

The Monteleone lobby looked the same as the last time Wendy was here. The dark wood paneling, the crystal chandeliers throwing fractured light across the marble floor. It was Wendy who was different. Six months ago she was terrified of making a mistake, of people viewing her as a failure.

The last time she walked through this lobby, Michael told her she looked like a sixty-year-old accountant. Now, every head turned as she walked by. The white linen midi dress had a v-neckline that was low enough the swell of her chest drew open stares from across the room. The concierge lost his place mid-sentence with a guest. A silver-haired businessman at the bar set his drink down to watch her pass. Two women near the elevator stopped talking entirely.

Six months ago Wendy would have hated the looks, covered her chest in shame. Now, she didn't even afford them a second glance. She was the most powerful person in the room, and everyone knew it.

Michael was three steps behind her, rolling his carry-on and no doubt enjoying the way her hips swayed as she walked. Wendy didn't have time to fight with him about that anymore. She had a national rollout to go over. Her ideas were about to be plastered across every billboard and TV in America.

Jon was surprisingly understanding when she'd told him she and Michael were going back to New Orleans. He'd barely asked any questions aside from how long she would be gone and if she needed a ride to the airport. She'd put a lot of pressure on him at work. That was probably the reason he'd been sick the last few days. He really took to his training of Jenny. Wendy knew from experience that woman could be annoying. She'd thank him when she got back. A proper thank you, just the two of them and a night at the casino. Jon would like that.

"We've been through this. The tier-two markets need a staggered launch window, or we're going to cannibalize our own influencer spend," Michael said, barking into the phone. He jabbed one sausage-like finger against the end-call button, then stuffed the phone into his pocket with an annoyed grunt.

"Fireball?" Wendy asked, slowing her stride so Michael could catch up.

"Whoever Jack has running their marketing department needs to retake Marketing101. I swear the guy doesn't know his asshole from his elbow."

Wendy laughed. "I think the term is his ass from his elbow. And don't be so crude."

"You'd think a company that size would hire someone competent to run their department."

"But then they wouldn't need us," Wendy said, with a seductive raise in her voice.

They rounded the corner toward the elevators and Michael's shoulder clipped a housekeeping cart parked against the wall, making the whole thing lurch sideways. Spray bottles toppled. A stack of folded towels slid off the edge and hit the floor. The housekeeper jumped in surprise, then quickly dropped to her knees and started gathering them.

"So if we front-load the social campaign in the first thirty days and let organic carry the back half, the cost-per-acquisition drops by almost forty percent in tier-three markets," Wendy continued. She sidestepped a towel without looking down. "That's the number that's going to make Bruce shut up about the budget."

Michael jabbed the elevator button. The housekeeper was still on the floor behind them. The doors opened and Wendy stepped inside. The mirrored walls caught her from every angle. She looked every bit the part of a woman who was running a fifty-million-dollar campaign to a CEO who had texted her twice already to express how much he was looking forward to her visit.

"Fourteenth floor," Michael said, stepping in after her.

She was still talking about the presentation when he stopped at the end of the hall. He swiped the key and pushed it open. Wendy peeked inside. It was much bigger than the room he'd gotten last time. There was a single King bed. The curtain was open revealing a gorgeous view of the river. There was even a cart in the middle of the room with champagne chilling on ice.

"You went all out." She chuckled. "Am I next door?"

"I booked us the honeymoon suite. Cheaper than two separate rooms." He said it nonchalantly, without even bothering to turn around to look at her.

Her mouth opened. She should have anticipated this, and yet it still caught her off guard. She needed her own space. A place to prep. Somewhere she could breathe for five minutes without Michael hovering over her. She watched as he stood in front of the window, watching the water as he untucked his shirt.

She let out a defeated breath. Why fight it? She knew how this ended. She would make her argument, he would brush it aside, and somehow she would wind up here anyway. Better to accept it now and save her energy for the presentation. Wendy stepped inside, let the door close behind her, and set her bag beside the bed.

She pulled out her laptop and placed it on the desk, slipping off her shoes. "The loyalty conversion data from Louisville is stronger than I expected. If we lead with that in the opening segment, it sets the floor for the tier-two projections and-"

Behind her the cork to the champagne bottle popped.

"It's a little early for alcohol, isn't it?"

"We're celebrating," Michael said, dismissively as he walked over to where Wendy was sitting with the open bottle in hand.

She kept typing. "-gives Bruce something concrete before he starts picking apart the media spend. I want to restructure slide eleven so the supply chain-"

His thumb traced the ridge of her spine, applying just the right amount of pressure. Her fingers hesitated on the keyboard and she closed her eyes.

"Michael, I'm working."

"I can see that." His hand slipped lower. His fingers curled into the fabric, slowly sliding the bottom of the dress up. "I told you. We should be celebrating."

Cool air tickled her skin, just above her knee as Michael continued to distract her. "We have a presentation in like five hours. Fifty-million dollars is on the line. We need to focus."

He took a drink of champagne straight from the bottle and smacked his lips. "I'm focused."

He leaned in. She could smell the alcohol on his breath. She pushed the laptop away as his lips grazed the shell of her ear, causing her stomach to drop.

"You've already gotten the deal, Wendy." Michael's voice was low as he bit her ear. "Jack is already eating out of the palm of your hand. You're the most successful account manager this company has ever seen. You deserve to celebrate."

"Michael..." Her eyes were closed and her breathing had gotten shallow. He was right, about Jack, and maybe about the success too. But that didn't mean she wanted to take her eye off the ball. Now was the time to-

His cock brushed against her arm and she gasped. He was already so hard. He'd been alone with her for less than five minutes and he couldn't control himself. Her thighs pressed together under the desk.

"We only have a few hours we need to make sure we're prepared." Even as she said it her legs fell open and Michael's hand wasted little time finding the inside of her thigh. She

could feel her pulse between her legs now. Michael's lips had worked down to her neck and she moaned softly, tilting her head into it.

She grabbed his wrist. "Michael, I'm serious."

"I know." His finger pressed against the silk fabric of her panties and she sighed, reaching back and grasping his manhood.

"If I take care of this, will you let me work? We have like four hours."

His free hand was already going to the button on his pants. "Only if you ask extra nice."

Wendy rolled her eyes as she stood. "You want to hear me beg?" Her voice was raspy and playful as she sank to her knees in front of him. "You want to hear how bad I've missed your cock?" Her nails raked down his chest and over the round of his stomach. "How my mouth is practically watering just thinking about it?"

She remembered how much her dirty talk excited him the last time they were here. She slowly lowered his zipper, looking up at him through her lashes. He grinned down at her, bringing the bottle of champagne to his lips. She could hear him swallow as she watched his throat work. The strange part was, it wasn't completely a lie. She couldn't explain why, but the thought of taking him in her mouth already had her biting her lip in anticipation.

She pulled his cock free and wrapped her fingers around the base. "Mmm, I think it missed me." She gave the tip a kiss, struggling to connect her fingers.

"You're wasting valuable time," Michael growled, wrapping his free hand in her hair and pulling her forward.

Wendy gasped, bracing herself on his thighs as the head of his cock slipped across her cheek. She inhaled his scent, rubbing her thighs together. Her tongue darted out, sliding along the long vein that ran from his root to the purplish head. The taste of him spread across her tongue and her right hand slid down his body and between her legs on instinct.

Michael's hips tipped forward and Wendy smiled in triumph. She hadn't even started yet and he was already rocking in anticipation. She pulled back slightly, allowing her tongue to swirl around the fat mushroom shaped tip before parting her lips further and taking him deep. She gasped around his shaft, hollowing out her cheeks and nearly taking him to the root.

"Fuck, you've gotten so good at that." He took another drink of champagne. "I bet you have no problem swallowing Jon's pathetic cock whole, do you?"

She wanted to tell him to shut up, but she didn't. Her mouth was full and she could already feel him twitching in anticipation. The power ran through her like a drug. Her fingers found the wet lace of her panties and she let the vibration of her moans do the work. Her hips rocked forward as she pulled the fabric to the side finding her clit.

"Balls," Michael said, breathlessly, and Wendy immediately slid off his shaft with a loud pop. Her left hand stroking him, strands of saliva coating her fingers as she took his hairy sac between her lips.

"Fuck. I bet you're looking forward to tonight just as much as Jack. Aren't you?" Michael's grip tightened in her hair. "You just can't help yourself, can you."

His words spurred her on. She moaned in compliance, two fingers slipping between her folds as she took the other sac into her mouth. Her hand worked him faster, twisting with each upward motion as the pressure between her legs grew.

Michael grunted, pulling her head away from the large orbs. "Want some?" He held out the bottle of champagne.

She looked up, expecting him to hand her the bottle. Instead he tilted it forward. Cold champagne spilled in a thin stream down his shaft, fizzing against her fingers.

Wendy didn't miss a beat. She lowered her head taking him back into her throat. The bubbles popped against her tongue as she took him deeper. The sweetness of the wine mixing with the salt of his skin. Some of it ran down her chin and dripped onto the front of her dress. But she didn't care. The heel of her hand pressed against her clit as she worked the last remaining inch of his member into her mouth, holding there and sealing her lips for effect.

"Good girl."

Her hips bucked and rolled against her own hand. She hated that those two words did what they did to her. She hated that the champagne dripping off her chin and staining her dress didn't make her angry. She was too turned on to be angry. She was too turned on to be anything except exactly what Michael wanted her to be right now.

"Fuck," Michael breathed. His thighs tensed under his slacks. He set the bottle down and both hands went to her hair. "Just like that. Don't fucking stop."

She didn't. She sealed her lips around him and sucked harder, her hand pumping the base. Her own fingers were circling her clit now. She was close, so close. Michael began thrusting his hips causing Wendy to gag and her eyes to water. But despite that, her fingers danced faster across her clit.

"Uuuuggggh," Michael roared, driving his hips forward and holding Wendy's head flush against his midsection. His head tipped back, his cock swelling in her throat as she swallowed rope after rope. She gagged once, but adjusted, continuing to swallow. Her throat worked around him as he pulsed against her tongue. Her own body clenched in response, right on the edge, one more stroke and she would-

Michael reached down, grabbing her wrist. "Stop."

Her cry was muffled, but she did as she was told.

She slipped his cock from her mouth, breathing hard. Her lips were swollen, her chin wet with champagne and spit. The ache between her legs was so sharp it almost hurt.

"I'm so close," she pleaded.

"Save it." He smiled and took a step backward. His breathing had barely changed. "Jack is going to want you at your best today." A cruel smile formed on his lips. "And we both know you're at your best when you're... pent up."

She stared up at him from her knees. Her pussy throbbed with need. Or maybe from his words. From the anticipation of what was to come.

"You're a real piece of work." She leaned back onto her legs.

"You're the one who insisted we need to work." He picked the bottle back up and took another drink.

She stood, glaring at him. Her knees ached and there was champagne drying on the front of her dress. She snatched the bottle from his hand and took a long pull, never breaking eye contact.

When she passed it back, she adjusted her dress and sat back down at the desk, and opened her laptop.

The sliding doors closed behind her and Jon sat in the car with the engine running, watching travelers drag their luggage through the crosswalk. He'd kissed her on the cheek at the curb, squeezing her hand. She apologized for leaving as soon as he started feeling better and he wondered how much she meant it.

He drove home with the radio off. It had been a couple of days since he met with Marcus and now that Wendy was gone it meant he could actually try to get to the bottom of this. *She chose this.* He did his best to ignore the voice of his friend and mentor in his head. *Your wife is guiltier than you want her to be right now.* He adjusted his glasses. His eyes burned.

The house smelled like her when he walked in the door. He tossed his glasses on the counter and started a fresh pot of coffee, hoping the bitter smell would cover whatever lingered in the air. As the grounds began to brew, he took his usual spot at the kitchen table. He still had a couple of hours before he needed to be at the office, and his plan was simple: go back to the beginning. The long nights with Michael, when she started to pull away.

Dr. Carson had told him to keep a journal, to write down what he was feeling instead of letting it spin loose in his head. At the time, it had been an exercise in proving to himself how irrational he was being. Now, he hoped those pages might give him something else. A clue. A pattern. Some loose thread Michael had left behind that Jon could grab with both hands and pull until the whole thing came apart.

After several long minutes of booting up, Jon's laptop finally blinked to life. He retrieved his glasses from the counter and put them on. The first thing he did was open their shared calendar. Every evening Wendy had marked working late, client dinner, or meeting with Michael, he entered into a spreadsheet. There were dozens of them, clustered together, repeating in ways he had never wanted to notice before. That's when he realized his hands were shaking. There was something obscene about it. The way he was laying his wife's betrayal out in rows and columns, reducing all those lies to dates, labels, and color-coded cells. Staring at the numbers made his leg bounce under the table. His stomach tightened, and for one sharp moment he thought he might be sick.

He cross-referenced that calendar with Michael's, still partially visible through the company system. As expected, most of the "working late" nights showed the same pattern in Michael's calendar. On the surface it didn't amount to much. After all, they weren't hiding the fact that they were working together. But it helped keep his mind focused. And that focus led him to the Cincinnati trip a few months back.

He flipped through his journal, trying to recall exactly what happened that night. He skimmed the passage recalling how Wendy had been unusually late, how she'd stopped responding to his texts and phone calls.

He read through his notes from that night. She was defensive at dinner, overly so. She'd explained it away as being tired, but now Jon was viewing it from a different lens. Something had happened, and he needed to figure out what. He'd read his handwriting another line down and for a second his heart stopped beating.

*Fact:* Her underwear is missing.

He shoved back from the table, barely making it to the sink before the dry heaves got the better of him. Luckily, his stomach was empty. He gripped the counter and breathed through his nose. The faucet dripped against the basin and he counted backward from ten

but only made it to six before his jaw locked and he had to start over. He needed to figure out everything that happened that day. He closed his eyes trying to think of a plan.

The office share drive would have more information. The meeting agenda, receipts for the trip, a slightly better timeline.

He took off his glasses and pressed the heels of his hands against his eyes. When he opened his eyes, he stared at the journal on the table. For the briefest second he wondered if Dr. Carson was somehow part of this. He'd forced Jon to take every instinct, every night his gut told him something was wrong, and smothered it with borrowed language and alternative explanations.

He shook his head. It wasn't Dr. Carson's fault. It was Michael's. He walked over to the table and grabbed the journal, tossing it into the trash. He didn't need thought journals, or Dr. Carson. He needed data and explanations. There was only one place he could get that.

Jenny would be at her desk by nine.

Floor-to-ceiling windows ran along the far wall of the Fireball conference room, pouring afternoon light across the table. The room felt smaller than it had the last time she was here. Quieter, too. She let her gaze move over the empty chairs, surprised by the steadiness in her chest. For a moment this large, her nerves should have been louder. Only Jack and Bruce had joined them from the Fireball team, making the meeting feel less like a presentation and more like something private.

Wendy stood at the head of the table with the clicker in her hand. She'd planned to wear the same white linen dress she'd flown in wearing, but after the mess Michael had made in the hotel room, she needed a wardrobe change. She'd landed on a fitted red mini dress that tied behind her neck and stopped a couple of inches above her knees. It wasn't nearly as daring as the gold dress she'd worn last time, but the plunging neckline made sure Jack wouldn't get too bored. She'd paired it with gold necklaces and bracelets, enough to make her look like she belonged on the Fireball side of the table.

Michael sat to her left, legal pad open, pen tapping against the margin. Jack was across from him, leaned back in his chair with his ankle crossed over his knee. His gaze found hers and the smirk he offered seemed to suggest he approved of her outfit selection. She held his gaze, bending over briefly to type something on her laptop, and smiling when she watched his gaze fall just as she'd planned. Bruce Callahan, Fireball's CFO, sat beside Jack. If he'd seen the show Wendy was putting on he didn't show it. His attention was on the printout in front of him with Wendy's projections. She was prepared for him as well.

She started the meeting with the usual pleasantries then dimmed the light and started the presentation. On slide four she showed the Louisville numbers. Twelve percent lift in brand recall. Nineteen percent increase in on-premise sales. A cost-per-acquisition that came in fourteen percent under projection. She rattled them off without glancing at the screen. It was important they understood she knew the numbers inside and out. That this was more than just another presentation for her.

"Memphis was the proof of concept," she said, clicking to the comparison slide. "Louisville proved the model scales. Every city after that confirmed what we expected. The playbook works regardless of market size or demographics." She set the clicker down and placed both hands on the table.

Bruce uncapped his red pen. "Walk me through the media allocation for tier-three markets. It doesn't look like you account for regional CPM variance."

Wendy smiled. She'd purposely used a different formula so Bruce would ask. "Page nine uses a blended rate because the geo-targeted social buy offsets the broadcast premium." She clicked ahead three slides. "The market-by-market breakdown is in the appendix. Kansas City, for example, runs thirty-one percent cheaper on influencer spend than Nashville, which lets us reallocate the delta into retail activation."

Bruce's eyes went wide. He flipped between pages, studying the numbers and nodding slowly. Wendy waited for a follow-up question. She used the opportunity to glance at Michael. He nodded in approval, making Wendy's stomach flutter.

"The window is the thing everyone here needs to understand," Wendy continued, clicking back to the timeline slide. "Every month we wait, someone reverse-engineers the social playbook. This is the reason we need to blitz the market. The premium scene is hot right now, and we have a ton of good PR. It won't stay like that forever."

Jack uncrossed his legs and leaned forward. "I've talked to our distillery. They've assured me they can keep up with market demand if we hit these numbers." He paused, looking over Wendy. "But these numbers are... aggressive. If you're wrong then it will be the largest loss in company history."

The gravity of his words rooted Wendy in place. Her hand balled into a fist, her thumb finding her ring. She'd only considered the success of the campaign, not what would happen to her reputation if it was a failure.

Michael straightened. "Wendy's estimates are conservative." He said it matter-of-factly. "Look at every city we've rolled out to so far, we more than doubled those numbers."

Wendy let out a breath as she saw Jack's shoulders slacken slightly.

"And what if that happens here?" His attention went back to Wendy and she saw Michael's jaw tighten from the corner of her eye. "If your numbers are too conservative then distribution can't keep up."

"Michael's distribution framework on page fifteen explains all of that," she said, glancing in his direction long enough to give him the nod without giving him the floor. She knew how he would react if he felt like he was getting shut out.

Bruce cleared his throat. "I'm glad we are all so confident." He flipped from one page to another. "But do we have a contingency at all for underperformance?"

"Absolutely," Wendy said, pointing to the slide on screen. "We pull the broadcast spend and redirect into programmatic digital. The model is built to flex. Every dollar has a fallback allocation."

The meeting ran another forty minutes. Wendy fielded every question without the need to look at the screen. She pivoted between analytics and storytelling, one minute citing retention curves by demographic, the next painting a picture of Fireball on every back bar in America by Q4.

More than once Michael interjected and she let him. It was only a problem when Jack would ask a follow-up question and direct it toward Wendy instead of Michael. Each time, the vein in Michael's neck pulsed a little harder. He wasn't used to surrendering control, and Wendy could feel the tension tightening between the two men as she steered the meeting toward its close.

As the final slide faded, Wendy asked one last time if there were any questions. When no one spoke, she let herself breathe. She had just run point on a fifty-million-dollar presentation, and she'd done it flawlessly.

Bruce closed his notes and congratulated her with a smile. Jack watched from his seat as the lights came back on, his expression saying what he didn't need to. She'd owned the meeting.

"We should celebrate tonight," Jack said, rising from his chair. His eyes held hers long enough to make sure she understood. "Properly."

"I couldn't agree more," Michael said, stepping in beside Wendy. "She's been telling me all week how excited she was for this."

"Is that right?" Jack cocked an eyebrow.

Heat climbed Wendy's neck and colored her cheeks.

"Your place?" Michael asked, making sure Jack understood he planned to be there.

"Actually, I've got the boat docked at the marina." Jack's mouth twitched, his gaze staying on Wendy. "The bar's fully stocked, and we won't have to worry about any... distractions."

"I'd love that." Wendy shifted her weight to the other foot.

As they filed out of the conference room, Michael's hand found the small of her back. She let it stay, catching the look in Jack's eye as they moved past him.

Jenny appeared in his doorway just after nine. She had her laptop bag over one shoulder and a coffee in hand. She walked by his door, glancing in. When she saw him, her eyes went wide and her mouth opened like she was seeing a ghost.

"You're... you're back."

He studied her face. The pinch between her brows could have been relief. Or maybe it was guilt. He'd been in the office for over an hour, cross-referencing schedules, receipts, and everything else that felt mundane. He expected to feel anger, or maybe sadness when he saw Jenny. But watching her now, he wasn't sure he felt anything at all. He was just numb.

"Close the door."

She nodded and took a step inside, setting her coffee on the edge of the desk. Then she pulled the door shut, and before he even heard the latch click she'd crossed the room and wrapped her arms around him.

Jon stiffened. His hands stayed at his sides, fingers curled against his palms. She was shorter than Wendy and her hair smelled like something citrus. Before he even realized it, his eyes burned with tears. He couldn't remember the last time someone held him like that. His throat tightened. He wanted to put his arms around her, but he didn't. He needed answers. He couldn't afford to be emotional, not yet.

She pulled back, reading him. Her hand lingered on his arm for a second before she let go.

"Sit down," he said. "We need to talk."

Jenny lowered herself into the chair across from his desk. She tucked one leg under the other and wrapped both hands around her coffee. Her thumb moved along the rim.

"How long have you known?" His eyes were glassy, but his stare was cold.

"I didn't. I mean... not really. I had suspicions but..." She closed her eyes. "So, you saw them? Together?"

He took off his glasses and pressed his thumb and forefinger into the bridge of his nose.

"How... How could you let me just walk into that and..." His voice cracked.

"Jon, I'm sorry. Really." She reached for his hand. "I wasn't sure and-"

"Bullshit." He pulled his hand away.

The word surprised both of them. Jenny's eyes widened and Jon leaned back in his chair, his pulse ticking in his ears. He wasn't angry at her. He was angry at everything and she was sitting in front of him.

"I had information." She swallowed. "But I knew even if I went and told you after you'd never... You had to see it for yourself."

He chewed on the inside of his cheek. His hand was shaking and he dropped it in his lap so she couldn't see.

"Information?" He wiped his eyes and put back on his glasses. "So, you're working with Ava."

Jenny gasped. She stared at him for a long beat.

"How did you-"

"Just answer. Please."

She studied Jon's face. Her eyes were soft, kind. He wanted to believe her. That she was somehow some innocent pawn caught up in all of this, but he couldn't let himself be deceived. She needed to tell him everything she knew. That was the only way he would trust her. If he could trust her.

"Yes. I've been working with Ava. She..." She picked up her coffee and took a drink. Her hands were shaking so badly liquid nearly spilled over the top. She leaned forward, glancing over at the door. "She has cameras. All over Wendy's office. She's been documenting things for months." Jenny paused, her gaze dropping to the desk. "She texted me the motel address."

Jon absorbed it. The scope was wider than he'd realized. When Marcus mentioned Ava was still digging he thought maybe she was asking around, contacting old friends. But cameras? He almost asked what the cameras showed. Whether there were timestamps and dates he could cross-reference against his own data. But his stomach turned at the thought of what he might see, and for a few seconds he just sat there, trying to keep the room from tilting.

"Why you?" His voice was quieter now. "I get Ava. She was there, she saw it, she lost everything. But you. Why are you involved in any of this?"

Jenny's composure held for another second. Then her chin dropped and her hand went to her mouth. Not the theatrical kind of tears people perform in offices. Her shoulders pulled in and she pressed her knuckles against her lips and looked at the ceiling. Jon watched her throat work as she swallowed twice.

"Lisa... " She laughed and shook her head. "She's my stepsister."

Now it was Jon's turn to be surprised. Lisa. He knew the name, the stories. He remembered what Marcus had said about her. How things went south with Michael and they tried to get her to come forward.

Jenny wiped under her eye with the heel of her hand. "I applied here because of what Michael did to her. Because the last time she called me, she was scared and she told me she was in over her head and I... " Her voice cracked. "I tried getting close to Michael. To see if he'd take me under his wing or whatever, but Wendy was like a guard dog."

She pressed both palms flat against her thighs, steadying herself.

"Anyway, you know the rest of the story."

The office was quiet. Jon could hear the HVAC rattling above them and Steve's muffled voice from somewhere down the hall. He looked at Jenny and tried to reorganize everything he knew about her. The Reinhart project. The lunches. She'd used him. The mentoring, the late afternoons poring over campaign data. All of it was just a fabrication. He was just a pawn in whatever fucked up game she and Ava were playing.

But then the second wave hit, and it was harder to sit with. Jenny was the only person who'd been honest with him. Maybe not fully, and not from the start. But more honest than his wife. Hell, more honest than his therapist. He watched her blink away tears and felt the ground shift under him again. He was no closer to knowing whether he trusted her than he'd been when she walked in.

"I want to meet Ava."

Jenny's head came up. She didn't answer right away, and the hesitation told him more than whatever she was about to say.

"I'm serious, Jenny. I need to talk to her."

"She's not... " Jenny ran her hand across her cheek. "She's not in a good place, Jon. She's been at this for months and it's consumed her. She doesn't want justice anymore. She wants blood." She caught his eye. "From everyone."

Jon held her gaze. He thought about what Marcus had said. About how hard she was hurting. Well, he was hurting too. And the only way any of them were going to get through any of this was together.

"Set up the meeting."

Wendy stopped at the edge of the dock, staring up at the boat as her bag hung loosely from her arm. It had to be at least forty feet, maybe more, though she only knew that because it looked longer than some of the apartments she'd lived in growing up. She had seen boats before. Little rentals on Lake Erie. Pontoons with faded seats and coolers shoved under lawn chairs. They were nothing like this. The railings looked freshly polished, and the wood floors shined like new.

"How big is this thing?" she asked, trying to sound amused instead of impressed.

"Forty-two feet," Jack said, already halfway aboard, looking just as smug as he sounded.

Wendy looked back at Michael. If he was impressed he didn't show it. His face was stern, his eyes locked on Wendy. He wore blue board shorts from the hotel gift shop, the fabric still creased from the rack, and a Salt Life T-shirt that looked big even on him. He looked like a father trying to tolerate a family vacation.

Jack extended his hand and Wendy stepped onto the boat. Her fingers tightened around his forearm as the deck shifted beneath her wedges. For one quick second, she had to lean into him to steady herself. His arm was firmer than she expected, warm under her palm, and when she glanced up, her smile came easily.

"Not used to this part yet," she said.

She slipped out of the wedges and left them beside one of the cushioned seats, then smoothed a hand over the white gauze cover-up knotted at her hip. Her gaze caught Jack as the light hit her, giving him a glimpse of the black suit underneath that left little to the imagination. "Champagne's already chilled," Jack said, as the boat swayed. He had his sleeves rolled to his elbows. "There's a full bar below deck as well. Lots of options."

Wendy looked past him toward the water.

The New Orleans skyline sat low in the distance, softened by the fading sun. Amber bled into purple above the buildings, and the river caught the color in broken strips of light. For a moment, she let herself stand there without thinking about Jon, Michael, or any of it. Just the boat under her bare feet. The warm air against her skin. Jack watching her like she belonged there. It was a feeling she could get used to.

He stepped closer and offered her a glass of champagne. Their fingers brushed against the stem. Jack didn't pull away right away, and neither did she. The contact lasted only a second, but it was enough to bring back the champagne from that morning, the sweetness, the salt, the memory of Michael's hand in her hair.

Her gaze dropped. Jack wasn't built like Michael. He didn't have Michael's size or weight. Memories of their time in the conference room surfaced and she pulled her lip between her teeth. He may not have had Michael's size, but he certainly wasn't lacking either.

"Plenty of options," she repeated, her eyes moving back up his body and finding him watching her.

Michael climbed aboard behind her, his weight making the boat dip. He found a seat on the bench across from them and pulled out his phone, scrolling through something before setting it face down on the shelf beside the speakers. Jack offered him a glass and he accepted, smirking at Wendy as if he was reliving the same moment as her.

"To the launch of a successful national rollout." Jack raised his glass. "And the team that made it happen."

"To Wendy," Michael echoed, holding her gaze.

Jack drank his slow, his eyes never fully leaving Wendy. "Well," he said, setting his glass down, "let's get this thing moving before we lose all the light." He rolled his shoulders. "Make yourselves comfortable. I won't be long."

A few moments after he was gone, the engines kicked over beneath them. Wendy felt the low growl through the soles of her feet, the whole boat shuddering awake before it eased away from the dock. She couldn't contain her smile when they lurched forward and the wind caught her hair, pulling it loose around her face. They were only a few yards from shore, close enough to see the marina lights trembling on the water, but already something in her loosened. Out here, even this close, the world felt less able to reach her.

The boat rocked in the choppy water, and Wendy startled, one hand catching the edge of her seat. Her eyes snapped over as Michael dropped down beside her, close enough that his knee almost brushed hers.

"We did it," she said with a laugh. "Can you believe it? The campaign, the money," she stretched out her arms, "All of this."

"I never had any doubt." He reached out, placing his hand on her leg.

She raised her eyebrows, but didn't object. "You're so full of shit." The boat started to pick up speed as they passed the final buoy. "But seriously. Thanks. For all of it." She looked into his eyes. "For believing in me."

He tugged at the tie on her cover, the front falling open. "If you're interested in repaying me before he gets back..."

"You're impossible," Wendy laughed, rolling her eyes. "Besides, a girl needs a drink before anything like that happens." She used her best innocent voice.

Michael reached for the table beside them, grabbing the open bottle of champagne. "A redo of earlier, then?"

Wendy's laughter echoed across the river, her cheeks tinting red. "Jesus, do you think about anything else ever?"

Michael shrugged, smirking. Then he stood, crossing to the bar built into the bulkhead. He came back a few seconds later with two shot glasses of Fireball.

"Is this more your speed?" he asked, standing in front of her.

"What are we toasting this time?" She took the drink, not bothering to tie back her wrap as it hung loosely off her shoulders. A thrill ran through her as she watched Michael react to the barely-there swimsuit underneath. Despite having seen her naked dozens of times now, his body still reacted like it was the first.

"To big boats and beauty queens."

Wendy laughed and tipped back the drink. The cinnamon hit different after champagne, hotter, and she sucked air through her teeth as it settled. Michael's face barely changed. He set the empty glass on the ledge next to his phone, reaching down to pull Wendy out of the chair.

"Not a beauty queen." She reached up taking his hand. Her body swayed as she stood, unsure if it was the motion of the boat or the alcohol already hitting her.

"No, you're something much better." His hands slid up her arms, peeling the fabric of the cover away slowly.

The engines eased and the boat began to slow. Wendy looked past the railing and realized she couldn't make out individual buildings anymore. New Orleans had shrunk to a smear of light sitting low on the water, close enough to know it was there but too far to feel connected to it. The sky had deepened. Stars were starting to punch through. She shrugged off the wrap, her eyes fluttering closed as Michael's hands slid over her chest.

Music had been playing since they left the marina. She hadn't noticed when it started, but now that the engines were quiet it filled the space. She swayed her hips, seductively, as Michael's hands slid over her stomach. The cold air cooled her skin from the whisky.

"Looks like I'm missing all the fun."

"You are," Wendy teased, her eyes opening as Jack returned from the helm.

He'd lost his shirt somewhere along the way. Wendy's gaze dropped to his chest, her mouth falling open as Michael's hands roamed her body openly. He was lean in a way that looked like he spent mornings in the gym. His stomach was flat. A thin line of hair ran from below his navel and disappeared into his waistband. His shoulders were broader than she'd realized when he was dressed professionally.

"But at least you've come dressed for success." She tilted her head, giving Michael better access to her neck while she held Jack's gaze. Jack watched Michael's mouth on her skin and didn't look away. His eyes darkened and Wendy felt her pulse kick between her legs.

"I was just telling Wendy you'd want to see her swim suit." Michael stepped to the side, grabbing Wendy's waist and spinning her slightly so he was directly behind her. Almost as if he were showing her off. His fingers found her hair, brushing it over her shoulder. His lips found her neck, causing her to sigh.

"You're absolutely right," Jack said, taking a step closer.

Wendy's eyes fluttered as Michael's lips made contact with her skin. She could see the hunger in Jack's eyes as he took in her bikini. The swimsuit underneath left little to the imagination. She watched his eyes slide down her body to the two thin triangles barely covering her chest. His mouth opened like he was going to say something then decided against it. Instead, his gaze moved lower to her long legs. The bottoms were equally as scandalous. A strap tied on each hip, the middle curving inward making the tiny bumps from her shaved bikini line visible.

"Almost as perfect as I remember from my time in Columbus," Jack said, stopping just in front of Wendy.

"Almost?"

Wendy's breath caught as Michael's hand slid under the strap on her hip. She could feel his knuckles against her bare stomach, his thumb hooked under the thin cord. His lips on her skin became more urgent as they worked their way to her shoulder, making her knees weak. He still hadn't actually untied the bottom and she wasn't sure if that excited her or disappointed her.

She pushed her body into him, unsure if it was the alcohol or the denied orgasm from earlier that had her so worked up. Maybe it was neither. Maybe it was the fact that she was on a boat that cost more than her house with two of the most powerful men she'd ever met salivating over her.

She reached to the side, grabbing the champagne and putting it to her lips. "Want a taste?" She held the champagne out. Then, before Jack could reach for it she tilted the bottle, gasping as the cool liquid spilled down her chest and stomach.

The champagne continued to drip down Wendy's chest in thin, shining rivulets, soaking through the black bikini top until the thin fabric turned nearly transparent. It clung to her hard nipples and slid lower over her stomach before dripping onto the deck between her bare feet.

"Glad to see you were taking notes," Michael grunted from behind her, his hand capturing her chin and turning her head to face him. His mouth covered hers in a dominant, sloppy kiss. His tongue parted her lips, finding her tongue eager and waiting. The bottle slipped from Wendy's hand, clattering onto the pristine deck soaking all of their feet.

Jack took that as his cue, stepping forward. His mouth brushed against the wet skin of her chest just above the edge of her top. His tongue slid out slowly, lapping up the champagne in long, slow strokes, following the cold trail down between her breasts. Wendy gasped into her kiss with Michael, her back arching slightly at the wet heat of his mouth on her skin. Jack kept going, tongue swirling to catch every bubble and making Wendy tremble.

Only then did his fingers hook into the top of her bikini. He pulled the fabric aside, exposing one breast completely. His mouth closed over her nipple, sucking it between his lips. His tongue flicked and circled the stiff peak, lapping at the champagne still clinging there before he drew on it harder.

"Oh fuck," Wendy whined, breaking her kiss with Michael and running her fingers through Jack's hair.

Michael's grip on her hip tightened, so hard that Wendy reached for his hand. He grabbed the loose string, yanking forward, making the scrap of fabric fall away. He pulled Wendy into him, making her feel his hardness.

Wendy gasped again, unsure what to do with her hands as Jack continued to feast on her chest while she ground into Michael's larger frame. The sensitivity astonished her. She wasn't sure if it was the taboo nature of what was about to happen, or just the effect Michael always seemed to have on her. All she knew for certain, was she was soaked.

"Already so wet and ready for us, aren't you?" Michael's fingers snaked forward, spreading Wendy's legs wider as the bikini bottom hung loosely off her left leg.

Upon hearing Michael's words, Jack finally released her nipple with a wet pop. He straightened, his eyes falling between her legs to find her glistening with arousal. He grabbed a fistful of her hair, pulling her face forward and crashing his mouth into hers. The kiss was surprisingly slower than Michael's. She could taste the champagne from her skin as Jack's tongue circled hers. Wendy moaned into it, one hand coming up to the back of his neck while her other reached down between them.

"Ugggnnhh." Wendy broke the kiss, her head falling back onto Michael's shoulders. He'd pushed two thick fingers straight into her pussy without warning. His thumb circled her clit, which was already swollen with need.

Wendy's head stayed tipped back against Michael's shoulder as his fingers pushed deeper inside her. Her thighs started to shake, as he curved them forward making her gasp with each thrust. The boat continued to rock under them, as the slap of water against the hull and music were drowned out by Wendy's cries. She felt Jack watching. But that only added to the experience. Her body coiled around Michael's fingers, wanting Jack to see exactly what was in store for him.

"We could take this down to the bed," Jack said, his hands sliding across Wendy's exposed chest, teasing her nipple. "Lots more room down there to get comfortable."

Michael thrust his fingers into Wendy again, causing her to nearly fall into Jack's arms. He pulled his digits out slowly, trailing them up Wendy's body, putting her arousal on full display for Jack. "Here's fine."

His hands turned her around, guiding her back until her thighs bumped the edge of the wide cushioned seats that ran along the side of the boat. "Hands and knees across the seats."

Wendy lowered herself onto the cushions, her palms sinking into the white leather as her knees found the edge. Her bottoms slid down her leg, and Michael pulled them off her ankle. The boat rocked and she steadied herself, arching her back as the night air hit her bare skin. She could feel both of them looking at her. Michael shuffled between her legs, his hand already resting on the curve of her ass. Jack watched her in disbelief, the front of his pants growing tight.

"God, you're even more beautiful than I imagined."

"Worth the wait?" Wendy asked, licking her lips.

Michael didn't speak. His hands roamed Wendy's ass, his fingers dripping between her legs, feeling her slick heat and smearing it over her skin. He spread her ass, groaning in approval as Wendy dropped to her elbows.

"It seems Jack and I are a bit overdressed, aren't we?" His hand dipped between her legs once more, sliding across her clit.

"Yes," Wendy panted, her gaze focused on Jack's hand as it went to his pants.

Jack held her eyes as he undid his belt. He wasn't rushing. He folded the belt once and set it on the bench beside him before sliding his pants down. Wendy bit her lip. He was already hard, his cock straining against his briefs. She didn't get to properly see it when he was in Columbus and now that it was right in front of her she found herself holding her breath.

Michael shuffled behind her. "You should have seen her in the hotel when we got here." He pulled her hips back, his bare cock sliding over her slit.

"Mmmm." She rocked her hips, already desperate for him.

"She was dripping all over the floor. Desperate for me to fuck her." His hand slammed down on her ass and she yelped. "Isn't that right?"

"Maybe I was just using you for the appetizer." Michael's cock rolled over her clit and she shuddered, trying not to give in to the overwhelming sensation. "Maybe I was just waiting for the main event." She reached out, grabbing the band of Jack's briefs, tugging them greedily.

Jack stepped forward as his cock sprung free, bouncing slightly before settling at attention, jutting straight toward her face. Wendy smiled as her hand wrapped around his base. The skin felt impossibly soft over the rigid core beneath, like velvet stretched over steel. She pulled him closer until her lips brushed the tip.

"Mmmm even bigger than I expected." She ran her tongue along the tip, making Jack groan in agony. "I think this may be my new fav' - Oh fuck."

Michael rammed his hips forward, burying himself to the hilt in a single thrust. Wendy's head hung low, her grip on Jack forgotten as a small orgasm exploded through her. Her fingers dug into the leather. She could feel every inch of him, the stretch immediate and consuming the way it always was. Her body opened around him, pulling him deeper.

"Whose dick your favorite?" Michael asked, a hint of annoyance in his voice. His pace was unrelenting. His hips cracked against Wendy, each one bringing a louder moan than the last.

"Yours." Her eyes blinked open, her face contorting in pleasure. "I love the way your dick feels, Michael."

She lifted her head, gasping, reaching for Jack again. She needed something to hold onto. Her tongue slid along the underside of his shaft. "Yes, just like that." Her lips closed around the tip of Jack's cock, allowing her moans to vibrate through his body, as hers clenched around Michael.

Jack groaned, his head tilting backward. She took him deeper into her mouth, her lips stretching around his thick shaft. She didn't have to strain her jaw the way she did with Michael, and she took him deeper faster, causing him to reach out and grab her hair.

She still couldn't believe she was actually here. When she'd made that promise to Jack, it had been strategy. A stall tactic. Something to keep him interested long enough to agree to the national rollout. Even after he did, some part of her hadn't believed it would come to this. She'd thought there would be another meeting, another objection she would have to find a way around.

Michael's hand slid up the inside of her thigh, reclaiming her attention. His thumb pressed against her clit as his cock stretched her. She still wasn't used to the size of that man. Every time he was inside her it felt like he was hitting a new spot. Wendy moaned around Jack's cock. He grunted above her, saying something about how good she was at that, but the words barely registered. Not with Michael moving behind her. Not with her whole body waking up like it had been waiting for this.

"Deeper," she begged, pulling off Jack just long enough to get the words out, unsure which of them she was talking to.

Jack's hips pushed forward, feeding more of himself into her mouth until he hit the back of her throat. She could hear his breathing change above her, could feel his thighs tensing under her palms. Behind her, Michael's fingers dug into her hips hard enough to leave marks. She was caught between two rhythms, two completely different versions of being wanted, and the power of it was better than any champagne.

Michael leaned over her, his gut pressing into the small of her back. "You'll do anything we want, won't you." His breath was hot on her neck. "As long as we keep fucking you." He grabbed her hair, yanking her head back and off Jack's cock.

The only words she was able to form were, "UH, mhmhm, ah, gaadd, mhmhmhm, fuck."

He released her head and watched with a smirk as she greedily dropped it back in Jack's lap.

"Jesus, Michael," Jack sighed as she took him with so much vigor that she gagged. "Don't be so rough."

"She likes it rough." His paw of a hand went to the back of her head, forcing it deeper onto Jack. "She can't get what she needs at home. The proper fucking she deserves."

The words barely registered. Wendy was too far past caring. The orgasm was coming fast now, close enough that she was afraid any shift, any hesitation, might make her lose it. Michael's hands seemed to be everywhere. Her hips. Her back. Her ass. Her eyes rolled to the back of her head. Each thrust lit up a new nerve in her body, pushing her closer until all she could do was keep moving with him.

His fingers dragged down her spine, slid over the curve of her ass, then grabbed a handful hard enough to make her gasp around Jack. A moment later, his thumb traced lower, running slowly down the crease of her ass until it brushed over the tight, sensitive ring there. Wendy's body quivered, but she didn't pull away. She rocked back against him, chasing the pressure, chasing the edge, the wet, obscene sound of her enthusiasm carrying out into the night air.

The orgasm gathered low in her body, no longer a warning but a certainty. Wendy pulled off Jack with a gasp, her vision flashing white as she rocked back, her body clenching around Michael's thumb. The release hit all at once. Every muscle locked, then broke loose, pleasure ripping through her so hard it seemed to wipe the deck, the water, the night sky from existence.

She held her breath as it took her, afraid even breathing might loosen its grip. For a few seconds, there was nothing but the brutal pulse of it, the stretch of Michael behind her, the ache in her jaw, the taste of Jack still on her tongue. Wendy gritted her teeth and fucked herself through it, desperate to stay inside the feeling for one more second.

"Mhmm... ah, fuck... Michael... shit..."

It seemed to go on forever, wave after wave of pleasure unlike anything Wendy had ever felt. Michael didn't thrust through it. He stayed buried inside her, holding still while her body tightened around him, letting her take every second of it without breaking the spell.

She realized she was still holding her breath. Her back was arched, her fingers clenched, her whole body trembling from the strain of staying there. Then, slowly, the tension started to drain out of her. The muscles in her back loosened first, then her thighs, and finally she let out a long, hoarse breath.

"Jesus," she breathed, a smile tugging at her lips as she dragged her tongue slowly along Jack's length. "Now it's your turn."

She hollowed out her cheeks as she attacked Jack like a woman possessed. Spit dripped from her mouth as she rolled her hips around Michael, signaling him to continue. This was the pinnacle of success. She'd closed a multimillion dollar deal less than four hours ago and now she was on a boat, with water slapping against the hull, as two men gave her the biggest orgasm of her life.

She knew Michael well enough by now to know he was close. She could feel it in the way his thrusts grew shorter, rougher, in the way his cock seemed to swell every time he buried himself inside her. Jack was harder to read, but even his control was starting to slip. Michael's thumb pressed deeper inside her ass, making her entire body clench.

"Nngh." She didn't dare pull off Jack. She needed to taste him.

Jack's hips rocked toward her mouth, his groans falling into rhythm with hers until the three of them moved in one filthy, uneven cadence. Wendy wanted to feel it happen. Wanted the power of it. Two powerful men, both used to getting exactly what they wanted, going completely slack because of her.

She threw her hips back harder, meeting Michael thrust for thrust, every hole stuffed full and aching. It was too much and still not enough. The boat shifted beneath them as she slammed back into him, hard enough that for one wild second she pictured Michael losing his footing and tumbling overboard.

"Oh fuck." Jack was the first to get there. His hand tightened in her hair and his hips drove forward.

Wendy moaned in delight around him, her makeup running down her face. She took him deeper, messier now, her tongue working him as she rocked back hard against Michael. Behind her, Michael groaned, his fingers digging into her hips.

"Here it comes," Michael groaned, breathless behind her. "I'm going to fucking fill you."

Jack's cock pulsed hard against her tongue. Wendy sucked him deeper, her mouth tightening around him as his hips jerked forward and the first thick spurt hit the back of her throat.

"Ugggghhh-" Both of Jack's hands clamped into her hair, holding her steady while his cock throbbed and pumped again, flooding her mouth. Wendy moaned around him, throat working as she swallowed, but some of it still spilled from the corner of her lips.

Michael's release hit harder. He drove forward with a rough groan, cock swelling even thicker inside her before he started coming in heavy, hot pulses. The force of it pushed

Wendy forward and she cried out around Jack's cock, more of Jack's cum spilling onto the deck as Michael kept grinding deep, filling her.

For a few seconds, none of them moved. Wendy stayed caught between them, trembling, her breath coming in shallow, broken pulls as the boat rocked beneath her. Jack's hands slowly loosened in her hair. Michael's grip eased from her hips. The night seemed too quiet all at once, except for the slap of water against the hull and the sound of all three of them trying to breathe normally again.

Wendy pulled off Jack's softening cock, her arms giving out almost immediately. She sank sideways onto the seat, boneless and flushed, one arm draped over her stomach as she stared up at the dark sky.

Michael gave a low laugh behind her, still catching his breath. He stepped backward, his large cock dripping with their combined juices.

"She's all yours," he said with a smirk. "I'm going to head below deck and find the bathroom."

Wendy barely had the energy to turn her head as Michael tucked himself away and disappeared below deck, leaving her sprawled there in the warm night air with Jack standing over her.

The cabin was nicer than he expected. The bed was huge, and Michael wondered how many times Jack hosted exactly this kind of party. It sat under teak paneling, a flat screen mounted to the wall that was larger than the one in Michael's apartment. He washed his hands and splashed water on his face.

This wasn't how he expected things to go with Wendy. He wasn't like her worthless husband. He didn't share. But Wendy had made the deal herself. As much as Michael hated sharing, he hated the thought of someone going back on a deal they made even more. Besides, this had played out better than he'd hoped. Jack would view this as Michael delivering Wendy to him. He would owe Michael. The Fireball account wasn't just secure. It was untouchable. And the best part of all, he'd established the hierarchy. Michael came inside her. He got her pussy. All Jack got was a sloppy blow job and some dirty talk. Michael could look past that as he developed this... partnership with Wendy.

He walked over to the mini fridge, wiping the sweat from his face onto a shirt that was tossed haphazardly on a dresser. He bent down grabbing a bottle of water as a familiar sound drifted down from the deck.

"Oh ffff..."

His grip on the bottle tightened, his eyes turning to slits. He'd left Wendy wrecked when he came below deck. She was already falling asleep. And Jack. He had just cum less than ten minutes ago. There was no way he was actually...

"Oh god. That feels so good."

His jaw locked. He set the water down and went up the stairs.

Wendy was on top of Jack. Her back was to Michael, her hips rolling in slow, grinding circles as she rode him on the cushioned seats. Her hands were wrapped in his hair as he feasted on her chest. The music had stopped at some point. The wet sound of their bodies filled the silence between Wendy's cries.

"Fuck, you feel so good inside me." She released his hair and braced both hands on Jack's chest as she started to work faster, her ass slapping against his thighs. "Right there... don't stop... oh fuck you're so deep."

Jack groaned beneath her, his hips lifting to meet hers. Jack's hands roamed her back. Michael looked at where they were connected, Jack's unprotected cock slamming into her used cunt.

"Harder... fuck me harder," Wendy begged, clearly on her way to another orgasm.

Neither of them looked up. Michael stood at the top of the stairs and watched his fist close around nothing. His chest was tight as Jack's hands continued to explore Wendy's body like he owned it. He tried to control his breathing. It wasn't that he was in love with Wendy, he knew what she'd become. What he'd made her. But he thought they had an understanding.

He closed his eyes remembering Wendy's laughter as Ava called him a creeper under her breath. She'd looked at him like he was beneath her. Like he was something to be tolerated because he was in charge. That was when he knew he wanted to break her. Not destroy her exactly. Not like he did to Ava, but strip her down. Make her admit there was something underneath the polished smile and perfect little body that was just as ugly as anything in him.

And he had. The woman who laughed at him by the conference room was gone. He'd hollowed her out and filled the space with something compliant. Something that spread its legs on command and thanked him for the opportunity. His fingerprints were on every sound she made, every trick she pulled, every filthy word out of her mouth tonight.

But she hadn't waited for him this time. She'd climbed on top of Jack while Michael was below deck wiping her off his hands. Nobody told her to do that. She just wanted to. He'd told her before that he was the one that made the rules, not her.

She wasn't a partner. She was beneath him. She had always been beneath him.

His phone was on the shelf where he'd left it, next to the speakers. He picked it up, without them even registering his existence. He opened the camera.

The angle was good. Wendy's back, the way her hips rocked, Jack's face visible over her shoulder. He held the phone steady and recorded. Her face turned just enough in profile to be unmistakable. He stopped recording and saved the files to a folder with no name.

Maybe he would never have a reason to use it. The Fireball account was firing on all cylinders. But now he had the CEO on camera buried inside a married woman. He slipped the phone into his pocket and poured himself a drink. Fireball. The cinnamon barely registered.

"Fuck... yes, yes, don't stop." Wendy's orgasm crashed over her and judging by Jack's grunts he was right behind her.

Michael turned away, walking toward the other side of the boat and looking at the blackness surrounding them. Wendy was an asset. That's all she'd ever been. That's all any of them had been.

Behind him, Wendy laughed at something Jack said. Michael stood with his back to both of them, watching the city lights flicker across the river.

Jon looked around nervously as Jenny knocked on the door. This wasn't considered 'the bad part of town', but he'd heard what sounded like a gunshot as they pulled into the small apartment complex. Ava answered after a minute, giving Jon a cold look as she stepped aside to let them in.

"I still think it was a mistake bringing him in on this." She said it to Jenny without taking her eyes off Jon. Then she turned and walked back inside, leaving the door open behind her.

The apartment was nothing like what Jon expected. He'd been to Ava's house before. Twice, maybe three times. Holiday parties where Wendy would spend the whole night glued to Ava's side, laughing louder than she did at home, the two of them disappearing into the kitchen with a bottle of wine while Jon made small talk about basketball.

This wasn't that woman's home. The furniture was mismatched IKEA that looked like it had been assembled in a hurry. A mattress was visible through a half-open bedroom door, no frame, no headboard. Jon noticed the single plate in the dish rack as they passed the kitchen. One towel on the bathroom door. A television sitting on a stand but not plugged in. There was a small coffee table in the living room. As Jon neared it, he noticed a stack of papers scattered across it. He looked closer. Divorce papers.

He pulled out a chair and sat down. The faint smell of mildew filled the air. Was all of this because of Michael? When Marcus told him Ava had become consumed by it, Jon hadn't understood how far gone she really was.

"You wanted to talk, so." Ava dropped into her chair across from him. "Talk."

Jon looked at Jenny, who gave him a sort of shrug. "... I don't know what to say." A lump formed in his throat and he swallowed it down. "I saw them together. What Michael did, is doing. I want to take him down."

Ava smiled. Her eyes stayed fixed on him, as if she'd already known what he was going to say. "You think Michael is the only one who needs to be taken down?" She shook her head and laughed. "And what about your whore of a wife?"

Jon's jaw tightened, his hand closing into a fist. "I know Wendy isn't innocent in all of this. I plan on dealing with her as well."

"Right." Ava rolled her eyes. "You mean protect her, right?"

"Ava, you promised you'd listen." Jenny's voice was soft. She sat next to Jon, her eyes pleading for Ava to not fight.

"I'm not here to protect anyone." Jon took off his glasses and cleaned them on his shirt, buying himself a second. "I've spent all day cross-referencing every late night, every business trip, every calendar entry Wendy has shared with Michael. I'm looking for dates, patterns. When I find it Wendy will have to answer to it all as well."

Ava studied him. "Patterns? What do you think you're going to find?" She shook her head. "I caught her in his office."

"Ava stop."

"She was on her knees with his dick in her mouth."

"Ava!" Jenny grabbed her friend's arm but she pulled away.

"Her face was literally dripping with his cum." Tears welled in her eyes and her voice got softer. "And what happened? I was fired the next day. She's just as guilty as he is. So don't come in here and tell me you're looking at fucking gas receipts and patterns expecting to make a difference."

Jon didn't move through the entire exchange. His chest grew tight, like he had a boulder sitting on it. When Ava was done with her outburst he lowered his head, pinching his nose between his thumb and forefinger. The image Ava painted burned in his mind. He wasn't sure if he wanted to throw up or add another hole to the wall.

"All that we have right now is our word versus theirs." He didn't look up when he spoke.

"One thing I know about people like Michael is that they are careless. We just need to find it."

Ava leaned back in her chair and crossed her arms. "And when you find it? When you have your patterns and your proof? Then what?"

"Then Michael answers for what he's done."

"Michael." She nodded slowly. "And Wendy just walks away? Goes back to your little house and your little life and pretends none of this happened?"

Jon's jaw tightened. "She's still my wife, Ava."

"She's still his whore."

The words hit Jon like a slap. He gripped the edge of the table, his knuckles going white. Jenny reached for Ava's arm again but Ava shook her off.

"If you're not willing to hold her accountable then I have no use for you." Ava stood, her chair scraping backward. "I didn't lose my career, my marriage, and my fucking life so you could cherry-pick who gets punished."

Jon stood too. His hands were shaking and he shoved them into his pockets. "And what is your plan? To just burn everything to the ground and hope you feel better standing in the ashes."

They stared at each other across the table. Jenny sat between them, her eyes moving from one to the other.

"We need each other. It's what Lisa would have-"

"Don't." Ava's voice broke. She turned away from both of them and walked to the window, pressing her forehead against the glass. Her shoulders rose once and held there.

Jon watched her for a long moment. Then he picked up his glasses from the table and put them on.

"It was good seeing you again, Ava."

He walked toward the door, looking at Jenny who seemed frozen in place. She looked at Jon with a pained look in her eye, then back at Ava. He stood with his hand on the door, giving her another moment to make a decision.

She grabbed her keys and followed Jon to the door.