

Boxes covered the front lawn. A rented U-Haul sat in the driveway with its back gate open, half-emptied, the afternoon Texas sun turning the metal interior into an oven. Katie sat in the cab of the truck, applying lip gloss as Josh hauled another box inside. She planned to get out and help him, but the lighting was perfect. She just needed a few minutes.

She climbed from the cab of the truck, the heat hitting her the second she stepped out. She grabbed the hem of her tank top, wiping her forehead as she pulled out her phone and propped against a box on the front porch. TikTok was the first app on her home screen. She opened it, pulling up a Megan Thee Stallion song she'd been saving for this exact moment.

The caption was already written in her head: *new house new adventures* with a house emoji and a key emoji. It was just the right type of combo that would make her 47,000 followers demand to know what she meant. She'd been building her account for two years and it was finally getting traction. She recently had a skin care company reach out and offer her free stuff last week to use their product on her page. It was weird, having strangers react to her every event, but they weren't real, just faces behind a phone she would never see.

She lip-synced the chorus, walking backward down the driveway in cutoff shorts and an oversized t-shirt she'd knotted at her waist. Her dark hair was pulled into a messy ponytail that swung against her back as she hit each beat, her lips mouthing the words in an exaggerated pout. She had the face for it. Full lips, soft features. Josh often commented on her lips and how perfect they were. She'd even had to ban more than one weirdo on her page who said exactly how much they appreciated her lips.

She was mid-spin when she heard a deep voice behind her that made her jump and ruined the video.

"Don't think I've ever seen a dance like that before."

Katie stopped and turned. A man stood at the edge of the driveway where the lawn met the sidewalk. Late fifties, maybe older. Well over six feet, with wide shoulders and big hands. He was overweight, but still solid underneath, suggesting that there was a time when that wasn't the case. His dark hair was going gray, his eyes were brown but looked too large for his head, and his nose was crooked like it'd been broken multiple times and never put in place properly.

In his arms he held a Chihuahua in a pink rhinestone collar. The dog was trembling.

"Sorry." Katie laughed, nervously, pocketing her phone. She tucked a strand of dark hair behind her ear that had come loose from the ponytail. Standing in front of him she felt tiny. At five-three and a petite frame, she looked small next to most people, but this guy was a whole other level. "I didn't think anyone was watching."

"Brian." He shifted the dog to one arm and extended his hand. His grip swallowed hers. "I'm next door." He nodded left toward a single-story house with a porch that had a rocking chair and outdoor sofa.

"Katie." She pulled her hand back. "We're just moving in. Obviously." She gestured at the chaos behind her.

"It's a beautiful house. You'll love it. I helped build the porch myself." His smile showed stained yellow teeth, his gaze dipping to her chest.

Katie crossed her arms without thinking about it. Then uncrossed them because that was worse.

"And this is Jewels." He lifted the Chihuahua slightly. The dog's ears perked up. "She runs the block. Everyone is terrified of her."

Katie reached out to pet her. Jewels lurched forward in Brian's arms, straining toward Katie's face with her tongue out, pawing at the air between them. Katie leaned in and Jewels caught her chin, then the corner of her mouth, her tiny body vibrating with the effort.

"Oh my God." Katie laughed, scratching behind the dog's ears. "She's so sweet."

"She usually doesn't like people." Brian watched Katie's hand on the dog. "She must sense something good about you."

The front door opened. Josh came out onto the porch, red-faced and sweating from the last hour of moving furniture. He was shirtless, beads of sweat covering his otherwise defined chest. His black hair was matted to his head, six-pack visible above the waistband of his basketball shorts.

He saw the man standing in his driveway with his fiancée and came down the steps.

"Hey." Josh extended his hand. "Josh."

Brian took it. His smile faded, his eyebrows pinching together. "Brian. Next door."

Jewels growled. A high, thin sound, her tiny teeth bared in Josh's direction.

Josh pulled his hand back. "Guess Chihuahuas are gonna Chihuahua."

"Oh," Katie startled, taking a step backward, her phone clattering to the ground. "Sorry, she startled me."

She spun around and bent down to grab her phone.

"She's protective." Brian's gaze dropped to her ass as the cutoffs rode up. She straightened and he looked away, meeting Josh's stare, caught. Brian just grinned, unapologetic.

Katie reached over and rubbed Jewel's chest. The dog immediately melted and started to lick her hand. "She loved me," Katie said, grinning at Josh. "Instant best friends."

"Great." Josh wiped his hands on his shorts. "So you're right next door?"

"twenty-five years." Brian looked at the house behind Josh. "Watched three families come through your place. Hopefully you two last longer than the last ones."

"What happened to the last ones?"

"Divorced." Brian shrugged.

"Well, we just recently got engaged. So no worries there." He put his arm around Katie, pressing his lips to her temple.

"Congratulations." He smiled at Katie. "So what do you do, Josh?"

"Accounting. My company just opened an office downtown. They moved us here to get it up and running."

"Accounting." He nodded, showing his teeth. "I should have guess it. Numbers at all." He winked at Katie and she covered her mouth in a laugh.

"So Katie," Brian pressed on, before Josh's jaw could loosen. "What was all the dancing about?"

"It's for TikTok."

"She has quite the following," Josh interjected, pulling his fiancée closer.

"Is that right?"

"I mean, it's not huge or anything. Forty-seven thousand followers. I post a couple times a week, lip syncs mostly, dances, some lifestyle stuff. I'm trying to grow it."

Brian's tongue slid across the top of his lip like he was processing what she said. "Wow, that's quite the feat. And here I thought I was doing well with my hundred or so." He pulled out his phone. "What's your username? I'll give you a follow, help the algorithm or whatever."

She exchanged a nervous look with Josh, before telling him.

"Well." He pocketed the phone. "I'll let you two get back to it. You've got a long night ahead." He looked at the U-Haul, then at Josh, then at Katie. "If you need tools, I've got everything. Just knock."

He turned and walked back toward his house. Jewels watched Katie over his shoulder the whole way, tail still going.

"That guy's a creep."

Katie laughed, grabbing a box of plates from the kitchen counter and placing them into the cabinet. "I didn't think he was that bad."

"He was practically eye fucking you." He grabbed a bottle of water from the fridge, leaning against the white granite counter-top.

"He was being friendly."

"When you dropped your phone his eyes nearly bulged from his head he was staring so hard."

Katie paused as she grabbed another plate, the slightest shade of pink coloring her cheeks. "I doubt he's the first guy to stare at my ass. Besides," she looked over her shoulder. "You're doing it right now."

"I'm serious, babe. He gave me the creeps." When Katie didn't immediately respond, he pressed forward. "And that accounting joke? Could he be anymore racist?"

Katie sighed. "It was a bad joke. Didn't Greg say almost that exact same thing last week?"

"That's different." His voice got softer, his conviction slipping. "Greg is our friend."

Katie placed the last plate into the cabinet and spun around. "He's our neighbor. Do you really want to make enemies with him the second we move in?" She walked toward him, wrapping her arms around his waist. "Besides, his dog is so freaking adorable." She grinned then pressed onto her tip-toes to kiss his lips.

"You're right," he sighed, his anxiety washing away as her full lips pressed against his. "I'll try harder."

He wasn't sure if she actually believed him, but she rested her head on his chest and let it go. Katie had always been a little too trusting when it came to this kind of stuff. He knew that she had a lifetime of experience with guys hitting on her. She'd always been hot, but something about Brian just didn't sit right with Josh. He hoped he was wrong.

Katie's phone buzzed in her back pocket and she lifted her head from Josh's chest. "Oh," she giggled.

"What?"

"He just liked one of my videos on TikTok." She held up the screen. "His username is *Bull_Durham_Brian*."

Josh leaned over to look. "Bull Durham? Like the Kevin Costner movie?"

"I guess?"

"Bull Durham Brian." Josh shook his head. "That's the most old-man username I've ever seen."

They were both laughing now, the tension from a few moments ago melting away. Katie looked back at her phone and her smile dropped.

"Oh no."

"What?"

"He found my Instagram." She held up the notification. "He just requested to follow me there too."

"So? What's the difference?"

"The difference is this." She scrolled to a photo and turned the phone around. It was her from last summer, standing on a beach in Galveston in a black bikini. She was looking over her shoulder, standing in knee high water. Her bottoms were bunched showing just enough of her butt to be one of the most liked pictures on her page. She almost didn't post it, but Josh had pushed her. The result was 200 new followers almost over night, along with a couple dozen DMs she refused to open.

"That picture is one of my favorites," Josh said with a grin. "You know how much I love your butt."

"And now our neighbor can see it. Josh, he's old enough to be my dad." She continued to scroll, her breathing getting shallower. "There's like thirty of them. Christ, the one from Cabo you insisted I post because my chest looked so good."

Josh leaned against the counter across from her. He watched her face, but his mind was somewhere else. The guy was a creep, sure. But the thought of some old divorced guy next door scrolling through these photos, stuck in his empty house while Josh had the real thing right here...

He shifted his weight, adjusting his shorts subtly.

"Unbelievable...You think it's funny, don't you?" she said flatly.

"I mean..." He shrugged. "It's not, not funny." He paused, his eyes glazing over slightly. "If there was any doubt in his mind that my fiancée was hot, there's none now."

"You just said he was a creep."

"He is a creep," Josh said, too quickly. He looked at the floor. "But you have to admit, the idea of him doing God knows what with your pictures right now is kinda hot." He actually laughed. "He

was all cocky earlier trying to charm you, acting like I didn't exist and now he's probably stroking—"

"You're disgusting." She covered her face with her hands

"You're blushing."

"I am not." She was. She could feel the heat in her face and she hated that he could see it. "This is not... I didn't sign up for a sixty-year-old fan club, Josh."

"You didn't decline his follow request either."

Katie looked down at her phone. The notification was still there. *@Bull_Durham_Brian has requested to follow you.* She chewed her bottom lip.

"Let me see his page at least."

She tapped into his profile. It was public. The grid wasn't what she expected. No selfies, no vacation photos. The first several rows were Jewels. Jewels in a tiny sweater. Jewels on a hiking trail with her ears pinned back. Jewels asleep in a sunbeam on a hardwood floor, the light catching the rhinestones on her collar. But they weren't regular pet photos. The composition was extraordinary. The lighting was professional. One shot of Jewels sitting on a porch railing at golden hour looked like it could be framed.

"Oh my God, look at Jewels." Katie tilted the phone toward Josh. "She has her own little photo series. Look at this one, she's in a sweater. Josh, look at her little face."

"I'm looking."

"He takes her everywhere." She kept scrolling. Past the dog photos were landscapes. A barn at sunset. A stretch of coastline in fog. A downtown street at night, puddles reflecting neon. And further back, older posts. Portraits. A woman in profile against a window. A man's hands wrapped around a coffee cup, every line and scar visible.

"Okay, these are actually really good," she said quietly.

"What are?" Josh had already lost interest and was scrolling on his phone.

"Brian's pictures. Look at these." She held up the phone. Josh glanced at it for two seconds and handed it back.

"Cool."

"No, Josh. These are legit. This isn't some guy with an iPhone."

"What like you think he had them professionally done or something?"

Katie didn't answer. She was still scrolling through his grid. There was something intimate about them.

She accepted the follow request.

They ordered Thai food and ate it on the sofa next to a pile of boxes and two full suit cases. Most of the kitchen was put together. The bedroom had sheets on the bed, the rest could wait until tomorrow.

After dinner, Katie decided to change into something more comfortable while Josh worked on mounting the TV. He had just gotten the mount in place when she walked back out wearing a pair of black leggings, a tank top, and no bra. Josh did a double take as she walked out, dropping the screw driver from his hand.

"You can't just walk around like that and expect me to get anything else done tonight."

She looked down at herself. The thin white fabric clung to her chest, the brown of her nipples clearly visible. It was her favorite tank top partially because Josh always had this type of reaction to it. "It's my house. I'll wear what I want."

"I'm not complaining. I'm just saying." His eyes hadn't moved from her chest.

"You're ridiculous." She rolled her eyes, smiling then bit her lip. "But if you're not going to get any work done anyway."

She grabbed the hem of her shirt and pulled it over her head. Her nipples were already hard just from how Josh was looking at her. She tossed the shirt at him and walked over to the sofa. Josh's mouth was still hanging open as she sat down crossing one leg over the other.

Josh was already on his feet.

He kissed her before he sat down, one hand sliding into her hair, the other settling on her bare waist. She pulled him down onto the couch and they sank into it, his weight pressing her into the cushions. His mouth moved to her neck.

"Mmmm," she purred, tilting her head to give him better access.

"Fuck, you're sexy." His lips moved to her collarbone, as her acrylic nails pressed into the base of his neck.

Her phone buzzed on the sofa next to her. She ignored it, focusing instead on Josh's wet kisses working their way to her chest. When it buzzed a third time, she could no longer resist. She reached for it, her free hand still in his hair.

Three notifications, all from @Bull_Durham_Brian. Three likes. A spring break photo where she was leaning against a railing in a crop top. A mirror selfie in a low-cut blue dress with a slit that showed plenty of leg, she'd worn to a friend's wedding.

Josh lifted his head from her chest and saw the screen.

"Well." He grinned against her skin. "I think we know what he's doing right now."

Katie's face went hot. "Shut up."

She swatted his back, pushing his head back to her chest.

Josh didn't move. He stared at the little red hearts on the screen. The logical part of his brain told him to be mad. That was their neighbor. A guy he didn't trust. But he couldn't deny how turned on he was. He tried to dismiss the thought, blaming it on the timing of the messages.

"And just think, all he'd have to do is walk right next door and he wouldn't need Instagram. He'd get an even better view."

Before she could respond, his lips closed around her nipple and her back arched off the sofa, her phone clattering to the floor.

"You're so responsive tonight." He pulled off her nipple, smiling at how hard it was, then sucked the other into his mouth.

"I want you." Her fingers slipped into his shorts, searching out his manhood.

Josh released her nipple, bringing his mouth to hers. His hand moved down her stomach, tugging on the waistband of her leggings as she lifted her hips and tried to lay flat on the couch. He pulled them to her knees and she kicked them the rest of the way off, one leg at a time, until they were somewhere on the floor, with her panties quickly following.

Josh sat back, pulling down his shorts, his gaze traveling over her body. She loved the way he looked at her, like she was the hottest woman on the planet. Somehow he made every time seem like the first time he was seeing her.

"See something you like?" she teased, spreading her legs slightly, letting her fingers trail down her stomach.

Josh nearly fell forward, tripping out of his shorts. He caught himself on the arm of the sofa and they both laughed before he kissed her again. She felt him hard against her thigh, then between her legs, the heat of him pressing against her smooth flesh. Her hand slid between them and wrapped around his cock, guiding him.

"Ahhhh." She pressed her forehead to his as he pushed into her. He was slow about it. She was wet but tight, and he only got the first inch before he pulled back. He dragged himself over her

clit and she sucked in a breath. Then he pressed forward again, deeper this time, and her mouth fell open against his neck.

Her nails dug into his back. "Fuuuuck." She bit down on his shoulder to keep herself quiet as he sank the rest of the way in, her body stretching to take him, her legs pulling him closer.

He pulled back a final time and pushed into her again.

"Ohhhh." She reached back, grabbing the arm on the couch above her head as he bottomed out inside her.

"You feel so good." He kissed her neck as he started to get into a rhythm.

Katie arched her back matching his strokes. "Fuck me, Josh."

Josh smiled and drove into her again. She didn't usually talk much during sex. She would moan, and show her enthusiasm in other ways, but the only time she would talk, especially drop an F-bomb was when she was really turned on.

Katie squeezed her eyes shut, focusing on the way his body felt when it met hers, the wet sounds of their bodies and the creak of the couch springs. Her orgasm was coming fast. She hadn't realized how much she needed it. Her eyes shot open, her arms wrapping around Josh's neck and taking him deeper.

"Fuck, Katie." His mouth was on her neck, then back to her lips.

She rolled her head to the side, a moan escaping her lips. Josh repositioned himself, putting her legs on his shoulders as he sat up on his knees.

"Ohhhh." She was louder now, and her hand found his, bringing it to her chest. He was happy to oblige as he squeezed it, and rolled the swollen bud between his fingers.

Josh's pace grew faster, as sweat started to bead on his forehead. Katie's mouth hung open, her tongue sliding across the front of her teeth. He released her tit, his hand trailing down her flat stomach and finding her clit.

"Oh, God! Right there." Her breathing was labored her voice beginning to carry. "Oh. Ohhh ffff."

The sound of slapping flesh filled the air. Katie's voice turning to unintelligible whimpers as she pushed her body up to meet him.

Her thighs started to shake against his shoulders. She could feel it gathering low in her stomach, that tightness that pulled everything inward. Her breathing broke apart. Short, sharp, open-mouthed. Her nails raked across her chest as Josh's thumb worked her clit.

She reached back with both hands, pressing against the armrest as she flung her body into his. Her arms began to shake, as her entire body lifted off the cushion, her walls clamping around him. Josh held still inside her, watching her face and allowing her to ride out the rest of her orgasm.

When she finally went limp beneath him, she opened her eyes to see him grinning down at her like he'd just won the lottery.

"Your turn." She pulled him down by the back of his neck and kissed him.

Her legs wrapped around the back of his thighs as he drove harder into her, chasing a release that was only seconds away. Each jolt made her gasp into his ear, as her fingers tickled his neck. Every time she'd clench around him, she'd hear him groan and his speed would increase. His breathing went ragged against her neck. His strokes got shorter, sloppier. She tightened her legs around his waist and felt his whole body go rigid.

"Ohhhhh." His toes curled into the fabric of the sofa, his cock pulsing deep inside her. She moaned against his neck as each throb sent another wave of electricity through her until he collapsed on top of her.

They stayed liked that for another ten minutes. Each of them trying to catch their breath as the sound of crickets chirping could be heard from outside.

"Well, living room christening can be checked off," Josh said, his voice muffled against her skin.

Katie laughed. "I think we may have broken the couch." She could feel the frame sagging underneath them. One of the cushions had slid onto the floor at some point and neither of them had noticed.

Josh lifted his head. He felt dopey, satisfied, but a nagging thought lingered in the back of his mind. He thought about the phone notifications lighting up the floor. He thought about Brian alone in the dark. It shouldn't have added to the heat of the moment, but it had. He felt a pang of guilt, followed immediately by a dull throb of want.

Katie flicked his forehead, snapping him out of whatever fog he was in.

"What?" he laughed.

"Nothing. You just look stupid when you're happy."

"You make me stupid." He kissed her once, soft, then rolled off her and onto the floor with a thud. "Ow."

Katie laughed and pulled a throw blanket off the back of the couch, wrapping it around herself. She found the remote and grinned at Josh who was still on the floor, naked and looking for his

shorts.

"Was that proper enough motivation to get you to finish hanging the TV?" She pouted her lips and blinked. "Please?"

Josh found his shorts and slid them on. "Had you not come out here looking all..." he made a gesture with his hands, "like that. It would be up already."

"Are you complaining?"

"Not at all." He picked up the screwdriver and got back to work.

It took them the better part of three days to finish unpacking. Katie hung curtains and pictures in every room. This was their first house together as a couple and she wanted it to be perfect. She rearranged the living room twice, and posted a half a dozen TikToks about the new house that pulled in a few hundred more followers. Josh got the TV mounted, assembled the guest bed, and only had to call his dad once about the garbage disposal. The house was starting to feel like theirs.

Brian had waved a few times from next door, but otherwise kept to himself. She usually saw him walking Jewels in the afternoon, the feisty dog snapping at everyone in her path. Despite that, he always seemed to like her latest posts on both TikTok and Instagram. The more it happened the more she thought maybe she'd over reacted when he first starting following her.

Thursday night Josh and Katie sat on the sofa, a new one she insisted he buy. They'd opened a new bottle of wine, and ate popcorn as she laid against his chest. It was the first night in their new house that felt normal. There was no more decorating, no more putting furniture together. It was all done and now they could relax.

Katie muted the TV. "Do you hear that?"

Josh sat up, confused. That's when he heard it. a low whine at the front door followed by scratching.

Katie sat up and padded over to the door. When she opened it, Jewels ran into the room, her paws on Katie's shins, her entire body shaking with excitement.

"Oh my God." Katie scooped her up and Jewels went straight for her face, licking her chin, her cheek, the corner of her mouth. "How did you get out, baby?"

Josh appeared behind her. Jewels' head snapped toward him and she growled.

"That dog hates me."

"She doesn't hate you." Katie rubbed the dog's chest until she calmed down. "You just startled her, huh baby." She kissed her forehead. "Make some more popcorn, I'll take her back."

She carried Jewels across the lawn and up Brian's front steps. The porch light was on. She knocked and the door opened almost immediately.

Brian stood in the doorway in jeans and a t-shirt. "She got out again. Screen door doesn't latch right." He reached for Jewels and the dog licked Katie's chin one last time before going to him.

"She came straight to our door. Straight to me."

"Good taste runs in the family." He stepped back. "You want to come in for a second? I have a favor to ask ya."

She hesitated, glancing back toward her house. She could see the blue glow of the TV through the window. "Just for a second."

She walked in and stopped. The walls were covered in framed photographs, and they were nothing like his Instagram. These were large, professionally printed, properly matted. A black-and-white portrait of a woman so sharp Katie could make out individual eyelashes. Landscapes that looked like they belonged in a gallery. Editorial shots that could have been pulled from a magazine.

"Oh my God." She turned toward him. "These are amazing."

He grinned, looking over her toned legs, making Katie wish she was wearing more than just her pajamas. "I have an eye for beauty."

"Wait." She turned to him. "You took these?"

"Most of them." He shrugged like it was nothing then turned and headed toward the kitchen. Katie followed, focused more on the pictures on the wall than the actual house itself. Every room was filled with pictures.

"I had my own studio back in my younger days." He stood at the kitchen counter, letting Jewels stand on the counter as he mixed her food. "Had an entire team working for me in North Carolina."

She watched as he pulled a pill from his pocket, smashed it into smaller pieces and put it into Jewels' food bowl. "Now, she's my muse."

She stopped in front of a portrait of a woman looking directly into the camera. The lighting was warm, the expression intimate. Like Katie had walked in on something private.

"Who is she?"

"A client. Long time ago." He leaned against the kitchen doorframe. "Difficult one. She fought me the entire way, but once she finally let me take the lead." He licked his lips, his gaze finding Katie's "It was magical."

"I um..." She suddenly felt very exposed. "I should get back to J—"

"I took a look at your Instagram page. You have real talent." He paused as she stopped her retreat, her ears perking up. "Your instincts are good. You know your angles, you know what works for your features. But the lighting is flat on most of them, especially indoors. Small adjustments would make a big difference."

She wasn't sure if she was being complimented or critiqued. Both, probably.

"I'm heading to Santa Fe in a couple days," he said taking a step toward her. "Jewels is on a pretty strict schedule. She needs her meds, walks twice a day. She's a real handful." He looked at the dog, already passed out in her bed. "Last time I put her in a car she threw up on my leather seats."

"Aww, poor baby." Katie looked at Jewels. Tiny ball, one ear flopped, completely gone.

"She likes you, and she don't like a lot of people."

"You're asking me to watch her while you're gone?"

"I don't have much in terms of money any more. But I'd be happy to give you some pointers on your photos. Just a few tweaks can really make all the difference."

"What's the routine?" The question was out before she could take it back. She probably should have talked to Josh first. But Jewels seemed low maintaince, and the appeal for her photos to look even half as good as the ones in his hallway was too good to pass up.

He pulled a piece of paper off the counter. Already written out. Meds, food, walk times. He handed it to her. "It's all there. Give me your number so I can call and check up on her. Make sure she'd getting along alright."

She was already typing her number into his phone, without actually agreeing to anything. Before she realized it, she was folding up the paper and heading toward the door.

"Katie." She turned. "She cries the first night. Don't give in. She's manipulating you."

She laughed and walked back across the lawn. Josh was on the couch where she'd left him with a fresh bowl of popcorn.

"What took so long?" he asked, grabbing the remote.

"He asked me to dog-sit for him."

"What? Like at his house?"

"She doesn't travel. And she clearly likes me more than anyone else on this block." She nudged him with her elbow. "And we all know how she feels about you."

Josh nodded unsure of what to say.

"You should have seen his house, Josh. The pictures on his walls are insane. He used to own a whole studio in North Carolina. He offered to give me tips on my photos when he gets back. Like a trade for the dog-sitting."

"I... I don't know if I like that. I mean, your pictures are all great. What is he going to be able to show you?"

"My pictures are average at best." She put her head on his shoulder. "Better picture quality could mean thousands of new followers. It could be great for what I'm trying to achieve."

"I don't trust him."

"I know, I know, he was staring at my tits." She rolled her eyes.

"Your ass," he corrected, but couldn't stop the grin from forming.

Katie leaned into him, tucking her feet under her and pressing play. "It's going to be fine." She grabbed a handful of popcorn. "Plus it will give me an excuse to go shopping maybe find a few outfits for your eyes only."

Josh sat back and shook his head. "Now you're talkin."

They watched the rest of the movie in silence, Katie's head on his shoulder, his arm around her. Her phone buzzed once on the coffee table and they ignored it.

It was just after seven in the morning when Katie let herself into the house. Brian had texted her an hour ago saying he was on the road, then again thirty minutes later informing her that Jewels eats every morning exactly at seven. It was sweet how much he cared for the dog. It was also borderline insane.

She let out a nervous breath as she pushed the front door open and was immediately met with the jingle of Jewels' collar as the dog rushed into the living room to see who was there. The lingering smell of coffee hit her nose as she stepped deeper into the house. Brian must have made himself a fresh pot before he left.

"Hey baby," Katie said with a grin, scooping Jewels up from the floor as she brushed against Katie's ankle. Jewels went straight for her chin, licking with the desperation, causing Katie to laugh. "I know, I know. He left you all alone. Poor baby."

She carried her into the kitchen and set her on the counter, followed by the list of instructions from her back pocket. Meds with every meal. She found the pill bottle next to the dog food, shook one out, and crushed it between two spoons the way the instruction sheet described. The powder got everywhere, but she was able to scoop most of it up and place it inside the dish. Jewels watched with enormous eyes, trembling, tail going.

"You act like you haven't eaten in days." She mixed the powder into the wet food and set the bowl down. Jewels nearly nipped Katie's finger she attacked it so fiercely.

As the dog ate, Katie leaned against the counter, taking in the house. Brian's kitchen was slightly bigger than hers, the countertops darker with flecks of silver in them. The backsplash looked real, not just the peel-and-stick stuff that was in their house. She kicked off her flip-flops and wandered around the space, opening drawers with mild curiosity as she mentally compared the house to hers, stopping as she reached the sliding glass door that led to the backyard.

"Whoa," she said to herself, as she opened the patio door and stepped out onto the deck. In the center of the yard was a large pool with stone around the edges. Two lounge chairs sat under a shade structure with string lights wound through the posts. A privacy fence ran the perimeter, tall enough that you could do whatever you wanted back there and nobody would know. The whole setup looked like something she'd save on Pinterest.

She pulled out her phone, planning to shoot a quick video of the setup, when Jewels appeared at her feet. "You live like a queen here, don't you?" Katie picked her up, put her phone into her back pocket and walked back inside the house to explore some more.

The hallway off the living room was like a gallery. Dozens of pictures covered the wall and Katie took her time examining each one. A jazz club shot in a neon light, smoke frozen mid curl. A

woman out with her friends, her head tossed back mid laugh as wine sloshed in her glass. A close-up of hands on piano keys that was so sharp she could see the calluses on the fingertips. She marveled at the detail of each picture, unable to imagine the amount of time and effort it must have taken to be able to get a shot like that.

She found herself opening the first door she came across. It was a small bathroom, well maintained, a single towel on the rack. The walls were mostly bare, and she closed the door wandering deeper into the house. The next door she opened looked to be a guest bedroom. The mattress was bare, a desk sat in the corner completely empty. She wondered if Brian had people who visited or if the guest bed was just something you kept because that's what the room was supposed to be.

She kept walking. The next door was open and she knew it was his bedroom before she stepped inside. The bed was big, navy comforter, pillows stacked against a wooden headboard that looked heavy and old. A pair of reading glasses sat on the nightstand next to a glass of water that still had condensation on it. There was a book, face down and open, something she didn't recognize. The room smelled more like him than the rest of the house. She stood in the doorway for a moment, Jewels tucked under her arm. "Is this where you sleep, girl?" The dog licked her cheek and she moved on.

There was one more door at the end of the hall and as she turned the handle she was surprised to find it locked. She tried it again, not hard, just enough to confirm, finding it odd that every other room was open. She looked down at Jewels, who was staring at the door with her like they were in this together.

"What's in there, huh?"

Jewels sneezed.

Katie looked at the door for another second, then turned around and walked back to the living room. It was probably a darkroom or an office or something. Jewels jumped into her lap and curled up immediately, sighing like she'd been waiting for this all morning. Katie pulled out her phone. She opened TikTok and checked her numbers. Forty-seven thousand, four hundred. The lip sync video from move in had a few thousand views, but only a handful of new followers. She'd tried to talk Josh into doing a dance with her last night, but he fell asleep on the sofa before she found something he'd actually agree to.

Deflated, she pulled up Instagram, hoping the pictures she'd posted gained some traction. She'd gained maybe three hundred followers since they moved in. The house content was dead on arrival. The kitchen reveal she'd spent an afternoon editing sat at nine thousand views. Her unpacking montage barely cleared six.

She looked down at Jewels, already half asleep, one ear flopped sideways.

"Alright. Let's see what you can do."

She opened the camera and held Jewels up next to her face. "Alright, don't embarrass me." She hit record and started lip-syncing to "I Got the Magic in Me," bobbing her head to the beat. Jewels stared at the screen for exactly two seconds before lunging at Katie's face, tongue first, nearly knocking the phone out of her hand. Katie broke, laughing hard enough that she almost stopped recording, but she kept going, panning between herself and Jewels who was now jumping on the couch cushion barking as Katie danced to the rap.

She watched the playback twice. The moment Jewels lunged at her was genuinely funny, and the light from Brian's kitchen made both of them look good. She almost never posted a first take of anything, but this one had something her other videos didn't. "Alright, let's see if you really do have the magic," she said to the dog, before posting it.

She tossed her phone onto the cushion and flopped back on the couch, Jewels readjusting on her lap. She lay there for a minute, staring at the ceiling, scratching behind the dog's ears. Her phone would buzz when the views started coming in. For now it was just quiet. She could hear Brian's refrigerator from here, a low steady hum. She liked it. It made the house feel less empty.

She reached for the remote on the side table. Pointed it at the TV. Nothing. Pressed the power button again, harder. Dead.

She flipped the remote over and popped the battery cover. Two double-A batteries were in it covered in dust.

"Come on." She sat up, pulling Jewels from her lap. "Let's see if we can find some fresh batteries." She opened the drawer on the side table. Paid bills, old instruction manuals, and a checkbook sat on top. She moved them around, rummaging through to see if she spotted anything that even vaguely resembled a battery box.

Just as she was about to close the drawer and give up hope something caught her eye. A stack of old polaroids, stuffed into the back of the drawer face down.

She picked them up, her eyebrows pinching together. The first was a woman sitting on the edge of a bed in an unbuttoned white shirt. Katie recognized the bed immediately, it was Brian's. The shirt was hanging open just enough that Katie could tell she wasn't wearing a bra. The swell of her chest showed just enough to be inviting. The woman looked to be about Katie's age. She was smiling seductively at the camera a look of admiration in her eyes.

Katie flipped to the next one. Different woman, same bedroom. This woman was taller, thinner, standing in front of the window in a slip that the backlight made nearly see-through. She had her arms crossed over her stomach, relaxed, like she'd been standing there for a while and forgotten what she was wearing. Or not wearing.

She kept going. A redhead on the couch, one knee pulled up, a sheet covering her lap and nothing else. A brunette in the kitchen, leaning on her elbows against the black countertop.. Her legs were kicked up, her ankles crossed. Katie could see the swell of her ass as she faced the camera, her lips barely parted. "I hope he scrubbed down that countertop after," she said to no one, as she continued to thumb through them.

They were all different women. Different ages, different bodies, different rooms. But they all had the same quality. Every single one of them were breathtakingly beautiful, and they all looked pleased to be there.

She paused on one near the bottom. A woman with short blonde hair, younger than the others, sitting in a kitchen. But this kitchen was different. The countertop was white, not black and the walls were more of a cream color. She was wearing a man's button-down shirt that stopped mid-thigh. Only the bottom two buttons were fastened the others hung free displaying her nakedness in a way that looked more elegant than scandalous. She was holding a coffee mug and looking at the camera with this expression Katie couldn't stop staring at. It didn't just look seductive, it looked challenging. Like she was daring the person looking at it to not want her.

Katie wondered what a picture like that would get in views. Not the nakedness, there was no way she would ever post something like that, but the confidence, the defiance. She only looked at the picture for a few seconds and she already wanted to know more about the person in it. There was true art in the way the photo was taken.

She put the photos back in the drawer and closed it. Jewels was watching her from the couch cushion, head tilted.

"Don't look at me like that. I was just looking for batteries and got distracted."

She pulled the dog back into her lap and sat there for a minute. Her heart was beating faster than it should have been, which was stupid. It wasn't like she'd found anything crazy. Boudoir photography was everywhere. Half the photographers on her Instagram explore page shot stuff like this. But scrolling past it on a screen was different from holding it in your hands in the living room of the man who took them.

Her phone buzzed and she flinched hard enough that Jewels jumped.

Has she let you leave yet? She likes to give you the big sad eyes when she thinks you're about to go. Don't fall for it or you'll never get out.

Katie smiled at the screen before she could think about it. Jewels had climbed back onto the cushion beside her, ear flopped, half asleep already. Katie shifted the phone, angled it down, and took the picture. The dog didn't even open her eyes.

She typed back. *We made a dance video for the channel. It must have worn her out.* She pressed send on the picture. Once it sent, she pulled up the thread with Josh and sent the same picture.

Josh's reply was almost instant. She was shocked he was able to answer so quickly, expecting him to be busy at the new office. *She barely even looks like the same vicious creature that attacked me.*

Katie giggled and fired back a text. *Don't be dramatic. She's perfect and you love her.*

Brian's reply came next. *Glad to see she's not giving you any trouble. I knew you'd be the right pick.*

Katie smiled at her phone and pulled up her TikTok. The video with Jewels already had almost a hundred likes and five new followers. Maybe this would be the momentum she needed.

By Thursday she had the routine memorized. The first half of the day was spent inside giving Jewels her meds and posting videos of the two of them on TikTok. She had gained almost a thousand new followers on both TikTok and Instagram. While still not at the fifty-thousand mark she'd hoped to be at, she couldn't deny Jewels was a hit. The afternoon routine was only slightly different. Instead of staying inside, they would go for a walk, exactly at three as instructed.

She hadn't gone back to the drawer, but she would be lying if she said she hadn't thought about them.

Brian texted every day. The first couple were simple. *How's my girl?* Katie would send a photo and he'd reply with a line or two. By mid-week they got more specific. *Did she eat the edges of the wet food or leave them? She does that when her stomach is off.*

The dog content was working. The lip sync from Brian's couch had cleared sixty thousand views by Wednesday morning. A clip of Jewels nosing a piece of cereal across the kitchen floor did even better.

Thursday night they were on their own couch, the TV running something neither of them was really watching. Katie had her phone tilted away from him, scrolling her analytics for the third time in an hour.

"I'm stuck."

He looked up. "Stuck how?"

"My numbers." She held her screen toward him. "I thought I'd be at fifty thousand last week. I'm still off by almost seven hundred. The house content totally flopped."

Josh glanced at the screen, then back at his pizza. "What about the dog stuff? You said that was doing well."

"That's the problem. The only thing working is Jewels, and she's not my dog. Brian comes home tomorrow and then what?"

Josh chewed, thinking. "Didn't the Galveston photo pull like two thousand in a day? You just need another one of those."

Katie tucked her legs under her. "So your solution is I post another bikini pic."

"I'm just saying. The numbers don't lie. People liked that one."

"You just want to see me in a new bikini."

"I mean. Yeah." He grinned at her, unrepentant. "But also you said it yourself. It was your single biggest post"

"There's no beach here, Josh. It's not the same thing." She picked the phone back up, flipped it face down on her stomach. "It was the water. The light. It was the whole... it was a whole vibe. I can't recreate that in our backyard."

"So find a vibe."

"Mhm."

By Friday afternoon the Texas heat was devastating. Temperatures climbed into triple digits, causing the pavement to shimmer. Katie stood in front of her bedroom mirror, checking her reflection. She was wearing a white micro skirt that left almost nothing to the imagination. She turned slightly, checking out the profile view and if she bent forward even slightly she could clearly make out her right butt cheek. She'd paired it with a fitted blue crop top and platform boots.

The idea was to go into the backyard and take a few photos. She'd given what Josh said a lot of thought. He was right, her bikini photos always got the most engagement, but looking at the outfit now it felt too revealing. She thought the skirt would be lower. She chewed on her lip trying to decide what to do, before kicking off her boots and deciding to put a pair of black biker shorts underneath to avoid the inevitable wardrobe malfunction.

When she returned to the mirror she smiled. The biker shorts helped. She did a little spin in the mirror, ensuring her ass was completely covered when her phone buzzed next to her.

Meeting got pushed up. Want to meet up for lunch? There's a new taco place in the plaza right by my office.

Katie smiled. One of her favorite things about Josh was that he always seemed to find ways to make time for her. He was always inviting her to lunches, moving around his schedule to accommodate her. It was refreshing to know she had a partner who enjoyed her company.

She snapped a quick mirror selfie.

Fit check, she responded. A lot of the plazas and outdoor malls she'd seen around town had great spots for photos. She could have lunch with Josh and find a good background for her picture. It was a perfect compromise.

Damn. Wish I wasn't stuck at the office.

Something tells me we wouldn't make it to lunch if that were the case.

Guilty as charged. May want to lose the biker shorts though. They peek out of the bottom.

Katie rolled her eyes, a smiling tugging at her lips.

Nice try, perv. Then my entire ass would be hanging out.

She did another slow spin in the mirror. He was right, she'd missed it before, but the shorts were visible if you looked close enough. She had to zoom in to really see it. Which meant Josh had zoomed in to get a closer view. A warmth crept over her as she imagined him sitting in his new office zooming in on her picture and needing to hide his arousal.

If I noticed then your followers will too. Just looking you for you ;)

Shorts are staying on. Sorry to disappoint. The only way you could tell was by zooming all the way in. Not everyone has a one track mind like you.

She grabbed her keys and headed for the door. She'd already been next door and taken care of Jewels. She'd head back over before Josh got home from work to do their afternoon routine. Brian would be back in the morning which meant tonight was going to be her last chance at new content with Jewels.

Didn't you say like half your followers are male? Trust me, I'm not the only one zooming in. This is your Galveston moment.

Sorry, I'm already in the car.

Katie rolled her eyes and opened the door. The second she did she was hit with a blast of heat like she'd opened the oven door. She quickly locked up and made the walk to her car, blasting the AC the second she turned it on. Despite it being less than twenty steps from the driveway to her house she already had a thin layer of sweat on her forehead. Texas heat was certainly going to take some getting used to.

She pulled into the restaurant parking lot fifteen minutes later. The sun glared through the windshield, but she didn't make a move to get out. Instead, she looked down at the white pleats resting high on her thighs. She sat there for a second with the AC blasting, her skirt bunched against her legs. She could already feel the biker shorts clinging to her in the heat, the elastic band digging into her waist beneath the skirt.

Josh was always saying stuff like this. He would tell her to dress sexier, or wear something revealing just to get a rise out of her. If he actually saw how exposed she was without the shorts he would freak out. She thought about his reaction when she first posted the swimsuit photos. The way he got possessive, how excited he was at the prospect of "all those guys" seeing what was his. There was something sexy about the toxic masculinity of it all.

She looked out over the parking lot. The restaurant was only about fifty yards from her. If she really wanted to, she could probably get there and get seated before anyone really noticed. She chewed on her bottom lip. Was she really considering this? She thought about the women in Brian's polaroids. The confidence they showed. They had looked directly into the camera, completely bare, daring the viewer to look away. That was the energy she needed for her own photos. The thought of walking into a crowded restaurant knowing all she had on underneath was a thong sent a sharp spike of adrenaline through her chest.

She told herself she was just doing it to mess with Josh. She wanted to see his face when he realized what she had done, to watch him squirm across the booth while they ate.

Before she could talk herself out of it, Katie lifted her hips off the driver's seat. She reached under the pleats, hooked her fingers into the tight spandex waistband, and shimmied the shorts down her thighs. She had to take her boots off to get them the rest of the way down. Her bare skin suddenly stuck to the hot leather seat, making her breath a little heavier.

She turned off the car and grabbed the door handle, her pulse racing as she stepped out into the bright parking lot.

The walk to the restaurant felt longer than she'd originally thought. Each step, she found her hands going to her skirt, ensuring it wasn't flying up in the back. She considered turning around and putting her shorts back on, but Josh had already spotted her as he leaned against the restaurant entrance. His eyes immediately dropped to her legs the moment she was in view.

His grin widened. He wrapped an arm around her waist, his fingers dipping just below the hem line. "You actually took them off," he murmured, pulling her against his chest. "Are you even wearing panties?"

"Stop," Katie hissed, swatting his hand away. She tugged the skirt down an extra millimeter. "Someone's going to see."

"They already are." Josh leaned in, opening the heavy glass door. The restaurant's icy air conditioning hit her bare thighs, raising an immediate rush of goosebumps. "The guy on the bench you passed probably gave himself whiplash he did such a hard double-take."

Katie's face went red. As the hostess led them through the crowded dining room, Katie kept her hand firmly pressed against her thigh to keep the skirt in place. But Josh wasn't looking at her. He was scanning the tables they passed, tracking the eyes of the men looking at her legs. Katie's gaze went between his legs. Was he hard? She could see the thick outline of his erection, as his slacks grew tight. She rubbed her thighs together, picking up her pace.

Once they reached a corner booth, Katie slid carefully onto the cold vinyl. "Seems like you're enjoying the attention more than I am," she noted, arching an eyebrow.

Josh's gaze darkened. He reached under the table, his warm hand resting heavily on her bare knee. "I am," he admitted, his fingers sliding up her thigh. "Every guy in here right now is trying not to stare at you. And you're sitting with me."

Katie's breath hitched as Josh's hand moved, her fingers catching his wrist. "Order a girl a drink," she said as she held his hand in place, afraid if he moved it much higher he'd see how much this display of possessiveness was really getting to her.

The waiter didn't look like he was much older than twenty-one. He stumbled over their lunch specials, his gaze flicking to Katie on more than one occasion. She ordered a spicy Margarita and chips with queso. Josh stuck to water, not wanting to return to work smelling like alcohol.

The moment the waiter walked away Josh leaned back against the booth, smiling proudly. "He was staring at your legs."

Katie rolled her eyes. "You think everyone is staring at my legs."

"They usually are."

Katie slid closer to him, allowing his hand to slide to the inside of her thigh, without going any higher. "Can I ask you something?" She turned her body so she could face him.

"Sure."

"Why do you get so..." she chewed on her lip, trying to find the right word, her gaze shifting between his legs. "wound up, when thinking about guys looking at me?" She placed her hand on his thigh and he shifted his weight. "Aren't you supposed to be jealous or something?"

The smile on Josh's face faded, his lips becoming a straight line as he considered her question.

"It's not... it's not that simple." He looked at her, then at the table, then back at her. "It's like. Okay. You know when you post something and the comments go crazy? And you get that rush because all these people want you but none of them can have you?"

"Yeah."

"It's like that. But in person." He shifted. "It's knowing what they're thinking. And knowing they can't do anything about it."

Katie studied him. "So it's a power thing."

"I guess. Yeah." He took a drink of water. "I just know you'd never let things get too far. You're not that kind of person. So it's... it's safe, I guess. It's fun because there's no real risk."

"So what if there was a risk?" Katie lifted her eyebrow. "Would that make it more or less exciting?"

She knew he didn't mean for what he said to sound like a challenge, but she couldn't help it. The idea that he liked seeing her flirt and tease people because he trusted her should have flattered her, but it felt more like he was drawing a line and daring her to cross it.

"I..." Josh's cheeks flushed pink and he turned away, but Katie saw it. She'd struck something he didn't want to dive into. She was just about to push further when the waiter turned the corner carrying her drink and queso on a tray. As Katie shifted to make room on the table, her elbow caught her silverware. The fork clattered off the table and onto the hardwood floor, landing right at the edge of the aisle.

Katie locked eyes with Josh, a flare of heat rushing through her body as she smirked at him.

She slid her hips to the edge of the booth. Slowly, she began to lean forward from the waist, her eyes never leaving Josh's. Without the biker shorts, the back of the micro-skirt immediately began to lift. She felt the restaurant's frigid AC brush against the bare skin of her upper thighs, then the swell of her ass. She kept her eyes glued to Josh, waiting for his hand to shoot out and grab her arm.

But Josh didn't move. His jaw clenched, his gaze fixed hungrily on her, a thick vein pulsing at his temple. A heavy, slick heat stirred between her legs as she pushed it another inch, neither of them wanting to back down. But at the very last second, her nerve finally broke.

Katie quickly dropped her hips, bending her knees into more of a squat. Her skirt fell flat against the backs of her thighs as she snatched the fork and slid back into the booth, her modesty miraculously intact. The waiter, none the wiser, set their drinks down on the table. He said something to them, but Katie couldn't make it out. All she could hear was the racing of her heart. The waiter had nearly seen her entire ass, and Josh did nothing to stop it. In fact, if anything, he seemed even more aroused.

"I can't believe you didn't stop me," she whispered, her chest heaving.

"I can't believe you almost went through with it." He fidgeted uncomfortably in his seat. "That's what made it hot." He leaned forward, reaching for her hand. "Let's get out of here. I'll call in sick for the afternoon."

"It's still your first week." She pulled her hand back, smiling. "And I still have to go take care of Jewels. Brian's back tomorrow and I want to get one more video with her."

Josh groaned, leaning back against the booth.

"But." She took another sip of her margarita, letting him sit in it. "Take some pictures of me by that fountain on the way out." Her hand crept up his thigh. "Something that will make my followers go insane."

The fountain sat near the back of the plaza, a low stone basin with water spilling over the edge into a shallow pool. The afternoon sun hit it from behind, throwing light across the wet stone. The heat was immediate and Katie worried her makeup would start to run before they even made the short walk. By the time they reached the stone, a thin layer of sweat ran along Katie's collarbone. She sighed in appreciation as a cool mist from the falling water hit her.

"Here." She handed Josh her phone and walked toward the fountain, her boots clicking on the tile. She turned to face him, the water catching the light behind her. "Okay. Tell me when."

Josh held the phone up. "You look incredible."

"You always say that." She cocked her hip, one hand resting on her thigh. "But I need you to give me actual direction." The skirt shifted. She felt it move and didn't fix it. When it was clear he wasn't going to offer any real guidance she smiled. "Take the picture, Josh."

He took three in quick succession. Katie checked them over his shoulder. Good, not great. She looked stiff. The skirt was making her uncomfortable.

"Let's try a different angle." She walked back to the fountain. This time she turned slightly, leaning her hip against the stone ledge, crossing one ankle over the other. The warm stone

pressed against the back of her bare thigh. A drop of sweat traced down her spine as she arched her back slightly, letting the crop top ride up. "Lower angle. Get the water behind me."

Josh crouched, having to adjust his stance as his slacks pulled dangerously tight against his erection. She watched him behind the lens. He was snapping pictures, but his eyes were on her body more than the screen. She stopped thinking about the skirt. Her chin tilted up, her lips parted just enough, and she looked directly into the lens the way the blonde in the Polaroid had looked into Brian's camera.

"Jesus, Katie. You look..." Josh's voice came out rough.

"Did you get it?"

He stood up and turned the phone around. The shot was better than anything on her page. The light from the fountain caught the white of her skirt, her stomach was flat and golden above the crop top, and her expression showed a confidence she wasn't sure she felt. But her eyes went to the bottom of the frame. Because of her angled hip, the skirt had ridden up on one side. The curve of her ass was clearly visible, the bare skin smooth against the wet stone.

"Josh." She zoomed in, her stomach tightening. "You can see everything."

She watched his throat work as he swallowed. His pulse racing in his neck. "It's... I mean it still covers more than a normal bikini. And you posted that."

Katie stared at the photo. He wasn't wrong. The bikini had shown more skin. But this didn't feel like the bikini. This felt like something else entirely.

She hit post before she could change her mind.

It was almost four by the time she got back to Brian's house with Jewels. The walk had been brutal, the pavement so hot she could feel it through her boots. Jewels had done her business quickly and spent the rest of the walk trying to get back inside. Brian had been pretty specific about the route they should take, how long the walk should last, and every other detail, but Katie made an exception today because of the extreme heat.

She filled Jewel's water bowl and collapsed onto the couch, her skin still damp from the heat. She pulled up her texts with Brian.

Josh found some organic dog treats at the store today! He thought Jewels might like them 🐾

She smiled at the message before sending it. Josh and Brian had gotten off on the wrong foot and Katie was trying to extending an olive branch. It felt good to include Josh in the routine. Like they were all part of the same thing.

Brian's reply came two minutes later.

Yeah, don't do that.

Katie stared at the screen. She waited for a follow-up. An explanation. A thank you. Something. Nothing came. She wasn't sure why he was being so short. Maybe it was a busy day, or he was driving. She typed and deleted three different responses before giving up and setting the phone down.

She opened TikTok instead. The fountain photo was doing even better than she expected. Four hundred likes in under two hours. The comments were already piling up. She scrolled through the first dozen. Most were harmless. Fire emojis, heart eyes, the usual. But further down they got bolder. Comments about her legs, her stomach. Then there were others. The ones that were far more... descriptive about how she made them feel. One guy had written something so graphic she blocked him, then locked her phone and set it face down on the cushion.

She picked it back up less than a minute later, once she didn't feel like she was blushing. Her DMs had thirty-six unread messages. She bit the corner of her cheek, but didn't open them. Instead, she thought about Josh seeing the comments. About reading the DMs to him in bed tonight, watching his face change the way it had in the restaurant. A warmth pooled low in her stomach and she closed the app.

She still had work to do. Brian was coming home tomorrow and this was her last chance at content with Jewels. She set up on the living room floor, propping her phone against a stack of books. Jewels was half asleep on the cushion but perked up when Katie started making kissing noises.

Her phone buzzed before she could get the first shot off. Josh.

Still thinking about lunch. I should have taken the rest of the day off.

Down boy. You'll be home soon. I'm sure I think think of some ways to thank you for being such a good photographer.

Send me something to hold me over then.

She rolled her eyes and took a quick selfie on the couch. Jewels had crawled into her lap, one ear flopped. Katie pouted her lips and hit send.

That's adorable. But I'm pretty sure you know that's not what I meant.

You're insatiable.

After that little fork incident can you really blame me?.

Her face flushed. She glanced down at the skirt, still riding high on her thighs. Before she could respond, Brian's name popped up at the top of her screen.

How's she doing? She seem like she's been sleeping through the night okay?

Katie switched threads. *She's been great. Sleeps like a rock. She's always so full of energy when I get here..*

Good. I'll be back early tomorrow morning. Has she had her evening meds yet?

Not yet. About to do it now.

She switched back to Josh. He'd sent another message.

Come on. One picture. I'm dying over here..

Katie bit her lip. Maybe one picture would be okay. Seeing just how excited he'd gotten actually made her feel bad for leaving him when she did. Standing up, she walked into Brian's kitchen. With her back to the sliding glass door, she reached behind herself and gathered the back of her skirt, hiking the fabric high up on her hips. Catching a glimpse of herself in the glass, she had to smile. All those endless squats at the gym were definitely paying off. Her butt looked perfect. She let the curve of it hold the gathered material in place, making sure the little white thong she was wearing was completely exposed for Josh to admire. Holding the phone over her shoulder, she snapped the photo.

She looked at it. Her pulse ticked up. Her gaze went to the clock on screen. There was at least another hour before he got home. She wasn't sure she could wait.

If you're a good boy maybe you'll find me exactly like this when you get home. she pressed send.

Fuck. That's not fair.

What? You asked for it.

Josh's response came in the form of a a picture.

Katie chewed on her lip as she zoomed in on the screen. Josh was sitting at his desk, thankfully. Her eyes focused on his lap. The screen was filled with the straining outline of his cock, the dark material of his dress pants pulled incredibly tight over the bulge. It looked like the zipper was fighting for its life. She traced her thumb over the screen, suddenly wishing he was already home.

Looks like you liked it, she teased, glancing up from her phone to make sure Jewels was still passed out on the sofa.

Bet you won't send it again without the shirt

She laughed out loud, causing Jewels to lift her head from the couch. *You're out of your mind.*

Brian's name appeared at the top of her screen again before she could press send.

If she gets her meds too late she won't sleep.

Katie groaned. She grabbed Jewels' pill bottle from the counter, crushed it up, and mixed it into the wet food. She took a picture of the food bowl and went to send it to Brian. Then she switched back to Josh's thread.

She stared at his last message. Without the shirt. Her heart was hammering. She set the phone against the backsplash and pulled the crop top over her head. The kitchen air hit her bare skin and she sucked in a breath.

Her phone buzzed on the counter. Brian.

Also make sure the back door is locked before you leave. It sticks sometimes.

Katie typed back one-handed, her other arm crossed over her bra. *Already locked it.*

She held her phone up and looked at herself through the camera. She looked hot, but she could do better. She smirked at herself through the lens as she reached back and unsnapped her bra. Josh would lose his shit if he say this.

She let the thin fabric dangle on her arms, giving herself one last out before making the decision. Then, with her skin burning, she tossed the bra onto the floor with her shirt. She held the camera in her right hand, her left arm crossing over her chest, fingers spread just enough that the edge of her nipple peeked between them. She snapped it before she could think.

She looked at the photo and her stomach flipped. It was the most daring thing she'd ever taken. She could see the outline of her body in the glass door behind her, the kitchen light warm against her skin. Her expression was flushed. She could almost see the fear and desire coming off of her.

Brian's name lit up her screen again.

It looks like that was only wet food. She needs the dry food mixed in or she's going to get fat..

"Oh my God," Katie muttered. She grabbed the dry food from the cabinet, spooned it into the bowl, and snapped another picture.

Come on, babe. Don't leave me hanging.

She shook her head, tapped Brian's thread and went to attach the food bowl picture. Josh sent another text, a crying emoji followed by an eggplant. Katie giggled looking at the notification bar on top of her screen as she attached the picture and pressed send.

"He's such a goofball," she said, to no one as she swiped back to Josh's conversation to attach the photo he was impatiently waiting for.

Brian's response came first, and it made her stomach drop.

The composition is good but the lighting is all wrong. You've got a warm source behind you and overhead fluorescent washing everything out.

"Oh fuck. No no no no." Her hands shook as she pulled back up Brian's messages. Her eyes welled with tears and she could feel her heartbeat in her throat as she realized she'd sent him the photo intended for Josh. Another text from Brian appeared as she stared at the screen in horror.

I'll show you some techniques when I'm back.

She stared at the message unable to make sense of it. Her embarrassment knotted in her gut as she tried to piece together why he didn't say anything else about the near naked photo she'd sent him. She called Josh, needing to tell someone what happened.

"Please tell me you sent—" She could hear the grin in his voice and it made her want to be sick.

"I accidentally sent the picture to Brian" The words burst out, unable to hold them a second longer.

"You... what?" The excitement in his voice was gone.

"How?"

"I was texting both of you at the same time and I sent it to the wrong thread. And I... Fuck, Josh what do I do? Tell me what to do." She could feel herself getting hysterical. She tried to slow down her breathing.

She expected anger. She expected his voice to go cold and flat the way it did when he was really upset. Instead she heard him exhale slowly.

"Send me the picture."

"What?"

"The one you sent him. Send it to me. I want to see exactly what he saw."

Her hands were still trembling as she pulled up the photo and sent it. She heard his breathing change on the other end.

"Fuck, babe."

Something in his voice made her stomach drop and tighten at the same time. She pressed her forehead against the cool countertop.

"Josh, I'm freaking out. What do I do?"

"I... um...What did he say?" Excitement had crept back into his voice, or maybe it was dread.

She read him Brian's messages. Word for word.

Josh was quiet for a long time. She could hear him breathing.

"I mean, it sounds like..." he paused and Katie heard him shuffle in his seat. "Katie, this picture... I can... he can see your nipple." He sounded out of breath.

"I know that, Josh. I didn't mean too. God, I can't believe I was so stupid."

Josh cleared his throat. "It's fine, seriously. It sounds like he realizes it was an accident. He probably just want to forget it happened. Same as you."

Katie closed her eyes. "You think?"

"Yeah." His voice had shifted again. Softer now. "Listen. The day's basically over here anyway. I'm going to come home early."

"Okay."

"I'll see you soon. I love you."

"I love you too."

He hung up. She stood there for a minute, her phone pressed against her bare chest. Brian's kitchen hummed around her. The refrigerator. The tick of a clock she hadn't noticed before. Jewels was eating from her bowl on the floor, oblivious.

Her phone buzzed against her chest and she glanced at it through blurry eyes.

Congratulations! You've reached 50,000 followers! 🎉

It was just after six when Josh pulled into the driveway. The sun had already started to set, but that didn't stop him from feeling like he was underwater the second he opened the car door. He adjusted the sunglasses on his face then reached over to grab his gym bag from the passenger seat.

The moment he shut the car door, Jewels jumped from her spot on Brian's porch and came rushing over, already yapping. Josh stood at the edge of the driveway, smiling as the chihuahua made it's way to the property line wearing a small shirt with bulldozers over it.

Brian was on his knees next to the porch steps, a nail clamped between his teeth. He stood the moment he heard Jewels start to bark.

"She was hoping you were Katie," he said, wiping his hands on his pants. "She hasn't been by since I got back. Jewels misses her."

"She's inside. I'm sure she's just been busy."

Josh knew it was a lie. Katie had been mortified after accidentally sending that photo to Brian. She practically begged him to put the house back up on the market. He'd hoped she'd get over it and the embarrassment would die down, but it'd been a couple of days and she was still hiding out inside the house.

"We both know that's not true." Brian reached down, picking up Jewels and scratched her behind the ear. "I know she's beating herself up about the photo. I tried to tell her it was no big deal."

Josh nodded, shifting his bag to the other shoulder as he glanced up at his house. His fingers began to tap against his palm, but he ignored them.

"Hell of a picture, though. Girl's got a body on her. I can see why you want to keep her happy." A smile formed on his lips that made Josh's pulse tick up. "I mean, that tight little stomach, and those—"

A knot formed in his chest, his shirt collar suddenly feeling too tight. It was the same feeling he'd had at the restaurant, when Katie almost flashed the waiter. The thrill of knowing other men wanted what he had. Only this wasn't a stranger. And Brian wasn't guessing.

"What the hell, man? That's my fiancée." Heat slid up his spine.

"What? I'm paying her a compliment." Brian held up his free hand, still grinning. "Don't get bent outta shape. Takes a special kind of guy, letting his girl put herself out there like that. Most men couldn't handle it."

Josh's throat was thick. It was sudden hard to swallow.

"Not you though." Brian's brows pinched together, his glare seeming to pass right through Josh. "You get a rush out of it. All them boys online, pining over her."

"Well if that's all. I'm going—"

Jewels growled in Brian's arms.

"Actually, one more thing. Why don't the two of you come over for supper tonight. Say around eight?"

"I don't—"

"Ah, now don't be like that. Jewels here misses her. And besides, I'm sure we are all anxious to put this little mishap behind us."

There was something about the way Brian said it that made the hair on the back of Josh's neck stand up. He knew he should turn him down cold and head inside. After all it wasn't like Brian was particularly warm to him. And Jewels had made her feelings toward Josh quiet clear. But, Brian was right. They needed to move past it. Katie had been in a funk, and he knew how much she loved that stupid dog. Plus, it was good for her content. Josh didn't pretend to understand what that meant, but he knew it made her happy.

"I'll talk to her," Josh finally said, committing himself to a couple hours of hell if it meant making Katie happy.

"Attaboy." Brian clapped him on the shoulder. "We'll see you at seven. Don't be late." He bent down, releasing Jewels from his arms, then turned and walked back toward the porch.

It was one dinner. What was the worst that could happen?

Katie was stretched out on the couch when she heard Josh's car pull into the driveway. She'd been in the same spot since lunch, her phone in her hand, one throw pillow under her head and another against her stomach. The TV was on, but she couldn't remember what she'd been watching.

She sat up and pulled her hair into a quick knot. On the coffee table, her phone lit up with another notification. She'd turned the sound off hours ago.

The email from Sunglass Hut sat at the top of her inbox, three days old now. *Congratulations on hitting 50K!* They'd found her through the fountain post and wanted her in their ambassador program. That meant free product, a small monthly stipend, a discount code for her followers.

This wasn't like the skincare deal she'd signed before. This was legit and had the potential to be huge. It's what she'd always dreamed about when she started posting. She'd opened it twenty times. Typed out a thank you, deleted it before typing it out again. It wasn't that she didn't want the deal. It was that every time she thought about it she remembered exactly where she was when she got the message.

On top of that, her DMs were still a war zone. She'd gone through them once that morning, scrolling but never opening. Over three hundred since Friday. The previews were enough. She'd blocked six guys and then stopped counting. One account had sent her the same three-word message nine times. Another outlined in no uncertain terms exactly what he would have done to Katie had he been near the fountain.

She locked the phone and set it face down just as the front door opened.

"Hey." Josh came in with his gym bag over one shoulder. He dropped it by the bedroom and came over to the couch, leaning down to kiss the top of her head.

"Hey."

"How was your day?" He straightened, rolling his shoulder like something in it hurt.

"Fine. Yours?"

"Long. Some of these oil accounts are like nothing I've ever seen before. I swear if I have to look at one more spreadsheet I'm going gouge my eyeballs out." He moved toward the kitchen, pulling a water from the fridge.

Katie gave a half-hearted grin as she watched him move into the kitchen. She tucked her feet under her and reached for her phone again, then put it back down.

"What's wrong?" Josh stood by the couch. "You usually love jokes that end with me harming myself."

"Sorry." She glanced at her phone. "Sunglass Hut emailed back."

"Really?" His voice rose giving away his excitement. "What'd they say?"

"They want me in the ambassador program. Free sunglasses, a code for my followers, little monthly thing on top of it."

"Babe, that's huge." He came around the couch and sat next to her, pulling her feet into his lap. "How much is the monthly?"

"Three-hundred a month plus ten percent for anyone who uses my code."

"Holy shit, Katie." He was grinning at her and she tried to match it, but she felt her face land somewhere short. "This is what you wanted. We should celebrate."

"Maybe."

Josh studied her and she did her best to look normal. "Why don't you seem like you want this?"

"I'm just tired."

He shook his head like he didn't believe her.

"Brian caught me in the driveway." Now it was his turn to look away.

Katie's stomach dropped. Her skin prickled with a nervous energy.

"When?"

"Just now. Coming in."

"What did he say?"

"He was fixing his porch. Just wanted to say hi." Josh took a slow drink of his water. "Said Jewels really misses you."

Her shoulders slumped. She missed Jewels too and not just because she was good for her photos.

"Was he weird? Be honest. Did he bring up—" Her cheeks burned.

"He said it was a mistake. He said to tell you to stop beating yourself up."

Katie put her hand over her mouth, then took it away, then put it back. "Oh my God. He doesn't get it. Neither of you do. Josh, I—"

"He wants us to come over for dinner tonight."

For a second she didn't process the words. When she did she laughed. He had to be joking. That was perhaps the most outrageous request she could think of.

"No."

"Katie—"

"No. Absolutely not. I can't sit across from him, Josh. I can't. Not after... Christ, I was naked in his house."

"I already said yes."

"You what?" She sat up straight, her hands balling into fists.

"I said yes." He set his water on the table. "Listen. He's trying to move past it. He made a point of saying it wasn't a big deal. He's not sitting over there obsessing about this. The only person making it weird right now is you."

"That's not fair."

"It's a little fair." His voice softened. "Babe. You've been on this couch for two days. You won't look out the window. When's the last time you posted any new content?"

"I'm not ready."

"You're never going to be ready if we don't do it." He reached for her hand. "One dinner. We eat, we laugh, we come home. And then it's over. You can go back over there and see Jewels, and you can stop hiding."

She looked at the TV. Some woman was crying on it with the sound off.

"You're the one who said we can't make enemies with the neighbor the second we moved in."

She opened her mouth to tell him how it was different, but paused. She was so tired.

"I do miss her," she said.

"I know you do."

"But Josh, if it's weird—"

"Then we leave. I'll make up an excuse. Say the dog bit me or something."

"She would never!" The faintest smile formed on her lips. Then she exhaled and it felt like she was pushing out every breath she'd held for the past two days.

"Okay. But you better be nice to, Jewels."

"No promises."

She wrapped her arms around his waist. "I love you."

"I love you too." He pulled her into him, inhaling her scent. Her phone lit up on the coffee table but she didn't bother to look at it.

A lump had formed in Katie's chest as they made their way across the yard. The sun had set, and crickets were chirping in the distance. It was almost peaceful, except for the sound of her racing

heart. She had changed three times before Josh dragged her out of the house. She'd finally landed on a blue maxi dress that covered her legs completely, with sleeves and pockets.

Josh walked beside her carrying a bottle of wine. They'd picked it up from Target the day they moved in but never found time to open it. It was the most expensive bottle of Cabernet they had. He'd tied a piece of twine around the neck to make it fancier than it felt.

"You good?" he asked, reaching out to take her hand.

"Yep."

He gave her hand a gentle squeeze, clearly not believing her.

She let out a breath and smiled as he knocked.

The door opened and Jewels came out of it like a missile. She shot past Brian's legs and made it to Katie before the screen door could close, paws scrabbling against the dress Katie had spent forty minutes choosing. Katie laughed and dropped to her knees right there on the porch.

"Oh my God, hi baby. Hi." Jewels went for her chin, her cheek, the corner of her mouth. "I missed you so much." She caught the dog under her front legs and held her up. "What are you wearing? Oh my God. Josh, look at her."

Jewels was in a pink gingham dress with ruffled sleeves. There was a tiny bow on her collar.

"She's got an outfit for every occasion," Brian said from the doorway. He was in jeans and a button-down, sleeves rolled to the elbow. "Figured she should dress for company."

"She looks like a doll." Katie stood with Jewels in her arms. The dog was already tucked against her chest, resting comfortably.

"Thanks again for the invite." Josh held up the wine. "Brought this for you."

"Appreciate it." Brian took the bottle and glanced at the label. He set it on the end table in the hallway so haphazardly it nearly fell off. "Come on in. Food's about ready."

Katie looked back at Josh raising her eyebrows as if to say "what the hell." Josh just shrugged and followed behind them.

As they rounded the island and moved to the backyard Katie gasped. It had completely transformed since the last time she was there. Fairy lights were wrapped around the pillars of the pergola and through the slates. The light was on in the pool casting a soft blue glow across the yard as the sun disappeared across the horizon. Whatever Brian was cooking on the grill smelled amazing, and Katie's mouth instantly began to water.

"Wow." Katie stopped at the edge of the patio. "Brian, this is beautiful."

"I had some time on my hands today." He pulled a bottle off the counter by the grill and held it up. Already uncorked. "I opened something a little while ago, let it breathe. Hope you don't mind."

"Oh." Josh flushed. Whatever Brian was pouring looked way more expensive than what he'd brought. "Thanks."

Katie took her glass and drank before she sat down. The wine was good in a way her wine was usually not. She took another sip, longer than the first as she felt it wash away a little of the anxiety. Jewels whined in her lap. and Katie sat the glass down to rub Jewels' chin.

Brian brought out steaks next, along with potatoes and some type of green bean with almonds on top.

"Brian, this is incredible," Katie said, feeling the buzz of her second glass of wine start to wash over her. She wasn't tipsy, but it helped take the edge off about being around Brian. She appreciated that he hadn't brought up the picture tonight, not even to say not to worry about.

"I made more than enough, so please, don't be shy." He sat at the head of the table with Katie and Josh on either side of him.

"So, Santa Fe, what took you out there?" Josh asked, cutting into his steak.

"An old friend." Brian focused on his plate, not even glancing Josh's way.

Josh fidgeted in his chair. "How was the drive?"

"Long."

Josh nodded and chewed. Katie flashed him a strained smile, and took a sip of her wine as Brian reached for the second bottle.

"Congrats on hitting 50k." Brian held her gaze. "I was scrolling yesterday and noticed the milestone. You must be proud."

The wine warmed her chest. She could feel the heat climbing up her neck and she bent her face toward Jewels to hide it.

"It looked like Jewels garnered a bit of a following." He took a bite of steak, his gaze never leaving her. "You two look really good together."

Katie smiled, rubbing Jewels' back. "Because she's cute. The camera loves her."

"Don't give her all the credit." He smiled warmly. "The shot you have of her eating cereal off the floor and jumping into your lap is perfect. You left air in the space instead of trying to fill it with her. That's a small detail that does a lot of work for the shot."

"Thank you." She sat up a little straighter. "It just felt natural."

Brian nodded. "Good instincts."

"I keep telling her that she has an eye for this." Josh tried to interject himself.

"Professional tip," Brian completely ignored Josh, "If you'd pulled your phone back another six inches and squared up with the counter, you'd have had room for a product on the surface behind her. That's what brands pay for. They don't want her face. They want her face with space around it for their logo."

Katie dapped her mouth with the napkin. "I never thought about it like that."

"Most people don't. They're shooting for views. You want to be shooting for real estate."

Katie leaned forward. She wished she had something to take notes. She wasn't used to having this level of insight when talking about her social media.

Josh glanced up from his plate. His eyes went to Brian, then to Katie, then back to his steak. He cut another piece.

"I um... I actually got an ambassador request." She took a large sip of her wine, embarrassed for even bringing it up. "Just a small deal and a discount code for my followers."

"I tried to tell her that—"

"That's great. Why haven't you announced it yet on your page?"

Katie's gaze cut to Josh. They had a whole conversation with their eyes as she took another drink.

"I'm just in my head about the response, I guess," she lied. "I don't want to sound too eager."

"You're over thinking it." He looked around the room at the pictures on the wall. "The first deal is boilerplate. Just accept it and move on." He sat up a little taller. "But remember what I told you about real estate." He topped off her wine glass without asking. "Start putting their sunglasses in the negative space. Let them see you know what you're doing. Then when you renegotiate in six months, they'll already know they're dealing with a pro."

"That's... I hadn't even thought of that."

"Anyway." Brian pushed his plate back. "I could show you some of those techniques now, actually. There's a lot you can do with a good phone if you know how to use it." He glanced at the table. "But I've got this mess to deal with first."

"I got it." Josh was on his feet with his plate in his hand. "Seriously. You guys do your thing."

Katie turned. "Josh, you don't have to—"

"Well, if you insist." Brian was already standing, chair scraping against the stone. He helped Katie with her chair. "Come out into the yard with me."

Josh ran the sponge over his plate, watching the suds slide down the glass. Brian's kitchen was quiet except for the faucet and the muffled sound of Katie's voice from the yard. Even Jewels had rushed outside to join them, leaving him alone with his thoughts, just like the majority of dinner.

He'd volunteered for this. He reminded himself of that as he placed his plate in the strainer and grabbed another. Katie needed this. She'd been miserable for days and now she was out there laughing, talking about making content and acting like herself again. That was the whole point of tonight. He reminded himself of that again as Brian's laugh came through the walls and Josh squeezed every drop of water from the sponge.

Through the sliding glass door he could see them in the yard. Brian had his phone out and Katie was leaning over it, her hair falling forward, one hand holding her wine glass by the rim. Brian pointed at something on the screen and she nodded.

"...I can tell." The clipped voice of Brian floated through the air, causing Katie to laugh and slap his arm playfully.

A knot formed in his chest that he couldn't explain. He set the plate into the strainer and tiptoed closer to the door for a better look.

He watched Katie crouch near one of the patio chairs, angling her phone toward Jewels. Brian stepped behind her. His hand went to the small of her back as he helped her adjust her angle. He could see Katie's muscle tighten, just briefly, before she relaxed continued messing with her phone. Brian leaned closer, their heads nearly touching as they stared at the small screen together.

The room suddenly got hot and began to spin. Josh gripped the counter, his gaze focused on the hand on Katie's back that hadn't moved even after she was finished taking the shot. Brian was taking liberties, wasn't he? Did he really need to touch her like that? Why wasn't Katie doing anything about it? Was she enjoying being touched by someone who was pushing sixty?

Katie suddenly kneeled, clearly looking for a better shot of Jewels. As she did, Brian's fingers rolled over her back to her shoulders. From this angle, from where Josh was standing it almost looked like she was preparing to suck his dick.

"Where the fuck did that come from?" He said to himself, shaking his head at his own crassness. His mouth had gone dry and he realized with horror, he wasn't upset. It was much worse than that. He was aroused.

What the fuck was wrong with him? He turned back toward the sink, chastising himself for trying to eavesdrop. He told himself it was the wine. The way Brian had looked at her that first day. He was just thinking about how good Katie looked in her dress, and what would happen between the two of them when they got back home.

Josh dried his hands on the dish towel as he took a couple deep breath to slow down his racing pulse. Once he felt like he had his emotions in control he walked back over to the door smiling.

"Dishes are done."

Katie spun around. She took a step forward, putting space between herself and Brian. Josh tried to read her expression. He couldn't tell if she was worried he'd seen Brian's hand on her. Then she spoke.

"Josh, look at this. I can't believe how good it turned out." She crossed the patio and held the phone up. Jewels was on the chair, string lights catching the rhinestones on her collar, the background soft and blurred. It was better than anything on her page. Hell it was better than some professional pictures he'd seen.

"You took that?" He didn't mean to sound surprised, but Katie didn't seem to notice. "Wow."

"Right?" She looked back at Brian. "He showed me this thing with the angle and the—"

"She's a fast learner." Brian was beaming, but there was something about the way he looked at Josh that he couldn't put his finger on.

They said their goodbyes at the front door. Brian shook Josh's hand. His grip was firm and brief and his eyes moved past Josh to Katie before their hands had separated.

"You've got real potential." He leaned against the doorframe. "A few more sessions and your content won't even look like the same page."

"Thank you. Seriously, tonight was really—"

"Anytime you want to practice, you know where I am."

Jewels darted forward and licked Katie's ankle. Katie crouched to scratch behind her ears one last time. Brian watched from the doorframe. Josh stood on the porch with his hands in his pockets.

The walk back across the lawn felt different than the walk over. Katie was barefoot, holding her sandals by the straps, the grass cool against the soles of her feet. Josh was a step behind her with his hands in his pockets. The crickets were louder than they'd been an hour ago.

She turned at the front door and waited for him to catch up.

"Hey." She caught his wrist as he reached for the knob. "Thank you."

"For what?"

"For making me go." She pressed up onto her toes and kissed him. Quick. Just enough to feel him stop. "I needed that more than I realized."

He smiled, but she could tell it was forced.

Inside, she dropped the sandals by the door and pulled him toward the couch. She'd had three glasses at Brian's and she could feel them in her cheeks. The warmth was just enough to make her body buzz with energy in a way that she was sure Josh would appreciate. She tucked her feet under her and curled into Josh's side.

"What's wrong?" She laid her head on his shoulder.

"Nothing."

"Liar." She poked his ribs. "Tell me."

He looked at his hands. "He just... He barely said two words to me all night."

"What?"

"Brian. The entire dinner I felt like a third wheel."

She was so caught up with her conversation with their neighbor that she didn't even notice. She hated herself for that. He didn't sound angry, just sad in a way that broke her heart.

"I'm sorry, baby." She pulled his arm around her. "That's probably my fault. We were just talking shop the whole time. He gets in his own head about photography stuff and I was eating it up. I wasn't paying attention."

"It's not your fault."

"Still." She kissed the corner of his jaw. "You were a saint the whole night. I can't believe you did the dishes." Her lips brushed his.

"Somebody had to."

She grabbed her phone off the coffee table. "Okay. Look at this though. Look what we made tonight." She pulled up the Jewels shot, the one with the string lights and the soft blue from the pool catching the rhinestones on the collar. "Josh. Look at the depth on this. Compare it to the one I posted last week."

She swiped. The two photos sat side by side in her camera roll. The new one looked like it belonged on a different account.

"That's amazing, babe."

"It's crazy right? Like it's basically the same photo. It's just the angle and the white balance. He showed me how to lock the focus before I take the shot so the background goes soft. I had no idea you could even do that on a phone." She was talking fast. "The Sunglass Hut thing. I... I think I'm going to do it. I was in my head before but after tonight..."

She glanced up. He was nodding but his eyes were somewhere else.

"Are you listening?"

"Yeah. No, I am. That's incredible."

She set the phone face down on the cushion. He was still upset about dinner. She should have made an effort to include him more. He'd pushed so hard for them to go and then she just let him feel like an outcast.

She shifted closer and put her hand on his thigh.

"You know what." She kissed his neck, just under the ear. "You deserve a proper thank you for tonight."

"Katie—"

"Shh."

She slid off the couch and onto the rug between his knees. He looked down at her with a half smirk on his face. She held his gaze and worked the button of his pants, biting her lip as she tugged down the zipper. He lifted his hips without taking his eyes off her face.

He was already half hard. She licked her lips trying to determine what already had him so excited. She wrapped her hand around the base of him and watched his stomach tense. His head fell back against the cushion.

"Mmm I've missed you," she whispered, planting a tiny kiss on the tip.

"He's missed you." Josh's hand wrapped into her hair.

She took him into her mouth. Slow at first. She loved taking him when he was soft, feeling him harden in her mouth. He sighed and his thigh muscle relaxed against her cheek and she flattened her tongue against the underside.

Her phone buzzed on the cushion above her. She didn't bother looking at it. Instead, she let her tongue dip down and touch his balls. She heard him inhale, his cock flexing against him.

"What was that?" She teased, letting his shaft fall from her lips as she kissed along the crown.

"Wh... What."

"That." She traced her tongue along the underside of him. "I felt that."

"It was nothing."

She noticed he'd picked up her phone. Her heart fluttered in her chest as she watched his eyes scroll.

"Josh..." She sucked his sack into her mouth, her fist pumping his now hard cock. "Tell me."

"It's just... the DMs. From the fountain post." His voice was strained. "Have... have you read them?"

"No." She kissed the tip of him. "I could only imagine what they said."

She licked him slow, base to tip, and watched him. His mouth opened slightly. His eyes stayed on the phone.

"You're so fucking hard, Josh." Her tongue circled his crown. "Is that from me or..." She sucks him into her mouth and he let out a sigh.

"They're bad. Like really... fuck... really bad."

She felt him pulse against her tongue again. Whatever he was reading must have been hot, because while he'd always enjoyed her mouth he was never this excited. The thought made her shift her knees on the carpet, a pulse starting to grow between her thighs.

He cleared his throat. The phone shook a little in his hand. He started reading.

"Just want to say I almost ran my truck off the road today scrolling. This picture is the hottest thing I've seen all month. Your entire ass is sticking out. I must have looked and zoomed in about fifty times."

She hummed around him and felt him buck up off the couch. She held him down with her free hand on his hip and didn't let him go any deeper. She pulled off him with a pop.

"And you like that? Hearing some guy say he's looked at my ass fifty times."

He answered with a groan, his dick growing another inch as she teased him.

"God you're perfect. I nearly came in my pants when I zoomed in and saw the white thong you were wearing."

She paused, holding the head of his cock just past her lips. Her thighs pressed together as she thought about what he said. Could someone really see her panties? She'd looked at the pictures multiple times before posting, convinced that while her ass was out she was still mostly covered. Josh's grip tightened in her hair. She knew him enough to know that he was getting close.

She moaned around him just to feel him jerk in her mouth.

"I bet you taste—" He broke off. He cleared his throat again. "Sorry. They're getting—"

She slid him out long enough to look up at him through her lashes. Her hand kept moving. "Don't stop."

He swallowed then nodded.

"I bet you taste so fucking sweet. I think about it. I think about getting between those thighs and never coming up. You'd come on my tongue so hard you'd cry." His voice had dropped. The grammar in his own sentences was starting to slip. "Jesus, Katie. There are like thirty more of these. From the same guy."

She took him deep. She gagged softly, but didn't relent, unsure of what had come over her. Tears welled in her eyes as she took him to the root, her free hand snaking under her dress to the inferno between her legs.

His hips lifted off the couch as he thrust into her. His spear hit the back of her throat as she hollowed out her cheeks. She felt his thighs begin to tremble and knew he was close.

"Not yet," she breathed, releasing his dick as spit hung from her mouth. "I need you to fuck me."

She climbed up his body already pulling her dress up. She didn't want him to come yet. She wanted him inside her. She kissed him hard, her hand still wrapped around him.

"Wait." His hand caught her wrist. "Wait. Stop."

She pulled back, breathing through her mouth. "What?"

He held the phone up between them. He'd opened a different message. She couldn't see the screen.

"Go put that skirt on."

"What? Why?" she raised an eyebrow. "What do you have planned?"

"Just... do it."

She studied his face. He was flushed and clearly just as turned on as she was. She released her hold on his manhood and he let out a soft sigh. "Fine." She grinned. "But you better not finish without me."

In the bedroom she nearly fell forward she pulled the maxi dress off so quickly. The skirt was draped over the chair where she'd left it after the shoot. She started to step into it and then stopped. She hooked her thumbs into the waistband of her panties and slid them down her thighs and stepped out of them. She left them on the floor along with her bra.

She zipped the skirt and looked in the mirror. A current of bliss running through her as she took herself in. She was bare from the waist up. The skirt left little to the imagination. The second she bent over Josh would get a glimpse of her pussy. It leaked with anticipation. Her hair had come halfway out of the knot. Her cheeks were pink and her mouth looked bruised. "You look like a slut," she said with a mischievous smile.

"Fuck me," Josh said as he stood in the door.

"That's the plan." She turned toward the bed. "How do you want me... Sir."

Katie could have sworn she heard him growl. She climbed onto the mattress on her hands and knees, then stopped, waiting.

"Other way."

She turned around, facing the headboard. He came up behind her and she felt the bed dip and his hand on the small of her back.

"Mmmm." She lifted her hips, putting her head on the bed.

"Holy shit, Katie."

"Too much?" She looked over her shoulder. "Ohhhh... fuck."

His mouth was on her before she could process it. She fisted the sheets as his stubble pressed against her thighs. He didn't go gentle, or ease into it. He fucked her with his tongue like he'd been waiting all night for it, his hands holding her open, the skirt bunched up over her hips.

"You're already soaked." His voice was thick. "Christ. You're dripping."

She buried her face in the pillow. Her hips pushed back into his face, wanting his tongue deeper. She couldn't even pinpoint when she had gotten so worked up, but there was no denying it.

"He was right," Josh said, against her. "This view is unreal."

The weight of the bed adjusted and so did his grip. His tongue lapped over her lips as he repositioned himself so he was lying directly underneath her.

"Are you this turned on because of them? Because of what they were saying?" His breath was cool across her clit and she whined in pleasure. "What do you think they would do right now if they could see you like this? Do you think they—"

She didn't let him finish. She pressed her hips down covering his face as she squeezed her breast.

"Mmm fuck, baby. That feels so good." She ground her hips into him. His tongue found her clit and her scream pierced the air. She tugged on her sensitive nipple.

"Oh fuck, oh fuck." Her voice came out broken as she rolled the swollen bud between her fingers. Josh's tongue worked her clit in tight circles and her thighs clamped around his head "Oh God. Yes... Mmmppfhh I'm close."

She moaned and squeezed her tit harder. The skirt was bunched and twisted around her waist and she could feel the cool air on the small of her back where it had ridden up. She thought about the man who had typed those messages. Some stranger sitting at his kitchen table or in his car or wherever he was, typing *I bet you taste so fucking sweet*.

The thought made her clit pulse and she ground down harder.

"Josh — Josh I'm gonna—"

He sucked her clit between his lips and she broke. Her thighs locked around his head and her hand left her breast and slapped against the headboard. "Ohhhhh Nnngggghh..." She continued riding his face as her pussy convulsed around nothing. Josh slowed his tongue, but never completely stopped sucking her clit. She gripped his hair until she was so sensitive she rolled off of him onto her elbow.

"Holy shit," she panted, bringing her arm over her eyes.

Josh was already moving on the bed. He grabbed her leg, rolling her onto her back. She couldn't help but laugh. He always had a healthy appetite for sex, but whatever had gotten into him tonight was a whole other level. She raised her hips as he settled behind her.

"Show me how bad you want me," she teased.

"Ahhh." The weight of his cock pressed against her entrance. She'd expected him to ease into her, but instead he buried himself to the root in a single thrust making her toes curl. "Ohhh."

He gripped her hips hard enough that she'd find the bruises in the morning and started to move. He fucked her hard and fast, unlike their usual love making.

Her skirt had bunched up around her waist and he grabbed it in his fist using it as leverage to drive into her. Every thrust drew a low groan from Katie, her body rocking into him, soaking him with her juices.

"Fuck, you're so hard." Katie rolled her hips desperate for her fiancé's release. "Harder... fuck me harder."

He grunted behind her, picking up his pace and making her tits bounce with each thrust. "They all wish they could do this." His rhythm got more urgent. "All of them wish they could... fuck... you."

"Yessss. Yesss." Her pussy squeezed him as her body trembled.

She could hear herself. She couldn't stop. Every thrust pushed a small broken sound out of her, half-moan, half-gasp, and her thighs were already starting to tremble again and she'd just cum. She didn't understand how that was happening.

Josh's groans were getting louder now, and Katie knew he wasn't going to last much longer.

"Cum for me, baby. Do it. Cum where no other man will ever be able to."

"Oh fuck," he groaned, from behind her as her pussy clenched around him. She purred in response, biting her hip so hard she could taste blood as she chased her second release. His hand fisted in her hair, snapping her neck back and her second orgasm hit like a freight train.

Katie's eyes rolled back in their sockets, and all she saw were stars. She felt Josh swell inside her, turning her body into a livewire. Everything was simultaneously numb yet electric at the same time. Her arms gave out completely, her legs began to shake. She felt parts of her body on fire, rippling with pleasure that she was normally only vaguely aware of as his body crashed onto her back.

For a long time neither of them moved.

She could hear him breathing, soft moans emanating from his lips.

He eased out of her and she sighed at the loss. She lay flat on her stomach. The skirt was still bunched at her waist. He collapsed beside her and pulled her against his chest so that her cheek was on his shoulder.

He kissed her forehead. "I love you."

"I love you too."

She closed her eyes. She knew they needed to talk. Not just about the sex, but the words. The way they both responded to those DMs. But right now her body was exhausted. All she wanted to do was sleep, and judging by the soft breaths behind her, Josh had the same idea.

Katie set the box on the kitchen island and pulled her hair into a quick knot before she opened it. Her fingers shook as she worked the tabs of the box. The cardboard had a matte navy finish with the logo embossed instead of printed, and just holding it made her feel like she'd actually accomplished something. She propped her phone against the fruit bowl, angling it down to catch the morning light coming in off the marble, and slid her thumbnail under the seal.

She wasn't sure why she was so excited. This wasn't the first ambassador deal she'd gotten, but it was certainly the biggest. Maybe it was because of the announcement she'd made earlier in the week of her page saying more was to come. Her engagement was way up and just knowing that over fifty-thousand people were waiting to see what she had in store made her stomach flip.

She'd planned to film a proper unboxing, but the second the flap came open she forgot about the camera and reached inside. Three pairs of sunglasses sat nestled in pink tissue paper. Aviators with mirrored lenses on top, a pair of cat-eyes in tortoiseshell beneath them, and at the bottom the black acetate pair she'd actually picked from their catalog. There was a branded card with her name handwritten across the top, a canvas pouch, and a discount code on a perforated tab she could already imagine ripping off and posting.

A small warmth bloomed in her chest. She hadn't felt anything like it since before the photo, and she pressed her palm flat against the cool marble for a second just to make sure it was real. Two years ago she'd posted a stupid dance video for laughs. That's how this whole thing started. Then it was in Instagram post with Josh and her taking a trip to Key West. She couldn't even remember making a conscious decision to make this her 'job' but somewhere along the way she had. And now there was a package from Sunglass Hut sitting on her island.

She remembered the camera then and started over. She took a breath to calm her nerves so her hands wouldn't shake as much, lifting each piece out like she was unwrapping something fragile. She'd cut what she needed to later.

The bedroom mirror had better light than the kitchen and after the unboxing she dragged everything in there. She tried the aviators first, tilting her chin and pouting her lips before snapping the picture. She rotated through each pair, posing until she had a dozen shots she'd actually be willing to use, then picked the best of the black acetate ones and posted it to her story.

The numbers started climbing before she'd put the phone down. Sixty views, then a hundred and forty, then over two hundred, the little eye icon ticking up while she stood there watching it. She felt the corners of her mouth pull up before she could stop them.

She studied the picture closer. It was a good picture, but it wasn't great. Brian's voice crept into the back of her head. She noticed the way her face filled the entire frame, exactly what he'd advised her not to do. There was no white space, nowhere to place their logo. She was so caught up in the moment she didn't even think about using the branded card they had given her, or the pouch that had their logo on it.

She shook her head, embarrassment creeping up her neck. She'd have to take more later, actually plan out a proper shoot. She picked up her phone to text Brian. Maybe she could go over there and use some of his equipment. He could give her particle advice now that she actually had the glasses. She started typing up the message then paused. She'd just go over there. It would mean more to him if she asked in person. Plus, it gave her an excuse to see Jewels.

She packed back up the box, glancing one more time at her feed. The views were already creeping up to the thousands. There was a comment saying she should wear those glasses with the skirt from last week and she sucked her teeth as she thought about the implications.

The sound of the doorbell brought her out of her thought and she glanced at the time. Her sister was here.

Stephanie killed the engine and sat for a second with her hand still on the keys. The neighborhood was so quiet it made her uneasy. No kids on bikes, no garage doors open with music spilling out, no sprinklers running in anyone's yard. Their old street back home had been a constant noise from May through September, her and Katie barefoot on the hot driveway, Katie always grabbing her hand when they ran across to the Hendersons' to use their pool. Now it was the middle of a Saturday morning and she couldn't see another person on the entire block.

She climbed out of the yellow jeep and adjusted her sunglasses as she started up the driveway.

"Hey, I had some more thoughts about poses I wanted to talk to you about. I think—"

Stephanie turned around. The man was standing on the lawn next door, big through the shoulders that made him look almost comical when she saw the tiny dog tucked under his arm. It was wearing a sun hat with an elastic strap that disappeared under its chin, and the hat was crooked over one eye.

His face shifted as he registered her. "Oh. I'm sorry, I thought you were someone else."

"It's okay." She shifted her weight to one side, subconsciously pulling down the hem of her skirt.

He'd thought she was Katie. They got it all the time. Despite the fact that Katie was two years older and slightly thicker, they pretty much looked the same. They both had long dark hair that they wore down. They had the same caramel skin and long legs. When they were younger, Katie would get furious when people asked if they were twins, stomping her foot exclaiming she was older.

"Stephanie," she said, taking a step toward the property line. "I'm her sister."

"Brian. Next door." He shifted the dog onto his hip and extended his hand across the grass. His grip closed around hers and she couldn't help but notice how large they were. "The resemblance is uncanny."

She laughed, trying her best to not roll her eyes as she felt his gaze dip.

The dog whined and pushed forward in his arms, tongue out, paws scrabbling against his shirt. Stephanie reached up with her free hand and scratched under the dog's chin, and the little thing melted into her palm with its eyes closed.

"She likes you."

"She's cute." She pulled her hand back. "I'll tell Katie you were looking for her."

She walked the rest of the way up the driveway without turning back. Behind her she could hear the dog whining, and feel Brian's eye on her as she swayed her hips.

the front door opened seconds after she rang the door bell and Katie pulled her into a hug so fast her feet nearly came off the ground.

"Oh my God you're here, how was the drive, how's school, did you eat? I have so much to tell you, you have to see what came in the mail this morning—"

Stephanie laughed. Katie was rambling like their mom did. She returned the hug, not realizing how bad she needed it. They hadn't seen each other in months. When Katie told her they were moving she couldn't have been more excited. They lived less than 45 minutes away from campus. They could spend more time together like they did when they were younger.

Katie laughed and released her hug. "Sorry, I'm just excited to see you." She stepped aside inviting Stephanie in. She stepped through the door, the cool air of the AC hitting her immediately. She looked back to see Katie smiling, waving at the neighbor across the yard, then shutting the door behind them.

The Sunglass Hut box was open on the coffee table between them. Stephanie had the aviators on, tilted halfway down her nose, scrolling through Katie's TikTok on the couch. She'd already

gone back six months and Katie hadn't bothered to stop her.

"Damn, girl." Stephanie held the screen up. The fountain photo was filling it. "Your legs looked good. You got me doing squats trying to get my ass to look like that."

"Shut up." Katie laughed, reaching for her water.

"I'm serious. Did Josh take this?"

"Yeah."

"That explains it." She zoomed in on something. Katie knew exactly where she was zooming.

"Damn, girl. These comments. Thirsty much."

Katie laughed, heat creeping up her neck. She knew exactly which comments she was talking about. After her night with Josh, Katie had gone back and read them again. The first time she did it was an accident, she went in to block someone and got caught up reading them. By the third time she'd done it, she couldn't deny the rush it had given her.

"It did really well," she said.

"Oh..." Stephanie held the screen up to her face. "I bet it did."

She started reading a comment out loud, something about Katie's thighs, half-laughing the way she did when she was trying to embarrass her. Katie's stomach pulled tight before she could stop it. Her thighs pressed together against the cushion and she shifted, crossing her legs the other way like she'd just gotten uncomfortable. She reached for her water and drank too much of it.

"I'm pretty sure I know why half the guys in my lit class were out last week."

"Oh my God, shut up." Katie's cheeks turned pink and she covered her face with her hands.

The conversation moved on and before long they were talking about Stephanie's on again off again boyfriend, Travis.

"I just don't get it," Stephanie said, grabbing her bottle of water. "He begs me to go to the club with him and then he just wants to stand on the wall all night and watch." She rolled her eyes.

Katie knew her sister well enough that she didn't need to cut in. She would provide the rest of the details after a few dramatic breaths and eyerolls.

"Then he gets all bent out of shape when guys who are actually dance want to dance with me. Like when am I going to say no?" She sighed. "The whole drive home he accused me of grinding on them."

Katie lifted her eye brow.

"Don't give me that look." She laughed. "Fine, of course I was grinding on them. But it was all in good fun. I went home with him didn't I?" She took a long drink of water. "Anyway, we broke up after that. Probably for the best really. But I am going to miss his cock."

Katie nearly spit her water across the room. "Stephanie!"

"What?" She giggled. "He had a nice dick. A girl can miss it." She nudged her sister with her foot. "Speaking of, how do you keep Josh from getting jealous? If I posted some of these pictures..." She trailed off.

"First of all, we are not discussing my fiancée's dick."

"Aww is it small?"

"And second of all..." She could feel her entire face getting red as she tried to control the laughter. "He isn't really the jealous type. I mean he... he kinda likes it when I post pics like that."

"Likes it how?"

She didn't mean to tell her, but now that it was out she wanted to tell her everything. She started with the restaurant and her taking off the shorts, then when she dropped the fork, and finally about the DMs.

By the time she finished she was watching Stephanie's face for some type of confirmation that she was right and that it was weird.

Stephanie took a long drink of her water.

"Are you bragging right now?"

"What? No." Katie's laugh came out wrong. "I'm not... I mean it's weird, right?"

"Kate." Stephanie set the water down and leaned forward. "You have a guy who's not insecure about you being hot. Do you know how rare that is?" She gave a twisted grin. "It almost makes up for his dick being small."

"His dick is fine! Ugh, you're impossible." She launched a throw pillow at her and they laughed until they cried.

When they finally settled down, Stephanie wiped the tears from her eyes. "But seriously. I wish I could find a guy that secure in our relationship."

"Yeah, but like... it's not just that he doesn't care, though." Katie looked off into the kitchen.

"Like. It's more than just him not minding it's..."

"It's what?"

She ran her hands over the front of her legs. "Just. Sometimes he's really into it... Like, a lot." She felt her face going pink again and hated it.

Stephanie waved her hand. "Babe, It's the same thing. He trusts you not to actually do anything. That's why he gets to enjoy it. If he didn't trust you he'd be losing his mind." She tilted the aviators back down over her eyes. "Stop overthinking it. Some guys are wired like that."

Katie finished the rest of her water. Maybe Stephanie was right. Maybe it was the same thing and Katie was just overanalyzing it. After all, Josh had told her the same thing in the restaurant. That part of what made it so hot was knowing that nothing would happen. Josh loved her. He wanted her, and was secure enough to enjoy other men wanting her. That should make her happy. That did make her happy.

She set the empty bottle on the coffee table.

"You're right," she said. "I'm overthinking it."

"So." Stephanie sat back. "What's the deal with the neighbor?"

"Brian? Nothing." It came out too fast. "He's just helping me with my photos."

"Mm-hm." Stephanie watched her, then drained the rest of her water. "He's into you."

"Steph. He's older than dad."

"So? I see it all the time on campus. College professors love hot younger chicks. And you, sis, are hot."

"It's not like that. He had a studio. He's just helping me with my photos."

"Cool. He's still into you."

"You met him for thirty seconds."

"Yeah." Stephanie set the empty bottle on the coffee table. "And in the time it was obvious he's into you."

"Stop it." Katie shoved her shoulder. "You're so gross."

Stephanie pulled her hair into a knot and stretched her legs across Katie's lap. "Anyway. I'm newly single and I drove an hour to hangout with my big sis. We're going out tonight."

"Steph, I don't—"

"You owe me."

"I'm not even—"

"I drove an hour. In Texas traffic."

Katie laughed. The truth was, going out sounded nice. She missed the days of hanging out with Stephanie. Her sister had a knack for finding trouble, and Katie was always there to pull her out of it.

"Fine." She reached for her phone. "Let me text Josh."

"Tell him I'm making you wear something extra slutty." Stephanie grinned. "I want to see how he responds."

"Oh my God." Katie's face flushed. "Stop. You can not let him know I told you that."

"Tell him."

"I'm not telling him you said that."

"Tell him."

She was laughing as she typed.

Josh pulled into the driveway just after six. He'd been aggravated about working a full day on a Saturday, but his boss had assured him it wasn't the norm and sweetened the deal by telling him he could leave at lunch one day next week. Stephanie's yellow jeep was already in the drive, parked at just enough of an angle that Josh had to pull onto the curb. He laughed. It was the exact kind of thing she'd do on purpose just to mess with him. Katie's text had come in around lunch to let him know Stephanie was coming and was dragging her out tonight. The wink emoji at the end had told him everything he needed to know about how the night would end.

It was the first thing in weeks that felt normal. Stephanie always lifted Katie's spirits. And even though she'd seemed okay after the dinner with Brian, a night out with her sister wouldn't hurt.

He paused halfway up the drive. Brian was on a ladder in front of his door, working on what looked like a security camera mounted just above the porch light.

"Everything alright?"

Brian glanced down. He didn't answer. Just turned back to the camera and kept working.

Josh stood there for a second. He considered walking over to ask what the camera was for. Then Katie's voice came through the front window, a yelp followed by a laugh, and he shrugged it off and headed for the door. Brian probably just had a package stolen.

Katie was standing in front of the bedroom mirror when he came in. She turned toward him and did a quick spin. "Well?"

He set his bag down and didn't answer right away. The shorts were so high he could almost see the bottom of her cheeks. Frayed white threads pressed against the back of her thigh. Her top half was covered by a black mesh bodysuit so sheer her bra was clearly visible. The cowboy boots made her legs look like they went on forever.

He sat on the edge of the bed. "Holy shit, babe."

"Steph picked it." She turned back to the mirror, slinging on a denim jacket that would cover her chest. "I think it's a little much."

"You look incredible." He leaned back on his hands. "You sure you don't want to leave the jacket?"

She caught his eye in the mirror and laughed. "You might as well suggest I go without a top at all in that case." She watched him in the reflection. He shifted on the bed, the fabric of his jeans pulling tight over his lap.

"That could work too."

A small flutter moved through her stomach, the same off-balance feeling she'd had in Brian's kitchen the night she'd taken her bra off. She pushed past it. "Behave. Stephanie is enough trouble on her own. I don't need both of you ganging up on me tonight."

He laughed and got up off the bed, came up behind her and slid his arms around her waist. His lips pressing against her neck. "As long as you come home to me after, that's all that matters."

She reached behind her and dragged her fingers across the front of his jeans. He was already hard.

"Yeah? And if I don't?" She felt him twitch under her palm.

It came out before she even realized she'd said it. The bedroom went quiet. In the mirror she watched his face, watched the smile flatten into something darker, possessive. He swallowed slowly. She watched his throat work. The silence seemed to stretch forever, neither of them breaking eye contact as her own pulse was loud in her ears.

"I'm just kidding, babe." She turned in his arms and kissed him, hard, her tongue finding his before he could say anything back.

She didn't know why she'd said it. The words had just been there. She hadn't even been thinking it, not really, it was a joke. Josh knew she would never.

He pulled back, studying her face. Then he smiled and the moment was gone. "I know. Have fun tonight. Seriously. I trust you."

She nodded and turned back to the mirror. Her cheeks were pink. Between her thighs there was a heavy, slow pulse that made her think about the night they'd come home from Brian's and he read her DMs. She tugged the jacket back up over her shoulders and went to the kitchen to find her sister.

Stephanie had changed into a red-and-black corset that pushed her chest up to a size it definitely was not, and a pair of jeans painted on tight enough that Katie wondered how she'd planned to pee all night.

"Damn, we look good." Stephanie moved away from the counter where she was cutting a lime. "Josh, tell your fiancée she looks good."

"I already did." He leaned against the kitchen wall.

"Fine, tell me I look good." She laughed and grabbed Katie's hand, twirling herself into her sister's arm.

"You look good."

"Damn right, I do." She slapped her sister's butt. "I poured us shots. But first, let's make a TikTok."

Katie pulled out her phone and opened the app. After a few clicks she found a Jason Derulo song and pressed play. Her and Stephanie began lip syncing the words together. After a few seconds she zoomed in on Stephanie who seemed to thrive under the attention. Her smile grew, her facial expressions growing more extreme, before ending with her opening her mouth wide and sticking out her tongue.

They watched the video back, giggling. "Post it. Let's see how it does."

"Done." She put her phone away. "Now, where are those shots."

Josh already had them in hand. Stephanie took hers, then salted the back of their hands.

"To a night of fun," Stephanie raised her glass. "And those tiny ass shorts. You're going to have the guys going nuts."

Katie laughed and tipped back her glass, watching Josh out of the corner of her eye. His gaze went to her ass and she wished she knew what he was thinking.

Stephanie looked at her phone. "Car will be here in 5."

"Dare I even ask how you plan on getting in?" Josh was rinsing the shot glass out at the sink.

"I'm in college, Josh." She rolled her eyes and dug into her back pocket. "You really think I don't have a fake?"

She slid the ID across the counter. He picked it up. *Lilly Phan. 22.* The picture was Stephanie alright, but it wasn't great. The lighting was bad and her hair was different. It also looked a hell of a lot like Katie.

"Alright, Lilly. So you're twenty-two?"

"Mhm."

He studied the ID. "People actually believe that? I mean no offense, but you have a bit of a babyface. Sometimes I forget you're actually twenty."

"Guys aren't usually looking at my face when they card me." She adjusted her chest and grinned at him.

He laughed and slid the ID back across the counter. "Noted."

She stuffed it back into her wallet. "Car's here."

"Alright. You two be careful." He walked over to Katie and kissed her. "Have fun tonight."

"Oh, we're gonna have so much fun." Stephanie pulled Katie into her side. "So, so much fun."

"Ignore her." Katie pulled herself away, and pressed her hands into Josh's chest. "We'll have a normal amount of fun."

"No we won't."

Katie rolled her eyes and gave him one more kiss. "I love you." Then she grabbed Stephanie's arm and they walked out the front door laughing.

The drive to the club took twenty minutes. When they got there, the line was wrapped halfway down the block.

"Oh my God. What is this place?" Katie asked, as she took a quick video of the line.

"Some of the girls in class told me about it. Supposed to be the hottest club around."

"This line is crazy. We're never going to get in."

Stephanie gave her a mischievous grin and marched straight up to the bouncer, her hand already digging for the ID. Katie trailed behind her, suddenly aware of how much skin the

bodysuit didn't cover. A few of the girls near the front shot them dirty looks as they pushed toward the front.

The bouncer was huge, his shirt straining across his chest. He took Stephanie's ID and barely glanced at it before his eyes dropped to her chest and stayed there.

"Have a good night, ladies." He stepped aside and opened the door for them where fog and strobe lights filtered out.

"How'd you do that?" Katie yelled over the bass as she pressed close to her sister.

"You really have been out of the game too long." She spotted the bar and pulled her sister that way. "Being hot and young is like currency in a place like this. No offense to the moms outside, but we have the look this place wants."

Katie nodded, then pulled out her phone. Stephanie threw an arm around her, both of them pushing their sunglasses halfway down their noses. Katie panned across the packed floor behind them. The bass flowed through and her body seemed to move on its own as sweaty bodies seemed to bump into her from every direction.

The bar took ten minutes to push through. Hands slid across her stomach, her thighs, she wasn't sure how accidentally they were. Stephanie ordered two more shots of Patron, leaning so far across the bar her feet were off the floor.

"To getting drunk and stupid." Stephanie raised her glass.

"Not too stupid."

They laughed then clinked their glasses and tipped them back. Katie bit into her lime, her nose squishing as she felt it burn all the way down.

"Come on," Stephanie grabbed her hand and dragged her out to the edge of the dance floor as 'Yeah' by Usher came on and the crowd cheered.

She didn't try to find a spot. She just stopped where the crowd let her stop and started moving. Stephanie threw her arms up over her head. Katie lifted her phone, angled it down, and got a clip of the two of them with the lights swinging behind, Stephanie's mouth open mid-lyric, her own face flushed and laughing.

For one full song it was just them. Stephanie kept finding reasons to grab her by her wrist, her hip, her shoulders. It was like they were sixteen again in their living room with the rug pushed back. Katie's hair was already sticking to her neck. She caught herself smiling at nothing.

As the second song started the first guy showed up behind Stephanie. Katie smiled at her sister as she caught his wrist, shaking her ass against him without even knowing who he was. Katie

nodded in approval, a silent communication they had developed over the years. He was tall, with dark hair and broad shoulders, exactly Stephanie's type. Katie took half a step back to give them some space when she bumped into the second guy.

His hand closed on her hip and she bit her lip, closing her eyes and letting the music take her away. When she opened her eyes, Stephanie was grinning.

"He's hot," Stephanie mouthed at her over the music, eyebrows up.

Katie laughed and shook her head. "Don't," she mouthed back.

But her hips were moving. She felt the guy behind her press a little closer and she didn't move forward to make space. She thought about Josh on the couch. About the way he'd looked at her with the phone in his hand. *They all wish they could do this.* What would he think if he could see her now? She knew the answer and she placed her hand on top of the one on her hip and dipped low, letting his hand slid up her ribs to her shoulders before spinning around to face him.

"Derrick," he yelled over the music, stepping forward to press into her.

Katie smiled, seductively, then took a step back maintaining just enough distance to keep her composure without losing his interest. "Katie."

The song came to an end and all four of them were beginning to sweat. The guys steered them back to their table. Katie let Derrick pull her by the hand. Stephanie caught up beside her, giggling.

"They're hot. Brad's already hinting that they have a place near by."

"Don't you dare." Her eyes drifted to Brad who seemed to know what they were talking about and smiled. "We're here for drinks and dancing, that's it."

"You're no fun," Stephanie teased, but otherwise dropped it.

They stopped at a high top where a bucket of ice sat with a half dozen empty bottles of beer. Derrick disappeared toward the bar and Katie watched him go before excusing herself to the bathroom.

The bathroom was cooler than the floor by ten degrees and her ears rang in the relative quiet. She washed her hands and looked up.

Her hair was everywhere, drops of sweat pimpling her face. Her makeup had loosened, her lipstick gone where she'd bitten the lime. The bodysuit clung to her ribs. She pulled the denim

jacket off her shoulders, hoping it would help her cool off quicker.

As she waited she studied her reflection. She thought about Josh's words. Technically, she was still covered. The dance floor was dark, and while her bra could be seen, it wasn't nearly as revealing as Stephanie's outfit. She thought about him on the bed asking her to leave the jacket. About how she'd said no.

She pulled out her phone.

Katie: *I miss you. Hope you're still awake when I get home. You know how I get when I'm drunk ;)*

She sent the message, followed by a picture of her without the jacket on. Her nipples stiffened, and she told herself it was because she was finally starting to cool off. She slung the jacket over her shoulder and headed back out to find her sister.

Stephanie was in Brad's lap when she got back. Her lipstick smudged, and the strap of the corset slid down her arm. Katie's stomach fluttered as she took in her sister. She wasn't surprised she'd found a guy to hook up with, she just hadn't expected how into it she'd be.

Stephanie saw her coming and sat up a little straighter, adjusting the strap so it sat back on her shoulder.

"Love the new look, sis. Very fucking hot." Katie blushed, noticing how Stephanie's words were already starting to slur. They needed to slow down, but Derrick already had another round ready for them at the table and she refused to be the first one to tap out.

They threw the shot back as Derrick hovered next to her. She pulled out her phone, ignoring the way his arm brushed against hers.

Josh: *You look so sexy like that. Are you two having a good time?*

She smiled. God, she missed Josh. It was great getting out of the house and getting to hang out with Stephanie but she would kill to be home with him right now cuddled up on the couch. She started typing a response, but Stephanie grabbed her phone with a laugh.

"You're being rude. You can be on your phone later. Let's get back out there and dance."

Katie laughed, already moving to stand as Stephanie draped herself around Brad and they headed toward the dance floor. She glanced at Derrick, noticing for the first time the deep blue of his eyes.

"Shall we?" He asked, he had a dimple at the corner of his mouth that somehow made him look less dangerous.

She offered him her hand as the DJ moved onto to something heavier and they followed behind Stephanie and Brad.

The crowd was thicker now, hotter. Stephanie was three feet away, with Brad's lips crawling up her neck as she backed into him. Derrick took his position behind Katie, his hands sliding across her stomach as she let him pull her flush against him.

She closed her eyes, getting lost in the moment as she rolled her hips teasingly. He was a good dancer, and despite the hardness she felt poking into her ass, he was mostly a gentlemen.

His mouth brushed against her ear, and she let out a soft gasp. "You look familiar. Have I seen you on campus?"

She shook her head no, running her fingernails up his arms to his bicep. His arms were big, and there didn't seem to be a single ounce of body fat on them. Heat coiled low in her stomach as she dipped slightly, then came back up running her hands through his hair as he leaned closer.

His hands drifted higher and for a moment she let herself get swept up in it. She wasn't sure how long they'd been out there when she realized a new song had started. Derrick's fingers ghosted over her ribs, making her suck in air.

"Are you sure I haven't seen you somewhere? You're not the type of woman I would forget." He tilted his hips forward, his hands just below her chest.

Katie chewed on the inside of her cheek. Her mouth opened in a silent moan as she felt his hardness press into her. He was so hard she could swear she could feel his heartbeat through his manhood. She casually caught his hands, ensuring they didn't slide any higher as she pressed back into him, letting her free hand slide through his hair. She smiled as she heard him suck in a breath.

When she opened her eyes she saw Stephanie watching her over Brad's shoulder. She smiled at her sister, mouthing that they needed to leave. Stephanie shook her head no, but as the song began to bleed into the next Katie stepped away from Derrick, motioning that she needed a breather.

By the time the others had gotten back to the table, Katie had chugged two waters. She was dripping in sweat and the room was spinning around her. She'd drunk too much too fast and she knew she was going to feel it in the morning.

"We need to leave soon. My feet are killing me," she said as Stephanie came back to the table. "Give me my phone back. I want to text Josh."

Stephanie had that mischievous look in her eye again and Katie couldn't place why. She assumed it was because her sister was about to ditch her to go home with the guy she'd just met. However, as she took her phone and open her text with Josh she understood why.

Stephanie had texted him while she was dancing with Derrick. Katie's stomach hit the floor as she stared at the image Stephanie had sent. There she was, eyes closed, head tilted back into Derrick's shoulder, her hand in his hair, his mouth dangerously close to her neck.

Her eyes lifted from the screen, Stephanie was still looking at her grinning. She didn't know how to react. She should have been furious. Was Stephanie trying to start an argument with Josh? That didn't make any sense. Why would she send him something like that without asking her?

Her phone buzzed in her hand and she looked down. That's when she saw the text that Stephanie had sent with the image, followed by Josh's response.

Stephanie: *your girl is making quite the impression.*

Josh: *Fuck, she looks so hot. Is she misbehaving?*

Katie stared at the thread. Her heart was pounding in her ears, an electric current seemed to run through her making her shift her stance. She read it again.

Is she misbehaving.

Her thighs pressed together against the edge of the booth. The pulse from the dance floor hadn't faded, not even close, and somehow Josh's words on a screen made it worse. He'd said that exact thing to her a hundred times. In bed, on the couch, with his mouth at her ear. She knew what came after he said it. She knew what it did to him to say it.

He wasn't upset. He was hard.

The thought hit her so cleanly she almost laughed. Of course he was. He was sitting at home, alone, with a picture of her tilted into another man's shoulder. His wording was interesting too. He didn't ask if she was behaving, but if she was misbehaving. It was almost like he was hoping the answer would be yes.

She glanced over at Derrick, watching her like he was waiting for her to make the next move. She thought about it. The briefest thought about her arms going around his neck thanking him for the night as she pressed her lips to his. She bet he was a good kisser. She imagined his tongue was rough, commanding. The kind that would occupy her entire mouth and make her moan for him.

Fuck, she was horny, and staring. she'd been caught. Both Derrick and Brad were looking at her now with those stupid grins on their face. She pulled up her camera and pointed at them.

Katie: *Big thanks to these two for the free drinks tonight 🥰 we're heading home*

She hit send and stuffed it back into her pocket.

"Take a picture to remember us by?" Derreck asked over the music.

Brad threw an arm around Stephanie. "Orrrr you two could come back to our place. Keep the party going."

Katie's eyes went wide. She wasn't ready for such a direct statement and her mind was processing too slowly to think of anything to say.

"Next time, babe." Stephanie pulled Brad's face to hers and kissed him. "I already ordered us a car."

Katie released a breath, thanking her sister with her eyes. Of course she was going to turn them down as well.

"But," Stephanie smiled, winking at her sister. "We should swap numbers so we can do this again soon."

She was already holding out her phone.

Brad took it, typed, handed it back. Then he looked at Derrick and tilted his head toward Katie. Derrick was already pulling out his own phone, holding it out toward her.

Katie looked at it, then at Stephanie. Stephanie was sipping her water. Her eyes daring Katie.

What was the harm in swapping numbers? She was never going to actually use it. She smiled and typed in her number, handing it back.

Katie's phone buzzed in her pocket, startling her.

"That's me," Derrick said. "Now you have my number too."

All Katie could do was nod as Stephanie shot her the biggest grin.

"The car is pulling up." She kissed Brad one last time. "Thanks again for a fun night."

Katie gave Derrick an awkward hug and then linked arms with her sister as they walked out.

The TV was on but Josh wasn't watching. Some game in the third quarter, the announcer's voice coming through the speakers in that flat rhythm that meant nothing important was happening. He had a beer between his thighs that he'd been working on for the better part of an hour. It was warm now. He took a sip anyway.

He wasn't sure why his nerves were such a wreck. Katie had gone out with her sister countless times before when they were dating. This should have been just like every other time. Except, he knew that wasn't true. There had been something different between them the last few weeks, ever since Josh had pushed her to show herself off more.

His phone buzzed on the cushion next to him.

He picked it up, and his heart immediately skipped a beat. It was Katie. *I miss you. Hope you're still awake when I get home. You know how I get when I'm drunk ;)*

He smiled, and felt his cock start to stir. It was true. He loved how worked up she would be when she got home.

The message had a picture attached and Josh found himself reaching for his drink. It was a mirror selfie from the club bathroom. The denim jacket was gone. Just the black mesh, her bra clearly visible underneath, her hair stuck to her neck and her cheeks flushed the way they got when she'd had too much.

His stomach pulled tight as he zoomed in on the picture.

She'd told him no when he'd asked her to leave the jacket. She'd laughed at him, told him to behave. And here she was an hour later, in a club bathroom, sending him exactly what he'd asked for.

He set the beer on the coffee table because his hand wasn't steady enough to hold it.

She was thinking about him. Despite her being drunk and surrounded by a bunch of guys she was texting him. Her nipples were hard. He hadn't noticed until he was zoomed in almost as far as he could go, but there was no denying it.

A million thoughts ran through his head. Why were her nipples hard. The bathroom was air-conditioned, that was it, that was probably it. Or she'd been dancing. Or someone was pressed against her at the bar. Someone had been pressed against her at the bar. Josh knew how clubs worked. He'd been to clubs.

His cock was straining against the fabric of his jeans. He pressed the heel of his hand against it and exhaled through his nose. He thought about going to the bedroom for two seconds and then dismissed it. She'd be home in an hour, maybe less. He could wait. He wanted to wait. He wanted her to walk in and find him exactly like this so she'd know what the picture had done.

He typed back. *You look so sexy like that. Are you two having a good time?*

He waited, expecting her reply to come instantly. The game came back on. Someone fumbled and the announcer's voice climbed into excitement and Josh didn't process any of it. He kept his

eyes on the screen of his phone, watching for the three dots that never came. The fourth quarter started.

He was halfway through his second beer, his cock still rock hard, when his phone buzzed. He grabbed it so quickly he dropped it onto the floor, nearly spilling his beer as he chased it across the living room.

It was another picture and this one made his blood turn nuclear.

Katie was dancing with someone. Her eyes were closed, her head tilted back on his shoulder. Josh studied the other guy. He was tall and muscular. His brown hair swept across his face. He seemed exactly like the type of guy Katie would be attracted to.

The thought made his cock throb. Why would he say that? Josh was the type of guy she was attracted to. That's what he meant, wasn't it? He stared at the picture again. The guy's mouth was close to Katie's neck. Had he been kissing it? Was he about to kiss it? His hands shook as he took in the image. Her hand was in his hair, his hands against her stomach. They looked like lovers.

Josh dropped the phone onto the couch and pushed to his feet. The room suddenly felt too small. He drifted into the kitchen, only to turn right back around, pacing the length of the living room. Sweat gathered at his temples, sliding down the side of his face.

Seventy degrees. The AC was already set to seventy.

Still, the air wouldn't come. His chest tightened, each breath shallow, uneven. He dragged a hand through his hair, exhaled hard, then crossed back to the sofa. The phone waited where he'd left it, and after a brief hesitation, he snatched it up again.

There was a message below the picture. *your girl is making quite the impression*

It wasn't Katie that had sent the message. It was Stephanie. He wasn't sure if that made him feel better or worse. He tried to convince himself that was a good thing. Stephanie wouldn't do anything to hurt Katie. Which meant it wasn't a moment Stephanie was worried about. Which meant Katie wasn't actually in trouble, she was just dancing, she was just a little drunk, and her sister was clowning her.

He pressed the heel of his hand against himself again and this time he didn't pretend it was to ease the discomfort. He was painfully hard. He could feel his own pulse in it. His mouth had gone dry and there was a tightness in his throat. He unzipped his pants to ease the tension.

Josh: *Fuck, she looks so hot.*

He stared at it. He deleted it. Unsure of how Stephanie would respond. His hand traveled to his dick as he thought about what he wanted to say. Almost unconsciously he stroked himself, his

gaze falling back onto the photo of Katie and her mystery man.

Josh: *Fuck, she looks so hot. Is she misbehaving?*

He sent it before he could read it back. His hand was on his dick before the message marked as delivered.

He set the phone face down on his thigh and pressed both hands against his face. His palms came away damp. The game on the TV had gone to commercial again. He'd missed an entire drive. He didn't care.

His phone buzzed again and this time he was ready for it.

It was another picture. They were at a table, a countless number of empty shot glasses scattered around. Katie wasn't in this picture though it was two guys. Josh recognized one of them, it was the same guy who had been dancing with Katie.

Katie: *Big thanks to these two for the free drinks tonight 🥰 we're heading home*

He stared at the picture, zooming in on the guy Katie had been dancing with. He was grinning from ear to ear. Was it because something happened? Was it the smile of a man who had crossed a line with another man's fiancée?

He readjusted his cock again. He didn't respond to the message, he wasn't sure what to say. She was coming home, that was the most important part. The picture on the screen taunted him. He knew nothing had actually happened, but he couldn't keep the what-ifs from popping in his head, making his dick scream for release.

The game ended, but he barely noticed. The next game came on, or maybe it was a postgame show. He let it play. He sat there staring at the picture of Katie and the other man dancing. The image seared into his brain as the ceiling fan clicked softly above him.

Headlights swept across the front window.

His head came up. He heard the car, the soft thunk of doors. Stephanie laughed at something and Katie shushed her in a tone louder than the laugh itself. He stood up, unable to move toward the door as it began to open.

Katie came in first. She was holding her boots by the straps and the denim jacket was tied around her waist by the sleeves. The mesh was sweat-stuck to her ribs. She saw him standing in front of the couch and her face lit up. She crossed the living room in three steps and jumped into his arms.

"Hi," she said pressing her mouth to his.

"H—"

She kissed him before he could finish. She tasted like tequila and lime and the salt of her own sweat. Her hand was in his hair and her hips were already grinding, her shorts riding up against the front of his jeans.

"I missed you so much." Her tongue dipped into his mouth with a hunger he hadn't seen in weeks.

Stephanie was somewhere behind them, banging a cabinet open in the kitchen, complaining about a glass.

"Babe." He tried again, his hands going to her waist by reflex even as his mouth said the word. "Stephanie."

"Mmmph." She didn't stop. She bit his lip, playfully. She kissed his jaw, his ear, her teeth catching his earlobe. "Go to bed, Steph!" she called, not looking, her voice loud enough to make him flinch.

"I'm getting water!"

He could feel her laughing against his neck. Her hips kept moving. He pressed his palm flat against her lower back without deciding to and felt the heat coming off her through the mesh. She was burning up. The night was still on her.

"Mmm were you waiting for me?" Her fingers found his open zipper and he groaned as she ran her fingers across her swollen shaft.

"Found it." Stephanie surfaced from the kitchen with a bottle of water already halfway to her mouth. She stopped at the edge of the living room and took them in. Katie's lips were on Josh's collarbone, her hand already inside his pants.

"Oh, I see how it is." Stephanie pointed the bottle at them, her words slurring. "You cock block me all night and then comes on and immediately try to get laid."

She stumbled toward the guest room. "All you had to do was take Brad and Derrick up on their offer to go back to their place and I'd be the one stripping out of my clothes."

Josh's body went rigid. So they had a name. He wondered which one was the one from the picture. Did she say they invited the girls back to their place? He pressed his hips into Katie's hand.

"Goodnight love birds. Please keep the noise down." The guest bedroom clicked shut and Katie tugged the hem of Josh's shirt up.

"I want your dick in my mouth." She tugged on his pants, whining.

Josh's hands went to her arms, stilling her. Stephanie's words still rattling in his brain. "They... they invited you back to their place?"

Katie finally got his button undone, her fingers pausing as the words registered. She lifted her head, her eyes unfocused as she looked at him.

"I came home to you," she said.

Josh stared at her. The room was quiet enough that he could hear the ice maker drop a tray in the kitchen. Katie's eyes hadn't left his since she'd lifted her head.

He should have said something. He should have asked the actual question. *Did anything happen.* That was the question. That was the only question. But her hand was still resting on the open waistband of his jeans and she was looking at him like that and Stephanie was twenty feet away through a door that didn't lock and he couldn't make any of those things stop being true at once.

She kissed him again. Slower this time. Her tongue moved along his teeth, forcing her way into his mouth.

"Bedroom," he said, against her mouth.

"Mmm." She didn't move. Her teeth caught his lower lip. "Too far."

"Your sister—"

"Don't care."

She kissed his jaw, working down his throat. She slid down to her knees on the carpet between his feet without breaking the line of contact and his cock felt like it may burst just watching her get there. She'd done this a thousand times, but never with this much fire. She tugged his jeans down and pressed her lips just below his belly button. Her mouth started moving south and he forgot how to breathe.

"Did..." He stopped, not knowing how to ask, but needing to desperately.

"Did something happen with those guys?"

His dick popped free and she took him all the way to the root.

His head flopped back against the sofa. His hand fisted in her hair. There was no build-up, no teasing or preamble. Her cheeks hollowed out and she stayed there, holding him deep, her eyes closing, her throat working around him. He couldn't remember the last time she'd taken him like this. He couldn't remember her ever taking him like this.

"Fuuuuck, Katie."

She slid him out slowly. A line of spit caught between her lips and the head of his cock and broke against her chin. Her hand kept moving, while she looked up at him.

"No," she said. "Nothing like that happened."

She held his eyes. He waited for the rest of it. The qualifier. The *but*. Her tongue traced the underside of him and her free hand cupped his balls and she didn't say anything else, just held his gaze.

"Did... did you want something to?"

She took him in her mouth again without responding.

His hips lifted off the couch. He'd been worked up for hours. He wasn't going to last long. He needed her to stop. He couldn't think. All he could do was see the smiling face of the man whose lips had been close to her neck while she ground on him.

"Oh fuck."

His grip in her hair tightened and she moaned in delight. The vibration rattled around his shaft as Katie continued to roll his balls in her palm.

He closed his eyes. That was a mistake. The image behind them was crystal clear. Katie's head was tilted into the stranger's shoulder, her hand in his hair, eyes closed exactly the way they were closed now. As her orgasm neared the image shifted. The couch under him became a different couch. Katie wasn't on her knees in front of the guy at the club.

He grunted and Katie took it as a signal to redouble her efforts. Soft gagging noises came from her throat as she worked Josh. Except, for Josh it wasn't him that she was working. She was choking on another man's dick.

"Fuck — Katie — fuck —"

He came before he could warn her. His whole body went stiff against the cushions, his hand twisted in her hair, his hips lifting off the cushion.

"Ohhh fuck." The image looped through his eyes as his balls emptied in Katie's throat.

She moaned in delight. Her throat working around him, ensuring she swallowed every last drop. Her free hand continued to squeeze his balls, like she was ensuring she got every last drop.

She pulled off slowly with a pop. "Mmmm." She ran her tongue around his shaft. "That was fast," she giggled, her lips leaving small kisses on the head.

"I—" He couldn't finish the sentence. His chest was still heaving. Katie usually hated when he came in her mouth. On the rare occasions that he did, he always gave her warning before hand.

She squeezed him at the base and her eyebrows went up. "And you're still hard."

She was right. Josh hadn't realized it at first, but despite having just cum he was still as hard as a diamond. She started kissing up his chest, her free hand fumbling with the button on her shorts.

He caught her wrist. "Bedroom." He looked over his shoulder at the closed guestroom door. "I don't want to be interrupted."

She stood up, swaying unevenly as she bit her lip. Josh couldn't get her into the bedroom fast enough.

The moment the door closed Katie was undressing. Her shorts came off with ease, the bodysuit she was wearing however required a little more effort.

"Help me," She slurred, falling onto the bed.

Josh stumbled out of his pants, tossing his shirt over his head and walked over to her.

He took her by the ankles and pulled her to the edge of the bed in one motion. She squealed and laughed, her hair fanning out across the comforter. He found the snaps between her legs. The bodysuit popped open and he peeled it up her body, dragging it past her ribs, past her bra, over her head. She lifted her arms to help and got tangled in it and laughed harder.

"You're so sexy," he whispered looking over her body. She was wearing a black bra and matching panties. His cock throbbed thinking about all the attention she'd gotten.

She grabbed his arm, pulling him down beside her as she lifted her legs peeling the panties away. Josh noticed the way they clung to her lips. A thin, clear liquid connecting her outer lips with the fabric.

"I need you to fuck me." She hooked her leg over his body.

Josh sat up, holding onto her lower back so she didn't fall. His teeth scrapped against her neck as his cock slid across her soaked folds.

"You're so wet." His fingers slid up her back, unclasping her bra. "What was his name?"

Katie froze in his lap, her breathing more rapid. "Who?"

"The guy you were dancing with." He rocked his hips against pressing into her nub and making her suck in air. "The guy you're soaked for."

"He was... Just..." She wet her lips. "Steph was into his friend. He was just there."

His fingers ran through her hair, tugging slightly and making her whine.

"Did you like all the attention you were getting?"

She wiggled her hips. "Fuck me, baby, please. I need you so bad."

He silenced her with a kiss. His hands squeezed her ass, pulling her sex against his length.

"Admit it. You liked the attention. Didn't you?"

The kiss was wet and sloppy. Katie moaned into his mouth, her nails digging into his back.

"Yes. I liked it."

"What was his name?" Josh asked again, lying back down flat holding her hips.

She bit her lip, her hands pressing against his chest. "Derrick his name was Derri.... ohhhh fuuuck."

Josh slammed home, discovering exactly how wet she was.

She rutted over him, her eyes slammed shut, lost in her own thoughts. Her dark hair spilled forward, hiding her face as she bit her lip to stifle a moan.

"Nnnngh, you feel so good. You're so hard." Katie's left hand went to her chest, her fingers rolling her nipple as she worked herself toward an orgasm.

Josh grabbed the other tit, making her cry out. Was she thinking about Derrick right now? Was she fantasizing about another man fucking her? He tried to slow her pace, unsure how long he could holdout despite having already cum. Her pussy was like a furnace, hot around him in a way he couldn't remember. Every time she sheathed herself she clenched around him, gasping in pleasure.

"Tell... fuck... tell me about Derrick."

"Ugggh..." She sat up straight, one hand gripping his leg behind her as she rode him.

"Was he a good dancer?"

"Josh..." Her voice climbed an octave, her hips gaining speed.

"Was he... could you feel how hard he was for you?"

Her mouth opened, but no words came out. Her tongue, slid past her bottom lip as her hips continued to roll. Josh swatted her ass and her entire body ignited.

"Yessss... ohhh fuck, Josh. You feel so... Unngh... fuck I'm going to cum."

She leaned forward, her mouth finding his as she moaned into his mouth, her hips never stopping.

Josh tried to keep up with her. He could feel her juices coating his thighs as her pussy twitched around him. She moaned into his mouth as she rode the orgasm out. It took every bit of self control Josh had, but somehow, he managed not to cum.

Katie's body began to slow, then went limp completely against his chest. Her thighs were still trembling around his hips, her forehead pressed against his neck, her breath coming in short ragged pulls that fanned warm across his collarbone. He could feel her pulse through her chest where it pressed against his.

"Mmmm," she breathed.

He could feel the aftershocks of her orgasm pulsing around his steel cock. He eased her onto her back. She flopped backward with her arms above her head, smiling at the ceiling, her hair fanned out around her face. Her nipples were hard. The flush across her chest had spread up her throat to her cheeks.

He stayed inside her. He didn't move. He just looked at her. At the slick sheen on her stomach, the way her thighs had fallen open without thinking, the wreckage the orgasm had made of her composure. She looked like a woman who had been thoroughly fucked and was waiting to be fucked again. She looked exactly like she'd looked in his head all night.

He pulled out slow and she whined. He pushed back in just as slow and her mouth fell open.

"He wanted to fuck you, didn't he?"

Her eyes opened. For the first time all night, they looked laser focused. Her tongue slid across her lips as her hips lifted.

"Yes."

His cock flexed inside her and she moaned in pleasure. His fingers tangled in her hair and she yelped more in surprise than pain. His breathing grew shallower. He slowed his thrusts. He was close, so close he wasn't sure that slowing would help or if he was past the point of no return. Katie sighed against him, her hips chasing his.

"Tell me... tell me about the dance. Was he grinding on you?"

She reached up, grabbing his hair and pulling his mouth to hers. She bit his bottom lip as she rolled her hips.

"He was... fuck, baby. He was so hard. I could feel it against my ass." Her body seemed to move on it's own, fueled by her admissions as she chased her second orgasm. "Fuck me, baby. I want

to cum again."

Her hips continued to roll, her free hand fisting the sheets beside them. Her breathing had broken into the short open-mouthed pulls he knew. She was close. He was closer. The pressure in his balls had become a sound he could almost hear.

He pulled almost all the way out and held it there, before slamming back into her. Katie went wild underneath him, her entire body lifting off the bed. Her cries rose like an aria her thighs clamping around him, locking him inside her.

"Did... ugh... did part of you want to leave with him?"

"Ahhh." Her eyes slammed shut, her nails digging so hard into Josh's back he was certain it was going to draw blood as her entire body locked around him

"Yessssss—"

Her orgasm ripped through her, fueling his own release. He pressed his mouth into her neck to muffle the roar as his vision turned white. His hand braced beside her head as he emptied into her, his legs flexing as she milked every drop from him.

He stayed there for several minutes, buried inside her. This time, his cock did start to deflate and it wasn't until he heard her light snoring that he slipped out of her and fell to her side.

He laid there staring at the ceiling. His heart was still beating too fast and he wondered if he was having a heart attack. He waited for it to slow, but it refused. He'd just come harder than he'd come in months and his body should have been done, finished, useless, and instead he was wide awake in a way that felt almost chemical.

The yes kept playing in his head.