he sighed, his hips squirming, aching for Charlie to touch his erection. Her rationale made sense, and it calmed him, suppressed the fear and allowed the arousal to swell large again. “So you did do it?”

“Uh-huh,” she said, nodding her head and still avoiding his eyes. “Are you okay?”

“I am,” he said. “All you’ve done, that’s pretty tame. And I know why you do it. Thank you for doing it.”

She smiled a little and her eyes wandered up to meet his. “It’s okay,” she said.

Eyes still on hers he let his hand crest her mound and he touched her little slit with his first two fingers, gathered up her folds and found them already wet. “Tell me more.”

Her eyes narrowed as he played with her pussy, and her head slowly drifted back, lips parting.

“Charlie?” He prompted her as her pussy made slick sounds under his fingers.

“He was kind of nervous,” she whispered, eyes closed as if to help her better picture it.

“Was he? Tell me.”

"We were parked right out front of the library. Not even in a parking spot, right up at the curb in the roundabout. At the bottom of the stairs. People were coming and going but no one was really paying attention."

The tips of his fingers used her flood of lubrication to run lines up and down the direction of her folds, teasing at her opening, pushing inside just the slightest then retreating.

"We got close together in his car, close as we could get, and he unzipped his pants. I made sure no one was looking, and I reached over and put my hand inside his fly." Now she leaned her shoulder on him and her hand went under his shirt and then down the front of his sweatpants. "Jonny, you're so hard." she said as she gave him a gentle squeeze. He flexed his stomach and encouraged a steady stream of pre-come.

"Was he hard?"

"Not when I put my hand in his pants. I think he was nervous because it was light outside, and people kept walking by."

"Where you nervous?"

"Of course."

"Were you … turned on?"

"*What?* No, Jonny," she said quietly, but he wasn't convinced that was the truth. Her freckled cheeks went rosy. She changed the subject by running her hand up and down his shaft. It worked; she had him groaning and flinching in seconds.

He gasped, "Tell me …"

"What?" she whispered. "That he's got a big penis? He does, Jonny. I played with it inside his pants while we were both looking out the windows to see if we were noticed."

"Did you like it?"

"His penis? Uh-humm," she gasped, and now her hips rocked against the motion of his hand. She'd gotten wetter.

"Is he as big as Reza?"

"Gosh, I don't know. He's really big. I didn't see it until he was a little hard and then I got out the lube Reza gave me. His thing lay on his pant leg. And Jonny …?"

"What?" He groaned in erotic agony, hearing her words, feeling her hand on his cock, but the most troubling was her own body's reaction, the wet smacking noises his fingers that produced.

"Tate's isn't ugly. I like the way his looks."

"You liked it?" he gasped now and hunched over hearing that terrible admission. Her hand stroked him smoothly, and he bubbled more excitement that made her grip like warm liquid.

"Oh Jonny, does that turn you on?"

It did, but he didn't know what to say. He didn't like how it made him feel so he said, "No."

She moaned and squeezed his cock tighter, between her legs her canal sucked tightly on two of his fingers.

"Tate has a big cock, Jonny, but I like it. It's smooth, and clean, and it doesn't have all that extra skin."

"He's circumcised?"

"He is. Like you."

"You don't like foreskin?"

"I don't know, Jonny. I like Tate's penis," she moaned, trailing off, lifting her knees higher by pushing off the floor with her toes, wanting him to put his fingers deeper.

"I want to fuck you so bad, Charlie," he said watching her face as she enjoyed the pleasure he gave her with his hand.

"We can't, Jonny," she gasped. "We can't."

"Let me get a condom," he said.

"Make me come first, Jonny," she said, gripping his cock with one hand and now the other one clutching at his arm to prevent him trying to leave.

The look on her face drove him wild, and he got up, pushing her to lay back on the bed with two of his fingers thrusting in and out of her. She drew up her knees and planted both feet on the bed while he got over top of her.

"How long did it take?" he growled near her ear.

She moaned, eyes closed, head rocking. "It was clumsy at first because he's big and floppy but once it was hard, God, I got him to come pretty quick."

His stomach tightened harder, like cinching a wet not. "You did it good?"

"I did. I made him come." Her hand on him stroked faster now, but absently. He wondered how different his felt from Tate to her. Wondered if she felt disappointed with his size though it had never been an issue before.

"Did you grab his balls?" he asked, hoping she would grab his now. She did. One hand stroking him, the other coming up to grip his dangling testicles. Fingers went to three that he thrust into her, his Charlie needing more stretch these days.

"No. I was shy."

"You were shy?"

"I, mm, wanted to make him come, do it well, but not be too eager."

"You're such a good girl," he sighed, his hips pumping his cock eagerly through her slippery grip.

"I am," she whimpered then frowned. "Jonny, please … make me come." Her pussy clamped on him and she dug her heels down on either side of his knees, pumping hard against his hand.

His face went over hers and he braced himself, digging his knees into the mattress, leaning his weight forward on one elbow while his arm tensed hard and he fucked her with three bunched fingers. His penis was forgotten, and he was okay with that. She held it in one hand, her grip loose, the other gently cupped his testicles. Charlie writhed underneath him, her face twisted up and scrunched, her eyes tightened to thin lines with pale lashes fluttering from where they were squeezed in the fold of her lids. Her breath was held and as he fucked her harder and harder, she took on a rosy cast and the veins stood out on her long neck.

"That's it, Charlie," he whispered, "Take his big cock, take that big beautiful cock …"

She grunted and blurted air out her nose, turned her face from him, drew in a short desperate gasp of air.

"Feel it fucking you, Charlie? Feel Tate's big cock? Does it feel good?"

Face still scrunched up, she turned so he could see her face. She nodded slightly.

"That's it, Charlie, Tate loves your tight little pussy, his big perfect cock never felt such a perfect pussy …"

It was what she needed and now she bucked underneath him, hips thrusting up to pin his fingers deep inside her and he fed them deep into her hungry hole. She gushed on him, her juices had coated his hand and he could feel some of her wet warmth even up his forearm. Her pussy crackled wetly around his hand as she came. Her back arched, and she blurted air again, the expulsion becoming a long, draggy moan before a hoarse intake of air. His penis had been abandoned at some point and now he watched her two long hands stroke over her own mound, her fingers caressing her folds where they stretched around his finger's intrusion.

AS SHE CAME down from her orgasmic high, she slowly turned to her side and rolled away to hide herself from him. He let her go, let his hand come free from her sweatpants as they closed with a tight smack against her belly.

"What's wrong?" he asked her.

After groaning again, she covered her face with her hands, spoke through them. "I can't believe I said those things."

"Sit up," he said.

She did, still hiding from him and pushing her face into his collar and hugging him. His arms went around her.

"Charlie, it's okay. I'm not upset."

"I know, but I love you. I shouldn't ever say those things."

"Is it true?"

After a brief hesitation: "No."

"It's okay if it's true, Charlie. I can take it. You didn't like Tate's penis?"

"Jonny, don't," she whispered.

"I think you did, Charlie, and I still love you," he told her while he stroked her back with the inside of his wrist, his wet hand bent away. "What hurts is not knowing the truth."

She squeezed him tighter. "Sit back for me," she said.

Their embrace came apart, and they looked in each other's eyes and he saw warmth there in hers, and love for him. He smiled. Both her hands caressed his thighs, rubbing up and down the cotton of his sweatpants.

Now she said, "Take your little dick out for me."

His body jumped with sudden surprise, and that deep sexual part of him, low in his belly, squashed suddenly as if she'd kicked him there, its jelly center bursting sweet strawberry goo up behind his eyes.

Charlie's face went wide with shock and disbelief and she clapped both hands over her mouth and nose, her eyes bugging out at him. "I can't believe I said that," she whispered through her hands.

He stared at her dumbly, his mouth drying out, his heartbeat squishing loudly in his ears.

"Is that okay?" she asked him, parting her hands so he could see her soft pink lips move. "I thought you might like that."

He nodded, swallowed, and licked his lips.

"Well, mister," she said with unconvincing bossiness, "show me that tiny little pecker."

He swallowed again, his features frozen and his hands made it to his waistband, pulled his pants away to show her what he had.

"It really is little," she said to herself, and that was somehow, horribly and also excitingly, convincing. "It's not even hard, Jonny," she said, eyes darting up to his.

"It's not?" he said, looking to see if she was mistaken. His throbbing erection had dwindled; it stuck out of his nest of scraggly pubic hairs at unimpressive half-mast.

"Did you come?" she asked him and touched around the head of his penis with the tip of her forefinger. He was slick with excitement but he had not come.

"No," he said.

"You didn't?" she said with a troubled voice.

"I'll get hard again, Charlie, don't worry."

"Do you not like me saying dirty things? About your size?" Her eyes met his, and he saw honest concern there.

"I like it," he said, and he did. "I just ... I'm so aroused, like my heart is racing, and I can't believe ... I'm not hard."

Now she made a mean face at him and said, "Imagine if you had a little dick *and* you couldn't get hard."

He groaned with true excitement. "Use your hand, Charlie, please, help me." He pushed his sweatpants down his thighs, past his knees and scooted closer.

"Want me to use my mouth?" she asked him.

"Maybe. Hand now, talk dirty, okay?" he said with mounting urgency, he'd begun to ache just below his balls.

"Okay, Jonny," she whispered, and she took up his half-hard member between thumb and forefinger and tried to jerk it a little.

It took a moment to build the nerve, but he asked her: "Do you think it's small?"

Her eyes moved up from watching her fingers stroke him, and she twisted her mouth to the side. "It's smaller than the other guys I've been with."

"Who've you been with Charlie?" he asked her.

"Just you, Jonny. Just you for real. But you know ... Reza, I used my mouth on Demetrius, and my hand ... my hand on Tate."

"That's it?"

"Yes, Jonny," she said pleadingly.

"And I'm the smallest?"

She sighed with slight exasperation. "You know you're the smallest, Jonny."

"And that's okay with you?"

She huffed, like his question was dumb, watching her fingers still stroking his uncooperative penis. "Of course, Jonny," she said with a smile.

"You don't like Reza's size?"

"I don't know."

"He makes you come with it. You don't even like him, and he makes you come."

"I can't help that, Jonny, I told you I was sorry, I—"

"It's okay, Charlie."

She made a pained face, slowed her stroke. "It goes really deep, and he's ... thick ... it gets some spot inside me and after a while I just can't help it."

"I can't reach that spot?"

She shook her head no, but then smiled, her eyes downturned to his penis. She whispered, "Hey, you're getting hard now."

"Hurry, Charlie, faster, faster, I want to come so bad ..."

"Okay, Okay," she laughed and leaned forward, put one hand on his pubic pad, the other trying to grip his dick and stroke it.

His penis hardened, and it felt glorious. “Yes, Charlie, that’s it, come on,” he said. “Tell me you liked Tate’s.”

She shook her head no, her brow lowered and her mouth going thin. Her hand picked up speed and took on wet sounds as he streamed pre-cum now.

“Tell me, Charlie ...”

“I don’t want to say that, Jonny ...” She ducked her head down and stroked even faster, shaking the bed with her rapid movements. “Come, Jonny, come ...”

There was a loud knock at the door, the pizza guy coming up without buzzing, someone letting him in at the front door.

“Shit,” he hissed.

“You close?” she asked, her eyes on his, her face gone red with effort, the veins standing out in her forearms.

“Hurry, Charlie, hurry,” he urged, hoping she would just blurt out the most perfect awful thing to say but even he didn’t know what it was.

The knock came again, louder this time.

“Get off, Jonny, just get off already,” she said with frustration.

“I can’t … I can’t,” he said, and he put his hand down to hold her wrist, stop her stroke.

She gave him a mean face again, and this time it seemed more genuine. She thumped her little fist onto the mattress. “It's those energy drinks, Jonny! You’re not sleeping, you’re not taking care of yourself.” Her lips trembled, and he saw her eyes take a pinkish hue.

“I’m sorry,” Charlie, he whispered.

But she shook her head and got off the bed. Another knock, and this time she shouted, “I’m coming,” her voice tinged with stress. Her back to him, she straightened her clothes, smoothed her hair, smelled her hands and checked for wetness at the front of her pants. She left him there, went up to the kitchen and answered the door while he pulled his pants back up. His cock burned like it had almost caught fire.

ON HIS KNEES STILL, he sat on the bed and waited, listening to Charlie answer the door, talk to some cocky sounding guy who she invited into the kitchen. Guy tried flirting with her but she sounded sombre. He brought the food right into the kitchen for her and Jonny could see the guy through the kitchen pass-through but he didn’t look down and see Jonny on the bed watching him. Charlie paid him from cash that Reza always kept for her in one of the drawers and then the guy left.

“Okay, Jonny. Dinner’s here,” she said from the kitchen, her voice soft and weak.

He got off the bed and climbed the steps to the kitchen, walking into a wall of cologne left over from the delivery guy. The pizza box and a bag of food were arranged on the kitchen table and Charlie stood over them with her back to him, both hands resting on the table and her head hanging down. It made him stop in his tracks and he wanted to comfort her but was afraid she might be mad at him for some reason.

Now she said, "I'm sorry I snapped at you, Jonny."

"It's okay," he said.

They stood a moment, neither of them talking, and he just watched her back move with her breathing. When he was convinced she *wasn't* angry with him he went to her and put his arms around her. She slumped against him, relieved seemingly to feel his touch. Her nails ran on his forearm.

"It just doesn't feel good when you can't give pleasure to someone you love."

"What?" he said incredulously. "You give me pleasure, Charlie. You do. I'm sorry I couldn't come. I don't know what happened there ..."

Charlie's hand came up to rub at her own forehead, dig into a temple.

"Charlie ...?" he said and turned her around to face him.

She looked up in his eyes and said, "You don't think I'm ... dirty or something do you?"

"What on earth ...? What do you mean?"

"Are you turned off because I sleep with Reza, or I do some other things with other guys?"

The words he had were frozen with disbelief, and he made a funny airy noise instead, hugging her tighter as he did. "How could you think that, Charlie?" he sighed.

"How could I not?"

"Gosh, no. I love you so much, and there's no way I think you're dirty or that I'm turned off by you. Don't ever say that."

"You could barely get hard. You couldn't come …"

He swayed with her now, his heart bursting with affection for her and her sweetness, how she could be concerned for him during all this. "It's the caffeine drinks and the bad living, baby. You were right. All those dirty things you were saying were perfect Charlie, I wanted to hear them. It didn't happen because of things I do, not the things you do."

She nodded her chin against his chest and looked up at him, her eyes a little wet. "I know sometimes you get hard when you watch Reza do stuff to me and that's okay. But this is an awful lot sometimes and I worry that you won't love me when we get through it. You'll get rich and successful and run off with some girl who isn't ... *bad*."

He showed her a stern and confident face. "I hate other girls. You're the only one for me ever."

"You mean it?"

"Frankly, I'm insulted that you question my love," he said, smiling, hoping to brighten her up.

She said, "Thanks, Jonny. I'd say we have to call this off if it wasn't too late already."

"It's too late," he agreed and embraced her again.

"Sometimes it's not so bad," she said.

"What do you mean?"

"Food and stuff. And I know you're going to get us out of it."

"What if it takes me longer than six months?"

"Jonny, we're a team. Keep me in the loop, tell me what's going on and we can work this out. We're husband and wife."

He licked his lips and looked in her eyes. "I need help. I *can* do it all on my own but not in time—I can't afford to hire someone and no one will work for me on promise of back end. Not any more."

"Not any more," she agreed.

"It'll take me six months, no, more like eight to have a beta, and the beta won't be really functional. That's me working a-hundred-twenty hour weeks."

The look she gave him wasn't disappointment, wasn't fear or worry, it was something calm and assuring, maybe calculating. "Okay, Jonny. Okay." Her eyes scrolled up and to the right. With a step back she began to smile and nod. "You know what? We'll figure it out. Don't worry, we'll figure something out. I don't know what it is, baby, but I *know* we'll figure it out."

Now he smiled too.

"Does it feel better to tell the truth?" she asked him.

"It does."

"You promised me something."

"I did?"

"You were going to eat a pizza with me and we would watch TV together," she said, drumming her fingers on the top of the Angelo's pizza box. She looked so adorable.

"Absolutely, Charlie," he said. And with a wink, added, "Maybe later we can try again."

# CHAPTER FIVE

THEY DIDN'T TRY AGAIN LATER, but he had the best night off with her in the longest time. They drank Cokes, ate pizza and fried pickles, had some tiramisu that was incredible. They watched an episode of The Twilight Zone and by the end of it he was drifting off, laying his head in Charlie's lap while she played with his hair. The episode ended, and he pretended to sleep. Charlie let him, skipping to the next episode instead of waking him like he'd asked her. And he let her get away with that too, watching with narrowed eyes and smiling, nuzzling himself into her.

They must have fallen asleep together because he awoke with the sound of a booming voice and shrill female laughter in the hallway outside the apartment. He sat up, looked around. Charlie was flat on the couch, sleeping with her mouth open and her hands balled up in the sleeves of her sweatshirt. He'd been wedged between her and the back of the couch, his head on her stomach. The TV was still on, but the screen was blank.

The voices in the hall drew nearer, coming down the hall from the elevators. Two people having fun, maybe a little too much drink in them. The deep voice was most assuredly Reza, no one else down this end of the hall like him, as boisterous as him, and with little regard to tenants who might be trying to sleep ... he checked his watch ...

Shit, ten-thirty. This whole day had been wasted. He'd worked around the clock since yesterday, till dawn this morning, a little more after breakfast ... and that was it. Then he'd been sleeping, fantasizing, fucking, or trying to fuck Charlie, eating, watching TV and now more sleeping. But his wonderful Charlie's words today had mended his stitching. He'd been stretching himself so far he was ready to tear.

Two people banged up against the door to the apartment and it set the girl laughing in histrionics, cooing and reciting Reza's name. Great, now he was bringing people home with him.

A key jiggled in the door, then it burst open and Reza and some woman tumbled into the kitchen. Charlie's eyes fluttered, and she jumped up, looking wildly at Jonny then spinning behind to look up in the kitchen. She saw them as well, Reza wearing a suit and pressing this woman up against their fridge much like he'd done with her coming home from their date a while back. She looked at Jonny fearfully, then away at the television, wiping the drool from her mouth with the sleeve of her shirt, smoothing back her hair.

"Who's that?" she whispered to him.

"Beats me," he said.

Charlie rubbed her face now, her hands still balled up in the sleeves of her sweatshirt and twisting knuckles into the hollow cups of her eyes. She blinked then, looked at him, said, "What's she doing here?"

He shrugged. What *was* she doing here? How would *he* know?

They both looked again and they could see the woman now. Short, Latina, short limbed but shapely—thick legs and a big bottom, tiny waist, wearing a tight, hot pink dress that hugged all her curves and pushed up her perky but meager bosom. Her skin was olive, almost a dark tan, her hair a lustrous black, tumbling down and hiding her face from them. Multiple tattoos scurried up one leg, starting at the calf and disappearing up the skirt. One whole arm was also drawn in ink in multiple colors and black lines that they couldn't make out from where they sat. She had heavy, clunky jewelry, big earrings that shone from behind her tangled locks.

They saw her face now over Reza's shoulder. Up on her toes—and though she was short she wore high-heel platforms,—letting her peek around Reza's shoulder. She had a beautiful face, made up heavily with black drawn eyebrows and eyeliner, and bright red lipstick. She brightened seeing them, and eyes still on them she said to Reza, "That's her, right?"

Reza turned, and the two people stood side-by-side with their backs against the fridge. Reza's eyes were narrowing, hazy, and he looked at both of them and smiled. "That's her," he said in a low gravelly voice.

"Hi," Charlie said in a friendly and soft voice, even lifting a hand to gently wave.

"Hey," Jonny said.

"Please to meet you," the woman sang, an accent detectable, maybe Puerto Rican.

Reza gestured with his hand for her to go down the steps ahead of him and she did with her clutch held to her waist and trotting down the steps in her very high heels with surprising skill. She came to stand at the side of the coffee table and held out a well-manicured hand showing bright red nails with diamonds on them.

Reza said, "This is Genesis."

Charlie shook Genesis's hand, said, "Nice to meet you, too," having to clear her throat so she was audible.

Genesis held Charlie's grip, her black eyes watching her and her head moving from side to side. After a moment, she said, "And your name?"

"Oh … Charlie. Sorry, I'm Charlie." Then looking to him, she put her hand on his knee and said, "This is my husband, Jonny."

Jonny stood up, trying to look calm but getting a bad feeling about their houseguest. He shook her hand as well and said it was nice to meet her.

Formalities over with, the woman turned around now and took in their apartment, her face poised in a held back laugh. "You told me it was small," she said. "I hate to see

you here." With her eyes lowered down to Charlie now she said to Reza, "She must be really something."

"She is something," he said ominously. He stood and looked at Charlie with both his hands in the pockets of his suit pants.

Charlie reached for Jonny's hand and he took hers, weaving his fingers through and clasping together.

"You want some wine?" Reza said to Charlie.

She nodded. Jonny squeezed her hand gently to show her support. Charlie wanted wine because she wanted to dull what she was predicting would happen. The same thing he was predicting what would happen.

With a thumb and finger stroking at the points of his mustache, Reza looked at Jonny and said, "Jonny, go grab us some wine, would you?"

It wasn't a question, and Jonny just didn't have the heart right now to get into it with Reza. The man had an audience of two women with him and that would put him, he imagined, in quite an ambitious mood. The last thing he needed was to be belittled right now after he'd seemed to claw back something with Charlie today. So he gave Charlie's hand a squeeze, let it go, patted her on the knee, kissed her shoulder, got up walked around behind Reza and Genesis and went into the kitchen.

HE GOT out four glasses from the cupboard, found a bottle of red then opened it with a walnut-handled corkscrew. He gathered the glasses up, putting his fingers between the stems and with the bottle in his other hand went down to the family room. He found the three of them with a bong on the table and the room hazy with smoke. Charlie looked up at him, her face pinched, her expression sheepish. Caught doing something she thought she shouldn't. She looked away and exhaled with a great cough. Coughed some more then into her balled up fist and covered her face with her hair. He continued down around behind Genesis and Reza, put the glasses on the table. Reza saw that there were four there and said, "Oh, Jonny, you're going to join us?"

He couldn't help it. "I'm not welcome in my own home?"

Reza laughed, said, "Pour yourself a glass, Jonny. You can join us."

Still couldn't help it. "Oh gee, thanks."

Reza's eyes stayed on him, a smirk there but his gaze baleful.

Jonny took up the bottle, poured into each of the four glasses. Charlie watched him with a meek smile, her eyes pink and hazy. She took up her glass of wine but before she could step sip it, Reza stopped her.

"Hold on, Charlie. How about we drink to something?"

Genesis said, “Ooh, I like that. What we drinking to?” Her earrings made soft metallic singing noises as she spoke and shook her head.

“To Charlie, of course,” Jonny beat him to the punch. It was likely that Reza had intended something disgusting. And though his preemptive toast wouldn’t prevent it, he hoped it might deflate anything he might say.

Reza rolled his eyes, a superior smirk on his face, then, gaze back on Jonny, said, “And the things we do for her.” He tilted the glass back and finished the wine.

“To Charlie,” Genesis laughed, then drank back as well.

He looked to his wife, and she gave him another weak smile, then closed her eyes and tipped her glass back, both hands cradling the goblet, the stem extending between. She finished hers as well. Jonny took a sip.

In a soft and timid voice, Charlie said, “Did you want to see the shirt?”

Reza said, “What shirt?”

“You know—from this morning …” She made a jerking off gesture with her fist but tried to hide it so Jonny wouldn’t see.

Reza said, “What are you talking about, Charlie?”

Voice tight, she whined, “What you asked me to do this morning.”

Reza regarded her with a frown then it came to him. “Oh, right. You did it?”

Charlie nodded. “Do you want to see?”

“No,” he said, leaning forward and pouring another glass of wine for the three of them. “You did it?”

“I did.”

“Good.”

“I thought you wanted me to prove it.”

“I don’t think you’d lie,” he said, studying her with a narrowed gaze.

“What are we talking about?” Genesis said, pouting.

Reza turned to her and said, “I asked Charlie to jerk Tate off this morning.”

Genesis grinned and looked to Charlie. “Oh, he’s handsome, isn’t he?” She practically writhed in her chair.

Charlie shrugged. Then Genesis and Reza stared at her for a long, uncomfortable moment. Genesis continued to squirm in the chair, flexing her hips like she was rubbing her sex against the cushioned seat, licking her lips like she would soon consume Charlie. She crossed one muscular leg over the other and leaned close to Reza. Jonny got a clear display that Genesis didn’t wear underwear. He could see her hairy sex, her twisted brown labia pierced with something bright, maybe another diamond. He looked away.

Genesis whispered in Reza's ear, her sly eyes regarding Charlie while she did. Reza leaned close to listen and whatever he was told made him smile. When he sat straight again, he said, "Charlie …?"

"Yes," she said in a soft whisper.

"Lift up your shirt, please."

"Lift up my shirt?" she said in a whine, her brow pinched up in the middle.

"I wanna see your belly," Genesis said and clamped the hard glossy nail of her pinky between her brilliant white teeth. One of them was gold.

Mouth twisted to the side, Charlie looked at Jonny sheepishly first, then back to them, bunched up the waist of her sweatshirt and T-shirt and slowly scrolled them up. As she did, he saw her tummy fluttering, her skin go to gooseflesh despite how warm the apartment was. She sucked her stomach in.

"Ooh, I love her," Genesis said with sleepy eyes. Reza nudged her arm, and she smiled, slunk off the chair and got on her hands and knees walked over to Charlie like a sexy cat.

"What's she going to do?" Charlie whimpered.

"I just love tummies," Genesis said and got her hands on the couch on either side of Charlie's thighs. Her bared stomach fluttered uncontrollably. Eyes glued to Charlie's navel, Genesis said, "Look how tight she is, practically an outie; I love skinny girls."

"What are you going to do?" Charlie said fearfully.

"Relax, cariño, ain't nobody gonna hurt you," she said to Charlie and smiled, her plump red lips gleaming in the lamp light. She was a strikingly beautiful woman, but the blackness of her eyes hid her intention; she seemed at once loving but simultaneously capable of great malice.

Reza said, "Relax, Charlie," his tone surprisingly reassuring. He leaned back in his chair and put the sole of his shoe up on the edge of the coffee table, slumped a little and watched now, his hand covering his own cock in his suit pants.

"What's she going to do?" Jonny asked, but no one responded. Strangely, the tension of the situation had worked an excitement into him as well, and he felt a surging stiffness beginning to ache between his legs.

# CHAPTER SIX

GENESIS PUT a hand up to cover Charlie's belly, her fingers spread out wide, admiring her own dark color against Charlie's pale freckled skin. "She's so warm, and tight as a drum. I can feel her quivering, feel her organs squirming under my hand." The hand turned to a claw, and she dug her nails into Charlie's hard stomach, the French tips of the expensive manicure digging crescents into her skin. Charlie lightly whimpered and Genesis hissed.

Charlie bit her lower lip and pulled her sweatshirt higher, tucked her chin down so she could watch what this strange woman would do. She didn't wear a bra and the lower curve of her breasts were bared, nipples still hidden. The hand relaxed on her stomach, fingertips smoothing over the little scoops she'd left impressed in her skin.

"Kiss it better," Genesis whispered to herself, and she plumped her lips, pressed them to Charlie's stomach and she made another high frightened sound, sucking her stomach in further. She softly kissed her stomach, did it carefully and suckled her flesh, pulled on it with the suction of her mouth. She pulled back and whispered now, "That's where the baby is made," her sleepy eyes watching Charlie's stomach—smeared with the sheen of her saliva and the imprints of her bright red lipstick. "You're a beautiful girl," Genesis said to her, eyes up to meet Charlie's now.

Charlie mouthed, "Thank you," her mouth dry and frightened and no sound coming out.

Genesis returned her attention to Charlie's tummy, stuck out her pink tongue, and it quavered in a point, poised above her navel. Then it dove in and scooped around its shapes. Charlie made soft breathy noises like she was hyperventilating, her eyes wide, pupils dilated. Genesis now dove in, clamping the ring of her lips against Charlie's stomach and suckled loudly. Charlie's eyes went wider, but she looked straight ahead, not at Reza but beyond him, her focus on what this woman did with her mouth on her navel stealing all her faculties for the moment.

The woman began a feline purr, slowing her mouth, pulling away with a shimmering strand of saliva connecting her lip to Charlie's skin, eyes lowered to her navel. She sucked on her lips, that bright lipstick rubbed off, her own lips an excited berry color. Her fingers ran the crinkled waistband of Charlie's pajama pants, then took up the dangling pink ties and unwound them.

"Hey wait," Charlie said excitedly, "I don't know …"

"I have to see …" Genesis said, eyes turned up to Charlie pleadingly.

"I don't know," Charlie whispered.

Reza said, "Let her," and Charlie's mouth twisted up again, her brow pinched low.

Genesis untied the strings and loosened the waistband by running her fingers underneath it and pulling it away from Charlie's stomach. Now with fingers purposely hooked into the very front of her pajama pants' waist, tucking under the fronts of her panties as well, she pulled them out and peered inside. It made her smile, and she drew a deep breath, inhaling Charlie's scent. She said, "Mm, you had sex today."

"No," Charlie protested, then amended: "Kind of."

"Tate get you so hot?" Genesis said and winked.

"No," Charlie said, "Jonny and I messed around."

Reza scoffed then laughed silently, shoulders shaking.

"Messed around, huh?" Genesis said and tugged the pants out further.

"We didn't have sex," Charlie said, Jonny wondering why that was anyone else's business.

"I can smell you came, Charlie," Genesis sneered.

Charlie shrugged. "I did."

"Good for you, Jonny," Reza said, eyebrows raised like he was impressed. Now Jonny shrugged.

Genesis kissed Charlie's navel again, working lower, tugging on the pajama pants, revealing more and more of her. Charlie fidgeted while she did, still holding her shirt up just below her breasts, but now looking up at the ceiling.

"Open your legs, Charlie," Reza said, and Jonny saw he was aroused under his pants, that huge tool of his pressing out the fine fabric of his dark tailored suit.

She made another soft whimper, but she complied, her teeth clamped down on that lower lip. Her legs parted and Genesis came around her leg to get between them, get close to her. She kissed more, lowered the pants, her tongue slipping well below Charlie's navel now. She tugged the pants hard and there was the sound of stitches giving, and Charlie gasped. The woman's head buried in her lap now, her face pressed in the gap between her pants and her skin and Charlie looked higher up, straight above her, her eyes wide, her mouth hanging open.

Reza said, "Tilt your hips, Charlie."

She scrunched her brow again, relaxed her body a little, curled her spine, her stomach folding in lines and her pelvis tilted forward.

Genesis's tongue must have come close to touching her intimate space because she jumped and protested. "I don't think … I don't know about this … Reza …"

Genesis raised up, let her pants go, on her knees between Charlie's legs. She chuckled lightly, her face gleaming and then wiping it with the back of her hand. She jutted her chin toward Charlie and said, "I want to see it," her eyes narrowed, watching her under her long, jet black lashes.

Charlie lowered her sweatshirt, her gaze on Genesis, mesmerized. They watched each other for a long moment then Charlie tucked her hands in her pants and pushed them down, leaning forward and pushing them down until they hooped around her ankles. She lay back again but her thighs were clamped together, her knees tightly pressed.

Genesis kissed the points of her pale white knees and raised up again, pushed with her hands to open Charlie's legs and she resisted but only for a few seconds then Genesis had them parting, her black eyes going wide with delight at what was revealed.

She softly exhaled looking between Charlie's legs, liking what she saw. "It's a pretty thing," she sighed. "So pretty. May I pet it?"

"I don't know," Charlie said.

The woman used the back of her hand to stroke up Charlie's exposed sex and she made a soft reluctant sound in her throat.

"Some girls are cherries, some are fudge, some are a dusky rose …"

Another weird frightened sound from Charlie's throat.

"You're just my tiny little strawberry, *amada*," Genesis said, and before Charlie could say anything, the woman's mouth was between her legs, suckling on her labia.

"Oh no, mm, oh wow," Charlie hummed, her eyes closed, face turned up. The sound was of guilty pleasure, her mouth open and gasping but her brow furrowed with worry.

Genesis head humped and bumped between Charlie's legs, her long, glossy hair rustling against the inside of her pale thighs. Charlie's soft whimpers became grunts that sounded almost like pleasure. But her face was twisted in sorrow and horror. Her hands came together working over her own thighs, her nails scratching her white skin then touching Genesis's shoulders. She felt the woman's muscular shoulders, slipped the palms of her hands up her neck and put her hands through the woman's hair. It was all done very tentatively, almost as though she didn't want to but couldn't help herself because of the pleasure the women was giving between her legs.

"I don't think … I don't think I want this," Charlie gasped.

Reza laughed, said, "I think you do, Charlie. I think you don't like that you like it so much."

"If she doesn't like it, you should make her stop." Jonny said.

"Jonny, Charlie could tell Genesis to stop. She said she doesn't think she wants this and she said it to the room, not to the person doing it. Let her stop it if she wants."

Jonny had a retort but kept it bitten. He hated to be wrong and he hated for Reza to show him up all the time. But he was right, Charlie could just say that this was enough, to put an end to it, but instead she sat next to him on the couch, writhing, hips wriggling, a hot, sexy, older Latin woman's face buried between her thighs, Charlie's

pale hands caressing her head. It didn't seem like she really didn't want this. It was disgusting to see her like this. It hurt his stomach. It was like she was being used and it was all his fault. She hated it, but it felt good and for that reason she let it continue. It was so wrong and yet there was something devious inside it for both of them. His own cock, that had been reluctant to grow hard in front of his wife when she used words to humiliate his size, had now risen in spectacular fashion that he would love to show her. It was her sexiness that was doing this. He wasn't drinking too many energy drinks, it was just the developments of the last half year had twisted up his sexuality into a bundled, unmanageable knot. Once this was over he hoped they would both be able to untangle the mess and return everything to normal.

AS CHARLIE'S breaths came quicker, Jonny watching her little chest rise and fall under her heavy sweatshirt, Genesis suddenly rose up, making a loud suckling, smacking noise between her legs. "You are a tasty little thing," she said, her lips and chin and nose gleaming. Charlie's breath still came rapidly and Jonny watched her hips swiveling on the couch. She was naked from the waist down, her bare, exposed, and shaved sex glistening with this woman's saliva. Unable to help himself anymore, he grabbed a pillow and pulled into his lap, slipped a hand underneath to squeeze himself. Across the coffee table from him, Reza watched as well, not so bashful while he handled the distinct outline of his arousal through his pants.

"Open it up for me," Genesis said.

"What?" Charlie whispered.

"You know what I want."

Charlie stared at Genesis for another moment, her hands paused on her thighs. She looked around her, afraid to face Jonny but he saw her pupils glancing at him in her periphery. Then she looked down between her own legs and ran her hands there.

"That's it," Genesis urged, her smile growing wider and biting on her lower lip with a sharp gold canine tooth.

Charlie touched herself, both her long, pale hands between her legs touching her sex. Wet sounds were made as her fingers caressed her pink folds and then she daintily held her plump outer labia and eased them away from her body and parted them like butterfly wings. Jonny could see her hands shaking.

Genesis still watched admiringly then said, "I like the taste of your sex. I like how you taste after your man makes you come."

Charlie struggled to say something, managed, "Thank you." It came out like a timid question.

Jonny squeezed himself hard underneath the pillow.

"Would you turn around for me, sweetheart?" Genesis said.

"Turn around? How?"

But Genesis was already helping her, hooking a hand under one of her thin knees and twisting her so her hips turned, Charlie then getting on her knees on the couch seat, her hands over the seat back. She looked nervously over her shoulder, eyes darting to Jonny. He tried to show her a brave, comforting face.

Genesis said, "Stick your ass out."

Charlie said, "Stick my ass out?"

Genesis looked over her shoulder to Reza and he gave a silent laugh. He said, "Charlie needs everything repeated. Get used to it."

Genesis turned around now, she was smiling. She caressed the globes of Charlie's cheeks and admired her narrow but round bottom. She said, "You know what I'm getting at. I'm gonna eat your asshole. Now stick it out."

"Jonny," Charlie whispered, and his eyes rose from where Genesis caressed her ass to meet her gaze.

He shrugged for her, gave her an attempt at a smile, one so weak it faltered before it got off the ground. He mouthed, "I love you."

"Okay," Charlie whispered to him. She looked very unsure.

"Stick it out, mami," Genesis repeated.

"Okay," Charlie said to her, slowly pushing herself back and lowering her chin to the seat back. She stopped, said, "I didn't shower after work."

Genesis chuckled, said, "That's what I was hoping."

As Charlie pushed her rump further, lowered her chin so it touched the couch, her forearms resting over the back, Genesis turned to Reza and motioned for him to pass her pink leather purse. It was a big bag filled with what looked like many things, and she pulled from it a silver vibrator that she twisted and brought to humming life.

"What's that?" Charlie gasped. She tried to dart a glance behind her to see.

Jonny whispered, "It's okay, Charlie. You'll like it."

"Okay, Jonny," she whispered and lay her cheek on her forearms, her tangled hair covering up her face but her eyes watching his. He leaned a little closer and rubbed her upper arm.

Genesis got low, examined Charlie's pretty petals, wet her fingers with her tongue, touched her there, stroking her fingers up and down. Charlie made troubled faces. Then Genesis took the point of the long silver vibrator and pressed it to Charlie's opening. She jumped and yelped breathily.

Reza laughed, and Genesis joined him. Jonny may have laughed as well if his stomach hadn't got so tight. He whispered, "It's okay."

Charlie said, "What was that?"

"A vibrator," Jonny said.

Charlie nodded, laid her cheek on her arms again and watched him. Genesis tried it another time, taking the humming chrome vibrator and pressing it to Charlie's opening. She frowned and her mouth fell open. Then with surprising ease, thumb and first two fingers brought to a point on the vibrator's base, Genesis slid at least seven inches inside his wife. Charlie sang a sweet and tremulous note of pleasure. Her brows rose high, her eyes closed, her mouth open in a gasping O.

"Oh Jonny, oh wow," she sighed.

Jonny's fingers tingled, and he felt lightheaded. The sight of Charlie delivered purposeful pleasure like this by such a strange intruder in their home was exciting. Under the pillow in his lap, he began to fondle himself.

Genesis pressed her lips in the center of one of Charlie's perfectly round haunches and kissed her there. Did the same on the other side, Charlie beginning to squirm with the feel of the woman's lips on her sensitive bottom. A few silver inches of the vibrator's base still protruded from her opening, and now Genesis, with her clicking bright red diamond studded nails, twisted the base and brought the humming louder. Charlie sang a tight, warbling note. It made Jonny reel again.

"Oh Jonny, oh Jonny," Charlie mumbled underneath the sound of her fingernails scratching on the couch's fabric.

When Genesis spread the whole of her glistening tongue over Charlie's anus—dipped it down, up again, down, then sweeping all the way up to her tailbone—Charlie moaned, and her feet curled up into tight balls; she kicked her legs a little.

The woman went to work on his wife. With her hands curled on the curve of Charlie's bent over bottom she worked her tongue through every part of her, every crease, every nook and cranny, moving around the vibrator and flicking at her folds, up again and then pressing the tip inside Charlie's anus. She even suckled on it, forming a tight seal around Charlie's tight, pink aperture and sucking.

Charlie's feet stayed curled, her legs kicked, and the longer it went on the more animated her reception became. She scratched at the back of the couch, she thrust her rump out to meet Genesis's tongue; sometimes she would gasp out, sometimes she would moan, and other times she would cry. Her head was thrust back, her hair would shake, her eyes stayed closed and her mouth stayed open. The woman worked her over until Charlie orgasmed with an explosive wail. Her body bucked and jumped, she thrust forward to get her sex away from this woman's invasive tongue, then thrust it back eagerly, Genesis complying and digging the point of her tongue inside her again. She grabbed fistfuls of the back seat of the couch until her hands shook, her long neck was bowed gracefully, her chin up to the ceiling as she babbled beautiful nonsense.

Jonny buckled as well, his cock flexing in his hand, so close to an orgasm just watching hers that he hunched forward to stop it from happening. Instead it flexed over and over in his grip pumping out clear excitement.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

WHEN IT WAS OVER, Charlie left slumped with her head on the back of the couch, face turned to Jonny but her expression one of unconsciousness, Genesis slowed her ministrations and gently kissed her bottom, working her way up to the soft divots at the small of Charlie's back.

"Ooh, you come good, mami," Genesis purred. Charlie whimpered softly, her gentle sounds barely audible over the vibrator still humming, inserted deeply inside her. Now Genesis crouched down and sat on her own heels, began to lick at the soles of Charlie's feet. Her hands searched around her and found her purse, brought it to her lap and she sat upright, put her hands inside.

Jonny reached to Charlie and gripped her arm, rubbing his thumb on her. Her eyes fluttered, opened, and he saw her glassy gaze.

Genesis removed something heavy from her bag and dropped it on the floor at the foot of the couch. He couldn't see what it was, just a jumble of leather straps. She stood up now behind Charlie and stepped out of her very high heels. She took the hem of her tight pink dress and brought it up her body and threw it aside. Completely naked now, she stood behind Charlie. Her body was bronzed, muscular, squat but incredibly vivacious. A tiny narrow waist and a hard muscled belly with a gleaming jewel pierced in her belly button. Her sex was unshaved; a thatch of unruly blackness. One arm was completely tattooed the other with just a few emblems; writhing snakes and dragons it looked like. One whole leg was practically inked, working from the ankle up her calf twisting at her knee to come up the front of her thigh. At her hipbone was a crude heart-shape with an arrow through it and underneath it said Fuck you, too. She caught him looking at her and it frightened him. She smiled.

"You okay, Charlie?" he asked his wife, his eyes still on this woman and what she might intend to do next.

"Yeah," Charlie sighed. Eyes fluttering again, she opened them and gave him a weak smile.

Genesis had bent over and grabbed her bundle of straps, brought them to her waist. He saw what it was now. As she snapped the straps around the tops of her thighs and her waist, between her legs dangled an enormous rubber erection. A strap-on dildo.

The woman dropped over Charlie's back, getting on all fours and clinging to her. Knees up on the couch on either side of Charlie's ankles she caressed Charlie's shoulders. She said in Charlie's ear, "I hear if Reza fucks you tonight you'll get pregnant."

"What?" Charlie said, then remembered Reza calling her out for having to have things repeated. "It's the middle of my cycle," she whispered.

"That's all right, sweetheart, don't worry," Genesis said. "He also told me you like them big."

"Like what big?"

Genesis reared up, stayed on her knees and reached around and down, grabbed the top of her purse and hoisted it up to the seat. She said "You like big cock."

"No, I don't," Charlie said, eyes closed, brow lowering.

From her purse Genesis withdrew a small tube. She withdrew the vibrator from Charlie, going slow and doing it carefully. Charlie's frown lowered, and she moaned. Genesis tipped up the small tube, squeezed it, a stream of sticky clear gel fell in globs over its tip. Then the vibrator was brought to her slick opening, Charlie reacting to its feel again, pushing back as though she wanted it inside her. But Genesis traced the point higher until it pressed on Charlie's anus.

"Oh, no," Charlie gasped. Her eyes stay closed but her mouth fell open in expectation. Once again, protesting but not preventing.

The vibrator was gently pushed, worked in then out, in again deeper, getting its surface coated with the lubricant before Genesis was able to insert it deep inside her. Charlie groaned now, this time hiding her face from Jonny in the crook of her arm.

"You don't like big dick?" Genesis asked, now hefting the big tool that dangled between her legs. It was a realistic molding, dark brown to match her own skin tone, circumcised with a massive prow-shaped glans. Veins wriggled its surface and Jonny wondered who on earth could have modeled that monster. It looked bigger than Reza.

"No," Charlie moaned.

Genesis stroked lube up and down the shaft of her imitation manhood, watching her own hand work and speaking absently to Charlie, saying, "Every girl loves big dick. You're just saying that 'cause your husband's here."

"No, I'm not," Charlie sighed.

Genesis curled over Charlie's back again, and still stroking the dangling member and saying, "Your husband had a big one, you'd a told me now. He don't satisfy you?"

"He satisfies me," Charlie said. "It's more than sex."

"I'm sure it is, Charlie," she said, stroking the tip of the dildo up and down Charlie's opening, just below the protruding silver end of the vibrator in her anus.

Charlie's hands gripped at the soft couch fabric again, and her chin came up her eyes opening. "It is," Charlie said. "It is."

THE MUSCLES of Genesis's haunches flexed as she slowly drove the huge thing inside Charlie. She withdrew and plunged again, slick wet sounds over top of the vibrator's

buzzing. Charlie's eyes rolled up and fluttered, her mouth hanging open again. Genesis worked her hips, muscles of her stomach flexing as she did, stroking it in and out of Charlie in tiny increments. She felt Charlie's back while she did, over the sweatshirt, her hands moving up her spine, rubbing her shoulders and coming down her ribs to squeeze at her waist. She drove herself deeper then and Charlie cried out. Withdrew and plunged again, and Jonny watched where the thick imitation cock spread his wife wide and how her tight sex clung eagerly to it. Charlie *did* like it. Charlie liked it *big*. Under the pillow, his hand slipped inside his sweatpants and found himself wet and throbbing. He gripped himself but refused to stroke.

"You get any work done today?" Reza asked.

"What?" Jonny grunted. It took great effort, but he pulled his eyes from this beautiful woman fucking his wife with a strap-on to look at Reza who sat across the table still slumped in his chair, rubbing his huge arousal through his pants. He watched Jonny. "You a good boy today?"

"Yeah. Sure."

"Too bad. I could keep this going as long as I want and love every minute of it."

"It won't be long," Jonny said, though the reality was he didn't know how long it would be. How much more of this could he take? He watched as Genesis now eagerly thrust in and out of Charlie and she gasped and writhed, swaying her own hips, her spread out sex making wet sounds, the vibrator buzzing from inside her body. It was crazy. All so over-the-top crazy and he couldn't believe that they found themselves here. It started out so simple. Just go down on their landlord and we'll get through this. Now look where they were. Solely in debt to the landlord, tens of thousands of dollars, held on a string now and his wife their landlord's sex puppet. They wedged themselves further and further into a crack looking for light on the other side, both of them sure there was something to get to, but now he hoped there still would be. After nights like tonight, what would be left of them when they popped through on the other side?

Genesis curled tighter to Charlie, thrusting that big thing further inside her, so close now Jonny couldn't see it going inside. Genesis's hips touched Charlie's buttocks and worked in circles, the thing embedded deep inside her and merely stirring in her guts now. The beautiful Latin woman bit on Charlie's back between her shoulder blades, ran her tongue through her hair and squeezed her shoulders. She worked her hands underneath Charlie's sweatshirt, pushed it up higher and higher, bared her back, bit at the skin and grabbed her hanging little breasts while she continued to fuck her.

"These girls are going to kill me," Reza groaned, and Jonny saw him now gripping his erection going crossways over one leg, holding it with both hands.

"Me too," Jonny said inaudibly.

Both hands ran through Charlie's hair and Genesis gathered it up in a ponytail, pulled her back so that her spine bowed and she pushed herself inside so deep Charlie cried out. Genesis arched her back too, pushed it even deeper and Jonny couldn't believe the size of that thing could be fully inside his wife. But it was. Pushed deep inside her and Charlie loved it.

Back arched and muscles gleaming with sweat, Genesis posed like a cowboy with eight seconds to bust this bronco, one muscular arm extended to grip a gathered ponytail of Charlie's hair, the other placed on the small of her own back. She held herself rigid for Charlie, and Charlie did all the work now. Rolling her hips, swiveling in circles sucking and bouncing on that huge thing buried inside her. She cried and moaned, and her face looked like it was the worst thing and the best thing that ever happened to her. Her face twisted in a passionate sneer, her mouth hanging open, her teeth opening and closing with a small clicking sound.

"Oh gosh, oh wow, oh gosh, mm gosh," Charlie began singing over and over. Her own little waist wriggling, pushing herself back on the huge fake penis buried inside her, making herself come. The wriggling became bouncing, bouncing became a deep impaling, and Charlie's whole body tensed; went rigid and shaking. She cried a long creaking dragging moan as she orgasmed again.

"That's it, Charlie, that's it," Genesis said letting the ponytail go and caressing the center of her back. Still keeping herself rigid, still pushing her hips so Charlie had that stable totem to push herself against.

When it was over, and Charlie was left heaving for breath, Genesis withdrew the huge erection from inside her with a slick, smacking noise then stroked it up and down the insides of Charlie's thighs. She got close to her, leaning over her back again and whispered, "Yeah, you don't like big dick."

Charlie made more soft whimpering sounds and leaned her weight against the back of the couch. Her sweatshirt had fallen down to cover her back again, her bare round bottom closed around the silver thing inserted inside her. Genesis held it, clicked it off and pulled it out. It came free with a brief belching sound, and Charlie put both hands behind her to cover up her bottom.

"You stroking off under that pillow?" Reza asked abruptly.

Jonny jerked upright. His eyes shifted to see Genesis watching him. He shook his head no. Reza laughed.

"You're jerking off under the pillow."

"No, I'm not."

Charlie rolled to her side, putting her butt down on the couch seat drawing her knees up and watching him. "It's okay," she said.

Genesis said, "Take the pillow away."

Jonny withdrew his hand from inside his pants, trying to dry them on the fabric as he went. He moved the pillow and looked down. The front of his pants were baggy enough to hide his arousal.

Genesis said, "Pull 'em down, let me see what you got."

Charlie jumped up. "Oh no, no, no, no. Seriously, no." She walked on her knees to get in front of Jonny and get herself between her husband and Genesis. She held her hands up protectively. "Please, no. No. I'll do anything."

Genesis laughed, said, "What do you think I'm gonna do to him?"

"Please, don't do anything to him. I'm begging you. Okay?"

"He can't even show me what he's working with?" Genesis smiled.

"He's my husband. He's not part of this. Not in that way. I'll do anything. But nobody can touch him."

Genesis shrugged and smirked. "Who said I was going to touch it?"

"I'll do whatever you want," Charlie said. Jonny reached up and held her waist over top of her bunched up sweatshirt. She leaned back against him, sat in his lap and he pushed the tip of his arousal against her bottom. "It's okay, Charlie. Don't worry," he whispered.

She flicked her chin toward him, looking over her shoulder. "It's not okay, Jonny. You're my husband. You're mine."

Genesis unbuckled her harness, the big dick between her legs nodding up and down and sideways, glistening with Charlie's insides from tip all the way to the base. When it was undone, she tossed it to the floor next to her purse. She put her hands on her hips now and looked at Charlie, saying, "You'll do anything, you'll get on that bed."

Charlie nodded.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

WHEN CHARLIE STOOD up with Genesis, Reza did as well. His large phallus was visible against the inside of his pant leg, swollen and engorged but pointing down to one side. He handled it. One hand out to Charlie, he guided her around the coffee table, but stopped her there. Genesis joined from behind.

Charlie's baggy sweatshirt hung down below her ass to the tops of her thighs and Genesis stood behind her, tucked her fingers under the hem and lifted it up. Charlie complied, putting her hands over her head and the muscular woman pulled it away and tossed it back to the couch. Charlie stood facing Reza, both hands folded across her tummy shyly, her chin tucked down. Genesis admired her from behind, looking at her pale freckled skin, her narrow shoulders and slim back, her tiny waist, the swell of her rounded ass cheeks. She took a handful of Charlie's apricot mane and held it to her mouth and nose, deeply inhaled and enjoyed it.

"She is so fine," she said to Reza.

Reza nodded in agreement, looked over his shoulder to Jonny and said, "Come take a seat by the bed, Jonny." He sneered, put a hand on the small of Charlie's back and guided her toward the bed, stopped to turn back. "You can come and jerk off while you watch, if that's your thing."

"No," Charlie whispered. She looked to Reza with concern, then over her shoulder at Jonny and gently shook her head no.

Reza said, "I don't think your wife wants you to do that."

"I don't want her to see it," Charlie whispered.

"Believe me, honey, I seen plenty." Genesis said.

"I just don't want you to see my husband's," Charlie said softly without looking at her.

Reza winked at Jonny and said, "Bring your pillow, Jonny. I didn't want to see your little dick, anyway."

"I'm not going to jerk off," he said defiantly.

As Genesis took the small of Charlie's back and walked her to the bed now, Reza hung behind, turning to say, "Too bad, Jonny. Though I probably gotta tell you: you're gonna come in your pants anyway when you see what we do to your wife tonight."

Charlie's step faltered, and she turned stiffly, her face tense. She said to Reza, "What are you going to do to me?"

"Only good things, little Charlie," Reza soothed her, though his tone still maintained its menace.

Behind them, Genesis climbed up on their bed and made her way up to the pillows. She sat crosslegged on them and slapped the inside of her thighs, calling Charlie to come and join her.

Reza helped her up onto the bed and Charlie made her way to face Genesis who sat patiently and preened herself. Reza climbed up from the foot of the bed still wearing his suit. Jonny got up from the couch as well, clutching the pillow to his crotch to cover his arousal. He took the back of the chair Reza had been sitting in and dragged it near the bed, turned it around to face.

On the bed, Genesis held Charlie's face in both her hands and admired her, running her thumbs along the soft pads under Charlie's wide eyes. Then the woman stood, her legs wide apart and walked herself a little closer to Charlie, her hairy sex near Charlie's face. Charlie flinched and backed away, saying, "Oh, I don't think I can do that."

"You can, amada, you can and you can do it well. I know you can by the shape of that mouth."

Reza got close behind her, scooting so his chest was at her back. He held her naked waist and stroked his fingers up and down her tummy. He said, "You'll like it, Charlie, you will. This woman was so good to you tonight, you want everything just for yourself?"

"No. I just don't know … I don't know what to do. I feel … it makes me feel funny …"

Genesis stepped closer. Left leg, then the other, her furry mound just inches from Charlie's face. Reza took a hold of the back of her hair and tilted her head upright so that she would face it directly.

Reza growled, "Open your mouth, Charlie."

Charlie gasped, "What do I do?"

Reza said again, "Open your mouth."

The hand that played with her tummy moved higher now, coming up to grip her neck. With a thumb pressed at the corner of her jaw, he held her head at the appropriate angle. Charlie complied, lips parted slightly, eyes open and looking at this other woman's sex. Genesis dipped her knees and brought her vulva to Charlie's open and waiting mouth.

"Use your tongue now," Genesis told her.

While Reza held her neck, Charlie's cheeks moved in and out, Jonny's wife pushing her tongue out and tasting another woman between her legs. He ached to touch himself again, but instead clutched the top side of the pillow tightly as he held it over top of his erection. Charlie made a frowning face, but continued to move her head as she stroked her tongue up and down Genesis's labia.

"Now put your tongue inside a little," Genesis told her, standing with her hands on her hips and looking down her own body at this slender white girl using her mouth on her. "That's it. That's good, right there. Keep doing that. I told you you'd be good."

"Uh-huh," Charlie hummed as she continued to push her tongue in and out of the woman. Reza let her throat go, his hand sliding over her naked body, finding both her wrists and guiding her hands up so that they held Genesis's toned thighs. Charlie's long and elegant hands stroked up and down the woman's muscle and now Reza backed away. Charlie continued on her own, moving her head as she sucked on this woman's vagina and caressed her strong legs.

Genesis took the back of Charlie's head and guided her deeper, groaning a little. Now she said, "Come with me, follow my pussy," and stepped backward. Charlie looked up, separated now from the woman's sex, her mouth and nose gleaming with wetness. Her eyes were wild and bewildered, and she went on her hands and knees and followed along as the woman held her hair and took a step back and sat her butt on the top of the headboard, her feet on their pillows.

Genesis asked, "You gonna make me come?"

Charlie nodded slightly, but not confidently, just telling the woman what she wanted to hear. She was right between her legs now, and her hands came up and rested on the inside of her thighs as she returned her mouth to suckle over top of Genesis's hairy sex.

Reza got on his knees, unbuckling his belt as he went, unzipping his pants, walking on his knees until he was behind Charlie. He said, "Charlie?—you know I got a surprise for you?"

With her mouth still between Genesis's legs, she shook her head no while her mouth made wet smacking noises. Genesis showed no expression other than a means sort of smile, looking down to see what Charlie did.

"You want to know what it is?" Reza asked her.

"Uh-huh," Charlie said.

Jonny watched as Reza, naked from the waist down, hefted his erection and held it in his grip, poking out in the gap between his black shirttails. Slowly, he peeled back his foreskin, angling his cock pointed upright, and it gushed bubbling streams of his pre-come that had been trapped inside his foreskin while he watched Genesis pleasure Charlie with her mouth. It ran down his shaft and he collected it, scooping it up to roll it around his exposed and gleaming glans. Finger still wet, he stroked Charlie from her perineum over her anus. She jumped at his touch there, and it made her disconnect her mouth from Genesis. Over her shoulder, she said, "You can't. You have to wear a condom."

"No, I don't," he said.

"You do. You really do," Charlie said.

"Not where I'm going," Reza said.

"Where are you going?" Charlie asked him.

In answer, Reza tapped on her anus with the big, flared end of his cock. Charlie's legs flexed and her butt cheeks bounced. She looked worried.

"What's my surprise?" she said fearfully.

"You're going to tell me what it is."

"What do you mean?" Charlie asked.

His cock gleamed with wetness, and he pushed down on it as it nestled into Charlie's tight, pink sphincter. He pushed hard enough so the glans disappeared inside, and Charlie groaned and whimpered.

"It's too big," she said.

"You're ready," Reza said, and pushed himself deeper. With his hand out of the way, Jonny could see what he thought the surprise was.

As he sunk deeper inside Charlie, she dug her nails into the insides of Genesis's thighs, and she seemed to like the pain. Charlie cried again, "It's too big."

"It's time, Charlie. I can't go six months without your ass."

"THINGS AREN'T SUPPOSED to go in there," Charlie said.

Reza wriggled his hips a little, his cock slipping inside her just a little more. He said, "Doesn't it feel good?"

Charlie frowned and made a funny noise in her throat. She moved one hand from the inside of Genesis's thigh and rested it over top of Reza suit jacket where it covered his hip. "It hurts. Your thing is too big."

"If you relax a little, Charlie, I'm telling you you're going to love it."

"Ow," Charlie whispered. But Jonny could see that her thighs flexed, and she pushed herself back against his intrusion. Like she was curious.

"That's it," Reza said. "You feel it now?"

Charlie nodded slightly but bit on her lower lip.

"I feel it," Reza said. "Everything on your body is tight, isn't it?"

Charlie gasped a little now, made a soft whimper and nodded. "Careful," she reminded him.

"You feel it? You feel my surprise?"

"Oh," Charlie gasped, her nails scratching at the fabric of his clothing. "What's your … what's your surprise?"

"Push back on me."

"Mm, ah," Charlie moaned. "You are so big."

Reza put the palm of his big hand in the center of her slender back and pushed himself a little deeper. Charlie cried out, retreating from him, burying her face between Genesis's spread legs. With his body leaned forward, his suit jacket opened and covered where he penetrated her. Jonny shifted in his seat to see if he could get a better angle. Reza chased her, pushed himself a little deeper still. Charlie bit a wad on the inside of the woman's thigh, and it made her mewl like a horny cat.

With the flesh still pinched between her teeth, Charlie nodded her head, wanting more.

"Oh, you like it now? You want me to keep going?"

Charlie didn't answer, her bite turning to a suckling as she mouthed the skin near the woman's sex. She made a soft noise that sounded affirmative.

"You're going to tell me what my surprise is."

"I don't know what you mean," Charlie gasped, rested her chin in the seam where Genesis's thigh met her hip. Genesis caressed Charlie's head, winding her fingers through her long, ginger hair.

Without looking at Jonny, Reza addressed him: "Jonny, bring me her T-shirt. Get the lube off the couch."

He thought of being difficult, of throwing up obstacle—there was something in him that liked railing against Reza sometimes. A little defiance, a little friction between them, was a good reminder that this was an ongoing battle, and while he owned his wife right now, it would not be permanent. So instead, he did what he was told. He stood up with the pillow clasped between his legs—God, his erection was literally throbbing, he could practically feel it through the cushion—and he wound around the chair and made his way to the couch, retrieved the small bottle of lube that Genesis had used to lubricate her strap-on. With that, he made his way to the bed and snatched up Charlie's T-shirt that had been thrown to the floor. But he wouldn't hand it to Reza, instead just dropping it on the bed next to his knee. Reza never looked at him once.

Now Jonny returned to the chair, sat himself in it deeply, and watched. His heart thumped in his chest.

"Easy, Charlie," Reza said and slowly withdrew himself from her rectum.

Charlie kicked her legs a little and curled her toes. With his cock withdrawn, Reza picked up her T-shirt, wrapped it around his enormous member and cleaned it off. Then he took up the bottle of lube and squirted out an undulating line across the top of his huge cock like he was putting ketchup on a hot dog. Between them, Charlie still squirmed, as reluctant as she always made this out to be, she couldn't help the way her body responded to the attention it received. She swayed her hips and rubbed her thighs together, and with her head firmly clasped between Genesis's hands, she continued to

use her mouth on the woman. Reza stroked the lube up and down his huge member then pointed it between her legs again.

When it touched her perineum, then dipped down to poke at her labia, Charlie jerked forward.

"No, you can't."

"Give it to me, Charlie. Just once, in and out."

"You can't, I'm being serious, this is a really bad time."

Reza rubbed her back with his huge hand, caressing her shoulder blade with a thumb. His other hand gripped his cock at the base and he stroked it up and down her entry, making Charlie whimper. He pressed until his huge glans slipped around the ring of her shining labia and disappeared into her body. Charlie moaned now.

"Please, it's a really bad time. I told you, I'll do everything you want, please, don't come inside me."

Reza gave a mean chuckle, said, "You don't want my baby?"

Charlie shook her head, "Gosh, no."

"Relax Charlie, don't you trust me?"

"I don't know," she whispered.

Genesis laughed, and said, "I wouldn't trust him, he's the devil."

"Don't listen to her, Charlie, you can trust me," Reza said as he pushed his hips forward and drove himself inside her just a little bit deeper. He pulled his jacket off and began to unbutton his shirt.

"I'll do the other thing now," Charlie said. "I'll do the other thing now and you can come there."

Reza pulled his shirt off and said, "I just want you to get your surprise."

"What is my surprise?"

Reza's hands went up and down her sides, squeezed her waist and caressed her hunches. One hand in the center of her back he pushed her into Genesis's crotch and the woman closed her thighs around Charlie's shoulders. Now he pushed himself inside her and Charlie wailed and kicked her feet.

"You feel it?"

"W–what?"

"Feel it?" Reza growled and pushed himself even deeper.

"Oh gosh, oh gosh," Charlie babbled.

"God, you're so fucking tight," Reza said to himself, then gripped Charlie's narrow waist and drove himself fully and deeply inside her.

Charlie wailed again and hooked her arms around Genesis's thighs. "Oh gosh, oh gosh, that feels so good, oh gosh," she murmured in a husky, quick whisper.

Reza balanced his hips against her, his full-size completely embedded in Charlie's body, she rocked with his movement. "You feel it?"

"Oh, yes, mm … I feel it …"

"What is it?" Resin growled.

"Mmm, you … sh-shaved it …"

"Get up with me," he said now and gripped her arms to pull her upright. She went to her knees, her bare feet folded on either side of his knees. With her back arched and her arms crossed behind her back, she rested her head against Reza's chest. Genesis dropped to her knees in front of her.

Reza said, "That what you wanted?"

"Oh gosh, mm … yes," Charlie said.

Both of Genesis's hands cupped Charlie's meager bosom, pushed them together then ran her extended tongue in zigzags and circles over both Jonny's wife's hardened and extended nipples.

Charlie went wild. Her hips gyrated, and she made pained mouthing faces, like a caught fish laying on a dock.

"It feels so good," Charlie asked. "It feels so good, it's so big, it feels so good …"

"I never shaved for no one."

Charlie said, "It doesn't scratch, it doesn't hurt, it just feels so good …"

Genesis withdrew her suckling mouth, and through narrowed eyes regarded Charlie's pleasure with a sneer on her face. To Reza, she crooned, "Ooh, she gonna come."

"Ah," Charlie gasped. Her breaths had come quicker, and Jonny watched the way her body moved against the huge totem buried up inside her. This was the worst time of the month for her to do this but she couldn't help herself, his little wife getting off on the worst thing she could do right now.

"She is. She's going to come," Reza said, like he was an expert on Jonny's wife. And in a way, he supposed he was, as terrible as that thought may be.

Genesis cupped Charlie's cheeks and kissed her fully on the mouth and Charlie whimpered into it. Her hands came around the woman's back, her pale hand stroking down the tattooed angel wings that covered from shoulder blades to tailbone then grabbed handfuls of her ass. She was sandwiched between two experienced sexual sadists and she surrendered to them. When Genesis withdrew her kiss Charlie cried out with a long, mournful sound of orgasm. Like abounding pleasure ripped through her as she tried to push it away, reluctant to enjoy its awful pleasure. Her wail became a long moan broken up with the sound of sobbing.

She collapsed forward onto Genesis and the woman received her with open arms, hugged around her back and scratched her lightly. Reza did nothing but feed his

enormous hard member into her. He didn't thrust, just stood on his knees with his hands on his hips. Jonny's wife fully impaled.

Before she was fully out of her orgasm, Charlie was already protesting, "Get it out, please, get it out of me. You have to get it out of me …"

As Reza withdrew himself fully, Charlie collapsed forward and Genesis turned and let her fall face first onto the mattress. Charlie grabbed up armfuls of pillow and hid her face. Into them, she moaned, "I shouldn't have done that, oh no, how could I do that …? …"

Reza sat back and lifted up his knees, now he pulled down his pants and threw them on the floor at Jonny's feet. He got up again, straddled his knees on either side of Charlie's. She lay face down on the bed completely naked, her bare ass pointed up at them. Reza slapped it lightly, and he dug his thumbs into the roundest part and pulled her seam wide, exposing her tiny butthole. He lowered his hips by spreading his knees wide, bounced his heavy cock until it settled against her sphincter.

"Oh no, oh wow, okay …" Charlie chanted.

Reza pushed his slippery member slowly inside her and Charlie's legs kicked up, her heels striking Reza's hard ass. He lowered himself more, spread his hands out on either side of her pale body. Then with her flat on the bed and face down, he began to bounce his hips up and down against her, each thrust making her haunches shake. His cock looked enormous going in an out of her pushed-together cheeks The bed got rocking and shaking, the headboard slapping against the wall. Genesis sat herself on the pillows and she gave a mean smile to Jonny. She looked between his legs and nodded her chin to him with a wink. Indicating to him to move the pillow and show her what he had. There was no way he would do that. Wasn't interested in her taking a look at what he had, just opening himself up for ridicule, and he wouldn't do what Charlie didn't want.

His wife lay and took it like a good girl. Occasionally her heels would come up and kick at Reza a little, but she stayed still the whole time, hugging a pillow to her face and whimpering into it as Reza pummeled his huge thing into her bottom.

It didn't take long, it'd been a long and exciting buildup. In just a few minutes, Reza was huffing and puffing, and then very soon after came breathy animal snorts. He ejaculated inside her then, big strong hands grabbing up fistfuls of their bedsheets on either side of his wife, thrusting his thick size into her tiniest space, his balls constricting and emptying their contents.

After his grunting and roaring abated, Reza gripped the base of his cock and unsheathed it from Charlie's anus. It exited with a flatulent belch and stayed open for a long moment until her hips settled forward and her cheeks closed. Reza collapsed on his back next to them on the bed.

Genesis ran circles on Charlie's back until she stirred. When her head lifted from the pillow, Genesis said, "You can't tell me you don't like big dick."

Charlie watched her blankly, her watery eyes blinking. Genesis stood, stepped on either side of Charlie's shoulders, and sat herself down on the same pillow where she lay her head. "I'm not finished yet," she said to her.

# CHAPTER NINE

GENESIS LEANED her back on the headboard and opened her legs wider. Charlie languidly rose from the bed onto her hands and knees. Her lips kissed the woman on her navel, her tongue then running circles around the diamond stud there. The tongue slipped lower, and Charlie buried her face in the woman's sex.

What she did must've been the right thing, because Genesis's head fell back and rested on the wall. Her eyes closed and her mouth fell open and she made soft clicking noises in her throat. Soon Charlie had her shaking, and the woman had two hooped piercings through her dark brown and engorged nipples. They swiveled and shook the longer Charlie used her mouth.

He could hear his wife's breathing between the woman's legs. Wet sounds, coarse and rasping, desperate for air. Her rump tilted higher and Jonny saw between her legs. Her anus had been reddened, and it flexed in and out as she used her mouth. Reza's semen seeped from it and ran down her labia.

Jonny rose from his chair, and this time he left the pillow, tossing it behind him to sit on the seat. He made it to the bed quickly, hunched over, sat on his hip and picked up the T-shirt Charlie's Reza had cleaned himself with. He took it now and dried his wife. He could feel her butthole moving in and out, heaving as her stomach flexed as she tried to breathe with her nose and mouth buried in Genesis's crotch. He dried her good, getting all her folds, making sure that none of Reza's potent seed got inside her.

Over her rump, Jonny watched Genesis's face as she came close to orgasm. Her long fake eyelashes fluttered, and her eyes regarded him. They traveled down between his legs and though he should've covered himself he didn't. He let her take a look for a moment, see the modest tent that his inferior manhood made in the front of his cotton sweatpants. Where the tip crest, the fabric had turned dark from the excitement. When she smiled, he covered it up, ashamed yet aroused.

A whine built in her chest, her breath came faster and she grabbed fistfuls of Charlie's tangled mane, shoved her hips forward and mashed Charlie's face into her sex. She made an unusual sound as she orgasmed, much like a cat, a growling purr that built in her chest then turned to a ravenous mewl.

AN HOUR LATER, Charlie and Jonny were alone in the kitchen.

After Reza had come inside her, and then Charlie used her mouth on Genesis, the three of them had lay on the bed. Reza and Genesis caressed Charlie's body all over. Genesis seemed particularly intrigued by her. Studying her nipples, tugging on them,

kissing them, she really liked her navel, too. The woman seemed to have a thing for tummies, just like she had said. Charlie was shy, watching their hands touch her, then thinking she should return the same favor, she let her fingers stroke over Genesis's latte-colored skin. But soon all their movements slowed, the swiping of their hands took longer moments of rest.

Jonny sat in the dark and watched the three of them as they began to each in turn fall asleep. No one had touched him at all. It wasn't until maybe fifteen minutes they were asleep before his erection finally subsided. Though he wanted to, he refused to pleasure himself. Too easy. Plus, the next time Charlie showed an interest, he didn't want to let her down.

It was sometime after that he himself must've drifted off. Charlie woke him with a gentle kiss on his forehead. When his eyes opened, he saw his wife standing over top of him while he slept in the chair. She was completely bare, smiling at him, then caressing his cheek. She whispered, "I'm hungry."

So, with the two strangers in their lives sleeping in the king-size bed, he stood with his wife—not wearing a thing—by the kitchen table. Their leftovers from dinner were brought out from the fridge and laid out. He ate a cold fried pickle while Charlie stood next to him with a pizza slice in her hand, her second one, chewing and rolling her eyes with pleasure. They were trying to be quiet, so Jonny whispered, "I guess you worked up an appetite."

She ignored the question by saying, "It's really good pizza, isn't it?"

He shrugged, gave her a noncommittal face. It *was* really good pizza but there was no way that he would ever be an Angelo's kind of person. Once Reza was out of their life, they were going to be Domino's people again, no matter how good that tiramisu was.

Charlie held up a can of Coke to her lips, waiting for herself to stop chewing, doing this weird little waiting-dance kind of thing, dipping at the knees and bouncing her head from side to side. Then she swallowed and washed it all down with about a half a can of pop.

He smiled at her, moved closer. He said, "When we started this, you said you didn't want him that way."

"What way?"

"You know what way." He nodded his chin down low with his eyes looking downward. "Back there."

"I know, I didn't. But you know how it is … Things are changing. This situation isn't like it was when it started."

"I'll say."

"We're going to make it work."

He nodded, she was right, and he didn't need to needle her. "Did it hurt? Are you all right?"

"It hurt at first, but it was okay."

"I thought you didn't like it back there."

"I didn't. I don't, I guess. Not really."

"It didn't seem like you didn't like it."

"I don't know what to say, Jonny. I *don't* like it. But it's not *terrible*."

"It's so dirty," he told her.

She nodded, took another bite of her pizza. "I'll tell you one thing for sure: I don't like him ejaculating in there."

"I don't like him ejaculating *anywhere*."

She chuckled a little, covered her mouth before he would see food in her mouth when she smiled.

"I'm glad you think that's funny."

"We are in this *together*, Jonny," she said and put her arm around his shoulder, kissed his neck with pizza scented lips. When she went on her toes to kiss his lips a distinct and wet belch came from her bottom. She thumped down on her heels and their eyes met. She looked ashamed, embarrassed. Her features sagged.

He let her off the hook and smiled a little. "Too much pop?"

"Too much pop," she whispered, and it gave him a warm feeling to see her sweet face smile just a little.

Even though she was completely naked, she took a napkin out of the paper bag that the fried pickles had come in, walked to the wastebasket next to the counter, turned her back to it so she faced him. Then standing there with a pizza slice in one hand, she tucked the other behind her and wiped at her bottom with the napkin. She checked it, shook her head, turned and put her bare toes over the pedal to flip the lid. She dropped the paper in, held it open for a moment longer, took one more bite of the pizza and dropped the crust in as well. When the lid clapped closed and she turned to face him, she slapped her hands together in alternating swipes, dusting off the cornmeal.

When they were close again, he whispered, "You kissed a girl."

Sheepish again, she turned her face away from him. "That was easier to take," he said quietly.

"For you," she said.

"Sorry. Was it hard …?"

She thumped her forehead against his chest. "I don't want to talk about it."

He stayed close with her for a long moment and just felt her breathe. She whispered, "It was nice of him to shave his penis for me, don't you think?"

"He's such a gentleman," Jonny said and rolled his eyes.

She stepped back and gave him a tentative smile. "I thought it was nice."

"It was considerate. And he's not a considerate person."

"Did you hear Genesis call him the devil?"

"I don't think she was kidding."

She peeked to the doorway as if looking to see if they were still alone. She whispered, "His penis does look weird shaved though. The rest of him is so hairy, now he's got this big bare thing hanging there." When she said it she mimicked Reza's big dick by dangling a swaying hand between her legs.

"Are you going to tell him that?"

"No, that wouldn't be nice."

"Maybe *I'll* tell him."

"Jonny, behave."

"What?—he thinks he's the best thing going. He doesn't—"

Charlie ignored him, smiling as he spoke, then padding over to him, getting close and whispering in his ear. "I'm standing here naked and you're talking about Reza."

"Sorry," he whispered back, wondering why he wasn't the one to think of that.

She got close to him again, up near his ear and cupping her hand just to make sure this was only between the two of them. She whispered, "Can I give you a blow job?"

There was an immediate stirring in his pants. His face darted back so his eyes could meet hers. He nodded solemnly, and she smiled. His beautiful wife, standing next to him naked, sacrificing herself before the great landlord demon, opening every orifice she had for him to fill, doing it for them as a couple. He set her on the path, probably for his own enjoyment, and here she was taking up the reins and bringing them together as one again, doing what it took to get their coach back on the track. She was the greatest and most beautiful thing he could imagine.

Charlie seemed excited at the prospect, still grinning broadly, her eyes practically sparkling in the low, dim light. She hopped around him and peeked down through the pass-through to check if the bad people in her bed were still sleeping. Then she came back tiptoeing, rubbing her hands together. She dropped to her knees, and the excitement froze him. He'd been aroused all evening watching that strange woman come into their apartment and dominate his wife, bent her over the couch and lick her anus, make her come and put dildos and vibrators in her. Watched her go down on another woman for the first time, washed her have anal sex with Reza for the first time. The whole while he was ready to explode. Now here he was with the most giving and loving person in his life, the only human being he ever really did give a shit about, the only one that he felt gave back the love that he himself delivered … and he was *scared*. Scared he wouldn't get hard, scared he would let her down yet again. This woman that he won, back when she was in school and he leached computer time for free at the

library, a woman that he barely deserved and bent over backwards to prove himself to. Probably in some sense it was his love for her that put them on the rails to destruction. The desire to make easy money … and that became fraud. Sure, he'd done it for himself, but he'd done it for himself in the sense that it would make him look better to the woman he loved. If he couldn't get hard, what good was he?

Charlie pulled down on the waistband of the sweatpants, got them down mid-thigh, his penis frightened and turtled, his testicles climbed high and protective. A small and meager fleshy offering nestled in wiry pubic hair. So small compared to his wife's dominant master. So small to her dominant master's minions. How could she even like it? Now his hands gripped the edge of the countertop and he thought how terrible it would be if he was small and shriveled like this and just when she wanted it he couldn't get hard. He willed himself, and felt nothing now.

His wife studied what he had, the thing that she'd seen or played with a million times but suddenly now he felt so inadequate. He didn't make as much money as Reza, he wasn't muscular, he wasn't masculine in that way, and he wasn't endowed. He got them in trouble, his deceit had put them in catastrophic debt. And this woman he barely deserved had stood by him. For the first time ever, he wondered if she had made a mistake in doing that.

But his Charlie apparently had no such thoughts, because she smiled at his penis that she looked at point-blank, the thing sticking almost straight out. Then cocked her head and put her mouth over it. The warmth, the wet—it all felt like heaven, but instead of his heart pounding from lust, his heart pounded with worry. He felt the wonderful things she did, felt her tongue slipping up and down the underside, felt the tight suction she formed with her pouting lips. She pulled it back, clamped in the ring of her mouth, teased it, sucked on it. Nothing was happening. Now his upper lip began to sweat.

The more she worked it, the more worried he became. He could feel himself—despite the wonderful things she did—constricting even more. His penis became less pliable, his testicles climbed higher. His brow furrowed, and he sneered, closed his eyes, tilted his chin to the ceiling and squinted his eyes until he saw stars. In the stars he tried to conjure the worst possible images. This morning when his wife had sucked Reza's balls until he came, how she kept his load trapped in his foreskin then peeled it back and put it in her mouth; she'd given a handsome, muscular, and well hung guy a hand job today—this very day she handled another man until he ejaculated; pictured again his frail little wife with her legs together, face down on the bed and hugging a pillow to her face while some half-animal half-man with the hugest cock he'd ever seen shoved it in and out of her bouncing bottom.

That stirred something. He felt a stiffening and although it wasn't in his penis, it was a hard lump somewhere near his prostrate and at least it was *something*.

He could breathe again, he flexed his ass cheeks, tried to use his muscles to pump up what he had. It wasn't working, but it was better than nothing, right? He looked down now and looked at her sweet face, but that was a problem—her brow was bunched with worry. It was bunched because her husband couldn't get hard. Now that mild arousal he felt was challenged and started to shrink away. He was going to let her down again. So he grabbed the sides of her head and gently caressed her, stroked his nails over her sweet scalp, and whispered, "I love you, Charlie."

Charlie sighed and her bobbing and tugging mouth slowed. She pulled it back, stretched his penis out, let it go and it shook and jiggled. She looked up at him and he could see sadness in her eyes. She licked her lips then bit her lower lip.

"Keep going," he told her, "keep going, it's getting there …"

She held his gaze for a moment, and though he knew he was failing her he didn't see that in her eyes. What he saw was endless compassion for him. Sure, he frustrated her today, and she even thumped her little fist on the bed, but that was because she was worried *she* was letting *him* down. They could work this out together when she looked at it this way.

"It's okay," he whispered. "I swear, just keep going."

She stood up and let her naked body rest against him, she kissed at his neck and snuggled her face near his ear. Now her hand came down, and she formed a ring tight ring around where his glans met his shaft. She whispered to him: "I know it works, Jonny. I know it does. We'll figure this out."

"You turn me on so much, Charlie."

"I know I do. You like it, Jonny? Like it when you watch me?"

"I guess I do," he admitted.

"You like watching me get … *fucked*?" This last word was a barely audible whisper, his wife wanting to tease him but still unsure of the bad words.

He moaned a little and leaned his head so that his jaw touched her cheek.

"You like Reza to fuck me with that big, huge cock?" She flicked the ring up and down the flared rim of his cock head.

"I hate it."

"I hate it too, Jonny. I hate it, I hate it when he fucks me with that big thing. I hate that it feels so good …"

Now he groaned again, put his arm around her waist, let his hand dip low, stroked his fingertips over the softness of her mound. She snuggled closer to him.

"Gosh, though, Jonny … He fucks me so good I come …"

He hated that this turned him on. He hated that this man did it to his wife all the time, hated that what she said was true—but mostly he hated that this new revelation was more than dirty talk meant to arouse him, worried that there was a truth in it, that she meant it, meant that it *did* feel really good. Though wasn't he crazy?—of course it felt good, she really did have an orgasm almost every time he put that thing inside her.

"I hate this is working," he sighed. And sure enough it was. More than just a swelling between his legs, there was a growing turgidity in his penis. Charlie noticed it as well, and though he didn't have anywhere near as much as Reza did, she was able to form a fist around what he did have. She looked down at him now, and whispered, "If only you had what Reza had between your legs …"

"Oh shit, Charlie," he sighed and his head fell back. It was so embarrassing that this worked. It was so embarrassing that his wife had figured it all out now, knew that he liked to watch her with another man. A much more dominant and capable man. Why would that turn him on? In his heart, he was a *man*. He was competitive, he was mean, he had a bad temper … He *was* a man. He wanted success, he liked to fuck with people, and he liked to win. He wasn't some low testosterone, meek sort of fellow who wasn't able to please his woman. Before any of this had ever transpired, he pleased Charlie plenty. Sure, he had been her only man ever, but he made her feel good. She was timid at first, didn't really like to have anal sex with him, wasn't a big fan of using her mouth. But they still got it done. They still had a good time between the sheets. As he stiffened further, he realized the changes in the last months. She took anal now, not so willingly, but submitting just the same. And in some sense *liking* it. Oral? Sure. Big, ugly, grotesque horse cock in her mouth? Sure. Come in her mouth? Sure. She'd done it to Demetrius, too. God, these awful thoughts were really working. He grew to hardness in her hand.

She whispered, "If that's what makes it work, Jonny, I guess that's what we'll have to do for now."

"You don't like it?"

"I just want things to be the way they were, when it was just you and me. Remember the fun we used to have, Jonny?"

"I'm sorry, Charlie, I'm sorry how this all turned out, I wish—"

The bathroom door closed.

Charlie stopped. Her hand gripped his erection, practically closing around it. They both looked down at what she held, then up at each other, their eyes darting. They stayed quiet.

"Hold on," she whispered in his ear.

She left him then, let him go, trotted to the pass-through and peeked down. She looked toward him, said, "Reza's in the bathroom."

She came back to him, said, "We should go back down."

"We can finish. Charlie, look, I'm hard …" Though when he looked down he saw that it had already dwindled.

Charlie said, "I don't think we should."

"We're husband and wife, we can do whatever we want. The deal isn't that I can't be with you …"

"I know it's not. I don't think he likes it though,"

"Who cares what he likes. You're my wife."

"He can make things difficult, Jonny. When we get together, it should be when he's not around."

He looked at her sweet face looking at him hopefully, wishing to convey to him the stress it gave her that Reza was awake and around. His erection had failed anyway. Shrunk down again, only half-aroused now.

"It's so unfair."

"I agree, Jonny. All of this is very unfair. But it's the way it is," she said, nodding her head and locking eyes with his. "We can make it work if we're together. Remember."

He picked up her hand and held it between both of his and kissed her fingers. Kissed her engagement ring diamond.

"I have to go, okay, Jonny?" she said.

"Whatever."

"Don't be like that, Jonny. I *have* to go down there."

"Fine. You're right. Go on ahead, I'm going to stand here for a minute."

She looked at him, troubled for a moment, went on her toes and kissed his cheek. "I love you, Jonny."

# CHAPTER TEN

WITH HIS ELBOWS on the counter, watching over the pass-through, he saw Charlie trot down, her pale, slender figure almost luminous in the seeping city-blue lights, and she tiptoed back to the bed and climbed into it, carefully scurrying up to lay next to Genesis. She bunched up a pillow under her head and curled up in a fetal position facing the bathroom door.

From behind that door, the toilet flushed. The line of light at the floor switched off, the door opened, and Reza came out as naked as Charlie. He was a squat, muscular shape in the low light, but you could make out the hair covering his chest and stomach. Between his legs, his shaved genitals were prominent. He used to have long, scraggly pubic hair that hid most of his size; tufts actually growing down the shaft. But now that he was shaved, it did look larger and more intimidating, but strangely *bare*. It seemed it also shaved his scrotum. His genitals looked stark against the rest of his furred body

Reza cocked his head seeing Charlie back in bed. He said, "Where were you?"

"Pizza," Charlie whispered.

Reza had the same thought as Jonny. "Work up an appetite?"

Charlie nodded her head on the pillow.

Reza walked to the bed and climbed up on it, laying next to Charlie, her in between the two of them. With his hand caressing her thigh, he said, "You had quite a workout."

"I did," Charlie agreed.

Reza lay down next to her facing her, his hand stroking over her body.

Jonny hated seeing it and he huffed an exasperated breath, looked away, lifted off the counter and put away the pizza box and the fried pickles, and the tray of tiramisu which they hadn't even touched. Though he wouldn't have minded having a piece but now that Reza was up he'd lost his appetite.

When he came back down to the living area and made his way to the chair still sitting next to the bed, he saw Genesis was awake as well. The arousal he had in the kitchen and that was difficult to provoke had dwindled, but sitting down in the chair now and looking across and seeing his naked wife behind the beautiful, undulating shape of Genesis sparked something inside him again. He brought the pillows to cover.

Genesis and Charlie were talking in low voices but he could make out what they were saying. While they spoke, Reza lay on his side behind Charlie propped up on one elbow. His hand went up and down her leg and would run circles over her belly button. He also bit on her shoulder.

Charlie was saying, "Thank you. You're beautiful, too."

With a handful of Charlie's long, curling locks, Genesis held them to her mouth and nose again and said, "You have the most beautiful hair."

Charlie said sheepishly, “Thank you.”

“I know I’m your first woman.”

Charlie’s eyes darted over Genesis’s face, and she sucked on her lip a little before saying, “Yeah.”

“You like it?”

Charlie squinted and made a funny face. She took the lock of her hair away from Genesis and covered her mouth and nose, her eyes still watching her and blinking. “I don’t know,” she whispered.

“I’m glad I had you. You are quite an experience.”

“I was?”

“You ate me out good.”

At this, Jonny knew Charlie would have gone red if he could see her face. She hid herself away and groaned, turned her face so that it was in the pillow. Genesis took her shoulder and rolled her so that she would look up.

“You have nothing to be bashful about, my sweetheart.”

Behind Charlie, Reza chuckled.

Eyes still on Genesis, Charlie slowly removed the hair and let herself be seen. Her mouth worked around a little then she said, “It was nice.” The word nice was almost inaudible.

“I could tell. It’s nice to hear.”

They still stared at each other for a long moment, their eyes locked on each other. At last Charlie said, “What’s that thing down there?”

Genesis moved higher up the pillow, propped up on an elbow like Reza, the two of them looking down on their prey like experienced predators. “Tell me what thing you mean?”

Charlie’s chin tucked to her chest, and she looked down both their bodies, looking between Genesis legs. “The thing you have there.”

“Touch it.”

Charlie didn’t protest, and though Jonny couldn’t see what her hand did, his wife must have slid up one of Genesis’s thighs because they parted slightly and then she touched her between her legs.

Charlie said, “It’s a diamond.”

“You like it?”

Charlie nodded a little. “But what is it?”

Genesis said, “It is a diamond. It’s pierced through me. Over my clit.”

“Pierced?” Charlie said with a certain distress in her tone.

“A VCH piercing,” Genesis said. “Vertical Clitoral Hood.”

“Why would you do that?”

"Isn't it beautiful?"

Charlie's eyes were downturned and her hand was manipulating something that Jonny couldn't see. He liked to imagine her long, pale fingers teasing the diamond at the apex of the woman's slit. "It is."

Genesis said, "Behind the diamond is a metal bar and on the end of the bar is a round metal bulb." Charlie still played with the piercing but now her eyes moved up to meet Genesis's. Genesis continued, "That bulb presses on my clit, like, all day long."

"All day long?" Charlie gasped, her eyes wide as she imagined what that would be like.

"Gets me off twenty-four-seven."

"It does? Really?"

"You want one?"

Charlie's hand darted back, and she gave a fearful and funny smile. "No way," she gasped.

Genesis made a purring sound, much like a cat enjoyed teasing her prey. "Oh you don't wanna feel good all day long? Standing there at the library, shifting those white thighs from side-to-side? I bet you could make yourself come three times while you was getting paid."

"At work?" Charlie gasped in a high wheeze.

Genesis ran her nails down Charlie's stomach between her legs. Charlie didn't flinch this time, looked down at what the woman did with her hand, parted her legs, even putting one foot flat on the mattress her knee pointed to the ceiling.

"You do have one of the most beautiful pussies I ever seen. You want one, you come to me, I do it for you you won't feel a thing. I do it for free."

Reza groaned at Charlie's shoulder and bit her there. "I'll buy your pussy a diamond," he said.

Charlie smiled, her face held in tense half-mirth, unsure if they were teasing her. "I could never," she said.

Genesis's fingers continued to tease Charlie's folds, and Jonny could hear a stickiness now. "You don't wanna come all day long?"

With his big fingers gripping Charlie's narrow shoulder he turned her over, and said, "She wanted to come all day long, she knows where to find me," and it made Genesis laugh.

Now Charlie lay on her back between the two, her head on the pillow but turned to face Reza. He sneered at her, black eyes twinkling in the dim. They looked at each other for a moment, then Reza reached down between his legs and lifted his heavy, flaccid member and dropped it on to Charlie's thigh. Shaved now, it looked too big to be real, laying over her thigh in a big wrinkled mess, and folded almost in a U-shape, the tip

puckered in a nest of twisted foreskin membranes. All three of them looked at it, this big dark brown thing laying on her pale freckled skin.

Reza said, "You didn't thank me."

"I didn't?"

"No, you didn't, you bad girl."

"Are you sure? I think I did—I meant to say it. I really do appreciate that you did that."

"Show me."

Charlie stayed under his gaze for a second, her top canine scratching again at her pouted lower lip. Then she turned, faced him, put her mouth on his chest and kissed her way down his hard, muscular torso. It bothered Jonny, seeing her do this, engaging in some foreplay, teasing him. Why would she kiss the muscles of his belly when all the man wanted was her mouth on his cock?

With her face buried in his crotch, Genesis curled up behind Charlie, admiring her back again. The point of her finger began to draw lines on Charlie's shoulder blades, swooping arcs that danced in the middle of her back up to her shoulder and down her ribs to her waist. It made Charlie giggle. Genesis did it over and over, and Charlie's legs began to jump because she was ticklish. She turned her face over her shoulder and said to Genesis, "That tickles—what are you doing?"

"You the one that needs angel wings. I want to draw them on you."

Charlie watched over her shoulder at Genesis timid, she said, "I like your tattoos."

"You come see me. I'm a give you my number, you come see me. We'll put a little diamond in your pussy and I'll draw the wings down your back my little angel deserves."

Charlie's eyes went wide, and she visibly shivered. Jonny turned to steel now. Why couldn't his wife be between his legs?

Genesis drew a wing again, on the other side now, and Charlie giggled again, squirmed a little, and Reza pulled her up so she covered his lap, her chest laying across his thighs. She looked up at him and said, "Thank you for doing that. I really appreciate it. When you went deep, your hair really did scratch at me, so thank you."

Reza seemed to smile, his cheeks pulling up and the points of his thick mustache raising. Jonny had seen Reza smile before, he did it quite often, though those times it was more menace than mirth. Sadistic, mean sort of smiles, bordering on a sneer. The smiled he showed Charlie now seemed like something honest. It seemed very strange, and it put a hard lump in Jonny's chest.

Reza's hand tilted up Charlie's chin, her lips parted and the two of them kissed. Their mouths sealed together, their breaths scoring through their noses—a long

lingering kiss, and when they parted, they looked in each other's eyes. Reza said, "You're welcome."

Charlie looked stunned. Caught in his gaze, still looking at him with her lips parted, unsure of the feeling that the kiss had put in her. She blinked a few times, rapidly, her face flinching a little. She licked her lips, and said, "It looks really good," her voice sounding a little weak and shaky.

"You like it?" he asked her.

"I do," Charlie said. She slipped off to his side, her head on his chest, her body curled against him. Genesis joined them. Charlie's hand stroked down his hard stomach and lifted up his penis. It had grown considerably, lengthened but still floppy, she cradled it. "It looks even bigger now."

Jonny watched her face, watched her as she looked with lowered eyes almost in reverence at the masculine thing she held in her pale, feminine grip. Giving him good words about his genitals. Telling him it looked good, telling him how big it was. Different from what she told him in the kitchen. In the kitchen they shared a joke about him. Was she kidding then or was she kidding now? Who was she fooling? In his heart he knew she was truthful with him, but a dark twisted part of him enjoyed considering that she wasn't. What if he was the one that Charlie fooled?

His wife's hand stroked up and down Reza's flopping member. It squished and squirmed in her grip, the ugly end of it puckering and peeling back, Reza's hole winking at Jonny. Genesis began to kiss Reza's chest, starting with his nipple, working down his ribs and over his hard stomach. Reza looked like a barbarian king, laying back with two concubines pleasuring him, both of them laying in the crook of his arm, their bodies pressed against him his muscular arms draped over their backs. He looked like a powerful conqueror painted on an old sword and sorcery novel, all that was missing was his massive two-handed sword, though he had one in symbol. Charlie held it.

Genesis kissed through the scratchy nest of pubic hair that still clung to his hips, kissing Charlie's fingers, Charlie's eyes growing wide at how dirty this was becoming. She gripped Reza's cock by the base tightly, Genesis running her tongue over Charlie's thumb then along the top side of Reza's shaft, then engulfing his covered glans with her open mouth and sucking. Charlie held it still, her eyes glued to the dirty action and she let out a long breathy gasp.

Genesis sucked for a while, and she was quite good at it. Head bobbing up and down, twisting her neck; Reza grew completely hard. When she pulled off, she covered Charlie's hand with her own, guiding it away and Charlie let go, the Latin woman taking over. She gripped Reza now, holding his big sword by the bottom and pointing it toward Charlie's mouth. She looked in Genesis's eyes as she opened it and lowered her mouth, Genesis aiming the big, bulbous end to pass between her teeth.

While Genesis held it, Charlie mimicked her expert moves, using her neck to roll her head up and down, her lips to form a nice tight seal around him. They alternated like that for a while, each taking a turn and holding it for one another.

Charlie was the first one to play with his balls. Getting bold. Her hand went down and lifted them, cradled them, ran her thumb over their shapes. When he was fully rigid, the skin looking tight, Reza groaned and pushed himself higher up the bed twisting at the waist, and finding the box of condoms that lay on the table next to the bed. They were Magnums, the larger ones, the XXLs. He peeled the wrapper and tossed it to the floor. Genesis took it from him and he let her, smiling, knowing what she would do, Jonny imagined. She placed the tip the rubber ring over the tip of his penis and told Charlie to watch what she did. She put her mouth over the condom, her eyes on Charlie's, Charlie watching with great interest. She bobbed her head up and down, pulled back and showed Charlie. She'd pushed the ring of the condom down as deep as she could go. Reza was too big for it to be fully pushed down, though if Genesis did that to him, she'd have the condom snugly in place right down to the base.

Charlie chuckled lightly and used her fingers to finish rolling the ring as far down as it would go. It hurt Jonny to see her having fun. In the kitchen he'd had his chance with her and failed. Now here she was with two people that weren't her husband, sharing in intimate time and getting off on it, having fun and laughing. He was left all alone on the chair to watch. But it shouldn't hurt—if this were the situation they were in, shouldn't he be happy that she was having a good time? There were times recently when this had seemed very dire. His wife seemed to suffer under their brutish landlord. Tonight these two in bed with her seemed intent on giving her pleasure and teaching her some tricks. But with everything that Reza did there was always a hidden ulterior action. Why was she being groomed to do better? How much more but they expect from her?

Reza got up on his knees now and Charlie sat back and then lay down on the bed without having to be asked. She knew she was going to get fucked. She knew that condom was being put on that big dick because he was going to fuck her with it. Charlie almost seemed eager. That hurt his heart as well.

Now with her head and ginger mane spread out around at the foot of the bed, Charlie lay on her back with her knees up and her legs open. Reza got himself where he wanted to be, walking between her open thighs, that huge condom-covered dick wagging back and forth. Charlie put her hands up over her head, one coming down and biting on a finger as she waited, her eyes watching Reza's manhood. He hefted it, slapped lightly on the inside of each of her thighs, and Charlie spread herself wider. He lowered then, nestled the big blunt end with the reservoir tip into his wife's wet and eager folds.

Feeling it there, Charlie gasped. He got down low over top of her with his hands on the mattress under her armpits, and Charlie reached up, hugged his arms and scratched her nails across the muscles. She whispered, "I'm a little sore, can you be careful?"

He didn't answer her, watching her curiously, head tilting from side to side. The fact that he didn't give her a snide comment, some sort of reprimand for even making the request, seemed almost like acquiescence. He was a rigid and abrupt man. He eased himself inside her, and she tilted her chin up, her eyes closed, and she exhaled. Then he was fucking her, feeding that big thing in and out of her, and Jonny swore he *was* being careful. Swore he *was* doing it to her the way she wanted rather than the way he wanted.

Reza studied her face as he fucked her, watching her reactions, slowing his pace, speeding up, almost as if he was feeding off of her reactions. It was more like making love than fucking. But just when Jonny's heart began to seize with a feeling of dread, the night got dirty again. Genesis scratched Reza's back, came around his body, walking on her knees until she was over Charlie's torso. Her back to Reza, she looked down her body as it straddled Charlie's face. She reached down and cupped the back of Charlie's head and brought it up between her legs. She reached over and snatched bundles of bedding and propped Charlie's head so it angled properly yet comfortably. Charlie put her tongue out and ran it along the woman's dark brown slit, flicking then at the bright shining diamond.

"That's it, Charlie, my little angel. Suck on that diamond, suck that diamond good …" She lowered her hips and mashed her sex into Charlie's mouth.

So now here she was, his thin white wife laying on her back, Reza sitting on his heels, holding her legs up with his forearms hooked under her knees, her pretty feet bobbing as he fucked her. In front of him, a muscular Latin woman sat on her face. How was he not going to come tonight? He had his chance and he let Charlie down. While the two of them fucked his wife into wailing ecstasy, got her squeaking and moaning and crying, Genesis swiveling her hips and mashing Charlie's mouth, Jonny couldn't take it anymore. His hand slipped under the pillow, dipped under his waistband and reached down to hold himself. Just the feeling of his own hand made his whole body shake. It only took about ten strokes and he was jumping in his chair, sending out scorching hot jets that squirted in endless pulses. It was intense, his head pounding, his vision blurry as he watched the two of them make his wife come.

He wished she could have seen that … wished she could have seen that, in the end, she did make him come.

# CHAPTER ELEVEN

BEFORE GOING up to the kitchen to make coffee, Jonny stood by the side of the bed and studied the naked bodies strewn over the battleground. Charlie lay upside down on the bed near the center but closer to the foot. She'd curled herself in a fetal position and her long, curly, apricot hair spread out over the bedsheets around her head like a halo. Bright morning light came in from the windows and lit up her highlights in gold. Her soft pink lips puffed with her gentle breaths as she slept. At her back, Genesis had spooned her, grabbing some white bedsheet and wrapping it around Charlie's middle. Her black hair spread out much like Charlie's. Reza lay on the other side of the cuddling girls, proudly spread out on his back and snored. Completely uncovered by bedding, Jonny looked his intimidating body over. All the muscle and all the hair, all the tattoos. That grotesque shaved squirrel laying in a wrinkled heap on his leg. The ruffled membranes of his foreskin looked reddened and swollen; abused probably from the rough anal sex with his wife's tight bottom. There was a little bright red spotting on the sheets and he worried that it might be from Charlie.

Now he was in the kitchen standing next to the expensive Italian espresso maker that Reza had brought into their home. It hissed and gurgled, and he rubbed viciously at his face with his hands. His clothing was fresh and new, having had to change after he'd finally released himself inside his sweatpants. The volume had been staggering. He rushed into the bathroom while the three of them were still engaged in their sexual activity and felt his hot liquid turning cold as it dribbled down his legs all the way to his ankles. But he was comfortable now in new cotton clothing, standing barefoot and wondering why such a horrid display that he witnessed last night was somehow acceptable; somehow arousing.

Just then, through the pass-through, he saw that ginger mane pop up, then his wife's bare, naked body getting off the bed and trotting to the bathroom. She cupped her bottom with both her hands, bumping the door open with her shoulder then turning to close it. He saw a pained expression. His head rolled on his shoulders, and he worried for her.

While the other two slept, he decided he would go to her and share some of that intimacy the two of them had in the kitchen in the middle of the night, sharing their pizza and leftovers and being a fun little married couple again, before those demons awoke. He trotted down the stairs and across the foot of the bed, moving quietly, watching the two naked sleeping figures on the bed. He made it to the door and tapped on it gently.

Charlie's soft voice from behind: "Go away."

"It's me," he whispered, running his fingertips in zigzagging lines across the door, hoping she would open it for him, but knowing she wouldn't. The bathroom was Charlie's private space, and she didn't share.

When the door lever turned, he was stunned. He stepped back, frankly a little overwhelmed with disbelief. Charlie was there peeping through the gap, her face worried. "Come in, come in," she whispered. He slipped inside with her.

The two of them alone in the bathroom, he put his arms out, and she cuddled up against his chest. He hugged her. "Are you okay?" She shook her head no against his chest. "What's wrong?"

She stepped out of his embrace, hugging her arms around her chest and dipping slightly at the knees. She said, "My butt hurts so bad, so bad."

"It does?"

"Jonny, I think he damaged it. Will you take a look?"

His heart went out to her, she wasn't joking, she wasn't trying to be funny, she was upset. "Yeah, sure, I'll take a look." He moved to the toilet seat and sat down on the closed lid. Charlie turned her back to him, sidestepped to his right side so that the lights above the vanity would shine on her.

On her tiptoes, she jutted her behind toward him. He opened her cheeks, lifted them with his thumbs and spread her wider.

"Ow, ow, Jonny, careful …"

"I'm sorry, I'm being careful ..."

"I told him he was too big," Charlie whispered into the shower.

Her usually pink anus looked a little red, and he imagined it must be sore, but there was no damage. There were no signs of blood, no signs of injury really, but he guessed she would have difficulty sitting down today.

"It looks okay, Charlie. I'm serious, it doesn't look bad."

"Are you sure?"

"I think it just hurts, Charlie. I know it does, I know it must, but it looks okay back here. Want me to put some cream on it?"

She thought about it a moment. "Yes."

He leaned to the side and pulled open the top drawer, found some topical ointment. With a pearl-sized dollop on the tip of his finger he massaged it into her little rosebud. She jumped at its cold feel.

"How's that?" he asked her.

"Better," she said.

He still caressed her gently, saying, "You're just going to have to take it easy today. Maybe we could—"

There was a knock at the apartment door.

Together they both sighed in exasperation, Charlie saying, “Who's that?” And Jonny saying, “What now?”

Their eyes met each other, and they both gave a little laugh. Jonny said, “Let Reza get it, it’s got to be one of his dumb friends.”

“I hope not,” Charlie said, frowning a little.

The knock came again. It was a little timid, a little soft for one of Reza’s friends, who were usually fighters from the gym or street toughs.

Jonny stood up and kissed Charlie’s shoulder. She lay her cheek on her collar and watched him do it. He kissed her forehead next. “Hold on,” he told her. He opened the door a crack and saw Reza sitting up in bed, Genesis still lay on her side but she was stirring.

He said to him, “Can you get that?”

Reza stretched, scratched at his chest. He said, “What day is it?”

“It’s Saturday. Saturday morning.”

“Shoot,” Reza said then yawned. “I think it’s for you.”

“What do you mean?”

Now he scratched his balls. “I think it might be Charlie’s mother.”

Every bit of his insides felt like they had just fallen down off a ladder, suspended from impact at the last moment by a twanging and straining bungee cord. His knees went watery, and he felt like his bladder wanted to release. His guts snapped upright again. “It’s *who*?”

“Charlie’s mother’s coming on Saturday to stay. I forgot to tell you, I guess.”

“Who is it? Who’s here?” Charlie asked behind him as she brushed her teeth, not hearing a single thing Reza had said to him. Jonny’s whole body went rigid. Charlie was going to lose her mind.

CHARLIE FELL to her knees when he told her. Her face blank, empty, distant; devoid. She looked awed, like she stood at the edge of the Grand Canyon witnessing its expansive endlessness, but looming in the distance above it all, billowing thunderheads, churning storm clouds; the force of a destructive hurricane gusting her way.

“Charlie? Charlie? ...” He went to his knees before her, gripped her thin, bare arms. Her body was lifeless, he felt nothing in her limbs but tension.

“Easy, easy, Charlie …” he said, and he guided her to sit down on her heels, put her back against the cupboards under the sink. He snatched down a towel hanging over the shower rod and put it around her shoulders, backing out of the bathroom and watching her.

At the foot of the bed now, he turned to Reza who was pulling his pants on, tucking his heavy manhood in the open V of his pants.

"Reza!" he hissed. "Reza? ... Look at me," he said steadily.

Reza's eyes came up to look at him coolly.

"Reza, I'm not joking around here. This is serious. Are you kidding?"

The knock came at the door again.

"Look, what do you want from me?—she called, and no one was here."

"No one was here?"

"Charlie was at work—"

"No one was here? Reza, I'm *always* here. Are you serious? You did this on purpose?" He felt his hands shaking with rage now.

"Are you going to get the door, Jonny?" Reza said, shrugging his shirt over his shoulders and pushing his arms through the sleeves. The two of them locked eyes and Jonny had to face reality. Reza adjusted his shirt, the gaps between buttons gaping from the way his muscles pressed against the fabric. He was the same height as Jonny but had maybe sixty pounds on him or more. All muscle. Maybe he wasn't ready to fight in the ring against other professionals, but he was assuredly man enough to end Jonny's life in a matter of seconds. Jonny and Charlie owed him money. A lot of money. They were powerless before him. He owned them in every way. He fucked his wife right in front of him. Came in her mouth. Had done so much, Jonny feared his wife was starting to enjoy it. At one time she was disgusted, but now it had changed. He was like a specimen on examination board, arms and legs outstretched to their furthest points, pins pressed through them.

"What are we going to do?" Jonny said in a weak voice, everything in him holding on to what little masculinity he had before this man, not showing him fear or worry but submitting just the same.

"I think you should start cleaning this place up," Reza said with raised eyebrows. He looked around him and so did Jonny. On the far side of the bed Genesis had squeezed her curvy body into the tight pink thing that she came in. Her shoes were scattered on the floor. Next to the bed, in the space between the bathroom and the closet door, a Magnum XXL condom lay in a wriggling sloughed snakeskin, its reservoir tip field with pearly cream and much of the shaft as well. On the coffee table: a bong, a bottle of wine, four glasses. Charlie's mother would kill her if she knew she had drank alcohol. And it didn't end there. Genesis's pink purse lay on its side, a dildo spilling out. There was a silver vibrator on the couch. A strap-on harness laying on the floor by the side table. Jonny was sure his heart had stopped beating. Everything in him was empty.

The bathroom door burst open and Charlie stumbled out. She had a big Dominican Republic beach towel wrapped around her shoulders like a shroud. She padded in with her bare legs and bare feet right up to Jonny. “Is it true ...? Is it true? Jonny ...”

“I think it is.”

Another knock at the door, still gentle but louder now.

Charlie’s eyes brimmed with tears and her lips formed a trembling ring until she sucked them in her mouth. She turned and hobbled to Reza. Her bare hands clutched the lapels of his suit jacket that he’d just put on. Shaking her head and looking in his eyes, she babbled: “You don’t even know ... You don’t even know ... You don’t even know ...”

Reza closed his hands over hers and gave her a stern face. When her trembling stopped, and she seems steadied, Reza flicked his chin to Genesis, saying, “Clean up.”

Genesis did so immediately, going to the coffee table bending and thrusting things into her big bag.

Charlie was still frightened, but in a more controlled tone, she said, “You don’t even understand, Reza. You don’t know what you brought here. You don't know what you're doing to me.” She shook her head idly, struggling for words. Then looking to Genesis, she said, “You can’t be here wearing that.” Still struggling for words, she closed her mouth firm, and hung her head low.

Reza lifted her chin so she looked in his eyes again. He said, “Me fucking you doesn’t seem to be the incentive Jonny needs. I worry he likes watching me do it to you. You ever think that? This is incentive. Jonny is weak. I told you. Some men need strong women. Not me, but Jonny does for sure.”

Another knock at the door, this time much louder. If Charlie’s father was here, there was a good chance all of them may end up dead this afternoon. It literally felt the temperature of ice traveling from his heart down through his fingers and his scrotum turned to a raisin.

Reza looked to him and said, “Go get the door, Jonny. We’ll take care of down here.”

Jonny wanted to move to the door but was still frozen. His body was rigid, and he watched Reza as he hypnotized his wife, talking directly through her eyes.

“You’re not strong enough. You have to rule him or he goes stray. This is tough love, only I don’t love Jonny. I care about *you*. I always said that. If you believe in him, he needs to see the big picture, we thought he was getting it but I think your perverted husband is only focused on my big cock going into you.” He glanced up and saw Jonny still standing there. “Jonny, you still here?—go get the fucking door.”

IN THE BRIEF MOMENT—THAT seemed to last an hour—before Jonny opened the apartment door, standing with weight forward on one foot, hand resting on the lever, he prayed this was all still some mean ruse developed on the fly by Reza. He gulped a breath, opened the door.

It was no ruse.

On their threshold was Charlie's mother. A modest, steely eyed woman in her fifties. Mother of eight children, and who knows how many animals she'd birthed by hand; she was hard and intolerant of nonsense. She wore simple clothes; her silvering red hair pulled back from her face and tied in a bun; the sides clipped in place with bobby pins. Clothing was simple; clean and pressed, and devoid of frills. On the floor at her side was a worn suitcase.

With careful control, and without stuttering or shaky voice he managed: "Hello. Uh, hello, Mrs. Shooter."

"Good morning, Jonny. I hope I didn't wake you," she said with no expression.

"Wake me? Oh no, Mrs. Shooter," he glanced down, realizing his attire did not look ready to receive guests, and wasn't she, after all, invited? Brain firing into salvation mode, he brightened, politely asked her: "Please, come in." When she nodded, he dipped and grabbed her suitcase, saying, "Let me get your bag for you—we're awake, we're up, please, come in, have a seat here at the kitchen table. With her bag in hand he stood at the top of the stairs that led down to the living area, obstructing her view of whatever may be transpiring there.

"Have a seat, please. Have a seat there at the table," he said nodding with his chin. "Do you want a cup of tea? Can I make you some tea? Coffee? How was your trip?" With a glance over his shoulder, he saw bodies moving quickly in the living area, the three of them working silently.

Charlie's mother said, "It was fine, Jonny. Thank you for letting me stay." She moved to the kitchen table and sat down on one of the chairs. "Charlie's here?"

"She's here," Jonny said, another furtive glance over his shoulder before he stepped down backwards, leaving the kitchen and blocking the view with her suitcase pressed to his stomach. "I'll just get her."

But when he turned, Reza was there. Nonplussed, arrogant smile, motioning for Jonny to return to the kitchen. He saw Charlie and Genesis coming as well. Genesis looked grim, and Charlie looked grimmer, her lips pressed to a flat line and turned down in the corners. She looked like she might be sick.

"What's going on? Did you—"

Reza gave a quick, aggravated shake of his head, frowned and nodded for Jonny to get up the stairs ahead of him, they were all coming up.

Back in the kitchen, Charlie's mother rose from her chair, seeing people filing up the stairs. Past Reza, Jonny could see Genesis wearing one of Charlie's winter overcoats. Held to her chest was her pink leather purse, stuffed with her goodies, closed at the top but almost bulging back open again.

Reza grunted to him, "Get the door, Jonny." It made him stumble backward, and he dropped the suitcase, fumbling around before he managed to get his hand on the lever to the apartment door and open it. Charlie's mother stepped forward as if she were to greet them all, but Reza hustled Genesis out into the hall. He said, "I'll catch up with you at the office later," took the door from Jonny and closed it behind her. Jonny looked over his shoulder to see Charlie's mother with a bewildered look on her face.

She said, "It's warm out for that overcoat."

"She's ... She works—"

It didn't matter what lie he was going to come up with on the spot because now Charlie was at the top of the stairs and the two women, mother and daughter, met eyes. Charlie gave a slight curtsy and lowered her gaze.

"Come here, Charlie," her mother said.

Charlie bit her lower lip, her hands clutched together in front of her, her posture slumped. She'd put on clothing, wearing a simple gray dress now, buttoned to her neck. The two women came together, Charlie's mother putting her arms around her daughter's back and holding her gently against her chest.

"How was your trip?" Charlie asked.

"It was all right, but you know how I feel about the city."

"I know, Mama," Charlie said.

Reza looked to Jonny, shook his head as if he expected something from him, then interrupted. "Sorry we weren't ready for you, Jonny called a meeting and it went late."

Still holding Charlie, Charlie's mother said "Were you the man I spoke to on the phone?"

"I am."

"And you work for Jonny?"

"With Jonny, I suppose." He smirked then, a mean little sparkle in his eyes. "We have contracts together."

Charlie's mother asked "You're business partners?"

Reza chuckled lightly, and said, "We *are* bound together. That's for sure. Wouldn't you say so, Jonny?"

Now Jonny did stammer. "I ... We—"

Reza rolled his eyes, interrupted, saying, "Why don't the three of you head down to the couch and catch up, and I'll give you some space."

# CHAPTER TWELVE

CHARLIE MADE a pot of tea and she and Jonny and her mother sat in the living room. Jonny and Charlie on the couch facing her mother who sat in the same chair Reza used last night as he watched Genesis do awful things to this woman's daughter. They exchanged niceties, her mother did tell her of the trip from Kentucky to the city, told them of all the vulgarities she witnessed on the way. Charlie told her how well things were going at the library. Reza loomed in the kitchen, making himself an espresso, and definitely trying to overhear what was said.

When the pleasant talk was over, Charlie's mother leaned forward and Jonny realized she was about to get to the point. His hand shook, and he sat the cup onto the table.

With her fingers woven together, the sober woman lowered her eyes and prepared herself. When she looked up again, she looked around the apartment, gave a soft and silent sigh and said, "I'm glad to see that you're doing well. I wouldn't come to you like this if I didn't have to."

Charlie said, "Is something wrong?"

After another sigh, Charlie's mother said, "If it weren't for your letter I would never ask."

"What letter?" Jonny asked.

Charlie's mother said, "Charlie writes. She's very proud of you, Jonny. I can see why. I'm glad for your recent successes."

Something warm bumped his cold hand. He looked down and saw Charlie reaching to hold his. He hooked his fingers around hers and she gripped him. Charlie had written her mother that her husband was a big success now. And he supposed she told him about all the things that they were buying. The big TV, the big king-size bed, going out for dinner, all the grand things that were happening around here. Truth was he wasn't responsible for any of it. He'd only brought the bad. The luxuries in their life were ones that Charlie had earned. Earned on her back, the proverbial money laid out on the dresser when Reza was done. And somehow his beautiful and loving wife had twisted that into Jonny's merit. That was how much she believed in him. But a cold ball of dread formed just behind his breastbone. Maybe it was just hope. That was what Charlie *hoped*. It was what she hoped her husband could provide. And now she was lying and telling her mother things she wished were true. She had tangible evidence to show; Reza provided those things, and they existed in their life now …

He didn't know if he should laugh or cry, embrace her and tell her how much he loved her, or fall before her and ask for her forgiveness.

Mrs. Shooter continued: “Your father is too proud to ask. And it pains me to go behind his back like this, but we do need help. And you're family. We would take you in in a heartbeat if you ever went astray.”

“What kind of trouble?” Charlie gasped, and her hand on his clutched a painful grip.

“Your father would kill me if he heard me say this, but we need your help. You know your Papa is as strong as a bull, but he isn’t the young man he used to be. He fell off the baler—”

“Oh no, Mama, is he okay?” Charlie whined, her face pinched with fright.

“He’s all right, Charlie. He’s all right. I told you he’s a tough one and you know it. Threw out his back. We got the boys on all the other chores, but we’re getting behind.”

“Is Papa hurting?”

Her mother said, “Not so he’d let you know. Out there all day just the same. Only he can’t do it as quick as he used to. I wanted to get some hands from the Work Center come and lend help, he won’t let me. Only he won’t let me because we can’t afford it. Wrong time of the year if you don’t mind me saying.” At this, she lowered her eyes shamefully.

“But what can we do?” Charlie asked, and Jonny wondered if she didn’t see that this was about money. Perhaps she thought her mama was going to ask Jonny to come down and pitch in, fix roofs, bale hay or whatever, put horseshoes on horses or something. There wasn’t anything they could do but one thing. At least, so her mother thought.

Mrs. Shooter’s eyes raised up again, she said, “I was hoping you could help out. Now you know I hate to come and do this sort of thing. And I wouldn’t ask if it wasn’t necessary. Charlie, I don’t want to see your Papa work himself into the grave just to prove he can.”

Charlie said, “I don’t want that either.”

Her mama continued, “If I didn’t get your letter, you saying how your family is doing well now, I wouldn’t come and ask.”

Charlie had caught on. “How much, Mama?”

With difficulty, her mother answered: “A few thousand, Charlie. Not more than ten. And I swear to the Lord, come the end of the season you get it back plus interest.”

Charlie’s head swiveled to face his, and they looked at one another. Charlie’s mouth was formed in a sorrowful O shape, her eyes trembling and wet.

But what could they do? They had no money to give. They had nothing to hock. All these trappings that Charlie had bragged to her mother about—so unlike his modest wife—weren’t theirs. And now, despite his wife’s improper but hopeful boast, he was

going to let her down again. Their tough mother came to him for money thinking he had it, and now she would know he didn't. He was a liar. Her daughter was a liar.

"Excuse me a moment," he said, cleared his throat, "more tea?"

Not waiting for an answer, he stepped around the coffee table and made his way to the kitchen, heard Charlie whispering his name behind him but didn't turn around.

"REZA..."

With a smirk, "What is it, Jonny?"

"You heard?"

"A little," he said, smirk still there, now adding a shrug.

"I need help."

"Already? I knew it was going to go this way, just didn't know it was going to be so soon."

"It was going to go this way how?"

"How's that game coming, Jonny? You make a million dollars yet?"

"It's only been a few weeks, you know that."

"I'm just surprised you can't see yet that it doesn't matter if it's going to be a couple weeks or a couple years. You're going to keep coming to me and there's only one thing you can offer that I want."

"I just need to know if you can help me."

"What did I tell you, Jonny? Anything you need. We just turn your dollars into days. Charlie's days."

"That's fine. You know that's fine. You don't need to rub it in. It's temporary. Mrs. Shooter'll pay us back."

Reza nudged his chin toward the steps, indicating for Jonny to get back down there. He followed behind. As Jonny took his spot sitting across from Charlie's mother again, Charlie searched for his hand and squeezed it. Her warm hand had turned cold. Reza came around and took the chair next to Mrs. Shooter.

"I handle the banking for Jonny's company. I know this is a sensitive issue, so I'm just going to say something and you're not going to respond. We're going to get this done quick and we're not gonna talk about it anymore. I respect your pride. I'm going to issue a check that comes from one of Jonny's companies. It's a check for fifteen-thousand."

Charlie's mother's mouth opened as if to say something then she closed it.

"There is one important stipulation. Jonny wants you to know that you're family. The only way you can take it is if it doesn't come back. That's your daughter sitting next to him on the couch."

"Doesn't come back?" Charlie's mother asked. Just like her daughter, needing things clarified all the time. Only Charlie's mother held Reza's gaze with a stern expression.

"Jonny's money is Charlie's money. Charlie's money is your money. Charlie does a lot for Jonny, a lot more than she might even tell you." And then with that loaded statement filled with allusion, he smiled. "Where are you staying?"

"I stay on the couch when I'm here."

"Not anymore. You ever stayed at the Four Seasons?"

Charlie's mother kept his gaze still, face expressionless. She shook her head no.

"Well, it'll change your opinion of the city. I'm a have one of the company cars come by, take you there get you settled. You can wash up, meet these two for some lunch. I'll phone around and make sure your problem is taken care of."

Charlie's mother listened, her stoic face giving away a certain discomfort. Turning away from Reza, she faced Jonny and Charlie. Eyes moving to Charlie, she whispered, "I *have* to pay it back."

Charlie shook her head no. Charlie was the one who'd be paying it back.

Reza said, "A deal's a deal, Mrs. Shooter."

All four of them sat silently for a long moment, the room quiet. Charlie's mother's eyes traveled from Charlie to Jonny to Reza back to her daughter. Eventually she nodded. "Thank you," she said.

AFTER THEY FINISHED THEIR TEA, making awkward small talk and enduring even more awkward silences, Reza called for Tate on his phone. Jonny stood with Reza in the living area while Charlie and her mother talked quietly in the kitchen. Jonny looked around. The bed had been made, all the evidence that had been left was cleared. But why had Reza let them come so close to calamity? Was it only so that he could be the hero—he could be the one to save Charlie's mother?

He asked: "Did Mrs. Shooter say she was coming to borrow money?"

Reza said, "Doesn't she seem too proud to do that?"

He nodded. "Why wouldn't you just tell us she was coming?"

"To fuck with you."

Jonny thought about it, his tongue working around the inside of his mouth. He said, "You can fuck with me all you want but don't ever fuck with Charlie or her mother."

"Or what?"

"Just don't."

Tate came then, walking into the kitchen and picking up Charlie's mother's suitcase. Jonny looked up there, saw his lovely wife standing with her mother. Her mother shook Tate's hand, smiled at him. Handsome Tate. The man who just yesterday her sweet and innocent daughter jerked off into her T-shirt in the front seat of the very same car you were going to be driven to The Four Seasons in. The fact that his mother-in-law was somehow dragged into Reza's disgusting game sickened him. Frightened him too, knowing all the ways that this could go wrong.

Charlie kissed her mother's cheeks, put hers out to be kissed. She said bye, Tate winked at her and escorted her mother down the hall to the elevators.

When the door was closed, Charlie thumped her head on it, then her weight fell forward and she slumped. Jonny went to her.

In his arms, she crumpled, curled so that her cheek pressed his chest.

She whispered, "Not my mother. He can't do things with my mother."

"He doesn't want to do things with your mother, Charlie, he—"

"Not those things, Jonny," she moaned. No, he knew not those things. Charlie's mother was a hard-nosed woman.

"I know, Charlie. I didn't mean—"

"I'm so ashamed. I'm so ashamed that my mother stepped foot in this den that I've created. This den of *iniquity* …"

"Don't talk like that, Charlie. It's all right. We'll take care of it."

With her head resting on his chest, he saw her blinking eyes look across the living room, seeing Reza there. She let him go, trotted down the steps, and for a moment he thought she would strike their landlord. Instead, she stumbled to his feet and got on her knees.

"Please, Reza. Not my mother. Don't make her part of this. I'm begging you."

"You're the one that made her part of this, Charlie. You write to her?"

"So what if I did? I didn't see what would happen."

Reza gestured for her to get up, and she did. She stood weakly before him, her chin tilted up so she could look in his eyes. Now she said, "I can't do this anymore."

"Then pay me what you owe me."

"I can't do it. But I will. I know what I agreed to."

"Then what's there to talk about? We just keep on keeping on."

Charlie rested her hands on his muscular chest then they slowly closed around the fabric and she held him. "Can we have *more* money?"

It made him grin broadly. His eyes sparkled and the pointed tips of his mustache raised like snakes fangs. "*More* money?"

"Jonny needs help. I want him to have help."

Jonny moaned, “Charlie ...”

Reza said, “What kind of help?”

“He needs help. People to code or whatever. People to help finish the game ...”

Reza nodded slowly. He said, “I like it. Jonny, tell me more.”

Jonny stepped down and joined them in the living room. His knees were weak, his vision a little hazy. He turned around a chair and sat down. “Charlie, don’t do this.”

Still holding onto Reza, she turned and looked at him over her shoulder. “It’s not more than what I'm already doing, Jonny. I’m gambling on you, but, baby, you’re my sure thing. It’s more money to owe him, but you’ll finish faster. You’ll finish and you’ll show him. And then ... It will all be over.”

“How much you need?” Reza asked, his voice low and gravelly.

Jonny sighed. After a long hesitation, he answered. “Two guys, maybe three.”

Reza thought about it, stroked Charlie’s hair while he did. Then he patted her on the bottom and motioned for her to turn around, holding out a hand to indicate her to the couch. Charlie sat down where last night Genesis had put her tongue up her anus, folded her hands in her lap and watched. Reza sat in the chair opposite Jonny, laced his fingers together, the two points of his index fingers under his chin. He breathed for a long while watching Jonny. He said, “Two guys. No more than 20K a month. I get ten percent of your game.”

“Ten percent? No way.”

“No way? That’s fine, Jonny. We’ll just keep on keeping on.”

“Five percent,” Jonny said.

“Ten percent, Jonny. Not negotiable.”

“That’s too much, Reza.”

“Then do it alone, take a year, take as long as you want. Six months my new place will be built, who knows where my relationship with your wife will be then. I can tell you right now, you’re still working on your dumb game six months from now she’s going to be moving in with me, much as she loves you. That’s how it’ll start. *I’m moving in with Reza, Jonny, just until you get your game done. It’ll give you more time to work, we’ll both be out of your hair, Jonny, I love you, kiss-kiss.* Then without you around, me fucking those screams out of her every night, next you’ll hear from her is divorce papers in the mail.”

“That’s ridiculous,” Charlie said.

“We’ll see if it is.”

“Can I think about it?” Jonny said—as soon as the words left his mouth knowing that he just exposed his throat to this predator.

Reza smiled. “Take as long as you want, Jonny. Take the whole six months. I’m having a great time. And your wife might complain to you behind my back, but she’s loving every minute between my bedsheets.”

Jonny hoped that Charlie would protest, but she merely lowered her eyes.

He said, “I have to get out of here. I haven’t been outside in days. I just have to get out of here …”

Charlie stood up, whispered his name, “Jonny … Jonny, let me come with you.”

He looked at her, the most important thing he had, the only thing of value. He nodded his head rapidly and held his hand out to her and she took it.

# CHAPTER THIRTEEN

TOGETHER THEY WANDERED the city streets for a while. Not sure how long, more than half an hour. Nothing was said, but they stayed close together. He wasn't mad at her, she wasn't mad at him, both of them just needed to do a lot of thinking. They ended up at the city museum and neither of them had to ask—they mounted the marble steps, paid the twenty bucks each to get in (why not, these days they always seemed to have pocket money), and wandered the halls of displays from ancient Rome. Still wordless, Charlie took his hand, and they stopped at every diorama to examine the ancient artifacts. One time she even kissed his shoulder then rested her cheek there.

Jonny's actions had created a real hydra. An impossibly complex situation. The more he struggled, the more Charlie struggled, the more they became stuck. There was a way out, he knew there was, but they wedged themselves very tightly in Reza's pronged trap. Somehow, he would get them out.

Charlie's mother hated cell phones, didn't have one, but she called from the hotel room to ask them to have a late lunch with her. Charlie let his hand go, wandered to where it was quiet and she wouldn't bother anyone with her talking. Jonny stood under a marble statue of Alexander the Great and watched her with his hands in his pockets from a distance. Leaning against the wall, her face hidden under her mane of pale ginger hair, one hand cupped over the ear on the opposite side of the phone. She closed off the call and rejoined him.

He asked her, "What did she think of the room?" It was all he could think of about Charlie's mother right now. Experiencing the luxuries of life, thinking it was Jonny's success, not knowing it was Reza's money earned by her daughter's submissive sexual acts.

Charlie answered, "She said it was … *opulent*." And with no further explanation, Jonny knew coming from that simple woman the word opulent wasn't a compliment. It was a castigation of sorts. But despite that, he got a glimpse of the happiness those luxuries would give his wife if he were to provide them.

At their late lunch, being seated after two-thirty in the hotel's ground floor Michelin-star restaurant that looked out onto bustling Frobisher Avenue, Charlie elaborated to her mother Jonny's recent success. She outlined all the hard work he'd done, all that true, talked about the sacrifices he made, the hours he kept, his dedication. Again, all true. Her smile though, seemed to be brought by the reward that came with Jonny's effort. That was a lie. For now. And that was Jonny's dilemma. Was Charlie's … *effervescence* … provoked by the trappings of success or provoked by her admiration for her husband's dedication? He'd like to think she recognized how he laid it on the line to save her, and then a darker part of him thought there was an even darker part of her

that liked spending Reza's money. She still kept those shoes, and one night wore them with nothing else while in bed with Reza. Reza asked her to do it, and she complied—Jonny carefully measuring her compliance, trying to gauge what it would mean. And there was a frightening possibility that it could be both. She could love Jonny and love how he broke his back for her, and she could also at the same time love the gifts she received from their menacing landlord. And with disgusting certitude he realized she might like his other gifts. Not just his size, but his mastery over her orgasm.

Charlie's mother was happy for her daughter, but there was a wariness there. She wasn't a stupid woman, and she must sense danger from Reza. But in a way, now she was on his hook, too. Fifteen-thousand dollars in her pocket book—her showing them that she received the money, a check delivered to her hotel room while Jonny and Charlie had wandered the museum. Now, this tough farmer wouldn't spread her legs for that man in a million years, but Reza'd found a way to make her submit in another way.

They had a fantastic lunch together—at least the food was good. Club sandwiches, Waldorf salad, iced tea and coffee, apple pie for dessert. Jonny stayed silent while Charlie's mother filled her daughter in on all she was missing back at the Shooter compound. Jonny twisted his cloth napkin into a tight knot without realizing, then hid it away, worried he would get in trouble. Worried the knot was so tight the busboy couldn't untie it. The whole while he sat and listened, the food he'd eaten became heavier and heavier, condensing to the weight of liquid metal in his stomach. When Charlie happily paid for the meal with Reza's credit card, he thought it might all come back up again.

THEY WALKED BACK to the apartment from The Four Seasons hand-in-hand. Silent again, and despite the dread—the swaying anvil held over their heads by a fraying rope—he found a sense of warmth and togetherness with his wife.

It was just after five o'clock that they made it back and found themselves alone in the apartment. Which was fine with Jonny. Better than fine. If only this were the way it always was. Money in the bank, work to do on his computer, Charlie by his side, the two of them alone in the place where they lived. Someday it would be like that, someday they would travel the length of this disastrous ellipse and find themselves back at the start and in a much better position.

Shoes off and enjoying the silence of their empty abode, they both came and flopped down on the couch. He looked across the room as Charlie lay against his side and rested

her head on his chest, looked at his workstation, its blank gray eyes. He needed to light those eyes up, make some magic, finish their contract with their landlord.

They saw something together, ignored it together …

Dead center on the king-size bed sat a small gift-wrapped box. Vibrant turquoise paper and a bright blue ribbon crossing it with an elaborate bundled bow atop. They ignored it, but its presence got Jonny chewing the inside of his mouth. What now?

Charlie's phone rang, and she withdrew it from the pocket of her simple gray farm dress she put on because her mother had arrived. Looked at the screen, and Jonny saw the call came from Reza. She sat upright, and he rested the palm of his hand in the center of her back as she answered.

"Yeah … Hi … Uh-huh, we did …"

Jonny rubbed his hand in a circle.

"We had lunch. We … Oh yeah? … She did … Yeah, she got it. She showed us."

Jonny rolled his eyes, kept his hand moving in that easy circle and feeling her wonderful and slim body under his hand.

"Yeah, I see it … huh? … I will … Where are you? … What time? … Uh-huh …"

Now she stood up, and Jonny rested his hand on his thigh. She walked away from him, her feet moving carefully around the furniture, moved to the bed and sat herself down on it.

"Yes. I know. It's not … I know that … I do … What? … You know I do … uh-huh, yeah …"

Her free hand reached to the side and brought the box to her lap. While she continued with her grunts of affirmation, her submissive speech to their dominant master, she undid the bow at the top and the ribbon wrapping the box fell away. She lifted the lid.

"It's what? … What's that? … Okay …"

She reached in and pulled out a sheet of paper pinched between thumb and forefinger. "Uh-huh, Yes, I'm reading it … Hold on …" Charlie read the paper while her feet gently kicked at the side of the bed. "Oh," was what she said as she set the paper back down.

Her face showed worry, and she averted her eyes from Jonny. She ran a hand through her shaggy hair while the box still sat on her lap. "Tell me again … How much … Yes, I know, I read it … I just don't understand …" She shook her head now and rolled her eyes. "I can read, you know I can read."

Now Jonny rolled *his* eyes and looked away. The dread had formed again, churning that liquid metal that still sat in his stomach and condensing it to the size and hardness of a cannonball.

"Yes. I know. I'll tell him … No, I know … I *know* that, I'll tell him. Bye." She closed the call and set her phone down on the bed.

"Now what?" he asked.

She didn't look at him for a while, stayed quiet, her two hands cupped around the turquoise box as her heels thumped at the side of the bed and she stared at the floor. He let her think, knew it was going to be bad anyway, and finally she said, "He's willing to make a deal."

"What kind of deal?"

She scratched her upper lip with the even white row of her bottom teeth, ran her tongue from side to side, her eyes turned up to look at the ceiling. "What we were talking about this morning."

"He'll pay for some help?"

"He will."

"I thought he said it wasn't negotiable."

"I guess it *is* negotiable," she sighed.

"What's the deal?"

"He'll take the five percent you offered."

"He will? And he'll pay for staff?" This was good news. He sat forward on the couch, rested his forearms on his knees.

Charlie nodded. "He will. He'll take five percent and he'll pay for staff on a month-by-month basis." Now she looked around the room again, sighed, finally met his eyes. "Can you come here?" she said and patted the space next to her.

"What's in the box?" he asked as he got up and took a few steps.

"Sit here," she said and patted the bed again. He sat down next to her and folded his hands in his lap, looked at her. She was tense, chewing the inside of her mouth as he would do. Her eyes were open, wide and innocent, but her brow had lowered with concern.

"What's in the box, Charlie?" he asked again.

She dipped her chin down and looked away, but reached into the small square box and pulled out a curved stainless steel wire tube with dangling rings and a small lock; it looked like a medical device.

"What's that?" he asked her, mimicking her look of concern, his own brow lowered.

"It's a cage. For a penis." She ran her finger into one end of the tube and said, "you put your penis in here and then close this ring around …" She closed her eyes and sighed. "… Your *balls*," she whispered.

"Why?" he said. "Reza wants to wear that?"

"Not Reza. You." She examined it, Jonny thinking she was gauging its size, even him recognizing now that Reza's flaccid penis would not fit inside it. "Why would I wear it?"

Teeth nibbling at the inside of her lip, she stared at him, then said, "It's a chastity cage, Jonny."

"Chastity?"

"So you can't use your penis."

His mouth opened to say something, but nothing came out. His eyes darted in quick vectors around the room, his brain scrambling to make sense of this. "What's … *What's* the deal?"

# CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CHARLIE TOOK A DEEP BREATH, stalled by looking down and glancing at the piece of paper, re-reading it. She said, "He takes five percent, and every month you wear this," she said, wiggling the cage, "he will fund two employees for thirty days. Only contracts, no employment. Contracts renewed on a thirty-day basis, depending on whether you've been a good …" Now she frowned, and tilted her head, averted her eyes. "… *Cuck* boy or not."

"What?" he chuckled with disbelief. "I can't take it off?"

"Twice a month. You get it off twice a month for one hour. The 14th and 28th."

"That's crazy. He's crazy …" Jonny said, staring blankly across the room.

Charlie softly said: "It's a sacrifice, Jonny."

Her meaning was received. It was a sacrifice far less than the sacrifice she made.

"Can I *do* that?" he asked himself out loud. Then glancing to Charlie, he asked, "Do you *want* me to do that?"

"It would mean you would get help."

"Yeah," he agreed, eyes still lazy and unfocused. "I could get help. But I can't … *do* … anything …?"

"It hasn't been working …"

It was like she punched him in the stomach. "My penis? You don't think it's working?"

"Easy, Jonny. You know what I mean. It hasn't been so good between us since this started."

"Jesus, Charlie," he said, venturing into profanity that went in an area she didn't like, taking the Lord's name in vain and all. But this was serious shit. He stood up, walked in a circle at the side of the bed. "You don't think my penis works?"

"I know it's difficult. I know it must be hard to watch me with … him."

"My penis *works*, Charlie. Jesus, fuck." He ran his hands through his hair and vigorously scratched at his scalp.

"You can take it off twice a month, Jonny."

"Twice a month?" he said.

"It better work when it comes off, Jonny," she said and gave him a weak smile.

"It will, Charlie. It works, you know it works. My head is all messed up. This whole thing is crushing me, but we'll get through it, right?"

*Would* they get through it? Sure, this was a sacrifice on his part now, but it would widen the gap between him and Charlie. It created a void just watching her have sex with another man, now that void would grow wider if he continued to watch her have

sex with this other man but couldn't partake himself. Then again, there was some truth to the difficulties he had with her recently.

Charlie gave a gentle head nod. "We can get through *anything*," she said.

He left her alone then, walked around the foot of the bed and came to stand in front of his workstation, two hands curled over the head rest of the chair that he had Reza buy him—on his wife's time. What the fuck was happening?

What had started out as a blow job in trade for some rent money had somehow become a full transference of all his debts to one lone and frightening man. That $80,000 that he owed was passed over with the lure of saving $30,000 in interest charges. Who would turn down an interest-free loan? Charlie was no dummy, but she *was* naïve. And this was exactly what Reza had wanted. A no-interest loan that kept getting more principal tacked onto it. Somehow over the course of this weekend Jonny himself had added maybe $120,000 to what Reza was owed, money to pay for help. A gamble. He'd give up five percent of his company for it and Charlie would pay in the meantime, laying on her back with her legs open. And she would do it until she couldn't stand it anymore. And that might be Reza's ultimate game. To take Charlie away from him. Just for fun. But that *wasn't* going to happen.

Reza offered a chance at getting out of this with Jonny's own sexual servitude—and he would do it. He would let his genitals be trapped in a cage until this was over. All that Charlie had done for them, he could chip in as well. It wouldn't be easy, but it would be a lot easier than what his wife was doing.

It would be six months before Reza's house was built and they would see what happened then. When Reza moved out, he assumed there would be money still owed, but Jonny knew it was just a matter of time before he would show them all. With that added debt, the money paid to contractors, maybe, just maybe, he would stick it in Reza's face even before the six months were up.

Still, a horrible scenario. That was the best hope he had, and it still meant that Reza would be fucking his wife every night for the next one-hundred-eighty days. And it wasn't usually just once a night. Sometimes twice, sometimes three times. There had been times it was four and even five. That meant Reza could fuck Charlie another five-hundred times before it was over.

*What would be left of his wife then?*

Charlie hugged him from behind, her two hands coming around his waist, her fingernails scratching at his chest. He thumped his fist on the chair's headrest, doing it hard and making the chair jump. Charlie stepped back.

"This is crazy, Charlie. I want to do it. I want to do it because *you've* done so much. But it's so *crazy*."

"You don't have to," she said softly, and he turned to see her wringing her hands together, her eyes getting wet.

"He's getting in my head, Charlie."

"Don't let him, Jonny."

"I lost my whole day of work yesterday. Then the whole night, watching you and that woman and him. Then today, he ruins my whole day. My focus is completely gone. I have so much to do and he keeps getting in the way. I want to do what's right, but I feel like we're just getting ourselves wedged tighter in his trap, we're falling for everything he's setting up."

Charlie nodded.

He continued: "I have to get back to work, and I'm looking at my computer and it just feels like everything is uphill again. I lost my momentum, he's shaking me …"

"Don't let him get in your head, Jonny. Don't let him win. Wear it. If you wear it, you can't think about *it*. *It's* off the table."

"*You're* off the table. You'll be his entirely."

"I'll always be here for you, Jonny. If I'm his, then you can work. You won't be distracted. Then you'll have your focus."

"And you'll be okay if I wear this thing? You'll be okay if my penis is trapped inside it?"

"I know it won't be easy, Jonny. I know it. None of this is easy, but remember we're in it together. I do what I do, you do what you do, we'll come out okay on the other side. It's a cage, but it's just wire. You can pee. It's pretty small, I don't think you can get hard with it on, but I guess that's the point, isn't it?"

"Yeah, I think that's the point," he said. Of course it's the point. "Okay. For you, Charlie. I'll wear it for you."

"Don't do it for me, Jonny."

"I'm doing it for *us*. I'm doing it for the money that would get me the staff that will build my game, and when it's done, shove it all back in that asshole's face."

It made his wife smile. Just a small tug at the corner of one side of her lopsided lips, but it meant everything to him. He loved to see that glimmer in her eye. Pride. Pride in her husband.

He said, "One time before it goes on?"

"One time what? You mean get in bed?"

He stepped to her and put his hands on her waist. "One time before it goes on, Charlie. Come to bed with me."

She shied away from him, shaking her head from side to side, and looking in his eyes. "Reza said we can't. It started already."

"He said that on the phone?"

"He said you would ask before it went on. He said we can't."

"How would he know?"

"Just obey the rules, Jonny. You know what I said. We can't make it difficult. We can't resist him all the time. It would be so easy for him to watch us. How did he know to call when we got home, tell me to open the box on the bed?"

The pain in his stomach told him how difficult this would be. Just that simple rejection, knowing that he wouldn't be able to have her (and he hadn't even put the damn thing on yet) was already constricting his chest and making him feel like he couldn't breathe. He kept his expression bright. "Okay. Give it to me, I'll go in the bathroom."

"I have to put it on you, Jonny," she said.

"Do you know how it goes on?" he asked, reaching down to grab the sheet of paper that was inside the box, laying on the bed next to it.

Charlie scrambled, tried to snatch it away before he read it. Now they stood together face-to-face, Charlie's hands clasped together over her chest as he read the paper. It outlined the instructions, outlined the parameters of the agreement, detailing the five percent ownership and the dual monthly contracts for employees. Underneath it, in that gorilla's blocky grade-school printing, he'd added:

I described Jonny's dick to the girl at the store and GOOD NEWS! He doesn't take the smallest size. You can tell him there are men with even smaller dicks than him, it might cheer him up.

"Can I put it on you now?" she asked, trying to change the subject.

"Okay," he said, his voice a dry squeak. She picked up the cage, and he unbuckled his belt.

"You want to sit down?" she asked.

"Yeah, please. I feel a little lightheaded."

She unbuttoned his pants and did down his zipper, let them fall to his knees and guided him to sit on the edge of the bed, his legs spread by the corner. She looked at the directions again though it seemed pretty straightforward. "Don't get hard or anything, Jonny," she said.

"I won't," he said, in fact having the opposite problem. The impending imprisonment had frightened his genitals. His penis had shrunken, and his testicles had climbed high. He watched as Charlie got on her knees, squatting down, then guiding the tip of his penis into the cage. With the point of her index finger, she popped each of his testicles through a tight stainless steel loop, then cinched it tighter bringing two open hasps together and clasping them closed with the small padlock.

"Is it comfortable?" she asked him.

"It's a little cold. I guess it'll warm up."

"Does it hurt your balls?"

"No. It feels a little weird, but it's not uncomfortable."

"Okay," she said speculatively, her eyes going over her handiwork, watching how her husband's genitals were now closed away from her. She pulled over the turquoise box and withdrew a very small key, inserted in the lock and twisted it closed.

"Don't lose that key," he told her.

"Oh my gosh, can you imagine?" She giggled, covered her mouth, got serious again. "I won't, Jonny."

It felt uncomfortable for her to see him like this, so he motioned for her to step back then he stood, pulled his pants up and did up his belt.

"Does it feel okay? Honestly, Jonny, does it feel all right?"

He moved his hips from side to side, eyes turned up, checking for discomfort. A certain calm had actually eased through him now. He told her. "Yes. I'm okay, Charlie. It's crazy. I feel more focused already. Like there's this weight that's been lifted off me. It just removed an option that was distracting me."

"I'm a distracting option?"

"Yes, you are," he said, then kissed her neck.

"But now you can't have me," she whispered. The sound of her voice so close to his ear, so sibilant and enticing, caused a stirring that pressed against his wire confinement. It was a teasing of the difficulties that may come. He pushed himself away from her, said, "Be careful, I don't want to make this thing uncomfortable."

"Sorry," she laughed.

They stood in front of each other again for a long moment, both of them feeling out this new arrangement. Him standing there with a certain tightness between his legs, knowing it was impossible for it to be fulfilled; his wife standing facing him, knowing that nothing would transpire between them today, or for a while.

"Okay," he said at last. "Yeah, okay, I guess … I want to get to work."

Charlie repeated: "You get back to work, Jonny." That proud smile had returned.

"I'm going to send out some work invites. By tomorrow afternoon I want to have two people banging out my code. I'm going to get this shit done, Charlie."

"Want me to make you some coffee?"

"Make me some coffee, that's right, I'm going to get cracking." Their eyes met, and he pushed away the desire to kiss her lips, instead weaving his fingers together, turning his hands inside out and cracking his knuckles to punctuate his statement.

"I want to kiss you so bad right now, but I'm not going to," Charlie said to him, her chest stuck out and her chin up proudly.

They *could* get through this. Together they could beat Reza.

As Charlie brewed espresso from Reza's machine Jonny already sent out notice on Job-Force that he was looking for talent, and now he had a console up, banging out code.

The machine hissed and chugged from the kitchen and a dread worked over him. Soon Reza would return to the apartment for the night. This was his home for the interim and now essentially Charlie was *his* wife—because she certainly wouldn't be Jonny's.

The idea of Charlie on her back as Reza gorilla-fucked her cinched his device tighter on him and he realized the potential danger here. How could he watch it happen and not get hard? He had no room to get hard. Worst of all: after Reza fucked her and made his Charlie come, now he couldn't meet her in the kitchen in secret and have a little dirty one-on-one while the beast slept. They couldn't have a quick one in the time between Charlie getting off work and Reza coming home. His stomach tightened, and he swallowed dryly.

This could be a big mistake.

It could be, but he would do it for that woman he loved. He gritted his teeth and typed faster.

# AFTERWORD

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KT MORRISON

# AWAY GAME

DOMINATED BY THEIR LANDLORD

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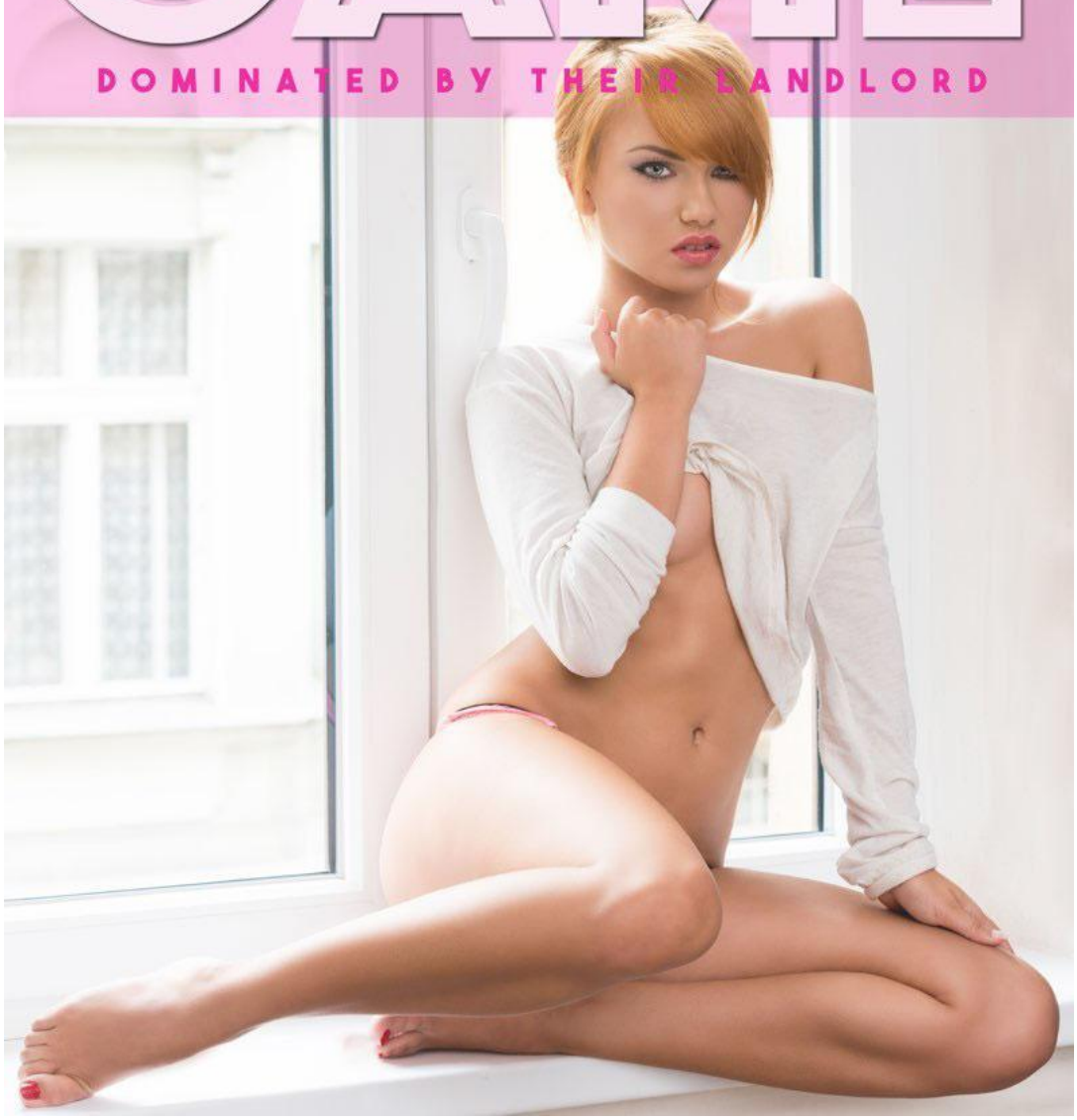

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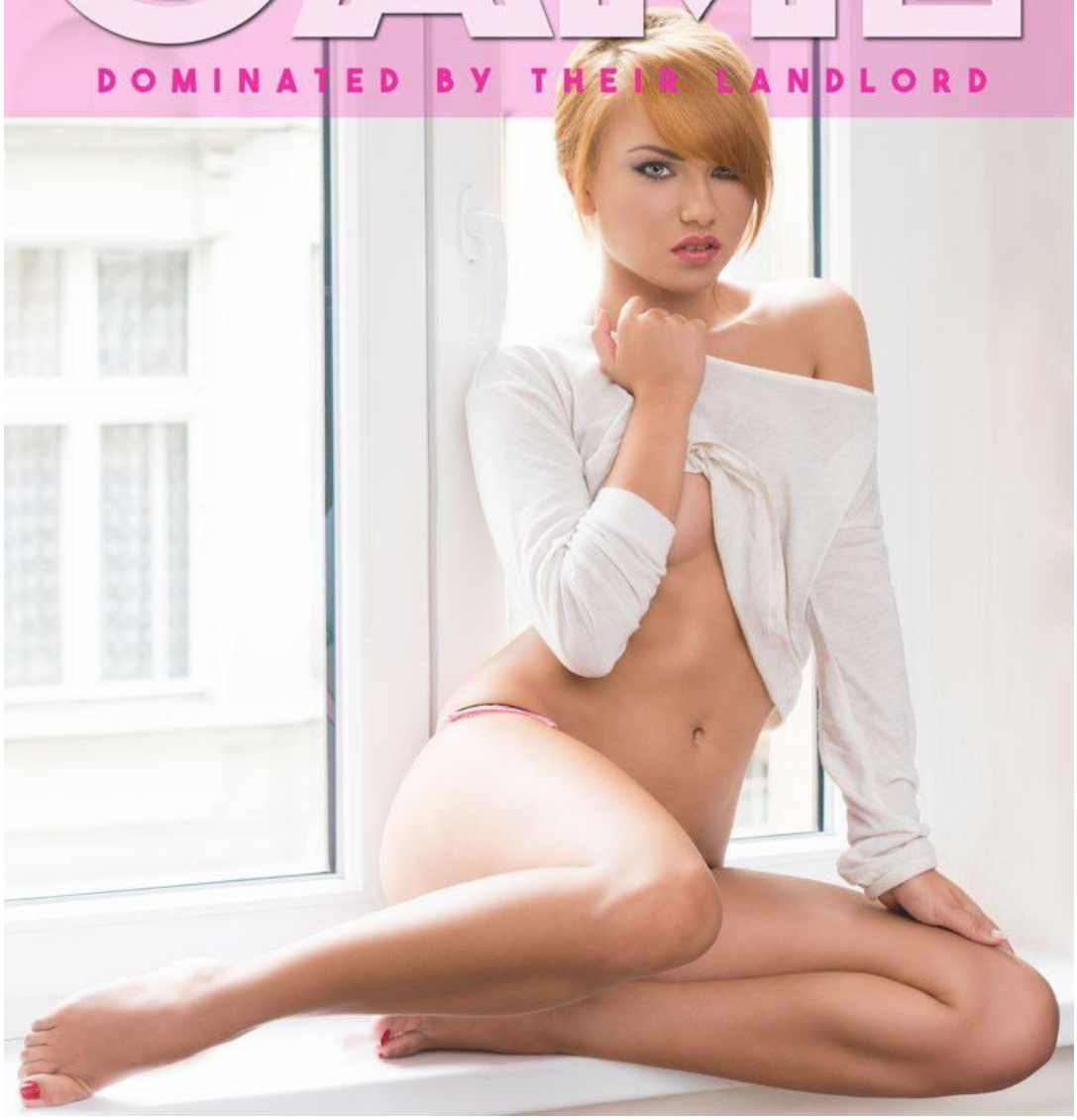

Away Game

# Dominated By Their Landlord

KT Morrison

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**About the Author**

KT Morrison writes stories about women who fall in love with sexy men who aren't their husband, and loving relationships that go too far—couples who open a mysterious door, then struggle to get it closed as trouble pushes through the threshold.

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Models on cover are meant for illustrative purposes only.

All characters are over the age of eighteen.

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AWAY GAME

A LANDLORD NOVEL

*46,000 words*

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# I

## Lawyers And Shopping

## Chapter One

On a rainy Monday morning, Reza drove them to the lawyer's office, Charlie sitting in the front leather seat of Reza's Mercedes sedan, Jonny alone in the back. She looked comfortable, he thought, while sitting in the back behind Reza, but of course she would—she and Reza had been out together a few times. The fact she'd been in Reza's expensive car before—without him—turned his stomach over. He shifted in the seat, tugged at the seatbelt, then at the front of his khakis which had pulled taut over his wire chastity cage strapped around his genitals.

Another thing that was irritating him: the car's expensive stereo system thumped and boomed a dumb, repetitive rap song. Something current and popular though Jonny couldn't place it. It was irritating, with inane lyrics—something to do with going out to the club, something to do with dubs. Whatever that was. Shit some people do to rhyme.

The music was bad enough, but what was making him shift more and more in his seat was Charlie didn't seem bothered by it. Not that Jonny was against rap music, it's just that it had never appealed to Charlie before. She liked simple country songs. Not even the new country music, but older songs, like from the Grand Ole Opry, back when it was really 'ole.'

He watched her from the backseat, even nodding her little chin along with the beat. Her ginger curls shaking, her eyes glancing around and out the windows as the wipers slip-slapped across the windshield. They were in the city center, and people bustled on the sidewalks in a hazy gray blur, cowering under their black umbrellas. Traffic was at a standstill, but they were almost there. Charlie had her hair pulled back from her face, wore a nice button-down collared shirt, a navy blazer, a wool skirt, and leggings with loafers. Reza wore a typical black suit with a black V-neck underneath. All Jonny had were his khaki pants, a button-down shirt, and a wool sweater that had begun pilling.

Reza hired his lawyer to handle Jonny's company's more thorough incorporation—he'd done it by himself online a few years ago—and notarize Reza's small percentage ownership. The lawyer was on the 35th floor of the Empire Crest building. Solomon, Woolworth & Sickler were high-powered lawyers with offices that looked out east, with a grand view of the water.

Reza parked the car in the underground and they got out together without saying anything. The Mercedes chirped and flashed its lights as Reza set the alarm with his key fob while Jonny stood hidden behind the car shaking out one pant leg and trying to relieve a tight pinching against his scrotum. Reza and Charlie walked away together, and he trotted to catch up with them, hobbling along with one straight leg to stop the pinch from getting worse. He caught up with them at the doors of the glass and metal vestibule that led to the elevators.

The cage that sealed his genitals took some getting used to. At first it had been a breeze. Charlie locked the stainless cage on him and he felt the burden alleviated—all he could think about now was work. And that really was all he should be thinking about. Work should be his sole thought until he'd finished his game, made money, paid off Reza, and got his wife back.

It wasn't so simple.

Reza got home later that night and climbed into bed with Charlie who was already sleeping. Jonny was working away at his workstation but watched in the cosmetic mirror on his desk what happened behind. Reza spooned behind Charlie, his hands caressing her under the sheets, and like a good and dutiful wife Charlie turned to face him, let him kiss at her neck and collar. When he was hard, he retrieved a condom from the side table, Charlie's hand stroking his cock under the sheets.

It was too much.

Blood pumped between his legs, but instead of pleasure and excitement all he felt was discomfort. Intense discomfort. His cock hardened, pushed against his cage, swelling and shoving down on the ring that held it in place. It felt like his balls were going to pop off. He'd had to leave. Get out of the room. The urgency of his discomfort was paralleled by the angst of leaving Charlie and Reza alone together.

In the bathroom, he'd examined his confinement, standing by the vanity with his pants around his ankles. His penis had swelled against the wires, been indented by them, the whole cage pushed downward by his arousal but the ring that circled the base of his penis and scrotum had pulled his testicles tightly against the skin, making it gleam in the bathroom light. It was awful. He'd had to sit on the edge of the tub with his head down, elbows on knees, hands clamped over his ears so he wouldn't hear any of Charlie's sex sounds.

The paperwork was easier than he'd anticipated. They'd arrived at the law offices that served Reza, were given coffee by a polite young woman in a tight shirt and skirt. Didn't even have time to finish it before they were ushered into the office of a pretty slick looking young guy named Solomon. He seemed to know Reza pretty well, and they clasped hands, shared a couple of knowing looks that made Jonny worried this lawyer knew of the 'home' arrangement. Knew that this guy in the shitty sweater's wife spread her legs for Reza. Knew that this paperwork today was just one more cinch of the noose around Jonny's neck. Did they laugh behind his back? Did Reza tell this young lawyer what a good lay this cute little redhead chick was?

Whatever. It didn't matter. There was no way around this anymore, so he finished off his coffee, gave Charlie's wrist a little squeeze and sat down in a low but very heavy wooden chair padded with leather that sat across from the lawyer's desk. Solomon sat down as well, the expanse of the city out his wide window. Rain came down in sheets against the glass, and in between capricious gusts Jonny saw the gritty gray architecture revealed; in and out like the pulse of a heartbeat.

The paperwork was presented to him with a brief instruction, but mostly it was all laid out in colored tabs and he just had to follow along and fill his name in. Sheets upon sheets he glanced over to make sure he wasn't signing over his firstborn somehow. You couldn't trust Reza.

The language was pretty clear, and it didn't take long before each of the little colored tabs sticking out the sides were completed. Signatures delivered on all the documents necessary. And that was it. Now whatever Jonny Keen's video game company made,

5% of it would go into his landlord's pocket. A few months ago that would really have stuck him hard. Right now he didn't care. He might've talked tough over the 5% ownership when he was negotiating with Reza but the truth was he would do just about anything for this to be over. The drive he had inside, the things he knew how to do … he would never stop until he was successful. It was just a matter of time before he could pay Reza back. The sooner the better. So 5% of his company to Reza was really a bargain because it brought him closer to the time when Charlie's heart would be his alone again. More accurately, her pussy—they always had each other's hearts, it was her pussy he was currently denied.

Leaving the offices, nodding politely to the secretary who was back behind her desk, they then walked concrete halls to the elevator bank and he thought back to the evenings when life was good, before all this began. How his pretty wife would come home from her job at the library, he would be hard at work developing his game—this was of course back before he had defrauded the Chinese investors. But despite the badness he knew was at the core of his business back then those sure were wonderful times. If he could only get that back …

In the elevator the three of them stood together again. He shifted uncomfortably, his hand fumbled around at his thigh looking for Charlie's. He found her warm little hand under the cuff of her jacket and he held her fingers and rubbed his thumb around her wedding ring.

He gave her a little smile and saw a gentle smile returned on her face, and he knew that signing those papers today was the right thing. Fuck pride. Fuck everything. He'd be nothing if he didn't have this beautiful girl.

Reza leaned forward, big blunt finger pressing 'C' for Concourse.

Jonny bristled. Charlie sensed it, too. Something was up. She asked Reza, "Where are we going?"

"It's a surprise," Reza grumbled.

Charlie's hand tensed on his, he felt her thumb squeeze against his knuckles.

On the concourse level they wandered the marble halls of a shopping mall. It was a late Monday morning and the early commute was over, but still it was packed. Below the Empire Crest building was a three-level shopping complex connected to four other sky-rises and two different subway stations. Reza led them to the first set of escalators and they headed deeper down together, him ahead of them as they lingered behind, and Jonny held Charlie's hand protectively.

Charlie gave his hand a polite and gentle double-squeeze and he looked at her. She whispered, "What do you think the surprise is?"

"Beats me," he said.

Charlie looked a little worried, and while she still held his hand he felt a certain clamminess in her grip now. She bounced a little on her toes, and he saw that she was chewing on her lower lip; her bright white canine gnawed the curled corner of her plump vermilion. Her head tracked from left to right, oscillating back-and-forth, eyes going up and down as she took in the mall. A little frown creased her brow. Her tenseness brought a frown of his own.

Everything with Reza was difficult. There was no way this surprise was going to be something fun. Sure, the man would present it that way, lower them into it slowly, then the ax would fall and reality would chop his head off. Hopefully not Charlie's as well.

Charlie leaned close again, and she asked him, “You don’t think there’s a store here that would sell those cages?” She made a curt, surreptitious nod between his legs but he already knew what she meant.

“I don’t think so,” he told her. “A store like that wouldn’t be in this upscale place.”

His suspicious wife murmured, “You never know …” She shared some of her mother’s disdain for the big city.

“You think he got my cage here?” Jonny asked, wondering why she would care.

Eyes still glancing around, she leaned her head close to him, and whispered, “No. I’m worried he’s going to try to get you a smaller one or something.”

That gave him a little tap in the stomach. The cage he wore was already too small. How did she think he could wear a smaller one? He said, “Smaller one? I barely fit into this one.”

Now her lips pursed, and he saw she was thinking something.

“What is it?” he said to her.

“Nothing.”

He leaned close now, too, gave her hand a squeeze. “Tell me what it is.”

Charlie sighed, stalling. She began to speak then stopped. She started again: “I don’t know, it can’t be true …” She pulled away, like she didn’t want to say any more. Then she returned. “He told me that that little cage you’re wearing will shrink your penis.”

He startled at the thought. He said, “That’s impossible.”

“I know, right? It sounded crazy. I thought he was just being a jerk. Teasing me …”

“He told you wearing a cage would shrink my penis?”

“Yeah. He said that denying you sex and making you wear a tight little cage will make your penis shrink.”

“That’s impossible, Charlie," he said, frowning.

Now it started to work around in his head, wondering if it wasn’t impossible that could happen. Could Reza shrink his penis if he kept introducing smaller and smaller cages? He shook his head, squinted his eyes—got those thoughts right out of his head.

He squeezed Charlie's hand again, got close and said, "Don't worry, Charlie. That's just crazy talk. He's teasing you." But the fear was in him now that this trip to the shopping concourse would end up at some sort of weird BDSM store, and Charlie and Reza would pick out an even smaller cage to stuff his genitals inside.

Instead of some bondage shop, Reza stopped outside an upscale boutique at the far end of the concourse Jonny thought would be somewhere underneath the old Romeo-McMillan building. Instead of mannequins in leather corsets and circled whips on their hips, male ones with chastity cages, this elegant-looking shop had halogen lights spotlighting alabaster models wearing caftans, swimsuits, bikinis, and light summer dresses. Pretty hopeful given the grim weather outside this morning.

Jonny led Charlie to stand next to Reza while the other shoppers filed around them on either side. Reza gestured with his hand for them to enter, and Charlie asked him, "What are we doing here?"

Reza said, "Would you please just go in?—we're standing in the way out here."

Charlie said, "Why are you so mad?"

Reza shook his head, pinched the bridge of his nose. He said, “You’re so timid. You need to come out of your shell. I brought you to the shop, would you please just go in?”

“Fine,” she sighed and let Jonny’s hand go, straightened her jacket and walked ahead of them—stopped short, almost tumbling over a woman’s stroller. She apologized, avoided looking back at them, waited for the woman to pass, then walked into the store.

It was Jonny and Reza alone now, and Jonny asked him, “What are you doing now?”

“Your wife needs better clothes.”

“Sure. She probably does. You’ve been buying her nicer things already. Why here? Why now?”

“I’m taking her away for the weekend, Jonny. I want her dressed up just right.”

## Chapter Two

When he walked in the store, Charlie saw his expression and knew something was wrong. He shook his head and tried to clear his face because he hadn't wanted to show her how bothered he was.

"What's wrong?" she said.

"Ask Reza."

The three of them were standing now in the quiet foyer by a low, round oak table centered inside the entrance. Nicely folded shirts, tops, and skirts ran around it, another alabaster manikin in the center wearing a wide straw hat. Not unlike what Charlie should wear if she were going somewhere warm. That alabaster skin wasn't far off his wife's complexion, either. Just add some freckles.

Deeper in the store there were side tables with flowers, clothing, displays with more manikins, shelves and shelves of clothes and racks with neatly lined hangers. A woman waited near the back of the shop smiling at them with her hands clasped at her waist.

Charlie's mouth swished around as she studied him, and she bit that lower lip again and looked to Reza. "Why is Jonny mad? What is it now?"

"I don't know why he would be …." Reza said, his palms out to the side and closing his eyes. There was a smirk there pulling up that villain mustache of his to one side. Like he knew exactly why Jonny would be mad. It was maddening, and Jonny would like to be nowhere else than at home right now banging out code and lining up more help to get this game done and shove the contract back in this arrogant son of a bitch's face. Put an end to this.

Reza continued, "I have business in the Caribbean. I'm not gonna go alone, now am I? Not when I have the prettiest girl in the world, I want her on my arm. I'm taking you to the Bahamas this weekend."

Jonny watched her expression. Was waiting to see how she would react. It wasn't great. It hurt him. He saw the initial shock, then a brief, bubbling burst of joy, then saw that

snuffed out as his wife realized she was being watched. That happiness had a wet blanket thrown over it, but he knew it was just a performance. He saw that she was excited when she heard she might be going away.

Charlie said, “How? Will I have to miss work?”

“We leave on Friday night,” he said, “and I’ll have you back on Sunday night. It’s business, but we’ll have lots of pleasure. We’ll have to pack it all in to two days. You can take Monday off if you want, you might want to call and let them know. I imagine you’ll be pretty exhausted.”

Jonny wiggled his toes and grabbed at the insoles of his shoes. He would give anything to get away with kicking Reza in the stomach right now. Sometimes he looked at him with pure hate. And every time he did, Reza sighed and gave back to Jonny an expression that showed he didn’t give a shit. Jonny was nothing to him.

Charlie asked Reza, “Can Jonny come?” Her mouth slimmed to a pursed line while she waited for an answer.

Reza scoffed. “No, Charlie, I’m not buying him a seat, hang around my neck when I got shit to do down there. Jonny’s got a lot on his plate right now and he better start taking big bites. Why you want to make it harder on him?”

“I’m not,” she said sheepishly

“Give me your hand,” Reza said more kindly.

“What?” Charlie said petulantly, not liking being scolded. Her lips had pouted and her brow lowered; she held up her thin graceful hand so he could take it.

Reza held her hand with the slender digits hooked over his index finger, his thumb caressing around her wedding ring. “Let your husband do what he’s got to do. You know he’s busy, you just watched him sign away part of his company. Give him peace to work, Charlie.”

“I’m fine, Charlie,” Jonny told her, his thin voice tight and strained.

“I have to go with him, Jonny,” she said, her little mouth twisted to one side.

“I know, baby, I’m a big boy,” he lied. “Go. Don’t worry about me.”

“She won’t,” Reza said absently, his attention on the waiting saleswoman as he waved her over.

The saleswoman approached them with a smile and her two hands gathered behind her back. As she drew near, she asked Reza, “Is there anything I can help you with, sir?”

Reza stepped aside so the woman could look at Charlie, and he told her, “We’re going away for the weekend to the Caribbean. Work-casual for her, plus some swimwear. I want sedate for the hotel pool, then she wants something more racy for when we go to the beach.”

“No, I don’t,” Charlie whined, her face twisting up fearfully.

It made the saleswoman smile wider, and she said, “I think we can accommodate that. Don’t worry, dear, nothing too salacious.”

Reza added, “And a couple outfits for going out at night. Dinner, a club, dancing.”

The woman nodded knowingly, letting Reza know they were in good hands. She was a kindly woman, smartly dressed, of course, and thin and proper. “Come with me …” She held out a hand, paused to hear the name.

Charlie flattered, said, “Oh, sorry, I’m Charlie.” She stepped forward, smiling out of politeness and extending a hand to shake.

“Well, come with me, I think we can find some outfits that will please your handsome husband.”

Charlie said, “That man’s not my husband. Jonny’s my husband.”

Jonny and Reza sat side by side in separate leather arm chairs waiting for Charlie in the dressing room. They were in a small and intimate circular waiting room lined with framed floor-to-ceiling mirrors and high-legged tables stacked with fresh-cut flowers. The lighting was warm and ambient and they’d been offered espressos which sat now on an elegant table between them. Reza sat with one leg crossed over the other, his hands clasped together under his chin, watching the archway dead ahead of them, looking for Charlie to appear.

Jonny was uncomfortable. The steel restraint around his penis was digging into him, the ring that circled his balls tugged on them painfully and he couldn’t shake it no matter how he shifted in his seat. It was also uncomfortable having your marriage dynamic challenged in public. Charlie had told the saleswoman that Reza wasn’t her husband. It might have been easier if they’d just pretended he was. This woman didn’t need to know. Not only that, once it was determined that Reza was a man with money and was looking to spend, they were assigned a second sales staff. The second woman was

younger, Charlie and Jonny's age, and that seemed more difficult, too. Like, maybe the older woman would think, Huh, kids these days, but the younger woman would just think, What a loser, getting dominated like this by another man. It was humiliating.

All it was, was Charlie wanting the woman to know Jonny was her husband. It was a fucking compliment, you know? She wanted it to be known her husband was the nice young man with promise, not the swarthy, arrogant master who was all swagger and meanness.

He'd even started to wonder if the younger woman knew he had a cage around his penis. She was more likely to be savvy to this sort of thing, and she did side-eye him a lot, catching him shifting and tugging at his pant leg. What would she think of this? A man and his wife here with a third man, this one rich and intimidating; a man very familiar with the wife, but shouldn't be; very forward, very presumptuous, putting his hands on the woman that wasn't his wife, doing it right in front of the husband and the husband didn't say shit. The more he thought about it, the more he came to realize at the very least the young woman knew Reza was fucking Charlie. Maybe the older one, too. He took the espresso cup, wished it was bigger as he held it protectively in front of his face, hiding himself from the two attendants.

Then Charlie was there, standing at the edge of the archway, partially obscured, afraid to step out and let them see her fully. So far, she'd appeared in a nighttime maxi dress in a pale blue and bright yellow flower pattern, coming out wearing heels; a more formal suit jacket, also in a grayish blue, worn with the sleeves rolled up and matching short-shorts, again with heels; a floor length navy skirt patterned with thin white slashes, worn with a white undershirt and obviously no bra, a straw fedora, and canvas sneakers; a baggy silk top in orange that had ties on the sleeves and a scoop neck with plunging V, peg-leg Capri pants in vibrant teal, also worn with heels, this time a sandal style with narrow leather straps and a jute rope platform. Now she had dressed in a bikini and was reluctant to appear.

"Come on out, Charlie," Reza said.

"You can come out, Charlie," Jonny urged her.

Her expression showed timid worry, her pouting lips pursed. She wore another straw fedora, and the brim shaded her eyes but Jonny could see they were wide and anxious. Her hands were gathered at her crotch and her fingers wrung together nervously.

"Charlie, please …" Reza prodded more impatiently now, extending a hand and rolling it in a winding circle, drawing her out into the light.

One bare and tentative foot in front of the other, Charlie emerged from the relative dim of the dressing room hall and into the light of the viewing room and its many mirrors.

Reza said, “That’s it, Charlie, show us what you’ve got on.”

She couldn’t bear to look at them, instead her face was turned up to the ceiling as she had four sets of eyes on her. She had one arm folded over her tummy, hand cupping the opposite elbow. When she stopped in the center of the parquet circle, she put one foot over top of the other.

She wore a wide brimmed raffia fedora with a thick black band, pewter bangles and rings, and a tiny lace-knit two piece bikini in turquoise yarn.

The younger sales woman clasped her hands together as if in prayer and brought them up to touch the tip of her nose. She smiled broadly, pleased with her handiwork. She’d done Charlie well, the color was perfect against her pale but creamy, freckled skin, and tumbling apricot mane.

Jonny exhaled heavily; enamored at the sight of how beautiful his wife was and crushed knowing she was going away with another man looking like this. She would appear on another man’s arm. And at night she would go to bed with him. His knees came together till they touched, his cock straining against the metal confine of his small cage.

Reza was speechless, managing only to groan her name admiringly.

Charlie’s eyes came down and her gaze met Jonny’s. She mouthed something to him but he missed it. He mouthed back: What?

She whispered, “I’m too skinny.” Her hands came together over her belly button and began to wring together again.

“Charlie, come here,” Reza said, low and with serious tone.

She didn’t ask him to repeat it, instead complying right away and walking barefoot to stand before him.

“Turn around,” he said now.

She shook her head no, childishly and energetically, her long hair making scratching noises over the bare parts of her skin. The knit on her bikini was loose, and up close Jonny could see the brown of her nipples in the holes of the crochet. Down below as well, open gaps in the lacy knit showed bare skin just above her mound, and if she didn’t shave down there her pubic hair would be poking through. His cock stiffened further, and he had to straighten his legs out a little in the arm chair.

“Turn around,” Reza repeated in a voice that said you won’t want to hear his request a third time.

Charlie slumped and her head cocked. She made a little grunt in her throat. But she turned around.

As she did, her hands came down, and she covered her ass with her hands. The back of the bikini bottom was just a small knitted triangle that swooped very high over the top curve of her rump and left the lower curve completely bare. Her hands blocked their view.

Jonny groaned, his cock wanting to grow but finding steely restraint. He straightened his legs further and dug an elbow into the chair's padded arm.

"Charlie," Reza chastised. "Move your hands away, please."

Charlie looked to protest, he could see her mouth open, but ultimately, just as he knew, there was no point in resisting. Before moving her hands away—as if stalling for time—she ran her fingers back-and-forth over the bikini bottom's trim as if to make sure that while it provided little coverage it at least was covering all that it could. She withdrew her hands and gathered them over her chest while facing away from Jonny and Reza. The attendants still watched, their faces betraying a growing concern.

Reza touched Charlie on the inside of her knee, his hand cupping her there. He said, "You don't hear it when I say how beautiful you are?"

"Guys just say those things," Charlie whispered over her shoulder, "well, they say those things because they want something."

Reza said, "That what your mama told you?"

"Yes."

"Your mama is not wrong, Charlie, but do you really think I need to say nice things to you so I can get you in my bed?"

Charlie's lips sucked inward and her cheeks blushed, ashamed the saleswomen might have heard that. "No," she said.

"Right. And you don't think you're beautiful?" His hand slipped upward and rested now mid-thigh. Charlie's legs began to tremble. When she didn't respond, he said, "Too skinny?—why, because you have a thigh gap?" His hand slipped higher until his thumb touched the crotch of her bikini bottoms.

"Shit," Jonny sighed and clutched his thighs together tightly, his cock feeling like it was being crushed as it pushed outward against the wire of his chastity cage. The ring that circled his scrotum pulled his balls tight against the skin of his sack.

Charlie went on her tiptoes, and she looked to the saleswomen. They were watching but averted their eyes when they saw Charlie's head turn. Charlie whimpered, "Maybe."

"Every girl wants this, Charlie," Reza said, manipulating his hand between her thighs, the knuckle of his thumb caressing her pussy through the woolly knit. "Every girl wants a body like yours, Charlie, and you don't even know what you got. I know you like to play shy and maybe I thought for a while you were just polite, 'cause you grew up on a farm or some shit—you know, like the Lord hates vanity. Now I'm starting to think you really don't know how beautiful you are, don't know how much better you could do than Jonny."

"Hey, Reza, come on," Jonny groaned, angry, hurt, and erect all at the same time.

"Turn around and face me, Charlie," Reza said and slowly withdrew his hand from between her thighs, his rough skin making a whisking sound against her soft, smooth skin.

She turned around, tiny seashell discs clacking where they hung in decoration on the ties that crossed her hip. She stared down her pale, flat tum at Reza who sat looking up at her, face level with her crotch.

He said, "How tall are you?"

"I don't know."

"Five-nine?"

"I think maybe."

"Charlie, that perfect face, that pale smooth skin and those beautiful eyes … you can have the world."

"No, I couldn't," she whispered in disbelief.

Reza's hands came up and the pads of his thumbs traced the lower trim of her bikini bottom, inches from her mound.

"Hoo," she squeaked, and her knees dipped a little. "What are you doing?" she asked him in a soft, excited whisper.

His thumbs pushed upward against the bikini bottom, and it tightened between her legs. Jonny could see the younger saleswoman's eyebrows begin to rise.

"And this hungry little mouth down here could make any man do whatever it asked. You're too much woman to follow Jonny around hoping he's going to make it."

Charlie's thighs flexed and quivered, her hands came down to rest over Reza's, not stopping him but maybe in an effort to block the ladies' view of what he did. Reza's thumbs pushed even higher, pulling the material outward a little. It narrowed and fell into the split of Charlie's sex, the soft shaved curves of her vulva visible now.

"No," Charlie whispered, not stopping him but almost encouraging him at the same time to tell her more.

"Oh yes," Reza said. "Someone rich, powerful, handsome. A man who would show you things about your body you wouldn't think possible."

It was Charlie's eyebrows rising now, right up to the brim of her straw fedora. Her pouting lips parted. The crotch of her panties had narrowed to a cord and Reza had wedged it higher, the wrinkled gray-pink of her labia folding and curling around the yarn. He flossed it gently forward and backward and smiled.

Jonny saw beyond them, the older saleswoman now take a step forward, considering how she could interrupt this without an overwhelming embarrassment of her own. She took another step, her hand extended and outstretched as if to say stop, but that hand curled to a loose fist and returned to rest at her thigh. She took a step back, but her brow was lowered and creased.

Reza looked up into Charlie's eyes now, still using the crotch of her bikini to tease her pussy. He could see from the corner of his eye the woman approaching, and without looking, still gazing at Charlie, he said, "Don't worry. We're taking it. We're taking it all. Everything she tried on today."

## Chapter Three

After Charlie adjusted her bikini bottom so it fit her straighter between her legs, she returned across the parquet floor on the balls of her feet and disappeared around the archway. The two saleswomen followed as well, headed to the dressing room with her.

Jonny brought his hands together and twiddled his thumbs. His skin was dampened with sweat. Reza shifted uncomfortably in his seat, slouching down a little, straightening one leg, sitting upright again. His hand disappeared inside the lapel of his jacket. He pulled out his wallet, a slim alligator billfold and withdrew his American Express card. He extended it to Jonny, held between first and middle finger. "Take this," he said.

Jonny leaned to the side, reached over the espressos and took the card. Reza said, "In a minute, those saleswomen are going to come out with all those clothes, bundled up, some of them on hangers, take them to the counter." Now he stood up and buttoned his jacket closed. Jonny stood as well, tucked the silver card in his pocket. Reza said, "Follow them over to the counter, pay for all the shit."

"Me go and pay for it? Where are you going?"

"Put out your hand."

Jonny should've seen it coming but didn't. He held out his hand, palm up. Reza took his wrist and brought it low between his legs, pushing his hand to the crotch of his pants. Jonny's hand closed around Reza's erection.

The guy had grown aroused watching Charlie try on all those clothes. Aroused by teasing her, flossing her bikini bottom through her sex. Jonny held it, his fingers semi-closed below the glans, his extra-large cock extended up high over his hip, the tip of it pressing out a knot above the belt line. It was as thick as an iPhone and felt just as rigid. He pulled his hand away and wiped it on his chinos. "Here?" he hissed, unable to hold back a snarl.

"Just keep them busy. I can't walk around the mall with this thing."

On cue the two women emerged into the bright of the room, their heels clicking on the glossy wood floor, all smiles, clothing bundled at the younger woman's waist, the older woman pushing a chrome dress rack on rubber wheels, the items Charlie had tried on gently swaying with her movements.

Reza said to the younger one: "Jonny's got my card, he's going to settle up."

She just nodded and gave a breathless Yes, sir.

Jonny got in step behind them, and as the sound of the rubber on wood went silent as the rack crossed onto a section of carpet, Jonny glanced over his shoulder to see Reza walking under the archway that led to the dressing rooms with his hands in his pockets, his arousal bowing out even his suit jacket.

The older woman rang the items up on the cash register and the total came to $4,817.27. Pretty much the cost of the actual vacation if Jonny was paying—and that was back when things were better. Reza just spent five grand on Charlie's vacation clothes, for a trip that wouldn't even be forty-eight hours long.

He grumbled at the expense spent on his wife by another man but kept a smile for the ladies. He went through a time-wasting rigmarole, patting all his pockets as if he couldn't remember where he'd put Reza's credit card.

*Another man's credit card – to make purchases for Jonny's wife.*

It ate at his guts. What would these two women think of him? What theories would be giggled once he and Charlie and Reza were gone, gossiping together and probably laughing at his expense? And, come on, ladies—aren't you wondering where Reza is, given that Jonny was the one standing at the cash register to pay? Wouldn't it have occurred to one of them Reza and Charlie were alone? And given the dynamic they'd witnessed, wasn't it obvious what might transpire in the dressing room?

It wasn't impossible that maybe they would allow it as Reza was such a big spender. Let him get away with indecent behavior because they wanted his money so bad. Jonny could relate. Just the same—as Charlie often lamented—Reza came like a fire hose, and he hoped that whatever transpired between his wife and Reza in the fitting room, it was left spattered like a Jackson Pollock painting all in white, and these smug and gossipy women had to roll up their sleeves and don rubber dishwashing gloves, get out the bleach and scrub the room down with hard bristle brushes.

He continued with his misdirection now, opening the paper shoppers they'd already packed and pretending he wanted to account for all the items again. With the time it took to bring everything out here, make idle and uncomfortable chit-chat, and for the women to bundle away all the purchases folded in tissue paper and place them in bags he did some mental math and figured Reza and Charlie would have had just under ten minutes alone in the fitting room. How much time did they need? It would depend on what activity they were up to, he supposed. It would depend on the whims of their landlord and whatever level of humiliation he'd like to inflict on both of them today. Boy, there was a game for the game-minded, if you were so inclined; an algorithm for a cuckold player to solve.

There wasn't much more he could do to stall, so he handed over the card and let them ring it through. It was accepted, of course, Jonny punching in the security code for the card he'd been given to use before. Nothing more humiliating than a man lending you his credit card to make purchases you can't afford, meanwhile the guy is giving it to your wife on the regular with his monstrous cock.

There were footsteps behind him, clopping on parquet, silent for a moment on carpet, then clopping again as they crossed over to the hard maple that surrounded the circular cash desk. Charlie was at his side then, coming to stand sheepishly next to him but not close enough to touch. Glancing over the other shoulder, he saw Reza on the other side. He was straightening his shirt cuffs. Now Jonny looked back to Charlie. She'd redressed in the clothes she wore when they arrived; her dark suit and her crisp shirt. There was a small, wet pearl on her lapel. His first instinct was to brush it away before the women witnessed it, but he didn't want his fingers to touch it. His eyes drifted higher, searching for Charlie's, but saw that she couldn't meet his gaze.

She hadn't been wearing much makeup, only a little lip gloss. It was gone now, her lips dry, a little wet smeared on her cheek. Her lips were their normal pouting shape, but they looked swollen and puffy. It was quite obvious, at least to Jonny, what had happened in the dressing room. It might even be quite obvious to the two women watching. He turned back to face them. It was quiet, no one had said a thing.

The women looked at them silently, and Jonny could see in their eyes they knew what had happened. He didn't think he was imagining things. He opened his mouth as if to say something but no sound came out. Next to him, Reza asked the women: "Everything settled here?"

It broke the spell, and the ladies moved again, nodding now, their vacant expressions blossoming with smiles, each of them taking up the twine handles of some of the paper shoppers and passing them across. "Oh yes, oh yes, everything's fine. Everything is put together in these bags …"

Jonny look back to Charlie. Her eyes were still cast downward, her hands folded in front of her. He asked her: "You okay?"

She nodded, a mild but rapid motion of her chin. She whispered something, but he missed it.

"What was that?" he asked her. The women were silent again. She looked up to him, and said, "Reza wants me to kiss you."

He stared at her for a moment, watching her tremulous lips. Watched as her teeth came together and closed over the plumpness of the bottom curl. There was symbolism in this. A humiliating submission. He took a long intake of breath, cleared his throat, and said quietly, but low enough for everyone to hear: "Okay."

Charlie studied his face for a moment as if gauging whether he was truthful. For the first time since maybe they were only dating, he felt awkward with her. He put out his hands at his hips, fumbling for hers. She looked down, confused, then took his hands with hers. He stepped closer, clearing his throat again. He craned his neck forward, but hesitated.

"Go on and kiss your wife, Jonny," Reza said behind him. The women watched. Between his legs, there was a tightening again. The tightening, while uncomfortable, was becoming a form of excitement in its own way. The restriction was a measurement of his arousal and a measurement of his humiliation. Now he got a little closer and let the metal bulb of the cage's end poke into his wife.

They were a breath away and Charlie gasped, "Okay?"

As an answer he closed his mouth over hers. She submitted herself to him, sucking on his lips as he sucked on hers. He even gave her his tongue, and she took it, let him search for hers. He swirled it over her pink slick shape and breathed her in. His cock swelled harder against its confines.

If Reza thought that he would humiliate him like this, Jonny would show him no shame. You want me to kiss my wife? I'll show you how I kiss my wife. And I'm going to pretend that I don't taste salt on her tongue and I'm going to pretend I don't smell that janitorial smell in her breath. Because what I do know is that I love her more than anything.

He kissed her longer than he'd even intended and Charlie felt the passion, too. Her hands even gripped around his waist. Then they came part with a soft wet smack, and his eyes remained on hers. His wife's eyes were wide in wonderment. They darted over his. He couldn't be sure but he thought there might even be a small measurement of pride in him. Unabashedly showing his love for her when challenged. Her mouth moved around now, too, producing no sound like he just had. He turned the tables on her, showed her his commitment. Charlie never doubted him, and no matter how bad things got he would show her they were in this together

Next to them, paper bags were slid to the edge of the counter. While the women may have enjoyed this up to a certain point, they were indicating it was time to leave. There was a moment in everyone's life when they felt like their involvement in something had gone too far—a moment when they realized while they may only be spectators they were somehow complicit. Next to the shoppers, butted up against the cash register, was a crystal bowl with small cellophane wrapped candies.

To the younger saleswoman, Charlie asked, "Are these for everyone?"

The young woman smiled, nodded. She said, "Take as many as you want."

Polite Charlie extended her long, graceful hand, plucked one single mint from the bowl and unwrapped it. She tucked the crinkling wrapper in the pocket of her suit jacket and put the mint in her mouth. She took one of the bags in her left hand and hooked her other arm under Jonny's. "Let's go," she said.

## II

## When Charlie's Away…

## Chapter Four

Jonny talked to Shulamit via Skype. She was a coder that he hired freelance and paid daily through PayPal without access to her full personal information. She looked and talked Israeli, maybe, actually quite beautiful though she dressed like somebody who sat in front of their computer all day wearing a grubby-looking sweatshirt, and she had her hair tied back from her face. Said she lived in Rome, but who could tell, she could be in this same building for all he knew. For clarification, he asked her, "And you got all the in-lines done, too?"

She nodded without responding.

He said "And the OOP and the data structure elements?"

She sighed, leaned back in her expensive looking leather chair and said, "Yes, all of them." Now she laced her fingers together behind her head.

"All those style sheets I gave you? …"

"All of them."

"And—"

Her chair squeaked as she leaned forward abruptly, her face almost filling the screen of his monitor. She said, "Jonny, everything. All the things on the list are done. We don't need to go through each one."

"Okay, okay. I just … That's really great, Shulamit. I mean …" He let it hang as his eyes drifted up and down the sheet of milestones he had for her. Everything was done? I mean, holy shit. She might be as good as him. If this were the case, if he had another version of himself, though as abrupt as she may be, this might actually happen ahead of schedule. There was a chance, right?

He confided: "Listen, I just … I think that's great, I don't know what else to say, I just … I guess I want you to know that really means a lot … there's no way for me to explain to you how much that means. Just let me say: it might change my life."

Shulamit looked uninterested. She had that work-was-work sort of attitude that he appreciated, but there was so much emotion building up behind the development of this game, he really did wish he had someone to share it with. Wished there was a way for him to explain what was on the line here. But, she wouldn't respect that, anyway. Now he breathed deep to settle himself, bashed the stack of papers on his desk to line them up properly and laid them flat.

"Okay. Good. You did good. Let's see if you can do it again. You get my email?"

"Of course," she said.

"And the milestones? You're good with the timeline?"

She shrugged and nodded her head, fluttered her eyelids. It gave him the impression that he could've tightened up the timeline even. He didn't think anybody was as good as him. At this rate they might be into a vertical slice in four weeks.

On his right, Charlie tumbled from the bathroom, feet moving quickly. She'd only got home from work about half an hour ago, and though she'd done much of the packing for the trip last night there were last-minute adjustments. She flitted around in the space between the bed and the closet, her suitcase open on the unmade bed. The one where he would be sleeping alone without her for the next two nights. Least it was a step up from the couch. The decision whether or not to change the sheets was an interesting dilemma. Did he want clean and fresh sheets? Sure—that made sense. Or how about sheets that Charlie had slept on? …

He hadn't been with Charlie in eight days now. Hardly worth mentioning, really, but his abstinence was at the forefront of his thoughts the entire time. That was what brought the challenge. He'd probably gone eight days without having sex with her before, but not because he was prevented. Even considering it right now brought a tension as his penis swelled out against its restraint.

It was the cage that made the decision to sleep on her dirty sheets. Sure, it came with a Reza bonus, but it would be worth it.

"Jonny—the milestones? …" Shulamit prompted him, breaking his momentary reverie.

"Yeah, the milestones," he mumbled, bringing his gaze back to the monitor.

Shulamit said, "Right, the milestones—I told you I was good …"

"Okay," he said.

Charlie said, "Jonny, is SPF 30 enough?"

He stared at Shulamit, made a low grumble and told her to hold on a moment. Charlie stood at the side of the bed, one hand on her hip, the other holding a squeezable tube of sunscreen. She wore light pajama short-shorts and an undershirt, thick mane pulled back and held up behind her head by a big, plastic butterfly hair clip.

He said, "What?"

She said, "SPF 30—is that enough for me?—for my skin …" She showed him the sunscreen and wiggled it around, clenched in her fingertips. "What did we have in Dominican Republic? Do they make SPF 50? Am I making that up? Can you Google it?"

He told her, "They make SPF 50."

"Then why do I have this? Where did it come from?" she said, more to herself than to him.

"I don't know. It's probably mine."

Body slumped in exaggerated exasperation, she made a growling sound of irritation, like this day couldn't get any worse.

Looking back at Shulamit on his monitor now, he said to her, "Sorry. My wife is going away."

"That's nice. Are you going to be reachable?"

"Am I? Oh, yeah. My wife's going without me."

"You're letting her go away without you?"

"She's not alone."

"Going with her friends." Shulamit said it as a statement rather than a question, and Jonny was glad that she didn't want to delve further.

Charlie had gone into the bathroom again but she was out now, walking lightly on the balls of her feet and showing Jonny a big smile, wagging the SPF 50 sunscreen she'd found in the bathroom. She mouthed, Got it.

Jonny continued with Shulamit, showing Charlie a thumbs-up and the best smile he could muster given the circumstances.

As they went over the milestones on the sheet, Shulamit asking pointed questions he was glad to hear, Charlie took most of the items back out of her suitcase and aligned them on the bed, standing there and surmising them with a frown. The suitcase was

also purchased by Reza, he brought it home midweek. Louis Vuitton, one of the white ones with multicolored logos. Probably cost as much as the vacation, too.

He talked with Shulamit, giving her more detail, and watched Charlie from the corner of his eye. Watched her as she went through the items and repacked them, leaving out nothing. What was the point in taking them out? He saw all the pretty things she would be wearing when she was away. Watched as she packed the tiny crochet bikini in bright turquoise, the whole thing bundled together barely more than two handfuls. His wife was going to be walking around showing it all, and he wouldn't be there to see it. Another man would. And that man would do more than see it. That man would put his hands all over it. And not just his hands.

The front door of the apartment clicked open, and two booming male voices came in, mid-laugh. Without turning around, Jonny knew it was Reza and Tate. Tate would probably be driving them to the airport. They trotted noisily down the stairs laughing and talking and Jonny told Shulamit to hold on for a moment again. She looked perturbed, and he didn't know if he liked that or hated that. She was kind of his employee, and she should do whatever he says, but she kind of wasn't his employee, and he appreciated her resistance to nonsense. So he added, "Sorry," a tiny sign of respect that seemed to brighten her face. She sat back again, folding her arms over her chest and waiting.

Reza clapped his hands once and said, "Where is my Charlie?"

Charlie emerged from the bathroom again, her face happy but still timid. She said, "I wanted to pack again."

Reza said to Tate, "Women," and it made Tate smile.

Jonny noted Tate's eyes going up and down appreciatively over Charlie's milky skin. Jonny blurted, "Is he going, too?"

Tate shook his head, as if he'd been momentarily hypnotized by Charlie's body and said, "Who? Me?"

Reza said, "No. Just me and Charlie. He's taking us to the airport."

Jonny said, "I figured."

Now Reza and Tate looked at him with quizzical expressions that said: Then why did you ask?

Now to Charlie, Reza said, "You repacked? You have everything?"

"Yes, I have everything."

"Are you ready to get going?" Tate asked.

Charlie smiled to Tate and said, "I'm ready to go. I just need to put some clothes on for the plane."

Reza rolled his eyes, and said to Jonny, "So she's not ready to go." He kept his voice low and it gave Jonny a funny flinching stomach. It was the kind of thing a guy would say to another guy about his girlfriend. But Charlie was Jonny's wife.

While Charlie went into her closet, reaching for a high shelf, Reza stood behind Jonny's chair, letting his hand curl over the top. He eyeballed the screen, and said, "This some kind of WebCam? You two jerking off with each other?"

Shulamit said, "Who's this guy?"

Reza tapped on his shoulder and said, "Who's your beautiful girlfriend? You two-timing Charlie?"

Charlie emerged from the closet now, her face no longer timid. He saw worry there, concern, and a good dose of mad, too. Her mouth was firmly set. She said, "What are you talking about?"

Reza said, "Jonny's new girlfriend. He's talking to her on the computer."

Tate chuckled.

As Charlie stomped over, Reza said, "You didn't know about this, Charlie? She's very beautiful."

Shulamit said, "We'll talk later."

She leaned forward to shut her connection down and Jonny said, "No, no, wait. We're almost done." Why would he do that? Just call her back when they were gone. But now Shulamit was pausing, leaning forward so her face filled the screen, and folding her arms on her table in front of her keyboard.

Charlie was there now, keeping herself out of the camera's view and poking her head around to take a look at the monitor. She saw Shulamit and how pretty she was. She made a hurt face to Jonny and met his gaze. Jonny said to her, "She's saving my bacon, Charlie. She's my coder and she's really fucking good."

Her bottom lip buttoned up like she'd wanted to say something but knew she shouldn't. There was another irritated sound in her throat and she turned on her heel, went into the closet and grabbed some things together and hustled them into the bathroom and closed the door.

Shulamit said, “Your wife’s going with this guy?”

Reza leaned closer, resting an elbow on the top of Jonny’s chair and lowering his gaze, making sure he was fully in the frame that he saw in the corner. He said, “Play your cards right, I might take you somewhere, too.”

“No, thanks,” Shulamit said and sat back again, resting in her chair.

Jonny said to Reza, “She’s Israeli.”

Reza made a Pfff sound, waved his hand as if dismissing everyone, and walked toward the bed. He said to Tate, “Grab her suitcase.” Then to Jonny, “Tell her we’re down in the car.”

“I will.” When he turned back to his monitor, Shulamit had disconnected.

## Chapter Five

Charlie came out of the bathroom wearing the clothes she would travel in. A bright blue blouse and white shorts. Thankfully, the shorts weren't too short. She had canvas sneakers on, and she'd adorned herself with a lot of the pewter bangles she bought when they were in the store under the Romeo-McMillan. She had three necklaces on, bohemian sort of things, made from shells and bits of bone, or something. But the pendants were clearly gemstones, and he imagined they were probably quite expensive. He didn't remember those amongst the items they bought under the McMillan, and he wondered if sometime during the week Reza took her shopping again. It was possible, maybe they'd even purchased that fancy suitcase together. Somewhere hidden amongst those pendants would be the most valuable of pendants: a key to the lock on his genitals' cage.

She was leaving now, and it wasn't the time to provoke bad feelings, so instead he extended his hand for her to come. Without hesitation she stepped into his space and his arms encircled her. He said, "Are you mad?"

"No. That would be silly."

"It would be silly. Charlie, believe me when I tell you, this girl can code. She's almost as good as me. I mean it. I gave her a list of things … Seriously, she did them all and did them right."

"I'm glad," she said, a little too coldly.

"What do you want me to do?"

"Nothing. Seriously, nothing. I'll be okay. I just need to grow up."

"Don't be hard on yourself, Charlie. Don't let Reza get in your head. She's a coder. You're my wife. And I don't think there's any way you could doubt how much I love you."

"And how much do I love you?"

He said, “You show me every day, Charlie. What you’re doing is amazing. You’re saving us.”

He could sense her beginning to brighten, and she said now, “You’re the one that’s going to save us, Jonny. And I might be away this weekend, but believe me, I’m not going to have fun. I put on a brave face for Reza, but you’re my husband. Okay? The best thing about me going away is all the free time you’re going to have. Nobody coming in and out of here, just you and your computer. I want you to get so much done. You hear me? Wow me.”

“I’ll wow you, Charlie. I can feel it beginning to come together. I don’t want to say too much, but believe me when I say: things are falling into place.”

“I don’t doubt it for a second, mister,” she said, and now she widened the distance between them, drawing back so she could look at his face.

He saw those bright green emeralds looking into his eyes, saw her sweet spattering of freckles across her cheeks and that wide and beautiful smile. This was the face that provoked him. This was the woman who made his heart beat. He wouldn’t make this difficult for her, so he said now, “You better get going. It’s okay if you have fun.”

“I’m not going to,” she said, her face turning a little surly. “I wish you were coming.”

“I’m telling you right now, Charlie. A year from now we’ll go. I swear it. And it will be just you and me. We’ll go wherever you want.”

“Don’t I know it, mister.” She gave him a firm and curt nod. A soldier heading out on a mission. She darted a kiss on his cheek, but there was no way that would be enough. He snapped her forward so her body squeezed against him. With his arms wrapped around her lower back he lifted her so she was almost up off the floor and he took her mouth. She kissed him, but felt her teeth close around his lip. He let her down. She made a funny little grimace, and said, “Ouch. Your cage poked me in my girl parts. Did you do that on purpose?”

“No. I kinda forgot I was wearing it right now. Saying goodbye to you right now is about love.”

That got her good. She veritably slumped before him, and shot a hip out and gave him the warmest, kindest expression he could imagine. This was the way he wanted to remember her.

“Get going. Don’t keep him waiting. The longer you’re standing here the longer you’re keeping me from my work.” He could barely stop from laughing as he finished the phrase.

“I better not keep the genius away from his laboratory,” she said and rolled her eyes. She darted him another kiss, said, “I love you so much, Jonny. See you on Sunday night.”

He pecked her cheek and ran his hands up her slim sides. “I’ll see you Sunday night,” he echoed.

He stood in the center of their apartment, and watched as she grabbed her purse and trotted lightly up the steps and out of the apartment, her long gingery mane swinging behind her. The door closed, and he watched the blank space where she’d been for a moment. He tugged at his cage, felt a sudden surge as he thought of all the things that might happen when she was away. Then he pushed it all away, drew in the deepest breath he could muster. Right now he had more important things to consider. Right now he had to get Shulamit on Skype again and patch things up, get her fingers moving as fast as his would be.

Later, almost near midnight, Charlie had face-timed Jonny to let him know she’d arrived safely. She talked to him for a little bit and told him all about the flight, barely mentioned Reza at all. And Reza didn’t loom in the background, or even press his cheek to hers and menace him through the phone like Jonny had anticipated he would. No, it was just Jonny and his wife, and she told him all about the travel. Told him about the hotel, and told him about the beautiful weather. As she talked, he could hear an ocean

breeze rustling palm leaves behind her. It was nighttime there, too, and though her face was lit up by the light of her camera, the background behind her was the faded color of a ripe eggplant. He couldn't help wondering where Reza was. Could imagine him maybe in the shower, Charlie taking a moment to sneak some contact with her husband, say some things to him out of earshot of their landlord. He'd probably come out, not even put a towel around his waist, walking around what was assuredly an expensive and luxurious hotel suite with his dong swinging around between his legs.

This weekend was hard, because this was distance. It was one thing when these things happened in the apartment before his eyes. It was worse still when it was done elsewhere in the city while he was stuck at home. But this was distance with a capital D. She was what?—thirteen-hundred miles away? He couldn't just say enough is enough and slam everything down and stomp out of the apartment, find her at some nightclub and yank her out of Reza's arms. Not that he physically could take her from Reza anyway. But at least there was always that option of confrontation. There was nothing he could do when they were so far away.

His mind had begun to wander as Charlie babbled more. He loved hearing her sweet voice, but didn't really care about the details of the hotel.

Maybe he could get Shulamit to hire some ex-Mossad guys to go down and take care of Reza in the Caribbean. Gosh, Jonny wasn't even connected. Detective, I had nothing to do with it, I was thousands of miles away.

"What are you smiling about, mister?" she'd asked him and he felt stupid.

He couldn't do that. He wouldn't. One, he would get caught. Two, he wasn't a murderer. Three, what if there was a mixup? It wasn't impossible to think that somehow things could go wrong and Charlie could be the one who got hurt. Or even that Charlie would witness it. Most importantly: he didn't want Reza dead, he wanted him beaten. How could you rub your success in someone's face when they were dead? Reza was a necessary villain. Murder was just dumb fantasy.

So they'd kissed each other through their phones, both of them actually touching lips to screens, and he said good night. Then he practically jumped into the bed that she'd been sleeping in with the Reza. Sure, he should stay up late and get more work done but right now after having spoken to her, and the stress of the week, the best thing he could imagine was getting a good night sleep. Been on the couch for a while now. On the couch and listening to his wife with another man. So he practically went spreadeagled, staying on the side that Charlie used. In the morning, while he woke refreshed, he did have a hair in his mouth. He might like to think it was one of Charlie's, but it was short and coarse and almost porcine, and he knew whose it was.

As well as the hair in his mouth, he'd also woken on the farther side of the bed. The smell was different there. A combo of musk, and man sweat and stale cologne. It lessened as he scurried back to the sweet Charlie side.

Morning had been great. It was bright and sunny and he didn't think about much about what Charlie might be doing in the Bahamas without him. It seemed too hopeful out there for her to be doing bad things, or for bad things to be performed on her.

He blasted through a veritable shit ton of work. Skipped breakfast, and his fingers bashed code straight out for hours on end until the tips of his fingers tingled when he stopped. Indian was ordered in for lunch, a real spicy vindaloo and he ate it at his desk. Mid-afternoon Shulamit posted completed tasks and he laughed and shook his head at her proficiency.

A luxury he added, something that might even have been missing recently: music. Music brought him happiness and he put it up pretty loud; not enough for distraction, just enough to get his head nodding and his feet tapping while his fingers beat out scads and scads of code.

The vindaloo did something mean to his tummy at around three in the afternoon and he lost almost twenty minutes in the can. But even sitting on the toilet he used his tablet to test run scripts. And despite the afternoon's surprise and spicy porcelain devotions he was hungry in the evening. Perhaps because of it.

He ordered a burger, fries, and a milkshake for delivery in the hopes that avoiding the international might be gentler on his stomach. While he waited for the delivery of his meal he called Javed, the second coder he'd hired. Guy was also good; young and local and living in the same city. They'd gone through the stage development stuff. It was on time and error-free but he wasn't an extra mile kind of player like Shulamit was.

So here he was, sitting still in his office chair, the sun gone down now but the night bright and he hadn't even thought bad things about Charlie once. He had wrapped up work-talk with Javed, just shooting the shit with him now—he was much easier to relate with than Shulamit—waiting for his food to arrive and not wanting to engage new work until it did.

He was laughing because Javed was talking about this guy they both happened to know called Craig Jefferson. Still in high school, Jonny'd done freelance for the guy, a project manager at OutHouse, working on individual assets he needed. But Craig was now doing project management at the big-time Lancer Games. Javed worked briefly on a project at Lancer and they were both regaling what a dick Craig was, and how he didn't know his ass from his elbow but acted like he did. Stupid old fuck. His phone binged while he was still laughing and he checked it.

That was how his evening of torture began; Reza sending the first picture of what would be many.

## Chapter Six

The first picture of the night had been simple enough, and nothing to provoke great fear—but he wasn't stupid and he knew there would be more. The thought curdled his stomach enough that he broke off his fun conversation with Javed and told him he had to get going.

The picture Reza had sent was of Charlie and she didn't know she was being photographed. She wore that crochet bikini. The one so tiny and sparse if she didn't shave her pubic hair you could've seen it through the gaps in the knit. At least she wore the white undershirt over top. But you could still see the turquoise material under the thin white cotton. She wore her Fedora and all the pewter jewelry. Wherever she was it was sunny, and it was daytime. The sun was going down, though, and the photo, actually quite a nice one, was a very warm color tone. Charlie looked beautiful. It was from mid-thigh up, and she was holding something in her hands. It looked like it might be her iPhone. Her head was turned down to watch it. Fuck you, Reza, he thought, she's probably trying to text me. Though no text came.

Sure, a pretty nice photo, but still he knew they now had an umbilical attached between him and Reza. One he wouldn't ignore. One he wouldn't be able to ignore. His hands began to sweat.

The food arrived, and he went up to the kitchen and didn't say a word to the young guy who delivered the food. He took the bag from gave him twenty dollars and closed the door. Wasn't even sure if that was the right amount. He might have tipped the guy five dollars or he might've shafted the guy five dollars. It didn't matter. His mouth was going dry. He fumbled for the wax cardboard milkshake cup and put both hands around it. He drew deep on the straw and felt ice crystals flood his mind. That was perfect. Freeze the dread.

Another photo came. He pushed the food away. He was hungry but his appetite had completely disappeared. He checked the screen. Charlie now, without the undershirt, walking on the beach in her bikini. How sweet.

In the picture it was clear there was a good-looking young tanned guy watching her from a nearby beach towel. Watching this tall, thin, ginger-haired supermodel strut

around in barely a thing. The shot was from behind, Charlie again not knowing she was being photographed. Probably not knowing that Reza was taunting her husband at home with images of her scantily dressed.

The scoops of her almost-bare ass were perfectly visible and beautiful. She shone brightly, her skin so pale and perfect in that bright Caribbean sun. He hoped she wore her SPF 50.

He let the food sit on the counter and stumbled mindlessly down into the apartment again and lay on the couch with his phone on his chest. No more images came for a while and he watched the city sky go from pale blue to a deep, burnt orange. Then the nighttime came, and the sky was a deep black-tinged indigo. The lights of the city began to come alive and Jonny still stared wide-eyed at nothing.

Four hours later was when the next picture came. He'd been laying on the couch the whole time. His dinner was cold, his workstation had gone dark, shutting itself off three and a half hours ago. The image was at nighttime, of course, Charlie now, and she was out at dinner. She wore a slinky flower-printed dress. She looked fantastic in it and he wished he was there. Wished he could whisper in her ear how beautiful she looked. No, right now, the man whispering in her ear would be Reza.

The place where they ate looked expensive. Exotic tropical flowers blossoming in the middle of tables, well-dressed patrons, well-dressed waitstaff bustling between tables in black pants and crisp white shirts. He could imagine the clinking of glass and the sound of knives on expensive china plates. He could imagine the chatter of rich people as Charlie waited for her meal.

It wasn't long after that until he sent another gift. This one not a picture at all. This one a little video. Short, maybe only seven seconds. Reza shot it while sitting across the table from Charlie. This time she knew she was being recorded, and she smiled for the camera. She cocked her head and set down a wineglass. She licked her lips before she said, "Hi, Jonny. Hope you're working …"

She lifted her hand and gave the camera a little wave. It broke his heart. He wasn't working. He knew he should be, but his attention was wrapt by this little message-machine in his hands. He wouldn't be able to put it down until they stopped coming. Until he knew she was safe.

An hour went by, and he drifted off to sleep. The phone dinging on his chest woke him up. Of course, another message from Reza. Another video clip, this time the camera whipped around a little too harshly and his head swayed on the pillow while he watched. The camera finally found focus. Tinny music banged in the little speakers. They were at a loud nightclub. There were a lot of people, and the crowd was jostling. When Reza finally found his subject with his phone's camera, Jonny saw Charlie

walking away, and she was doing a little dance. She had her pale white fingers pointed in the air, jabbing mildly as she shook her booty and strutted. She was being beckoned to the dance floor by a man he didn't know. A handsome guy, slick and glossy black hair combed back from his face, young, with an unshaven dimpled chin and black eyes. Tommy's heart seized up.

The handsome guy held out a hand and Charlie took it, and the other dancers on the dance floor swallowed them up. Just when he thought that video was over, he could hear Reza chuckling and breathing through his nose.

It looked like he was sitting at a VIP table because Jonny could see now that Charlie had passed through a section cordoned off with velvet ropes. The camera panned down to the table where she'd probably been sitting with Reza. It was glass, more flowers on the center, there was an empty wineglass, two bottles of vodka on the table. He had the impression there were more people sitting on the left-hand side of Reza. Of most importance were three white, powdery lines where Charlie would have been sitting. There were three more dusty sweeps where it would be surmised that three more lines had previously existed. Had those three lines been snorted up Charlie's nose?

"Fuck, Charlie," he groaned. He took the rubbery edge of his phone's cover and poked his brow just above the bridge of his nose, trying to grind out his mind's eye, wishing these pictures weren't being sent to him. Was Charlie snorting cocaine?

Twenty minutes later another video arrived. He was wide alert as if he'd snorted his own three lines of cocaine. The video started at a cleaner table, suggesting to the viewer, Jonny, that the cocaine he'd seen earlier was now gone. Also up his wife's nose?

Now the camera scanned the crowd until it found that bright apricot hair tousling around in the flashing lights of the nightclub. Charlie out there on the dance floor. She had both long, pale arms up over her head and two men danced with her. One her handsome suitor with his brushed back hair, the other one a tall and large black man. He was well-dressed and a good dancer; he kept his legs wide apart and Charlie danced her body up against him. She must be able to feel the man's package against her stomach. Jonny wanted to throw up. He sat upright and hung his head between his knees for a moment, pretty sure that Indian food he thought he'd exorcised was going to make a return visit. He burped.

Half an hour later another taunting video came. This time it was Charlie talking to him again. Charlie had too much to drink. She was slurring, she was glassy-eyed, sitting at the table with her hands clasped together and her cheek braced against her combined hands. Her body swayed from side to side. She said, "Hi, Jonny," and she giggled. A deep voice from off-camera, not Reza's, said something to her Jonny couldn't decipher, and she looked to the left of the camera and laughed. Then she narrowed her eyes like she was mad at this person and she gave that man a wagging finger like he was going

to be in trouble. The camera shook with Reza's laughter, too. She blew the camera a kiss and said, "I miss you, Jonny."

That one was nice. But it was so filled with suggestive menace he hated it. Hated to see his wife like that. Hated to see her act that way even though she might think she was being fun. She was being taken advantage of. She was being used as a pawn in a game against Jonny.

Only twenty minutes later another picture arrived. This one shot underneath the nightclub table. It punched him in the chest. An up-skirt shot, and Charlie clearly not wearing any panties. Her pussy almost visible, the undulating scoop of her soft vulva swells, commissure pressed down on the underside of her skirt as she sat with her pretty labia mashed underneath her. That was bad enough, but her white legs shone brightly, lit up and over-exposed in the camera's flash, and curled over the inside of her thigh was a huge, black hand. Jet black, the camera unable to distinguish between the two wildly different skin tones and blowing them both out. Jonny coughed bile, made a crying groan. The man had his hand on the inside of her thigh. Slipping up another six inches he could touch her bare pussy. What the fuck was happening down there?

Half an hour later Reza sent him another short video. Charlie back on the dance floor. She danced with three men this time. Not the black one from before and not the handsome guy with the tan. Three new guys. All of them Jonny would guess were Latin. Well-dressed and well-groomed, big smiles, tight clothing that showed off their muscle. Expensive looking things, too, garish, Gianni Versace and Gucci for men. He fucking hated these guys. And these guys he fucking hated were putting their hands all over Charlie's body and Charlie did nothing to stop them. No, quite the contrary, Charlie was loving it. On the dance floor with all these other people, all of them behaving like fucking assholes, Charlie shimmied and shook with her hands up over her head, her beautiful hair thrashing around, her hips shooting left and right. Men gyrated against her, fake-fucked her from behind through their clothes, dry-humping like goddamn teenagers. And Charlie loved it. Rubbing her ass up against the guy who was grinding his dick into her bottom. The other two watched and laughed, touched her, put their hands on her stomach and danced with her. She was passed around, enjoyed by all of them. The video went dark again.

He sat up and cocked his arm back. He could end this right now. Just wing this fucking phone right across the apartment and smash it against the far wall. Fuck you, Reza, if you can't get to me you can't hurt me. This connection between them could be severed. But he knew he wouldn't. He knew he would sit here and watch everything that his tormentor sent to him. So he suffered, looking at the ceiling and waiting for the next image.

Reza sent another, just as bad as the previous ones, and of course, also incrementally worse. She was inebriated in this video. Evidenced by her babbling and laughing. They

were still at the club, but somewhere quieter, maybe in a private lounge, or even leaving, crossing through a lobby. She could barely stand. The men were holding her up, trying to get her to walk, but she would stumble on her heels and fall into another man. They laughed and talked in Spanish. When they would help her to stand again, their hands would caress her and touch her in places they shouldn't. Charlie laughed, too, thinking this was all fun. All Jonny saw was danger. This wasn't fun, this was scary.

He frantically texted:

Jonny: okay don't seriously its enuff

Reza didn't respond.

One of the Latin guys grabbed his bulge while Charlie's back was turned. Adjusting himself, obviously getting hard. Did he think he was going to fuck Charlie? Was he going to fuck Charlie? Jonny stood now, wanting to rip out of his skin. This was too much. This was way too much and now he wished he had smashed his phone.

Jonny: please Reza take care of her

Reza didn't respond, and now Jonny dialed Charlie but her phone went straight to automated voicemail.

Waiting for the next call almost killed him. All he could hear was the pounding of his heart in his eardrums. Thump, thump, thump, thump. Faster than it should be, harder than it should be. He felt wild and electric and angry and so incredibly frightened. He jumped when his phone dinged again, a video sent by Reza.

Charlie was so drunk she could barely talk. She was laughing, and the guys were making fun of her as she walked down a hotel hallway ahead of them. She was going from the left to the right, seesawing as she walked, unable to maintain a straight line, putting a hand out to brace herself on the wall. The men laughed and joked in foreign

languages. When she looked like she would stumble, the black man was there again, putting out his huge hand across the small of her back the other one dipping around to the front. Probably touching her chest. She thanked him in slurred speech, and he looked back at the rest of them and smiled. The video ended.

Jonny could feel himself dry-sobbing. While his jaw trembled he texted.

Jonny: Reza I will give u anything if u keep her safe

Reza didn't respond to his text.

He only had to wait five more minutes for the next video. It was Charlie getting into bed. Not under the covers but just collapsing on top of a big king-size bed that looked like it was in the expensive suite where Charlie had called him from last night. For a moment he thought she would be safe, but he could hear other men's voices in the room. Reza called out to one of them and said, "Yeah, help yourself. There's more in the fridge." Something banged, two men were talking near the camera, one more distant, perhaps in another room, laughed. Charlie climbed up on the bed and collapsed face down.

The camera bumped and bobbled for a while, Reza crossing the room, the sound of the mattress as he sat down on it. Then the camera swooped around again and Charlie was seen on her side, laying in the center of the bed, her knees drawn up, her tight skirt pulled a little high. Reza's big hand appeared in the frame, touching at her knee and then slipping upward. A man laughed nearby, a deep and scary sound. A pop can opened. Maybe a beer. Jonny's heart pounded.

Reza's hand slipped under Charlie's skirt, and he began to pry it upward. She wasn't wearing any panties and she mumbled some kind of complaint and tried to move away but gave up. He pulled the skirt right up to show her bare bottom. Another guy came and sat on the bed, too. The new guy's tanned hand with a gold pinky ring slapped her bare ass cheek and Charlie mumbled No, and she tried to slap his hand away but missed. She was so drunk her arm folded up behind her back, her wrist bent behind her awkwardly, and stayed there. The other guy reached over, his hand coming back into the frame and caressing her elbow.

"Don't," she said thickly,

Reza laughed and he dug his thumb into her ass cheek and spread her wide. The camera moved a little closer, Reza pushing his phone nearer Charlie's body. He jabbed his thumb near her vulva and he pulled her labia wide. Her sex was completely bare, and he tugged like he was trying to make a puppet talk, making her labia wiggle like it said something. There was a slick crackling sound. Reza said, "Hi, Jonny," like it was Charlie's vagina talking, "I'm so hungry."

Someone else in the room laughed loud and loon-like. Reza was stroking her pussy with his thumb. Someone in the room belched, another man gave a throaty chuckle. Reza shut the camera down.

Jonny waited, sitting there with the greatest most enormous rage he'd ever felt in his entire life. He looked through the blank phone like it was a window and the other world was just on the other side of the glass. He waited for it to light up again and let him glimpse what was happening in this other reality. This other reality that he created in his mind but existed so far away. That was it: she was so far away and he could do nothing.

Tears began to stream down his cheeks. But he wasn't sad. He wasn't sad at all. He was murderous. He was brimming bright red rage. He was also hard as a rock. His cuckold cage crimped around his meager erection, choking and crushing it, metal tines digging into his sexual flesh.

He waited like that, the most intense emotional experience of his life, sizzling with electric hate and fear, waiting and waiting to find out what happened to his wife. No more calls came.

## Chapter Seven

The baseball bat was aluminum, and it had been a long time since he felt one in his grip. Little League. That would be the last time. He held it now in both hands, the rubberized tape squeaking under his fingers as his hands rotated to firm his clutch. It was eight-thirty now. The plane from the Bahamas landed at seven-fifteen. He checked online to see that it was on time and saw that it had arrived five minutes early. Now he stood to the right side at the bottom of the steps from the kitchen, his back in the corner, the tall lamp and its broad shade in front of him.

The bat was purchased today after lunch. The morning had been a write-off. He didn't even try to work. Shulamit had contacted him and he ignored her message. Javed called and he let it go unanswered. He stewed. Then when he knew what he would do, he left the apartment, walked the city until he found a sporting goods store.

The only sound in the apartment was his deep and heavy breathing, the sound of his teeth clicking and grinding were in his ears. A soft ding emanated from the silence down the hall. The elevator sound. It had been half an hour since the last time he heard it, and he was almost certain this time it was Charlie and Reza coming home. He prepared himself for what he must do. The last time had been a false alarm, this time he was sure it was Charlie and Reza. And indeed, as he sat and gripped the baseball bat even tighter, he heard footsteps coming down the hall. No one talking—but what was there to say between them? Reza had taken her to the Caribbean, got her drunk and coked up, laid her on a bed and let maybe a half-dozen guys fuck her. What was there to talk about?

This was over, it couldn't go on anymore. It would end today with a grand and bloody finality that would change his life forever but it had to be done.

He heard a suitcase set down in the hall just beyond the apartment door; heard the jingling of keys, a cat's-head key-chain tapping underneath the doorknob as the lock was whisked open. The door was kicked, and it knocked against the wall next to the fridge and made a picture frame rattle. A grunt sounded, then a growl of irritation. The door slammed closed.

He sat there waiting, looking for his opportunity.

There was a moment of silence, the sound of clothing rustling, and then Charlie jumped into view, her high heels stomping down the steps—and there she was, two feet away from him.

He pushed his back into the wall, clenched his teeth tighter and waited.

Reza didn't come.

Charlie stomped across the apartment to the bed, and with two hands, heaved the suitcase like she was giving a child an airplane ride. It landed on the bed, bounced and toppled right off to the other side and clattered on the floor in front of the closet. She made another growling sound, and Jonny continued to watch her.

All he wanted to do right now was rush to her and take her in his arms. Unfortunately, he had a very important job to do.

She kicked her shoes off, purposely flicking them toward the closet, one hurtling and tapping against the bathroom door. Now she stomped and stood at Jonny's workstation. She looked at it. It was dim and shut down, and she slapped her hands on her thighs and made an animated What the fuck? gesture. She ran her hand through her hair and growled again. She stomped into the bathroom and slammed the door closed.

Fuck. It was obvious Reza wasn't here. He waited another half a minute, his grip on the baseball bat slackening then he stepped forward, peered around the corner and up into the kitchen, saw no one. He heard Charlie flush the toilet, and he walked to one of the red IKEA chairs and lay the bat on the floor, tapping it with his toes until it rolled, hidden underneath.

He walked to the center of the apartment feeling so unsure of himself. He was bewildered with indecision. The bathroom door clicked open and Charlie emerged with the hissing sound of the toilet remaining behind her. She saw him there, and both of them locked gaze but said nothing. Her jaw was firmly set, and her brow was furrowed, but he saw a happiness gleam in her eyes.

He hurtled toward her, and she said, "Where were you? I was—" and then she grunted a huffing sound as he hugged the life out of her. Her hands went over him, but she pushed him away.

He said, "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine."

He held her shoulders and pushed her back but gripped her so she couldn't get away. "Are you?"

“I told you I’m fine.” Her tone was certain.

“Where is he? Where is Reza?”

“He went out with friends.” A haughty disdain in her voice.

“He came back on the plane with you? He’s in the city?”

“Yeah, he is. I told you he went out with friends.”

“When is he coming back?”

“Were you working?”

“I was.”

“Did you get a lot done?” There was a demanding in her voice.

“I got a lot done,” he said, now feeling a certain irritation in himself as well. He said, “What’s going on?”

“What’s going on? I go away for two days and I come home expecting to see you passed out on the bed from overwork. I come in and everything’s blank. Every thing is black.”

“Charlie, why are you so mad?” Visions of her waking up in the morning with her sore and tattered vagina hanging open, laying on a bed spattered with semen, fulfilled his question for him. She’d been violated. That was why she was mad.

She made as if she was considering an answer and instead he tugged at her shoulders and her head snapped back. He circled his arms around her again and squeezed her tight, his hands making hard fists over her slender back. He said, “I’m going to fucking kill him.”

“Kill him? Kill who?—Reza?”

“I’m going to get him back. Don’t you worry, Charlie. He won’t get away with it.”

“Get away with what?” she said.

“What he did to you. It’s a fucking crime, Charlie. I don’t care if he did it in the Caribbean, I don’t care what their laws are. I know what the punishment is.”

“What did he do?”

“He sent me videos, Charlie.”

“What?” she said and pushed herself away from him.

He said, “Of what he did to you.”

She looked puzzled and said, “What did he do to me?”

“He gave you to all those men.”

She stared at him her mouth fallen open with her brow lowered in puzzlement. She shook her head and struggled with what to say. Finally she said, “What are you talking about?”

“He let all those men have their way with you.”

“What men?” There was a certain irritation in her voice again.

“All the men from the club. They got you naked on the bed …”

She rolled her eyes and crossed her arms over her chest. She said, “Yeah?”

Red boiling rage swept over him and he blurted with contempt: “You let them fuck you?”

The muscles of her jaw flexed and her arms uncrossed. It looked like she might slap him. She had a hand back, her palm laid out flat. She said, “Nobody had sex with me.”

“You don’t know they did. You were passed out, and they put you on the bed …”

“Nobody had sex with me, Jonny.” She was positive.

“Charlie, you were so drunk—”

She scoffed and rolled her eyes, turned her body away from him by a degree. Mad but also slightly embarrassed.

“You were, Charlie. He lifted your skirt and showed everybody … you know …”

“He did not, Jonny.”

“He did, Charlie. I saw it myself.”

She was skeptical, shaking her head at him. “I know I didn’t have sex with anyone. Do you think six men would have sex with me and I didn’t know about it? Do you think I could have a little too much to drink and even one man would have sex with me and I would wake up and not know about it? I know the next morning even with you.”

That hurt, and he was frozen, not knowing what to say. He didn't know how to explain it to her, tell her what he'd seen, let her know what had been done to her.

She said, "Jonny. I did not have sex with anyone." Each word was carefully enunciated.

He stood there frozen, his hands outstretched, his palms turned up. He knew what he'd seen, he knew what had been done to her. Parts of him wanted to fall at her feet and believe what she said. Parts of him wanted to take her up in his arms and together they would cry at the enormous relief that he was mistaken. A bigger part of him wished he could communicate to her what he knew. What had been shown to him.

She said, "Did he send you video of them having sex with me?"

"No."

"Jonny. I am telling you. I was not in bed with six men. I wasn't even in bed with one man. Except to sleep."

He shook his head in puzzlement. "He sent me video …" His voice was so sad, a tickle working up his back, doubt weaving its way through his thoughts finally. He'd been duped. He was so stupid. He'd lost a day of work for no reason. He said, "You didn't have sex with anyone?"

Arms crossed over her chest again, she still glowered. "No one."

"No, Charlie, I can't believe it," he babbled with relief but still struggling with doubt. He was going to be her savior, he was ready to do the ultimate thing, he was ready to vindicate her, to bring her the justice she deserved. For nothing.

He hugged her again, and she uncrossed her arms. She said, "That's why you weren't working?"

"I did work. I did, Charlie. I got a lot done. Yesterday I got so much done."

"And today?"

"Well, why didn't you call me today? Why didn't you send me a text?"

"I lost my phone," she said, moving away from him, her arms uncrossing and hanging down at her sides. She looked down and they both comprehended. She hadn't lost her phone, someone had hidden it on her just for this reason. Quietly, she said, "Reza said he texted you this morning."

"He didn't."

She sighed, still afraid to meet his gaze, and she threw up her arms. She wore the same thing she had traveled in on Friday evening, and now she left their circle and headed to the closet. She opened the door and pulled out her PJs.

He said, "Why are you so mad?"

She took off her top, folded her arms behind her and began to unclasp her bra. She said, "I'm not. I'm not mad."

"Then why are you stomping around?"

"I'm not." She took the bra off and tossed it on the bed, stood there bare-chested, unfolded her white undershirt then pushed her arms through it and pulled it over her head.

"Yes, you were. You came in here upset."

"You weren't at your desk."

"You were mad when you came in. I saw you looking at my workstation, seeing I wasn't there, you were already mad."

She shook her head at him like she was angry again. She said, "Where were you? Hiding? Are you spying on me?"

"No. I was standing in plain view and you walked past me."

Now she slumped; didn't have an explanation for that one and she felt a little bad that she might've walked right past him and missed him. Take that. She softened a little, unzipped her skirt and let it fall to the floor. She pulled her panties down, too, and turned her back to him and he saw her pert white buns. He said, "You didn't get any sun?"

She kicked her skirt into the closet, turned around and put her pajama shorts on. She said, "A little. I wasn't out in the sun much."

He returned to it. "And why are you mad?"

"I'm not mad, Jonny. I'm not. I'm just, I don't know … It was a lot this weekend. It was a lot, and … look, there's no way I'm mad at you. Although it would've been nice to see you at your workstation when I got home, I'm not mad at you."

"You're mad at Reza?"

"Can we just not talk about it?"

“Did he do something?”

“Jonny, I told you. I told you he did nothing. And I mean nothing.”

## Chapter Eight

Jonny helped Charlie move her suitcase back onto the bed, heaving it to lay on top. When he stood again, the two of them silent and looking at each other for a moment, he wiggled his right leg to adjust the cage inside his pants.

She said, “How is that thing?”

“Uncomfortable.”

“Do you think I should take a look at it?”

It was an exciting thought but the profound enormity of the moment squashed some of its sexuality. “Yeah. Maybe you should.”

She said, “I’ll get some ointment.”

Charlie went into the bathroom and flicked the light on and he undid his belt buckle, unbuttoned and unzipped his pants and let them fall to his ankles. He held up the front of his shirt as she returned.

She came back to him, her eyes lowered to the small metal cage bundled between his legs. There was concern there. She held ointment in one hand, stepping lightly and looking so pretty in just her shorts and undershirt. Her hair hung around her chest and shoulders, an unkempt but beautiful mess. She squatted down in front of him and he smelled cigarettes.

She said, “Sit down, Jonny. Sit down on the edge of the bed and open your legs for me.”

“Okay.”

He set himself down and let his knees go wide, his heels touching. She got on her knees and wormed herself close to take a look. Her mouth switched from side to side as she regarded his genitals through narrowed eyes. She said, “It doesn’t look bad. It’s a little red, I guess. It’s itchy?”

“Yeah. It rubs sometimes.”

"I'll bet," she said.

"Are you going to rub ointment on it?"

"I think I should," she said.

Now his heart did start to pound, and he felt a sexual surge where there shouldn't be one. Five minutes ago he was ready to go to jail. He was ready to sacrifice everything he had to vindicate the woman he loved. He was ready to restore her sanctity through violence. Now it was all gone. All washed away. All his anger and pain of the last twenty hours completely purposeless. But he hadn't known that. He'd been ready to do it, and now it didn't matter. Just when he didn't think things could get any crazier …

Charlie unscrewed the top of the ointment, set it down on his thigh and it made him flinch.

He said, "That's cold."

She said, "Sorry," and it at least provoked a little smile from her. Now she squeezed out a rolling pearl onto the middle finger of her right hand, her eyes still on his constrained manhood. This was medical, it was sad and tragic, it was awful—and yet he could feel himself growing aroused. The ring that circled his scrotum began to tighten and tug downward. But he wouldn't stop her.

"You ready?" she asked him. "It's going to be cold."

"Go ahead," he said and leaned back a little, put his hands out behind him and watched between his legs. What he had wasn't much, it was enough, but it was very small compared to what Reza had. Bundled with steel wires into a tight ball between his legs it looked even tinier now. Next to Charlie's hand, which he could use in comparison to the man who had sex with her frequently, he could see the size difference in stark contrast in his mind's eye. Was it possible that his penis was shrinking inside this cage?

Charlie touched him and his legs bounced a little, the lid tumbling off his thigh patting quietly onto the floor. Charlie giggled.

"Cold?"

He said, "It's okay."

Charlie swiped her fingers in slippery circles where the contact against his skin was tightest. That was the steel ring that went around the base of his penis and around underneath his scrotum. Every touch got his tummy fluttering, and she watched it as her finger went around and around.

She worked the ointment in and he could feel its soothing medicinal properties already at work. She lingered, like she knew that he was enjoying it and didn't want it to end. Around her neck there was a thin chain, and it dipped between her breasts, hidden behind the undershirt. But he knew what was most likely at the end of that necklace. Very quietly, he asked her, "Do you think you could unlock it?"

They knew the rules, and he saw her posture slump a little. He continued: "Just to put the ointment on." Like this wasn't just for the sake of the skin irritation.

"I shouldn't."

"You don't have to. But I'd really appreciate it."

"Jonny, don't …" she sighed.

He let it go. Her fingers continued anyway, knowing he was getting more from this than he should, but she didn't seem to care. His heart beat low and hard, and strangely deep in his chest like it had sunken. He asked her, "What did you do on your trip?"

"It wasn't much."

"Did you have fun?"

"You told me to."

"Yeah, no, I know I told you. Did you?"

"Sometimes."

"The pictures Reza sent me, it looks like you're having fun. At night? Was it at a club?"

"Yeah."

"You went out for dinner, you went to a night club …?"

"We did," she said with a soft sigh, her head cocked to one side as she used her first two fingers to stroke at the sensitive bit underneath his scrotum.

He tightened his stomach muscles making the tight metal globe of his genitals tilt upward so it sat upright between his legs, bundled up smaller than a tennis ball. Charlie knew what she did felt good to him and still she did it. He could feel all the badness, hurt, and fear he suffered over the last twenty-four hours begin to seep from him, toxicants exiting through his pores like a poisonous sweat. His heart began to pump those feelings of love for her.

She said, “I don’t know what to tell you, Jonny. You want to hear all the boring details?—”

“No. Well, y—”

“—because there wasn’t much that was exciting. Reza did a bunch of work all day on Saturday. We got in late on Friday and went to bed. We didn’t even… you know… do anything. That was okay. Then when I woke up on Saturday morning, he was gone already. Didn’t even leave me a note. So I went down to the beach and just walked around a little.”

“Did you wear that bikini?”

“No. I felt foolish.”

“Then what happened?”

“He came back after lunch and didn’t even eat with me.”

“Was he mean to you?”

“Not mean. Just didn’t care that I was there.”

“At all?”

“Not until the late, late, late afternoon. Then he came home and made me go down to the beach with him.”

“What was the weather like?”

“I told you. It was hot and sunny.”

“He made you wear that bikini?”

She was quiet for a moment then softly said, “Yeah.”

“He paraded you around?”

She said, “Is this too much for you?”

He shook his head, said, “What do you mean?”

She withdrew her fingers and her eyes went to his then back down between his legs. He saw that he had hardened within the cage. It was pulling upward on his balls. He’d been so caught up in the angst of hearing about her with another man so far away from home his mind had suppressed the discomfort between his legs.

He said, “You can tell me.”

“I don’t think I should. We’re not supposed to do this.” She sat back down on her heels, and he watched as her hand swept around the floor until it found the ointment lid. She screwed the cap back on it and stood up, said, “You should put your pants back on.”

He watched her walk away and into the bathroom to put the ointment away and when she came back out he asked, “Are you mad at me?”

She walked to the side of the bed and unzipped her suitcase. She said, “I told you I’m not mad at you, Jonny. I’m not.”

He stood and hiked his pants up, did the buckle. Now his genitals were uncomfortable. He was throbbing between his legs but there was nowhere for his penis to grow—it tightened against the steel but the ointment made it slick and it felt like everything was slipping around down there. Except his testicles. Those felt like they were being squeezed hard. He sat back down.

“Charlie, just tell me what happened at night. Please? I just want to know you’re okay.”

Charlie began to unpack. She said, “You can see that I’m okay, Jonny. He sent you pictures?”

“Yeah. Those guys had their hands all over you. He sent me videos of you dancing with them. I saw that you weren’t wearing any panties.”

That stopped her. She stood with her back to him, a bundle of clothes folded up and held at her waist. He could see her head go forward. She said, “He told me not to wear them.”

“And you do everything he says.”

Talking to the wall, she said, “You know I do.”

He hung his own head, put his hands together in his lap and looked at them. “I do. I know that,” he said.

Charlie went in the closet and began putting things away. He turned and set a hand out, sitting on his hip now. He said, “Did you do cocaine?”

She didn’t answer him. Just tidied up her clothes and put them away. That was an answer. He didn’t need to ask her again. He watched her a little longer, and she didn’t want to offer up anything more. Something was bothering her, she was annoyed. It was probably Reza. He didn’t feel like it was him. She would probably tell him. So he’d let her brood and unpack her clothes.

Before she was done the throbbing between his legs had subsided and he stood up and dropped himself into his workstation and fired up his computer. He said, “I better get back to work.”

Reza didn’t come home on the Sunday night. Just the same, Jonny slept on the couch, anticipating his arrival.

Reza never showed, and in the morning he had great regret that he hadn’t slipped into bed with Charlie. And when she woke in the morning, she was mad Reza hadn’t come home, too. Something had happened between them and he was having trouble sussing it out. He’d asked her a few times, and she told him she didn’t want to discuss it. He’d even pleaded, just a little, and she told him ‘later.’ He left it alone, but wow had it bothered him.

He was of two thoughts: the first, of course, that there was something that had transpired, something dirty, probably with those other men, and she’d been offended. Given the video he’d seen, his mind locked on this fact, but as time passed and he watched his wife around the house, he began to form another opinion: the second, that Charlie had been ignored in the Caribbean and she was mad at Reza for that. There were associated thoughts that danced around this line of thinking. They were hard to

take. Like, maybe Reza was flirtatious with some other women and it made Charlie jealous. But the worst, so bad he was afraid to poke around it too much: Charlie wanted to have sex with Reza but he had been too busy. Well, wasn't that a fucking killer? She'd said to him quite pointedly: I did not have sex with anyone, Jonny. There was irritation in her voice. Was that because she wanted to and didn't get it? He didn't like that one bit. Was it possible he'd be happier to know she'd been violated in some way? Was it possible that would be a less hurtful outcome for him? It was, but he'd suffer ahead of Charlie any time you asked him, so he'd actually prefer to hear the worst news. The thoughts of her being violated had him buying a baseball bat and preparing to do the ultimate deed.

The idea that he would feel pain over hers had a nobility that eased some of his discomfort. There was a security in knowing you were righteous. Even if the truth of that meant that as much as your wife hated having sex with the landlord and his disgusting monster penis, she'd grown to want it.

Reza came home again, Monday after work, late in the evening near bedtime.

## Chapter Nine

Charlie had been home from the library for an hour before she made dinner for just the two of them. It was like she had been waiting to see if Reza would arrive.

He didn't, and Jonny sensed her exasperation as she banged pots and pans around in the kitchen, using some of the expensive items in the fridge to make them a pretty good salad with chicken in it. But they didn't eat together at the kitchen table, instead she plunked it down on his workstation and then sat on the couch by herself. That was a message. Keep working.

He was, too, she didn't have to worry. But it wasn't like Charlie to be so irritated all the time. So he said nothing, kept on typing with a big bowl of salad in his lap, picking away at it as he worked. Next to him, on his left side, the TV flicked to life but instead of watching The Twilight Zone, Charlie watched dumb game shows. They were together in the room but he felt strangely apart. She would get over it soon, whatever it was. He knew she would. He'd never seen her like this before, though.

When he was done his dinner he gathered up his bowl, went to the coffee table and collected hers sitting empty in front of her bare feet curled over the table's lip. He thanked her for dinner and he gave her a smile, not too earnest as to be pleading, but enough to show her how much he cared for her and respected whatever she was going through. That worked. She gave a funny little head shake like she knew she was being difficult, and she smiled for him, too.

He went in the kitchen and washed the dishes and then he washed the pan where she cooked the chicken. He put it all away, then sat with her on the couch. They didn't say anything, but he could tell Charlie liked having him sitting next to her. They didn't hold hands, and they didn't look at each other, they just watched TV together. After fifteen minutes, he said "I better get back to work," and as he sat up, he patted the top of her foot. It made him feel better. Having her in a bad mood like this gripped at his heart and made its beat seem strained. But that meager contact seemed to repair it a little, and he felt physically lighter as he returned to his workstation.

Code was plucked away for hours and he got a lot done. Charlie watched TV and when he checked on her one time he found her sleeping. Laying there on the couch with her

feet on the coffee table, her head back on the couch's head rest and tilted to the side. Her lips had parted, but she made no sounds of snoring. She looked peaceful.

Reza got home finally at around nine o'clock. Jonny hadn't seen him since Friday. Charlie woke, looked bewildered for a moment, then glanced up to the kitchen to see Reza up there hanging up his keys. She rolled her eyes, brought her feet onto the couch and hugged her knees, the remote still clutched in one hand. She turned the volume up.

Reza came to the stairs, stepped down onto one and stood there over everyone else, watching them. He said, "How's everyone doing?"

Without looking, Charlie thunked her chin between her two knees and muttered, "Fine."

"How about you, Jonny?"

Jonny had just been watching and forgot he was involved with all of this. He shook his head briefly, said, "I'm fine. Where were you?"

"I had things to do. I don't answer to you."

"I don't care where you go. I'm just making small talk." Jonny fixed him with a gaze. Something had changed between them. He figured it came when he made the decision that he could do what he had to do. Sure, it hadn't played out the way he'd anticipated. But when the time came, he could do the grandest gesture of them all. For the sake of Charlie, he could confront Reza. Some of the fear had been diminished. It didn't change the parameters of this awful relationship in any way, but some of the pressure had been released.

Charlie tossed the remote control onto the coffee table with a clatter and she rose. To no one, she said, "I have to go to the bathroom." She walked across the apartment, her heel strikes coming a little heavy, then she closed herself in the bathroom.

It left Jonny and Reza alone, looking at each other.

"What's with her?" Reza said.

"I think you know."

"Do I?"

"What did you do to her?"

"What makes you think I did anything?"

"She's mad."

Reza shrugged. “And you think she’s mad at me?”

Jonny stood up now, walked halfway across the room and put his hands in his pockets. Reza stepped down one step and stood evenly with him half a dozen feet away.

Jonny said, “I don’t think she had a good time in the Caribbean.”

“That’s on her, Jonny.” Reza said confidently. “Have a seat.” He gestured towards the couch.

Something tightened in him, a tense anticipation coming unexpectedly. “Why?”

“You want to talk. Let’s talk.”

Jonny took a seat on the couch and with the point of his shoe, Reza pushed and angled one of the red IKEA chairs to face him. He sat down across and looked at him.

Jonny said, “I didn’t appreciate those pictures and videos you sent me.”

Reza chuckled, threaded his fingers together and leaned forward with his forearms on his knees. He said, “I think you did. I think you really liked them.”

“Why would I like them?”

“We’re gonna dance around this all the time? Just face it, Jonny. You like your wife being a slut. I sent those pictures as a favor to you.”

“You sent them to taunt me.”

“You love it.”

“You wanted me to believe you let all those guys fuck her.”

“She tell you they didn’t?”

“She told me they didn’t. I believe her.”

Jonny watched Reza’s mouth underneath the thick mustache of his beard as it slowly tilted to one side and then he smiled. He said, “We didn’t fuck her. Nobody fucked her.”

“I would kill you if you did that.”

Reza disregarded him, didn’t even acknowledge his remark as a threat. Instead he smiled. “I wouldn’t if she were passed out, Jonny. But they were there to fuck her. She

asked them to come along. If she was awake, I bet you she would have fucked every single one of them."

"No, she wouldn't."

"I think I know your Charlie a little better than you do."

"What? No, you don't."

"In that way I do."

"Sex? No, you don't."

"Please, Jonny," he chided. "You should have seen her on the dance floor grinding her long, hard body on them. She wanted them."

"You're such an asshole."

Reza laughed. "You don't know her like I know her. She's a slut, and she's looking to blossom. Those pink little petals want to open up." Jonny watched as Reza held his two hands together in closed fists and he gradually extended his fingers, imitating Charlie's vagina opening up for other men. The baseball bat was under the chair, only a dozen feet away and his mind leapt to it, flashed him a picture of itself, its steely weight resting on the hardwood.

"I fucking hate you," he said.

"You should, Jonny, you should. Even if, miracle of all miracles, you get your wife back from me, I will have changed her."

"No."

"Oh yes, Jonny. If you can manage to win her back, you're going to have a woman you will never, ever, ever manage to please. You'll never fulfill her like I fulfill her. Even with ten million in the bank, little Jonny, you won't have what it takes to scratch Charlie's deepest itch. It's me giving her that tickle, Jonny. It's me putting that desire in her that you could never meet."

"You're wrong."

"You can act confident, Jonny, but I can see through it. I know in your heart you see the truth." Now he leaned forward and gripped Jonny's knee. "Your little wife took some blow, but I think she smoked weed all day when I was in business meetings. Now that's a depressed wife, smoking rope all day, all alone. She's got stuff she wants to escape. I think she was so baked the coke didn't work on her. Once those men started feeding her whisky and wine she got sloppy. We had to carry her back to the hotel room and Jonny

she wanted us but it just wasn't right. We're not animals. It was sad really, her laying on the bed begging us to come and join her. I didn't have the heart to send that to you. Begging for our big dicks, tsk tsk," he shook his head and clucked his tongue as if recalling a tragic scene.

"Bull. Shit."

"It's true. It's a boner killer when a girl gets like that. Pathetic. Too hungry, Jonny. It's a turn off."

"You're such a liar."

"Am I?" he said with a sneer. In a soft and breathy Charlie imitation, Reza panted, "Who wants to fuck me first?" He even made his eyes go glassy and drunk-looking.

"Fuck you. If she did that you would send me the video."

"I couldn't film it, Jonny. I put the camera down. I don't like you, but I care about Charlie. I wouldn't film her like that. I felt bad. She must be going through a lot. You know. Inside her brain. Wondering how she fucked up so bad, getting into this situation. But then, like, knowing it's actually your fault. Wondering, beginning to doubt the faith she has in you. She had a lot of fun with me and those guys, you know, before she passed out. That's what her life could be like if she wasn't weighed down by the bricks you tied to her."

Jonny rolled his eyes in irritation and disbelief but couldn't deny the dozen quick and short knife wounds Reza had just stabbed him up with.

Reza said, "You think something is wrong with Charlie? You think it's me?" He stood up now, took off his suit jacket and laid it over the back of the chair. He began to unbutton his shirt cuffs. "Charlie's mad at herself, Jonny. She had a chance at a gang bang with a half dozen of the hottest rich young dudes in the Bahamas and she blew it. She got too drunk. She wanted it, Jonny. Believe it or not, I don't give a fuck. I know Charlie and I know she's mad because she missed out on something she really wanted. Wanted bad."

There was no sense in arguing. Offering up resistance to Reza just fed his arrogance. So Jonny fixed his eyes on his and showed him his words meant nothing to him. Deep inside, they would begin to twist at him and create anfractuous hurt that he would be dealing with probably forever. But he wouldn't give Reza the satisfaction of showing him that.

"Go easy on her, Jonny. She didn't have a good Sunday. Man, you should have seen her. She asked me if we could stay longer and I told her What was the point? Those guys had gone home already. When she sobered up she asked me to call them, Jonny,

can you believe it?—she was trying to get me to put it together again. Bring all those guys back so we could get naked and roll around in bed with her. Charlie loves big cock, Jonny. She took a feel of all those guys to make sure they measured up."

There was no way that was true. So Jonny continued to stare and keep his face as expressionless as a stone.

Reza watched him, said no more, his twinkling eyes taking him in. He smiled the whole time, taking his shirt off now. He got undressed while Jonny watched, stood completely naked, Charlie still in the bathroom, then got into bed, turned out the light on the night table and turned away.

Jonny went back to work at his workstation and maybe twenty minutes later, Charlie emerged. She looked toward the bed and saw Reza sleeping, looked toward Jonny. Her face was pinched in a scowl.

Slowly her meanness softened but didn't disappear. She looked at his computer for a moment, her eyes finally meeting his gaze. She said, "Good night."

"Good night," he said to her, his heart pounding in his chest. He had images of her cupping her hand between the legs of all those guys that danced with her. Their bodies humping up against her and Charlie squeezing their dicks and balls through their pants while she writhed against them, loving their size in her hand. It couldn't be true.

She got undressed as well, and he angled his clever mirror toward the bed. He watched her there in the reflection, saw her in her short-short pajamas and undershirt climbing into bed. She looked at Reza and Reza was already sleeping. She watched him a little longer, and irritated then, bounced around a little and turned her back to him. Jonny tried to work, but he was fixated by her face as she grew sleepy, closed her eyes, and eventually fell asleep.

## Chapter Ten

Charlie had been in a bad mood since she got home from work. A bad mood for Charlie wasn't really that bad, it just hurt to see her not her usual kind self. The absence of her kindness was pronounced. Jonny had a girlfriend just after high school who had bad moods that were frightening. Banging things around and shouting and it came with a tension from the threat of potential catastrophic explosion. She did, too, a couple times, explode on him over nothing. But that girl was a nothing to him. Charlie was everything, so the fact that she wasn't her happy self was hurting him rather than frightening him. He wanted her to be happy again.

It was Wednesday now, and they hadn't seen much of Reza. He'd come home Monday night to sleep. Same thing last night, too, getting in very late and getting into bed with hardly time for a mean word to Jonny before he was snoring. When he got up this morning he was out the door without a word, headed to the gym to train and then shower there.

After work, Charlie had made him dinner again. Another nice salad, and they ate together on the couch but she didn't want to talk so he didn't make her. He'd thought of rubbing her feet for her, at least making the offer, but didn't for fear of what that would do between his legs. The cage was an omnipresent concern.

Progress on the game was stellar. Shulamit was hungry for work and she knew if she beat the milestones she would get new assignments. That meant she disregarded what his schedule said and just hammered away, sending him two milestones at the same time today. Showing off a little maybe. Fucking great. She could show off all she wanted if it meant they could get this thing up and running and completely presentable sooner than he even wished.

Work came in from Javed and before he cracked it open, he went up to the kitchen for a Coke. Charlie sat on the couch reading a book with her legs drawn up and to the side, Wuthering Heights braced on her thigh. Up in the kitchen he grabbed himself his pop, but coming down the steps again he beelined to the couch, feeling in a good mood tonight even if she wasn't. He plopped himself down right next to her. She jostled with his movements but said nothing, just continued reading. He watched her.

She turned a page slowly, concentrating on her book, but now her head turned to look at him expressionlessly.

He said, “Hi.”

Her head turned back, and she traced her finger along the first line of the next page as if trying to steady her focus on reading again. She said, “What are you doing?”

“Sitting with you.”

“I’m trying to read.”

“I like watching you read.”

“I can’t read if you’re watching me.”

“I used to watch you and you didn’t know it, remember? When I would come into the library at your school and work …”

The book she held slumped a little against her thighs and she rolled her eyes—but he could see the slightest hint of a smile there. She said, “I knew you were watching me.”

“I thought I was getting away with it.”

“You weren’t.”

Now he edged himself a little closer and his thigh almost touched her haunch. “But you liked it?”

That smile stayed the same small shape but now it lifted to one side and a dimple dented her cheek. Her pretty eyes stayed lowered to the page, but she ran a lock of her hair behind an ear so he could see her perfect face.

He answered for her: “Yeah, you liked it.”

“I did not,” she whispered but now her smile grew a little wider.

He touched the bare heel of her foot with the back of his hand, let it rest there. “I hope you come out of it soon.”

“Out of what?” She faced him now, her eyebrows pinched quizzically.

“Whatever it is that’s got you tense.”

"I'll be fine," she said and closed her book, then hugged it to her chest with both arms. Her gaze drifted off to the far side of the room, watching his empty workstation. He joined her and they both looked at the empty place where he should be sitting.

He said, "You'd tell me if Reza did anything to hurt you? Or anything you didn't want."

"I don't want any of those—"

"You know what I mean."

She regarded him blankly. "I would."

"Nothing happened in the Bahamas?"

She solemnly shook her head no.

"Did you want it to?"

Her brow lowered, went to a straight and even line over top of her fierce green eyes. "What does that mean?"

"Did you want to have sex with those guys from the club?"

"Jonny, I told you I didn't."

"I know, but … would you tell me if you did?"

"I didn't," she said coldly.

He looked down at his hands gathered in his lap. "Reza told me you wanted them but you … fell asleep."

She made a coarse sighing sound, and he knew she was mad again. "I told you I didn't. Reza tells you I did. You believe Reza. You believe him over me."

"It's not that I don't believe you."

She said, "I think you want me to sometimes."

"Want you to what?"

"Do that," she gestured and made her eyes go wide as she put her index finger into the OK sign of her other hand like a penis going in a vagina. "With other men."

He didn't answer, just stared at her. He said, "Reza tell you that?"

She shrugged.

“He says that. You believe him sometimes just as much as I do. We’re both guilty of that. He’s trying to get between us and you fall for his bullshit just like I do.”

She exhaled and stared away. “Would you just … just go to work, please? Let me read my book.”

She wouldn’t look at him but he watched her, saw her blinking eyes, her pursed but pouting pale pink lips, the spray of freckles across her smooth cheeks. Her hair tumbled forward as she shook her head and loosened it from where it tucked behind an ear. He smiled and stood up, kissed the top of her head and went back to his workstation. She wasn’t cheered up yet, but he could see progress. And just that sliver of sun coming through the clouds lifted his spirit, and he felt spiritually lighter as he returned to his keyboard and resumed his coding, checking Javed’s work while he did.

The code streamed from his fingertips in an endless clatter of keys. He was in the zone, and as the ideas emerged from his brain they were communicated immediately through his lightning fast fingers. Line after line scrolling across the screen bringing him closer to the end of this.

There was a distraction in his vision but it didn't slow him down. In fact, it might be why he was going so quickly now.

It was Charlie.

Sleep was obviously eluding her because he could see in the small circular cosmetic mirror he kept on his desktop that she tossed and turned. She would lay facing away for a moment then she would be batting at the pillow with a fist, jumping and turning around with a low and mean looking brow. Then she would bundle the pillow up under her head and he would watch as she lay facing him now with her eyes purposely shut—like they didn't want to close and she forced them. It wasn't long, however, before they would inch up again and he would see her staring at nothing, the reflection of his monitors lighting up the wet of her big green eyes. Then her feet were kicking, the sheets were shooting up in the air and she was tossing over to the other side again.

It was never like this before between them, and soon it would never be like this again. With Shulamit and Javed in his corner things were looking good. Things were looking really good. Sure, it was terrible to be in debt to Reza like this but that debt came with the promise of final freedom. So he let the code stream through him, even smiling a little despite his wife's chagrin.

It was almost midnight when Reza came home again. The door to the apartment opened and Jonny didn't even stop typing. His head just slightly cocked, his ear facing toward the door and noting the sound. When you were in the zone, shit like this didn't matter.

At least Reza was alone. He came into the kitchen by himself, no one here to gang up on Jonny and aggravate him while he tried to work. No hunky but dismissive Tate, no somehow friendly yet simultaneously menacing Demetrius. Just like the previous nights, he hoped Reza would come in, take his clothes off, go to bed and sleep. As annoying as it might seem, Jonny even managed these nights to work right through his buzz-saw snoring. So, good, come in, take your shoes off, climb into bed with my wife and saw some logs. You asshole.

That line had got him smirking, and now while he typed his eyes drifted to the mirror and saw Reza coming down the steps from the kitchen and into the living room. The lights of the monitors lit him up and he saw that the landlord wore a business suit tonight. His face was grim and mean, as usual, and he stopped in the middle of the room, eyeballed the annoyed lump in the bed then over to the workstation. That thick mustache of his tilted to one side as he smiled. He sure liked his handiwork.

Yes, Reza had crafted a real webwork of hurt and filth and jealousy. He'd interjected himself into the lives of two happily married people and offered them gifts aplenty. And everything that was given to them came with an enormous price.

He darted his eyes back to the screen and chose to ignore his landlord. His fingers flew faster. Only now it was Charlie who had something to say to Reza, and she wasn't going to bite her tongue. Jonny saw a flash of white in his mirror. It was Charlie whipping the sheets away. She was mad. She bolted up wearing her little undershirt and her short shorts and brought her knee up. She confronted Reza, saying, "You think you can come home at midnight?"

Reza smiled and began to un-knot his tie. He said, "You know I've been busy. You know that I was up to some pretty great things while I was in the Bahamas. This is an intense time for me."

"So what? I have to work in the morning."

"Poor, Charlie," Reza sang, unthreading his tie from around his neck and tossing it to the nightstand. As he unbuttoned his shirt, he said, "You sure got it bad, don't you?"

"Why are you such a jerk these days?" she asked him.

"I don't think I am."

"It's midnight, Reza," she stated again. "It's midnight and I'm trying to sleep." She thrust both hands towards Jonny and said, "And I got this guy with his monitors all over the place shooting lights all around the apartment and then I got you walking in and slamming doors, walking through the apartment with your shoes on. Does anybody care? Doesn't anybody care?" She huffed with exasperation and tilted her chin up to look at the ceiling and shake her head.

Reza chuckled. He unbuttoned his shirt and let it hang open. The muscles of his chest and abdomen were visible in the gap, his cascading trail of thick body hair pointing a line to his belt buckle and what lay below it.

He undid his cufflinks and smiled while regarding her.

"What?" she asked, irritated by his lack of concern over her troubles.

"I told you I was busy. I told you I had work to do. All these nice things you've been enjoying, they don't come out of thin air."

"I don't think they do," she said defensively.

"Successful people don't work nine-to-five, Charlie. That's for chumps. I'm twenty-four-seven. You're going to have to get used to it."

"It wasn't like that before." There was a tone in her voice, a meanness and a haughtiness that Jonny hadn't heard from her before.

Reza said, “Money ebbs and flows, young pretty Charlie.” He moved his hands like waves and said, “There’s times of rest and there’s times of turmoil and I find opportunity in both. It’s been a busy week, I don’t need shit when I get home.”

Charlie folded her arms over her chest now, not liking being talked to this way. She said, “Still, a little decency …”

“Fuck’s sake,” Reza said, but he was smiling, “what do you want from me? I just walked in the door and you’re latched on me like a tiger.”

“It’s been like this all week and I’m sick of it.”

Reza pulled off his suit coat and shirt, stood there with his bare muscular body lit by Jonny’s monitors. His chest flexed and jumped, his shoulders twitched as he tossed the clothing aside. He smiled at Charlie now and said, “Tell me what you want, Charlie.”

“I want to sleep,” she said after a long moment.

“So sleep.”

“How can I with all this light and doors opening and closing?”

“What do you need to sleep?”

She growled with irritation.

After a brief stare-down: “Quiet,” she whispered hoarsely.

“You want some earplugs? You want one of those nighttime masks? I’ll send Tate for you tomorrow. Get you one with diamonds all around the edges. The best earplugs and night masks they make. Charlie likes her nice things, doesn’t she?” He put a knee on the bed and leaned toward her, put his hand out to brush her cheek. She slapped his hand away.

“No, I don’t.”

“I think you do, Charlie.”

“I don’t.”

“I know you like your big bed.”

She didn’t answer. Her face was pinched and her lips pouted. She looked away.

“See? Don’t tell me you don’t like nice things. I’m not stupid. I know you like your shoes. Tell me you don’t like your shoes, Charlie.”

She folded her arms tighter and stared away from him, her face scowling.

“Charlie.” Reza was serious now. Charlie knew, and she looked toward him. He smiled again, said, “Tell me you like your shoes.”

Her stiff posture softened, and she agreed. “I like my shoes.”

“I know you do. See, this is a good starting point. There’s a lot of things you like. I don’t know why you’ve been so grumpy these days but we can figure it out.”

Her posture further slackened, and she unfolded her arms and put them around her knees and hugged them. She put her chin between the points.

Reza said, “There, you’re listening now. Well, I’m listening too, Charlie. Tell me what you want. Anything under the sun and I’ll give it to you.”

“I don’t want anything,” she said solemnly.

“Oh, I don’t think that’s true at all. Just tell me. You want a car? You want me to buy you a Mercedes? What color?”

“I don’t like driving,” she said.

“What, then? What is it, Charlie?” he asked, feigning some sort of curious care. He got on both knees on the bed. “Tell me what you want.”

Charlie’s head rolled around, and Jonny caught her peeping at him from her behind her locks. He stopped typing now. He suspected what it might be.

She said to Reza, “I don’t know.”

Reza said, “Use your words, Charlie. That’s what you went to school for. Library science. You know all about words, don’t tell me you don’t know how to use them.”

Charlie looked back toward the workstation and Jonny saw her peeking at him again. He turned around to face her. Reza sneered over her shoulder at him.

He said, “What?”

Charlie softly said, “Can you put your headphones on?”

## Chapter Eleven

"Why?"

"Would you please put your headphones on?"

Reza snapped his fingers, said, "Jonny. Listen to your wife."

He showed them a solemn face and tried to hide the rage that had burst up within him. But under that rage, under that sickly swell, was an ocean of curiosity. So he showed them that he didn't want to put his headphones on but he did. Because he wanted to.

With the headphones over his head now, big earmuffs style, he glowered at them. Charlie made a little gentle helicopter motion with her finger indicating for him to turn around. She didn't smile for him, but there was a certain warmth of concern in her eyes.

As soon as he swiveled his chair around he tapped a few keys and activated the microphone. Instantly, his headphones were filled with the sound of the room.

His fingers began to type. Only it wasn't code coming from his fingers right now. It was complete gobbledygook. Nonsense. His mind was focused on one thing and that was what Charlie wanted to ask from Reza.

Charlie watched him, he saw her face in the mirror turned toward him. Reza scratched his shoulder and waited. Charlie shouted "Jonny!" Loud and sharp. He made no movement.

She watched him further. Shouted again: "Jonny!"

Still he typed. Streams of useless characters.

He listened.

Charlie turned to face Reza again, and Reza asked her: "Well? What is it you want from me?"

Mean Charlie had simmered. Barely there now. What had emerged? Childish Charlie. Little Girl Charlie who wanted something. An ache developed in his belly. Hard and swirling and imminent. Right in the space between his bellybutton and that steel cage that locked his dick away.

"I don't know," Charlie said in a soft singsong.

Reza smiled wider. "Yes you do. Tell me."

"Why didn't you pay any attention to me in the Bahamas?" she asked him now, changing the subject and trying to control things.

Reza said, "You knew I was busy. You knew that was a work trip. We went out on Saturday, we had a good time."

"I know. But you hardly even paid any attention to me."

"Sure, I did."

"We didn't do … anything."

"We did lots of things."

Charlie acted petulant, sighing briskly and cocking her head at him. She said, "You know what I mean."

"Maybe I do," he said acting stupid. Then: "Tell me."

Charlie continued needling him. "So we come back, and then all week you're hardly even around here."

"So?"

"So?" She shrugged. She realized she couldn't say what she wanted.

Reza prompted her "Tell me what you want and I'll give it to you."

Charlie's head rolled around on her shoulders as she was confronted with the thing she didn't want to face. It was a long while that she said nothing, just chewing her lips and looking around the room. Reza stayed on his knees on the bed with his big masculine torso completely bared. Finally, Charlie looked over her shoulder again, and Jonny watched from the corner of his eye as she regarded him. He kept typing.

When his eyes went back to the mirror, he saw Charlie's foot stroking at Reza's thigh. Little toes gripped at the fabric of his pant leg and tugged downward as if she wanted his pants off.

Reza watched her foot as it tugged. His hands came together at his waist and he undid his belt buckle, then slipped the clasp at the top of his pants and drew down his zipper. He put his hands on his hips. Charlie tugged a little harder and Reza's pants lowered until shaggy, black pubic hair sprung from the V of his open fly. But with his knees spread the way he was kneeling, she couldn't pull his pants any lower and reveal the large, shaved object she wanted.

Reza looked to her face now and said, "Is that what you want?"

Charlie didn't answer. She let her foot come down, and she hugged her knees again. She rested her forehead on her thighs and hid her face from him. Her apricot mane tumbled around her legs.

Reza stood up by the side of the bed, let his pants fall to his ankles and stepped out of them. That huge cock danced between his thighs as he got himself back on the bed. Charlie looked at it. Reza said, "This is what you want, isn't it?"

Charlie thumped her chin on her knees and stared at his penis.

"Don't be embarrassed. Don't be embarrassed at all, Charlie. Go ahead. I'm not judging you."

Charlie peered over her shoulder again and Jonny whipped his eyes back to the screen. When they returned, he saw Charlie easing up to sit on her heels. She put a hand out and rested it on Reza's chest. She ran her nails over the muscle and watched his thick chest fur wriggle between her fingers. Reza put a hand over top of hers and they looked in each other's eyes for a moment. Reza smiled, took her hand in a straight line down between his legs and Charlie took his heavy dangling penis in her gentle grip.

Their faces were close together as her hand gripped and coddled his cock. She milked it downward, lifted it while it flopped around. With thumb and forefinger she pulled the foreskin back and rubbed the cushion of her thumb over his urethra. Reza kissed her. Charlie took his kiss and held it. She stroked his cock with one hand while they made out. The sounds of their mouths were wet, and it made bright clicking sounds in the microphone's reception. It made Jonny wince.

The cage between his legs began to push downward, and he felt that tension in his scrotum again. It felt like a foot was stepping on his testicles. It ached down his thighs and into his knees. And that sickness still swirled just above the cage, somewhere in his center. He typed with one hand and clutched at his stomach.

Reza guided Charlie backward until she lay her back on the bed with her knees stuck up awkwardly. He rested his hands on them and widened them. He said, "What do you want me to do with it? Show me where you want it."

Charlie lay on her back and watched him. Then her hand moved, going down her body over her undershirt across her stomach. She touched herself between her legs.

"There? That's where you want it?"

She nodded.

"That's where I want it, too."

Charlie whispered, "I want it there."

"Tell me. Tell me you want."

His hand went down and grabbed his cock. He began to pump it. The big, heavy thing wound around in lazy, floppy circles, slowly beginning to stiffen.

Charlie's head tilted up and back to face the workstation upside down. Jonny's eyes darted away again. He heard her say then, "I want you."

"Want me what?"

Charlie made at tsk-ing sound and said, "I want you to do that."

"Do what?"

Jonny's eyes drifted back to see Charlie sit upward on her elbows. Her pert breasts poked out the front of her shirt and Jonny could see the points of her nipples tenting out the fabric. It was like pulling teeth, but Reza got her to say it: "I want you to fuck me."

Reza smiled now, said, "That's what I want to hear."

"Please," she added.

"I thought you had to work tomorrow?"

Charlie sighed again. She ran a hand through her mane and tugged at her hair. "Please, Reza. Don't be mean."

"You really want it?"

"I do."

"Take those shorts off. Show me your pussy."

Charlie did. She drew her knees up to her chest, dug her thumbs into the waistband of her shorts, swept them up her thighs. Reza took them at her knees and pulled them

away from her feet. She let her legs fall again, and when her thighs drifted apart, she covered her sex with both hands.

“Show me,” Reza said.

Charlie let her hands come away and Reza smiled wider when he saw her pussy revealed. He batted at it with the back of his hand and Jonny could hear wet, sticky sounds in the microphone. He groaned and flexed his stomach. It felt like his cock was in a vice.

The groan attracted attention, so he darted his eyes away again. He knew they were watching him. He began typing faster, hitting enter angrily, stabbing at the keys with his fingers.

When his eyes went back to the mirror, he saw Reza over top of her. Charlie’s knees were up on either side of his waist. She scratched her nails over his back while they kissed. He could hear soft moaning sounds from Charlie’s throat.

Reza said, “You really need it?”

Charlie whispered, “I need it.”

“Beg for it.”

“No.”

Reza took his cock with one hand and tapped it on her tummy. Charlie squirmed and made a hungry sort of sound. She squeezed his hips with her knees.

“Beg.”

She whispered, “Fuck me. Please, please.”

“You want it?”

“I want it so bad,” she said.

“You need it?”

She ran her nails on his neck and said, “I need it.” The word need came with elaborate desperation.

“That’s my Charlie,” he whispered. His hips drew back, his round muscular rump raising up as the tip of that huge cock slid over her mound. When the head of it touched between her legs, Charlie mewled.

He prodded at her with it, and she gasped, “Oh wow …”

“You miss it?”

“I missed it,” she agreed. “I missed it.”

“It’s all yours,” he said. “You want to take it?”

“I want to take it,” she whispered. “I want to take it all the way.” Her head had tilted back while Reza bit at her neck. Her eyes were closed and her mouth hung open. Her little pink tongue licked the ring of her lips. She said, “I need it so bad. Please fuck me.”

Jonny watched as Reza’s hips pumped forward slowly. He drove that monstrously thick tool inside Charlie and she hooked her ankles around his rump. She let out a long whining sound and Jonny squirmed in his chair. Both her arms hooped around Reza’s neck and she hugged herself to him. Her face was turned up and as their landlord inched everything he had inside her, Jonny got to watch the range of emotions that a big penis could deliver to his wife. It was tragic. It bounced from happiness, hunger, pain; regret, too. She bit her lips, she clenched her teeth, she gasped and coughed. One hand grabbed the bunched up muscles around Reza’s neck and dragged downward as he got deep. Red nail lines dragged across his skin, disappearing in the lion tattoo on his neck and shoulder.

“Yes, yes, that’s it,” Charlie gasped. “Fuck, mm, it’s so big, it’s so good …”

## Chapter Twelve

Reza was gentle at first, his hands caressing at her shoulders as he kissed and bit at her neck and collar. His hips did all the work. Dipping upward and backward, pushing and pulling, his huge cock making slick sounds between Charlie's legs. Charlie loved it. He had her practically wailing. Pleading yes sounds, an oh no, an oh yes-yes; she panted soft syllables and grunted. Her hands stroked all over his thick muscle. Her toes wiggled and clutched. She moaned and cried, and Jonny thought he might fold in two.

It felt like a hand as strong as Reza's had clutched his penis and testicles and squeezed. Squeezed hard. But his eyes wouldn't draw away from his wife on the bed.

Then Reza had her upright, his hands sliding up her ribs, his fingers curling underneath her arms, he sat her up with her legs draped over his hips. His knees were spread out on the bed and his cock was inside her still. Jonny could see his heavy testicles dangling underneath Charlie's spread legs.

Charlie kissed him and clutched at him. She was higher than him sitting on him like this, and she held his thick, muscular neck while they kissed. She panted and made soft crying sounds.

Reza leaned backward, putting his head on the pillow and watching her the whole while. He lay on his back and she sat atop him now. Their disgusting biological connection was fully revealed to Jonny, lit up by the glare of his monitors. Reza's wide, dark, and shaved cock stretched Charlie's labia into a thin pink ring.

Reza began to pump himself in and out of her again and it got Charlie whimpering. Jonny watched as those big testicles bounced and tumbled between his legs, flipping up and tapping Charlie's white butt cheeks and making them quiver.

Charlie worked with him as well. Not letting herself get fucked, she was active now. She had her feet planted on the bed, her knees up in her armpits. Reza held her waist and Charlie's legs flexed as she made herself bounce on his huge cock. It got Reza excited that was for sure. He was growling and grunting now, too.

This was an intense session that he hadn't seen between them before. A connection. Normally Charlie was a passenger in his vehicle. A woman who hated having to do what she had to do. Opening her legs and accepting his inhuman penis. Hating that it made her come. But right now, his wife was actively fucking Reza. There was no reluctance. There was no shame. Charlie wanted something, and she knew how to get it. She was trying to make herself come.

"Oh Fuck," Jonny whispered, and this time the two people on the bed were so engaged they weren't distracted by his outburst.

He punched a fist between his legs and it jabbed the metal cage into his pubic bone. The pain was sharp and bright overtop the grinding ache that was encompassing him.

Reza's hand swooped the flat of Charlie's back, turned downward and Jonny watched through squinted eyes as he ran his big middle finger along her spread crack, hooked it and slid it inside her anus. Charlie howled. A huge, joyous crying sound that propelled a stream of excitement into his pants. His hands stopped typing, and he clutched them both in fists. She was coming. Charlie was coming.

The howl turn to a long cry then diminished to a gravelly croak. She bounced and swiveled her hips frantically, her body shaking. Her hands had turned to fists as well, and she beat them on the heavy muscle of Reza's chest. Plaintive warbling vowels moaned from her mouth and she turned her chin up to the ceiling. Reza drove his cock in and out still, Charlie's slickness spilling copious fluid that drooled in lines over and around his scrotum. He wiggled his finger where it was inserted and Charlie collapsed on top of him. She hugged her cheek to his chest as he continued to work himself in and out. Her orgasm droned on, slick, sick, and lubricious. She bit at her lips and drool spilled from her mouth and mingled with the hair on Reza's chest.

"That's it, Charlie, get that. You get it," Reza commanded.

Charlie's eyelashes fluttered, and Reza stroked her back.

Reza said, "That what you want? That what you need?"

Charlie didn't answer, just moaned.

"You come to Daddy to get what you need, don't you?"

Reza slipped himself from inside her, took his cock and beat it against each of her butt cheeks. He toppled her off of him, got on his knees. Charlie lay on her front, looking lifeless. He grabbed her hips and pulled her to her knees, her face dragging on the mattress. He took his cock, pulled back the foreskin, the huge bulb of his cock head gleamed in the monitor light. Jonny watched as it was slurped up by his wife's opening.

She moaned and kicked her feet, her toes curling up. Reza spanked her, pushed himself deep, and Charlie cried out.

"That's it," he growled. He gripped her tightly by the waist and pounded her hard. The bed began to shake and rattle. Jonny could see her face twisted up, as if in pain, but lips parting and panting as if she loved that pain. "You miss this cock? You miss this?"

"Yes," she gasped, and a spike punched in Jonny's chest. He hitched a breath, one hand clutching his stomach the other his heart right now.

"You love this cock?" Reza growled.

"I love it," she cried. She was out of her mind.

He pounded her harder, pushing her face down on the mattress until she was laying flat on her stomach. Charlie was spread eagle on her front, her skinny white legs skewed past Reza's hairy, muscular thighs. He could see nothing but Reza's round ass as it pumped in and out, that huge thing going in and out of his wife.

Charlie gathered up fistfuls of sheet and pulled it up to her face. She came again, crying out loud into bundled up fabric.

Jonny kicked his legs outright and tried to suspend his body like a board leaning against his workstation chair. It did nothing to alleviate the pain. It stretched his stomach which eased the stabbing hurt, but couldn't stop the intense grip that seemed to clutch at his penis and balls. He turned sideways and dug the thumb knuckle of a fist into his kidney. "Oh God," he groaned, "Aw, fuck."

Reza hoisted one of Charlie's knees up to her chin and exposed her fully. He spread his legs wide as he fucked her. Jonny watched his balls bang around against Charlie's buttocks and thigh, tapping against her pink but reddened pussy.

It went on like that for far too long. Ten minutes? Fifteen minutes? Reza gave Charlie what she needed.

She came two more times. Undeniable cries of ecstasy ripped from her as an orgasm found her again and again. And when it was Reza's turn finally, he had Charlie on her back, curled up with her knees at her shoulders. Her feet bounced over his back, flexed and curled. She cried and cried, pain and pleasure. Reza pounded. Charlie's nails ran circles on his back.

"Here it comes," Reza warned her.

"Yeah," Charlie gasped.

"You want it?"

"Yeah," she gasped again.

Jonny was dripping sweat. From his brow, down around behind his ears, wet ran in ticklish rivulets. He needed this to be over. The pain between his legs was excruciating. Despite it, there was no way he would miss this either.

Reza pounded and held it in her deep. His body shook and trembled. Charlie cried and hugged herself to him. He pulled out and shoved in again. His balls lifted and fell, lifted and sagged heavily. He growled like a lion, then roared. He pulled out, shoved in one more time and the headboard rattled against the wall under the kitchen pass-through. Charlie bucked underneath him, kicking her legs. She cried out one more Yes! Then they were still for a while, both of them heaving breath.

Reza's body glistened with sweat. Charlie's hands began to move over his skin. Reza kissed at her neck and made a low chuckling sound. Charlie was done though. She squirmed out from underneath him, and Jonny saw the shame there in her expression. She wiped at her face with both hands and dug her fingertips along the ridge of her brow. Reza watched, laughing quietly the whole time. He lightly slapped at her haunch then squeezed her knee. He said, "Don't worry, Charlie. It's our secret."

Charlie said nothing, and he grabbed her by the tummy and pulled her back against his chest. His hands explored her body, finding places where she was ticklish. She squirmed in his grip. Now she was laughing and smiling, too. "Stop," she told him, but his hands kept moving, even running a finger between her butt cheeks. She kicked her legs and jumped away from him. "Stop," she said again, and she hit his muscular arm with the heel of her fist. He laughed, and she did, too.

They stared at each other for a moment, Reza smiling and Charlie trying not to. At last he said, "Feel better?"

She rolled her eyes and shook her head. She sat forward now, gathered up her undershirt. "No," she said firmly.

Reza knew he was right, and he grinned, put his hands together behind his head and lay back on the pillow to watch her. She held the bundled undershirt between her legs and dabbed at herself. Then she wiped vigorously and seemed to try to pull out the sticky semen from her slit. She flexed her tummy a little, wiped again, and threw the undershirt toward the closet where her dirty laundry basket was.

Reza watched her back, Charlie looking toward Jonny. He'd assumed some semblance of a working position, fingers moving slowly, tapping away nonsense still, his insides ripped apart, his cock squashed and ruined in its metal cage. He'd spilled what felt like a quarter-gallon of pre-come into his pants. Sweat ran down his face and he licked at his

lips, his eyes watching Charlie in the mirror. He saw that she was smiling now and it at least lifted his spirits. He didn't know how this ache would ever leave him and he regretted ever making the decision to have his penis locked in a cage. Was it worth it? Was any of this worth it? It was too late, anyway. It was way too late. All he could do now was code, finish his game, win. Get his life back. But the thing Reza had said stuck in his mind. Even when you do, you'll never be able to give her what I do. No matter how successful your game is, she's grown to want something that you can't ever provide. And he knew it was true now. Saw it with his own eyes. He could make $100 million off a video game and Charlie would never beg him for his cock. She would never grow grumpy from his cock's absence. He would never give her orgasms like she got from the landlord. He sighed, held back a choking sob that jumped up from his heart.

Charlie got off the bed, and she tiptoed around behind him. He watched her come toward him in the mirror. Then she was there, her hands lifting the muffs of his headphones. She kissed his ear. He swiveled around in his chair, hoping the shadows of the table would hide the stain he was sure was between his legs. She's looked at him warmly, then she kissed his cheek.

"What was that for?" he asked her.

She said, "I'm sorry."

"Sorry for what?"

"Sorry I've been so grumpy. I've been a real jerk. I took it out on you, and that was mean. I really am sorry." She cupped her hands around his neck, put a knee on the seat of his chair and hovered over top of him. He took her mouth in a kiss, sought her tongue. He found it, pulled it into his mouth, and his tongue danced around her slippery shape. His cock surged again, pushed out against the tight confines of his cage. He didn't care anymore. He had to have her. He had to have her in his life. His time would come. It would be next week. The cage would come off and he would have his time with his wife. He just had to hold on a little longer. Take advantage of this time to do the work that needed to be done. Do the work that would end the nightmare.

He let her kiss go, and he looked in her eyes. She made a giggle, shook her head. She was naked. His hand went up her waist and cupped her breast. She laughed, put her hand over top of his. She whispered near his ear, "One more week, Jonny. One more week."

"I know," he said. She kissed his forehead then, jumped away from him before he wanted to touch her more. He went to grab for her bottom, but she skipped away laughing. Her hands came down to cover her ass from his view and he laughed watching her trot into the bathroom and close the door. He looked at the bathroom door

for a moment, smiling. He flicked the mirror away in case he would get an errant view of his arrogant landlord watching from the bed.

Turned back to his monitor, he closed down the window of text-nonsense, opened up the window he had been working on and began coding again. The metal's bite on his genitals slowly faded as his mind grew obsessed again with winning her back.

## III

# The Cage Comes Off

## Chapter Thirteen

On the morning of the 14th of the month, Jonny's 'Day of Release,' Charlie promised him she would be right home after work. She'd even withdrawn the necklace from around her neck and dangled it before his eyes, the key to his cage's lock swinging back and forth like a hypnotist's pendant. She even mimicked the old style talk of a circus performer, taking on the creepy tone she picked up while watching The Twilight Zone: "You're getting sleepy, Jonny, you're getting sleepy and when you awake, I'm going to be kissing you … and poof! your cage will be gone …" She wiggled her fingers like she performed a magic trick. They'd both laughed and then stopped abruptly as Reza came out of the bathroom. She'd tucked the key back in her shirt and they both looked at each other with held back smiles.

Sure, technically, at least according to him, it was the 'day of' and that meant if he wanted to, he could have thrown Charlie down on the bed and get the deed done right away, but it would be nice if Reza wasn't there, and it would be nice if it was just the two of them alone.

So now he shifted his weight from foot to foot, standing sometimes, pacing other times. It was early evening. Charlie was late coming home. Fifteen minutes past due. He didn't know if he could wait any longer.

It'd been another productive day of work. He'd skyped with Shulamit, and damn it, that woman impressed him again. Javed was up-to-date as well. He passed out new speculations for them and felt a promising enthusiasm from both of them. They liked his game. This was going to work. And today he would be with his wife. But the last fifteen minutes of expectation were killing him.

At last he heard footsteps approaching. He bent each leg, flexing as if he were about to begin a 5K run. He winced from the pain between his legs, then ended up limping into the kitchen. His cock wasn't hard, but it wasn't shrunken and small right now. It was alive with anticipation. Pumping with possibilities.

He could hear now her keys jingling on the other side of the apartment door. He snatched it open before she could put her key in the lock. He took her in his arms, and she yelped. He surprised her snatching the door open like that, but she fell into his arms

and she kissed him back. When they broke their kiss, he took her hand and led her into the apartment, mule kicking the door closed behind them. He said, "Come on. Let's get into bed."

"Hold on, Jonny. Hold on."

"What?"

She had something to tell him that she didn't want to. Her face made a pained expression as she thought the best way to break it to him.

"What is it?" he demanded.

She said, "Jonny, Reza came by work today."

"Oh no, it's my day, Charlie. It's my day. There's no way around it."

"No, I know. He said it's your day. That's not it."

"Then what is it?"

Her eyes darted around the room, stalling for time as she was reluctant to tell him the bad news he knew she had. "He took the key, Jonny."

"He took the key to my cage?"

"He took it. He said he had to be here when it was done."

"For Christ sake, Charlie."

"What am I supposed to do?" she asked, thrusting her hands out.

He said, "It's not you. I'm not mad at you. Jesus Christ." He thumped his fist on his hip and it jolted his penis inside its cage. He hissed and made a pained face

She said, "Are you okay?"

"No, I'm not okay. Jesus, Charlie, I've been working like crazy all day. I couldn't wait for you to get home. I've been going out of my mind. You're fifteen minutes late and I thought I was going to explode …"

"I'm so sorry."

"Don't be sorry, it's not you, it's fucking Reza. God, I can hardly walk," he said, and he turned his back to her and went down into the apartment putting his hands on his hips and exaggerating the limp he walked with. There was a shooting pain traveling on the

right side of his groin that went up under his rib cage like a wire pulled taut. His testicles ached. His penis was so sore. The skin itched. The cage had a hole he could pee through, and he did his best to keep the thing clean, but it had been two weeks now. This wasn't right.

Charlie was behind him then, and she put her hands on his back and rubbed him.

He said, "Why did you let him take the key?"

"I tried to stop him. But he just …"

"Charlie, you know how much agony I am in?"

"It's not easy, Jonny. He came in at work and people were there and he started talking and I didn't know what to say. He told me I was supposed to give him the key, and I didn't know if I was or not. In the end, he just took it from me …"

"Did you try to stop him?"

"No," she said sheepishly.

He shook his head. Then he walked away, out of her grasp. She followed him. He sat himself down on the corner of the bed very carefully.

She said, "Is it sore?"

"Is it sore? Of course it's sore. Charlie, I have a tiny cage wrapped around my dick. I've been wearing it for two weeks. I can't get hard, but you're around me every day."

She smiled a little, liking to hear that her husband was aroused by her. Neither of them wanted to address the fact that it was her activities with another man that had been driving him crazy.

She said, "Is it really itchy?"

"Would you look at it?"

"Okay," she said, and he sensed she wanted to add something. He knew what it was. A reminder that she couldn't do anything until Reza was here.

"Please, Charlie."

"Yeah, I'll take a look at it. We need to make sure it's okay."

He unbuckled his pants and did down the zipper, pushed his underwear and pants down his hips and sat back to show her his locked up penis and balls. He said, “It’s so tight. Maybe you could put some more ointment on it.”

She said, “I could. I can’t do … anything, you know?”

“I’m not asking you to. It really hurts and I want you to put some ointment on it.”

“Okay,” she said, and she got close to him, putting her hands on his thighs and looking at his small bundle. She looked it over, and he could admit that it didn’t look like there was anything going on that needed medical attention. She said, “I guess I could put some ointment on it.”

“Please.”

She made a bit of a smirk, but then she left him there, went to the bathroom and came back in with the tube of ointment. She settled herself between his legs and pushed his pants upward. He said, “What are you doing?

“He could be home any minute, Jonny. Don’t have your pants down too far.”

“I can get my pants up quick.”

“Okay,” she said, squeezing out a dab of ointment onto the tip of an index finger. “But I think he has cameras in here …”

The truth was he didn’t need ointment. He just wanted her to touch it. It had been so long and they had got so close that his mind was getting anxious. Before she put the ointment on him, he reached down and held her hand. He said, “Come into the stairwell with me.”

“The stairwell?”

“He doesn’t have cameras there. Come into the stairwell with me …”

“Jonny, I can’t.”

“Why not? It’s my fucking day, Charlie.”

“He’ll be here soon.”

“That fucking asshole will come here at five to midnight and you know it.”

“Please, Jonny, don’t make me do something that I’ll get in trouble for.”

“You’re my wife …”

"Jonny, just wait a little longer, I'm sorry."

His heart beat strongly in his chest, and he stared at her and realized he was glowering. She looked a little fearful, timid, shy. She bit at the inside of her mouth, smiled a little, then tapped his bundled up testicles with her ointment blob. She said, "Boop-boop," as she tapped his testicles with her finger. It made him flinch, and she giggled. She ran her finger around in circles, getting the ointment good and smeared over him. His penis grew hard quickly, pushing the cage outward and pulling his testicles up. He made a hissing sound.

She said, "See, Jonny. I shouldn't be doing this …"

"Keep going."

"Jonny, it hurts you. Reza is mean, but he'll be here. He keeps his word."

"Maybe just grip it, stroke it a little, please, Charlie."

"Jonny, don't be difficult. You're getting me all stressed out. Let's just behave. How did you do today? Did you get lots of work done?"

The last thing he wanted to do right now was talk about work. His cock was throbbing hard, he'd been promised release, and now that was dragged a little further from his grasp. He clenched his hands and fists. He didn't answer her. She went back to his testicles, rubbing the ointment and going in nice gentle circles to spread it into his skin. Not trying to pleasure him, but he appreciated it just the same. He said, "Maybe put it in your mouth. Lick the cage a little with your tongue."

She tsk-ed loudly and rolled her eyes. She said, "Come on, Jonny," and she stood up stepped back. "Pull up your pants. He can walk in the door any minute. Just a little while longer, okay?"

He groaned now and held his stomach. He felt like he just done a hundred sit-ups in two minutes. He ached all through his core. His penis was pushing hard against its confines again and his testicles were being strangled. He looked at her, all pretty and dressed for work and loving. He smelled the light smell of her soap and shampoo and he ached to be with her.

*A little. While. Longer.*

"Okay, okay," he groaned, and he fell back on the bed. His hands came down and grabbed his belt and pulled his pants up by it, did up his zipper and closed away the most prominent thing in his mind. All his focus was shifted between his legs. At least he did get some work done today.

Now he told her, “Work is going really good, Charlie. I swear to God, this is good. These coders are worth it. Worth wearing this fucking thing,” he said and slapped at the cage between his legs making it jiggle.

“I’m glad,” she said. “I’m glad. Let me get undressed … I mean changed into my after work clothes, if you know what I mean.”

“Lingerie?” he groaned.

She kicked his shin lightly with the tip of her shoe and said, “Later, silly. There’re leftovers. Want me to reheat them? Come sit with me on the couch, watch some Twilight Zone. It’ll take your mind off it.”

“Fine,” he sighed with great drama. When he sat up, he winced again.

She said “You’ll be okay. He will be here. You know he will.”

“I miss you so much,” he said.

“I miss you, too,” she said, and kissed his forehead and hugged his neck.

The dreams that came to him while he slept with Charlie in his arms on the couch were turbulent and filled with wild unnameable sexuality. Flashing lubricious images of wet

sex membranes, Charlie's glossy lips, huge engorged cock heads like soft, supple army helmets and they were free of cages and slick with pre-come and Charlie's saliva …

He awoke with a start and his heart was pounding and lust sizzled through every artery, vein, and capillary. It burned in him like a hunger.

Reza was home.

He startled, jumping up to a sitting position, Charlie tumbling off his chest and snorting herself awake, gasp-mumbling: "Wha—?"

Their landlord stood at the end of the couch, leaning against the wall at the foot of the stairs from the kitchen. He was smiling while he watched them sleep.

The way Jonny sat upright quickly pushed the cage sharply down on his already hurting testicles. It made him groan, double over, and he curled himself into the corner of the couch with his head thumping on the armrest. His hands went to his stomach.

Charlie said to a chuckling Reza: "Today's the day."

"I know it is," Reza said.

Charlie's warm hand stroked circles on Jonny's back and she said, "Where were you? He's really hurting."

Reza said, "I bet he is."

Jonny's hand moved from his stomach down lower and cupped his aching testicles. Charlie's hand slipped over the back of his and held his hand softly while he cupped himself. She said to Reza: "He's really hurting, and his balls are way bigger than they should be."

That made Reza chuckle again, and he said, "So they're almost normal size now?"

Charlie ignored the insult, just whispering, "Please …"

Reza took in a deep breath, and Jonny heard him shift his weight off the wall and approach them. He said, "A deal's a deal. Today's the day, Jonny. Sit up and look at me."

Jonny did, hefting himself off the arm of the couch and putting his back against the cushion. He looked at Reza standing there with his hands in his pockets. He wore a suit again today—there'd been a lot of business meetings in Reza's schedule these days. Jonny said, "I need my cage off. I'm really hurting. I can't think straight, where's the key?"

Reza said, “I don’t have it.”

Charlie gasped an exasperated sound. She scolded him: “Reza, don’t do it.”

Reza pulled his hands out of his pockets and showed them his palms as if in surrender. He said, “It’s no trick. I don’t have it, but it’s coming. It’ll be here soon.”

Charlie groaned and rubbed at her brow. She said, “Today’s the day, and it’s late …? My Jonny—Reza, he isn’t doing very well.”

Reza said, “I know. But I’m a man of my word. The key will be here any minute now and we’ll take care of Jonny’s problem. He can get back to work. And then in two weeks we’ll do it all over again.”

“Okay,” Charlie whispered. She ran her fingernails in circles over Jonny’s shoulder. She said to him, “Are you okay?”

“No,” he kind of laughed. Then to Reza: “Who has the key?”

“I gave it to Charlie’s mother.”

Jonny’s thighs clapped together and his eyes shot wide. Charlie made a high, frightful squeak in her throat.

“You what?”

Reza chuckled and smiled so wide the twisted ends of his mustache lifted from his face. He said “I’m kidding. I’m kidding.”

Charlie leaned her body against Jonny, and he put his arm around her. She rested her cheek on his shoulder and mumbled, “That wasn’t funny.”

Reza said, “I beg to differ. You should’ve seen your faces.” Then he cocked his head and both he and Charlie heard it, too: footsteps in the hall.

Reza said, “I bet this is your key coming, Jonny.” He trotted up the steps to the kitchen door and opened it. All three of them waited, eyes peering in the gap to see who would arrive. The footsteps grew closer and Jonny realized there were two people coming.

His mind flashed multitudes of possibilities. From what would be expected to the worst case. Somehow Reza commandeering Shulamit and Javed, the two of them showing up to see exactly what they got themselves into …

But it was only a second or two of horror with his mind flashing possibilities before the frame of the open door was filled with two figures. It was Genesis, walking with her arm locked through Tate’s.

## Chapter Fourteen

Charlie groaned, "What's she doing here?"

Genesis strolled into the kitchen as Tate pulled her coat off her shoulders. She made a tsk-ing sound, sucking her teeth and lamenting: "Aren't you as happy to see me—"

Charlie tilted her head and murmured, "It's not that …"

"—as I'm happy to see you?" Genesis continued.

Tate and Reza smiled.

Charlie's manners took over. She said, "I'm happy to see you, too, Genesis."

Reza said, "That's better," and now extended a gesturing hand for Genesis and Tate to step down the stairs ahead of him. He followed behind, and all three of them came to stand in front of the couch.

Jonny's heart—already suffering from the stress of sexual frustration—now surged even more strongly. What was Reza's plan? What did Reza have in store for him now? Why had he brought these people?

The real fear was whether or not he would be able to properly perform with an audience. Given the tension and hurt in his stomach he didn't think it would be an issue, his biology would take complete control over his mind. And yet his mind started to say, Are you sure about that, Jonny? … Charlie's counting on you here and it sure would be awful if you couldn't get your little half-penis up for her in front of these three. And once that doubt crept in …

Charlie said, "The key, please? Which one of you has it?"

Genesis said, "What key?" She looked to Reza with a perplexed expression. She whispered to him, "I thought you said not to bring it?"

Reza said, "You didn't bring it? I said that you should bring it."

Tate said, “Well, where is it? Is it back at your apartment? I’m not going all the way back there …”

Charlie said, “Why would you do this? This isn’t what we agreed to. Why do you always have to be so mean? I don’t like it.”

Genesis said, “I’m sorry, Charlie. I misunderstood …” She came now a few steps and sat down on the couch on the other side of Charlie and put her arm around her. Charlie wriggled away but not far enough that Genesis couldn’t hold her. Charlie made a scowling face.

Jonny could smell Genesis’s perfume. A bright and sharp concoction of tropical flowers and something feminine, something that made him think of the smell of good sex. He groaned and covered his stomach with both hands. He said, “She can use her hand … use her hand over … over the cage. It won’t matter …”

Genesis scoffed, and she rolled her eyes. “You guys are no fun,” she said, and she dipped her hand in the front of her black low-cut blouse that showed off her modest but upright bosom. She pulled out the pendant of a necklace and let it hang over her stomach. It was a small key.

Charlie slapped her thigh with an open hand, and said, “Reza!” her voice harsh and scolding.

Reza chuckled and said, “I guess she did bring it.”

Tate said, “I hope that’s the right one. There were so many keys …”

Jonny’s hands slipped up and down his thighs and came to rest over his testicles again. They felt round and plump even through his pants. The tension in his stomach was excruciating. He said, “It’s not funny.”

Tate laughed, and Jonny thought it was the first time he’d ever seen that. He apparently did think it was funny.

Charlie glowered and said, “Tate. Don’t laugh.”

Tate wiped the smile from his face and nodded to her.

Reza said, “Give me the key, Genesis.”

Charlie said, “Give me the key.” She held the cup of her palm out expectantly.

Reza said, “Charlie, you know that’s not how this works.”

Charlie said, “This is taking forever. I told you he was hurting. Can’t you see it? Look at his face.”

Reza said, “All in due time. This is all part of our agreement.”

Genesis hooped the necklace over her thick mane of black hair, and that smell of flowers washed across the couch again. She slung the necklace to Reza, and he caught it in one hand. He held the fist before them, the key clenched in it, the chain of the necklace dangling under his knuckles.

Charlie said, “Let me unlock it. Let me do it for him.”

Reza said, “Oh no, I don’t want you near Jonny’s penis.”

“Come on, don’t. Just let me do it.”

Reza said, “No. You’ll touch it.”

“I know. That’s what we’re here for.

Genesis said, “No, boo-boo.” She ran her long fingernails in circles over the middle of Charlie’s back. “That’s what I’m here for.”

Charlie’s head whipped from Reza to Genesis and back again. She said, “What?”

Reza said, “Today is Jonny’s release date.”

“I know …”

“Genesis is here to release him.”

Charlie frowned, and her face began to show the beginnings of anger. In a low, feminine, but gravelly voice, she asked: “The cage?”

“Yes. And the release.”

Charlie shot up, standing now before Jonny. She got between him and Reza. “No way. No way.” She was pointing in his face. “There’s no way, Reza. She is not having sex with him.”

Reza showed his hands and said, “That’s okay. We leave the cage on.”

Charlie slapped both her thighs with her hands and stomped her foot. She said, “Why is it like this? Why is it always like this? We do everything you want.”

Reza said, “I know. You do. You’re both very good. This is the agreement. Didn’t you read the papers you signed?”

Charlie shook her head and looked at the ceiling. She said, “There wasn’t anything about sex in those papers. There’s no way you could put that in a contract.”

Reza said to Tate, “I guess she didn’t read them.” He peered around Charlie and said, “Did you read them, Jonny?”

“I did,” he groaned, squeezing his thighs together to relieve the pressure. “There was nothing about sex and you know it.”

“Look, I don’t know what to tell you,” Reza said, “this is the way it is. I mean, maybe tomorrow I’ll call and we can get copies of the contract from Solomon. Go over them one more time and see.”

“Aw, come on,” Jonny groaned.

Reza said, “Today’s Jonny’s release date, and that’s why I have Genesis here. So are we going to do this or what?”

Charlie said, “No. We’re not going to do this. I want my Jonny.”

“You can’t have him, sweetheart,” Reza said. His voice was soft and sweet but there was menace in his eyes. Charlie was bewildered, her mouth hung open frozen with words she was unable to say.

He said, “Just tell me that we don’t need to do it. I’ll send Genesis home and we’ll see how everybody feels two weeks from now.”

Charlie said, “You expect me not to have sex with my husband for months on end?”

“I don’t expect anything. That’s all up to you. If you really need to have sex with your husband, maybe we can renegotiate.”

“What do you want?” she said solemnly.

“Right now? Nothing. I have everything I want. I don’t know what will happen in the future but at least I know there’s some room to dance.”

Charlie said, “Genesis can’t have sex with Jonny.”

Reza said, “Can she blow him?”

Charlie jumped back like somebody shoved Brussel sprouts into a kid’s mouth. She crossed her arms over her chest and said, “No, she can’t blow him.”

Reza said, “Genesis, honey, I’m sorry I brought you here. I’ll make it worth your while but you know …”

Genesis put her hands up and said, “No, I understand. That’s all right. I was looking forward to this, but …”

Charlie said, “Wait.”

She stood there motionless for a long moment with all of them staring at her. Her eyes darted back and forth, staring at nothing as she contemplated what she would do. When the moment grew long and tense and it seemed she would say nothing, Tate offered: “How about Genesis uses her hand?”

Reza snapped his fingers and smiled. “Great idea. How about that, Charlie? Genesis can use her hand.”

Charlie turned around with her arms folded and stared at Jonny. Her eyes trembled and looked wet. She would cry in a moment.

Jonny said, “It’s okay. I’ll figure it out. We don’t have to do anything. Genesis can go.”

Reza said, “What a brave, brave boy. Look at you.”

Tate nodded with grave admiration. Genesis said, “You sure? You look like you’re gonna die.”

Jonny breathed heavy for a moment, both hands still between his legs and massaging his testicles. He said, “I don’t want to see my Charlie cry.”

For whatever reason that got Genesis. Maybe she didn’t have a black heart like Reza. Her mouth quivered a bit, and Jonny swore he saw her eyes get teary like Charlie’s. She even cocked her head and made a soft sound.

It emboldened him. Made him feel proud. He continued, “Just go. Everybody go. I just need to lay down.” He leaned forward as if he would stand, his face twisting unexpectedly with the pain in his stomach.

Charlie said, “Wait.” She put both her hands on his shoulders. He looked at her and they stared in each other’s eyes for a dozen heartbeats. She sniffed wetly, said, “Okay.”

Jonny said, “No.”

Charlie shook her head no now and said, “Jonny. You have to.”

“I don’t.”

“Jonny, I don’t want to see you in pain.”

He said, “I don’t want to see you in pain.”

Charlie whipped around now and said, “She can use her hand. But I want to kiss him.”

Reza said no.

Genesis stood up now, agreeing with Charlie. She said, “Reza. Look how sweet she is. How can you be so cold to her? These two are in love.”

“So?”

Genesis sidled up against Reza and whispered in his ear. It was brief, but she pulled away smiling and Reza rolled his eyes. He smiled at Charlie.

Charlie smiled, said, “Okay? Can we do that?”

“Yes. Fine.”

Charlie’s head drooped with relief, her knees dipping and her hair swinging behind her as if she might pass out. She turned to face Jonny with her hand over her stomach and a big smile on her face. A tear had rolled from one eye. She said, “Okay?”

“Yes,” he said, and he couldn’t wait to feel her lips on his.

Charlie disrobed in front of them all while Jonny watched, his cock beginning to throb in its cage. Tate watched her. Reza watched her. Genesis watched her, too. But Charlie's eyes were on him. Sucking on her lower lip and smiling, she pulled her top off over her head. She didn't care anymore. She'd been naked with all of them. She'd had sex with Reza, had sex with Genesis. She'd given Tate a hand job.

It didn't matter. This was all for him. Right now she was all his. It didn't matter that he wasn't going to have sex with his wife, it only mattered that they were together when he came.

Charlie stood there without her top, still smiling, slipping her hands into the waistband of her shorts. She shimmied her hips and slipped them down her thighs and let them fall to the floor. Then off her panties came, too, and now his wife was totally naked in front of them all. She hopped lightly onto the couch next to him, getting on her knees, leaning against him. Her face hovered over his and her hair fell down to cover them from the others.

"You ready?" she whispered.

"I love you," he said.

"I love you, too, Jonny," she said, and she caressed his cheek and kissed him lightly.

Reza said, "Not quite yet."

Charlie said, "Oh, come on. You're being ridiculous." She was mad again.

Reza said, "You have to wait. Wait until it's time." He motioned to Genesis, and she nodded. She came toward Jonny in her tight skirt and her tall heels, her squat, sexy, shapely body rippling with muscle underneath the tight fabric. She got on her knees and pushed his legs wider. She said, "Let's see what he's got."

Reza said, "It's not much. Don't get excited."

Genesis made a cooing sound, and she pouted at Jonny while she undid his belt buckle. "They tell me you have a little one."

Charlie leaned against him and watched, her fingernails lightly scratching at his neck. "It's perfect," Charlie said to Genesis.

"We'll see about that," Genesis said, and she smiled as her fingernails armored with long glossy nails began to tug at Jonny's zipper. His thighs turned to trembling iron,

and the feeling of her sexy body between his legs made his eyelids flutter. At this point he didn't even care about being revealed. They would taunt him about his size but he would accept it.

Genesis dragged out the opening of the zipper, gently swaying and dancing between his knees as if she were excited about the revelation and wanted a buildup. With his buckle open and his zipper drawn down, she ran her fingernails over the bare skin of his belly just below his navel. Tufts of his pubic hair stuck up in the V of his open pants.

Charlie bristled next to him, not liking to see Genesis scratching her nails on her husband's skin. Now Genesis pressed the fabric of his pants to find the cage underneath; the ridges of its wires pressed out the cotton. She traced her fingers along the shape. "Not very big at all," she whispered.

"Please," Jonny muttered, the plea coming from him unbidden. He needed to be touched. He needed release.

Genesis made a throaty chuckle and began to tug his pants downward. The cage holding his genitals flicked free and stuck up almost straight from his body. Genesis laughed. Reza smiled.

"Oh no," Genesis said, looking at it. "That looks so painful."

He'd grown erect. His cock shone red-blue where the skin bulged through the gaps in the gridwork of his chastity cage. His arousal had pushed the tube of the cage straight upward, the steel ring that circled his scrotum had yanked on his testicles so they were halfway up his shaft, huge, shining, and purple looking.

Charlie sighed, "Oh, Jonny, oh, that doesn't look good."

Genesis said, "It doesn't look good. I think it's time we got this off you."

"Please," he muttered again, and it was like another person in the room saying it.

Genesis put her hand up with the palm facing Reza, waiting for the key. Reza let it dangle above her palm, the key swinging in circles like a water diviner until he settled it on the flat of her hand. She took it and Reza stepped back again. With the tip of her finger she flipped the cage's lock upright and slipped the small key into it.

Charlie said, "Don't pretend it doesn't open. Take Jonny's cage off right now."

Genesis lifted her eyes to meet Charlie's gaze, and she flashed her a friendly, feline smile.

With a twist of the key, the lock was released. She hooped it out from the hasp and set it and the key on the floor. With the tips of her fingers over the bulbous end of the cage, she tugged a little, finding the cage wouldn't budge because he'd grown so hard against it. Genesis frowned, said "Uh-oh, it seems to be stuck."

Charlie said, "It'll come off."

Genesis wagged it to the left and to the right, tugging on it gently, and soon it began to slip upward. Every bit of shaft it revealed blossomed and ballooned free from its constraint. The skin showed marked red lines where it had been pressed. Jonny whimpered and groaned as Genesis continued.

"There we go," she said as she got it near the end. She pulled it free and let it make a soft metallic thunk on the floor next to her knee. Jonny's cock sprang upright, marked with hurting lines and showing a throbbing purple glow. He'd never been harder. The flared coronal rim of his glans stood out prominently.

Charlie made a soft sound seeing it, and she whispered, "Are you hard for me?"

Not even caring who overheard him, he said, "I told you. I told you I'd be fine."

She whispered, "I wish we could be together."

"We will be. Soon, we will be," he answered.

Genesis said, "It's not very big at all. Look how cute it is. It's so little …" She cocked her head from side to side and moved around so she could see it from different angles. Jonny groaned and held his stomach. A sudden spate of clear pre-come flowed from him. It pulsed strongly, then ran down his shaft and made Genesis laugh. "Oh, look at this," she sang, "somebody's excited."

Jonny clutched his stomach tighter. He flexed to hold back the propulsion of his semen, but even doing that now he could see it still pulsing silvery streams in time with his heartbeat. The excitement couldn't be held back.

Genesis made spiders with her fingers and walked them up the inside of his khaki pants clawing over the open fly, and with the tips of her two index fingers she began to stroke lightly in alternating swipes on either side of his cock. At her touch, he moaned. More pre-come jolted from his tip in a shimmering spew. Charlie made an uncomfortable sound, and she hugged his neck.

Genesis now opened her hand wide and let Jonny see it coming toward his erection, showing him her palm and then inexorably moving at a snail's pace, fingers closing and closing until she had the slightest, featheriest grip on his erection. He thought he might come.

His head whipped back, and he thrust the crown of his head into the couch cushion. He looked at the ceiling. The feel of someone's bare, warm skin against his aching cock was the greatest delight he could imagine. He could feel more excitement streaming from him.

When he looked again, he saw rivulets of his pre-come running over Genesis's fingers.

She said, "It's so tiny. It's barely bigger than my hand."

She stroked a half-inch upward and pre-come spurted from him almost as if he'd ejaculated. She looked to Reza and said, "This isn't going to take too long at all." Reza chuckled. Tate watched grimly.

Jonny said to her, "Not too fast. Don't make me come fast."

Charlie whined, "Jonny," and she turned his face to look at hers, her brow lowered sternly.

Looking in her eyes he said, "So I can hold you. So I can put my hands on you. When I come, this will stop and I won't be able to touch you."

She kissed him. Put her lips against his and held his cheeks between her hands. He felt her knee press into the couch as she threw her other leg over top of him and straddled his hips. Now she was over top of him and he was looking up into her face. She purposely ran her hands through her hair and closed it around them so it was just the two of them. She whispered, "Fuck me. Put it in me."

## Chapter Fifteen

"Oh, Charlie," he sighed, his brow low and troubled. He'd never heard her speak this way; it was so loving and understanding, and yet so incredibly dirty.

"Put it inside me," she whispered again, and wiggled her hips. She was nowhere near low enough, and he looked down her body to see her bare sex hovering over his navel. He tugged on his shirt and bared his stomach. He ballooned out his tummy and felt his skin press her sex.

"Yeah," she whispered, and she pooched her labia against his navel. "Make love to me," she said now, and she took his mouth with another kiss.

His hands went over her, running up from her hips and over her back. They circled around her shoulders came down her ribs then quickly to the front to cup her breasts. That was when Genesis began to stroke him. He gasped into Charlie's mouth and made a whimpering sound.

She said, "I feel you, Jonny. Do you feel me?"

He nodded and kissed her again.

Genesis squeezed his balls, and he cried out. His hips began to pump as if he were actually having sex with his wife. She swiveled and rolled with him, her hips doing a little Charlie dance over top of him as if they were connected sexually. They were. Not biologically. But mentally they were one right now.

Genesis's hand was like warm wet velvet and she worked his cock with care. The pleasure was wild and intoxicating. He couldn't breathe. Up and down she went, squeezing, teasing, caressing his balls. He worked with Charlie, focusing on her, wishing the moment could last forever, but it had been two weeks without ejaculating. It'd been two weeks of torture. Watching her taking a pounding, watching her go away without him, watching her in videos sent surreptitiously that showed her with other men who put their hands all over her. Then he saw her beg for their landlord's big cock because she couldn't stand to be without it.

“Oh, oh wow,” he blurted as semen exploded from him. He bucked and jumped and Genesis squeezed his cock in her grip. He heard her giggling. Stream after stream shot from him, and it just kept coming. His cock surged and flexed and propelled his pent up lust up in strong, explosive pulses.

“I feel it, Jonny, I feel you coming,” Charlie whispered right into his ear and ran her thumbs over his cheekbones.

He squeezed her breasts and every muscle in his body tightened to steel. His stomach rolled in and out and he felt Charlie’s damp sex make puckering suction against the flat of his stomach.

Tate muttered Gross, and Genesis laughed. Reza made no sound and he couldn’t see the man—he pushed the thought of his existence away.

Charlie hugged him, kissed him, his neck, his ears, his cheeks. She stroked his face with her thumbs. She whispered, “I love you.”

“I love you, too,” he groaned, one last surge spewing from him. There was slick, disgusting, sopping wet sounds from Genesis’s hand gripping him. The relief was enormous. A white sheet of unconsciousness fell over him like a drape and his mind somersaulted backwards. He swore he would pass out. It was heaven. The release had come. He felt enormously empty, he felt bottomlessly happy, bottomlessly relieved. His back sank into the couch cushions with a heavy but weightless depth—like a floating anvil.

“Oh my God,” he cried, and he kissed Charlie’s collar. “Oh my God.”

The pain ebbed from his belly and balls, the tension spilled away.

Charlie smiled, kissed his cheek and looked in his eyes. She said, “I think you came all over my back.”

“I think I did, too,” he sighed. He wiggled his head lower, Charlie knowing what he wanted, raising up and feeding him her nipple. He sucked it, found its shape swollen, the tip of his tongue dancing over its bumps. She giggled.

When she came back to face him, she whispered, “God, I’m so horny. When this is over Jonny, we are going to go crazy.”

“We are,” he said.

Genesis said, “Don’t you want to see?”

It made them both flinch, reminding them they weren't alone. Charlie shook away her hair and the light of the room was revealed to him again. Over her shoulder he could see Tate watching, his nose turned up in a disgusted sneer. Reza watched with a blank expression, his hands in his suit pockets. Charlie shifted sideways and looked over her shoulder with a soft gasp. Jonny saw it, too, Genesis showing them her hand. It was covered front and back with white ropes of his semen. Jiggling webs connected all her fingers. She said, "It had been a while, huh?"

Charlie made a scoffing little sound.

She said, "What are you going to do with that?" There was a tinge of worry in her voice.

Genesis waved her sticky fingers at her, then moved her hands between her legs. Charlie jumped. Jonny looked down to see the long fingernails of Genesis's hand stroking at Charlie's pussy. She spread Jonny's semen over his wife's sex. His stomach flinched at the erotic sight of it. His balls began to ache again even though they'd just been emptied. He wanted to go again right now. He could do it right now. He was still hard. He had a feeling he'd be hard for a long, long time.

"Oh wow," he sighed.

Charlie liked it, cooing at the feel of her husband's semen being spread over her. Genesis worked her magical fingers until Charlie made soft whimpering sounds and her hips began to wag back and forth.

Between her legs, Jonny could see now Genesis's hands gathering up some of his semen into a sticky puddle held between her fingers. She pushed it up inside Charlie and let three fingers slip up deep inside her.

Charlie looked up to the ceiling and sighed, "Oh-ho, oh wow, oh wow, mm, I love it …"

Jonny's stomach jumped again, and the urge to put his penis inside his wife overcame him. He slipped his hand down and pushed on the top of his erection to angle it to enter her. Genesis slapped his penis away. Then with both hands spread on Charlie's butt cheeks she pushed her forward until Charlie's chest squashed his face.

"What are you—?"

The soft wet sounds of Genesis sucking on Charlie's pussy came.

Charlie squeaked, "Oh no, oh don't do that. That's Jonny's …"

Genesis licked what she had spread over Charlie's pussy. Charlie didn't stop her, but it was killing her. Pleasure and regret twisting his wife's heart in a knot. She cried soft moans and clutched Jonny's head to her chest. He could feel her rib cage wracking with

a soft sobbing sound. Genesis continued; Jonny could feel her working between his legs, rolling her face from side to side up and down as she licked Charlie clean. The front of her dress, her bosom, mashed against his balls and his rock hard erection throbbed with his pounding pulse.

Charlie clutched his head tightly, both her arms hugging around him and her hands cupping his ears. She gasped right next to him, "Oh, this is so terrible," but she panted with ecstasy at the same time.

Charlie came. She squeezed his head so tightly his ears rang and his face must have turned purple, choked off by her clutched arms.

She groaned, "Oh no, oh no, it's coming, oh no," and then she tightened on him and it felt like his head might pop off. Her body jumped and shook over top of his. He let it happen, let her enjoy it. It was terrible but somehow it was beautiful. Somehow he was involved in it. He rubbed her back, let his hands explore her, even stroked over the globes of her ass cheeks and let his fingers find how slippery Genesis had left her.

Genesis was gone, and his hand was free to explore. Touching her was not forbidden. It just had not been a good idea over the last two weeks. Touching her lead to complications between his legs. Painful complications. But this was fine. This was fine because he wore no cage right now. He took two fingers and slipped them up and down his wife's wet stripe, found the ruffled lips of her swollen labia and parted them. He slipped two fingers inside her and she sighed, "Oh Jonny, oh, that feels so good."

"You feel so good," he told her.

"That's your fingers?"

"That's me," he told her.

"You feel so good …"

"Do you think you'll come?" he asked her, then his hand was pushed away.

Jonny batted the hand away, determined to enjoy his wife's slickness a few moments longer. His fingers stroked at her, moving up and down and teasing into the shallow depths of her aperture. The hand returned to push his away again, beating at his fingers lightly. He flicked it away. It persisted, prodding at his hand again. This time when he went to flick it, he realized it wasn't a hand. The tips of his fingers grazed the gummy surface of Reza's cock. He could tell it was Reza's because his fingers snagged on the man's thick foreskin and he felt it glide backward. His thumb slipped over the slick and smooth top side of Reza's enormous cock head. He didn't knock it away.

Without being prompted, without being cajoled, he knew what Reza wanted and he wanted it, too. The tips of his fingers now retracted Reza's foreskin fully, baring that plump, swollen shape. He wiggled it around against Charlie's slick membranes. It made sticky sounds, the two of them primed and ready for action, both greasy with their own sexual lubrication.

Charlie felt it now, and she made a soughing gasp past his ear. Jonny had guided another man to enter his wife. He held Reza's cock firmly in place and Reza pushed himself inside Charlie. The man's thick shaft bumped and slid past his fingers, sinking into her slowly. Charlie made a whimpering cry in Jonny's ear. Her nails dug into him.

"Oh, oh no, oh, oh wow," she grunted.

Jonny's fingers were widened as the thick base of Reza's erection slid into Charlie further. He removed his hand.

Charlie whispered in his ear so only he could hear, “You’re so big, Jonny. When did you get so big?”

He breathed in sharply. His cock shot to electric steel suddenly. Reza withdrew almost fully and slipped deep inside her again.

She whined in his ear, “Oh Jonny, you’re too big. Oh, you’re so big you’re tearing me up.”

“Oh Charlie,” he sighed, his loving wife doing amazing things to his heart and to his mind. Reza pulled back and plunged in harder.

“Jonny, your cock is so big it hurts. It hurts so good …”

Out and back in again.

“Oh, Jonny, I never knew it could … could hurt so good …” She dragged her nails on him.

Reza gripped her waist, held her rump firmly in place and began to steadily stroke in and out of her pussy. Charlie lost her concentration for a moment, making soft desperate whining gasps in Jonny’s ear as Reza fucked her. It sounded like she was being hurt, but it sounded like she liked it, too.

The rhythm of Reza’s pounding had his balls swinging. The way the three of them were sandwiched, his much larger and heavier testicles collided each time against Jonny’s. It felt like heavy pool balls smashing against hollow candy-shell Easter eggs. Each strike of the man’s large testicles against his flashed white over his vision and put a pulse of swirling pain in the center of the stomach. But it joined him in the action. Charlie’s words, the feel of her body being rocked, the implication of the other man’s testicles against his own united him in the action. His hands moved up above Reza’s and gripped Charlie’s breasts. Her nipples were like rubbery rocks against his palms.

“Ah, shit, Charlie,” he whispered, “you feel so tight.”

She made a giggling whimper, and whispered in his ear now, “Your cock is so big, Jonny, your cock is so big …”

“Take it,” he whispered.

“Jonny, I can’t. It’s too big. God it’s hurting me … but don’t stop, please don’t stop …”

“I won’t stop, Charlie,” he said, “I won’t stop till you come.”

“Oh Jonny,” she gasped, and her nipples hardened further in his hands.

His own hips began to pump, being beckoned to join in. For a moment he could imagine he had something like Reza had. Something so large and masculine that despite the discomfort it might bring, the pleasure was so much larger in scale and his wife could endure. She could put up with being stretched because it came with the brightest of orgasms. "Can you take it?" he whispered, "Can you take how big I am?"

"No, Jonny, you're way too big. You're way too big, please, you have to come, it's splitting me …"

"You come first," he told her.

"I'll try, Jonny, I'll try," she whispered. And she actually did. He felt her body shifting, tilting to accommodate Reza's thrusting from behind. She made muffled sounds of complaint and the strikes of Reza's testicles against his own became more pronounced. Jonny grunted as well. But just like Charlie, the pain wasn't too much to endure because the pleasure was so much larger.

"Jonny, ah, Jonny, you're gonna make me come, your huge cock is going to make me come …"

"I want you to Charlie. I need you to …"

"Make me come, Jonny, make me come with your horse cock …"

"You feel it …?" he said, "Come on my cock, Charlie …"

She couldn't answer anymore, and her face drew back. It was twisted up like a kid who'd skinned her knee and was just on that precipice of bursting into tears. Her eyes had squinted shut and her mouth was down-turned. Her lips shone wetly, and they wriggled with the impending orgasm. She blurted, "Oh, Jonny," and it came out in a cough. A thin strand of saliva hung from her lip.

"That's it," he said, "That's it, come for me, Charlie," he whispered and he squeezed her breasts hard.

She cried out loud, a plaintive sound of lust and sadness and pain but also enormous pleasure. And with that his own cock jolted. He looked down to see darting ropes pulsing from his tip and up onto his T-shirt. Charlie saw it, too, arching her back and tilting her breasts toward him. She looked down her body and watched him ejaculate. She let out a huge sound. More coughing, more crying. Happiness in there, too, and wild pleasure.

But now she was taken from him, Reza's fingers dug into her hard belly and pulled her upright. Jonny could see the man's hairy, muscular thighs spread out on either side of his own legs, the landlord squatting low so he could thrust up into her.

Jonny watched the thick wide base of his cock slipping in and out of Charlie. His huge testicles dangling and bouncing and batting off the inside of her thighs. Charlie panted, blinked, and looked bewildered. She caught his eyes for a moment, and she smiled. She looked down his body, looked at the darkening stains up the front of his T-shirt and smiled wider. While Reza fucked her, she flashed him a peace sign. Then he realized it was the number two she flashed because she said, "That's two times, Jonny. I got you two …"

He wanted to laugh, and he wanted to hug her. Even in the midst of this horror, he could find something so amazing. The love of this woman. His perfect, pure, and innocent girl. She would do anything for him, no matter how bad it was; if he asked she would engage. She would endure. And she was resilient. More resilient than he could ever have imagined. Here she was taking pain and pleasure for him. Sure there was pleasure, he got that. But somehow he knew that she didn't want this. She didn't want it, but it needed to be done. She was his partner. And in the midst of it all, the two of them standing in a nuclear apocalypse, naked and afraid in a wasteland of gray ash, she could give him the tiniest of gifts. Those two long graceful fingers poked up in a secret signal just for them.

So he watched her with a smile on his face that he couldn't help. He laced his own fingers together behind his head and watched the most amazing woman in his life.

Reza's hands roamed her stomach and her breasts, and he fucked her from behind, doing it way too hard. Charlie's body was slender against his muscle. Pale against his dark. Hairless against his fur. She was incredibly beautiful. Then Reza ejaculated inside her.

He stiffened and thrust, held it deep, roared. His balls lifted and fell. He withdrew and plunged deep again, making a slick gushing sound. He roared again and his fingers dug into her flesh. She made a warbling cry and frowned.

"Fuck, yeah," he grunted. Again: "Yeah." He thrusted deep one more time. Charlie whimpered.

Jonny's heart hammered in his chest, and it was him who was breathless now, too. Breathing heavy, the sight in front of him too much for him. His eyes lost focus, became wide and CinemaScopic, taking in the rest of the room. He could see half of Genesis, sitting in the chair with her legs crossed, her shaved and oiled legs glistening, a tattoo swirling across her shin and down into her expensive shoe. She smiled while she watched. On the right he could see Tate fully. Tate watched with awed horror. His eyes glued to the action but perhaps not liking what he was seeing. He might not like it, but his cock did. Jonny's eyes lowered down his body and could see the athlete's huge erection pressing out on an angle the front of his sweatpants. There was a quarter-sized stain at the tip, this man also aroused by Charlie's sexuality had produced his own

lubrication. Jonny was disheartened to see that Tate was also incredibly hung. Behind the cotton of his sweatpants it looked like the man sported something about as large as what Reza had. And Charlie had described it as good-looking. His wife had jerked that thing off. His wife had told him she liked Tate's penis. It was as big as Reza's but maybe not hideous.

Sickness curled up in Jonny's belly, and he tightened up as Charlie was released from Reza's clutch. She collapsed overtop of Jonny again, her soft feathery hair falling around his cheeks. Her chin rested in the hollow under his collarbone and he could still see the perpetrators of his horror. Genesis gently kicking that crossed over leg and enjoying the show. Sneering at him. Tate still watching, now gripping his erection overhand. And of course Reza, backing away, out of breath and momentarily sated. His wide cock bobbed between his legs, upright, the foreskin beginning to slowly close over the head now that business was done. A jiggling strand of semen swung from side to side from his tip until it swung and stuck to his scrotum.

Reza panted, "Holy shit. She is so tight. Charlie, your pussy is unbelievable."

Charlie made no response to him, only breathed heavy in Jonny's ear. His hands went up and down her sides and found her skin damp and clinging. "You okay?" he asked her.

She said, "That was incredible, Jonny. You fucked me … fucked me so good …"

"We both came," he said grimly, the excitement of the previous moment washing away from him now. The enormous truth of it all taking its place. He didn't have a huge cock. He didn't make her come with it. It was all another man.

"I love you," he whispered.

"I love you … love you … too," she panted and kissed his neck.

Reza squatted to retrieve his pants from around his ankles. He pulled them up and did up the button. His massive erection still poked out, the fly bowed around his massive girth. He was still out of breath, but he stepped back one more time, and ushered with a gesturing hand for Tate to step in. He said to him, "Take your turn."

Jonny's heart seized up again. "No," he gasped.

Tate took a step forward, moving tentatively. His movement was slow, and his brow lowered, eyes wide. His gaze darted left and right and Jonny got the impression he was looking for a way out of this.

When he stalled, Reza said, "Take your turn, Tate."

Tate stopped. Charlie sensed now what was happening behind her and flicked her gaze over her shoulder. Tate stood a few steps behind her, the front of his sweatpants pushed way out by his huge erection.

Nothing was said for a long moment. Genesis was watching, enjoying this disgusting burlesque show she'd been a party to. Curious to see where it would go next and knowing whatever happened she would like it. Reza had an insistent expression on his face. Tate was still speculative. A longer moment stretched thin and Charlie whispered, "Go ahead, Tate. It's okay …"

She swayed her hips, wagging her opening to this man he suspected she had a crush on. Jonny held his breath.

## Chapter Sixteen

Tate shook his head. He didn't look at Charlie; he didn't look at Reza. He took a step back then his chin finally lifted. He looked around the room and said, "No. I don't think so."

Charlie made a sad sound in her throat. Reza said, "Tate. Do it."

Tate said, "No, I think that's enough."

Reza said, "She wants you."

Another long moment of silence, nobody knowing what would happen next.

Charlie said, "He thinks I'm disgusting," the last word squeezing closed as it turned into a pinched cry.

It woke Tate up. He shook his head as if he'd been asleep. He said, "No, no, Charlie. Not that at all," then he came to her, taking the two steps to the front of the couch. He dropped down on one knee and put his hand on the small of her back. He looked into her face earnestly. Jonny could feel the man's leg pressing against his. Even though they were so close, it didn't seem like Tate even knew he existed.

Tate said, "Charlie, don't say that. I don't think you're disgusting at all."

"You don't?"

"Not at all, Charlie. I don't want to do it like this."

"You don't?"

"No, of course not. Not like this."

"You don't think I'm disgusting?" her voice was hopeful, luring him to say what she wanted to hear.

Tate smiled and looked at her with patronly warmth. “Charlie, I think you’re beautiful. I think you’re amazing.”

She watched his face for a long moment to see if he would taunt her next or take it back.

“Come here,” he said now, and he guided her up off of Jonny. She couldn’t look at Jonny, nor at Tate. She turned her head away and hid her face in her hair. Her hand stretched out and snatched up her pajama shorts. She took them and clutched them between her legs to sop up the mess that had been left there. She closed her thighs against the shorts and sat down heavily next to Jonny. She put her hands together and pressed them between her knees. Tate stroked an arm and her thigh. He said, “Look at me.”

“No,” she softly said.

Jonny said, “Leave her alone.”

Tate disregarded him. He said, “Charlie, please, look at me.”

She did, tilting her chin up and showing him her big, round, sad eyes. He said, “Don’t think that. Look at me. Don’t think that.”

She looked up, her pouty mouth pressed into a slim thin line, and they held their gaze for a moment. She nodded.

Reza was smiling. He said, “Let her use her mouth.”

Jonny saw Tate’s expression take another shape of exasperation, but it was restrained and hidden away from the man’s boss. Tate made no response. Charlie whispered, “I can do that for you.”

Jonny’s heart twisted up into a knot. All the good that had just happened, and now she was offering it to another man. He exhaled slowly.

Tate looked at her expressionlessly.

She repeated, “I can do that for you.”

Tate thought about it. He licked his lips, his eyes looking over Charlie, flitting about the wall behind the couch. He said nothing more, stood up, knees touching the front seat cushion on either side of Charlie’s legs.

She looked up at him, pulling her hair away from her face, looking a little hopeful. She said, “Can I do that for you?”

Tate looked conflicted. His body was rigid like he didn't want to turn around. He only looked at Charlie. At last he said, "You can do that."

"I can?" she said almost hopefully.

"You can," he said simply.

"Okay," she said, and she prepared herself. She turned her face to look at Jonny and gave him a sheepish sort of expression. He was frozen. He wanted to say No, but knew he couldn't. Even if she didn't want to, she would still do it. And now if she did want to? It was futile. The enormity of Charlie's desire to please this other man was infinite. It was like he stood in that apocalyptic wasteland alone now, looking all around and he couldn't find her anymore. She'd gone off with some other survivor.

Charlie leaned forward on the couch seat, shifted herself a little, her knees slipping in between Tate's. She gripped the front of his sweatpants' waistband, the dangling string between her thumbs. One more time she looked up to him and asked: "It's okay?"

"Okay," he answered.

She pulled the front of the sweatpants down and they were loose so the waist slipped right down over his hips and underneath his buttocks. His huge hard cock sprang free and bobbed in an undulating W pattern before Charlie's face. She watched it bounce. Jonny saw what she meant. It was big. Maybe not as big as Reza but it was really close. And unlike Reza's it did have a certain aesthetic quality. It was long and thick and arrow straight. Maybe not as wide as Reza's, but definitely girthy. He had been circumcised, and it was a good job, no scars, and a nice folded envelope of skin right behind the large flared cock head. The skin didn't shine, wasn't red, wasn't too veiny. The plump glans had flared swooping shapes; not too pointy, not too blunt. No wonder Charlie liked it. A short, fat, dangling thread of clear pre-come dangled from his tip. Charlie waited for his cock to stop swaying then she extended her shimmering pink tongue and slipped it up the underside of his shaft and collected the semen in the cup of its curl. Her mouth swallowed his glans.

Tate hissed an intake of breath. "Oh Charlie," he sighed. Now his hands came together and pulled up his T-shirt. Slowly, chiseled abs were revealed, and Jonny's black chrome jealousy wormed through him again. Every bit of his body tensed to steel, and he had a sudden instantaneous thought: Get the fuck out of here. Don't watch. Don't watch, this will kill you. Get on that fucking computer and type your fucking fingers off. Now!

Only he didn't. He sat frozen and breathless. A lifeless shell, a sculpture sitting in the corner afraid to move. His eyes were frozen open. Charlie sucked on the end of Tate's cock, one hand coming up to press against her lips and stroke her saliva down his shaft. Charlie, who really wasn't that good at blow jobs six months ago, also cupped the man's large, hanging testicles and coddled them with just the right amount of

gentleness. Tate's stomach muscles twitched. He let the shirt fall down one muscular arm and it draped over Charlie's knee. She sucked Tate's cock for ten minutes. Doing it properly. Doing it lovingly. He was too large to take deep, but she took what she could. Her hand did the rest. Stroking and slipping, the other one squeezing and tugging at his testicles. Tate's muscular stomach heaved in and out. The muscles of his chest flexed and twitched. Sometimes Charlie would pull right back, push with her hands on his cock, point it downward and she could look up into his eyes. Once he told her: "You're so beautiful."

Jonny could see her practically swoon. Then she closed her eyes and began sucking again. Soon the magic moment came. Tate held both sides of her face, tilted her chin up, the end of his cock still plugged into the ring of her lips. He said to her, "Can I come in your mouth?"

Cock still in her mouth, she nodded.

He whispered, "I won't if you don't want."

Charlie let her lips come free, licked them, said, "It's okay, I don't mind." Her hand kept jerking his cock head.

He said, "I'm going to come."

She put him back in her mouth, hummed an Uh-huh around his dick.

"Okay," he said, and he held her face still.

She watched his eyes while she stroked him, her mouth bobbing slightly, her tongue stroking up and down the underside of the end of his cock. Jonny's own erection pounded between his legs. There was no way they could get a cage on right now anyway so no one bugged him about it. It was like a steely shaft poking up between his legs still shining from the dirty things that happened to it earlier.

Jonny watched Tate's stomach heave in and out, the muscular athlete's breaths snorting and chugging. Tate struggled to keep his eyes on Charlie's, struggled not to narrow them to slits. His body tightened and grew still for a brief moment while Charlie kept sucking hard. And then he came in her mouth.

Charlie jumped feeling the pulses down her throat. She hummed affirmative sounds, letting him know she felt him. Humming ahs, humming okays, and mm-hmms. The whole while she tried to watch his face.

It slowed finally, Tate stroking the sides of her face and caressing her hair. Then her mouth began to withdraw, pouting lips coming to a point on the very tip of his penis,

making a slurping sound like she was taking the last drag off a straw at the end of a milkshake. Then she smiled and licked her lips.

She lay back in the couch heavily, making Jonny bounce next to her. Tate's cock bobbed up and down, slick and shining. He made an exhausted sound and then he smiled, too.

Now it was over, and they all knew Reza's badness would resume, he reached down and pulled up his sweatpants. Under the heather cotton, his huge cock made a large sideways tube across to his hip.

Jonny's head finally turned, taking in the rest of the room now. He hadn't even seen what was going on, so mesmerized by Charlie's actions, so bewildered by them. Reza had sat down, his cock still stuck out of his pants hard as iron. His eyes were wide like he couldn't believe what he watched either. Genesis looked like she might burst out laughing. Jonny's heart was breaking.

"Well, well, well," Reza said, "that was something." He sat in the red IKEA chair with his legs apart, his elbows on the arms, his hands clasped together under his chin; his thick arousal struck up straight from his open fly. "Something indeed."

Genesis agreed. "I'll say."

Reza said to her: “Did you see that?”

Genesis said, “Wow.”

Reza said to Tate, “Can you go down and get the car ready now?”

Tate rotated his head around on his neck, said, “I will.”

Reza said nothing while Tate reached down and grabbed his sweatshirt. Charlie watched all the big round muscles in the guy's body work as he pulled it over his head and shrugged it down his body, his big hands pulling the hem down to cover his huge arousal. Tate nodded to Charlie and something flashed in his eyes.

Charlie whispered, “Bye.”

Tate continued past the couch, trotted up the stairs lightly for such a big guy. He went out the apartment door disappeared into the hall and closed the door behind him.

Reza continued to watch Jonny and Charlie. Genesis continued to smile.

Jonny’s heart pounded. He looked at Charlie incredulously. She sat there naked watching Reza and Genesis, her legs closed tightly together, her elbows on her thighs. She still sat with the bundled short shorts wedged over her sex. Jonny reached out to her. Though they sat side-by-side she seemed so far away. He held her wrist, and she swung her hair away so she could see him. She smiled, let his warm hand grip her and then she moved her other hand to hold his wrist. She kissed his knuckles. It healed his heart at least momentarily.

Reza sighed finally, put a hand between his legs and lightly stroked his cock. He said to Genesis, “Get the ice pack.”

“Coming right up,” she said, lifted herself gracefully from the chair and strutted in her heels up the steps and into the kitchen. Now Reza watched Charlie. He said to her, “You go get on the bed. What you just did has got me wanting a lot more.”

She sighed petulantly and her shoulders slumped. Her head cocked. A lot different from when Tate asked her to do something.

Reza said, “Get on the bed, Charlie.”

“Fine,” she said, kissed Jonny’s knuckles one more time then stood. Jonny watched her pert bare ass lift and fall as she walked across the apartment on the balls of her feet. Totally naked, totally carefree. She was becoming inured.

She climbed up onto the bed on all fours and sat cross-legged, waiting.

Reza watched the kitchen archway until Genesis appeared again. She came down the three steps, her heels clicking. In her hand was a frosty blue gel-pack she'd taken from the freezer. Something Charlie kept there in case somebody had something injured or sprained. He used it on his wrists sometimes after long days of typing.

Reza nodded to her, and Genesis didn't need to be told what to do. Jonny frowned at first, but then figured what was in store. His cock was a piece of solid iron right now (nowhere near as big as Tate or Reza, but he was sure he could go toe-to-toe with them for hardness and come out on top), and Reza wanted the cage back on and it wouldn't go until he was flaccid.

Genesis sat herself next to him on the couch on his left side, right where Charlie had been. He wished Charlie was still there. Genesis moved her eyes on him like he was prey.

"What are you going to do?" he asked her, even though he knew.

"We have to make that little thing go down," she said.

"Whatever."

Reza chuckled, stood up now. He took off his suit jacket, unbuttoned his shirt and headed toward the bed. Charlie waited for him.

Genesis took her left hand and gripped Jonny's erection. He didn't know what to think of her, sometimes he liked her and sometimes he didn't. Sometimes she frightened him. Like right now. Her strong hand gripped his erection, and she examined it. She whispered, "Charlie gets so much better now."

"Stop it."

"Oh, you sensitive?"

"Just put the ice on it and leave me alone."

Genesis sighed and stroked him a few times. Charlie watched Reza approaching the bed but saw what was happening on the couch. She told Genesis, "Please, don't."

"We have to get his cage back on, sweetie."

"I can do it."

Reza said, "You're staying on the bed."

Charlie said to Reza, "Please, don't let her do anything dirty with Jonny."

Without looking over his shoulder, Reza said to Genesis, “Just use the ice.”

Genesis said, “I was only teasing, anyway.” She withdrew her hand from Jonny’s cock, and he missed it as much as he was relieved. He’d ejaculated twice and the absence of the pressure in his abdomen was greatly cherished—he wouldn’t mind going a third time but it was asking too much. The fact that Charlie had helped him get off a second time was a greater gift than he deserved.

Genesis took the frigid pack, and she wagged it back-and-forth, bowing and curling it into an S shape. Flakes of frost fell and melted onto Jonny’s pants. She said, “It’s going to sting.”

“I know,” he said.

Reza let his pants drop and he pulled off his shoes, climbed up onto the bed with Charlie. She’d gathered up one of the pillows and clutched it to her tummy, hiding behind it. Her eyes watched Reza now.

Genesis took the base of his penis with a thumb and forefinger and pulled it out from his body so she could slip the flat of the icepack against his pubic bone. It stung so cold it burned. He hissed, and Genesis giggled watching his testicles disappear up into his body. Then she took the open ends of the ice pack sliding it so it was a nice fit and curled them around his aching erection like she wound up a sleeping bag. She held it in place with the palm of her hand.

Jonny watched Reza get over top of Charlie. She lay on her back, and Reza took the pillow out of her hands and threw it away. His cock was still hard, huge, dark brown, and ugly against her pale and beautiful body. She opened her legs and covered her breasts.

Genesis said, “He’s going to ruin her pussy for you.”

“I know,” Jonny said solemnly.

“You better get that game done, junior.”

“I’m doing it.”

Charlie let out a frail and hurting moan as Reza slid his cock inside her again. Her knees lifted, and then she slapped the soles of her feet on the bed and whimpered.

It was funny because a week ago she wanted this. She didn’t have it for days and days on end and she missed it. Now when she had it, she didn’t want it. She was reluctant to take it. Would she miss it again? When this was over with her and Reza, would a time come when Charlie craved him? Or would it be Tate?

Jonny said, “I can’t watch it.”

“She make you hard?—” Genesis purred, “—even when Reza fucks her with that big cock?”

“It does.”

“You got it for her bad.”

“I do.”

“Don’t look,” she told him. His cock throbbed and throbbed from the frigid cold. He couldn’t tell if he was hard or soft anymore. All he knew was frigid pain and numbness. Detachment from his organ. “For your own good,” she continued, seeing his gaze never leave the bed where another man fucked his wife.

Genesis reached and covered his eyes. She used her thumbs to close his eyelids and he let her. She pulled her head to her bosom, and he rested his ear in the cup of her collar. Pressed so closely to her chest, he could hear her heartbeat. She smelled of beautiful perfume, and it was a very matronly thing that she did. He wondered if Genesis had children, and strangely suspected if she did she was a good mother despite the terrible things she did outside the home.

He curled up against her, cuddled himself and hid away from what was happening on the bed. Genesis made a soft singsong, something in Spanish maybe, gently humming and saying a few of the words, one hand gripping the frigid ice pack over his penis, the other one gently stroking his neck. But over top of her little lullaby, Jonny could still hear Charlie whimpering, gasping, and reluctantly moaning.

Even though his face was hidden, he clenched his eyes tightly until he saw twinkling stars. He couldn’t shut up the sounds. And it wasn’t long before he heard the distinct vocalizations of Reza making his wife orgasm with his huge penis.

## Chapter Seventeen

The cage fit snugly again. Genesis had been kind, cleaning him off with a baby wipe from her purse before slipping it back on and closing it again with the lock.

He'd had to change his clothes. He made quite a mess from his eruption. His pant legs were spotted, his T-shirt was ruined. So now he was back in sweatpants, T-shirt, and an open flannel shirt. Coffee was brewing, and he was gonna be up all night coding again. He was closing in. And the relief he felt now was hugely helpful. Charlie had been closed in the bathroom now for fifteen minutes.

They were gone. All of them. Tate had gone down to warm up the car and bring it around to the front door of the apartment building. Reza had another appointment and said he'd be out again late tonight. Genesis left with him, arm in arm. Charlie had said nothing and just watched them leave, sitting cross-legged on the bed with a towel between her legs. She'd been used pretty hard.

When the apartment door closed, she looked at him solemnly. He could say nothing either. There was a tension in his heart, pressure like a grip, soft, not squishing, but making it hard to beat. The way she'd asked Tate wouldn't leave his mind. After a long while just watching each other and breathing and saying nothing, she finally cleared her throat and said, "It's back on?"

He'd been sitting there with the pillow over his lap, his pants fallen around his ankles. He nodded. She scratched her head and looked around uncomfortably for a moment then said, "I need to clean up." Then with nothing further between them, she disappeared into the bathroom.

He could get back to work right now but he was waiting for his coffee to brew. Plus the thought of sitting down and typing right away after all that had happened seemed so harsh. Like he should perhaps take a moment for reflection here. Yes, going full throttle all the time was the recipe for getting out of this, it was the roadmap, but if he didn't step aside once in a while, pull over to the side of the road and take a look at the scenery and breathe in the air, what was the point in the trip at all?

When Charlie came out of the bathroom, she saw him sitting there in the red IKEA chair where Genesis had sat. He was waiting for her. She stopped, made a funny face then leaned on the doorjamb. She twitched her nose a little, then said, "What do you want to do tonight? I don't feel like sleeping."

"I don't know," he said solemnly. "It's almost midnight."

"I don't think Reza is coming back until tomorrow."

"I have to work."

"I know you do," she said softly. She was wearing a fresh T-shirt and a pair of new pajama shorts. Her feet were bare, and they nervously played with each other, toes grabbing at toes while she talked.

He said, "I put coffee on. Are you going to go to bed? You could read."

"I guess. You want to come to bed and lay with me?"

"I'm wearing the cage again."

"Just to snuggle."

He inhaled deeply and held it. She watched him. He let the long breath exhale from his nostrils making a hoarse and harsh sound.

"What?" she asked timidly.

"What do you think?"

"I don't know."

"You know something's wrong."

"You're just staring."

"Just go to bed," he told her.

Her body wavered, swaying from side to side, deciding what to do. Wanting to stand and talk to him more but thinking it might just be easier to flop into bed. Finally she said, "Tell me what's wrong."

"Really?"

"I don't want you to be mad at me."

"Then maybe don't be so fucking eager to suck Tate's cock."

“Jonny,” she said harshly. Then softening she said, “I was not.”

“That’s what I heard.”

“I wasn’t. Not like you say.”

“You should’ve seen your face light up when he said you could suck it.”

Now the sheepishness reversed to the threshold of anger. She folded her arms, her brow came down. She said, “Sorry.” It didn’t sound like she was. It sounded like she was mad. The word came out as a condemnation.

“Did you see your face?”

“Excuse me, Jonny. Do you know what it’s like? Do you know what it’s like to have to suck a cock all the time? Do you know what it’s like to open your legs and take his huge thing? To be degraded? To be used?”

“You don’t ever turn them away.”

“How can I?”

“You lit up when he said you could put his dick in your mouth.”

“Exactly, Jonny. Maybe because for once it wasn’t going to be awful. Reza does his things to me and I let him. I do it because that’s what needs to be done. So, sorry. Maybe if you made some money, it wouldn’t have to be like this.”

“Charlie …”

“Tate is the only one who’s nice to me. Everybody else is so mean and they only want one thing. Tate is considerate. There was no way I wasn’t going to do something with him. You know that, you know what Reza’s like. Stop being a jerk. There was no way around it. Reza was going to have me do something with Tate. So excuse me if for once it wasn’t going to be terrible. I don’t even know how you can talk to me like this.” She threw her hands up, shook her head.

Mad at her for defending herself, he went after her for something different: “I heard you beg for it, you know. I’m not stupid.”

“When?”

“Last week, on the bed, you made me put on headphones so you could beg Reza for sex.”

She scoffed. “So?”

"How does that make me feel? My wife on our bed, asking the landlord to fuck her—not because she has to but because she wants to."

"I didn't want to …"

"You were rubbing your legs together like a cricket, you were so horny for his huge cock you treated me like shit for three days—"

"I did not, Jonny, take that back. Are you crazy? I wanted sex, yeah. I wanted it from you, you idiot but you got your little dick locked up in a cage, didn't you?"

"Little dick?"

"I can't believe this, Jonny. I didn't want Reza. You have no idea. I should just leave and get out of here, for one week why don't you let Reza climb into bed with you and he can stick his big fingers up your butt and you can try to suck his fat cock, let him shoot his stuff all on your face for a week, I'll come back and we'll see what you say."

"You going to go stay with Tate?"

In all his years with her he'd never seen this reaction: she growled at him, a feminine roar that came out of her like a freight train. She stomped her foot like a bull and both her hands clenched in shaking fists at her side. Then she turned around, hefted the table lamp off the night stand next to the bed and she hurtled it against the closet door where it burst into a hundred pieces.

"Whoa, easy, Charlie, come on …"

"Just forget it, Jonny," she hissed.

"Don't be like that, Charlie, you know what I'm saying …"

"Just forget it," she said again and now she stomped around to the other side of the bed, careful to pussyfoot around the broken shards of lamp.

"What are you doing?"

She didn't answer him, yanked open the closet door and snatched out her jacket. She threw her arms into it, pulled out a pair of loafers.

"Where are you going?" he asked her.

She still didn't answer. The jacket was long, coming to her mid-thigh, and she yanked tight the belt that went round the middle. She stormed around the bed again, and he saw her face briefly. It was pinched in anger, a scowl—and she was hurt, he could see that, too.

“Charlie, don’t go …”

Her face was beet red and her mouth turned down like she might cry, and then she was gone. Past him, trotting up the stairs, the hard soles of her loafers making clacking sounds up into the kitchen. She left. She slammed the door behind her.

Jonny slumped. He watched and waited. He watched and waited a long time. She would get to the elevators and come to her senses. She never got mad. Never like this. Sometimes she might get frustrated but he could always get her laughing again. Not when she left the apartment though. He still waited. When she didn’t return he timidly followed her path, went to the apartment door, opened it and peeked down the hall. She was gone. He couldn’t believe it.

“Oh, Charlie,” he sighed, “I’m sorry.”

He watched down the empty hall for a few minutes and when there was still no sign of her he came back in and closed the door behind him. He came down into the family room, looked at his workstation. That was where he should be right now. That’s where he was supposed to be. What would he do without her? What was the point in any of this if she wasn’t around? Why did he say those things? He’d given away his greatest fear by that spectacle. Go be with Tate. And that’s what she had probably done. Tate was the only guy that had shown her any compassion these days, she said. He didn’t know where Tate lived but maybe Charlie did. Maybe she was sitting in a bus right now on her way there. She would go to his door and he would open it, when he saw her face he would take her in his arms. He would probably hold her and make her feel better, like a man should. Later, they might get into bed together and who knows what would happen? She’d already given him a hand job, and she’d already given him a blow job. It might be nice to lay with a man and feel his strength and his warmth and his care. She would probably open her legs for a man like that. He took in a long deep sigh and heard the sound of sadness wheezing in his lungs. Fuck it. What was he to do?

He did what he should be doing. He did what Charlie would want him to do. He adjusted the cage in his pants to make it more comfortable, walked to his workstation and brought it to life. Screens on, he shook his head then cracked his knuckles. His heart was wrenched with sadness but he had duty. There were things he had to do. It would be nice to wallow right now, lay back and think of all the horrible things that could happen to Charlie when she was off and she was mad. But that’s not what Charlie’s husband should be doing. So he sat and typed like a crazy motherfucker.

## Chapter Eighteen

It was two-and-a-half hours before she came home again. When he heard the apartment door, he jumped. Instant bursts of happiness went off in his brain and his heart like fireworks. But then they were muffled by the wet blanket of sadness. The way they'd left things were terrible. The things he'd said to her were mean. Even though he was hurting, he had no right to go after her. His typing slowed. He could hear her moving around in the kitchen up there, could hear the fissling of a plastic bag. Where would she go shopping at three in the morning? The only things that were open were twenty-four-hour drugstores and party shops. He wouldn't blame her if she took up drinking.

The door to the pantry closet in the kitchen opened, just a small sliver of space where they kept their cleaning supplies. He heard the sound of the broom being taken from the hook off the wall, the plastic dustpan banging against the shaft.

When he heard her footsteps coming down the steps behind him, he stopped typing and swiveled in his chair. Their eyes met, and she stopped and stood to watch him. Her mouth twisted left, it twisted right. She bit at the inside of her mouth. He could tell she'd been crying. Very softly, she said, "Hi."

"Hi," he said, waiting to see what she would do.

In her right hand she held the broom and in the other hand the dustpan. Still in her light rain jacket with the belt tightened around her waist, still in her loafers. It didn't look like she'd gone to Tate's apartment. She averted her eyes then, put her head down and walked to the other side of the bed.

"Oh," she said just as quietly as she'd said Hi. He'd already cleaned up the pieces of broken lamp. Used that very same broom to sweep it into the pan and throw it all in the trash. Even taken a shopping bag with its jagged shards down the hall and dropped it down the garbage chute.

She let the broom rest against the wall, undid the belt on her jacket then turned around and looked at him again. She had something to say, but it was taking forever. The jacket was unbuttoned and thrown on the bed. Loafers were pried off. Now she looked

around the room, her mouth moving around again and her hands gathering at her waist, her fingers working together nervously.

He started first, saying, "I'm so sorry, Charlie. I shouldn't have said any of those things."

Her knees dipped, and her head swung loosely. She said, "No, Jonny. No, no, no, I'm sorry," and now she came to him, stumbling and falling on her knees at the side of his chair.

"You're sorry?"

"I'm so sorry, Jonny. I'm so sorry."

"You don't have to be sorry—"

"I do, I really do." She took his right hand in between both of hers and she squeezed it. She looked up at him pleadingly, her big, expressive eyes wet with fear and sadness. He caressed the side of her face.

She said, "You were right. You were right, and I was wrong. I shouldn't have done that. I shouldn't have been like that with Tate. You're so right, I didn't see it."

"No, you were right. I know you're right. I know how hard it is." And now he hated being above her and having her sit at his feet. He didn't deserve that position. He squatted and bumped the chair with the backs of his legs so it kicked away on its wheels. He dropped on his knees before her and they looked in each other's eyes. "I'm the one that's sorry."

"No, Jonny, I'm sorry."

He pulled her into his clutch and he squeezed the life out of her. She made a little soft grunting noise and laughed a little. "We're both sorry, we're both sorry, Jonny …"

"We are," he laughed, "we are."

"We can't be like that, Jonny, we can't talk to each other like that. We can't let them get between us."

"You're so right. You're so right, Charlie."

"I shouldn't have been so nice to Tate. That must've hurt you."

"It did. It hurt me really bad because I love you so much."

"I love you too, Jonny. What I said was true. Tate's nice to me. That's all. But I shouldn't have let you see me like that. That was a terrible thing for you to see. I get it. I do."

"It doesn't matter Charlie, it really doesn't."

They held each other for a long time, both their hands clutching and grabbing and smoothing up and down. He felt tears brim his eyes. That was all the sadness from earlier pushed away and washing down his cheeks. Happiness filled up his insides now. This was what it was all about. This was why they did any of it. They would get through this.

After a long while, both of them sniffing and occasionally chuckling and hugging each other too hard, they slowly came apart. Charlie wiped at her face and so did he. They both had big smiles now. She said, "Can you get in bed with me? Reza's not coming home."

"I'm supposed to be working."

"You're always working. We never get this chance. Please, Jonny."

"Are you sure? Every minute I spend working is a minute closer so you don't have to do the things you do."

"It doesn't matter, Jonny. The things I do, they're not important anymore. What's important is that you get into bed with me. I've been thinking …"

"Thinking about what?"

"I went to the drugstore."

"You did?" he said and had to wipe at his cheeks again, more wet spilling over.

"Yeah, I did. I bought pancake mix. The old cheap kind. I'm gonna make you breakfast—" she glanced at her watch, "—shoot, in just a few hours. Golly, and I have to go to work, too."

"Call in sick."

She laughed. "I'm always calling in sick. They're going to fire me."

"They won't fire you, Charlie …"

"Just come to bed with me. I want to do something."

"What do you want to do?"

“Get in bed and find out, mister.”

He was on his feet before he could even answer. “Okay,” he said, and he shot his mouse into the hot zone to shut his workstation to black. He made his way over to the bed, pulled back the corner of the cover and slipped under it. Charlie was on the move, dancing lightly up to the kitchen. He called out to her, “Where are you going now?”

She didn’t answer, but he heard the fissling of the bags up there. Was she going to make pancakes now?

When she returned, coming down the stairs just as lightly as she trotted up them, he saw the front of her T-shirt pushed out by something she was hiding. She bounced onto the bed on her knees, crawled over top of him to get on the other side. He asked her what she was hiding.

She shushed him. She said, “Remember—what if he has cameras …”

“Do you care? Care what he sees?”

“I do. He makes things difficult. What he can’t see won’t hurt us.”

“What are you up to?”

She bit her lower lip while she fumbled with something under the covers. She said, “He doesn’t have cameras underneath the bed sheets now, does he?”

“No,” he said tentatively.

“Push your knees up, Jonny, take your pants down.”

“Ho, wow,” he breathed, his mind instantly alert, and suddenly his cock surged against its steel restraint. He said, “Did you get the key?”

She shook her head no, and he heard her pop the top of a plastic lid.

He said, “I’m still wearing the cage, Charlie.”

“I know. But it won’t stop us from fooling around.”

Butterflies fluttered all through his stomach, and they turned sharp and gnashing as they lashed through his system. He was overwhelmed with lust. But it was also love. His heart swelled up in his chest as he watched her happy face as she tried to get sexy with him and make the best of their situation.

“Fool around?” he whispered.

“I want to see if I can make you come even with that stupid thing on your little penis.”

“Little penis?” he said, hurt but smiling. Liking it.

She said, “Your little, pathetic pee-pee.”

“What’s gotten into you?”

She said, “I love you. That’s what’s got into me. Reza is trying to make me forget. But I won’t forget, Jonny.”

“I love you so much …”

“Give me your hand,” she said, and she looked around the apartment as if she were trying to spot something.

He asked her, “Are you looking for cameras?”

“He always knows what’s going on. How do you think he does that?”

“I don’t know,” he said, and he bumped her stomach with his hand. She took it and squirted something warm into it.

She said, “Use it on me …”

“Where?”

She rolled her eyes. “Where do you think, silly?”

He ran the heel of his hand down her taut stomach, found she’d slipped off her panties already. He said, “Where are your panties?”

“Who cares?”

It was a good point. He flipped his hand over and found her shaved sex. She was warm and swollen and inviting. Eager for his touch. She’d been with Reza today. She’d sucked Tate’s cock today. But it was him she loved. He could feel that was true. He teased her with his fingertips.

He said, “What is this stuff?

She whispered, “It’s lube. It’s flavored. Cherry.”

He groaned, “My cage is killing me.”

She eyed him, smiling while she bit her lower lip, and he heard her squirt lube in her own hand now. She shimmied a little closer and rotated her shoulders toward him.

They faced each other now, laying on their sides. Her hand went between his legs and she reminded him: “Keep your knees up so he couldn’t tell what we’re doing under the covers. He’ll suspect, but he can’t prove a thing.”

“Okay,” he whispered, getting into it.

When she touched him, he jolted, and they both laughed. Her fingers went all around the shape and tines of the cage. The skin of his penis pushed through the gaps and she stroked him. The tip of her finger played into the cage’s center hole that allowed him to pee and she teased his urethra. The cage tightened further, and the ring pulled up on his testicles. He grunted and groaned.

She asked him, “Does it hurt?”

He said, “It’s killing me.”

She said, “I’m going to suck your little balls.”

His heart jumped and his stomach tightened. “Holy shit, Charlie,” he sighed, and the cage pinched him harder.

She slipped herself underneath the covers before he could stop her, and he stared at the ceiling. He could feel her mouth breathing against his sensitive skin. Then her tongue began to flick at his swollen testicles. The pain of the tightening cage became excruciating, but there was so much pleasure in it as well. She kissed his testicles, she ran her tongue over their pulled-taut shape. She closed them both in her mouth and gently suckled. Her hand caressed the steel cage and he could feel the movement of her grip even over the metal. Her hand carefully stroked him.

She kept at it, her movements light, feathery, and teasing. There was so much pain and stress involved, but his heart was pounding with pleasure, too. It took ten minutes of agony and joy but he finally blurted out, “Oh my God, it’s gonna happen, oh Charlie, it’s gonna, mm, happen …”

She continued stroking and suckling, and he could feel the snort of a soft laugh against the wet of his scrotum. She moved her hand quicker, took his balls in her mouth again. And that was it. His body bucked and shook, and he ejaculated through the end of the cage and up onto his stomach while she made happy sounds under the sheets.

He lay there feeling the movement of his beautiful wife between his legs, writhing between the pointed up triangles of his knees. She worked her tongue around him while the throbbing subsided. The pain began to release as his heart rate slowed and his hardness faded. Then she worked away a little higher and her tongue began to flick at what he’d ejected from his strangled testicles. She sucked it up off his stomach, and he reached under the sheets to cup and caress her head while she did. She used her mouth

to collect it all, worked her way higher then kissed both his nipples. When she emerged from the sheets she was smiling. He kissed her forehead, and she closed her eyes. She said, “Your turn.”

## Epilogue

Even better than Charlie's dedication to him—shown through the loving act she performed with him—was the feeling of waking with her in his arms. After she'd used her mouth on him, sucking on his testicles while her hand stroked over his cage until he came, he'd taken his turn on her. That was something new. Wasn't something that hadn't been done between them just not a thing that Charlie had ever really looked for before. But she asked him to do it. Before all this began, his time with her in bed between the sheets was usually spent in a mainly missionary style. And while she seemed like the sweet woman she had been back then, her sexual experience had definitely expanded. She eagerly told him it was his turn. That was exciting.

She'd flopped over onto her back and opened her legs and waited for him to get under the covers and use his tongue on her. It was heaven. There were benefits to this arrangement with Reza. Even, possibly, he'd made her come. He didn't ask her if she faked it. That would be rude. It wasn't a huge orgasm. She didn't beat the sheets with her fists or anything. Didn't do the things that came out of her when Reza pounded her with that monster between his legs. But she definitely responded to the strokes of his tongue.

The best part though was being gently woken not by an alarm or the snoring of the beast that usually slept in this spot next to his wife but sunlight coming through the windows and heliographing off the tall buildings in the city out their view. The feeling of her body heat against his, the feel of her flesh and bones held in his arms. The feel of her soft cheek against his chest. The smell of her hair in his nose. She was special. There was no doubt about it.

When they were both done pleasing each other under the sheets hidden from the view of Reza's cameras hidden in the room—if there even were any—she'd snuggled up to him and it honestly felt better than when he'd ejaculated. She got real close to him and said, "That's three." He said, "Three what?" She said, "That's three I got you despite wearing your silly little cage," showing him three held up fingers, closing them then into a small, gentle fist and beating it lightly over his heart. He hugged her tight. That was how he fell asleep.

Charlie moved against him now, beginning to wake as light filled the room with the dawning sun. He let his hands stroke up and down her arms, encouraging her to join him in the land of the awake.

"Good morning," she finally whispered, and he kissed the crown of her head and breathed her hair in. It'd been a long time since they woke together and he didn't realize how much he missed it. The feeling was profound. Their love was real, and it had been startlingly absent. Charlie had returned it to them even despite her blowup over his selfish, petulant reaction to what she did with Tate. He whispered, "I'm gonna make you pancakes this morning."

She pushed away at him lightly and said, "Oh no, you're not. No way. I'm making pancakes. I bought them special for you and I want to do it. You get in that chair and get back to work today." She gave him a serious face. She was right. He kissed her forehead, used the pad of his thumb to caress the shapes and contours of her perfect face.

He said, "Okay."

They both sighed and held each other for a moment longer. But Charlie had to go to work. And there was no denying that he had a lot to do himself. So she slipped out of bed after darting a kiss on his lips, and he watched her trot naked to the closet and throw on a robe. She closed it up, gave him a quick, honest smile then danced to the kitchen.

As she banged pots and pans around and thumped things on the counter, bringing out mixing bowls and spatulas and measuring cups, he stirred, got out from under the sheets and put his feet on the floor. It was like starting over. This was like day one. His relationship with Charlie was restored. All the horror and fear that had been working its way between them was gone. All he had to do now was finish his game and get this over with. And he was getting there. Shoot, he was practically done. It wouldn't be long before they had a complete beta they could pass around. If he could get it picked up …

On the coffee table across the room he saw his phone light up with a silent incoming text and he got up and pulled on some sweatpants, being careful with his cage. Charlie lightly hummed in the kitchen and he heard the distinct sizzle of bacon hitting a hot pan. She might've been trying to imitate their meager life from before, buying cheap pancake mix, but she still liked her little, tiny luxuries. He wasn't going to complain, not about bacon that was for sure.

He grunted, seeing the text on his phone was from Reza. He flicked the screen and brought it to life.

Jonny, great news. Boy, you're not gonna believe the opportunity I have for you. Come by the gym today. Come by at 1 PM sharp. I got an amazing proposition for you. You're going to freak.

He'd marked it XX. Asshole. He thumped himself heavily down onto the couch seat. The spot where he sat last night and watched Charlie suck Tate's big, beautiful cock. The badness of last night seemed so different now in the light of dawn, but this electronic message he held in his grip right now was bad news. An opportunity?

"Bre-eakfast," Charlie called sweetly from the kitchen. He slipped his phone into the pocket of his sweatpants and joined his wife in the kitchen. She was moving gracefully in her robe, legs and feet bare, a big, happy smile on her freckled face. She arranged pancakes and bacon onto plates for them. She even fried two eggs. He sat at the kitchen table where she'd put ketchup and real maple syrup. Another luxury he wouldn't complain against. He tried to smile but couldn't. As she brought the plates to the table, she looked so innocent. She frowned when she saw him.

She asked him: "What's wrong? What's gotten into you?"

He ran his hand up her knee and across the back of her leg. "Breakfast looks amazing," he said. "Nothing's wrong, Charlie. Don't you worry about a thing."

She set the plates down and sat next to him watching him with a suspicious and tentative smile. He tried to show her his own smile. Deep down, he knew that this opportunity Reza would present would be something terrible for Jonny. It was an opportunity for Reza. It would be torture for Jonny. And it was Charlie who would suffer. He just knew it.

He reached out and put his hand over hers and they ate using only their forks and holding hands while the sun came fully up and lit the kitchen.

**Afterword**

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KT MORRISON

# HIGH STAKES

DOMINATED BY THEIR LANDLORD

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

KT Morrison writes stories about women who fall in love with sexy men who aren't their husband, and loving relationships that go too far—couples who open a mysterious door, then struggle to get it closed as trouble pushes through the threshold.

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HIGH STAKES

A LANDLORD Novel

*51,000 words*

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# PART 1

# 1

REZA'S GYM occupied a hundred-and-fifty-year-old building on the edge of the city center. The place had been a hardware store when it was built. From photos in the gym's lobby, Jonny could see back in its heyday there was no city out this far yet, and the place looked like it was set in a rural village.

ROY'S HARDWARE, a sign read in bold painted letters out front over a corrugated metal awning. Horses were tied to posts, and Roy (he supposed) posed out front on the porch steps. The proud proprietor stood with men in wool pants, suit vests, rolled-up shirt sleeves, and sporting thick mustaches.

Out front today there were jacked-up pickup trucks, sports cars, and of course, Reza's V12 Mercedes sedan. The tin awning was gone these days, too, and not much remained of the way old Roy kept the place, except for the red brick façade and twin peaked roofs, done now in black steel.

Inside, metal clanked, men grunted, fists beat rhythm on punching bags, sneakers squeaked, heavy rubber Olympic plates bounded off cushioned floors… all under the drone of that same dumb rap song that played the other morning when he and Reza and Charlie all went down to the lawyers office to formalize his company's 5% exposure to Reza.

It was five minutes before 1 P.M., and he'd barely made it in time to the gym for the expressly important meeting with Reza. If it was so important, the guy could have sent a car for him or something, but Reza would never do something to make things easier for Jonny, despite how sweet his promises may be. Like today's fun sounding proposition sent by text before Charlie headed out for work this morning… there was no way this would be good news for Jonny, no matter how Reza framed it, of that he was sure.

As he walked to the gym's reception desk, he stretched his back and shoulders. It had been an uncomfortable hour-long commute, jumping from subway lines to the M-line bus that bought him out to the edge of the city. Hot out today, so his pits had sweat a ring through his pale blue shirt, and the constant sitting had made the base-ring that circled his genitals and locked the cage in place squishing his privates uncomfortably—if it wasn't impossible, he'd actually believe his penis was shrinking. *What if it wasn't shrinking, but merely retracting – that wasn't impossible, was it?*

A ring of gym members circled around the reception station, leaning on elbows and chatting. While the gym itself seemed rough and masculine, the lobby was sleek and professional. The desk was a crescent with a black marble top and a line of blue LED lighting a beam below it. The receptionist was female and fit, her hangers-on male and large and intimidating. One other girl, a young Latina in tight black braids, hung back

from the group and eyed him aggressively, looking from his feet to his face to his feet and back to his face again with a scowl.

The guys hanging by the counter watched over their shoulders and seemed bothered by his presence as if he were intruding, but he couldn't care less these days. He wedged between two of them and sidled up to the counter.

At least the receptionist was pleasant, giving him a grand and glossy smile, sassy ponytail swaying behind a smooth, tanned shoulder. "Hi there, sir," she bubbled. "Are you from the paper?"

"What paper?"

"You're not a reporter?"

"No—why?"

The big guy leaning next to him, eyeing him slyly, said, "Dude came here to get jacked."

The receptionist said, "For the fight."

Jonny said, "What fight?"

"Never mind, sorry, what can I help you with?"

"I have an appointment at one. With Reza."

The buff guy beside him bristled.

"With Reza," the receptionist repeated, her name tag reading Crystal, "oh, I'm sorry, *please*, hold on." Her eyes went down to an iPad angled away from Jonny and her finger worked the screen. He waited and nodded, slipping his hands in his pockets to adjust his underwear.

"Sorry, I don't see anything here," she said, then looked at him with finality.

"I have a meeting with Reza at one. It's Jonny Keen. We're like… business partners." His voice assumed some disdain, given the truth they were indeed business partners.

Now he was sure he was not called here for business today, but rather Reza's pleasure. Reza's most important business these days seemed to center on the world's hottest commodity: a certain young wife of incredible, sweet and innocent beauty, long pale legs and shining ginger hair.

Fear crept up his back.

Crystal said, "Reza doesn't take meetings here."

"He does," Jonny said, fishing his phone out of his pocket with a ball of dread forming in his guts. "He called me to come here. If he's in the gym… fucking call him to the front, okay? Tell him Jonny Keen is here…" And now he was waving her off irritably and speed-dialing the library.

Was this some ruse? Get Jonny out of the apartment—and for what? He could picture Reza and Charlie sitting in first class air travel, headed to the Maldives or somewhere, sipping champagne, the apartment emptied out, his workstation gone…

"Metro Public Library," the softest, gentlest voice said on the other side of the phone, "How may I help you?"

He sighed with relief. Behind him over the loudspeaker it was announced: "Mr. Khan, can you come to the front desk, please, sir, Jonny Keen is here. Jonny Keen is here now," she repeated, "he says he has a meeting…"

Jonny rolled his eyes and ran his hand through his hair. He walked with his back to the reception and stood by one of the old hardware store windows that looked out over the fancy cars in the parking lot. Traffic was busy though they were outside the city center and it was bumper-to-bumper out there. He said, "I'm looking for a recommendation on a book."

"Okay, sir, I'd like to help you…"

He could picture her sitting one leg over the other on the stool at the front desk in the library maybe tapping a pen on the desk or between her front teeth with her hair tied up behind her, dressed in a pretty and slim outfit. He said, "I'm looking for a How-To book…"

"Okay…"

"I want to tell my wife that she's the most beautiful, freckle-face girl in the world and I just darn tootin' love her so much—but I'm so-oo shy… I need some help…"

"Jo-nny," she chided, figuring out it was him.

"Hey, beautiful, how's your day?" he asked her.

"Pretty good," she said, all those mean images of her dissipating into a mist in the top of his head somewhere—there was no way his Charlie would run off with Reza, no way she would do that to him. She continued, "it's almost lunch. Where are you? Are you at home? Do you want to meet me?"

"I'm out, but I'm out at business, Charlie. Work stuff I have to figure out… I'm on the other side of the city. But I was just thinking of you and I had to call you."

"Bless your heart," she sighed.

"Jonny, what the fuck?"

An irritated voice behind him and he knew who it was without looking. It was deep and masculine. And savvy.

He said "I got to go, okay, sweetheart… I'll see you tonight. I'll meet you on the couch and we'll do dinner."

"Pizza?" she sang.

"Sure thing. You bring it home?"

"I'll swing by Angelo's," she said, and it didn't even bother him this time.

"I love you."

"I love you, too," she said, and they hung up.

When he turned, Demetrius was standing in the archway on the left side of the gym's reception desk. He looked irritated, but it was that kind of pretend-irritated—Demetrius liked to keep you on your heels—and he couldn't hide the smirk on his face.

His black skin shone with sweat. He wore a cut off T-shirt and his hands were taped up, a pair of boxing gloves pinched between his elbow and his waist. He swiped at his forehead, said, "Just fucking come in. What the hell is wrong with you, putting that announcement on the loudspeaker?"

"She said I didn't have an appointment."

Demetrius said, "Just come in, Reza's in the back. Jesus." He waved a hand in circles with irritation, intending Jonny to hurry up.

Jonny did, put his phone in his pocket and shuffled slowly to greet him—partly in rebellion, but partly because it wasn't exactly comfortable right now between his legs.

The irritation gone now they're side-by-side, the two of them walked together through the gym between Olympic stands and squat racks and massive weight machines with huge guys lifting incredible amounts of weight.

Demetrius said, "So, hey man, how's it been going?"

"Busy. You know…"

Demetrius said, "How's that game coming? It was looking good, my man…"

"It's coming along pretty fucking awesome."

"Oh yeah? You gonna let me see it sometime?"

"I'll have a playable sometime soon."

"Invite me over, player. I'll fuckin' put it through its paces, tell you what's up. You know I can play."

"Yeah, maybe. We'll see."

"And, uh, so how's Charlie?" Demetrius asked slyly.

"She's fine," he said coldly.

"She ever ask about me?"

Jonny grunted and gave him a funny look. "What do you mean Ask about you?"

"You know, she ever say What's up with Demetrius?"

"Why would she say that?"

"Hey man, I'm just asking. I think about her a lot."

"Yeah, I know. But why would she think about you?"

"We had some good times, me and her."

"When?"

"Jesus, Jonny. Right in front of you."

"That was it?"

"Oh, ho, ho, ho," Demetrius laughed and slapped at his stomach. "You think she might be seeing me on the side. She might, my man, she might. I hear she gets around.

Comes by this gym twice a week and Reza picks a dude name out a hat and your Charlie never backs down. Charlie takes all comers. On her back, on all fours, on her knees…"

"You're such an asshole."

"And you're so easy to push around, your tach got a redline, like, at fifty RPMs, homeboy. You gotta chill out sometime, man, you gonna blow all your gaskets. Ay, Jonny, maybe when you call me over play your game I'll bring some killer kush. Fuckin' get Jonny baked. Get him to re-lax."

"I'm fine," Jonny said firmly, hands going to fists in his pockets.

"Hey, sure you are," Demetrius said. "This is me here, man," he said, collecting the beaten boxing gloves together and stopping in front of a still-swaying punching bag that had seen some abuse. While he stretched his hands into the gloves, he nodded his chin deeper into the gym and said, "The man's working out in back. You better skedaddle, he say you late."

"I'm on time," Jonny said.

"Uh-huh," Demetrius said, squinting, challenging him. "Five after one, Rip van Winkle. You sleep in this A.M.?"

"I got here at five-to," Jonny said, shaking his head and waving Demetrius off.

Before he turned his back, Demetrius said, "Say hi to Charlie for me, Jonny," then exploded in a flurry of body blows that rocked the bag and jangled its chain.

HE STOOD at a crossroads of concrete paths that transected various areas of the huge gym. Punching bags and cardio equipment behind him, ahead there were rubberized square-tile swatches with weight machines, more Olympic lifting platforms, squat racks and bench setups. Deeper, he could see three boxing rings; two empty, and spectators gathered around the third, watching two big men spar.

With his head down, he wove through the heavy weight area avoiding glares from any of the sweaty, grunting, pumped-up animals, then saw one hairy and burly, black-haired beast at the furthest point before the boxing rings. It was Reza, preparing to lift a well-stacked barbell off the rubber floor.

When he saw Jonny, Reza nodded without saying anything, probably trying to stay focused, but he tapped his bare wrist where he normally wore a Rolex to indicate Jonny was late. Jonny didn't give him the satisfaction of any response and merely gazed at him blankly.

There were two burly attendants hanging around, one with his hands on his hips, the other pacing and clapping his cupped hands, saying, "Let's go, let's go, big man," and "You get that, Reza." His landlord's very own hype men.

Reza tightened the thick double-prong belt around his waist, walked a circle, grabbed a handful of powdered chalk from a bowl sat on a metal stand then whomped his hands together, slapping a cloud of white dust he now marched through with his eyes focused on the weight he intended to lift.

With no hesitation, Reza inhaled and held it, stooped and clasped the bar, thick hands gripping strong, pulling up till his arms were straight and tight, straightened his back, tilted his neck, black-bearded face coming up to look at Jonny. His body strained, muscles bulged, veins rose like hoses; slowly the stacked multicolor weights began to raise off the floor.

"It's all you, baby, it's all you," hype man one shouted and clapped, hype man two choosing "You got this, you got this," as his own mantra.

Reza's breath hissed through clenched teeth, and his head shook as he shakily straightened to stand upright, the barbell bowing with the massive weight it supported. Once fully upright, his goal was complete; the two supporters whooped and hollered, one jumped and punched the air. Reza exhaled fully, let the bar fall where it bounced and boomed mightily through the gym. Reza was pleased, and while the hype men clapped his back and continued to hoot, he walked around in a circle undoing the weight belt, head down and nodding to himself.

Reza wore fancy and expensive looking track pants, black with red stripes, and they showed off his thick, muscular legs, his bulge, too, if you looked; a white undershirt tank top that displayed his hairy muscle and tattoos.

Belt handed to one of the others, he waved Jonny over.

He still breathed heavily, powerful body taxed by the brief but mammoth exertion. Close to him now, Jonny could feel the man's damp body heat. His skin shone with sweat that glittered in his thick, matted body hair.

"Come on, Jonny, hurry up, I have appointments this afternoon."

Jonny said, "I was on time. You're the one still lifting weights. You're taking up *my* time."

"How's the game coming?" Reza asked him, gesturing for Jonny to head toward the sparring man at the back.

"It's perfect. I'll have a demo soon."

"Before my new house is ready, or should I get Charlie to pick out our bedding and draperies?"

"She won't be moving in with you," he said flatly.

"This must be some game, she's going to give up all I give her."

"It is," Jonny said.

"Glad to hear it, Jonny. Hey, you know, things are looking good for me, too."

"Swell."

"Hey, you ain't happy for me?"

Jonny said, "Ecstatic," as they crossed another concrete laneway and entered the sparring area where everyone was gathered.

Reza nudged him with a thick forearm that left Jonny's own arm sweaty, said, "You should be. Good things for me means good things for you. We make a good team, much as you struggle and squirm, try to make shit harder."

"Why'd you call me here?"

"Check this out," he said, nodding his chin toward the boxing ring. It was elevated about three feet off the floor and bordered off with two bright yellow, but grubby ropes. Under a low hanging rack of lights, two heavyweights faced off, circling, darting toward each other, avoiding, jabbing. One man was black, about two-twenty-five, with a stretchy white long sleeve shirt, red gloves and big red cushioned headgear around his face. The other guy was also large and impressively built, his big arms and massive chest stretching out a black, long sleeve spandex shirt; his headgear and gloves were white. After a moment watching the two men move around, sensing each other out, he realized the one in the black shirt was Tate.

The group gathered around to watch sensed Reza's presence, looking over their shoulders and giving him space to get up front. Jonny joined Reza at ringside and they watched the two men spar.

Reza nudged him again with an elbow, said, "See, this is another great thing happening. Big fight this weekend."

"Tate?"

Reza nodded and watched as the black guy shot forward and tried to grab Tate's waist and pull him down. Tate stepped aside swiftly and his opponent scrambled to gather himself realizing he was open.

"Where?" Jonny asked. "Here?"

"Here?" Reza scoffed. "No. City Center. 15,000 people, Jonny. How we get them all in here?"

"I don't know shit about it," Jonny said.

"Good. Keep your nose stuck in your computer, make me some money with this kids game."

"It's not for kids. It's for everybody. And I don't know shit about the fight because I don't care about you or Tate, or anything you do. Can you just tell me why I'm here? I should be working."

Reza still watched Tate, smiling now, elbows resting on the canvas flooring of the ring.

Tate circled, and now his sparring partner lunged for a takedown again and Tate sidestepped, slapped a quick but pulled punch to the guy's kidney. As he turned, reeling, Tate advanced, but the black guy only managed to put up a weak defense before Tate was on him, jabbing high then diving low. It was over quickly.

Tate threw him down, spun around and ended up with the other guy facedown on the mat with one arm twisted behind his back, clutched against Tate's chest.

As the black guy's gloved hand tapped the canvas in surrender, Reza let out a sharp piercing whistle and Tate stood, helping his sparring partner up, Reza jerked his head to the side. Tate nodded.

Reza said, "Come on, Jonny, let's hit the showers."

# 2

THE GYM'S locker room bustled with fit men of all sizes and ages, banging lockers, swinging towels and weaving to and fro around the sinks and urinals. Hand dryers bellowed and whined, dudes blowdried their hair in front mirrors with towels around their waists. Some didn't bother with the protocol, walking around with their genitals bared.

Reza steered them to the right, and they walked through a single door that led them to a private changing area. It was well appointed, with gleaming wood walls and halogen lights. There were only two banks of lockers in here and a single bench. It was much quieter now they were out of the public area. Beyond the locker room's bathrooms and sinks he could see a tiled room lined with shower heads. Steam billowed as someone showered in there unseen.

Reza was removing his shirt while walking and said, "We gotta make this quick, Jonny. I have a meeting in forty-five. But like I said, I just couldn't wait to present this to you."

Hands still in his pockets, Jonny grumbled, "I'm sure it's amazing." He looked over his shoulder to see Tate walking grimly behind, and also joining them were the two hype men who'd clapped their hands while Reza deadlifted.

Reza said, "I think you're gonna like what I have to offer, Jonny."

They stopped at the bench and Reza opened a locker.

Jonny said, "I'm sure it's not going to cost me a thing."

"Nothing in life is free, Jonny. You know that more than anybody. At least what you pay isn't dollars."

No, what he paid was his wife's purity.

Reza was shirtless now, smelling the shirt he'd pulled off and not liking it. He bristled with hair and shone with sweat. His muscles were large and swollen from exertion, and the veins rose in his biceps and through his shoulders. He jammed his thumbs in the front of his sweatpants and pulled them down. He wore no underwear, and his big, sweaty member swung freely between his legs as he pulled his feet from them.

The locker next to Jonny opened, and he looked to see Tate now doing the same, pulling off his tight Lycra long sleeve shirt and throwing it in the locker while the other two took up Tate's headgear and gloves and put them in a separate storage bin near the bathroom.

Reza said, "I didn't call you down here for nothing, Jonny. If you think all I care about is making your day suck, you don't know me. Your life has changed. Tell me it hasn't."

He couldn't answer. His life had changed; it was fucking obvious. "Yeah, it's changed," he said finally.

"Damn right it has," Reza said, one of the hype men handing him a clean white towel. He tucked it under his arm and stood now in front of Jonny with his cock out. "I make things better wherever I go."

"I'm sure you think you do," Jonny said. One of the hype men bristled and Tate slammed his locker. Jonny turned now to see him naked as well. One of the hype men stepped forward and handed Tate a towel.

Reza said, "Take your shit off, Jonny, let's hit the showers."

"I didn't work out. I don't need a shower, I showered already."

"I don't give a shit, Jonny. I did. Tate did. We have to shower, and I've got a meeting. You want to hear what I gotta say get your fucking ass in the shower."

"Just tell me what it is."

"Take your shit off, less you wanna come in like that. Comfortable bus ride home, you sitting there with your clothes drenched," Reza said then turned to walk toward the showers.

Jonny said, "What about?—" *The cage.*

"Everybody knows about it, Jonny. It's not a surprise."

The two hype men disrobed as well, doffing their things and throwing them on to the bathroom counter. They eyed him warily then joined Reza and Tate in the shower.

He could do without this. He could do without all of this. But he did want to know what Reza had to offer. It would cost him something but maybe he could afford it. Maybe it would be something he *really* wanted. He had to find out. He didn't come all this way to turn around now, go home.

He undid the buttons on his shirt and took off his pants. His cock and balls were gripped in a small stainless-cabled bundle. A misshapen, indiscernible brown-flesh ball that looked far too small right now to contain male genitalia. He stuffed his things into an empty open locker.

As he walked through the bathroom, he snatched a towel from the counter and hung it on a hook outside of the shower stalls.

REZA AND TATE were already soaping themselves up, the two hype men were on the opposite side getting their temperatures adjusted, standing with hands on the levers, other hands held out in the stream of water.

The shower's existing occupant was a large black guy who had his back turned, scrubbing his face as water splashed off his muscle. The two hype men looked between

Jonny's legs with curious lowered brows. Jonny looked as well, saw his small shriveled genitals constricted by the stainless wires of his cage.

He took the empty shower spigot next to Reza and turned the water on, standing like the hype men did with his hand under the stream waiting for it to get hot.

Reza began, "So listen, Jonny," scrubbing a bar of soap in his hairy underarms while his dick swung around, "like I said, things are picking up for me, too. A lot of opportunities out there. I hate to see my *current* opportunities go wasted while I take advantage of them—others can share my benefits, too."

"Oh, yeah?" Jonny said, waiting for the punch line.

Reza said, "I got a lot of travel coming up."

Jonny said, "You want to take Charlie to the Bahamas."

"Nope. No tagalongs this trip. Charlie doesn't like to be ignored. Fuck, she's so cute when she's ignored and it makes her *beg* for it, and I love to see her beg, but I can't be distracted, Jonny. Way too important shit going on. I'm going to be away. Meetings, meetings, meetings. Europe next weekend, weekend after that I'm in Africa. You believe that shit? Africa of all places. Burgeoning markets, Jonny. Maybe you would know about them if you didn't play games all day."

"I don't play games."

"You're playing a game every minute you breathe, Jonny."

Jonny soaped himself, keeping his back to the other side of the shower to hide his bundled shame.

Reza said, "So that's two weekends I'm away. You get it?"

"I get it," he said, seeing where this might be going and not liking it.

Reza said, "That's two weekends where it's just you and Charlie left all alone. The two of you alone in that apartment, my Charlie unattended."

"So what do you want to do?" Jonny asked.

"How would you like a gift from me?"

"A gift?" he said with sarcastic flair. "It's not going to cost me anything?"

"It's just going to cost you a gift of your own. Not a gift to me, Jonny."

"To Charlie?"

Reza said, "What would you do if I said I'd be willing for you to have a whole weekend with Charlie and you don't have to wear that stupid cage on your little dick."

Jonny rolled his eyes. "I would want that."

Reza stopped scrubbing for a moment, leaned his shoulder on the tiled wall as water splashed around his hair and he shook his head, sprinkling water. He leaned forward, out of the stream, said, "Wouldn't you? Doesn't that sound fantastic? I won't be there, Jonny. I swear I won't be there. I'm talking forty-eight—no, wait, *sixty* full hours

without me. Sixty full hours just you and Charlie, no phone calls from me, no nothing. I swear. A weekend like I don't exist."

His heart began to race. He did want that. He wanted it so bad.

He said, "You know I want that."

Reza said, "Right? Who wouldn't want that? Sixty hours alone with that beautiful wife of yours. And she's always so eager. You can get a lot done in sixty hours. You would fill her up till she's overflowing in sixty hours, am I right?" He sneered.

Gross.

"I do want that. I really want that, Reza."

Reza smiled and said over his shoulder to naked Tate, "Jonny wants that. See that? He comes in here all rigid, trying to keep me at bay, how long did it take me before he's nibbling seed out of my hand? He's a curious little chipmunk."

Tate still scrubbed his muscular arms with his back to them, but Jonny could see him chuckle.

Jonny said, "I'm not eating out of your hand."

"Relax, Jonny. I'm just trying to be funny. Just fucking with you. I'm offering you a *kindness* here. Things got a little rocky between you and me, don't you see it? And yet I've got everything I want. You've given it to me. And now here you are, you say you're almost done your game, and that's money in my pocket. I got your wife dancing on my dick every night and she never complains. Maybe she complains a little when she's not getting it, but when I'm around, I'm eager to give it to her. She takes it so well, Jonny. She's the best fuck I've got in the city, and I'm not kidding."

"It's amazing we're at odds," Jonny said.

Reza was serious now. He said, "You can act the smart ass big shot all you want, Jonny. You're getting what you want, too. I know you act like you hate it, but deep down you know you don't. You know you like watching Charlie get what she wants. Stop being so bitter all the time, you're wrecking it for everyone."

Jonny said, "I said I wanted it. What's it going to cost me?

Reza got under the spray again, let the blast hit his face. Water streamed down his muscular body and ran in a dribble from the end of his big penis.

Jonny turned outward, getting the water on his back. The two hype men were across from them watching, looking at the little cage bundling his genitals. The black guy turned around now, too, getting water on his back and putting the soap on the ledge beside him. He looked between Jonny's legs and his eyebrows went up and his head jolted. He said to one of the hype man, "What the fuck is that shit?"

Hype man two shrugged his shoulders and said, "Dude's wife doesn't trust him or something, I guess. Put him in chastity."

The black guy snickered, and in a baritone, said, "With that little thing? Shoot, she think she have to lock that up?… That's a hard sell. Who he gonna cheat with?"

That got the two hype men laughing. Jonny covered up, putting two hands over the cage.

Reza said, "I told you about that fight, Jonny. Fifteen-thousand people coming out to see my man Tate knock out Ivas Ivankiv. Big fucking dude from the Ukraine. Now, I own Tate. He's in my stable. He's my fighter. And he's doing good for me, Jonny. So good. This guy makes money. Knocks out whoever we send him and the ones he don't knock out he fucking chokes them, leg locks them, snaps their arm… You know what I'm saying? Unbeaten."

"Yeah?" Jonny said, at least enjoying the warm water on his shoulders.

"So, as any good fight promoter and fighter owner would do, I gotta offer my man a bonus. He wins, he gets thirty-five grand. That's from the commission. I share another twenty or so with him that we collect from the door because Tate means a lot to me. But I want to give him a *gift*, you know? I want something from my heart. Something money can't buy."

Jonny's testicles rolled in their sack and pulled into his body before snagging on the tight stainless ring.

Reza said, "I think you know what I'm saying. So listen, I just asked him: Tate, what's going to make you happy? What can I *get* you? I mean, I could lease him a truck, right? That's easy. What do you want? We'll go down to the lot set you up with a Hemi. We can make it special—maybe I'll go get you something vintage. Like an old Camaro or something and we can pretend it has meaning. But does it have meaning? Still just a car… Jonny, Tate's a good guy. You know he's a good guy. I asked him what would make him happy… What did he tell me?"

"I don't know," Jonny said, but he did know.

"Tate says he wants your wife."

JONNY REELED, his head going foggy and the steam in the room billowing in white clouds before his vision and blocking it out. Was it steam or was he losing consciousness?

He stumbled a step back and felt the safety of tiled wall against his shoulders.

Reza continued. "Tate tells me if he wins he wants a weekend with your wife. He's got a thing for her. Don't we all? She is the sweetest, sexiest…"

"No way," Jonny croaked.

Reza said, "That's cool. Like I said, everything is negotiable. Maybe this isn't. You don't want Tate, that's fine." He slapped his hands together like it was settled. "Course, then you don't get your weekend with Charlie."

Jonny let his head fall back so the crown bumped the tile. He said, "Tit for tat."

"None of this works pro bono," Reza said. "And you gotta know that about me by now."

"I know," he said.

Reza said, "So whatever. I'm away two weekends. Opportunities missed. Why do I give a fuck, right? I'll be on the other side of the world. You two can mope around your apartment with your little dick locked up, I don't give a shit. I'm just offering opportunities. It's up to you to take them."

"What would it mean?"

"What would what mean?"

"Tate and Charlie. What does that mean?"

"I don't know. That's up to Tate. Up to to Charlie, too. But I think she likes him. They can do whatever they want. They got a whole weekend together. And here's the thing: you have to stay there."

"I *want* to be there."

Reza shrugged. "Then what's the problem?"

"He's going to do things with her?"

"I suppose so. Less he wants to just go hang out with Charlie and she can tell him all about how the library works. You don't want that, do you, Tate?"

Tate shrugged and gave no expression.

"I don't think Tate wants that, Jonny. I think Tate wants the full girlfriend experience. You know what that is?"

"I've heard."

"Yeah, that's right. The full girlfriend experience. You can rent a whore for a weekend she'll act like she loves you. I'm betting that's what Tate wants."

Over Reza's shoulder, Jonny saw Tate scowling.

Jonny said, "I don't know."

"I don't know how to sell this to you anymore, Jonny. What you get in return is everything you want right now. A weekend like before any of us ever met. A weekend where it's just you and Charlie and you watch your dumb TV shows and prance around your apartment like a couple of college kids. That's of course right after the weekend big Tate comes in, lays her down and shows her what a man's like."

"If he wins his fight."

"That's right. If he wins his fight. You're smart, Jonny."

"What if he loses?"

"He isn't gonna lose."

Tate gave an uneven smile and glowered at Jonny.

Reza said, "Agree to it and you get your weekend no matter what."

Jonny groaned and rubbed the heels of his hands into his eye sockets. The idea had begun to swell things between his legs and the cage pinched him.

"All right," he moaned so quietly Reza didn't hear him.

"I think I heard what I like," Reza said. "Did I?"

"All right," Jonny said in a growl and swung his hands down to pound the tile wall at his thighs. His caged penis jiggled. "All right, all right, all right."

"There we go. Just like that. I wish all meetings were as easy as this one. One I gotta go to now is going to take a lot more fight. But I *will* win. All right, let's go—I gotta suit up."

# 3

BACK IN THE CHANGE ROOM, Jonny went to his locker left open with his things stuffed in it. Reza closed it and it locked.

"What the fuck are you doing?"

"We need to talk."

"Reza, open my locker. I have to get back to work."

"I will in a minute. After we talk."

"Talk about what?"

"What do you think?"

"I have no idea."

"How's your cage?"

"Tight. I hate it. What do you think?"

"Getting work done?"

"I told you how great things are g—"

Reza smiled and Jonny stopped talking.

Reza said, "You see what I'm saying, don't you?"

He suspected but asked, "What…?"

"You know. Why did we put this cage on your little dick?"

"To torture me?"

"Oh really? That's why?"

"Why else?"

"Come on, Jonny. Man like me? You think I get off on doing things with other dude's dicks…"

"You like controlling people."

"I won't deny that. I don't get off on your sex stuff, Jonny. Now again: Why did we put that cage on your little dick?"

"It's not little."

Reza chuckled, and the others followed suit. "Why, Jonny?"

Jonny hesitated, hated giving in. "So I would work," he said, teeth gritted.

"Right. You have Charlie on the brain. Shit, all the guys in this room have Charlie on the brain and not all of them have even fucked her yet."

"Come on… They're not going to."

"Jonny, you got that hot little redhead on the brain and I don't blame you. You wear that cage for Charlie's sake. That cage is your chance to get her back. You're fucking it up."

"Fucking it up? How you mean?" In his mind's eye he could picture Charlie in bed last night, her eyes flitting around the room casting suspicious glares in the spots she suspected Reza might have hidden cameras.

Reza said, “Genesis is pretty familiar with your dick. I had her run an errand for me, and she assures me she’s solved your problem.”

“What’s my problem?”

“You’re a horny, young, unfocused dude with a ten for a wife. I don’t blame you for being distracted. You hit the jackpot. I don’t know if you hypnotized that girl or what but you bagged a filly. The two of you together looks like a kidnapping.”

The hype men chuckled, the two of them leaning and watching from the opposite bank of lockers.

Reza continued. “I don’t blame you, but you’re fucking up.”

“How?”

“Trying to work around the cage…”

Jonny felt caught, like denying it would be futile. he showed Reza a blank expression and watched as the mustache of Reza’s beard crept upward on one side as he smiled. Without saying a thing he felt somehow to Reza his suspicion had been confirmed. Either that or the bastard really did have cameras in the apartment.

Reza smiled with a strange affection, black eyes glimmering in the spotlights’ cone of halogen light. “Like I said, I don’t blame you at all, Jonny. This is for your own good. Have a seat there,” he said, gesturing a hand to the bench. When Jonny sat down, head down but looking toward the hype men, Reza told him to straddle the bench.

“Straddle it?”

“One leg on either side. Like you’re riding a horse.” He reached into his locker, looking for something.

Jonny gathered the towel around himself even though all the men had already seen the cage locked on his privates. It was somehow worse in here, the lights bright, no steam to obscure the vision. One leg on either side of the bench as instructed he sat down and bundled the towel between his legs.

Reza had withdrawn something from the locker but hid it in his grip.

“Move the towel, Jonny.”

Jonny sighed and rolled his eyes, moved the towel aside and put it behind him on the bench. For some reason, his penis was pulsing and beginning to strain against its cage.

Reza’s other hand disappeared back into his locker for a second, came back out with the zipping sound of a thin metal chain against aluminum. He showed Jonny what it was: held between thumb and finger was the key to his cage, the long necklace chain dangling down.

“You’re taking it off?”

“Swapping it out, Jonny.”

“Swapping—”

Reza opened his other hand and held it out. In the center of his palm rolled an opaque silicon tube with a flared shape on the end like the head of a cock. There was a black rubber ring with a brass lock on it. The whole thing was small enough to be hidden in Reza's hand.

"This cage is fine," Jonny said, putting his hand between his legs and holding onto his bundled genitals. His balls ached.

"You know it's not, Jonny. It doesn't serve its purpose, and its purpose is to help you."

"Is that one *smaller*?"

Reza held his palm up so he could look at it. "I suppose it is. You'll need help getting it on. Tate, sit across from Jonny, please."

Tate didn't flinch and Jonny suspected the guy knew this was coming—but he did run his hand in a circle over his wet hair and looked to hesitate.

"Tate, hurry," Reza said, "I have to get going."

"Yeah," Tate muttered, put his hands on his hips, head down, came to the bench and put a leg over. His towel opened in a V and Jonny could see his dick hanging down. Reza was also naked, standing beside him, and he could see the two mens' penises compared. Both large, Reza inching Tate out; Reza's was gnarly and wrinkled, heavy folds of reddened foreskin closed over his tip. Tate's was attractive. Circumcised, smooth skinned, the glans healthy and well-formed.

Reza handed Tate the key to Jonny's cage and Tate sat down with his legs open, that big penis (that Charlie was attracted to) flopped to lay out on the bench between his legs.

Tate looked down and muttered something unintelligible to himself.

Reza said, "Swap his cage out, Tate. You don't want your new girlfriend playing with his little dick, do you?"

Tate inhaled in preparation, reached his big hands between Jonny's legs and Jonny's stomach started to flutter. He folded his hands over his chest and put his shoulders up like he was cold.

"She's not his girlfriend," he said.

Tate slipped the key in the cage's lock and jiggled it. The fingers of his other hand pinched at the ring roughly, trying to steady it.

"It's not coming off," Tate said.

As Reza said, "Oh no, what if we lost the right key and Jonny has to wear it forever?" the key clicked over and the lock opened.

Tate said, "I got it."

Reza said, "That's a relief, huh, Jonny?"

Jonny sighed relief—but there was a new problem: with the lock undone his penis straightened out from his body, the cage gripping him. The ability to have an erection fueled its own fire and even though five well-endowed naked men were standing and watching him, his cock went to full hardness, swelling out the gaps between the cage's rings.

Tate sighed, shook his head, flexed his jaw. Then, knowing there was no other way, he took hold of Jonny's cock cage, fingers gripping the wire, and began to tug. His penis looked so small in Tate's large muscular hand. It was embarrassing, but he'd grow aroused from the idea and from the situation, and he'd pumped out pre-come. Tate was able to sway his cock from side to side and Jonny's own lubrication got the cage sliding right up and off his shaft. Tate tossed the cage to the floor where it clanged then bounced and skidded on the hard tile. He wiped his hands on the towel and grimaced, eyes down and looking at Jonny's rock hard cock.

He was free and hard, and as awful as the situation was the feeling was glorious. He closed his eyes to shut them all out and enjoyed the pleasure of an erection.

"Jesus, Jonny," Reza said, "you have no shame."

"You don't know what it's like having your dick locked up."

The black guy had been watching, leaning against the counter wearing a towel. He said, "Ay man, this is where I'm out," and he put up two pale palms in surrender. "I ain't gonna watch dude sit here and jack off or some shit."

Reza laughed and said, "Tate just needs to cover up his snake," leaned over and tugged Tate's towel closed. "Jonny keeps checking it out. Jonny's a cock-watcher. Knows Charlie's going to love it. Pictures that thing you got going in and out of her and all the sounds that redheaded tiger's gonna make when you fuck her."

"I'm not thinking of that," Jonny said.

Reza laughed. "What then? Five naked duded got you hard?"

The hype men snickered.

The black guy said, "Get this dude some ice. You gotta ice that thing down."

Reza nodded toward the hype men and they moved away, off to the side and Jonny could hear the sound of a fridge opening and closing.

Tate lay his forearms over his thighs and waited, his brow low, his jaw tense. One of the hype men returned and held out a hand. Tate opened his, and the guy dropped a single ice cube in it. There was great laughter. The other hype man said, "That's for his little dick," and it brought another brief wave of laughter, Reza even joining in.

TATE HELD a hand towel filled with ice over Jonny's crotch. The wet terry fabric froze his cock and balls numb, and he couldn't tell if he was hard or not anymore.

The hype men put on cotton sweats and the black guy went to his locker and dressed in casual clothes and what had to be size 14 tan leather shoes. He winked and pointed a finger gun at Jonny as he left.

Reza got dressed in a charcoal suit, no underwear, polished dress shoes, clasped his Rolex on his wrist, surmised Jonny.

He said, "You made the right choice, Jonny."

"I would do anything for a weekend with Charlie."

"I already know that, Jonny. And this new cage is for your sake. For you and Charlie. There's a reason you wear it so don't try to get around the purpose of the cage."

Jonny watched him as he knotted his tie, standing just over Tate's shoulder. He said, "Do you have cameras in our apartment?"

Reza's expression pinched. "Don't be ridiculous, Jonny."

They eyed each other but Reza gave nothing away. Soon he put his hand on Tate's shoulder. "You good?"

"I got it," Tate said.

"Let's take a look."

Tate eased the ice-filled towel away, and they looked at Jonny's penis. The hype men came close and leaned to see as well.

He'd lost his erection, and his frigid little penis had shriveled.

Reza said to Tate, "All right, get that cage on him. I gotta get to this meeting. I'll call you later."

"Yup," Tate answered without looking.

Reza came around the bench looking at Jonny. "Two weeks from now this is all going to be worth it." He patted Jonny's shoulder.

One of the hype men said, "I'd wear one of them cages if you said I could fuck Charlie all weekend." The other hype man laughed and nodded, nudged his friend with an elbow.

Reza looked to scold them, paused then a slow smile spread his beard.

"I gotta go," he said and slapped Jonny's back again. Jonny listened to him walk the hall then leave.

Tate took the new silicon chastity cage and examined how it worked. Jonny said, "The black ring goes around—"

"I'll figure it out, it's not a carburetor."

"Whatever."

Tate took the small silicon sleeve with its molded cock head shape and eased it over Jonny's cold-shrunk penis. The rubber surface snagged on his skin and instead of his penis sliding into the sleeve, Tate's pushing squashed Jonny's cock against his scrotum. The sleeve was too small. Tate withdrew the sleeve and groaned, rubbed an eye socket with the back of his wrist. He looked at Jonny's penis, shook his head and clamped his lips between his teeth. After a preparatory inhale, he spat in the silicon cage and then wiped the insides with a finger, coating it with his spit.

The two hype men had their arms folded and watched from a few feet away. One of them said, "This guy's dick is like a thumb. You see that?" Opposite of hype men for Jonny, these guys served for his humiliation in Reza's stead.

The other one said, "Tate, seriously, I think your thumb is bigger than his dick. Hold them together."

Tate stopped what he was doing and his head slowly came up to regard them. Jonny could hear one of their mouths clopping closed with a hollow lip-sound.

Tate watched them for a moment and Jonny resisted looking over his shoulder to see their reaction.

Tate said, "Don't you two have better things to do?"

One of them said, "Yeah, sure, Tate. We were just messing around."

"I know," Tate said, "now get the fuck out of here."

Tate watched them leave with a lowered brow and his mouth held in a firm line. When the door closed, he breathed a few calming breaths, his large muscular shoulders rising and falling. Jonny watched the guy's body. Up close like this he could feel the man's presence. His chest was huge, his stomach trim and hard. If Tate won his fight, this weekend Charlie would get in bed with this man and her hands would roam his perfect, masculine form. Charlie liked him; she had a crush on him. She'd admitted to her husband that the man's penis turned her on. And the crazy thing?—despite the ice held against his dick for almost ten minutes, he was growing again, getting aroused at the thought even though it was dangerous. Reza was an animal, mean and crude despite capricious gentleness; Charlie couldn't fall for him. Reza was brutish; his penis large and grotesque, his manner in bed dominant and atavistic. Charlie accepted it, and though he made her come, it was a reluctant orgasm. Reza forced her orgasms. What if Tate conjured them?

"For fuck's sake, are you getting hard again?"

"Well hurry up and put it on. You're taking for fucking ever."

Tate grunted an exhale, took the small silicon tube and slipped it over the head of Jonny's penis. Turning it clockwise and counter, he screwed it down Jonny's shaft, the inside of it slippery now with Tate's spit. Jonny pinched the base of his cock to help and Tate didn't stop him.

Jonny said, “Then you just put the black part right around the—”

“I know,” Tate interrupted him.

Jonny watched the fighter’s large masculine hands work the rubberized ring underneath his balls and around his cock. Tate’s knuckles were large and the first two were callused and swollen.

“It’s so small,” Jonny said, but didn’t know why. Maybe he sought sympathy but should know by now Tate was not the type.

Tate closed it, tugged the lock, jiggling Jonny’s new, smaller cage. It was tight and constrictive and he had a sudden shiver of claustrophobia; feeling as trapped as his penis was. The inside was smooth at least, and with Tate’s spit his cock was swelling against the cage’s interior but it was only uncomfortable, not painful.

Jonny cleared his throat as Tate dried his hands on the towel. Jonny could see his large penis laying on the bench alongside the inside of his thigh. He said, “What’s Reza got on you?”

“Don’t talk to me.” Tate wouldn’t even meet his gaze, kept drying his hands.

Jonny scoffed. “Why do you want to spend the weekend with my wife? Can’t you get your own girlfriend?”

Tate groaned, covered his face with his hands and rubbed his eyes. He laughed into the cups of his palms. When he set his hands down on his thighs he was looking directly at Jonny. He said, “How long does it take to make a fucking game?”

Speaking with measured defiance, he replied, “I’m working as fast as I can.”

Tate said, “It’s your wife working. That perfect woman deserves a man, you fucking baby.”

# 4

WHEN CHARLIE GOT home from work Jonny was on the couch. She brought home Angelo's, and he wondered how she got it home.

She was in a good mood, coming in the apartment walking on her toes lightly and disappearing into the kitchen to set the pizza box on the counter, and in a bright singsong calling out, "Hi, Jonny."

Jonny stood up, adjusted his pant leg, but that didn't help the unease between his legs. He had to push the nose of the cage down to find comfort. After a few steps, the discomfort waned. He joined her in the kitchen.

"You're in a good mood."

She spun, a long skirt twirling around her knees. She shot him a wide smile, sunlight sparkled in her eyes.

She said, "I am," and shot her hip out.

His own smile faltered. He imagined Reza had told her that if Tate won his fight, she would spend the weekend with the big man. His brow lowered as he considered his wife was happy because she looked forward to it.

He said "Is there good news?"

She said, "Good news? I just brought home Angelo's. We've got a couple of hours we can watch some Twilight Zone, eat about maybe five or six slices of pizza. The sun is shining, it was beautiful out—"

He said, "How did you get home? Did Tate drive you?"

"Nope. It was so nice out I took the bus. Why?"

"You carried the pizza all the way home?"

"It's not that far."

"Are you serious?"

She said, "Geez, Jonny. What's your problem? You called me today, and you got me all happy. Now I get home and you're mad at me for having a smile on my face." She came to him, still smiling but he could see that she was hurt by his meanness.

He put his arms around her, said, "Sorry. You're right. The sun was shining today…"

"Right?" she said into his chest as she hugged him. "It's not too hot out anymore, the leaves are still on trees, why wouldn't I walk home?"

"I'm just glad you're here," he said and rested his chin on the top of her head.

"Oh Jonny, something happened today?" She darted her head back but still held his arms. She looked in his eyes.

He shrugged.

"Did you not have a good day?"

"It was fine…" He couldn't stop a low groan in his chest.

"Oh no… Did something happen with your game? Did something go wrong?" Her eyes look frightened.

He pulled her back to hold her. "No way. Not at all, Charlie. Don't worry, baby. I'm on top of that. That's my domain." When she'd looked frightened, she showed doubt in him and he'd never seen that in her before. Her fear frightened him more than she could understand and he didn't want her to know that.

"I know, Jonny. I know, I trust you. Then what's wrong?" Her arms went around his waist and she laid her ear over his chest again.

In a quiet voice near her ear, he said, "Remember when you said you thought there were cameras?"

"I *told* you. Why?"

"Maybe you're right."

"I think I am. It's not hard to believe."

"Would you come out into the hall with me?"

She didn't answer, but stepped back from him and looked in his eyes, her hand scratching at his forearms and holding his hands. She nodded.

Jonny took her by the hand, went out their apartment door and into the hall. He turned right and opened the door into the stairwell. Their feet were squeaky on its painted concrete surface and the heavy metal door boomed behind them. But now he felt alone. Really alone.

She said, "What is it? What's going on?"

Jonny told her to hold on, undid his belt, opened his pants and pushed them down. He thrusts his hips out and his smaller cage jiggled between his legs.

Charlie's eyes went wide and her mouth fell open. Her hand came up, and she touched her lower lip with the tips of her fingers. She said, "Your penis is in that?"

"It wasn't easy, but they got it in there," he told her.

"Oh my God, Jonny. It's so small." The hand left her face and came down to hold the outside of his cage. The old one had wire rungs that let his skin be touched. But this silicone was impermeable. He could tell that Charlie was touching it, but he couldn't feel the delicate touch of her fingers, couldn't feel the warmth of her skin. It was dull and muted. He was surprisingly un-aroused by her touching of the cage.

She said, "We can't mess around if you're wearing this." She jiggled it, and he looked to see her thumb and finger holding the cock head shape and moving the cage up and down.

"I know. Reza made me put it on. He said that if I try to get around the purpose of the cage I'm letting you down."

"You're not, Jonny…"

"Maybe I am."

"We had fun…" She cupped his cheek with a hand and rubbed his nostril with her thumb.

"Maybe that was the point. I don't know if he's right or not. But he wanted me to meet him…"

"That was your meeting today?"

He nodded. "Yeah. He had a proposition to do with the business. And then when we were done he made me put this on."

"Jonny. I'm not kidding, you *have* to finish your game."

"It's all coming together, Charlie. It's just odds and ends now. I swear it won't be long."

"Can you stand it?"

He nodded. He wanted to tell her about the proposition. His heart raced with the excitement. He couldn't wait to tell her about the weekend they would spend together. But he'd offered her up like she was common goods. And that part he didn't know how to explain yet. The first part of the revelation would be great. Two weeks from now, no matter what, the two of them would have a weekend alone together. It would be like a staycation. Just the two of them. They'd lock the door and only open it up to receive the food they ordered. Then the rest of the time they would be naked… But then he'd have to tell her what it was going to cost her. Not him. *Her*.

And there was a greater fear: she might be looking forward to it more than the weekend with him…

THEY SAT TOGETHER on the couch and watched TV while they ate pizza. They were quiet and dinner was tasteless; not just because it was Angelo's. Jonny had a lot on his mind.

What would Charlie think of this proposition? When he told her about it would he catch a glimmer in her eye? He'd offered up his wife services and felt guilty, but deep down he was sure that she would have offered. And now it was beginning to work on him. Twisting and turning deep down below his belly.

When an episode ended, he turned, ready to tell her. She faced him at the same time and her mouth opened as if she were going to speak. She saw he was as well and closed her mouth.

He said, "No, you first."

She said, "You think that if we… If we were to…" She got a little closer now, and whispered to him, "If I were to put your balls in my mouth do you think that would be enough?…"

"Shit, Charlie," he said and grimaced. Just the idea of her doing that thing for him again got him surging. This cage was tighter. And while it didn't have rings that pinched, it had silicon rubber that tightened around his testicles. When he began to get hard they began to pull, the sleeve began to squeeze…

"Sorry," she said. "I don't mean… You know what I mean. Isn't there a way we can still be happy?"

"There is," he said and paused again.

She said, "I know you won't feel my hand on your penis, but doesn't my mouth feel good on your… *balls*?"

He nodded. "It really does, Charlie. We can figure something out…"

She said, "You don't think Reza was right…? Am I distracting you? Am I the reason your game isn't done?"

"You're not." He scratched his head and looked at his empty plate on the coffee table. "I just mean that maybe there's some truth in this cage providing some focus. Reza's giving me the money to pay people to do the things I need to do. He uses you like a carrot to get me to work harder. And I hate those things he does with you. That motivates me. The more I see him with you the more I want to be finished." Now he put his hand over, collected hers and gripped her thumb. "But I love seeing *you*. You know? With him? As terrible as it is, you're beautiful…"

"Geez, Jonny," she sighed.

"But if there's ways around the cage, that's what I think about doing. That's what I think about instead of working. I think about ways to beat his system. But if I just stayed—"

"But, Jonny, I love you. We need to be together. And the way we did it last time? With Genesis? I don't want that…"

Now he smiled. And with perfect timing a cloud passed by the house and let the sun blossom through the window and shine golden light on her face. He said, "Well, I have some great news for you, sunshine…"

She said, "Really? What's the good news?"

Someone knocked at the door.

"For Christ's sake," he muttered.

"Hold on. I'll get rid of them."

He sighed, shook his head. There was something arousing about what he wanted to tell her. It was good news, for sure, and he couldn't wait for two weeks when they could be together fully. But he also wanted to see the look in her eyes when he told her about what it would cost…

Charlie trotted the three steps up to the kitchen, went to the door and unlocked it. She opened it, stepped back and said, "Oh hi, Tate."

JONNY WENT TO THE KITCHEN. Charlie was closing the door and Tate was taking a seat at the kitchen table.

Tate was wearing what he'd dressed in at the club. Jeans and boots, flannel shirt with the sleeves rolled up that showed the big muscles of his forearms. He rested one of them now on the kitchen table.

"Can I get you some pizza?" Charlie asked.

Tate said, "No thanks, Charlie. I got the fight coming up, I gotta watch what I eat these days."

"Oh yeah? When's the fight?"

Tate looked to Jonny. "You didn't tell her yet?"

Jonny rolled his eyes.

Charlie said, "Tell me what?"

Tate rested his elbows on his knees and ran his hands through his hair a few times.

Jonny said, "I was just about to tell you, Charlie."

"The good news?"

Tate brightened. He sat upright and rested his big hands on his knees. With a wary smile, he said, "You think it's good news?"

Finger pointing toward Jonny, she shook her head no. "Jonny told me it was good news."

Tate slumped. "Oh, right."

Jonny said, "I was just about to tell her. Why are you here?"

"I'm here to talk."

"About what?" Charlie asked.

Tate looked to Jonny and said, "Would you just tell her?"

"Like I said, I was just about to. Then you showed up uninvited."

Tate grumbled and put both hands up, looking away from them. He leaned back in his chair, put an elbow on the table and scowled.

Jonny cleared his throat. "Charlie…"

"Is this the good news?"

"Yeah. I went to meet Reza today…"

She looked down between his legs.

"It wasn't even about that," he said and fidgeted with his cage. "He had something else he wanted to talk about."

"Oh no." She began to gnaw on her lower lip with a canine.

Jonny said, "Hold on. It wasn't terrible. He's going to be away for two weekends this month…"

"Okay," she said, still gnawing.

"Yeah, so he's going to be away. He offered me a chance to be with you."

"Be with me?"

"He did. Not this weekend, but the next. No matter what happens, Charlie, you and I are going to be left alone all weekend. No interruptions, no cage, sixty hours of just you and me."

She watched him speculatively, waiting for the bad news to temper it. Her eyes twinkled with hope. A smile slowly crept up, pulling the corners of her mouth into her cheeks and forming dimples. She made a funny croaking sound and then giggled. "Two weekends from now?"

He stepped forward, put out his hands, and she put hers inside his. Their thighs touched, and he looked into her eyes. "Two weekends from now you and I will have the whole weekend to ourselves. No Reza, no nobody. Just the Keens. And we're mighty *keen*."

She gave up another bashful giggle. "I'm so keen for you." He kissed her forehead.

Tate said, "There's more."

Charlie stepped back and her tooth worked nervous lines into her lower lip again. Her brow came down.

Jonny said, "There always is."

"What do you have to do?" she asked him.

Jonny said, "It's not me…"

Charlie moaned. "Oh no, what do I have to do?"

Tate stood up. Jonny said, "On the first weekend…"

Tate nudged Jonny out of the way. He stood now in front of Charlie.

Charlie said, "Oh no. What do I have to do?" She looked up pleadingly at Tate, almost unaware that he had taken the place of her husband. She looked at him with the same sort of trust and affection. Jonny's stomach tightened, and he sat down heavily in the seat Tate had occupied.

Tate said, "The only way you get to have that weekend was for Jonny to agree to something else."

"Something I have to do?"

Tate said, "That's why I'm here. Jonny had to agree to it. But I'm not doing it unless you agree to it as well."

"Agree to what?"

"In order for this to work… in order for you to get the weekend with Jonny, you spend a weekend with me." Tate looked at her with hopeful eyes under a low and mean looking brow. His mouth hung open tentatively. Charlie's eyes darted over his. Her hands came together and clasped over her chest. She made that croaking sound again.

"Weekend with you? What does that mean?"

"I get the same thing Jonny gets. Sixty hours. Sixty hours where I'm here instead of Reza."

"Oh." Her eyes flitted towards Jonny.

"I asked for it, Charlie. I wanted it. It's for my fight."

"What fight?"

"Remember I told you I had to fight this season. Remember I told you in the car?"

She nodded.

"It's this weekend, Charlie."

"Okay. I knew it was coming up. I did."

"It's this weekend," he said again. "Reza wanted me to have something. Anything I could ask for within reason. He would give me a gift if I win. I asked him for you. I just want to spend one weekend with you."

"Why?"

"Why? Why wouldn't I?"

Her eyes made a funny roll, and she smirked a half-smile. She said, "I have to spend the weekend with you?"

"That's why I'm here. I asked for it because I wanted it. But I don't want it if you don't. The only way I'll do it is if you tell me it's okay. If you tell me it's okay, we'll spend the weekend together."

"And if I don't agree?"

"I'm sorry. Reza won't let you spend the weekend with Jonny."

"I want to spend the weekend with Jonny."

"I don't want to put you in this position. He asked me what I wanted and I want you. But if you don't want to, I'll give it up. But listen… I'll be good to you. I want to be with you. I want the whole experience. You're amazing. I think about you all the time…"

Jonny said, "Okay, that's enough.

Tate ignored him. "If you don't want to, I'll understand."

She began to speak, but he stopped her, put a finger on her lip. Charlie waited.

He said, "Don't answer me now. I want you to think about it. I want this to be for real. You don't decide tonight. You decide tomorrow. I'm going to go now. I promise I'll be good to you. And as much as I hate the situation, it means you get a weekend with your husband. Don't do it for him. Do it for me."

Jonny said, "Thanks, Tate. You can get going now."

Charlie said, "Wait…" and stood with her two men watching her. Her mouth worked in small movements and her eyes stared wildly, darting from side to side but

not looking at them. For a second Jonny feared she was going into some sort of fit and she might collapse on the floor. She was processing too much information.

Tate held her arm to steady her. “Don’t decide now. Don’t say a thing. Jonny’s right. I’m going to go. You call me tomorrow and I hope to God you’ll say you’ll be with me.”

He took her by both arms, pulled her close. She was frail and thin against his hard muscle. His hands dwarfed her upper arms, and he was much taller than her. He kissed the top of her head, let her go and walked to the apartment door.

“Call me tomorrow.”

He opened the door and left.

# 5

JONNY PARSED through the data Shulamit sent him.

"See what I'm saying?" she said from her apartment in Italy or wherever she actually was.

"Uh-huh," he said, still scrolling. "How big a problem do you think it is?"

"You tell me."

He shrugged. "Just fix it. I want it right."

"Take me a day…"

"I want it fixed."

"It'll still work without the fix."

"I want it right."

"I do, too," she said. "It's good, this game."

"I know it is."

Shulamit smiled. "Okay, Mister Jonny, consider it fixed. I start now. Time me, see if I can get it done in twenty-four hours."

Jonny picked up the leather beanbag stress ball sitting on the desk. "You're going to work straight?"

"Try to stop me."

Now he smiled, squeezing the stress ball. "God, I love you, Shulamit," he laughed, but kind of meant it.

Shulamit came nearer the screen as she reached to turn off the webcam. "Don't let that wife hear you, she seemed feisty."

The screen went black.

He said, "She's a sweetheart, Shulamit."

Now he passed the stress ball from hand to hand and watched the bathroom door. That sweetheart of his had closed herself in there a long time now. He checked his watch. Forty minutes.

Once Tate had left, Jonny stayed silent and cleaned. He put the uneaten pizza away in the fridge, closed in Tupperware. He cleaned the plates, took the empty pizza box down the hall and dumped it in the recycling chute. Charlie tidied as well, sweeping the floor with a broom. Her face was pinched in concentration and he wondered what her decision would be. Not true; he wondered when she would tell him she would spend the weekend with Tate.

Stress ball set down on the desk, he eased himself out of his work chair and hooped his headphones over his head, lay them on the desk. He crept to the bathroom door and listened. What he worried he'd hear was the sound of her crying. The thought of hearing her soft sobs beyond the door wrenched on his heart.

There *were* soft Charlie sounds from inside the bathroom. The way his brain had been working he thought at first they were the sounds of crying. But while he listened it dawned on him: it wasn't crying, it was panting. Breathy gasps, coming in regular syncopation, a soft moaning sound trickling underneath. Not the moans of sadness, but moans of pleasure. Ear pressed to the door, he also attuned to a quieter sound but one that came in the same syncopation, just a little off the melody. A wet clicking. Soft feminine suction.

His hand went between his legs and squeezed on his cage. Stomach muscles tightened till they cramped. Charlie was masturbating.

He listened harder. Click-pant-gasp… click-pant-gasp…

"Charlie?"

The sounds stopped.

He waited, but she said nothing.

"Hey, Charlie?"

A long silence, then: "What?"

"Are you okay?"

Silence again.

"Charlie?"

"I'm okay."

Another long silence, and even he didn't know what to say now. "You want a snack?"

"No."

He rested his hand on the door knob and it made a metallic clack.

"Don't come in here," Charlie said, her voice rushed.

"I'm not," he said. "I'll leave you alone."

No answer.

He stepped away from the door but hesitated. He heard her putting things away, heard zippers on cosmetic bags, shampoo bottles being set back on the shower shelf.

Back at his work desk, he got his fingers typing but couldn't stop thinking of his wife masturbating in the bathroom by herself, in secret. He adjusted his cage.

The door to the bathroom opened, and Charlie came out, walking past him without looking. She left a trail of wet bathroom heat and the smell of soap and shampoo.

Over his shoulder he said, "Did you have a nice bath?"

"Yes. Did you need in there or something?"

"Yeah," he said, thinking how irritated her voice sounded. Charlie liked her alone time in the bathroom. Even though he didn't need to pee, he left his chair and closed himself in the bathroom.

The mirror was hazed with humid fog, one side touched with the clear marks of her fingerprints where she'd opened the cabinet. He did now too, looking through their things on white metal shelves. Nothing out of the ordinary. He squatted down and opened the cupboard doors. There were a lot more nice things these days since Reza was staying here. Bottles of mouth wash, shampoos and conditioners; ultrasonic toothbrushes, whiteners, hair gels, mousse, different kinds of deodorants—men's and ladies… Their storage was now a bric-à-brac of expensive toiletries. While Charlie didn't wear make-up, he knew she'd been buying it anyway. Maybe some feminine curiosity. She'd bought shoes she'd not worn yet, too.

Some of the things she had were tucked in toiletry bags. He quietly unzipped a few and poked his fingers inside, eventually turning up a small baggie the size of a match book with white powder in it and another one with half a joint. It was in the expensive alligator bag tucked away and hidden at the very back he found Charlie's dildo.

It was a big, lifelike one with molded veins and a plump, flared cock head.

"Ah fuck, Charlie," he sighed as he examined it. His temples began a steady throb, and his cock began to swell in his tiny rubber cage. There was no room to grow, and it felt like his cock was pushing back inside his body. Thoughts came again of his penis shrinking because he wore the cage.

The dildo wasn't as large as Reza's or Tate's members, but it was a lot bigger than her husband's. He flexed it, wagged it, tried picturing Charlie bent over the sink and running this thing in and out of herself, trying to enjoy it but keeping her gasps of pleasure quiet so her husband wouldn't hear. His cock pushed into his body so uncomfortably he squeezed his thighs together as he hustled the big dildo back into the leather bag.

Hand squeezing his rubber-clad genitals, he flushed the toilet and waited a few heartbeats before leaving the bathroom.

Charlie sat on the bed in her pajamas now, rubbing lotion on her arms. She looked over her shoulder at him but didn't smile. Back at rubbing lotion she said, "What?"

Jonny sighed, got on the bed and walked across to kneel behind her.

After a moment where he lurked behind her without saying anything, she paused, rested her hands on her knees. "What is it?"

He licked his lips. "Charlie, were you masturbating in there?"

She made a quick scoffing sound, reached over and clapped the lid closed on her lotion, tossed it in the nightstand drawer and shoved it closed with a bang.

He said, "It's okay if you were…"

"I wasn't, Jonny," she hissed with determined punctuation through clenched teeth.

"If you ever need me to do something for you…"

She scoffed again, plopped herself into her spot on the bed, sitting up still, but shoving her long pale legs under the covers. Her cheeks had blushed. "I wasn't doing *anything*," she said.

"Charlie… I know you were."

She scowled at him, thin lines creasing her smooth brow above the bridge of her nose. Her mouth had gone thin and firm. "Mind your business, Jonny."

Now *he* made a scoffing sound. He said, "Are you masturbating thinking about Tate?"

"No! Why would you even say that?" Her hands formed fists around bunched up bedsheets.

"I saw your face when he took that big dick out and you asked him if you could suck it."

"This again? For crying out loud, Jonny, we had this argument…"

"Remember you told me how you liked it when you jerked him off? Now he's going to spend the weekend with you and you're trying to pretend you have to think *so-oo* carefully about it, but you go in the can and start jabbing yourself with some big dildo?…"

Scowling meaner, she said, "Maybe I wouldn't have to if you didn't let Reza put that tiny cage on your dick, maybe if you were a man…"

He flinched. "I *am* a man."

Charlie fixed him with that furious scowl, brow low, mouth turned down now in the corners.

Everything in him slumped. His shoulders fell, and a weakness worked up his back. In a soft request, he said, "Don't spend the weekend with Tate."

"Then I don't spend the next one with you."

"That's fine."

"Well thanks a lot, Jonny. You're so jealous you'd keep me away from my husband—you!—just to prove your manhood… When did you get so spiteful?"

"It's not spite."

She laughed. "It's not?"

"No. I don't like you with Tate."

Smiling now, she said, "Oh? Do you like me with Reza then?"

"That's not it."

"Sure it is. You're afraid I'm going to like it with Tate. *Now* you'll put a stop to it. You think I *don't* like it with Reza and you don't say a peep." She watched him, smiling mean, waiting for him to catch up with her logic. "You let Reza fuck me and you watch. The whole time thinking poor Charlie under that big hairy man, poor Charlie having to let that horse cock go inside her, I hope she's okay… A guy might come and spend a

weekend and he says he'll be nice, says he'll be gentle…? Now you put your foot down? This is where you say enough is enough? And to prove your point you're going to deny me a weekend with the man I love?—you, Jonny!—maybe it's you should spend some time in that bathroom. There's a big old mirror in there and you should probably take a long, hard look at yourself. Oh sorry, did I say long and hard? Is your little dick straining against its cage?"

He shook his head, lips trembling.

She said, "Funny how I'm the one who worries about your comfort. I worry about you all day long. You're selfish, Jonny, and I never thought you were before."

Her hands raked through her long ginger mane stirring up the oily coconut smell of the expensive shampoo their landlord bought for her. She made a growling sound, kicked her legs out of bed, and went around to the closet.

She was going to leave again.

He said, "Wait, Charlie, please, don't go…"

"I have to get out of here, Jonny, I *have* to…"

In a timid voice, he said, "I just wanted to say I would help you masturbate…"

"No, Jonny, stop," she said from inside the sweater she pulled on. Tugging her long hair out the neck hole, she said, "That's not all you wanted to say. You said what you wanted to say. I mean it: sit and think."

She pulled on jeans and grabbed her purse.

"I can think while you're here."

She shook her head in admonishment. "I'm not going to leave here and see Reza, I'm not going to see Tate, if that's what you're worried about. I want to be alone. So sit here and think about how mean you are to me. Don't spend it worrying and grabbing at that cage trying to wonder if I'm with another man. I'm not. I'm going to go and sit alone somewhere. I *need* to be alone."

She walked around the bed and he turned to watch her go. She paused at the bottom of the steps. Without looking back she spoke down toward the floor. "You want to worry I'm with someone, worry I'm with Genesis. Tonight's the night I think I've officially had enough of men forever."

Up the stairs she trotted; he heard the jingle of keys plucked from the hook, then the sound of the door closing behind her.

IT WAS A GRAY, lifeless dawn when she returned and he'd hardly slept. Once she'd gone, he'd done as she instructed: sat on the bed and thought about her. Thought about the things he'd done and saw some truths about himself he didn't want to see. At some

point he'd slipped under the covers and put his head on the pillow. Sure, he was supposed to be working, but it was all for Charlie; what was the point if he didn't have her?—or worse, had been hurting her…

She came down from the kitchen in light steps, careful to be quiet because she cared about him. They met each other's gaze, and he saw the wet gleam of her eyes in the low light.

At the side of the bed, standing right next to him, she gave him a weak smile, and he returned it, his heart in his throat.

When she sat next to him, she lay her hand on the covers over his heart. She gave him a few scratches; her smile getting more confident. She cupped his cheek. His smile grew, too. Now she came to him and kissed his lips. It was soft and slow and gentle. Her lips were cool, and damp, and so soft. She tasted like whisky. Marijuana was in her hair, pungent smell chasing away the light tropical. It was possible she'd gone to see Genesis. He didn't care as long as she was here.

Their kiss broke with a small smack. She still smiled. Looking in his eyes now, she said, "You *are* a man, Jonny. You're my man, and I love you."

"I love you, too," he said with no hesitation, "and I'm sorry."

She turned away, nodding, her hand going into her pocket and withdrawing her phone. Three swipes and it was ringing. She put it to her ear.

"Hi, good morning… It is… I know… thank you… I did… I did, all night… I'll spend the weekend with you if you win your fight… I'm sure… I *am* sure, Tate. I *want* to do it."

# PART 2

# 6

THE DRESS CHARLIE wore made him furious, but he'd kept his mouth shut so far. A Bardot dress, she called it, skin-tight in Royal blue; floral lace over a liner. The liner had cut-outs though—a diamond over her tummy, baring it behind the lace, and a diamond on the small of her back. It was off the shoulder, showing her creamy freckled skin, but had long sleeves that came to below her wrist. She looked stunning in it, especially standing. The skirt was short, above mid-thigh, her long, elegant legs bare, feet pointed in silver-white lacy heels with a thin ankle strap and small gold bells hanging from the buckles.

Now she had her legs crossed sitting in the back of the limousine Reza sent, and the bells jingled with the swaying of the ride. Jonny sat beside her, dressed nowhere near as elegantly, just in jeans and a sweatshirt. The jeans were black, the sweatshirt black, and he hoped he might pass as some rich and successful game designer (which he intended to be in the near future).

In the future when he was rich and successful, he would also be without a cage on his penis. He fidgeted in his seat, slumped low with his hands thrust in the pouch of the sweatshirt. Charlie watched out the window, and he was bothered by the pleasant smile on her face. She held a crystal tumbler in one hand, amber fluid dancing in its cup as the limo took a right turn on Houston.

He asked her, "Are you wearing makeup?"

"No." She tilted her head, then amended it: "Just a little eyeshadow."

"Lip gloss?"

"Yes. And some lip gloss."

"So you *are* wearing make-up…"

"If you call that make-up…"

"I call that make-up. What do you call make-up?"

"I don't know, Jonny. Foundation. Blush. Drawing on your eyebrows…"

"You don't do that."

"No, I don't."

He reached over and took her hand. "You don't have to."

"Aw, that's sweet. I don't have to, but maybe I should…"

"You couldn't be more beautiful."

He put his hand up her bare back, felt the smoothness of her skin, felt how *vibrant* she felt. She'd been cleaned and massaged with scented oil and her silky hair brushed over the back of his hand as he swept it up to hold the back of her neck. He could feel the chain of a necklace against his palm. A necklace Reza had probably bought for her.

He said, "There's a chance Tate won't win."

"I know."

"Are you going to be upset?"

"Do you want to start this now?"

"I'm not trying to start anything. I'm serious. Are you looking forward to spending the weekend with Tate?"

"He's going to win."

"But if he doesn't?"

"Will you and I still get our weekend together?"

He watched her face, she was studying him. Her eyes were narrowed, and he noticed she'd also used black on her lashes. Charlie was fucking unbelievably beautiful. A dimple had formed in her cheek as she smirked, and he loved that she didn't wear foundation because there was nothing more Charlie than the spread of those beautiful freckles. He said, "That's the deal. We still get our weekend together."

"Then why on earth would I be disappointed?"

He let it drop. This was as good as her saying *Yes, I would be disappointed, I was looking forward to getting into our bed and rolling around with that muscular hunk who's been turning me on, I've been dying to feel what that perfect penis of his would feel like sliding up inside my body. Do you think I would come? Because I think I would. I think Tate would make me come really hard. So yeah, I guess I am disappointed.…*

"Are you sure you don't want one?" Charlie lifted the crystal decanter with expensive bourbon.

He shook his head no.

"Are you sure? It really is good."

"Can I have a sip of yours?"

"Sure," she said with happy charm. She squeaked the lid off the decanter and poured an inch worth of whiskey into the bottom of the heavy crystal glass.

He said, "It's so weird to see you drink."

"I know," she said, "my mother would kill me. Absolutely kill me."

"You're grown-up now."

"Aren't I?" she said and seemed pleased with the prospect that maybe she was. She was a married woman now. She'd come to the city wide-eyed and in love with books. She married the first guy that asked for her hand, and while she loved him she was being exposed to the depths and darkness of the city. She wasn't wilting. She hated that she liked it but there was stuff about the city that turned her on… Women like Genesis who lived in the shadows. Tough men like Tate. Streetwise cons like Demetrius. Dark, soulless men like Reza. All of them villains in any movie she'd ever seen but here they were embracing her. And God, could they do things to her body. Things her dip-shit husband could never do. And yet she lived in this perfect purgatory. A happy, married woman who had her dream job working at a library, and by night she was the sexual

servant of a dark bearded master with a cock that belonged on a horse. Her master made her come. He made her do dirty things. Things her mother had told her she should never do. Things her mother had wanted to prevent her from going to the city for. God, Charlie's mother didn't even want her to be with Jonny. Jonny was the sweetest thing in her life. If her mother and father could see her now, they would be devastated.

She scooted closer on the bench seat of the limousine to sit next to him. He put an arm around her back and cupped her opposite side. She brought the whiskey to his mouth and nose and he sniffed.

"It smells awful."

"At first," she said.

She tilted the glass up to his lips watching him and smiling. He didn't want whiskey, but he wasn't going to say no. He loved the look on her face right now; he wanted it more than anything. The whiskey was terrible. Cool and clean on the tongue until it got underneath and then it burned. When he swallowed, he swore it was paint thinner.

His face contorted, and she giggled. "That's what I must've looked like the first time, too."

He knew she meant whiskey, but all he could think of was her first time with Reza. The first time she'd seen the thing between his legs that was probably what her face had done. The thought made him tug at his pants between his legs.

She noticed, said, "How is it doing down there?"

"It's fine," he said.

Charlie set her glass down with a thunk as the limousine stopped at a red light.

She pressed her lips against his neck, her lips soft and damp with alcohol. She suckled on him, and he would do anything to get a hickey from her right now. Her hand crept his knee and slid up the inside of his thigh and he almost shook himself right out of his seat.

"Holy, oh, easy…"

"Is it hurting your cage?"

"It's okay," he sighed. He had to close his eyes and squint them. Charlie's hand settled between his legs, closed her grip around the small silicone bulge. This cage was more restrictive than the last because it was smaller. And while it provided comfort in different ways because it wasn't steel, it also provided *dis*comfort in new and startling ways. Arousal was almost impossible. Whatever way this one held him, when he got hard it didn't push the whole apparatus away from his body; this thing had a grip on him, the silicon rubber had *bite*. Instead, when he got hard now, his penis pushed *into* his body. It was *so* uncomfortable his erections dwindled. He could get aroused, could

feel the surge and the swell, but it wouldn't last. The discomfort extinguished his arousal.

Charlie squeezed and played with it, using her thumb and forefinger. He wondered how many drinks she'd had.

He said, "You haven't been playing with it."

"I thought you didn't want me to."

"It helps me to be focused."

"I want you to be. But I want to be your wife, and I want to do *wife* things with you…"

"You're the best thing in my life," he said with complete honesty. His hand swept down to hold her narrow waist, and he kissed the top of her head.

The limousine turned left when the light flashed green, and here they were pulling past the front of the City Center arena. There were hundreds of people gathered around the doors underneath the awning light. Written in black sliding letters in the grooves of the marquee awning were the names of tonight's fighters. There was one that stood out.

TATE ARMSTRONG

Yes, the heavyweight. The man Jonny feared could deliver a knockout punch to his marriage.

COMING in the private entrance in the City Center's gated access sub-basement, they ran into the naked black man from the gym's private shower room, the one with the tan size 14s.

"Hey, baby girl," he said in his deep voice and Charlie went right to him.

"Hi, Marco," she said and hugged his waist. Marco stooped to kiss her cheek.

Tonight Marco wore a glen plaid suit, high-waisted, showing off his long legs and his bulge. His tie was shimmering purple, and he had a blue flower on his lapel. Size 14s on his feet again, these ones gleaming patent black. His hands on Charlie's upper arm were enormous, and against her bright white skin they looked jet black.

Marco said, "I know why you here." He smiled wide and knowing then winked.

"You do?" Charlie said with a look of timid worry.

"You here to see our man Tate knock out some Ukrainian homeboy, send his body back to Kiev wrapped in the American flag."

"Oh yeah. I am." She gave a small smirk.

Charlie was worried that her friend Marco might know of the arrangements. Marco didn't let on that he did, but Jonny was fully aware that Marco knew Tate would win

more than a fight tonight. Marco knew that if Tate beat the Ukrainian, he would be lucky enough to get his turn between Charlie's legs.

Marco said, "Hey. Where you at? You up with us?"

"In the VIP? We are," she said and motioned to Jonny. "Have you met my husband?"

Marco smiled, raised his eyebrows and nodded to Jonny. "Oh hey man, I know you—how's it hanging?"

"I'm fine. How've you been?" *Don't mention my cage.*

"I'm good," he said with a wide white smile, big black hand rubbing up and down his shiny tie, "I'm good, man. Real good."

Charlie said, "Jonny doesn't follow the fights."

Jonny said, "Not really my thing."

"More of a thinker," Marco said with a smirk.

"More of a thinker," Jonny agreed in deadpan.

"Well hey, here's the boss man coming now." Marco pointed with one of those long fingers over Charlie's shoulder and they both turned to see Reza coming down the hall.

He wore a black suit, and tonight sported a white shirt and tie. Walking with him was Genesis, and they held hands. Genesis wore something black and slinky showing off her curvy muscle and her tattoos. She strutted in tall clicking heels, their sound bright and loud over top of the murmur in the hallways.

Reza's limousine had parked in the underground next to Jonny and Charlie's, just beyond the metal doors where Reza had walked through. There was security at the entrance, four black guys in neon yellow sweatshirts, and inside the checkpoint were more men in suits and guys in khaki pants and blazers; paunchy fellows with thinning hair holding glasses of scotch. This was definitely the VIP section, that was for sure.

Everyone had a lanyard with their name on it. Somehow they let Charlie off, clipping it on her purse instead. And Jonny saw they did the same favor for Genesis. All the security guards were big men, and it was possible none of them wanted any of the hot ladies here to have their outfits marred by dumb identification they probably didn't care about, anyway.

Reza waved to them, but didn't smile. Then he flipped his hand over and wagged his fingers in a come hither gesture meant for Marco.

Marco said, "I'll catch you two later," adjusted his suit jacket and walked around them to join Reza.

"Bye, Marco," Charlie said.

Jonny asked, "How do you know him?"

"Marco? He's around sometimes. You know him?"

"Yeah. He was in the shower the other day at the club when I met with Reza."

"Oh yeah?" she said in the husky conspiratorial way a woman might say to her woman friend indicating: *Lucky you!—you got to see him naked?… Tell me what he looked like…*

Before he could chastise her, she was already talking about something else, as though wondering what big Marco might look like naked was a small blip in her day—meanwhile it was all Jonny would be thinking about for the next few hours.

While Marco and Reza got close to talk, Genesis spotted Charlie and trotted over to them in a short-stride quick-step that made her calf muscles bulge and flex. Charlie moved toward her, too, and they collided in a hug. Genesis kicked one heel up, and Charlie did the same. The hug went on longer than Jonny expected, and the girls began to rock each other. Genesis's eyes closed, and she shone a beatific smile, her cheek nestled in Charlie's ginger hair.

Jonny joined them, standing behind Charlie with his hands in the sweatshirt's pouch.

Genesis spotted him. "There he is—hey, Jonny."

"How're you?" he said in a somber tone.

"Oh," she moaned and pouted, sensing his mood and letting Charlie go, "somebody's grouchy."

"I'm not," he said as Genesis put her arms around him for a hug and he gave her one arm in return, patting the small of her back.

"It's a little small, isn't it, boo-boo?" she said, eyes lowered between his legs.

"It's fine."

Charlie said, "It's really small," and crinkled her nose.

Genesis said, "I heard you two were naughty."

"No-oo," Charlie said, face pinching in a pout.

"S'okay," Genesis purred and touched Charlie's cheek, "my angel has needs…"

Charlie smiled and cocked her hip, nudged Jonny with her shoulder like Genesis was talking crazy.

Genesis sucked her teeth and made her own pouting face at Charlie. "Angel, you got needs, you know who to call."

"It's my Jonny has needs."

"It's this little bad boy's needs," Genesis said, eyeing him slyly, "got you in this mess in the first place."

"No…" Charlie said.

"Don't worry, sexy," Genesis said, and touched Charlie's cheek again, "ain't it a beautiful mess?"

# 7

REZA WAS DONE with Marco and they broke apart. While Marco was all smiles, Reza was all business, staring Jonny down now, indicating with a head nod he wanted to talk to him next.

Charlie said, "Oh, here comes Reza," and fixed her posture to stand straighter and adjusted her skirt.

"There's my beautiful Charlie," he said and took both her hands and pulled her to him, kissing her mouth. When they stepped apart again, Charlie pressed her lips between her teeth and adjusted her skirt.

He said to her: "You miss me?"

"You haven't been home in five days," she said.

"That little pussy must be *dying* for it," he said.

Genesis laughed and Charlie frowned, touched her stomach below her navel. "Don't be so vulgar," she whispered.

"I want that thing hungry. I want it starving."

Charlie hooked her arm through Jonny's and he felt protective now. "Watch what you say."

"Tate's going to feed it, Charlie," Reza said, "so don't you worry."

Jonny said, "He has to win the fight."

"Trust me, Jonny, Tate's going to *feed* it. Going to make all Charlie's hunger *slide* away."

Though his words were crude, he had Charlie's attention, and she watched him with disgust.

Marco was on the move, weaving between clutches of out-of-shape white executives and motioning to Genesis, putting one long finger up to tap at the side of his nose as he paused at the men's room door.

"Hey, come on," Genesis said and took Charlie's hand, pulling her to walk.

Charlie saw Marco still motioning to his nose, hand on the bathroom door. The two women went into that quick high-heeled walk, Charlie looking left and right with nervousness.

Jonny said, "Where you going?"

"I'll be right back," she called. Men watched lecherously as two hot women trotted past in heels, dressed like they wanted to get *fucked*.

"So listen, Jonny," Reza said, "I'm glad to hear you're abstaining."

"Who told you that?"

Genesis and Charlie joined Marco at the men's room door and he held it open for them. They went in ahead. Marco looked up and down the busy hall then slipped inside and let the door close behind him.

"Is it true?" Reza asked.

"I've been abstaining," Jonny admitted. Reza had to have cameras in the apartment—unless Charlie had been telling Reza… Or could she have told Genesis, who then told Reza?…

"And isn't it better?"

Two white guys came out of the men's, lanyards swinging, drying their hands on paper towel and looking back over their shoulder. When the door swung closed again, they looked at each other and guffawed.

"I'm getting a lot of work done."

"Jonny—that wife of yours would drive any man to distraction. You're only human."

"I know…"

"But I'll tell you—she's having the *opposite* effect on Tate. Distraction?… He's got *wolf* eyes. He wants your Charlie so bad," Reza clasped his shoulder, "I'm afraid for this Ukrainian dude. Tate's going to fuck him up. Like letting a gorilla loose in the ring, you know?"

"Uh-huh," Jonny said, at once picturing Tate doing push-ups in the dark, growling like an animal while his eyes burned hot as coals, and simultaneously he could see Marco, Genesis, and his wife closed in a toilet stall, the big man with his fly down, Genesis cradling his long, black, flaccid cock while Charlie snorted a line off it.

"You okay, Jonny?"

"Yeah," he said, pinching his brow and flexing his thighs to ease the growing discomfort between his legs. Sex with other men was one thing, but he had a worry his wife might be turning *bad*.

"You're one week closer, Jonny. Hang in there. I hope Tate leaves you a little. I heard he fucks like a champ…"

Jonny ignored the taunts and Reza asked him how the game was coming. He kept his responses positive but reined in some of the enthusiasm, kept some of the success hidden. For a guy that was good at designing games, he was terrible at playing them. At least in real life. He gave everything Reza asked and had been so forthcoming that Reza knew exactly what it was that he *could* ask…

THE GIRLS STUMBLED from the men's room laughing, Marco coming out behind them with a smile.

Reza said, "There's my girls, get over here, Jonny is boring my balls off."

Genesis cackled, plucked at her nose and came to hold Reza's hand while he kissed her neck. Charlie tottered in her heels to come to Jonny's side and lean against him.

Marco joined the group, extending an arm on either side to encircle both women. He said, "Ay, you show the man yet?"

Charlie gave a shocked expression and looked to Genesis who mouthed: "*Oh no*."

"No," Charlie laughed and covered her mouth. Her cheeks had blushed.

Together, Reza and Jonny both said, "Show me what?"

Charlie looked to Jonny sheepishly, hand still over her mouth.

Marco said, "Show them, baby girl," and curled his big fingers under the dress's hem at the back of Charlie's thighs. She yelped and swatted at his hands, stepping away.

"What is it?" Jonny said, a cold fear creeping up his back.

"Nothing," Charlie said.

"Show me," Reza laughed.

"No," Charlie said, holding the hem of her short dress down with both hands.

Genesis smoothed her body up against Charlie and said, "Go on and show them, you sexy bitch."

Charlie laughed and shielded her eyes with a hand. "Fine," she sighed.

Now Genesis took the hem of Charlie's skirt and this time she didn't protest. She said to Marco, "Cover us." Then looking to Jonny, she mouthed, "*Sorry*," and bit her lip.

As Genesis lifted the skirt up, Marco got close to block anyone else seeing, and Charlie turned and stuck her rump up, standing on her tiptoes, the points of her high heels coming up off the polished concrete floor.

Jonny watched as the stretchy blue fabric scrolled up his wife's pale flesh. Slowly the cheeks of her ass were revealed. And her crack. Charlie wore no underwear and allowed herself to be revealed in public.

Reza watched and chuckled, holding his chin. "What did you do, Charlie?"

"You'll see-ee," Genesis sang.

The dress came higher, Charlie's bare ass completely revealed. Jonny could see the duskier flesh of her vulva, and the curl of a folded labium. "Ho fuck," he sighed, and pinched at the front of his jeans. "Oh, Charlie…"

Then he saw what she was reluctant to show.

At the top of her ass cheek, just where it curved to meet the small of her back was a black tattoo—a star, small enough to be covered by a dime, yet its existence was enormous.

"Holy fuck, Charlie," Jonny said, "you got a tattoo?"

She gave him a surly pout, then looked to Reza hopefully.

"Shit," Reza said, "I fucking *love* it."

"Ain't it hot?" Marco asked, still covering but taking a peek for himself.

Jonny was still flabbergasted. "Charlie, you got a tattoo…"

"It's just a tiny one, Jonny…"

"It's tiny, but it'll be there forever," he said as he laid a hand across his forehead.

Reza grabbed her waist as she began to pull the skirt back down, brow lowered with concern because the love of her tattoo wasn't universal. Reza pretend-humped her behind and said, "God, I just want to fuck you so bad right now…"

"Don't" Charlie said and slapped his hands away from her waist.

Jonny said, "Charlie, I can't believe you did that…"

She said, "It's just a little star…"

Reza said, "One star for every guy you fuck's not Jonny…"—he nudged Jonny with an elbow—"…pretty soon your wife's gonna have a fucking constellation on her back."

"Charlie, when did you get this?" he asked, and got close to her, smoothing the skirt down and trying not to think how she wore no underwear beneath the skimpy dress.

"The night, you know… When I stayed out," she said, looking at him with submissive eyes and pursed mouth.

Jonny looked to Genesis. "Did you do it?"

Genesis shrugged. "She come by. I let her in. We hung out."

"And you talked her into a tattoo?"

Reza laughed. "Oh no, Charlie's been naughty. She's in trouble."

"I asked for the tattoo, Jonny."

"Was up to me," Genesis said, "Charlie would have my angel wings." She drew sweeps on Charlie's back and she shivered.

"Jonny," Charlie said, "it's just a little star. And I *wanted* it."

"Why?"

"Well, why not?"

"You don't ask me?"

"She don't need to ask you," Reza said.

"Unh-unh," Marco agreed. "No, she don't."

Jonny changed tack. Hands outstretched in exasperation, he said, "You don't *tell* me?"

"I knew you'd be like this," she said.

"Like what?"

Genesis hugged Charlie from behind, watching Jonny over his wife's shoulder. "A party pooper."

An overhead crackle from the hidden sound system preceded the announcement that the exhibition matches were beginning.

Reza put a hand on Jonny's chest, saying, "All right, Jonny, cool it. Don't wreck the night. Everybody—let's head up to the box."

Genesis took Reza's arm, and they walked off smiling. Marco tugged at his the jacket's lapels, eyeing Jonny and shaking his head in comical admonishment before walking around Charlie and following behind Reza.

Charlie said, "Please, Jonny, can we go up now?"

"And not talk about this?"

"Why? I already told you—"

"Don't shut me out, Charlie."

"I'm just…"

"You don't tell me before… You don't tell me after…"

"You can get one too, if you want."

"I don't want a tattoo, Charlie. But if I did, I'd *tell* you."

"Sorry," she said, meeting his gaze, cute mouth quirked to one side.

"It's fine," he sighed, "it's just a little star."

"I'm sorry I didn't tell you. I was just putting it off."

"Hey—you showed Marco in there?" He pointed toward the men's room.

"Genesis did that," Charlie said and put her arm under his, held his hand.

"But he would have seen your bare ass."

"He wasn't looking there, he was looking at the tattoo."

"Sure he was. What were you doing in there, anyway?"

"Nothing," she grumbled.

"Were you snorting coke?"

She sighed. "We were just talking."

# 8

REZA'S BOX at the City Center was on the first floor after the concourse, above the last row of the stadium seating. It was luxury, of course, with an attendant at the door. A full-service bar ran along the back, and three big screens covered all the walls that weren't the window view. A leather couch faced the glass that looked down over the seating and the ring, and there were flowers on the tables in the corners and behind the couch. Two waitresses in black skirts and white shirts served the guests.

Arm in arm with Charlie, they came in behind Reza and Genesis; Reza already greeting men in business suits, Genesis moving past to get to the bar.

Charlie said, "Hey, there's Demetrius."

For some reason, Jonny was glad to see the guy.

Demetrius was leaning back in the leather couch with his sneakers up on a low, steel table. He sipped from a cocktail glass with juice in it. When he saw Charlie he smiled wide and stood up. He came to join them, saying, "Hey, there's my favorite people. Shit, Charlie, I ain't seen you in a minute. How you been?"

They hugged and kissed cheeks, Demetrius still holding his cocktail.

Charlie said, "I'm good, really good."

"I hear. I saw my man Jonny the other day, said you was doing good. He tell you that?"

"No," Charlie said.

Demetrius sucked his teeth and shook his head at Jonny. "Some friend you are, my man."

"Slipped my mind," Jonny said.

Charlie said, "Hey, you two look the same." She wagged a finger, pointing at each of them. "Black on black," she said.

Demetrius said, "Black on black, baby."

Demetrius wore the same outfit as Jonny, and it bolstered him. Black sweatshirt over black skinny jeans though Demetrius's sneakers were much nicer than his.

"Yeah, we the same," Demetrius said. "My shit come from Jugrnaut, Jonny's come from Target." He laughed at his own joke.

Jonny said, "Who can tell the difference?"

Demetrius said, "I can. Other people, too. Don't slouch." He threw a light, fake jab at Jonny and Jonny didn't flinch.

Demetrius said, "My man. Whyn't you two come sit with me, I got the best seat in the house…"

Charlie said, "You're not fighting tonight?"

"I'm up next month," he said. "Title fight."

"Is it going to be a big show like this one?" Charlie said, clicking along in her heels.

He put his arm through hers as if to walk her and Jonny fell behind them. Demetrius said, "It'll be a bigger show than this one. No offense to my man Tate, he holding up, and he packs seats, but I'm in a different organization."

"Are you going to be professional?"

"I win my fight I will. But Tate's almost pro, too. He'll be a star in a year…"

Demetrius let Charlie sit, holding her hand. She eased back in the couch and crossed her long legs. Demetrius took the spot right next to her and Jonny sat down on the other side.

Behind them Reza boasted and laughed, and he shook hands with guys in suits that he must've invited to impress. Drinks were served, there were hors d'oeuvres. Demetrius ordered them a plate of nachos and they shared.

When the exhibition matches were over, the first fight began. Now Demetrius leaned forward, and he kept Charlie informed of what was happening. He told her who each fighter was, what their strengths were what their weaknesses were and what to look for. And as the fight progressed, he would say what the strategy would be, and he was almost always right. Charlie was impressed, watching along and nodding, even leaning forward as well and resting her elbows on her knees.

"Isn't this exciting, Jonny?" she asked him. Her eyes were wide and happy.

He scooted forward on the couch as well and held her hand. "I guess it is," he said.

He didn't know what to expect tonight but so far this wasn't too bad. Comfy seating, free drinks, free food. And while he wasn't into the fights, he did find it entertaining. He didn't know who anybody was, what the point of any of this was, but at least those guys were out there putting on a show. He felt simpatico with that. That's all he was doing. Putting on a show for everybody. Being the entertainer, designing games for them to go through, and ultimately he was the player in another man's arcade.

After the third fight of the evening, Reza loomed behind them, standing at the back of the couch next to the table. He put his hand on Charlie's back, his head over her shoulder. He said, "There's better seats, you know…"

"Better seats?" Charlie asked.

He said, "There's an usher here, gonna take you down. I want you two sitting ringside."

Charlie said, "Ringside? You mean all the way down there… All the way down by the fighters?"

Reza said, "Tate's fight is coming up. When he walks in that ring, I want him seeing your face. I want him to know what he's fighting for. I want him to be reminded."

Charlie's happiness waned, and she looked frightful for a second.

Reza said, "So go down there and smile for him. He sees that pretty face, and he's gonna turn into a tiger."

THE USHER ESCORTED them down the aisle, Jonny and Charlie arms hooked together. From rowdy roughnecks seated at the rear, they emerged in the relative calm of the well-heeled ringside seating.

"Right here, Mr. Keen," the usher said, stopping at the edge of the ring and gesturing to the front row.

"Thank you," Charlie said, giving Jonny a shoulder-shrugging squee and dipping at the knees. Before walking ahead of him she whispered in his ear, "Ooh, he called you *Mister* Keen."

Faces watched them coming, glancing from Charlie to him. Young guy in sweatshirt and jeans walking a supermodel in a tight dress and high heels to their assuredly expensive seating. He smiled and nodded to a few, but generally kept his expression cool. The others must wonder what this guy did for a living—*how does this guy make money? You see that girl he's with?* For the first time since this began, the sun seemed to peek out from behind its cloud and shine on him. *This! This was what he fucking wanted!* It was just a glimmer, a mirage—this was still all conjured by Reza, but this was what he wanted. For Charlie. And, shit, for him too.

Now he was smiling and there was nothing he could do to stop it. His beautiful and sexy wife walked a step ahead, getting the majority of stares—drooling men, baleful looks from other hot women…

Charlie half-turned and held her clutch up to cover her mouth. "That's the governor, Jonny—the governor's here."

He laughed because the place was so loud no one could hear her—maybe she'd read the governor was a lip reader. "Which one?" he shouted near her ear.

She jittered her head, flicked her eyes toward a handsome guy in his sixties, black hair combed back, silver at his temples. The governor nodded to him, half-smirking, then eyes drifting back to get a load of the beautiful redhead he was with. *Tell me about it.*

Before they sat, Jonny stopped Charlie.

"What is it?"

He kissed her, and she giggled into his mouth. When they sat, he held her hand.

"Isn't this exciting?" she asked, looking around and up.

"It is, Charlie," he agreed, squeezing her hand.

The ring was empty. The girl with the booty shorts who strutted between rounds with a numbered placard hung around on the opposite side with two commentators in suits and headphones around their necks. A young Latino guy scurried off the ring backwards under the bottom rope with his bucket and sponge. Done cleaning blood off

the mat. Spectators talked and laughed, the guys next to him in the slick business casual yammered about mutual funds. Overhead, two American flags as big as driveways hung from the steel rafters; the center-hung scoreboard box over the ring displayed highlights from the night's earlier fights.

He took a deep breath and imagined a future where it was him providing a night out like this for Charlie. *It was close, he knew it was…*

The lights dimmed, and the crowd went quiet.

A chunky, threatening guitar lick boomed from the sound system—a repetitive one note rift in A. The fighter's entrance ramp lit up in purple, dry-ice smoke rolling over the gangway. A pounding drum started, and the lights pulsed with their whomp. Metallica. The lyrics began…

*All right…*

A darker purple silhouette emerged in the entrance archway. A big man in a satin robe, hands thick with grappling gloves.

*We're scanning the scene…*

Tate strode the walkway, shoulders hunched, head lowered, hood of his robe up covering his head. Cannons fired along the sides of the metal planking as he passed, flashes of blinding phosphorous; confetti whirled in the air. Jonny watched Charlie. Face lit up by the light show, she smiled open-mouthed and wondrous, eyes wide and sparkling.

*Searching… Seek and destroy!…*

Charlie applauded with the crowd and gave a timid whoop. Without realizing it, Jonny's hands had taken up clapping, and he whisked them down to rest in his lap and scowled.

Tate strode to the ring with his entourage hanging back—Jonny saw the hype men from the club in his pack—and he darted under the ropes; agile for such a big guy.

Lights flashed and popped and wisps of the purple smoke wafted over the canvas and around Tate's feet as he walked circles around the ring with one fist raised to the cheers of the crowd. Charlie cupped both hands on either side of her mouth and hollered.

Jonny nudged her side, and she flinched.

"What did you do that for?" she asked, frowning. That was her tattoo side, and he wondered if it was still sore—it had only been a few days ago.

He got close and shouted, "What are you doing?"

"I'm cheering," she said, still frowning.

He waved her off, and she went back to watching.

Up in the ring, Tate still circled, then came to a stop in his corner, his back to them. One of the hype men passed a stool through the ropes though Tate didn't sit. The other

hype man stood on the lowest rope, reached over and helped Tate's robe off. Tate stood and ignored the crowd's cheers, off in his own world. He kicked each leg out in succession, looking down, shaking his hands, flexing his arms.

A new song groaned from the speakers now, something inverse and funereal compared to Tate's energetic metal number. Cellos, big brass, a drum; it sounded like a national anthem. Tate's opponent appeared in the archway, lit up in white and blue. He was a monster. Bigger than Tate but lacking the definition and symmetry. This guy was a monolithic block with a five dollar haircut and a low brow that suggested lineage going back to the Gravettians. Instead of a robe he had a swatch of satiny fabric over his shoulders like a cape—when he stepped in the ring, Jonny saw it was the Ukrainian flag.

Charlie raised out of her seat and she wagged both hands, her thumbs turned down. She booed with the rest of the crowd.

Jonny tugged at the waist of her dress and she sat back down. He shouted, "You're rooting for him?"

Charlie said, "You want him to lose?"

Jonny nodded. "Yeah, I do."

Charlie's expression softened, and she said, "I don't want to see him get hurt."

The Ukrainian took his spot in the corner opposite Tate and ignored the crowd's boos. Tate turned his back to the center and grabbed the ropes, head bowed, as the announcer stepped into the ring holding a sheaf of paper and wearing a tuxedo.

As he read from the paper, hailing Tate from Illinois, weighing in at two-forty-five and wearing the black and white trunks, the man who might win Jonny's wife tonight raised his eyes and saw Charlie. She made sure her hunky handsome-penis saw her cheering, raising her hands to clap over her head. Jonny saw past her ginger mane that the governor was watching her with a raised eyebrow.

Tate chuckled, gave her a casual two-finger salute and a smile. In Jonny's periphery he could see spectators on the other sides of the ring trying to get a look at who Tate waved to. Someone took a picture with a flash. He looked to see Charlie making eye contact with Tate. She showed no expression, but the corner of her mouth tugged upward slightly.

The Ukrainian was announced at two-fifty, Ivas Ivankiv from Kiev, in the blue and yellow shorts—the crowd thundered boos, the announcer ducked between ropes and the bell rang.

The two fighters skipped out to the center and touched gloves. For nearly a minute the two big men felt each other out. Circling, charging but backing off, throwing feints, kicking legs out to create distance. The crowd began a rumble of dissatisfaction. Jonny caught Tate throwing glances their way, trying to get a look at Charlie.

The action opened just as the crowd began its boos. They shut up.

Tate charged the Ukrainian, throwing a jab, getting the guy's hands up, then jacking a hard knee up that made the guy's beefy body shake. He tumbled back and Tate swung a left cross that tapped his opponent's cheek. Tate tried to take him down but Ivas got his hands up and the two grappled while standing for half a minute. Tate kneed his thighs and Ivas stomped on Tate's feet and whacked clumsy hooks into Tate's midsection. Charlie grimaced.

With thirty seconds in the round, Tate managed to hook a leg around the Ukrainian's knee and lean into him enough they both toppled to the mat. The two of them scrambled for position and Tate got a hold of Ivas's arm and reefed it between his legs but the Ukrainian wouldn't submit. The bell rang to end the round.

Jonny's hands had sweated themselves slick. His upper lip too. He smiled at Charlie. Her cheeks were flush, and she breathed with her mouth open.

Tate sat on the stool in his corner, hunched over. Hype Man One rubbed his neck and back, and another guy rolled a piece of stainless steel over his forehead.

"Come on, Tate," Charlie hollered, and gave three loud slaps overhead.

"What are you doing?" Jonny hissed, getting mad again and showing it in his expression.

Charlie frowned mean back at him. "I can't believe you want him to get hurt, Jonny. That's not nice."

"You want him to win?"

"I don't want to see him get hurt," she said with precise pronunciation.

The bell rang for the next round and the two men strode out to touch gloves. Charlie turned away to watch, and Jonny stroked a hand up her back.

It was the same thing again: the two fighters feeling each other out, darting and feinting, circling. But twenty seconds into the second round Tate charged and Ivas was ready. The Ukrainian faltered, stumbling back, but it was a trap. At the ropes, he put one leg out behind him and swung a lightning strike cross that snapped Tate's head around.

Tate collapsed straight down like someone turned his brain off. He heaped on the canvas like a load of laundry and the ref began his count.

The crowd gasped and shrieked.

Jonny smiled.

# 9

IT WAS a quiet ride back to the apartment in the limo, Jonny with his arms folded and his scowl hidden under his pulled up hood. He sat facing the direction of travel, opposing Charlie who sat with her back to the driver. Tate was next to her, slouched on the leather bench, tilted toward Charlie. A thick white bandage crossed his nose though the doctor said he didn't break it.

Jonny had a can of Coke on his thigh, held in his grip. He took it to his mouth and drew on the straw—the cold and the sweet helped his headache.

Charlie watched him, soft eyes darting up and down his body, then following his hand as he took his drink. She whispered, "I thought we weren't using straws anymore?"

He shrugged, drained the can with loud straw suction and tossed the empty can—straw and all—into the garbage.

Tate looked at his hands again. Jonny was pretty sure the guy wasn't all there. He held them out to look at the palms, then flipped them around to look at the back. His hands had been wrapped across the knuckles with thick tensor bandage. After the fight, recuperating in the locker room with an IV in his arm, Tate's hands had looked broken and swollen. Charlie had moaned and hugged herself to Jonny when she saw them.

The limo pulled up to the front door of their apartment. It was almost two in the morning now and the lobby was dark and empty.

"This is it," Jonny sighed.

"This is it, Tate," Charlie said, and she rubbed his shoulder.

Tate looked at them groggily and nodded.

Jonny opened the door and stepped out first, turning to hold Charlie's hand. They stepped out onto the driveway and Charlie shivered, folded her arms around her slinky dress.

"Should have brought a coat," Jonny said.

She said, "Are you going to help me?"

He shook his head no and Charlie didn't like it, gave him a tight, firm mouth.

She leaned back into the car and said, "We're here, Tate. Can you get up?"

Tate grunted.

"Come on now," she said, and Jonny watched her back muscles flex under the tight dress as she must have been pulling on Tate's arm. He sighed and grumbled, put his hand on her lower back. "Move, Charlie, let me do it."

"I'm fine, Jonny," she said, head still in the limo.

"Let me get it," he said.

The limo driver was out now, and Jonny saw him coming, black cap on, walking from front to back on the other side of the limo. He told the limo driver: "We got it. We got it."

"You sure?"

Jonny waved him off.

"Charlie, please," Jonny said, and now he was caressing the small of her pretty back.

Charlie stood up, mouth twisted, rubbed her forehead. "He's so big and heavy."

From inside the limo: "I'm okay. I don't need help."

Charlie scooted down, hands on her knees. "Can you get out okay?"

Now Jonny saw Tate's face in the limo's door opening, smiling at Charlie, eyes a little foggy and swollen. Both bandaged hands curled the door frame, and he pulled himself out with ease. They both stepped back to give him space.

"Feeling better by the minute," Tate said, standing tall before them now, adjusting his sweatshirt.

"Can you walk okay?" Charlie asked.

Tate chuckled. "Charlie, I'm absolutely fine. Don't you worry about me."

To be on the safe side, Charlie sidled up next to him and hooked her arm around his, practically hugging the guy's thick muscular arm. Tate didn't mind that though she did it to help; he smiled.

They walked under the awning of their apartment's covered entrance and Jonny used his keycard to get both the doors for them; his thin, leggy wife strutting on the arm of this huge, muscular man.

At the elevators they waited, eyes up and watching the lit numbers above the bank.

Charlie laughed to herself and shook her head. "It was just so amazing. I can't believe it."

Jonny harrumphed, said, "I know, Charlie. You keep saying it."

"Well wasn't it? I mean the way he popped back up, shook his head, you know—shook it off, then he came right back at him…? That big guy went back on his heels and he didn't know what was happening. He looked scared like they'd just let a grizzly bear in the ring."

Tate said, "They did."

Charlie sighed, "Yeah, I guess they did…"

"I thought I was gonna lose for a second there and there was no way that was going to happen."

"You sure came back on fire."

"No way I was missing out on you."

Tate kissed the top of her head and she hugged his arm tighter.

IN THE APARTMENT, Charlie trotted down the three steps from the kitchen to the living room and held out her hands to receive Tate.

"I can make it down three steps, Charlie," Tate laughed, but gripped the handrail.

Hands in his pockets and yawning, Jonny said, "She's worried about our insurance. Slip and fall and all that."

"I'm worried about *Tate*, Jonny," she said, wagging her fingers to the big man for him to step down.

"I been hit harder than that, Charlie. You don't have to worry. In fact, I demand you don't…"

He walked down to the living room without taking her hand. "I worry about you with those heels. You're practically as tall as me."

"Not quite," she laughed, turned and flexed her legs. "Do you like them?"

"One look at you in that dress and I knew that Uke couldn't do anything to stop me."

Charlie made a pained face. In a quiet voice, she said, "You think he's going to be okay?"

"What did you hear?" Tate said.

"They took him to the hospital," Jonny said.

Tate nodded and frowned. "He'll be fine. He's tough."

They were all silent a moment, then Charlie said, "You want to come sit on the couch? We can watch a movie…"

Jonny said, "It's two in the morning, Charlie."

"I'm not even tired," she said under her breath.

Tate said, "Jonny's right. It's late, Charlie."

"And he got his bell rung, Charlie," Jonny said. Then to Tate: "Doctor said we're supposed to keep an eye on you."

"I'm fine," Tate said, "how many times I gotta say it?"

"I'd feel real bad if you went to sleep and never woke up again," Jonny said and laid a hand over his own heart.

Tate leveled his eyes at him and, drowsy as they were, Jonny backed off.

"Can I get you anything?" Charlie asked, "You want a drink? Some whiskey?…"

"Not with all these painkillers. Good night sleep is all, Charlie."

Now he held her elbows and Charlie sucked her lower lip under her teeth.

She said, "You want to go to bed?"

Tate nodded and gave a grunt.

Jonny flinched, hearing her timid voice, soft and hopeful, the look in her eyes as she watched up at big Tate. Now his penis was swelling against its tight sleeve and he got that squirmy, claustrophobic feeling again that made his skin crawl. He pressed his thighs together and squeezed his butt muscles.

"Yeah, we can do that," Charlie whispered, and it got Jonny's cage even tighter.

Tate said, "A good night sleep, Charlie. It's late. We'll sleep in, then tomorrow we got all day. Just the two of us."

"Reza said Jonny has to be here," Charlie said.

"Just the three of us," Tate said, hands coming from her elbows to caress the bare, creamy skin of her exposed shoulders. He looked only at Charlie and she nodded.

"Okay, let's go to bed," Charlie said, took Tate's huge hand in both of hers and walked backward in her heels, eyes on Tate's. At the bed, she paused, looked at her closet where she kept her PJs.

Tate said, "I might need help."

"Help?"

"Getting my shirt off," he said, voice thick with reluctance, not wanting to ask for help.

"I can do that," she said, "oh no, are you sore?"

"I don't know about getting my arms over my head."

"Don't worry," she laughed and ran her hands over his chest, "I'll help you."

# 10

JONNY FIDGETED WITH HIS CAGE, watching them, then went to the couch and kicked his sneakers off. He nudged pillows up to the armrest where he would lay his head, unfolded the blanket draped over the back.

When he looked to the bed, Tate was hunched over, Charlie pulling his sweatshirt over his head. Tate groaned from behind the cotton. Charlie still wore her tight dress and high heels, long legs scissoring while she stepped backward to pull Tate's shirt and sweater off. The guy groaned again as he stood upright. The doctor had taped his ribs after the fight, and Tate ran his hands over the bandages.

"You sore?" Charlie asked and tossed his tops away.

"No," he said, "not at all. Let's get this shit off." He scratched at the bandages.

"Are you sure?"

"I'm sure," he said.

Charlie said, "Jonny, can you get me the scissors?"

"Uh-huh," he said and headed up to the kitchen, dragging his feet. He brought the scissors to Charlie, and she was pulling a loose end of a bandage with her fingernails. He went and stood by the couch again. Tate was shirtless before her, his broad chest bare, his thick, muscular arms on display.

Charlie took one blade of the scissors and slid it under his bandages. "Is it too cold?"

"You're doing great, Charlie."

Now she cut a straight trail through the swath of bandages that went around Tate's middle like a cummerbund. The sound of adhesive tape being scissored was loud in the quiet apartment and for some reason Jonny thought it was sensual; Charlie was revealing her lover's body.

Once the band around his middle was cut, she began tugging it away and Tate helped her, also pulling off the stripe across his nose. She said, "Are you sure we should be doing this?"

Tate said, "I've been hit way harder. No way my ribs are broke. I've had em broken before so I know what I'm talking about."

They removed all the tape and let it fall around their feet. Tate stood in only his sweatpants now and watched Charlie. Her hands picked at stray bits of bandage that still clung to his stomach muscles then caressed his chest; palms laying flat and stroking, fingertips grazing along his raised ridges, exploring how hard his muscular body felt.

Charlie said, "Can I get your pants off?"

Tate nodded.

Charlie's hands came together at Tate's waist, and even from this distance Jonny could see they were shaking. Tate wore draping cotton sweatpants cinched with a tied

string. Charlie's hands worked the knot apart, slipped one finger behind the wound strings and pulled toward herself until they came apart and dangled, untied.

Jonny's heart raced. Tate didn't seem like the kind to wear underwear. Charlie would pull his pants down and he would be naked.

Charlie ran index fingers under the waistband from his hipbones to the untied front then back out halfway between, just at the point where his stomach muscles met his hips. She pushed downward, her eyes lowered to see what would be revealed. Jonny's penis struggled inside the cage and he grimaced. The thing was tight, the rubber sticky; his penis twisted and squirmed but the rubber had a good grip on his gummy skin.

Charlie pulled the front of the sweatpants down, Tate with his chin to his chest watching as well…

Only Tate wore underwear. Some sexy briefs in royal blue like Charlie's dress. Charlie sped up now, and Jonny wondered if she had been drawing out the moment his penis would be revealed—now she saw the guy wore underwear, she just wanted his pants off.

She pulled them downward, to mid-thigh, stepped a little closer, head turned down, hands pushing along the sides of his thighs until the sweatpants felt around his ankles.

Tate said, "Hold on a second," his voice a low and quiet grumble.

Charlie looked up at him and he rested big, bandaged hands over the curl of her bare shoulders. Charlie's calf muscles flexed as she braced her toes inside her high heels—Tate was leaning on her. The big man stepped on one sweatpants leg and pulled his foot out. Stepped on the other side and pulled that foot free as well. He smoothed his hands down Charlie's arms, over the sleeves of her dress and grazed across her bare hands. Charlie still looked up at him. Here he was, this huge, muscular fighter, standing there in just sexy bikini briefs, Jonny's wife dressed in her clinging royal blue dress, long, bare legs tapered to points in her stiletto heels.

Now Charlie's hands came up to his muscular stomach again, and she ran her nails in circles over his ribs. It got Tate's stomach jumping and twitching, and Charlie never took her eyes off his. Her hands came down and rested at the top of the waistband to his briefs. She chewed on her lower lip, curled the first two fingers of both hands inside the waistband and pulled his briefs outward. She said, "Do you like to sleep naked?"

TATE DIDN'T ANSWER, just stared back at her. Charlie stepped away to make some distance and looked down. She was looking inside his underwear. The bulge was large, his big genitals sagging out the front of the cotton pouch. He was big even when he wasn't aroused. Charlie stared, looked what was between his legs, and Jonny wondered

what she saw in there. How did it arouse her? Curious Charlie was curious. She liked what Tate had, and she'd admitted it to him. Now she was taking a good look and didn't care that her husband was there.

Tate said, "Tomorrow. I'll sleep naked tomorrow."

Charlie couldn't hide disappointment, and she looked up at Tate again with her brow furrowed.

She said, "I don't mind."

Tate said, "Let's take our time, Charlie. You're not here with me because of Reza. Okay? He's not pimping you out. You don't have to do anything."

Her head twitched on her neck and Jonny saw her eyes flick toward Jonny. Her husband. *She didn't have to do anything.* Tate said it. But he knew in his heart some point this weekend she would.

Tate said, "Climb into bed with me. It's been a long night. It's late. This isn't how I want things to happen. Do you?"

She shook her head no.

"Come into bed with me. Wear whatever you want to wear. Just lay with me."

Now she nodded. "Okay."

Her hand smoothed over Tate's body again, Charlie stepping back with finality. Nothing would happen tonight. Charlie knew that now and accepted it. She slid her hands down his stomach muscles, around his waist. Couldn't help herself. With her hands around and against his lower back she hugged herself to him and rested her cheek on his chest.

Tate hugged her, his huge bulge pressing into her stomach. Jonny squirmed again, and even though it didn't seem like anything would happen, his penis still wormed around against its restraints. His hand came up and he bit the knuckle of his index finger.

He sat down heavily on the couch. This was where he would sleep. His wife would be sleeping with the man who won her for the weekend. This chivalrous piece of shit, this good-looking guy with his big good-looking dick was going to climb into bed with his wife. He wouldn't make her do anything she didn't want. But Jonny knew she would. He could see her in his mind's eye like that night she begged for it from Reza. Didn't want it, but had to have it. She'd pulled down Reza's pants using her toes. Had trouble using her words, but made it very apparent what she needed. *Needed*.

He thumped his pillow, making a hollow to lay his head. Charlie sat Tate down on the side of the bed, Tate saying again how he didn't need help. Now she trotted on her toes, long legs flexing, coming to Jonny on the couch.

"What is it?" he said hopefully, waiting to hear her voice, waiting to hear her connect with him, address him, remind him that he was her life.

She said, “You going to be okay here?”

“This is where I sleep. This is where I always sleep these days.”

She said, “I want you to be okay, Jonny.” She wasn’t smiling, she was serious.

“Okay,” he said. “We talked about it.”

She squatted next to the couch, rested her hand on his stomach then took the blanket and pulled it up over his chest. She said, “Jonny, I’m going to be good to Tate. Can you take it?”

“Whatever.”

“Don’t be like that, Jonny.”

“Tate said you don’t have to do anything.”

“You think that’s true?”

He actually did. He shrugged.

“It’s going to happen. It’s just the way it is.”

The way she said it left the unsaid lingering: Jonny, you set up these pins and now we play the game.

She reminded him: “I love you. I love you more than anything.”

It was what he needed. He felt himself sinking into the couch, his joints melting. “Okay,” he said.

She gave another look over to Tate who lay in the bed looking up at the ceiling. She darted back and shot Jonny a quick kiss on his lips.

He grabbed her arm, but now she was standing. She gripped his hand and shook it then let go.

Now he watched as she trotted across the room again with impossibly long legs, passing the foot of the bed, Tate watching every move she made. She went to the closet and pulled out pajamas.

With her shorty PJs tossed on the bed, Charlie turned her back to the room, stepped out of her high heels, suddenly half a foot shorter now. Her hands curled the hem of her dress at the back of her thighs and she sawed her hips as she scrolled it up her body.

First her bare ass was revealed, Tate and Jonny both watching with heart-pounding interest. There was the small black star above her butt cheek, near the divot by her tailbone. She pulled the dress a little higher, showing off her tiny waist, breathed in and began to pull the dress up over her head. Her ribs pressed against her pale skin, the dress turned inside out, up over her head, then off, her apricot mane in thick curls slowly settling and swaying over her beautiful back. She tossed it away.

She half-turned now; she wore no bra. She gave Tate a timid smile and Jonny saw that she covered the breast that Tate might see with a cupped hand. She grabbed her sleeping T-shirt and pulled it over her head. These days the one she wore was tighter, and it fell short of her sexy, bare bottom. She snagged the shorts, turned her back

completely to them and put her legs through the holes, tugged them up to her waist then slapped her thigh and turned around. She was smiling.

"Fuck, you're sexy," Tate said. He lay with his head on the pillows, sheets pulled up to his sternum, the large humps of his chest muscles bared, his shoulder muscles twitching as he tugged the sheet down for Charlie to join him. She walked on her hands and knees, eyes on Tate's.

"Thank you," she said.

She sat down, pushed her long legs under the sheets, scooted downward and lay her head on the pillow, her face turned up to watch Tate. He smiled now, too. His arm went around over the top of her head, and she lifted it. He scooted down, she scooted up. She lay her head over the big man's shoulder and he pulled the sheet up to cover her. She drummed her fingers on his chest, said, "Good night."

"Good night, Charlie. See you in the morning. We're going to have a great day."

She nodded, lips pursed, eyes on his.

"I'm going to take you tomorrow," he said and smiled. "And you'll never forget it."

Her eyes widened. "Yeah," she whispered, then without thinking, kissed him just above his nipple. She squirmed now, writhed herself up against Tate's hard muscular body and closed her eyes.

Jonny groaned, bringing his knees up protectively. The discomfort between his legs was profound. Arousal was impossible as badly as his brain provoked it. He bit on his lower lip and pressed his thighs together. There was still a chance… there was still a chance Tate's concussed brain would turn itself off, and in the morning Charlie would wake with a corpse.

# 11

TATE WAS alive the next morning.

Jonny lay on his side with a pillow under his head and faced the bed. Charlie and Tate still lay together the way they'd fallen asleep; Tate on his back with his arm around Charlie, her curled up against him with a hand on his chest, cheek in his shoulder. They hadn't moved all night.

The apartment was bright, the sun high in the sky. He knew they slept in. He reached to his phone laying on the coffee table, checked it. It was almost five after ten in the morning.

Despite the dread he felt knowing what would happen this weekend—and getting a glimpse last night—he'd slept well. The events of the previous evening had run the gamut of human emotions. At times he'd been happy, at times he'd been upset. He'd been mad, he'd enjoyed good food, he was entertained; he soared to the height of victory thinking Tate would stay down, and crashed to the hollows of despair when the big man jumped up and ended the fight. His phone buzzed in his hand.

A text from Reza.

**Reza**: how is she this morning? Can my sexy girl still walk?

**Jonny**: fuck off

**Reza**: sounds like she might have liked it. You mad?

Now he regretted ever picking up his phone. He texted back.

**Jonny**: nothing happened

**Reza**: find that hard to believe

Jonny rolled on to his back, flexed his neck side to side and texted a response.

**Jonny**: it's true. They went to sleep

It took almost a minute for the response; the room filled with Tate's heavy breathing.

**Reza**: now you're in trouble. Tate gets a solid eight hours, he will be looking for action

**Jonny**: I'm sure he will be

A few minutes went by, and Jonny wanted to throw his phone away.

**Reza**: Norway is nice. You ever been?

**Jonny**: no

**Reza**: everybody here is tall and blonde. Charlie would love it, I saw a few redheads too

**Jonny**: that's nice

**Reza**: you finish that game maybe you can take her here sometime

**Jonny**: I have no interest in Norway

**Reza**: take her wherever what do I give a fuck. Are you working yet?

**Jonny**: I just got up. How are you even in Norway?

**Reza**: flight right from the fight after the show last night. Slept on the plane. First class they let you lay down. I'm in the airport
**Jonny**: Great. bye I have to get to work
**Reza**: ttyl Have fun today Jonny. You might want to do some stretches because once Tate starts doing his thing that tight cage is going to have you folded in two

Jonny tossed the phone to the coffee table. With his hands back under his cheek he watched the two sleeping lovers laying in bed. His wife and the man who fought hard to win this opportunity to be with her. But it was going to work out. There was a lot Jonny was going to get. Next weekend was all he would think about. Thinking of next weekend would get him through this one. But the cage was a real problem. The steel one had give. The steel one they'd been able to work around. He didn't like this one. That weird uncomfortable feeling it gave him when he grew aroused was almost sickening. When his penis hardened, it felt like it was pushing back inside his body.

Tate stirred.

Charlie's eyes fluttered, sensing the enormous chest she lay on moving under her cheek. Jonny watched her eyelashes flutter, slowly he could see the bright of her eyes. She inhaled, and the sound was hoarse as air whisked through her nostrils across the skin of Tate's chest. She made a moaning sound, and Jonny watched Tate's hand curl around the point of her shoulder and rub at her collar with his thumb.

Charlie made a funny laughing sound, winced and lifted her face off of Tate. Her cheek had stuck to him, both of them warm and sticky and hadn't moved in more than seven hours. Her cheek pulled away from her face and she smiled. Tate laughed too. He said, "We didn't move all night."

Charlie said, "I had a great sleep, I wasn't even tired but boy…"

Tate said, "I was out cold."

Charlie watched him and neither of them said anything, their eyes flitting over each other's. Charlie scratched his chest, said, "How do you feel this morning?"

"Right as rain."

"You're a liar," she laughed.

Tate laughed too. "No, I'm not. I feel great. A little stiff. My face is sore…"

He turned to her, eyes on her, showing her both cheeks. He said, "Am I still handsome?"

Charlie held his wide chin and pretended to examine his face. "All your features are still there, present and accounted for. You're a little puffy, but I'd say you're still handsome."

"That's all that matters." He smiled and winked at her.

She nestled her cheek onto his chest again, an arm went around to hold his ribs and hug him. She said, "You sure your ribs are okay?"

"Totally sure."

Charlie squeezed a little, Jonny could see the muscles of her thin white arm flexing, and she laughed and lifted a foot up under the covers, poking up a tent. "Are you sure you're sure?"

"You got a good squeeze, Charlie, you hear me complaining?"

Her foot dropped down and she lifted her head and rested the point of her chin above his nipple looking in his eyes. She said, "I'm glad you're not hurting."

"I didn't say I wasn't sore. Just said I feel good."

"Good. I hated to see you fight, but I loved it too. I can watch you punch him, but I didn't want to see it happen to you…" Her elbow dipped under the cover and she moved her hand. "Oh," she said.

"Oh is right," Tate said with a smile.

"Somebody woke up with a big hard-on."

"And you were worried about me."

Charlie said, "Feels like you're doing okay to me."

"All's well in my world."

"I'll say," she said…

JONNY WATCHED her hand move under the covers, could see now the hump of Tate's erection under the bedding. Charlie had her hand on him.

"You're so big. Gosh, and so hard," she laughed. She bit her lip, hand still moving. Her chin was still resting on Tate's chest, watching him. She said, "Did you want to do something?"

"Let's get some breakfast."

"You don't want me to do anything? I don't mind."

"I told you it's not like that."

"I know. But I don't mind…" Her hand was still moving, stroking him under the covers.

He said, "It's not how I want to do it. Let's go out and do something. Let's get something to eat…"

Charlie said, "I can use my mouth…"

Tate touched her cheek now. He said, "I told you it's not like that. I don't want you to do things *for* me. I want to do things *together*."

Charlie's hand stopped moving. She said, "I like that."

"Good."

She said, "What do you need today?"

"Uh, food, water, rest… It would be really good to walk around. What do you want to do today?"

"Me?" She shrugged and looked to the side. Jonny could see her hand still moved under the covers.

Tate said, "Yeah, what kind of things do you like to do?"

"Wow, uh, I like the museum…"

"I'd love to go. And I need to walk around…"

"Really? Yeah, okay..." Now, more to herself, she said, "The art gallery, the big library on the west side, the aquarium…"

"Anything you want, Charlie. I want to spend the day with you, you know, not just doing *those* things…"

She giggled whipped her hand up from under the covers and rested them under her chin, laying on his chest.

"You don't want me to do anything?"

"Later. Not now. Later, Charlie…."

"I can use my hand or something…"

"That's sweet. It's not like that with me."

"It's not?"

"You know it's not."

She smiled, thumped her chin on his chest, smoothed her palms over his muscle. "I can rub your back."

He touched her lip. "You want to do that?"

"You're sore."

"Yeah, I'm pretty beat up."

Charlie scooted to a sitting position. "Make a muscle for me."

Tate was more than willing. Grinning wide he cocked an arm and flexed an impressive bicep for her and she raised her brows. She fell onto his arm with both hands clutched around his humped muscle and squeezed.

She said, "My Daddy is strong, too. No one gives him trouble."

Tate made a fist. "You think he could have knocked a bull out with one punch?"

Charlie laughed and clasped both her small white hands around Tate's massive clenched fist now. "I bet he could have when he was young." She shook Tate's fist, then tried to push his arm back over his head. He resisted. Charlie laughed and tried harder, hunching her shoulders up and trying to use her bodyweight to push his arm back down. "Golly, you really are strong," she said, "I bet you could—"

*Whoop!* she hollered, as Tate let his hand thrust back and Charlie fell forward on top of him, head in his collar. Tate grabbed her in both arms then flipped over in one hard buck. Now he was over top of her on all fours, Charlie submissive on her back, giggling.

The sheets tangled around Tate's waist, but they slipped free. Charlie squirmed underneath him, Jonny watched her knees rising up under the covers. At least Tate was wearing briefs. She hadn't touched his bare cock under the covers.

But then, Charlie said, "Somebody needs bigger underwear."

Tate still over her on all fours, looked down between them, sucking his stomach in. Jonny saw what Charlie was talking about.

Tate's morning wood extended a fist's length above the waistband of his bikini briefs. They were humped out, stretched by the belly of his big, hard cock.

Charlie's hands stroked along Tate's sides, coming near his hips, and Jonny kicked his legs under the blanket as the discomfort jumped out at him between his legs. Then as Reza predicted, he folded up in two, drawing his knees to his chest.

Charlie's hands moved slowly. Her fingertips grazed his sucked-in stomach, her hand went around the end of Tate's cock. She said, "This thing doesn't look like it wants to go down by itself."

He said, "Weren't you going to rub my back?"

"Sure," she said and smirked. Now she traced her fingertips along his waistband's trim. She pulled it downward, taking a peek inside his underwear, then tugged it upward and tried to cover his whole erection.

Tate laughed, said, "You're giving me a wedgie."

Charlie tittered, then covered her mouth. Jonny saw her cheeks red. With both hands again, she tried to cover his erection, said, "Like I said, you need bigger underwear."

He said, "It won't go back in?"

"I have an offer on the table," Charlie said and smiled, still holding Tates underwear outward, looking in now and admiring the guy's throbbing morning wood.

TATE SAID, "Let's start with the back rub."

Charlie looked at him, bit her lower lip and smiled, pulled downward again on his waistband and let it snap up. Tate's erection bounced and tapped his own hard belly and he made a groaning sound.

"Okay," she said, "back rub it is."

She scooted upward until she was sitting on the pillow where her head had just lay. She brought her knees up and pushed Tate aside. He went with it, flopping onto his back, laying prostrate now on top of the sheets, his blue underwear bowed out, the end of his cock clearly visible.

Jonny squeezed his thighs together and pressed a clenched fist against the point underneath his nose and over his lips. This was something he shouldn't be watching. This was something that was going to hurt him. And this was why Reza made the deal so Jonny had to be here. Tate had agreed to it. He had agreed to it. Charlie had as well. And there was the unsaid threat that Reza's cameras watched them all…

So they would obey the rules, they would do what Reza wanted and find what pleasure they could find for themselves in the bad the landlord commanded.

Charlie said, "Are you going to roll over for me?"

Tate adjusted his underwear, rolled over and lay in the spot next to Charlie on the bed, pulled a pillow underneath his head to rest his cheek on it. His hips squirmed as he tried to find a comfortable position laying on that hard monster.

Charlie watched his round, tight butt flex underneath the blue cotton briefs. That hurt. He flexed his thighs again.

Tate's muscular back glimmered in the light from the apartment window. Humps and bumps, squirming muscle under tanned skin. His traps were bunched up around his thick neck, his sandy blonde hair in its nice haircut resting on the pillow.

Charlie said, "You've got so much muscle. I think my hands are going to hurt."

She sat upright, scooted so her hip touched his, laying one hand on the mattress, the other one swooping dry circles over Tate's body.

She looked over her shoulder and caught Jonny's eye. She made eye contact, looked to say something, her mouth working around. Her eyes were sad, despondent. He knew what it was. She was enjoying this but didn't want to enjoy it. She was right about Jonny not minding her with Reza because he thought that she didn't like it. Her body responded to the man's size, power, and ability, but she was just an object underneath him. And he allowed it. This was the same situation, but this one he wanted to deny. And that was selfish. Charlie had to do this, and she hated that she liked it, but both husband and wife knew that she did indeed like it. He shrugged his shoulders. She mouthed Sorry.

He shrugged his shoulders again, gave her a half-smile.

She cleared her throat, asked him, "Jonny, can you get us some oil?"

"Oil?"

"To rub his back."

"We don't have any."

"It doesn't have to be massage oil, Jonny. Olive oil, coconut oil…"

It bugged him. How did she know so much about rubbing men's bodies she knew what oil was good?

"Yeah," he said, his voice dry and flaky.

He eased himself off the couch, knees first, feet touching the floor, getting off and staying in a crouch. Slowly he stood, easing out the tightness of his sleepy joints, stood then, pushing down on his cage to make it comfortable. His cock wanted so badly to be hard, and Lord, it was trying. It was straining against the silicon but there was nowhere for it to go. It wanted to lengthen, but the resistance was too strong, the rubber's grip too tight. It pushed his penis backward into his body; the kind of discomfort that made him want to shout out.

He limped his way to the kitchen, went to the cupboards. They only had vegetable oil, and he was going to tell her, shooting a glance out the kitchen pass-through to see Charlie and Tate on the bed together in the family room below, his wife straddling Tate's narrow waist, her long pale legs out on either side of his muscular body, her hands spread wide on his back and digging her thumbs into the muscle. His mouth open to ask her where she thought they might have better oil, he remembered Reza used coconut oil in his coffee that he mixed in the morning sometimes.

He went to the coffee cupboard, found a jar of coconut oil. He had to stop one more time before descending the stairs to the family room to adjust himself. Then he was down, coming to the side of the bed.

"Coconut oil," he said, holding the jar with the tips of his fingers held in a claw and wiggling it for her.

Charlie straddled Tate wearing her skimpy shorts and her clinging tank top, the points of her nipples pushed out against the fabric. Her pussy was pressing against the small of Tate's back. She looked happy, excited. He pushed his hips backward, trying to ease the tightening discomfort.

She flicked her head to the side, encouraging him to get close. He bent over, pressed his fist between his thighs and pushed down on the cage, easing his head closer to her. She hooked a hand over the back of his neck and whispered in his ear. "Do you need to get out of here? You know? Go to the bathroom or something?"

"No," he whispered to her, "you're just gonna rub his back."

"I think so."

He whispered, "I have to stay here. I'll go to the bathroom if I can't take it."

"I'm sorry," she whispered. "I have to do it."

"You want to do it."

Instead of whispering, this time she met his gaze and ran her tongue over her lower lip, watching him. She shrugged.

He shrugged back. "It's okay," he said. But wasn't sure that it was.

"Okay, Mr. Armstrong," Charlie said now, loosening the lid on the jar of coconut oil, "where does it hurt?"

"All over my back," Tate said into the pillow.

Charlie scooped out hunks of white paste, pushed them onto Tate's back, closed the jar and laid it up on the pillows. She spread her hands on him and turned the paste into clear oil with the warmth of her hands as they spread over the man's muscle.

Jonny stood by the side of the bed, knowing if he was smart he would be in the bathroom already. But he wasn't. He was a bad person. He was a bad husband who enjoyed this. Enjoyed it and hated it, loved his wife, and was crushed by her, everything all at once.

Charlie's thumbs worked in circles over the muscle, her fingernails dragged across his skin. Jonny took a few steps back.

Charlie said, "Your body is like steel under the skin."

"Your fingers feel good. You're working that steel into rubber…"

"Like this?" she asked, and she made fists and dug them in circles like a mortar and pestle into the humps of his back.

Tate groaned.

Jonny stepped back far enough he could sit now on the couch.

Charlie said, "How about this?" And now she began a comical Swedish massage, giving quick karate chops over his back.

It made Tate laugh, the sound undulating with Charlie's chopping. That got Charlie giggling too.

Now she scooted forward, and Jonny knew Charlie was rubbing her pussy on him. She worked herself a little higher, practically hugged herself over his back, dug her elbows into him.

"Oh God, oh my God, that feels so good…"

"You like it?…"

"Oh Fuck, keep doing that…"

Charlie's smile widened, liking to hear that she was pleasing him. She worked the points of her elbows around in circles, digging into him, working up and down sideways and around. Tate continued to groan. Jonny drew his knees up until his heels were on the couch seat. He clasped his hands between his legs and over his jeans. He lay his head back on the couch.

But he still watched.

# 12

CHARLIE WORKED Tate's back for a half an hour until she was practically panting. Her arms glistened with oil, and so did Tate's back.

Her movements slowed as she became exhausted, and Tate sensed it. He said, "That was good, Charlie. That was so good… God, your hands are amazing."

Charlie sat more upright, her hips rolling forward and backward, squirming her sex against his hard body. She dug thumbs into him now, then ran her nails in light circles. "It was good?"

"So good," he moaned.

"Do you want to go get some breakfast?"

"Uh-huh," Tate sighed and rubbed his cheeks.

Charlie rolled back, got her feet on the mattress, her butt squashing on his butt with her hands on the bed behind her. She admired her fighter's shimmering oil-glistened body for a moment longer then rolled off him.

Tate turned on his side and Charlie watched between his legs. His enormous erection still pushed out his underwear and the end showed above the waistband.

Charlie said, "Well this is crazy…"

Tate laughed, groaned, watching Charlie through narrowed, sleepy eyes. His hand came down to tug on the waistband of his underwear to inch it a little higher. The end of his cock could not be covered.

Charlie still watched it. She said, "You can't go out like that."

"It'll go down."

"Doesn't look like it's going to."

Tate lay on his back now, letting her take a good look at it. Let her take a look at his huge, hard manhood.

Charlie said, "You can't go out in public with that big thing sticking out of your pants like that."

"I thought it would go down."

"I can make it go down for you."

"I told you I don't want you to do things because you feel like you have to."

"I don't have to, I want to," she said. "And I'm apparently pretty good at it now."

Jonny fell onto his side, head thumping the pillow over the couch's arm rest. He drew his knees up again. This was one-hundred percent the point where he had to leave. This was where he should scramble to the bathroom. But he was curious to see how much discomfort he could take. He wondered if at some point his penis would grow so hard it would split the silicon rubber.

Charlie rolled forward to lay next to Tate. She said, "Let me do it."

"It's up to you."

"I want to hear you *want* it," she whispered.

"Why don't you show me what you can do. I have a feeling once you start there's no way I would ever stop you."

Charlie watched his eyes for a few seconds, kissed him above his nipple and worked her way down the bed. She eyed the end of his cock where it stuck out past the waistband. Her fingers went over and back along the curved waistband, feeling where it pressed out over his cock. Then changing from horizontal to vertical, the pads of her fingers began to stroke on the underside of his exposed erection. Fingertips swirling around the shape of his glans, she watched herself work. With the point of a finger she collected some of his clear excitement and tickled the chin of his penis. Tate's thighs flexed, and his body bucked.

Charlie smiled, got over top of Tate now on all fours, just as he had done. She kissed the muscles of his stomach, the bulbous end of his erection pressing on the underside of her chin. She kissed lower, the slippery tip of his penis sliding along her jaw until it folded-over her earlobe. Her hand squeezed the base, slipped lower and clutched his balls through the blue fabric.

Tate groaned. Jonny flexed every muscle in his body to brace against the pressure between his legs.

The quivering pink point of Charlie's tongue ran over the coronal edges of Tate's huge glans. She pried his cock upward like a lever, and Tate's underwear scrolled down his shaft to pinch across his scrotum. She sunk the glans fully in her mouth and bobbed her head lightly.

"Oh, mm, fuck," Tate said, his hand cupping her cheek. Charlie worked her head around in circles, going nice and gentle. Tate's size pushed out her plump lips to a thin ring. She worked her head up and down, taking him as deep as she could—which wasn't very. Tate's erection was long and thick.

Her hand squeezed at his balls, then stroked the shaft. She worked him like that for a few minutes, then her fingernails went under the waistband to pull the briefs further down until his balls were freed. She ran her thumb over their shape while she continued to pleasure him with her mouth.

She had Tate groaning and squirming. Charlie was good at giving head now, she wasn't kidding. She'd been taught by other men. Men with large organs who showed her how to take them. How to give them pleasure when she couldn't get them deep. Showed her all the parts of the penis that they responded to. Charlie knew how to please a man. Charlie knew penises. Knew what parts felt good, knew how to get Tate's stomach fluttering.

It went on for a long time, maybe almost twenty minutes, Tate watching, sometimes thrusting his head back in the pillows. He would cup her cheek, he would palm the back of her head.

His legs rose on the bed on either side of her, his heels stroking up and down the mattress. His breath came quick. The muscles of his stomach flexing in and out, his chest rising and falling, his shoulders jumping and twitching. His left hand grabbed bedsheets and held them in a tight fist. Charlie stroked faster, using two hands and her mouth, both hands twisting, her head bobbing.

"Oh fuck, mm, fuck, I'm going to come…"

Charlie nodded while she sucked. Breath snorted through her nostrils, and she bobbed faster.

"Ah fuck, Charlie, oh fuck, oh shit…"

Tate's knees came up, then his thighs slammed back on the bed and it bounced. He pounded a fist into the mattress, pressed his other fist into his forehead and turned his face away so they couldn't see him. He arched his back, his stomach billowed out then sucked in, showing off all the muscles underneath. He snorted once, then bellowed. His legs shook and his fist pounded the mattress. He was coming. He was coming and Charlie was taking it all. Stroking and bobbing, snorting through her nose; her cheeks had gone red, her neck, too. Spit ran down over her hands, already glistening with oil, and as Tate's reaction abated, she held him in her mouth and tight in the grip of two fists. Tate hissed breath through clenched teeth, a long draggy exhale.

Charlie held him still, her two hands squeezing tight and stroking upward, getting every last bit into her mouth. Slowly her mouth came off, her lips forming a pout at the tip when it was free; she kissed the underside of the head of his penis and smiled. She stroked him with both hands a little, and he kicked his legs and squirmed. Charlie giggled.

She asked him, "How was that?"

"Fucking incredible," he sighed.

"See," she said, gripping the base of his penis with a thumb and two fingers and slapping it up onto his hard stomach over and over. "Now you might be able to go out."

"Maybe."

"We can do it again if we have to."

"You won't be hungry for breakfast."

Charlie made a snarly funny face, scrunched her nose and laughed. She covered her mouth with both hands and rolled back to sit on his thighs.

She had something to say to Tate, but spied Jonny in her periphery and made an uncomfortable face. Rolling forward to lay on him, she whispered in Tate's ear behind the cover of her hand.

Tate smirked, looking doubtful. "I do not."

She nodded.

"Isn't it all the same?"

"Not yours," Charlie said.

"I think that's a compliment."

Charlie shrugged, laughed, then covered her face with a lock of her hair.

Tate said, "Maybe it's my diet. I eat pretty clean."

Charlie shot Jonny a sheepish look, still trying to hide behind her hair.

# PART 3

# 13

WHILE THEY WERE in the shower Jonny went to his workstation. It would be difficult to get anything done this weekend and he would have to take every opportunity he could get.

Behind the bathroom door he heard a low voice talking, could hear Charlie titter. They were both naked in there. It was probably better he couldn't see them. It was bad enough laying on the couch and watching the two of them cross the room, Tate with his underwear around his hips and his long, hard dick out and wagging. Now Tate would be in there with Charlie, both of them naked. Both of them getting in the shower together.

He read the message from Shulamit. She'd tried to get him on Skype last night even though he told her he would be out all evening. Message said to call him, it was important.

He opened Skype and got a connection with Shulamit.

Screen came on, showing her sitting at her desk, eating her dinner from a bowl, twirling pasta on a fork. He wondered if she really was in Italy. If she was trying to convince him by using pasta as a prop it made him more dubious. He said, "What's up?"

Shulamit said, "Your data sheets are stretched," her mouth sideways, a ball of pasta in the opposite cheek.

"Stretched?"

"Your code is covering too much."

"It's clean. You always say how clean it is."

"The code is great. I'm talking about the data sheets."

"Javed did the data sheets."

Shulamit chewed, swallowed. "Javed's code is stretched."

"What does *stretched* mean?" he grumbled and rubbed at his temples.

Shulamit said, "Calm down, Jonny. What's got into you?"

"Nothing," he said more calmly.

Shulamit studied him through the camera for a long moment. "You want me to talk to him?"

"Who?" He pictured Shulamit talking to Reza.

"Javed."

"Would you? Really?" He had so much shit to deal with, and Shulamit was his savior these days.

Shulamit raised her feet up to rest on the edge of her leather chair. She cradled the pasta bowl to her chest and eyed him carefully. "Yeah, I'll deal with it. How are you doing?"

"I'm fine. Overworked. Excited, too. You know what I mean?"

"I know what you mean."

"Excited," he repeated. "I just want this thing to be done, I want it out there and I want it making *money*." He growled, raked fingers through his hair. "Argh, I just fucking need money…"

"It will, you know… It will make money."

"I know it will," he said but even he didn't sound convincing. Even though they were at the end of their initial development, it felt like making this thing would go on *forever* and it just wouldn't ever see the light of day.

Water in the shower had been turned on. More tittering from Charlie. More low rumbling from Tate and it got her laughing again harder. Naked, big, strong, Tate holding the shower curtain open for his wife. Charlie giving his awesome body a sideways glance. Or would it even be sideways anymore? This week she'd been so different, so confident.

Now he pictured her, standing in the shower with Tate, the hot water blasting his wet muscles, Charlie's hands going over his body, feeling that granite slab of a chest, moving over the bulging humps of his hard stomach muscles, Charlie smiling and laughing while she did it. No Jonny to make her feel nervous in there, and she was more confident these days, too, she'd get down and play with that big thing between Tate's legs, cup his testicles, maybe go down on him again…

"You okay?" Shulamit bringing him out of it.

He tugged between his legs, the discomfort growing, him grimacing, canine biting on his lower lip, scowling. "I'm fine. There's a lot going on…"

"I've sensed it," she said.

"Yeah, I give it away, don't I?"

"I'm gonna be honest. I give a shit about no one on this planet. Not even you. But you're close. A good guy. I think you're smart. Your game is going to win, but you got a problem with your wife… But I definitely don't want to be involved."

"My wife," he sighed, offering no more information.

"She worth it? All this trouble?"

"Is she worth it? You don't even understand, Shulamit. There wouldn't be a point in doing this game if I didn't have her."

"You're doing it for her?"

"She's doing it for me."

"Doing what?"

"Everything. She's making this possible."

"Funding you?"

He groaned. "Yeah. She's funding me." *In a way.*

"All right, Jonny. Let me call Javed. I'll work it out. I'll call you back. You going to be around?"

He sighed, slumped almost to his desk. "Where'm I going to go?"

WHEN THEY FINALLY EMERGED FROM the bathroom, Jonny told her he wasn't going. Charlie said, "What do you mean?"

"You guys go without me."

Tate said nothing, chuckled a little, went to the closet. He had a towel around his waist, his chest was bare, showing off the muscle.

Charlie sat on the end of the bed. She wore a towel as well, her hair was wet and hung in heavy ringlets around her shoulders. The towel was tucked under her armpits. She said, "Don't…" She pouted. It was an honest reaction. It softened his heart. She really did want him to come along. But there was a part of it that made him feel like he was ruining her fun. That she would feel guilty if he stayed at home. And her guilt would wreck her time with Tate. But he was firm…

"I have work to do. You know that…"

"We're just going to go have some breakfast."

Tate was in the closet. He said, "Let him stay here."

Charlie said, "You're just gonna stay here? All by yourself?"

He said, "You know I have things to do. Go, don't let me wreck your time with Tate."

She frowned at him and tilted her head.

Tate was moving around in the closet, zipping open a bag of Reza's. Jonny pushed himself out of his work chair, pivoted and sat down next to Charlie and put his hand on her knee. He said, "Don't pout, Charlie. Just go and do whatever. I know, I know what it's like for you. Don't let me get in your way. Go have breakfast with Tate. Go out and go see a movie or something. You were gonna go to the museum…"

She nodded.

He said, "So go to the museum. Go have fun."

She said, "It won't be the same without you." Her chin tucked down, and she was sullen.

He couldn't help hugging her. Put his arms around her shoulders and squeezed himself to her. It wasn't even sexual. It was just love. He held her, felt the heat from her hot shower, felt the damp clinging of her clean skin. He said, "I love you. Don't worry about me. Go have fun and don't feel guilty."

"Why would I feel guilty?"

He shrugged and smiled. “See? Then what’s the problem?”

She rolled her eyes and smiled, darted a peck to his cheek. Tate was out of the closet now, coming to the bed with an athletic bag. Tossed it onto the mattress and it bounced. He said, “Reza left some of my things here for me.”

Charlie smiled at him over her shoulder. Jonny returned to his workstation chair. She said, “He was pretty sure you were going to win.”

“I knew I was going to win, too. I packed the bag.”

Charlie laughed.

STANDING AT THE OPEN CLOSET, Charlie asked Tate, “What should I wear?”

“I’m a jeans and a T-shirt kind of guy.”

“Me too.”

“You *were*,” Jonny said.

Charlie frowned at him. “What do you mean?”

“Don’t you like your shoes and your dresses now?”

“Yeah.”

“Wear what you want to wear,” Tate said. “Want to wear your heels?”

“No, I want to dress like you.”

Jonny said, “Your boots.”

“What boots?”

“Didn’t you buy really nice cowboy boots?”

Her face brightened. “I did… that’s right…” Her eyes went wide and happy. “I didn’t even wear them yet…”

Tate said, “Wear them with some jeans. You’ll look beautiful.”

Jonny said, “You will.”

Charlie put on a pair of skintight jeans and both men watched her. Her legs were impossibly long. She sat on the edge of the bed with her cowboy boots and set them on the floor. She only wore a bra for a top. Her tight middle bunched up in lines above the pants button and she looked sexier than ever; like an ad for Stetson cologne or something.

She pointed each bare foot and slipped them into the boots, shoved her feet down to stomp her heels in them then pulled the denim over. She stood now, looking taller, looking sexier, and she got a shirt from the closet.

Tate stood watching dumbly still with his clothes in his hand. Charlie was a knockout. It was frightening that she was beginning to learn it and recognize it herself. Her greatest gift, he’d always thought, was her hidden beauty. He was the one who got

to see it when she got undressed at night and climbed into bed with him. She was sharing it more and more and other men were peeling back her petals.

Tate let his towel drop, pulled on his underwear, big flaccid cock slapping around. Charlie watched him as she pulled her head through the neck hole of her shirt. Then Tate got his jeans on and a flannel shirt, rolling up the sleeves to his elbow, showing off the forearms.

"You ready?" she asked him.

"I'm going to eat about two pounds of bacon. You going to watch me?"

Charlie said, "Watch you? I've been known to eat quite a lot of bacon myself."

"Sounds like you want a competition," Tate said and held out his arm so she could hoop hers through it.

They walked together across the apartment but stopped at the bottom of the stairs. Jonny's thumbs ran over the inside of his fingers as he watched them.

"Hold on," Charlie said, pivoted and skipped across the apartment, cowboy boots clicking on their hardwood floor. She beelined directly to him, and his heart soared. She fell against him, putting her hands on his thighs and kissed his lips.

She said, "You want me to bring you something back?"

He said, "I'll just eat here. There's lots of food…"

"We'll be a couple hours, okay?"

"Okay," he said. "I want you to have fun."

"Thank you," she said. "We will."

She kissed him again and left. He watched her sexy long legs returning her to Tate, him holding his hand out for her. She took it, and he guided her up the steps, then the apartment door closed and he was alone.

He'd been strong, but now his heart ached. He folded his forearms over his chest in an X and grimaced, groaned. Swiveled his chair with his toes, faced his workstation, and waited for his call from Shulamit.

IT WAS HALF an hour later mid-sentence with Shulamit when he stopped.

"What's wrong now?" she asked him.

He said, "I'm making a mistake…"

"The data sheets? I told you Javed said—"

"I have to go."

"Go where?" she said, getting closer to the camera, her face looming on his monitor.

He said, "I just have to go. I made a huge mistake," his speech was rushed, and he was racing with sudden frantic agitation.

Shulamit was saying something, but he didn't hear her. He disconnected, shut down his monitor, jumped up. Now he was scrambling, trying to figure out what to do. No time for a shower, no time to brush his teeth, he ran up the stairs to the kitchen and grabbed his keys. Then he was out, slamming the door behind him and racing down the hall in the same clothes he'd worn last night to watch a man beat another man to earn a chance to fuck his wife. Jamming through the heavy metal stairwell door in the same clothes he slept in, bypassing the elevators because there was no way he could stand still right now.

He ran down the concrete steps taking two at a time, racing to the lobby. He had to find them. He couldn't be without her…

# 14

THE THIRD FLOOR of the Metropolitan Museum of Antiquities was where he caught up with Charlie. He was sweating. Black rings ran around the neck of his sweatshirt, under his armpits. Probably down his back, too. It wasn't even hot out, but he'd been running the whole time.

First, he got to the diner, but they weren't there. There were a dozen other joints they could've had their breakfast in, but he figured they'd done eating by that time, anyway. So he went to the art gallery first, it was the closest. They weren't there. Took a bus that passed by the library where she worked. Ran in there, waved to one of her friends at the counter, asked if she'd seen Charlie. Was told that Charlie didn't work today, and he said, I know, she has a guest from out of town, I thought she might want to show them where she worked.

Then he was at the Antiquities Museum, paying $18.95 to get inside and poke around, see if she was here.

Sure, he could've texted her, found out exactly where she was. As much as he needed to be with her there was a part of him that wanted to see what she looked like *without* him. What would she do on a date? What would she do on the arm of a big, handsome man, a local celebrity, a fighter, six-four, two-twenty-five of chiseled muscle and a cock down to his knees? Would she strut around with him? Would she show him off?…

He was glad that she hadn't gone to the library. It would've been nice to catch up with her, but what would it mean to find her there with Tate? Bringing her new boyfriend around to show her coworkers what she could pull. Show them the kind of man her second husband would look like. It had made him grit his teeth and settle his resolve to find her without calling. He had to know…

*Well there you are, Jonny, Charlie's with Tate, and it's just as bad as you thought…*

Charlie and Tate were standing next to the carved wooden coffin lid of some lady priestess who sang for some king, and Charlie was telling her new boyfriend all about limestone sarcophagi; how grave robbing was a problem in ancient Egypt even when it wasn't ancient and how they used limestone cause it was too heavy for some thieves. The same spiel she had given Jonny on one of their early dates. One of those early dates where he'd fallen in love with her, listening to her timid little voice as she wanted to share with him something that interested her, wanted to share with this cute guy that picked her up at the university library how smart she was. Those days she'd been a timid little flower whose voice hardly raised above a whisper. Now here she was standing tall in her cowboy boots, elbowing her huge muscular boyfriend and laughing loudly. He could overhear her explaining to Tate: "The limestone coffins were more expensive, so only the wealthiest could afford the added security…"

Jonny spied from under the archway where Rome met Egypt. Gladiators, emperors, Caesars behind him, sarcophagi, sphinxes, pyramids, and mummies ahead. Between two worlds he leaned against a Corinthian column and watched his wife being playful with another man.

It was so terrible he considered strolling out with his hands in his pockets, catching up with them and saying *Oh hey, guys, changed my mind. Got a lot done*—he didn't—*and didn't want to miss out on the fun*. But a dark and dirty part of him wanted to see more.

*Would she grab Tate by his big hand, her two hands pulling them into the ladies room so they can finally get this over with?… Let this big, sexy guy put that big, sexy dick inside her and make her sing her songs. What would she sound like?—what would her voice sound like outside that bathroom door? Could he stand it? Could he stand to listen to his wife being pounded in a public bathroom? And what would passersby overhear?… And when they saw this man lingering outside the door would they know that he was a cuckold? Would they know those sounds they all heard were the sounds of this poor man's wife getting it like she'd never got it before?*

Charlie and Tate were moving, holding hands, heading now through an archway into the next room, a quiet cavernous cathedral containing a recreation of a gold sphinx at about a tenth to scale. Jonny adjusted his cage. The awfulness of this moment making itself aware with the swelling discomfort between his legs…

JONNY FOLLOWED, keeping a safe distance. As his wife and her suitor passed into the huge warehouse of antiquities, the room's only other sole occupants were leaving. An elderly couple maybe in their sixties, holding hands, smiling at these two young people coming in.

Tate and Charlie looked like young lovers. Both of them beautiful. Handsome Tate with his beautiful girlfriend. Charlie was tall and thin and had wild, beautiful hair. She would smile at those two old people because she was polite. And what would they think of the man who held her hand? The man who made her look *feminine*. The man who made her look like a happy woman…

They passed, and Jonny watched the older couple squeeze their hands together and smile at each other. Then they got to pass the weird dude in the stinky sweatshirt that he sweated through, lurking behind that attractive couple and spying on them. He gave them a smile as well, but it was probably a grimace. His hair was unkempt, he was sure he had dark circles under his eyes. And he could force a smile as much as he wanted, but there was discomfort between his legs and hurting in his heart, a dichotomy of

lustful pounding—they would see it on his face. They gave him uneasy smiles and continued walking.

Now Jonny situated himself by a tall glass cabinet to watch his wife with another man. They still held hands, and the sounds of Charlie's clicking boots echoed under the high rafter ceiling. They were watching the Sphinx and Charlie was talking close to Tate, probably telling him everything she knew about ancient Egypt. She was smiling, Tate was alternately looking up at the Sphinx, tilting his head to hear what she said, looking in her eyes…

Next to Jonny, inside the glass cabinet, was a diorama of a mummification. The poor unfortunate dead man lay prostrate on a wooden table. His stomach had been opened, entrails lay on his belly, an attendant prepared to stuff him with salt and sawdust. Jonny wished for that kind of relief. All his stuff—heart and lungs and hopes and dreams—stored in separate canopic jars, topped with the heads of the sons of Horus. The things he would need in the afterlife, but weren't his right now. Just like his cock. Bundled away until it was needed. When he became a man; when he earned his wife back. He longed to have his suffering removed from his body—just take every hurting bit out of him, put it in clay jars on a shelf. He could walk around a dull, empty husk and he would be happy…

Or would he? The only reason it hurt was because he loved Charlie. Without love there was no hurt.

He would embrace the hurt.

He moved from glass cabinet to glass cabinet, making sure his sneakers didn't squeak and give himself away. Charlie and Tate walked a circle around the large Sphinx that had to be thirty feet tall. He moved around display cases, dioramas; wound his way counter-clockwise. Then he lost them.

It was momentary; he found them again. Sneaking along the edge of the Sphinx, he poked his head around to find them sequestered in a dim vestibule between a colonnade of display cases showing ancient Egyptian antiquities. They were lit by the soft lamps inside the display cases. Their figures dim, their edges highlighted; the curls of Charlie's hair lit up in amber.

Tate had backed her against a display case and she tilted her head. They said nothing. Looked into each other's eyes. Tate grew closer and Charlie rested her hands on his chest, her lips parted. Tate lay a hand on her hip and circled another behind her. She fell into it and braced herself against the frame of the display unit.

Tate's mouth came closer and Charlie tilted her chin up. They kissed.

It was soft, tender, and long-lasting. They didn't tumble with passion; they didn't fall to the floor and yank off their shirts. But they might as well have. At least that would make sense to him. What transpired between them when their mouths were

embraced was powerful. Lust would make sense. Pure physical need would make sense. Biological imperatives: Charlie's pussy wanting large input. That made sense. But a long-lasting kiss twisted at his heart.

When they broke apart, their eyes stay connected. Tate was the first to smile, then Charlie did as well. She raised a hand to cup his cheek and patted his neck.

Their hands intertwined again, and they strode toward Jonny. He darted out of the way and pressed his back to the base of the Sphinx sculpture. He listened to their footsteps, relieved they weren't coming his way. He slipped along the back of the Sphinx to peek around the other side. They were moving on, onto the next era.

Jonny followed them, watched them as they toured the Greeks, the Macedonians, down the next floor and through the Mesozoic era. Charlie wasn't into dinosaurs, so they just strolled straight through, but Tate looked up in wonder at the replicas of dinosaur skeletons.

Then they were leaving, out into the sunlight.

Still inside the building, Jonny lingered in the vestibule behind the glass doors. If they were to look back they would only see their own bright reflections as they approached a vending truck parked by the curbside. Tate bought them both ice cream cones, two scoops, Charlie smiling.

As they headed down the sidewalk, Jonny emerged into the fresh air and followed behind…

THEY STROLLED through the park following the gravel pathways, pausing to watch swans on the lake. They shared their ice cream cones, offering samples of their own flavors to the other, running tongues and looking in each other's eyes.

They stopped at the gazebo by the waterpark and used the bathrooms. It was a relief, thinking back to the Antiquities Museum, imagining them going in together and what he would hear. But they just washed their hands and threw away their napkins from the ice cream cones and joined each other outside again in a few minutes.

Instead of holding hands, Tate stood by a park bench waiting for Charlie, and she stepped up onto the seat as Tate bent over. She climbed on his back and he carried her up on his shoulders. They walked like that together, Charlie reaching up to tap at branches as Tate passed underneath. He set her down again when they emerged at the iron archway entrance to the park and back onto the busy city sidewalk.

They paused there, facing each other, and Tate took both her hands. He whispered in her ear and she nodded. He kissed her neck, and she smiled. Then their mouths

locked on each other's again and they stood in the middle of the sidewalk making out while pedestrians merged around them on either side.

Tate stepped away, took her hand and walked to the curb. He snapped his fingers and waved his hand, and a passing taxi chirped its tires to dart to the curbside to pick them up.

*Shit, fuck, shit…*

Tate held the door for her and Charlie scooted into the taxi. He slammed the door behind him and the cab merged with traffic as Jonny raced to follow them. He stopped on the sidewalk and watched the yellow taxi grow distant in the traffic.

Where were they going? What would they do?

*It was fucking obvious, wasn't it?*

They were ready to fuck.

He darted in the reverse direction the taxi headed, aiming for the stairway into the subway. He threw money at the attendant, banged through the turnstile, ran the steps, and jumped on a waiting car as the doors closed. Then he sat there a bundle of nerves.

Tate and Charlie were in the taxi now. They were making out; he was sure of it. Tate would have her pinned to the corner and his hands would be up her shirt. Her hands would be running his thigh. Was she squeezing his cock through his pants? She was. He knew she was…

But the greatest fear was that they wouldn't do what he expected. The romantic interplay between them was foreplay. Everything he watched was propelling those two attractive humans toward the event where Charlie would open her legs and finally receive the man she had a crush on. But what if they didn't go home? They needed a bed to continue what they wanted to do. But what if they didn't use the bed in the apartment? What if they didn't return to the apartment? What if they got a hotel room and shut Jonny out? He was supposed to be there. Would they go against Reza?…

By the time he jumped off the subway and was running up the steps and darting across the street, weaving through traffic to get to the apartment he was bewildered and mindless.

He couldn't run up the stairwell to the apartment because he was exhausted now. So he stood in the lobby and jabbed the elevator button twenty times before it came. Then he was in, riding in excruciating slowness up to his floor, hunched over, fists beating at his knees.

When the cab dinged, and the doors opened, he rushed through so fast he banged his shoulder and collided against the leather chairs outside the elevator bank. He was rubbing his shoulder and hissing as he made it to the apartment door, keys fumbling in his hand, shaking so wildly he couldn't get it in the lock.

But then it was open, he was inside, closing the door behind him. He inched down the steps, going slow.

They were here.

Tate was on top of Charlie, laying in bed. He was fully clothed, and the sounds of the kissing was loud and wet. Charlie lay underneath him, her knees up on either side, her cowboy boots rubbing at Tate's thighs. Tate's hands roamed her, touching her over her clothes. Charlie was making soft panting sounds.

She caught him, eyes opening and seeing him standing by the side of the bed. She smiled. Her eyes were glassy and distant, she was being lured into the world of ecstasy by her hung and muscular lover.

She said, "Hi Jonny, where were you?"

"I had to run errands. How was breakfast?"

Tate bit at her neck and she made a soft snarling face.

"He's going to take me now, Jonny."

"I know."

"Are you going to be able to watch?"

"I have to."

"Okay," she sighed, grabbed Tate's shoulders and kissed his mouth hungrily…

# 15

JONNY WALKED BACKWARD to sit on the couch.

Charlie lay her head on the pillow while Tate was overtop of her. The big man took both her hands, and she let him. They intertwined fingers.

Charlie's denim legs worked up and down Tate's waist, the cowboy boots curved to cup at his bottom as he humped his hardness between her legs. Tate bit at her shirt lapel and tugged away the top snap button. Charlie giggled. He did it again, unsnapping the next button, tugging with teeth clenched on the cotton, working his way down until he'd opened her shirt to her navel.

Then he pushed her hands into the bed and humped his hips hard, rolling against her, and Charlie kicked her legs feeling his stone erection pressing through both of their denim pants. She laughed, liking it. Now he worked lower, hooking one arm around the small of her back and curving her waist toward him, kissing her stomach in the bared line between her shirt and her pants.

Up on his knees now, Tate was eager to take his shirt off. Charlie raised on her elbows and set the soles of her boots on the bedding. Tate pulled his shirt off, and Charlie admired his body. His big hands stroked her denim thighs. They kissed again, Tate putting his hands on the bed on either side of her waist and Charlie closing her eyes and opening her mouth for him.

She bit at his lower lip, and he said, "You're so fucking sexy it's killing me."

Charlie smiled. "You are too."

Tate pulled her head back by a handful of her hair; they collapsed on the bed again and he bit her neck while Charlie raised her knees and kicked at his bottom.

This was real. This was going to happen, and it was nothing like he'd seen before. Charlie *wanted* this. For the first time he was seeing his wife without reluctance; she *desired* to feel Tate. Charlie wanted this man to take her. And while it was somehow a duty she performed—done for the same reason she'd been with Reza—he was profoundly aware that his wife was eager. Lusty. Horny.

He sank off the couch, hands clutched over his squirming half-hard bundle being gulped back inside his body. On his knees, he watched his wife and her lover on the bed, and he began an internal mantra: "If it's okay with Reza, it's okay with Tate… If it's okay with Reza, it's okay with Tate… If it's okay with Reza, it's okay with Tate…"

*If you don't let her do this with Tate, you've been hurting her this whole time, using her, and that's impossible because you love her more than anything…*

Tate undid her shirt, and Charlie watched his eyes to see what he would think of her body. She pulled the shirt away, still watching him, only wearing a pale pink bra. They kissed again, Tate stroking his big hands on her hips, Charlie's neck flexing and working as their mouths sucked on each other's.

Tate unclasped her bra and Charlie helped him take it off.

"You are so beautiful," he said as Charlie laid back turning her face away and smiling.

As Tate suckled on her nipples, Charlie brought her knees up to his armpits. He took turns, the left one, the right one; kissing on her ribs, kissing her sternum. Charlie watched the top of his head as he suckled on her, her head writhing on the pillow. The worst thing was the smile on her face. It was killing him.

Jonny reached behind him without looking, gripped his blanket and pulled it over his shoulder. Blanket clutched in a loose ball, he pressed it down hard between his legs.

Tate worked his mouth lower, kissing his way to her navel, and down to her pants button. He tugged with his teeth again, but had to use his fingers to get the button undone. The zipper was drawn down, revealing Charlie's pink underwear in the open V of her fly.

Charlie was eager, digging her heels into the mattress and raising her butt right up off the bed, pushing her shoulders into the pillow and looking down her body. Her nipples were like hard cherry pits sitting on her soft creamy breasts as Tate pulled her tight jeans down her legs.

He scooped them over her knees and she had to help, pushing them with her hands; Tate tugged on her boots and she had to kick her legs, laughing and joking as they had fun with each other. He got them off, throwing a boot on either side of the bed and kissing the inside of her calf as she rested her ankle over his shoulder. He stroked the inside of her thigh, his hand grazing lightly over her pussy; touching her over top of the cotton panties.

Then his tongue was licking from her waistband up to her neck and they kissed again, Tate over her. He ran his tongue down her body to between her legs and Charlie put a hand over her mouth, formed a fist and bit her first knuckle as he kissed her pussy over top of her panties. He pushed his mouth against her and Charlie made soft moaning sounds; Tate tugged down her panties, and she lifted her butt again. They were pulled free and tossed toward Jonny.

Charlie pressed the point of her knee against the huge bowed bulge pressing out the front of Tate's jeans. He arched his back, humped his hips against her pressing.

"We should get some lube," Charlie whispered.

"You want lube?"

Charlie's smile faltered, and she said, "Is that okay?"

"You know it is," he said and stroked her cheek.

"You're big."

Jonny grunted. She'd taken Reza, and he was probably bigger. More proof she wanted this to be pleasure over duty.

*If it's okay with Reza, it's okay with Tate… If it's okay with Reza, it's okay with Tate… If it's okay with Reza, it's okay with Tate…*

Tate said, "We can take our time, Charlie."

She nodded a slow and careful up and down line, her eyes on Tate's. "I'd like that," she said.

"If you need lube, we'll use it. But I don't think you do."

She smiled and pressed her knee into his large erection again. "I don't know…"

Tate lowered, his lips kissing her knee, then running along the inside of her thigh. Charlie began a high, quavering sound of intense anticipation; she was excited, breathless and bewildered. Tate wanted to please her with his mouth…

TATE LOWERED his face between her thighs, Charlie raised her knees for him making funny, nervous titters. But when he kissed her bare pussy, she arched her back and moaned.

Tate said, "You got such a beautiful pussy," then smoothed the back of her thighs, gripped behind her knees and pushed her legs up. She rested her bare feet on his shoulders as he kissed her between her legs. Charlie moaned and groaned, and made strained grunting sounds, being driven out of her mind. Her hands clenched the cotton sheets. Tate caressed her thighs while he ate her out, his round denim butt sticking up in the air. He worked her over, kissing and suckling, licking his finger and probing her, teasing her.

As he fingered her, he watched her reaction, smiling and enjoying it. Charlie writhed and bucked, grabbed handfuls of her own hair as she arched her back into a tight bow.

Then he was sucking on *two* fingers and teasing her, sliding them in, Charlie gasping and moaning, Tate chuckling as he watched her reactions, Charlie knowing he was laughing, and joining in, covering her face as this man *controlled* her with his hand and his mouth. Sometimes she would moan, close her eyes; other times she would stare, bug eyed but unseeing. She came finally.

Watching his wife come did Jonny in. Tate jacked his hand between her legs, sloppy sucking sounds, his muscles bulging. Charlie bucked and jumped and squeaked. Jonny's cock squashed between his legs, fighting the rubber, pushing into his body but now the arousal so intense the cage's outer ring pried upward, strangling his balls. Now he had that squirming feeling and a hurt in his stomach and balls. The arousal was denied.

As Charlie panted and moaned and Tate chuckled, Jonny opened out the blanket and put it over his head and shoulders, watched out at his wife and Tate on the bed from under its cowl.

Tate still stroked her, stroking his fingers inside her but getting up to kiss her face. Charlie hooked a forearm around his neck and hugged and kissed him in return.

Charlie's orgasm didn't sate her. It energized her.

Now she was sitting up, pushing Tate's hand away from between her legs, both of them on their butts and kissing. She rolled him back so he lay with his head at the foot of the bed, her hands working at his button and undoing his zipper. Together, they pulled his pants off and he kicked his shoes away. Charlie ran her hand over his cotton bulge, squeezing his balls and tracing the shape of his huge cock beneath the underwear.

But she was too eager to play around, and she hooked her fingers into the waistband and pulled them down to expose his bare hard cock. He scurried them down his thighs, caressing her arm.

His underwear wasn't even off and Charlie was kissing his balls, running her tongue up his length. She gripped him by the base and got her mouth over it. Tate closed his eyes and let her, laying back with his muscular body prostrate as Charlie stroked and sucked. There was something about Tate's big dick that she *loved*. She couldn't keep her mouth off it. She loved what he had between his legs. And it was a big beautiful thing, too, Jonny couldn't deny it. Huge but not garish, symmetrical and smooth and masculine. Charlie sucked until his whole shaft gleamed with wet.

"You going to fuck me?" she asked him, smiling and darting her tongue over his cock head. Her hand stroked up and squeezed.

"You're so fucking hot," Tate moaned.

"I want it so bad," she whispered, jerking him. "I want this big dick inside me."

Tate got up, and Charlie knew how she wanted it, rolling to her back, lifting her knees and opening her legs. Tate got over her, and she admired his muscle as he got hands on either side of her, his face over hers, big cock wagging between them. She stroked the inside of her knees against his hard, muscular sides.

She said, "I've waited for this a long time."

"Me too. I wanted this from the first second I saw you."

"Me too," she said.

They settled themselves in the bed, Tate raised up, hooking his forearms under her knees and straightening her body underneath him. He lined his cock up and Charlie brought her knees higher, the backs of her calves resting on his hard, muscular shoulders.

Again, there was that big smile on her face. She wanted this and there was no doubt in her mind. No trepidation. She'd been used a lot. She'd taken Reza many times. She was used to having sex with men who weren't her husband. And this time she was with somebody she liked it. Somebody she wanted to have inside her.

Tate pushed down with his middle fingers on the top side of his huge cock and nestled it in her folds. He said, "I'll be careful."

"Go slow," she said.

"You want it slow?"

"I want to make it last. Just when you put it in…"

Tate laughed; his laugh turned to a groan as he slid himself slowly inside her. He watched her face, her eyes locked on his. He did take his time, putting his thing into her as they both looked into each other's eyes. Charlie's mouth was held open in a gasp. Each time he sunk deeper she would huff breath.

He asked, "It's okay?"

She said, "It feels so good. Nice and slow…"

"You're so wet," he said.

"I am. You feel so good…"

"We don't need lube," Tate said.

She shook her head no. "We don't need lube…"

"I told you," he said.

She nodded now and bit her lower lip as he sunk his big thing even deeper.

Charlie closed her calves around either side of his neck as Tate now started to fuck her. Drawing his cock back out, pushing it in. Her hands scratched and grabbed at his thighs as he picked up the pace.

"Still okay?"

"Okay," she gasped. "Okay… Harder…"

"You want it harder?"

"Yeah, oh, mm-harder…"

Her hands gripped his waist and her nails scribbled over the small of Tate's back as his big, round, muscular rump rose and fell, his huge cock fully inside Charlie, her bare feet intertwined over Tate's head. She squeaked and gasped as he fucked her. Jonny could see his bouncing balls in a big round bunch underneath his asshole. Tate rolled and rocked, and Charlie drew lines all over his back. Soon he had her crying. Making her sex sounds that Jonny loved. Yes's and O's and That's its. She loved it with Tate. This man who rolled and wrestled with two-hundred-and-fifty pound giants had this hundred-ten pound beauty folded in two like a gymnast, her knees up to her ears as he fucked her hard and steady…

TATE DREW HIMSELF OUT, kneeled before her, torso upright so he could watch his cock moving in and out as his thumb stroked her clit. He said, "You're so tight. This pussy is so perfect…"

"Your *cock* is so perfect," she said, and stroked over top of his thumb, helping him please her clitoris.

Tate held her other hand and rocked himself against her, looking like he was riding a bull, big huge cock running in and out of Charlie. Her small breasts jostled on her chest, her hard nipples rolling around in circles as the bed rocked and the headboard banged against the wall.

They held hands and both of them teased her clit as he fucked her. Charlie moaned and groaned, made little squeaking sounds. Then he was overtop of her again, both her hands held in his and pinned above her head, hips driving hard. Charlie locked her legs around him, ankles twisted at the small of his back.

"It's so big… It's so big and perfect…"

"You're so tight and hot, and you're fucking beautiful," he said, rump rising and rolling, driving his huge thing in and out of her.

She gasped, "I'm going to come… I'm going to come, Tate…"

"Do it, come for me," he said and pounded her harder.

Jonny watched as one foot hooked over the other, her ankles locked, toes flexing, her feet curling. She panted and gasped, her breath coming quicker and quicker, Tate's rump driving like a piston. She cried out when she came, and Tate kissed her neck.

While she was still in the throes of her orgasm, panting heavily, Tate withdrew and rolled her over onto her tummy. She laughed, looked over her shoulder at him, raised her rump up, her little black star showing.

She said, "You want to fuck me from behind?…"

He straddled her, his thighs on either side of hers, took that huge thing, pushed into her from behind as she lay flat on the bed. Her legs kicked and she squealed with discomfort.

"You okay?"

"You're so big," she reminded him.

"You can take it. You're tight, but you can take it."

"I like taking it," she said, and he picked up the pace, pounding her until he had the bed bouncing again, her creamy buttocks slapping and jiggling as he fucked her. His two big hands pressed over her narrow back and he pushed her into the bed so he could pound her even harder.

Charlie made great sounds of discomfort but also pleasure. Loving every bit of it, but Jonny knew it was hurting her. Tate was big and powerful, and as much as it hurt her, Charlie *wanted* it. Jonny knew the feeling. His cock was gripped in a rubber vise and there was nothing he could do about it—but he didn't want it any other way.

Charlie crossed her ankles over, bringing her knees together, making her opening even tighter, giving more resistance to Tate's penetration. Charlie getting off on being taken by a man so large and powerful.

When it was too much for her, she dug her hands into the mattress then and pushed herself up so that she was on all fours with her knees out wide. Tate took her from behind still, his hands on her ass, rolling her into his thrusts, his hands palming the round curve of her ass cheeks.

Charlie came again. Gasping, "You're so big, you're so big," and then, "Harder, oh, harder, harder…"

Tate appeased her, driving hard and fast and slapping her ass now. Then he stopped while she was coming. Held himself steady, his huge cock outright and buried inside her but he let Charlie do all the work, let her get what she needed. Riding out an orgasm and swiveling her hips with her large lover fully planted inside her. She shone with sweat and her hair tangled on her face. She said, "I need you to come. Can you come for me?…"

# 16

TATE POUNDED HER, showing the strain on his face. "Oh fuck, I'm so close…"

Charlie on her back now, Tate overtop, said, "Do it, come for me."

Tate groaned and arched his back, baring his teeth. "Oh fuck, it's coming…"

"Give it to me…"

"You're not on the pill."

"No," she gasped. The headboard beat against the wall.

He grunted, "Is it okay?"

"I-I think so…"

From the floor, underneath the blanket's cowl, Jonny said, "You *think* so?…"

But it was too late, Tate had both her hands pinned on the pillows above her head and Charlie was wild in ecstasy. He pounded her faster and faster; the veins raced through his biceps and forearms, his skin shone wet and then he was ejaculating inside her. Bellowing and thrusting, bucking, holding himself inside, withdrawing and thrusting again; each time roaring like an animal and Charlie wailed underneath him, twisting and writhing with her hands pinned above her, loving every drop he was putting inside her.

Charlie's ankles, locked over his back, clung and climbed as Tate continued to spurt his seed inside her; she mewled, eyes closed, chin upturned.

The room went quiet without their squeals and roars—their rushing, heavy breaths seeming timid in the absence of their shouted ecstasy.

Tate panted, "Holy… holy shit…"

"I know…"

"Oh, wow…"

"Tell me about it," Charlie whispered and ran the back of a hand over her sweaty brow.

It got them both laughing, their tummies bouncing.

"Ooh, oh," Charlie protested, hand going down to where Tate speared her. "Don't laugh, don't laugh… oh, ha, I'm so sensitive. Take it out."

As Tate withdrew, Charlie's sleepy eyes fluttered and her mouth hung open. There was a wet smacking sound, then Tate plopped his big wet cock over her mound. Charlie looked down her body and smiled, swaying her hips, knees up at Tate's sides still.

Jonny groaned and pinched his thighs together. His mind was reeling, feeling airy and floating yet heavy and leaden all at once. His vision was dim and set with sparkling stars. The sight of Tate's big cock on his wife's belly, a plump trail of pearly semen snaking from the slit proved too much. He eased forward, hunched over, fell to the floor and thumped his forehead against the hardwood. He kept himself upright, hands

shoved in the sweatshirt pouch, forehead rolling side to side over the floor, appreciating its cool hardness.

From the bed, Charlie's voice: "Oh, hoo," she sighed, "that was so-oo amazing…"

"You can fu-uck," Tate said. Charlie giggled at that.

The whole display—Charlie engaged in a hybrid of fucking and lovemaking—was profoundly worse than watching her with Reza. With Reza it was animal lust and domination… This was… this was…

Charlie's voice again: "You all right?"

…It was dangerous.

"Jonny, you okay?"

"Yeah," he grunted into the floor, eyes closed. Body tucked into a ball, he rolled to a shoulder then onto his back, knees pulled up to his chest. Charlie peered over the edge of the bed with a look of concern. Her hair tumbled around her face and he could see the slope of one bare breast but not her nipples.

Her lips wriggled, and she frowned. "You sure you're all right? Is it your cage?"

"You think it's okay?"

"Is it too tight?"

"Not that. Not my cage. What he did… *inside* you… You *think* it's okay?"

"Yeah…"

It took some work, but he made it to his knees, hands still shoved in the front of his sweatshirt pouch and turned around to face the bed again. "You think?"

"It's okay, Jonny."

"Is it?"

She rolled her eyes, flopped back to the bed, perfect little breasts shaking. She stared at the ceiling. There was irritation in her voice: "I think so."

"Charlie, come on…"

"It's fine, Jonny, it's fine…" she said, exasperated.

"Charlie, this is serious—"

"It's fine, Jonny. I can count days. It's just, is it *ever* fine?" She turned her palms up.

He grimaced, sank his butt back on his heels and squeezed his thighs. His prostate throbbed, pulsing like a live wire. His balls ached as though they were squeezed. His penis was inside his body, he was sure of it, pushed up into his belly or something. He shook his head, then hung it.

"I hope you're okay," Charlie whispered.

"I'll live."

He squinted to see her, and she smiled. Tate loomed over her shoulder, turning his head now on the pillow to regard Jonny. He'd stayed out of it, always preferring to pretend Charlie's husband didn't exist.

Charlie rolled her head to Tate. "They made him put on a smaller cage."

Tate showed no expression.

Jonny said, "He knows. He was there."

Tate scowled.

"Oh?"

Jonny smiled, said, "He was the one who put it on me."

Charlie's expression pinched; he watched it sag, look unsure, move toward concern, then break with humor. She chuckled, looked over her shoulder at Tate again. "*You* put it on him?"

Tate's expression stayed blank, and he shrugged one round, bulging shoulder.

"You actually put it on him with your hands?"

Tate's eyes moved to the side to meet hers.

Charlie smiled wider as she comprehended this. "Did you touch his penis?"

"No," Tate said, scowling.

"How'd you put it in a cage?"

"He didn't touch my penis," Jonny said.

"You slipped it over?"

Tate shrugged and shook his head: *obviously*.

"You locked my husband's penis up?"

Tate averted his eyes and smirked.

Jonny said, "Reza made him."

Charlie looked to Jonny, registered the menace on his face. "Oh."

They were all quiet a moment, then Charlie smiled again. Over her shoulder to Tate: "Did you lock up my husband's dick and then have sex with me in front of him?"

Tate smirked, eyes up to the ceiling. "I guess…"

Jonny groaned, "What's Reza got on you, anyway?"

Charlie whispered to Tate, "That is so *crazy* bad."

Tate's eyes met hers. "You like it?"

"I don't know what to think." She chuckled now, and her breasts shook. Jonny saw her nipples had hardened again. "You used your hands to lock his cage?"

Smirk tugging to one side, Tate looked up to the ceiling again.

"What a bad boy you are," Charlie whispered, and poked an index finger into the muscle of his shoulder, "locking up my husband and then doing what you just did to me."

Tate's smile widened, and he chuckled too.

"You locked him up to have your way with me?" Now she pounded a light and loose fist on his chest. He grabbed her wrist.

"You're a monster," Charlie mouthed, then smiled.

Tate pulled her on top of him, hugged her, rolled away and got over her. She sunk into the bed under him, eyes on his, knees raising.

Their breaths came heavy again; Tate reached between their legs, rolled his hips up.

Charlie gasped, her nails gripped into his lower back as he fixed his huge cock in her opening. Then they were kissing, Tate's hips humping into her again, Charlie's hands stroking his muscle. The wet mucous sounds of their joined sexes were loud in the apartment. Charlie's passage accommodated her lover with the lubrication from his first ejaculation.

As she panted and gasped—Tate stroking deeper—Jonny's teeth and knees ached. The urge to orgasm was triggered but his arousal was impossible. His body curled up again like a potato bug but he couldn't protect himself from hearing their sex sounds.

With great effort he pushed himself to kneel, then stand. In his periphery he saw Tate's wide back, muscular arms supporting him over Charlie; her thin white legs were up and open, knees in Tate's armpits. The steady syncopated suction as her canal was stroked by her lover's large organ accompanied him as he stumbled across the foot of the bed, banging off the washroom door frame. He closed the door with his knee, tumbled to sit heavily on the lip of the tub.

It was quieter, but he could still hear his wife's gasps. He turned, levered the water and let it rush in the tub, pulled his hood tighter around his face and put his hands over his ears.

HE GAVE THEM FIFTEEN MINUTES.

With careful slowness he let the hood peel from his head and he heard nothing. Bathtub lever closed with an elbow he listened. No sex sounds.

It had taken fifteen minutes of meditation, wasting water down the drain, but his throbbing arousal had subsided. The ache remained, and he was sure his testicles had been destroyed by the pressure.

At the sink he washed his face, didn't look in the mirror. teeth brushed, hair combed, he cracked the door and looked out.

His wife lay naked over the covers, satisfied, exhausted, the pink line of her sex gleamed wet. His stomach flipped over. Door opened further, he saw Tate sitting at the edge of the bed with his feet on the floor.

With his back to Charlie, Tate stretched and said, "Well, we could go out. You want to do that?"

Charlie said, "Unh-unh," her hand tracing between her legs and feeling where this man had punished her with large pleasure.

"You don't want to go out?" Tate asked, looking over his shoulder at her.

"I want to stay naked till tomorrow," she said. Now she caught Jonny watching from the bathroom. She smiled and twinkled her fingers at him in a playful wave.

Tate said, "Let's order in."

Charlie sat up cross-legged, made a sad face at Jonny, mouthed: "You okay?"

He nodded, opened the door wider.

Tate said to Charlie, "What do you like to eat?"

Eyes still on Jonny, she tried to hold back a smile but couldn't. She giggled and covered her mouth. "Umm… Pizza?…" She winked at Jonny.

Jonny's heart lifted and he couldn't help it. He smiled too.

Tate said, "I would *de*-molish a pizza. Angelo's?…"

Charlie gasped. "I *love* Angelo's."

Jonny grunted, shook his head, heart feeling squeezed, belly feeling hard and hurting, testicles feeling ruined. He turned and dropped his butt into his workstation chair.

Arm up on the ledge of his desk, he scooted fingers at the mouse to bring his workstation to life. Both monitors glowed to vibrant light, one with code, the other with a playing demo and a window showing unopened messages from Javed and Shulamit. The one from Javed was marked urgent with an exclamation mark, but he was not in the mood to deal with it just yet.

Tate rose to stand, still half-hard and shining, stretching arms above his head. Their eyes met, and Tate looked away, disgruntled. Arms down, swinging, making that penis dance, he came around the foot of the bed, grabbed his jeans from the floor where they'd been tossed. Phone retrieved from a pocket, he made his way to the couch and dropped himself on it, put his bare feet up on the coffee table and dialed. His genitals hung under his thighs, resting against the couch's welt.

While Tate dialed, Charlie got up from the bed, gathered sheets around herself like a toga and came to him. He rolled his chair to face his workstation, and she put her arms around him and stood at his side, resting a knee up on the arm. The movement of her legs stirred up a humid sex smell from between her thighs.

"I know it's hard, Jonny," she said and hugged his shoulders, kissed him above his ear.

He scoffed, and she realized what she said.

"Not like that."

"I know."

"Is it really uncomfortable?"

"It's nothing like the other cage. Nothing at all. It's impossible."

"I'm so sorry, Jonny. I wish there was something I could do."

"It hurts my stomach so bad. My knees, my jaw, my temples. I have such a fucking headache."

She kissed the top of his ear.

He said, "Would you check it for me?"

"Sure," she whispered.

"I'm afraid to look," he told her, pulling down the front of his sweatpants.

Charlie scooted forward enough she could peer down the front of his pants. She put a warm hand over his and guided him to open his pants further. He looked up at the ceiling while she examined him. She made a soft slow exhale.

He asked her: "Is it still there?"

"It's still there, baby."

"It feels like it's going inside my body."

"Can I touch it?"

"Okay. Don't get me going…"

He kept his eyes on the ceiling. Tate talked to the guy at Angelo's. Charlie's fingertips prickled through his pubic hair and got his stomach fluttering.

Tate said, "Meat lovers,' right? You like meat?"

"Meat lovers,'" Charlie agreed without looking around. Her fingertips went over his swollen testicles. "And tiramisu and some Brios, too."

Tate said okay and relayed it to the guy at the pizzeria.

Jonny said to Charlie: "They feel like they're going to explode."

"One more week, Jonny. We'll make em explode together."

The sweet sound of her voice, her fingers patting his aching balls, the sex smell from her, her promise of sexual favor, her proximity all proved too much, and he groaned.

"Stop," he said and regretted it. But if he let her play with his balls, all that would come of it was discomfort and dissatisfaction. Right now it would be possible for him to get up, wander to the toilet, knock the lid up and throw out all his stomach contents through his yawning mouth. The *squeeze* on his balls was enormous.

She asked him, "Are your balls really sore."

He nodded. "Are they blue?"

"Not really. They look… *big*."

"They ache so bad."

"Jonny, I wish I could help you. I really do."

"I know…"

"That cage is so small, Jonny, I have no idea how Tate got your willy in there."

"It wasn't easy," he told her.

"I'll bet," she said, kissed his ear again, eased off the chair's arm and left him.

Her bare feet padded the wood floor, took her across to the couch where she collapsed next to Tate and he hugged an arm around her. Jonny watched her in the small cosmetic mirror, having to reach and touch it downward so it would angle to see her. Tate sat naked, Charlie lay next to him wound in bedsheets.

She asked Tate, "Want to watch some TV while we wait for our pizza?"

Tate said he did, and they flicked the TV on and it wasn't long before Charlie was introducing him to the old black and white episodes of The Twilight Zone. Jonny popped up a messenger window and fired off a message to Reza. His feet bounced under the desk, waiting for a reply. He hated reaching out to his tormentor like this, but maybe enough was enough.

THE MESSAGE he'd sent to Reza…

**Jonny**: I will do anything you want to get this cage off

It was almost ten minutes of agony before he got a response.

**Reza**: you're doing it now

**Jonny**: please

**Reza**: you're doing anything right now

**Jonny**: ?

The dancing dots showing waiting for Reza's response showed the man's irritation.

**Reza**: you're getting your cage off next week and right now is what you're doing to make it happen. isn't it fucking obvious?

**Jonny**: I'll do anything you want to get the cage off RIGHT NOW

**Reza**: you don't have anything I want

**Jonny**: percentage

**Reza**: percentage of what?

The apartment intercom buzzed. The pizza guy was here from Angelo's.

**Jonny**: the company

**Reza**: your company is nothing, your game is nothing. it's a joke. just suck it up

Jonny sighed, grunted, bumped a fist on the workstation desk. Over his shoulder Tate was on the couch canoodling with his wife right now, waiting for their pizza.

**Jonny**: let's make a deal

It was almost two minutes before Reza responded, Charlie and Tate giggling and being playful, play wrestling. Tate dared Charlie to answer the door for the pizza guy naked.

Finally…

**Reza**: yawn, stop annoying me…

**Reza**: shit you know what? I got the key here with me in Norway
**Jonny**: you do not
**Reza**: I absolutely do, you're wasting your time
**Reza**: kiss Charlie for me

He knew there would be no more responses from the landlord.

"No way, no way, no way," Charlie was saying. "You do it."

"Me do it? With my dick out? Who would want to see that?"

Charlie laughed. "Please! I want to see that…"

"I'm not doing that."

Charlie said, "But it's fine if I do it?"

"It'll be a guy."

"So?"

"It'd be funny to see his face."

"For you maybe."

Tate agreed with a smirk. "Yeah, for me."

"Why would you be looking at the guy's face?" Jonny said, scowling at them.

Charlie smiled. "Yeah, why would you be looking at the guy's face if I'm naked?"

"You got me. I'd be looking at your ass."

"You're bad," she said and beat his shoulder with a fist.

There was a knock at the door…

WHILE CHARLIE TITTERED with her hands over her mouth, hiding behind the couch and spying, Tate went up wearing only a towel and answered the door like that. While his wife got a big kick out of it, Jonny saw nothing funny, nor did the delivery guy. It was pretty anti-climactic but Charlie howled like it was the greatest prank she'd ever been a part of.

Jonny skipped dumb Angelo's pizza and worked while they ate and watched TV. It was hard to concentrate, but he enjoyed the challenge right now. Tate and Charlie grew silent and their movie ended. They didn't change the channel. They'd fallen asleep together.

Jonny worked for another hour without them moving.

But soon the lovers on the couch roused. Movement in his cosmetic mirror caught his eye, and he watched Charlie come awake, smiling. She lay with her head in Tate's lap, between his legs, her long body stretched out on the couch, Tate with his feet on the floor. The bed sheet wrapped her still, and covered parts of Tate as well. She kissed his stomach, and he played with her hair, his eyes heavy and drowsy.

He asked her: “You feel like doing something?”

Charlie nodded, kissed his stomach a little lower.

Now her arm moved, came out from the cover of the bedsheet and her hand slipped between them. Tate’s head went back and Charlie lay his flaccid cock over her neck. Her hand disappeared again and Jonny assumed she was pushing Tate’s balls, at least one of them, into her mouth and sucking on it. Tate’s head went back, and he groaned.

Charlie used her mouth to play with and suck Tate’s scrotum for a while. His cock lengthened, grew hard, rose off her neck; tapping it once in a while as they moved around a little.

Tate said, “Is there something you want to do?”

Charlie shrugged and Tate’s cock bounced on her collar. She rolled to her back; Tate took his heavy manhood and tapped it over her mouth and Charlie laughed, pursed her lips and made noises against his skin.

Tate said, “Is there?”

Charlie took his cock overhand, ran her tongue along his underside, moved it out of the way so she could say, “Maybe.”

“Tell me.”

Jonny strained to hear, knowing she would whisper. His thighs had closed and flexed like iron again.

Charlie whispered, “Maybe I could ride it.”

“You want to ride it?” Tate smiled.

Charlie made an embarrassed face, took his cock and covered her eyes like she could hide behind it. Tate extended both arms over the back of the couch, his cock over Charlie’s face, too engorged now to drape it was straight as an arrow.

“Come on,” Tate whispered in a low, husky voice, encouraging her.

Charlie rose with the sheets scooped around her and straddled Tate’s lap. They kissed for a long while, Tate’s hands feeling her back. Then the sound of rustling sheets and Jonny tilted the mirror to see Charlie tugging them away to bare their sexes. Tate’s cock was erect and upright, pressing against the softness of one of her ass cheeks. She caressed its underside, moved it, angled it, eased forward so its tip nestled in her glistening pink stripe. Once it was seated, she put both hands on his shoulders and slowly sank herself on him, sliding it deep inside her. Tate’s balls climbed and rolled in their sack at the feel of her hot tightness on him.

“Jesus,” Jonny sighed and tightened his hood around his face.

He tried to look away, look at his code instead but all he could see in the small, round mirror was his wife’s pale shoulders rising and falling as she rode her well-endowed lover right behind him.

Their sounds grew. Soft gasps, moans, Tate grunted, and growled.

“Oh fuck,” he grunted, his cock squished in its silicon grip. He hunched over and almost fell out of his chair.

The sounds stopped.

When he looked up, he saw Charlie watching him over her shoulder. She had her legs over Tate’s thighs and her pussy was spread by the man’s erect width.

“Sorry, Jonny,” she whispered.

He grimaced, turned away from them, hurting so bad between his legs.

There was a slick sound, and he was sure it was Tate withdrawing his sword from her fleshy sheath, then bare feet on the floor.

He looked to see Charlie taking Tate by both hands, naked, lifting him to stand, saying, “Come on, take me into the shower… Let’s leave him alone…”

IT WAS CONSIDERATE; her taking Tate into the bathroom to fuck. But while it helped the discomfort he felt between his legs, it didn't remove it completely. He could hear the squeak of their feet in the tub, could hear what might be an elbow bump the tile wall a few times. He heard Charlie laugh. His imagination could fill in all the rest. What he imagined might be worse than what was really occurring—maybe they were just soaping each other up, making shampoo mohawks—but it was probably parallel. And wasn't the idea of them just in there naked under the water's spray and touching each other bad enough? His dick thought so, struggling with the silicon sleeve.

Regardless, the situation playing out on the couch or in the bathroom made it impossible to work. His screens had gone asleep while he sat here and tried to listen-without-listening to what transpired with his wife and the heavyweight champ just on the other side of the wall behind his computer.

The water turned off, taps squeaking and Jonny sat straight and rubbed his cheeks, massaged his temples. The doorknob clicked, and he started. There hadn't been enough time for them to dry… A lightning flash of consideration struck him—Charlie would ask him to come join them…

Charlie pranced out the door, headed for the bed. She was completely naked, her alabaster skin still wet. her gingery mane had been soaked and ringlets of dark red hair bounced on her back. Three steps, breasts jumping, and she hurled herself on the bed with a giggle. Tate emerged now, naked as Jonny's wife. His hair was wet and slicked back from his handsome face; water ran rivulets over his muscle. Between his legs his cock stuck out straight and hard and furious looking, his huge glans like a small clenched fist. The thing couldn't be more erect, straight and out, pointing upward even though it was so large its weight wanted to succumb to gravity.

Charlie looked over her shoulder, seeing him emerging, and wagged her bottom at him; presenting as they called it in the animal kingdom. The lurid sight had Jonny bucking in his chair and leaning forward. His eyes bugged out of his head, wanting to see every detail of this but his heart and mind knew better.

So did Charlie. She said, "Jonny, is it okay to switch? I'm sorry, we can't do what we want in there. We need a bed…"

"Want m-me to go in the bathroom…?" His voice was thick, his tone nonsensical. His pulse raced at the sight of her baring herself like this to her hung lover so impressively engorged. Tate looked enormous right now.

"You don't have to," she said. "Should you?"

It's like she knew this was going to be bad and he might not want to watch. But that made him want to watch even more.

Charlie said to Tate, "Ho, wow, look how *hard* you are…"

"Is it going to be bad?" Jonny asked, his voice thinned to a quiet, sandy croak. He was sidestepping to the open bathroom door, his stomach cramping already.

Charlie didn't hear him, watching between Tate's legs as his fully hard monster barely bobbed with his steps to the bed. She bit her lower lip then let it slide away from her teeth as her smile grew.

Tate said, "You did that. Look what you did to me…" He flexed his stomach and hips and his cock flexed and lifted.

She laughed.

Tate murmured, "You and that mouth…"

"Did I do that?" she said slyly. Tate put a knee on the bed and caressed Charlie's ass cheek. She made a purring sound and leaned to his touch. He patted her flesh lightly.

Backing into the bathroom, hunching, hands in his sweatshirt pouch, Jonny asked, "What are you guys going to do?"

Charlie said, "He's going to show me how to take it all…"

"Take it all?"

"His whole thing," Charlie said, looking at Tate's cock, "all the way…"

Tate patted her ass cheek again, and she raised her eyes to meet his. She said, "All nine-point-two-five inches."

Jonny said, "You don't like that. You complain it hurts."

Charlie said, "He's going to show me how I'll like it."

Tate said, "You're going to like it."

"I believe you," she said.

Jonny rested a hand on the doorknob, ready to close the door but unable. Whatever was going to happen he shouldn't watch. It would crush him; crush his spirit, crush his heart, his ego, his cock, his balls…

Tate got both knees on the bed and walked close to her bent over rump, using both hands to caress her ass. One knee poking her inner thigh, he said, "Spread a little wider…"

"Like this?" She moved her knees outward and curled her ass upward, showing off her glistening slit.

"That's perfect," he said.

It was only one second, but Charlie's eyes flitted to meet Jonny's. In that moment he felt some connection, some understanding. If it's okay with Reza, it's okay with Tate. And she had humor in her eyes. This was fun. Tate was good to her. Tate didn't punish. Tate was a reward. But in that quick eye-flash he also felt communication. Two things:

1) Charlie saying You probably shouldn't watch this, Jonny

2) Charlie angled herself on the bed so if her husband watched he could see clearly what happened

He kept the door open and Tate prodded at her opening with his corpulent cock head as big as a ripe, bursting plum. Charlie's jaw levered open, her lips parting in a gasp, her face looking down her body to see this big man try to put his whole big thing all the way inside her.

Tate smoothed his hand over the small of her back, still stroking his tip against her. "Tilt your pelvis forward for me, Charlie."

"How?"

"Try to stick your perfect butt up a little higher, like you want your butt hole to point at the ceiling."

"Like this?—"

She grunted as he pushed the end of his cock past her opening and slid into her body. Her toes curled, and she moaned quietly, her head rocking like she might faint.

"Easy, easy," Tate said, sliding deeper. "Up, up, Charlie. Anus up, your belly button to the tops of your thighs…"

Charlie's eyes were closed, her face yawning in ecstasy—but her ears were working, hearing her lover. Her hips tilted, thighs flexing; her ass rolled higher—Tate's cock pushed halfway in—and her tummy expanded as she drew a deep belly breath.

"That's it," Tate said, hand going up and down from low back to tailbone, soothing her. "Does it feel okay?"

Charlie nodded. Saliva spilled over her bottom lip and she sucked it back up.

Tate's eyes cast up to the ceiling, open but unseeing, his concentration on his mind's eye. "I'm deep, Charlie, do you feel it?"

She nodded, brow furrowing.

"Keep your back arched. You feel that?"

She made a funny grunt.

"I'm touching your cervix."

She cocked her head and made a look of discomfort. Jonny fell to the side and leaned on the doorway. His stomach felt like it turned over and got hung up in its cords and passages and was strangling itself right now.

Tate said, "Keep your back arched, keep it arched, that's it…" He slid himself deeper until he was all the way in. Charlie's eyebrows raised high into her hairline and her mouth hung open.

"Your uterus is tilted away, now I'm over your cervix, the tip of my cock is caressing it, but I'm past it, not pushing *in*to it…"

Charlie made a silent gasp, brows still raised, eyes closed, paying attention to her own mind's eye.

Jonny sank to his knees. His legs had turned to noodles, his balls into throbbing walnuts.

Tate said, “I won’t move. I don’t want to hurt you. You move how you want. I’m touching you where probably no man has touched you before. It’s a whole new G-spot.”

“It’s so big, it’s so big,” Charlie mouthed as her hands gripped bedding and her hips began to work.

Her cheek came to rest on the mattress, her hips humped in slow and careful increments against Tate. Tate had impaled her on that massive spear. His pubic bones were pressed into her creamy buttocks and his hands caressed her back while she worked herself against him.

“Oh gosh, it’s so deep, mm, so deep,” she moaned, hips moving with more energy, her tummy moving in and out. Tate moved one hand underneath to feel her ribs and stomach.

It went on for a long time and Jonny sank onto his heels, eyes never leaving the action, seeing his wife get the deepest pleasure she could and loving it. A little bounce began, Charlie’s hips jumping against his intrusion, setting a little jiggle through her ass cheeks. Her breaths came quicker, and she panted and sucked her lips. Jonny watched her ribs press in and out on her sides as the pleasure grew more intense and he knew it would just be a matter of time before she had an orgasm.

Her head thrust face down in the mattress as she made a sound like she’d been thumped in the stomach. Her hands went outstretched ahead of her, and she ran herself back against Tate, stretched in an awkward looking downward dog. Tate gripped her hips and pushed himself deeply and she moaned a quavering sound into the bedding. A tremble began in her thighs, and her arms shook.

Her neck craned, her head twisted and Jonny would swear his wife wanted him to see her expression when she came. It looked like she was singing, joining in with a chorus only no sound emanated. Brows high, her jaw unlocked, her mouth in a wide open O shape with her chin jutted forward.

Something happened between his legs when she cried out. Charlie let out a gulping wail and her body bucked. She babbled nonsense for a moment, hid her face then showed it again.

“Ho smoke, ho smoke, oh, ah, oh…”

She shrieked as the height of her orgasm hit her and bared her teeth. That’s when Jonny bucked and he swore a completely ruined orgasm drained and drooled from the end of his caged penis. It was a sad feeling of loss and emptying; whatever erotic nugget he could hold on to inside his core leaked out the end of his dick and he wanted it back because he didn’t get to enjoy it at all. He’d give anything right now—his whole game if he had to—to touch his dick and hold his Charlie.

He slumped against the wall feeling the wet spreading through the crotch of his sweatpants, sure now he'd spewed impotent seed out of his rubber cage. His balls felt lighter, but despondent and regretful, like they wanted their contents back as well.

Charlie continued to wail and pull on the sheets with shaking, writhing fists, and Tate began a steady rhythmic bucking against her. It brought her waning orgasm back to vivid life, and she met his gentle thrusts with her bouncing bottom. An undulating moan sang from her parted lips.

Just when he thought it was over it reached new depths of glorious hurt.

Charlie gasped in a tight squeaky voice: "Oh wait, oh no, ah…"

Her feet arched and tightened, and her knees bent, ankles squeezing along the sides of Tate's muscular thighs. Her eyes opened wide and staring and she took a look of emergent dread. Something bad was happening. Her body tightened, cords and muscle standing out against her light frame; her hand shot between her legs to cover where she was skewered.

"Oh no, wait... stop..."

But Tate didn't stop. His hands squeezed tighter at her sides and he pushed himself deep as he would go; the muscles of his thighs and glutes flexing; his erection inside Charlie most assuredly doing the same. Bright winking droplets spritzed up her backside and over Tate's belly and Charlie's rump. Charlie moaned again, this time the sound fearful and worried. Tate smiled, let his grip go.

Charlie eased forward; Jonny could see her arm shaking, her hand thrusting between her legs, jacking on her clit; her face twisted in silent, agonized ecstasy. Sprinkling eructation spattered Tate's belly, high pressure excitement splashing around his huge intrusion inside her.

Charlie whimpered, "Oh what's happening?—oh no..."

Tate rubbed the pad of his arced thumb over her anus in hard circles, cock still inside her; Charlie rubbed her clit; the tinkling still came. Wet droplets pattered the bedding with quiet taps.

"Oh no, oh, oh no," Charlie continued whimpering, making embarrassed sounds in her throat, rolling forward, Tate's erection popping out of her and wagging up and down. She thrust herself into the sheets where it was dry and brought her knees up. Her expression was bewildered, shocked.

Tate soothed her: "It's good, Charlie, it's good, you're squirting..." He rested a hand on her knee.

"I am, I am," she said, "what's... why...?"

The hand on her knee curled inside her thigh and spread her legs. Charlie went with it, rolling onto her back but trying to keep her knees together. Both hands on her knees,

Tate opened her up and lowered between her legs. She took him willingly, opening her arms to embrace him, taking his kiss as he slid that iron monster inside her once more.

The effect was immediate: Charlie gasped as though she came again, and her head rocked back; Tate kissed her neck and bit at her collar.

Nails ran red lines on Tate's back and she hooked her ankles around his waist. Tate pounded her now until the headboard beat against the wall. It was Tate's turn, and he was getting what he wanted now.

Jonny squeezed his cage overtop of his sweatpants wishing he hadn't seeped out what was in his balls, wishing for that tension again; the tension brought hurt, the hurt reminded him why he worked.

Up and down, Tate's round muscular rump drove his cock in and out of Charlie while she hollered in agonized joy underneath him; Jonny was sure she was still riding the wave of her hugest orgasm. Tate began a grunt as he got closer and when Charlie heard his sounds she recognized them, clutched her arms around his neck tight, clung to him.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah," Tate chanted as it built. Charlie's feet flexed, anticipating her enormous bull of a lover's eruption inside her.

It happened then: Tate roared, arched his back, cabled muscles of his straightened arms bulging and gleaming. Charlie's eyes were open, watching Tate as he came inside her, hands coming up and caressing his chest and stomach, admiring his hard masculine body. Her eyes gleamed, lost and wild and lusty...

IN THE AWFUL aftermath the two lovers lay in the wasteland battleground of the bed, twisted in sheets and soaked with sweat. Tate lay on his back, head on a pillow. They were diagonal across the bed, corner to corner, Charlie curled at his side with her head on his chest, his arm draped around to hug her against his muscle. She still breathed heavy and her eyes showed the wonder of what she just experienced.

Jonny breathed heavy as well. There was a certain relief in being drained. The feeling of impending explosion had expired, and his testicles felt safe once more though they still ached. At least they didn't throb with the electric pulse of a downed power line.

Charlie sighed, drew her knees up till they pressed Tate's hip; she tucked a hand between her thighs and lay it over her sex. She whispered, "What did you do to me?"

"Did you like it?" he asked her, touched his chin to the top of her head. Her hair framed her face in wet tangles still and it made her look so much younger; her eyes looked wide and innocent.

She said, “Yeah,” a husky, high whisper; nodded her head. Then she added much quieter: “I tinkled everywhere.”

Tate chuckled, hugged her with his arm, kissed her hairline. “We’re really going to have to change these sheets now.”

Charlie smiled and hid her face against his chest. With her lips squashed against him, she said, “They’ve got all kinds of stuff all over them.”

“They sure do.”

Tate’s cock was still half-engorged, laying lazy on his thigh looking plump but flaccid. Charlie eyed it, smirking. She said, “Look at that thing.”

Tate’s eyes lowered, and he flexed his stomach.

Charlie held his cock, lifting it and cradling it in her palm as if she tested its weight.

In reflex, Jonny closed the door, but he sat in the way so he just pulled it against his knees; the door’s sharp edge lined a satisfying crease of pain across him. He couldn’t help but watch even though his wife’s actions were renewing the discomfort between his legs.

She held Tate’s cock upright, and it sagged across her knuckles. She wagged it and made the end half bounce around. She smiled wider, said, “It’s all sticky from my insides.”

Tate laughed, stomach muscles flexing; his balls rolled in their sack.

Now Charlie, still admiring it, said, “If I were a boy this is exactly what I would want between my legs.”

Tate said, “You would?”

“Don’t you like it?”

“Of course I do.”

“What you just did to me…” Her eyes went wistful, her voice trailing off.

“Wouldn’t you want that every night?”

Charlie’s eyes widened, trailed slowly toward Jonny, then darted back to Tate’s cock. She ignored the question, saying now, “Look at the head on it. It looks like a big army helmet.” Her hand stroked up the shaft to pause just under Tate’s glans.

Tate laughed again, put an arm under his head to prop himself forward to watch what she did. He grew harder in her hand. Jonny watched from the shadows of the bathroom floor, trying to close himself off but still see.

Charlie said, “Look at this rim,” and her thumb flicked the flared edge of the coronal ridge, watching it plop up and down as she did. “Yours is the most beautiful one I’ve ever seen.”

Tate smiled. “Thanks, Charlie.”

“Reza’s is big, too, maybe bigger, but his is so scary it—”

“No, no,” Tate said, losing his smile and scowling.

Charlie let his cock go, looked up to meet his eyes. Tate ran a sopping strand of hair from her cheek. “Don’t say that. Don’t talk about him. Don’t even say his name, okay? This is *our* time together.”

Charlie kept his gaze for a moment, silent, biting a little at her lip. Tate’s expression softened from a scowl.

Charlie raised a knee up over his thigh till her leg touched his cock. She said, “You think you could make me tinkle again?”

# 18

AWAKE IN THE MORNING LIGHT, Jonny stared at the apartment ceiling and played back the highlights of the previous evening.

After Charlie and Tate fucked again, Charlie riding on top once more, they napped. Charlie did not tinkle, but they'd tried. Jonny worked some more, getting some coding done and working on the UX. The lovers roused. They were hungry. They ate leftover tiramisu and ordered in Chinese. Jonny ignored them, putting on his headphones till the food arrived. The three of them ate together at the kitchen table like the weirdest family that ever existed. Charlie tried to engage him though he was surly and sullen. Tate ignored him. Tate asked Charlie if she wanted to go out to a club and she said she did but they never made it. The two of them tried picking out clothing for her to wear, Charlie changing right in front of Tate, Tate's hungry eyes going all over every naked inch of her and Charlie liking it. Charlie strutted around with nothing on but high heels, leafing through her closet and Tate couldn't take it anymore. He took her down onto the bed and fucked her with her heels on. He did her from behind, they did it her on top, him on top, ankles over his shoulders… When they were done they collapsed, Tate's cock slipped out of her and she seeped his seed. She laughed and cupped her pussy and told him there was no way she could go dancing, anyway. Too sore. They cuddled, kissed, napped again. Jonny worked with his hood still up. Some time before midnight they woke again and made love like spoons. It was slow and quiet and went on for a long time. They both came, but it was not the vocal theatrics of earlier in the day. Jonny worked till two in the morning, then shut his monitors down, stood at the foot of the bed and watched them sleeping before collapsing on the couch and sleeping in his clothes.

Now it was a little after eight in the morning and Charlie was up and stretching, smiling and bright-eyed like she'd got a great night's sleep…

SUNDAY MORNING, blue skies and sunshine beyond the window of their apartment that smelled like sweat, pussy, and semen. Jonny sat up to see Charlie flop over the bed and drum her hands on sleeping Tate's muscular mid-riff. His legs jumped up to protect himself and Charlie giggled. Their eyes met and Tate came awake, smiling and blinking at her fresh and beautiful morning demeanor; hair dry now, wild and crazy, tumbling over her creamy freckled skin. Her nipples were pointed into soft but aroused buds.

Tate held her by the elbows and she fell against him so they could kiss.

He asked her, "What do you want to do today?"

She thought about it a moment, sat up, looked over her shoulder at her husband sitting up on the couch. “I don’t know,” she said, “what do you want to do, Jonny?”

“Me?” He scratched his head and yawned. Visions of her and Tate at the museum yesterday came to him; the kiss in the Antiquities Museum, sharing ice cream cones, riding his shoulders. “I should work today.”

“Again? You don’t want to go out and do something? Look how nice it is out there...”

He looked over his shoulder, out at the bright blue sky and puffy white clouds. “You’ve got Tate,” he said, “so I might as well take advantage of my time.”

Tate said, “Let him stay, Charlie. We’ve got the day to ourselves. Let him work. I’ll take you out for breakfast, and we can go have some fun somewhere.”

Charlie still watched Jonny, but Tate took her arms again and got her to turn around.

“What do you want to do?” she asked him.

“I want to do whatever you want to do.”

“What about you? What things do you like to do?”

Jonny stood up and stretched, said, “Go lift weights then hit your face on stuff.”

Tate ignored him but Jonny saw a flash of hate in the guy’s eyes as he struggled to ignore the husband of the girl he was trying to woo. It made him smile a little. The pain in his testicles had subsided while he slept and there was a good chance if they got out of the apartment he could salvage the day and make some more progress on his game.

“We can find something we both want to do,” Tate said. He let her arms go, smiling hopefully, shuffled out of the bed and stood up naked. Charlie sat back on her heels and watched him go to the closet, fish through his bag and draw out a pair of folded glasses, walk across the foot of the bed to the kitchen. Jonny watched his wife as she waited to see her hunk return, half-smirk on her face, scratching at the nape of her neck under her mane of hair. Tate trotted down the steps, big dick slapping off his thighs, newspaper tucked under his arm. He sat on the couch and put his feet up on the table, unfolded the paper and opened it.

Jonny walked to his workstation and dropped his butt heavily in his leather chair. Tate opened the arms of the glasses and put them on, flipped through the paper with studious furrowed brow. He said, “How about a movie?”

“Okay,” she said and shrugged.

He flipped a few more pages, looking through his large, masculine set of Clark Kent glasses. “Oh hey,” he said now, looking up at her over the top of the frames, “how about a hockey game? There’s a minor league match at the Gardens.”

Now Charlie smiled, bare feet wagging under the covers. “Okay,” she said, “I’ve never been to a hockey game.”

"Matinee at the Marquis, Toros versus the Jets at the Gardens, but first I buy my baby a big, big breakfast."

Charlie rose from bed now and came to the couch.

She said, "You wear glasses?"

Tate looked up over the top of the paper, paused a moment. "Just to read," he said.

She set her bare backside on his thigh and said, "I think it's sexy when a man wears glasses. You like to read?"

Jonny said, "Just the sports page. Maybe the comics if he's taking a *real* long shit."

Tate's lip twitched, and his head flicked. It was taking a lot to hold back his rage toward Jonny and it was Charlie being in the room right now that was keeping him from stomping Jonny's head to mush. For some reason it widened Jonny's smile.

Charlie laughed at her husband's joke and his heart swelled for her. She reached over the paper and slid Tate's glasses off his face.

"What are you doing?" he said.

She took the glasses, reversed them, put them on her face. Still sitting naked in Tate's lap, she turned at the waist, Tate's black frame glasses looking huge on her small face, her eyes wide and blinking, looked at her husband and in a constricted, funny cartoon voice, said, "Take me to your leader." In case he didn't get it, she made grabby space alien hands at him and added, "beep-beep, boop-boop."

Jonny threw his head back and laughed so hard at his wonderful Charlie tears came to his eyes. She laughed too, and he saw her smiling at him through warbled vision as she took the glasses off and folded them.

Tate liked it too though, and he took his glasses back and said, "You're real funny, Charlie, make fun of a guy who wears glasses." He tickled her middle, and she jumped instantly, kicking her legs. Then he gripped her waist, lifted her right off his thighs and tossed her to land on the couch, climbing over top of her and getting his mouth over hers. She sighed then moaned as they kissed and her arms circled his neck. Jonny's heart sunk.

Tate's hands were on her middle still, powerful fingers digging at her ribs and tummy making her squirm and laugh into his mouth.

Between guffaws she said, "Don't tickle me, don't tickle me…"

"You don't like to be tickled?" Still tickling.

Between breaths she managed: "Who likes to be tickled?" Her legs kicked, but he had her pinned. Then more seriously: "Don't, Tate, it hurts…"

"It hurts?" He stopped instantly.

"It hurts me downstairs."

"Downstairs?"

"Between my legs. It makes me flex my tummy, then that makes me flex somewhere else."

His hands smoothed her sides, and he took a serious expression.

She whispered, "You've been doing really bad things down there…"

He smirked then she smirked. Their faces came closer together and Charlie pooched her lips to be kissed. Tate wove his fingers between hers and raised her hands above her head. Jonny fidgeted with his sweatpants, feeling a discomfort beginning to squirm between his legs. He wondered how many times his wife was going to fuck this stud this weekend.

Between them, Tate's cock slowly grew longer and fuller. It tapped on Charlie's stomach while they kissed. Her hand came down and cradled and caressed the underside.

"My pussy needs a break. Can we save this for later?"

Tate smiled, let her other hand go. "Yeah. I can't wait."

She still stroked his hardness. "Thank you."

His eyes narrowed, and he gave a sly smile. "No shower. Let's go out with our sex stink so everyone we meet knows we've been fucking all weekend."

"Ew, gross," she said and covered her mouth with both hands. Her knee came up and bounced his cock off its point. "Okay," she said through her hands.

"Okay?" Tate said, brows high, smiling.

She nodded.

TRUE TO THEIR WORD, they dressed without showering. They even dared each other not to wear underwear and to Jonny's surprise Charlie agreed. Jonny sat and watched the whole drama unfold, his body still as stone.

Tate wanted to brush his teeth, and he patted her bottom before going into the bathroom. Charlie smiled at Jonny and came to stand by his workstation. She'd dressed in sexy casual again; long legs in jeans, cowboy boots, a tight flannel shirt and a leather jacket. When she bent over to hug his head, he indeed could smell the sex off her. It was even in her hair.

"Come on to the hockey game with us, Jonny."

"No, Charlie. It's a perfect time for me to work."

She set a butt cheek down on the arm of his work chair. "I'd like you to come. And we're going to go see a movie, too…"

"I want to as well, but it's better if I don't."

Now she rocked with him. He'd never felt so *below* her before. Even though she wanted to include him, he'd never felt such confidence in her. Her time with Reza had shown her a whole new world—and now her time with Tate was coaxing her spirit out into the light. He should be happy for her but his heart just felt the threat of loneliness.

His hands came up with shaky creaking, the muscles weak and watery. He gripped her forearm with both hands and squeezed.

"Charlie…?"

She breathed against his ear for a moment. "Yeah…?"

"Don't have sex with Tate when I'm not there. Please."

She reared her head back so she could look in his eyes. Mouth open as if she would say something, she paused, sighed, bit her lower lip.

"You don't want to agree to that?"

She said, "No, that's okay. You're right. I won't. I don't have to do that."

"Really? You can still do it and all, but would you come back here?"

She gave him a small smile and nodded.

"We'll come back here and do it."

"Thank you."

"But isn't it better if you don't see?"

He shook his head no.

"How's your little guy doing?" She nudged her chin toward his crotch.

"Not good. Not good at all."

"You better get so much work done while I'm at the hockey game. I don't like having your dick in a cage."

"Soon, baby, soon. I swear it."

"I trust you," she whispered.

Tate tossed his toothbrush in the cup with Charlie's and Jonny's, switched off the light and came out looking for Charlie. "You ready?"

Charlie jumped up and Tate grabbed her before she could go into the bathroom. He took her in his arms and kissed her.

"Minty fresh," he said.

"Can I brush my teeth now, please?"

"I thought we wanted everyone to smell our sex smells…"

"I can't brush my…" She got it now, him joking he wanted his cock on her breath. She smiled, batted his chest. Her hand drifted lower, cupped the bulge in the front of his jeans and they made low animal sounds at one another. Charlie realized what she did in front of her husband, shot him a sheepish look and let go of Tate's bulge.

She disappeared in the bathroom, closed the door and brushed her teeth while Tate ignored Jonny who scowled at him the whole time, Tate sitting on the side of the bed and going through his phone.

Then Charlie was out, strutting long legs and clicking boots, smiling and waving at Jonny as she passed. Tate took her arm, and they crossed to the stairs, up to the kitchen.

Before she left, Tate holding the door open, she said to Jonny, "We'll be home pretty late, maybe ten or eleven, okay, baby?"

"I'll see you," he said, wondering how he'd stop himself from following them this time.

They closed the door behind them.

Jonny pulled up his hood, turned on some music, shut down all his messenger windows, cracked his knuckles and got to fucking work…

# 19

WITHOUT FOOD, penis and its related urges caged, another man taking care of his wife, hood closed around his face, phone unplugged, methods of digital communiqué cut off, Jonny worked eleven hours straight of hyper-focus time and by nine-fifty-five he pushed himself away from the workstation, astonished.

"No way," he whispered. "No fucking way."

The coding was done.

Tomorrow, Shulamit and him could bolt it all together. Two weeks from now he would shop the demo. *How the hell did he do it?*

He looked between his legs, said to his penis, "Focus, that's how, buddy, focus."

Hot god damn dog. He stood, legs shaky from lack of use, back stiff. He hunched over and beat his fists on his knees. Two weeks from now this trap he'd got them stuck in would be dismantled. Not overnight, but strut by strut, bolt by bolt, he would take apart the framework cage-maze Reza had built around him and innocent Charlie.

A hunger hit him hard. His high-powered brain hungry for glucose after a marathon of psychic endeavor of the highest order. Fuck Reza. Fuck Tate. In a million years those two could never accomplish what he was able to do.

Up in the kitchen, he stood leaning on the open fridge door eating a slice of cold leftover Angelo's. Tonight it wasn't too bad at all. In fact, maybe two months from now he would be an Angelo's guy, too. Forty dollar pizzas would be nothing to him…

Time on the stove clock said it was 10:05. He'd really been at it nonstop for almost eleven hours. Time had flown, and so had his fingers. He'd accomplished days worth of work in a short time.

Where would Charlie be now? How long was a hockey game?

He was headed down to the family room to check the paper, see when the game started, when he heard them in the hall. Bodies collided against the apartment door, making it crack in its frame. He jumped, turned and looked.

Two people wrestled on the other side, their bodies sliding against it, jostling the doorknob. Keys jingled, dropped, more wrestling, the sound of a gasp…

Keys jingled again, cat head key fob scratching below the handle. The lock clacked, the door burst inward and Charlie and Tate stumbled in, embracing, kissing. Jonny stepped backward to the family room giving them space and avoiding being knocked down the steps.

Tate pinned her to the kitchen wall, her arms struggling, his hands clutching them. At first Jonny thought Tate was assaulting her, then realized they were both trying to get her leather jacket off.

Together they got the jacket off, except for one sleeve which still clung to Charlie's arm, the rest turned inside out. Both Charlie's hands clutched Tate's neck as they

kissed, one hand still inside her sleeve. Pinned to the wall, against her back, Charlie's legs climbed Tate's waist, her cowboy boots hooking over one another under his rump. Tate pumped the crotch of his jeans against hers. Their mouths sucked on each other, their breaths coming hard and hungry.

"How was the game?" Jonny asked, but they didn't even hear him.

Tate backed up with Charlie clung to him, bashed against the fridge, lurched to the top of the stairs.

Jonny said, "Careful," seeing Tate's boots close to tumbling down the steps.

But Tate needed no help, stomping down the steps with Charlie hooked on him, kissing, biting, his palms cupping and caressing her denim bottom. At the side of the bed he tossed her off, and she bounced once on the mattress before he was on her again, both of them writhing on the still-dirty bedsheets.

Jonny stumbled further backward till he sat down on the red IKEA chair, ready to watch and have his stomach hurt. He still held a pizza crust, noticed it, threw it to the floor.

Tate clutched Charlie's shoulder, forced her to roll over onto her stomach, and she watched him over her shoulder while he did.

Now her hands went down underneath her, working on the button and zipper of her jeans. Tate was strong and too impatient, swollen hands both going down the back of her waistband and yanking hard enough the stitching tore with a high sound.

The jeans peeled back over her bare ass turned up to receive her lover, looking like a pale ripe peach. Tate kneeled, burst his own pants open and his huge erection wagged out, spitting a long strand of pre-come on to Charlie's ass. She hissed at its feel, her hands going out and grabbing sheets and twisting them up.

Pants still on, Tate shoved his huge cock into Charlie's shining, wet slit and sunk deep. She cried out and kicked her boots on the bed. His hard, thick body covered her, his denim rump rising and falling as he fucked her and Charlie wailed and gasped.

With a grip on her hair he turned her face up so he could kiss her. He growled, said, "I've wanted to fuck you all day."

"You feel so good," she said.

"You're so wet for me."

They fucked wild on the bed, fully clothed, jeans still on, grabbing hands and grunting like animals. Jonny groaned in delicious unwanted pain, brought his knees up and rested the soles of his feet on the seat.

Charlie was a slim, pretty stick under Tate's big-frame brutish body and the idea that Tate's huge, nine-point-two-five inch cock was goring in and out of her—and that it brought his wife pleasure—was awful but it did something powerful to him.

*One more week… One more week…*

TATE FUCKED HER LIKE THAT—FACEDOWN, bare ass turned up, jeans under her cheeks—until she came with a crying shriek. Then he buried himself deep, and she wailed and kicked the toes of her cowboy boots into the mattress.

As it went on, she moaned and whimpered, Tate very deep but not thrusting, and she clenched her teeth on a mouthful of bedding. When their breathing slowed, he helped her up onto all fours, cock still buried, then pushed his own pants down his thighs.

Now he fucked her doggy-style, both of them still clothed, pants down to their knees, bare thighs slapping against bare haunches. Charlie still clutched bedsheets between her teeth, squeaking grunts coming with each thrust.

They were almost sideways to Jonny the way they fucked, and he got to see that big meat pole pushing and pulling between his wife's thighs, her slippery pink lips clinging to him.

"Every night, Charlie," Tate grunted, pounding her.

Charlie cried into her mouthful of bedding.

"Every night you can have this…"

The bedding fell from her mouth and a thin line of spit followed, spilling over her pouted lower lip.

Tate said, "You hear me? Every night, Charlie," —he steadied his stroke now—"you don't have to work, I take care of you, we can have fun, you could be fucking *safe*."

She moaned, arched her back, whimpered, "I *am* safe."

Tate curled over her back, took her cheeks between thumb and fingers and turned her to look at Jonny. "Safe? You're not safe. What do you even see in him?"

"I love him…"

"You love him? Look at him…"

Charlie's eyelashes fluttered, her narrow, lusty eyes meeting Jonny's.

"Don't, Tate," Jonny said.

"Show her your cage, Jonny."

"No."

Charlie said, "You don't have to, Jonny…"

"He's doesn't have a cock, Charlie. It looks like my thumb. All the guys laughed at him in the locker room."

She panted and his thrusts grew quicker again.

"Feel that?" He bucked his size into her and she made a joyous cough. "That's a man, Charlie. That's what a man feels like."

"I'm a man," Jonny said, heart pounding with lust and rage.

Tate's hips pounded and Charlie took it, closed her eyes, hair swinging while he fucked her hard from behind.

"He can't please you… Not like I can… You need a man, a man who can take care of you…"

"I take care of her," Jonny said, clenching his thighs together.

Charlie closed her eyes tighter, sucked her lips into her mouth and bit them. She heard every word Tate said but resisted it. Those words would bounce around inside her pretty head until she was poisoned.

"Just fuck her and shut up," Jonny said, "Then get out of here. It's almost midnight."

Tate met his gaze and his face turned mean, the corners of his mouth bowing own. His grip on Charlie's hips tightened, denting her flesh, and he fucked her even harder. She brought a knuckle up and clenched it between her teeth.

"Your husband's a loser, Charlie, a loser. How much does he, mm, owe now?…"

Charlie gasped and babbled.

"A hundred-fifty thou? Two-hundred? And he puts you on the line for it…?"

Jonny said, "It's an investment," just short of shouting.

"He's putting you on the line…? You…? I owe money I strap on gloves and fight for it. Not my woman. *I* do. My woman would be protected. Your husband is using you." His hips pumped fast and hard. A wet and slushy sound syncopated between them.

"No, I'm not using her. I need her…"

Tate hugged a big forearm around Charlie's middle as he sat back, pulling her up to squat on his lap, cock still inside her. He scooted to the edge of the bed and put his feet on the floor. Charlie sunk onto him fully with her bodyweight, crying out at the deeper penetration. Tate shoved her pants further down with a thumb, sat back and opened her legs so Jonny could clearly see the way his wide cock spread Charlie's pretty flower.

"Your husband doesn't give a shit about you, only his game…"

His hands let her go and spread wide on the mattress behind him. With his knees bowed out, Charlie was able to get her feet on the floor. Her jeans rolled inside out but bunched just below her knees. Now with her thighs together Jonny could hardly see how Tate penetrated her. Her hands went to her chest, and she clutched her own breasts through her shirt, eyes closed off, mouth open, hair swaying over her shoulders. She stood, knees bent, and Tate humped himself into her.

"He's a loser, his game's going to be nothing and you're gonna be back to square one, in debt stuck with this guy who can't take care of you, can't provide for you… can't even please you in bed with that little dick…"

Charlie moaned, bent lower and grabbed her own bare knees now, pretty hands clutched with her nails digging her soft freckled flesh.

"Reza tells guys before this is done, he'll have your husband sucking his cock to get him wet before he—"

"There's zero chance you dumb jock piece of shit, just come already and get the fuck out of here," Jonny said.

Tate stood, eyes on Jonny, lifting Charlie by her waist. Her legs kicked as she struggled not to let her bodyweight sink on his cock now. He turned, lay her on the bed on her back, climbed over top of her. With her jeans still on, Charlie lifted her legs high, Tate pushed her knees up over one shoulder and bared her gaping pussy for Jonny to see. then he plunged his cock into her and she threw her head back and gave a cry.

"Come for me, Charlie," he said.

"You come, I want… I want you to come…"

"Come, Charlie," Tate said, low and slow, drawing his organ out and pushing it back, giving her long, tip to base strokes that had her pussy crackling.

"I came," she gasped, "I came…"

Their mouths came together, wet sounds of smacking and suction as Tate pumped her so hard he had her boots knocking together over their heads.

As Tate began to grunt with each thrust, Charlie broke their kiss.

"Don't come inside me…"

"Don't…?"

She shook her head no, Tate slowed.

"Keep fucking me," she gasped, "I want to see it, I want to see it come out…" She kicked at his back, giddying him to fuck her.

Tate's arm muscles bulged and flexed, holding himself over her, gleaming with sweat while he fucked Charlie. His thrusting tripled, getting the bed shaking, Charlie squawking, the headboard banging.

In preparation for his eruption, Charlie tugged her snap-button shirt and bared her breasts in their bra. Tate looked, saw where she wanted him to ejaculate, snorted like a bull and fucked her harder. Charlie hollered a long sound that warbled with the pounding she took. Then it was happening. Tate pulling out, clamoring to get by her side, jerking off his big cock over her, Charlie watching and holding her shirt open wide.

The first long line pulsed from him and flopped between her breasts and over her bra. She yelped and jumped, closed her eyes. Then he was spritzing her with quick, short pulses that got over her neck, her collar, up her cheeks and one line that went over her closed eye and onto her forehead. The whole time Tate roared and grunted, stroking his throbbing monster, humping it through his jacking hand.

WHEN IT WAS DONE Tate was exhausted, breathing heavy, slumping. He collapsed next to Charlie and lay with her.

For a while they were motionless but for their breathing, then Charlie brought a corner of her shirt up and silently wiped the semen off her face.

"Sorry," Tate said.

"It's all right," she said.

"You okay?"

"Uh-huh," she answered, looking up at the ceiling.

Jonny dug the heels of his palms into his eye sockets, hearing the echoes of what Tate said inside his skull. They were truths, and if those words echoed in his head, they echoed in Charlie's, too. What Tate said was the last thing he wanted Charlie to hear. They were like dark, deep secrets and for months he thought they were his alone—he was the only one who knew them. Now it was all on the table.

Charlie sat up now and struggled out of her tight Western shirt, head tilted forward. When she got it removed, she took bed sheets to wipe at her face again. Tate stroked her thigh.

While his heart ached and his body raced with dread, Jonny couldn't help watching how sexy his wife was. Long legs, jeans bunched around her boots, naked body but for her skimpy bra. Her beautiful, soft hair tumbled down her bare back and hid her creamy shoulders.

Tate watched her as well, laying on his side with his pants down to his knees, still-hard dick poking down into the bedsheets. He put a hand up to caress her back. Though Charlie didn't look at him, Tate had tilted his head to watch her face, both men in the room wanting to see what she would say next.

Jonny said, "It's late. I want you to go."

Charlie bit at her lower lip and averted her eyes from him. Tate still stroked her back, waiting to hear what Charlie would say.

Jonny's hands trembled, curled over the slope of the IKEA chair's arm rests. There was something building in him; this had been almost over, he was at the finish line, and just when everything seemed to be going right Tate the Executioner injected noxious chemicals into the lifeblood of his relationship with his wife. Right now that poison was coursing through their systems.

Jonny repeated, "It's time to go."

Without looking over, eyes still up at Charlie's cheek, Tate said, "It's only ten-thirty."

Charlie finally moved, hands coming up and scratching at her temples, running through her hair and gathering it behind her neck. She stared at the floor. Right now

she was realizing what a piece of shit her husband was. Right now she was seeing the bad that Jonny had done. She said, "It's late."

Tate repeated: "It's only ten-thirty."

"I'm tired," she said.

"You don't want to lay down with me? Come lay with me." He patted the mattress.

She said, "It's late. I'm done. I'm sore, too sore to do anything." She touched her pussy.

"We don't have to do anything," Tate said, and he was rubbing her back again.

"I just want to go to sleep."

"You think I should go?"

She nodded, her pouting mouth held firm but turned down in a sad crescent.

He said, "You sure you're okay?"

"Yeah."

"I'll go if you want me to."

Jonny said, "Jesus, she fucking told you. Just go."

Charlie's eyes darted up to look at him but bailed at the last moment and returned to the floor. She gathered her hands together in her lap.

Tate didn't move, his hand still on Charlie's back. Finally, he said, "It's late. I'll let you go to sleep."

Charlie nodded.

Tate went over, put his heels on the bed and arched his back, pulling up his jeans, taking great effort to shove his half-erect cock in his jeans then zipping them up with care.

He rolled over to the opposite side of the bed and put his feet down, stood up and began putting items into his athletic bag without saying anything. The room was silent while he worked, just the sound of his fingernails zipping along the nylon as he shoved unfolded shirts and pants and underwear in there. He went to the bathroom to get his toothbrush.

"Hey," Jonny whispered to Charlie.

She shook her head no and didn't answer. His stomach turned over.

Tate was out now, bag packed, held in one hand, shirt back on and tucked in. His cock still humped out the front of his pants. He came to stand next to Charlie who still sat on the bed.

He put a hand on her shoulder, said, "Sorry if what I said was harsh. But you gotta wake up. You have to look around and see what you're worth. Don't waste your life."

Charlie nodded but wouldn't look up.

He said, “That beating I took, that Ukrainian got me in the face…? It was all worth it. You’re so worth it, Charlie. You’re worth more than anything on this world. I’d do anything for you. You hear me?”

She nodded again, looked up now at him. Her eyes were wet and shining in the low lamp light.

Tate smiled now. “There she is. Charlie, I had the best weekend of my life with you. I mean it…”

“Thank you,” she said.

“You think about what I said?”

She nodded again. “Thank you, too. It was amazing. I had a lot of fun.” She put her hands up for him to hold them and he did. She tilted her chin for a kiss and Tate gave her one. He cupped her neck, and they sucked on each other’s mouths for almost a minute. When he stopped, he ran his thumb over her cheekbone and smiled. She gave him one back though hers was weak and tired.

“I hope you’re okay.”

“I am.”

“Call me. Okay? Text me anytime. Call me anytime. I want to hear from you.”

“I will,” she said.

He took both her hands and squeezed them again, smiled just to get one out of her. She gave him one.

“Okay, I got to get going. You go to sleep. I guess I’ll see you tomorrow morning. I’m taking you to work.”

“Okay.”

He couldn’t leave her. He bent at the waist and cupped the back of her neck, kissed the very top of her head and smelled her hair. “All right, that’s it, I gotta go, I know,” he said finally.

Without even looking at Jonny, not even turning to give him a wicked scowl, he left, boots clomping up the steps, going into the kitchen, closing the door behind him with a careful click.

# 20

CHARLIE SAT ON THE BED, boots on the floor, pants hooped around her ankles, staring at nothing for a long while. She breathed soft and slow, sighed.

"What are you thinking?" he said at last, worried about her answer, wishing he hadn't asked, but knowing he had to.

She shrugged, her face turned down and morose. Now her hand worked through her hair, finding a tangle and wincing, knowing it was caused by Tate's semen. She worked it out with her fingers while she kicked her heels on the floor. When it was free, she raked her fingers through her hair and stood. She bent, grabbed her pants and pulled them up, shimmying them on cause they were tight. Zipped and buttoned she ran her hands over her bare tummy. This was where she would get her shirt on, pack a bag and go stay with Genesis. Or worse, tell him to leave.

Instead, she walked across to him, paused standing at his knees in jeans, boots, and bra and looking like the best thing ever existed.

She asked him: "Are you okay?"

"Am I okay? Me? No. I don't know…"

Her mouth quirked to one side, and she sighed again. Now she put a knee down on the seat on the outside of his thigh, doing the same with the other and straddling his lap. Her tight denim butt rested on his knees.

Now she leaned forward and put her arms around him. His heart soared and his temples beat hard with the rhythm of its pulse.

"What's that for?" he whispered. His hands went to her bare back, traced the soft feel of her cool skin.

"We made it," she whispered.

"The weekend?"

She nodded her chin in his collar.

"We did," he said, allowing himself to enjoy the moment for now.

"Was it all right?"

"For me? I made it. I made it, Charlie. Was it all right for you?"

"Yeah, it was good," she sighed. "Thank you for not being too difficult."

"I was a *little* difficult."

"A little but you let it happen. Thank you."

He paused, waiting to ask a question he wanted to pose but afraid of the answer. "Did you enjoy it?"

She took a few slow breaths, squeezed her arms on him. "I did."

He nodded so she would feel it. "I don't mind that you enjoyed it."

"Good."

"It's better than Reza. Cause I know you enjoyed it."

"See? You're not selfish at all any more."

"I was. Now I'm not." He held her a little while longer but couldn't avoid it. "Are we not going to talk about what he said?"

"Do you want to?"

The truth was no, he didn't. But it was out there, she'd heard it, and not talking about it was like waiting for the other shoe to drop, the one where she said enough was enough. "You're thinking about it?"

She nodded.

"What do you think?"

She shrugged. "I'm sorry he said those things, Jonny."

"You are?"

"I like Tate. I really do."

"You do?" He took her bare shoulders and guided her to sit up so he could look in her eyes.

She rolled them, mouth fidgeting. She said, "I thought he was nice, but he said all those mean things about you. What a jerk."

"You think he's a jerk?"

"He thinks he's so great, but he's just like the other ones."

"The other guys?"

"Mean in their hearts. He's not the meanest, but he's got it in him."

"He does, Charlie," Jonny said.

"He's got that amazing body and that big dick but he's kind of a… *jerk*."

"You don't think he was nice to you?"

"Nice in the way guys are nice when they want something, sure."

"Like an act?"

"Yeah, Mr. Nice Guy, whatever you want to do, Charlie... Until he knows you for a month and then it's like, Did you make dinner, I'm going out tonight, where's my socks?"

"Where's his socks?"

"Or whatever," she laughed. "You know what I'm saying. It's an act. Trying to be what he thinks I want him to be."

"No one tricks my Charlie."

"You did. Tricked me right into a wedding dress." She wiggled her ring finger at him, wedding band shining.

"I didn't trick you at all."

She smiled. "No. I wanted it. You make me feel safe."

"Safe? No way I could beat up that Ukrainian dude."

"You make me feel a different kind of safe. Safe in here," she jerked a thumb between her breasts.

"Your heart."

"Uh-huh." She nodded.

They hugged again and feeling her breathing in his arms brought a tear to his eye.

Near his ear, she whispered, "Those mean things he said are mean to me. Doesn't he get it?"

"No."

She sat up again, patted his chest. "If you're a loser, then I'm a loser. Doesn't he see that? I'm not a loser, Jonny."

"You're not, Charlie."

"I'm a winner. We're both winners. We're just young and we haven't won yet. But we're not losers."

He smiled uneasily, said, "You don't think I'm a loser?"

"No way, mister. I hitched my cart to your dreams cause I believe in you."

"I believe in you, too. Hey… I'm done. The game is done. I'll piece it together this week, but creation is done. I finished today while you went to the hockey game."

Charlie smiled wide and warm. "See? Does that sound like a loser? You're my winner, Jonny." She cupped his cheeks and stared in his eyes.

One more doozy to go, he took a breath before asking: "Do you think I have a little dick?"

"It doesn't matter, Jonny."

"Sure it does."

"This dick is my favorite dick in the whole world. I married it, didn't I?" Her hand slipped between them and squeezed the head of his rubber cage through his pants.

He flinched and jumped. "You didn't know there were bigger ones out there."

"I still love it, Jonny. It suits me just fine, plus I love the guy it's sticking out of."

He breathed a chuckling exhale into her collar then bit her neck.

"Did all those guys laugh at your penis in the locker room?"

"Not really. A little."

"That would be mean."

"Guys can be mean," he said. "Sometimes they think it's just being funny."

"Girls, too," she said.

Their eyes met, and he allowed himself a smile. She gave him one in return. His eyes narrowed, and she saw he was thinking something sly.

She asked him, "What…?"

"He was saying those mean things you didn't like while he was having sex with you…"

"Uh-huh…"

"You were mad at him, and you let him do that?" To show he wasn't mad, he kissed her chin.

She scrunched her face up in embarrassment. "He's *really* good at it."

He laughed and hugged her hard and she rocked in his lap. She said, "Is that okay?"

"It's okay," he said, "and for some reason I like it."

"You do?"

"I don't know why, Charlie, but I do. You like it even if you don't like him?"

"Jonny, that's what I've been saying. You only realize it now? And, hey, you want to know something else weird…"

"Yeah?"

"I didn't want to say it, but I think his glasses were fake."

"What…? No…" He laughed at the idea.

"I put them on and it was like looking through a window."

"He can see fine? He just wanted you to think he was smart?"

"I think so."

"What a fucking loser," Jonny laughed. Then in a mock dumb-jock voice, he said, "Look at me I'm so smart I read and stuff, I readed so much d'uh-I needed glasses."

Charlie laughed until she couldn't breathe, just shaking with her mouth open and making no sound.

When she recovered he said, "Do you like Tate or not?"

"He's nice but I know he's not that nice. "

"You let him stay to have sex…"

"It feels so good."

"You're so bad."

She laughed, hid her face. "Why? Cause I like having sex?"

"You know that's not why…"

She laughed again, let him see her. "He's got a nice one, Jonny, and he knows how to use it."

"Oh my God, you're killing me." He flexed his thighs and squeezed her.

"I wish to God, Jonny, on my heart of hearts, you weren't wearing a cage right now. I would jump on you so hard."

"One more week, Charlie."

"I can't wait, Jonny…"

He held her, smiling and rocking. "You know what?… I think I like your little star."

"Do you?"

"I think I do," he said, running the cushion of his middle finger around the curve of her buttock, trying to pinpoint her tattoo, his other hand pulling her waistband back.

Her eyes rolled up, thinking, smiling. "Careful," she reminded him, "it's a little sore still… that's it, a little to the left…"

He ran his finger where she told him.

"That's it there."

He tapped it and she bit her lower lip.

"One more week," he sighed.

"No, it's not…"

He frowned, a nervous twinge clicking up his neck. "What do you mean?"

"Aren't you supposed to be smart?"

"What…?"

"It's Sunday night, Jonny. It's only like four days and fifteen hours, or something."

"Oh my God, you're right."

"It's hardly any time at all. Enough time I can tease you, show you my bare butt and maybe flash you a few times so you're on your knees by Friday night."

"Don't you dare, Charlie."

She folded her arms around behind her, unclasped her bra. She pulled a cup down to show him a hardened brown bud.

"Don't, Charlie, don't," he said, squirming underneath her as the cage squeezed on him, wishing he had the willpower to look away.

She closed it up, leaned to rub the tip of her nose against his. "You know you love it…"

"Maybe I do," he admitted.

"I'm getting ready for bed, Jonny, and I think there's space for two if you want to cuddle."

He couldn't answer. His face went tight and hard, lips pursed in the strangest reaction. He was so happy he almost cried. He nodded in quick hard dashes.

She smiled, slunk herself off him in reverse, running her nails along his legs. He watched her strut to the bathroom.

He chuckled and smiled, looked at the closed door.

His phone buzzed, and he pulled it from his pouch, checked it. Reza.

*Reza: change those spunky sheets, Jonny, I'm in the air. I'll be home and hard in six hours tell Charlie to ice that little kitty cat*

His arm whipped back, posed to throw. He gripped his phone so hard it made a quiet crack. The bathroom door opened and Charlie came out naked, covering up with a forearm barred across her breasts, a hand tucked over her kitty cat. She made a scrunchy face and said "Come on, get in bed, I still smell like sex…"

He nodded, his face grim. His eyes flitted to the corners of the apartment, wondering where Reza had cameras.

She worried she'd hurt his feelings. "What's wrong?"

He forced a smile. "Nothing, nothing at all." He chucked his phone onto the floor, took off his sweatshirt. "We can cuddle for five hours then I have to get back to work."

She gave him a look of admiration. "And Tate called you a loser…"

# AFTERWORD

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