

"I knew it," Lisa said, sitting on the bed across from me. She wore a pair of ripped jeans and a pink top that left her midriff bare. I suspected that her outfit was designed to tempt me. It was one of her go-to strategies for catching a guy's attention. "I just knew you were gay or something. That was the only explanation."

I didn't respond immediately because, quite frankly, I had no idea what to say. I couldn't tell the truth – that I wasn't what I appeared to be, that the whole thing had been based on money. Nor did I want to lie, to go along with the story she'd no doubt imagined. I was caught, and I had no clue how to extricate myself.

"I always thought there was something off," she continued. "So did the other girls – you know, the ones you cheated on me with. Yeah – I knew about all of them. But back then, I was convinced it was my fault. I wasn't woman enough for you. But now I realize that you were just looking for something none of us could give you. I get it now."

It was official. She'd gone crazy, and I'd driven her to it. That she had concocted such a silly story was proof of it. However, I was in no position to correct her faulty reasoning. So I just shrugged noncommittally, which she took as a confirmation of her belief.

"I knew it!" she said. "So tell me – were you sleeping with any boys, then? I understand if you were. I get it. I mean, being surrounded by them all the time..."

I shook my head. "No," I said, for the first time telling the absolute truth. "I didn't do any of that back then. I didn't even know...you know...I didn't even know that I'd like it."

"But you do, right?" she asked. "You know that now, don't you? You like boys."

She was manic, and her questions came rapid-fire. I could barely keep up as she grilled me about my sexual preferences. Finally, she asked the question I'd been expecting but dreading.

"How many?" she asked.

"How many what?" I responded innocently. I knew exactly what she was asking, but I had no interest in answering.

"How many guys have you slept with?" she elaborated. "Three?" I shook my head. "Four?"

"No," I said. "Eight." It was a lie, but a believable one. I'd slept with far more than that, but I wasn't about to tell her the real number.

"Oh my God – that's like twice as many as me!" she exclaimed.



"Is that a new car?" I asked, standing on the sidewalk, staring at a brand-new Corvette. It was a beautiful automobile, all sleek curves and shiny paint.

My mother looked up. "You know it is," she said. "You're dense, but you're not so stupid that you can't recognize that this is different from the old one."

"Looks expensive," I said, ignoring her insult. It was her way of deflecting, which meant that she didn't want to talk about it. "Can we afford it?"

"I can afford it," she responded, putting emphasis on the first word. After opening the door to the car, she looked back, saying, "I got a good deal."

"Like you did on the house?" I asked.

She sighed. "Do we really need to have this conversation again?" she asked. I didn't answer. "Fine. Yes, I can afford both of them because I don't spend my money on frivolous things."

"Like new dresses?" I asked. "Or that expensive purse? Or all those shoes in your closet?"

"And all the bills are paid," she said. "You've got a roof over your head. You want for nothing."

"And I do all the work," I said. "The real work at least. Clearly, you're getting paid a lot more than me. How's that work?"

"It works because I say it works," was her answer. "If you don't like it, feel free to try to set things up yourself. Oh – you can't, can you? Because you're not smart enough. You weren't smart enough for college, and you're not smart enough for this. Face it sweetie – you're a pretty, little idiot. Without me, you'd be –"

"I was salutatorian in high school!" I insisted. "I'm not stupid!"

"Second best is nothing to brag about," was her counter. "At a second-rate school. Listen, I love you, but you can't do this alone. We both know it. So why don't you worry about what you're supposed to worry about, and I'll worry about everything that really matters. Sound good?" Again, I didn't answer. "Good – don't wait up. I won't be back until late."







“I’m never going back, am I?” I asked, knowing full well what the answer would be. I pulled my bra down, exposing my breast. It was small, sure, but it was definitely a breast. Each time I looked in the mirror, I saw a girl. Not a crossdressed boy. A girl. And it scared me more and more each day.

“Do you even want to?” asked Maria. “Look – I understand the reasons you did this. And yeah, it’s fucked up when you think about it. Your mom’s a total cunt. But you’re happy, aren’t you? I mean, not with your situation – obviously – but with who you are.”

Was that the impression I gave? I’d come clean with Maria a few days before, and while she’d been surprised to hear about how I’d come to be what I’d become, she’d accepted my explanation. I hadn’t really had a choice but to tell her; I was falling down a hole, and I needed to confide in someone. She just happened to be the only person I could remotely trust as a friend.

“I don’t know,” was my honest answer. “But I don’t have a choice, do I? These things don’t just go away. And I’ve looked up the side effects of taking hormones long-term. Even I stopped right now, I don’t think my body would ever go back to the way it was.”

“Maybe that’s a good thing,” Maria said. “I know you think that you didn’t want this – not really, at least. But there’s a part of you that did. Otherwise, you wouldn’t have stuck around. And all that stuff about gay or not gay – it’s a smokescreen, and you know it. You’ve known for a long time which way you swing. I knew that the first time I saw you. And the first time we had sex just cemented it for me. You weren’t built for girls, sweetie, and that’s the honest truth.”

“So what do I do?” I asked.

“I have no idea,” she said. “But if you’re not comfortable doing what you do, stop. Leave. Don’t look back. Because your mom’s using you. She’s cheating you. And she’s a horrible person. I don’t know much, but I do know that.”





“This is a mistake,” I said, standing in front of the sliding glass door. I wore a peach-colored dress, white high heels, and minimal makeup. “You know that, don’t you?”

My mother nodded. “I realize that you think that,” she said. “But you have to take into account that he’s paying an incredible amount of money. We’d be idiots to turn him down.”

“That’s easy for you to say,” was my response. “You get to sit back and collect the money. I have to actually be with him.”

“You’ve done it with dozens of other men,” she said. “Why should he be any different? Whatever you usually think about, think about that.”

“Seriously, mom?” I asked. “That’s your advice? You want to know how he’s different?” I held up a finger. “First of all, he’s your ex-boyfriend. Your married, ex-boyfriend. You know, the one with the bitch wife who got you fired?” I held up a second finger. “Oh, and he’s also the father of MY ex-boyfriend. That won’t go over well if Cameron finds out, right?” Another finger went up. “Ex-boss, too. Oh, and he’s, like, super creepy. I told you about that time he was waiting outside of —”

“You’re doing it,” my mother said, interrupting me. “End of story. I know it’s awkward. I don’t like it either. But we’re in this to make money. And McCarthy has a lot of it. With any luck, he’ll become a regular, and we’ll have —”

“You can’t be okay with this!” I screeched. “He’s your ex-boyfriend!”

“I’m over it,” she said. “I’ve moved on. So has he, it seems. I never would have pegged him for the type of guy who’d go for someone like you, but, well, there’s no accounting for taste.”

I ignored her not-so-subtle jab at the fluidity of my gender. To her, I wasn’t really a girl. Nor was I boy, obviously. I was something else, something less-than. Like Maria had said, she was a horrible person. But in the end, she was my mother. More than that, she was my boss. And I had little choice but to do as she said.

“Fine,” I said. “Whatever. I’ll do it. But if he ends up cutting me up and sticking me in a freezer or something, it’s on you.”





“First of all,” Mr. McCarthy said. “I want to apologize for what happened a few months ago. I know I scared you, and I’m sorry. It was a low point in my life. My wife had just left me. Cameron moved to Australia with some forty-year-old man he met on the internet. I was alone and, if I’m honest, a little drunk. I shouldn’t have ambushed you like that.”

I admit that he surprised me, and not just with his apology. Not only did he look light years better than he had the last time I saw him, he seemed genuinely contrite. For the first time, I was seeing him at his best, and I was impressed.

“Apology accepted,” I said.

“So – now that that’s out of the way, I want to assure you that this is not about sex,” he said.

I cocked my head in confusion. “You do know what I do, right?” I asked.

He nodded. “I’m aware of what you usually do,” he answered. “But that’s not how this is going to go.”

“Y-you don’t think I’m pretty?” I asked, a little hurt that he didn’t want me.

“Of course I think you’re pretty,” he stated. “You’re gorgeous. I saw that the first time we met. Even as a boy, you were quite pretty. But now? You’re perfect.”

“T-then why don’t you want me?” I asked, stepping forward. Inches away, I put my hand on his stomach, feeling the smooth material of his vest. I slipped my arm around him. “I understand if you’re nervous. I can take the lead if you want.”

He stepped back, disengaging from the embrace. “That’s not what I want right now,” he said. “What I want is to see you. I just want to watch for now. Is that okay?”

I hid my disappointment. While I’d originally been opposed to the idea of sleeping with him, I’d come around to a different view almost as soon as I walked into the room. Now that the possibility had been yanked away, I felt more than a little cheated. But he was the boss.

I nodded. “It’s your money,” I said. “Just tell me what you want.”

I was on all fours, wearing nothing but a pair of striped panties. My breasts hung loose, which made them look far bigger than they really were. Meanwhile, Mr. McCarthy sat in a nearby chair, his chin in his hand, watching.

“What’s the elephant?” he asked.

“What?” was my confused response.

“The tattoo on your ribs,” he said. “What’s it mean?”

“Oh,” I answered. “It’s for my favorite college football team.”

“Which one?” he asked. “I don’t really follow the sport.”

“Alabama,” I said. “Seriously – how do you not know that?”

He shrugged. “In case you didn’t notice,” he said, his accent seeming suddenly important. I didn’t know enough to place it, but I was sure it was either Australian or British. “I’m not really from around here. I don’t get American football.”

“I guess you’re a soccer fan or something,” I said.

“Tennis, actually,” he corrected, smiling. “I also play golf, if my country club snobbery wasn’t altogether clear.” He laughed, and I couldn’t help but join him.

“Really, Mr. McCarthy – are you sure you don’t –”

He waved his hand. “Call me James,” he said, interrupting me. “And I’m certain that this is exactly what I want to do.”





"You look good in pink," McCarthy said, leaning back in the chair. On his face was a pensive expression. "It suits you."

I looked down at the pink underwear, confused. He'd said much the same about each pair I'd put on; I wasn't certain if he just liked me in general, or if he liked to watch me try on different pairs of panties. My gaze strayed to the pile of underwear on the bed.

"It's weird, isn't it?" he asked, seeming to read my mind.

"No, it's not that," I lied. "I'm just...you know, usually by now, we've gotten down to business."

"I told you that I just wanted to watch you," he stated.

"Yeah, well, lots of guys say that," I responded. "And then, when they see me, that sort of goes out the window, if you know what I mean."

"I can see how control might be difficult around you," he said. "Tell me – do you like what you do?"

"What?" I asked. "What kind of a question is that?"

He shrugged. "I just wanted to know if all of this is fun for you," he said. Holding his hands up, he continued, "No judgement."

"How am I even supposed to answer that?" I asked. "If I say that it is, you're not going to believe me, right? I'm just telling you what you want to hear. And if I say that it's not, what we do won't be as much fun for you. And if it's not what you want, I lose a client. No – I'm not touching that, Mr. McCarthy."

"Fair enough," he said. "Suspension of disbelief it is, then. You can go now."

"I-I'm sorry," I said. "I didn't mean to –"

"No, no – that's not it at all," he said. "You were wonderful. Exactly what I wanted. But it seems our time is up. I have to be back at work soon."

"Oh," I said, surprisingly disappointed. I liked posing for him. "D-do you want to see me again?"

He grinned. "Most assuredly, my dear," he said. "Most assuredly."





“It’s weird, though, right?” Maria asked, looking back at me. There was a time when I would’ve counted myself lucky to be in the presence of such a beautiful, half-naked girl. But as I sat on her bed, her near-nudity barely even rated notice. In fact, I paid more attention to the cut of her panties than I noticed the ass they struggled to contain. They were pink and lacy, and I wanted a pair of my very own.

I shrugged. “I guess,” I said. “Or I mean, it was at first. But not anymore.”

“Because he pays so well?” she asked.

“That’s part of it,” I admitted. “But he’s actually a really sweet guy, once you get past the innate creepiness. He’s the only one of my clients who’s ever actually wanted to talk, you know? He cares what I think.”

“But that makes it even weirder!” she said, laughing. “No offense, but who pays an escort to talk?”

“Apparently Mr. McCarthy does,” I said. “I mean I am usually naked – or mostly, at least. And he does like to take pictures. And a few times, he’s watched while I – you know – did it to myself.”

“Wait, so he watched you jack off?” she asked.

“Eww – no,” I said. “God, that would be...I mean, no. Just no. But he bought me a toy a few weeks ago, and...well, I use it on myself sometimes while he watches.”

She turned. “So you never...” she pumped her fist back and forth, miming a hand job. “You know.”

I shook my head. “Not anymore,” I said. “It’s just not me, you know? I just...you know, I can’t anymore. It doesn’t really work.”



“I don’t get it,” I said. “Why are you doing this? He’s a good –”

She slammed her hand down on the bar. “It doesn’t matter why I’m doing it!” she screamed. “I said he’s off-limits, and so he is. End of story. Point blank. Period. Move the fuck on.”

I stared at my mother, unbelieving. She was the one how’d insisted I take McCarthy on as a client, and she’d been right to do so. He’d quickly become my most consistent regular, and what’s more, had always treated me incredibly well. And now she was telling me that I couldn’t see him anymore? It was more than confusing – it was bad business.

“But –”

I never saw the slap coming. Why should I have? She’d never so much as raised a hand to me; there was absolutely no reason I could have ever expected that she would strike me. But she did, effectively cutting me off mid-sentence.

Immediately, my hand went to my face; it hadn’t hurt – not physically at least – but I couldn’t keep the tears from welling up in my eyes. What’s more, I was suddenly aware of how much bigger she was than me. She practically loomed over me, a cool rage in her glare.

“You really need to learn your place,” she said. “You’re the whore. I’m the boss. You do what the fuck I say. You don’t question. You don’t argue. I point, and you fuck. That’s it. The sooner you realize that, the better it’ll be for you.”

“But mom, I...I...I don’t –”

“Right now, I’m not your mother,” she said. “I can’t be. This is for your own good. If you were smarter, you could see that. I’m doing this because I love you. Now go get dressed. That kinky Russian wants to see you tonight.”

I rubbed my face, a million rebellious thoughts running through my mind. I quashed them, saying, “Yes, ma’am.”





Boris leaned back, enjoying the view as I turned in a circle. I could feel his eyes caressing every inch of my body.

“My brother told me that you were beautiful,” he said, his Russian accent thick. “He said you were the most feminine ladyboy he’d ever seen.”

I wanted to object, to tell him that the term he’d used was offensive. But something told me that he wasn’t the sort of man a person corrected. Even so, I bristled at the label. The problem was that I really didn’t know why – mostly because I didn’t even know how I identified.

For most of my life, I’d considered myself male. I had a penis, right? What other proof of gender did I need? But that wasn’t enough, was it? The hormones had rendered my masculinity null, and I scarcely resembled anyone’s idea of manhood. I looked, more than anything, like a girl. So, was that what I was?

I didn’t think of myself as female. Even with the clothes and the hair, the makeup and the transformed body, I didn’t consider myself to be a girl. Feminine, sure. Girlish, definitely. But not female. My own confusion made his term feel all the more appropriate.

“Did you hear me?” he asked, and I jerked back to myself. How long had I been daydreaming?

I turned, smiling. “What was that, baby?” I asked, my voice sounding like nothing so much as a high school cheerleader’s. It wasn’t so much the pitch – though that was high enough – it was the cadence, the patterns.

He rose, unzipping his pants. “You will suck me, now,” he said. My face must have betrayed my excitement, because he said, “Good. I like it when you like it. Come, girl. It is time.”





“There,” I said. “I’m wearing it. What now, baby?”

I felt incredibly stupid, and not just because I was wearing a cheerleader’s uniform. No, it was also because the uniform belonged to a girl I’d once slept with, a girl I’d gone to high school with. And then there was also the way her father – my old principal – stared at me.

“You were always so pretty,” Mr. Bell said, pushing his glasses back up his nose. He had the face of a weasel and the demeanor of a squirrel – all jitters and quick movements. How he’d produced such a pretty daughter was beyond me. “Even when you were pretending to be a boy, I saw the potential in you.”

I didn’t know whether to be creeped out or to thank him. I opted to remain silent.

“I’ve been thinking about this for years,” he said, rising. “Tell me that you don’t usually do this.”

“I-I don’t usually do this, Mr. Bell,” I said.

“It’s okay to experiment,” he said, stepping closer. He gripped my arm. “Some boys are too pretty to be boys for long.” I swallowed hard. “Now, tell me how much you want my cock. Tell me that you’ve been dreaming about it. Tell me that you can’t stop thinking about being sent to detention with me.”

I said all of that and more, quickly grasping the scope of his fantasy. I told him how I’d hoped he would walk in on me in the showers after a long cheerleading practice. I told him how the cheerleading sponsor wouldn’t let me wear a boy’s uniform, but rather had told me that I was “too girly” to be a boy. I touched a dozen different fantasies, each a little more far-fetched than the last. And he ate it up.

In the end, he fucked me right there in the den. My skirt hiked up, with him thrusting in and out of me like a jackhammer, I couldn’t help but wonder if he knew about what his daughter and I had done right there in that same den.

More than that, I wondered if she knew what I was doing with her father that same moment. To my surprise, I hoped she did. I wished she could see me.



I wish I could say that my enthusiasm for my job waned. That would be normal, right? I remember watching a movie – I can't remember which one it was – that featured prostitution. And in that movie, all the girls had these god awful, sad stories. None of them were happy. They were all looking for a way out. I can't really relate to that because even at its worst, even when I wanted to be anywhere but a client's bed, once I got started, I fell into it. I was insatiable.

I lost count of how many men I'd slept with. Once it gets over a hundred, the number doesn't seem to matter anymore, does it? I was only limited by my appointments, and there seemed to be no shortage of men who wanted to fuck me. I don't know where my mother found them, but there wasn't a night that went by that I didn't have at least one date.

I know the money was good. I saw that much reflected in my mother's spending habits. And I also saw that my cut was an increasingly smaller percentage all the time. I saw more clients, and I knew they paid more, but my income remained unchanged. It was infuriating.

Sometimes, I wonder why I never took Maria's advice. She had the right of it, if I'm honest. My mother was a controlling bitch who had ceased to think of me as her child. To her, I was a commodity. A product. An employee. And I knew I couldn't trust her to treat me fairly. But what choice did I have? Even with her taking the lion's share of our profits, I still lived quite comfortably. I had whatever I wanted, and didn't have to worry about the business' minutia. It was liberating, knowing that whatever happened, I only had to worry about my own performance. She would take care of the rest.

None of it mattered, I guess. I knew I wouldn't leave – not so long as there was a demand for my services. No matter what, she was still my mother, and I believed that she would look out for my best interests. I'm naïve like that sometimes.







“I’m not comfortable with this,” I said, chewing on my glasses. “If she finds out...”

“She won’t,” he said, his voice reflecting the sort of calm I wished I felt. “And if she does, I’ll take care of it.”

I shook my head. That was easy for him to say. He wasn’t living under her roof. He didn’t have to worry about her disapproval.

“I wish I could have your confidence,” I said.

McCarthy smiled. “It’s not confidence,” he responded. “I just know that there’s nothing she wouldn’t do for a little bit of money. If it comes down to it, I’ll just pay more. She’ll shut up then.”

It made sense. My mother was, if nothing else, a materialistic creature. Money was her driving force, and if enough of it was on the table, she’d acquiesce to almost anything. Even so, I wasn’t eager to endure her ire if she found out that I’d gone behind her back. And if she found out I was doing it for free? I shuddered to think of her reaction.

He touched my shoulder. “It’ll be fine,” he said. “I promise.”

“This is crazy,” I said. “I don’t know why I’m doing this.”

“If it’s about the money, I told you that I’d be happy to pay –”

“I don’t want your money, James,” I said. “This is about what I want. This is about us. I like you, okay? And you like me too. I don’t care if you’re married.

I don’t care about our weird history. I just want something real, okay? Something that doesn’t involve an exchange of money. I just want to be normal for a little while. Is that too much to ask?”

“Not at all,” he said. “I understand completely.”



“Where were you last night?” my mother asked, looking up from her phone. “I tried to text you.”

I didn’t deviate from my pose. Concentrating on my routine made it far less likely that she’d see through my lie. “I needed a night off,” I said. “I was with Maria.”

Of course, it wasn’t true. I’d been seeing James twice a week for almost a month, and it was going far better than I ever could have expected. He was a perfect gentleman, treating me exactly as a lady should be treated. It was a breath of fresh air.

She sighed. “You missed out on a pretty lucrative appointment,” she said. “You remember Mr. Sanchez, right?”

“You’re the one who told me to take a night off once in a while,” I said. “You said you didn’t want me to burn out.”

“I didn’t,” she said. “I don’t.”

What she left unsaid was the fact that she hadn’t really expected me to take her up on it. Also unsaid was the reality that her concern wasn’t for my welfare or my psychological well-being, but rather that she didn’t want clients to think I was phoning it in. They could tell when I wasn’t into it, she always said.

“Then what’s the problem?” I asked.

“Nothing,” was her answer. “No problem, sweetie. I’m just letting you know that you’re leaving money on the table. That’s all.”

“Hasn’t anyone ever told you that money can’t buy happiness?” I asked.

“Anyone who says that has never been poor,” she stated. “Money can’t buy happiness. I agree. But it makes life a whole lot easier.”





“Why do we keep doing this?” I asked.

“Doing what?” was Keith’s response. “I asked if you wanted to go see a movie or something, but you –”

“I mean, why do you keep wanting to hang out?” I clarified, looking across the table at him. He was handsome enough, but far from my type. Increasingly, I’d begun to find older men far more attractive than their younger counterparts. Plus, Keith and I had been friends for as long as I could remember. The thought of any sort of intimate relationship with him was akin to incest, as far as I was concerned.

“We’re friends,” he said with a finality that suggested it was the only answer necessary.

“Seriously?” I asked. “That’s all you have? We used to be friends, Keith. Best friends. Almost brothers. But ever since I dropped out of college, I’ve seen you like once every six months. I just want to know if you’re doing this because of some sense of obligation.”

“Of course I feel obligated,” he said. “Don’t you?”

“This isn’t about me,” I said. “I’m asking about you. Every few months, you come back into town, and you set up some sort of pseudo-date. You pay for everything. You open doors for me. We go to the movies I want to see. I don’t know what this is, but it’s the weirdest friendship I can imagine.”

“Whose fault is that?” he asked, crossing his arms. “No, seriously – whose fault is that? For ten years, you were my best friend Carl. Ten years, and not a single hint that you’re gay or transgender or whatever the fuck you are this week. And then, out of the blue, you’re just something else. And you expect me to know how to deal with that? Look – I support you. I do, but –”

“You support me?” I asked, cutting him off. “God, I’m not some cause for you to get behind. I’m your friend. Or I was. I don’t need you to say you support me, Keith. I don’t need you to do anything but treat me like you’ve always treated me.”

“Really?” he asked. “You want to go work out? You want to go to a game? Maybe go pick up some chicks? Or how about we go down to the gym and play a game of basketball with the other guys?” He rubbed his eyes like he had a headache. “God, Carl – it’s not the same, and you know it. I’m trying to figure this all out. I am. I want to be your friend. But Jesus, man, you’re not making it easy.”

“Yeah, well,” I said, standing up. “How’s this for easy? Just leave me the fuck alone.”





“So you really just went full-on bitch, huh?” Maria asked, casually tucking her clutch under her arm. “You know he didn’t deserve that, right?”

I pushed my hair behind my ear. “I know!” I said. “God, I know, okay? But you don’t understand how frustrating it is that everyone treats this like I’ve got some disease or something. I don’t need them to tell me they support me, you know? I don’t want them to treat me any differently than they always have.”

“That’s a bit much to ask,” Maria said. “You have to understand that.”

“I do,” I said. “Rationally, I do. But every part of me wants to scream bloody murder at anyone who looks at me the way Keith looks at me. Like I’m some sort of charity case or something.”

I don’t know why it irritated me so much, but it did. Every single time I was reunited with someone from my past, they went through a couple of phases. First came disbelief. No one wanted to believe I was the person they once knew. Then came shock. Awkward personal questions. Pity. Virtue signaling. It was like clockwork, and I hated it – especially when it came from people like Keith who had no reason to feel awkward around me.

But he did, and because of that, so did I.

“I’m just glad he doesn’t really know what I do,” I said. “If he did, it would have been even more awkward.”

“Do you think he’ll come back?” she asked. “Do you think he’ll try again?”

I shrugged. “Maybe,” I said. “A part of me hopes he’ll just take it for a lost cause. We have nothing in common anymore. But another part of me hopes he’ll keep coming, that we’ll find some way to reconnect. I just don’t know which I want more.”

“Good thing it’s out of your hands, then,” she said. “Now come on. I’ve got my eyes on some shoes I saw at Barkers – you know that new boutique down on Sage? They’re kind of in-your-face pink, but I like them.”



"I know this is weird for you," my mother said. "I just hope you can –"

"Why?" I asked, going to one of the lockers. I opened it, making sure it was empty. Turning back to my mother, I asked, "Why would this be weird? It's just a locker room."

"Because it's a girls' locker room," she answered. "And we both know you have some, well, identity issues you're still working on. Maybe this will help."

I knew what she was saying. Despite the fact that I was, in fact, living as a girl, in my mind, I hadn't fully transitioned. As far as I was concerned, I was still playing a role. I fully expected to one day go back to being Carl. However, knowing that she was right didn't mean I had to acknowledge it. No – I felt like being argumentative. I felt rebellious. I wanted to be disagreeable.

"It's not going to help anything," I said. "I come in here. I change. End of story."

"And you're not going to be distracted by all the naked girls?" she asked.

I shook my head. "I'll be fine," I insisted.

"Because most men would be," she stated. "Or most straight men, at least. Maybe you just don't fit into either of those categories."

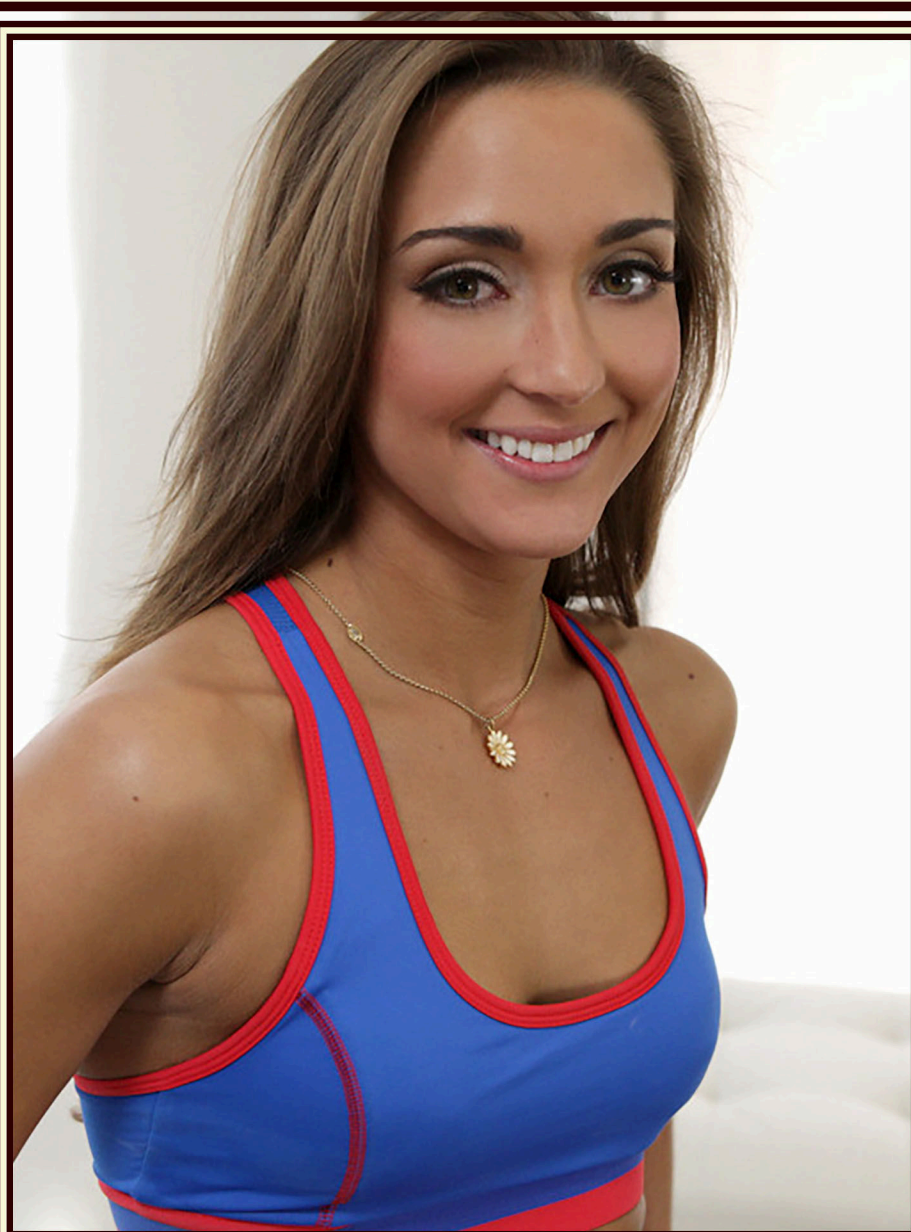
I hated her. Over the previous eighteen months, I'd truly grown to despise the woman. She was controlling, petty, and aggressively domineering. More than that, she wasn't afraid to use violence to get her point across. I couldn't count the number of times she'd slapped me across the face during an argument. But she was probably right, and I knew it.

I'd long since ceased to see women through a sexual lens. The body parts I'd lusted after in the past no longer excited me. Sure, I noticed a pair of big breasts, but my interest was asexual. It was the same when I saw a woman with a particularly good body. I was far more likely to wish I could emulate her figure than to imagine any sort of sexual liaison.

Even so, I wasn't altogether prepared to admit that I'd changed – not to myself and certainly not to her. So I just nodded, saying, "Like I said – I'll be fine." I tossed my bag into the locker, and looked her up and down. "Maybe you should get on a workout program too while you're here. Tone up a bit."

I pushed past her without another word.





“You actually said that?” Maria asked, leaning forward and touching her toes. After a few seconds, she rose, smiling. “Good for you. She deserves to be taken down a peg or two.”

“She’s on a new diet now,” I said. “I feel guilty, you know? It’s not like she was fat or anything. I just knew it would needle her. Bad body image, I guess.”

“Well, we can’t all be model thin like some people,” Maria said, referring to a statement she’d made about my own body on multiple occasions. If I was honest, I had mixed feelings about the fact that someone as gorgeous as Maria was seemingly jealous of my body. On the one hand, I was flattered. I’m not without an ego, and I never felt better about myself than when I received a compliment. But on the other hand, it highlighted something that had been weighing heavily on my mind.

Inevitably, each time I saw people from my past – whether it was in the capacity of my job or in my normal, everyday life – they would remark that they “always knew” I was different. Or they would say that they always thought I was pretty. Or that they saw the signs. Hearing that from so many people couldn’t help but alter my view of who I was, of who I was meant to be.

I couldn’t quite dismiss the notion that maybe they were right. Perhaps I’d always been fated to become Carly. Maybe the “Carl” persona had been a mask. It was possible that I’d been fooling myself for most of my life, that lurking somewhere beneath the surface of my personality was an entirely different person – one which only needed the barest of excuses to take over.

“I’ve been thinking of getting a boob job,” I said. The change of subject was as much for my benefit as it was for hers. “Nothing huge. Just a little bigger.”

“Why?” Maria asked. “I love them. They’re so cute.”

I shrugged. “I’d make more money,” I said. “And guys like big tits, right?”

“Look – I know you’re self-conscious about your chest,” she said. When I began to object, she cut me off. “It’s natural. Lots of girls go through that. But I’ll let you in on a little secret – boys like boobs. It doesn’t matter what size they are. That said, if you think it’ll make you happy, I say go for it. Just don’t do it for the wrong reason, okay?”



I admit – I'd come to dread being paired with female clients. With men, it was all about the sex. Sure, many of them liked certain scenarios played out, but they were all ultimately about fucking a sexy shemale. To them, I wasn't a person. Rather, I was a personification of a fetish. And there was a certain freedom to that. I could lose myself in whatever role they wanted me to play. For a few hours, I could forget my real life. I could become that sex object.

As liberating as the disconnect from reality might have been with my male clients, it was the exact opposite with the vast majority of the women who paid for my services. With them, it was about the psychology of it. They didn't see me as a transgender girl. They didn't even see me as a shemale or ladyboy. No – they saw me as a something of a failed male. A sissy. And they couldn't shut up about it.

"You like that, don't you?" my client, Melissa, asked. She was a little older than me, but pretty enough to catch anyone's attention. "You like being fucked like a girl, don't you?"

"Mmmhmm," I purred my agreement, looking back to see her working the vibrator in and out of my ass. I arched my back, pushing toward her. I knew she wanted me to lose control, and I did. It wasn't that hard of a sale to make; the toy felt extremely good, and was designed to hit just the right spots. I only had to exaggerate my natural reaction. So I moaned. I hoarsely whispered for more. I bit my lip and curled my toes.

And it drove her wild. Before I knew it, she had the toy's twin buried in her own sex, and she was screaming right along with me. It was a predictable session, and one which had been repeated on more than one occasion.

When it was all said and done, I lay in her arms as she massaged my breast. "I'm sorry if I got a little carried away," she said. "I didn't mean to offend you."

It was always the same apology. In her real life, she was no doubt very respectful of transgender issues. I think the guilt was part of the fetish.

"It's okay," I said. "I get it."

"I know," was her answer. "That's why I like you. No judgement."



"He's not your son, Trish," the man said. He looked vaguely familiar, but I couldn't quite place him. "You had no right to –"

"I have the right to do whatever the fuck I want to do," she said, pushing him against the wall. Next to the much-smaller man, she looked formidable. Reflexively, I backed away, afraid of being seen. "I always have, and I always will."

I don't know why I'd followed her. Perhaps it was simple curiosity. Or maybe, on some level, I knew something was wrong. Whatever the case, I certainly hadn't expected a shady meeting at a deserted rest stop forty miles from where we lived. It was only through sheer luck that I hadn't been seen.

I knew I shouldn't have pressed my luck by getting out of the car. But I had to know what was going on. I needed to know why my mother was meeting some strange man in the middle of nowhere.

"It's wrong," the man said, running his hand through his hair. He had delicate features that might have once been handsome. Age and hard living had robbed him of his good looks, however, giving his face a rat-like cast. "You know it's wrong."

"He wanted it," she said. "Every step of the way. I just made it easier."

"And you fucking pimped him out!" the man screamed, his voice shrill. "My son! You raised him for God's sake. You have to feel something for him!"

"Do you really want to know what I feel, Robert?" she asked, the name clicking in my head. The rat-faced man was my father. But that didn't make sense; he was in jail. "This is what I think. You left. Ran away. You saddled me with that stupid fucking brat. And yeah, I raised him. I did. But if you think for one fucking second that I love him, you've got a lot to learn. I don't. I never have. And I never will. And do you want to know why, Robert? Because every single time I look at him, I see you."

"He's just a kid, Trish..."

"Not anymore," she said. "He's property now. He's my little bitch, and I'm not going to let him go until I've been paid back every single cent I'm owed. So, you can let your precious little boy work it off, sucking one cock at a time, or you can tell me where you hid the fucking money. It's your choice."

"I don't have it, Trish," Robert said. "You know that. The police seized everything when –"

"They seized two-point-two million," she said. "We stole five. There's almost three million dollars missing, and I'm going to get mine one way or another. Like I said, you decide. But be aware – you don't have that much longer. I'm almost finished with him. And once I am, you won't be able to get to him."







“And you just left?” Maria asked as I slipped the straps to my bag from my shoulders. I dropped it without answering. “I mean, you had to say something, right?”

Even after two days, I still wasn’t quite up to tackling the repercussions of the overheard argument. Even so, I’d analyzed it dozens of times, going over every single thing I could remember. But I still didn’t want to come to terms with its meaning.

I shook my head. “No,” I said. “I went home, grabbed a few things, and left. I haven’t even seen her in two days.”

I’d stayed with McCarthy one night and Keith the next. Neither had asked many questions, for which I was grateful. I didn’t really have any answers.

Of course, I knew what it all meant. Neither of the conversation’s participants had tried to conceal anything. But I didn’t know what to believe. My mother wasn’t really my mother? My father wasn’t in jail? They’d stolen a good deal of money? I could hardly wrap my head around any of it.

“It explains a lot,” Maria said. “You’ve got to admit that at least. Or it explains why she is the way she is.”

I looked up. “What’s that supposed to mean?”

“I’m just saying – she doesn’t act like a mother,” Maria explained. “You have to see that, right? I’ve said it before – what kind of mother does this to her child?”

I shook my head. “It can’t be true,” I said.

“It is true, Carly,” she said. “You know it is. I don’t know about the rest of it, but I’m, like, a hundred-percent sure that she’s not your mother. Not really, at least. And if she’s not, well, you can’t really trust anything about your life.”

“Thanks for letting me stay?” I said, looking back at James. He stared at me with unashamed lust. “I didn’t really know where else to go.”

“It was fine the first time,” he said, his voice smooth and cultured. Or maybe it was the accent. “And it’ll be okay every time you need it.”

“Still,” I said. “Thanks. I mean it. I literally don’t have anyone else to turn to.”

It was a sad admission, but no less true for it. As much as I’d come to depend on Maria’s friendship, I knew that we hadn’t quite gotten to the point where either of us would be comfortable with me spending more than a couple of days in her apartment. Not only was it a cramped space, but there was an undeniable distance between us, no doubt the result of my profession. As worldly as she pretended to be, Maria did not consider me respectable. And she would be mortified if anyone learned she was friends with a real live prostitute.

So, with nowhere else to turn, with all the bridges I’d burned, I had little choice but to take advantage of McCarthy’s freely-given hospitality. The only other choice was to go back to my mother, which I couldn’t do.

I looked at my phone. She’d called me twenty-seven times over the previous three days, and I knew she was furious. Before I’d overheard her conversation with my father, I might have chalked it up to parental worry. But now? Knowing what I knew? I couldn’t help but think that she was protecting her own profits.

“How long do you need to stay?” he asked.

“I-I don’t know,” was my honest answer. “A few days? A week, maybe?”

“Whatever you need,” he said. “Just ask, okay? I’m here for you.”

“I know,” I said.







“I’ve been a bad, bad girl,” I said, digging the spike of my ruby red heel into his chest. He winced. “What are you going to do about it?”

I didn’t know what else to do, so I fell back into my comfort zone. It wasn’t precisely that I thought I owed James anything; he was a friend – maybe more – who wanted to help me out. And I appreciated it. But I also felt extremely guilty. I felt like a leech, staying with him without contributing anything. And so, I wanted to do something for him – hence the school girl outfit.

It was one of his favorite fantasies, and one which I wasn’t altogether comfortable exploring. Maybe it hit a little too close to home – after all, I’d experienced my fair share of dirty old men – but my discomfort was irrelevant. I was well-practiced at pushing it to the very back of my mind.

“You don’t have to do this,” McCarthy said. “You don’t have to –”

I ignored him, pressing the stiletto harder into his chest. “Do you want to spank me?” I asked. “Or maybe I need to do some of those bad girl things for you.”

I straddled him, my hand reaching down to caress his manhood through his jeans. Even through the denim, I could feel its familiar, comforting shape. It was as thick as ever. I leaned in kissing his neck. I whispered, “You like bad girls, don’t you?”

He nodded, and I bit his neck. He winced as I said, “Say it. I want to hear you say that you like bad girls.”

“I like bad girls,” he breathed. I ground my groin into his, dry humping him. “God, I like bad girls!”

“Then you’re to love me,” I said.



I stood, unbuttoning my shirt, teasing him with each subtle twist of my fingers. I could see his bulge growing. I knew that he was on the verge of exploding. There's an art to it, knowing when to titillate, when to tease and when to get down to business. It's talent as much as experience, and I had both. I knew exactly what I was doing.

Once my top was open, exposing my perky breasts, I could feel the cool air caressing my hard nipples. I wanted him at least as much as he wanted me, and he knew it. You can't fake that kind of desire.

I threw my shirt aside, and dropped to my knees. He stood, knowing exactly where it was going. We'd danced the dance before, and we knew the rhythm well. I unbuttoned his jeans, and his cock practically burst toward me. It was long and thick and represented everything I loved about men. I couldn't get it into my mouth quickly enough. However, I forced myself to take it slow. I looked up at him, my fingers wrapped around the base of his manhood.

And in that moment, I think I loved him. I always did, right before. It's a curious thing, love. On the brink of consummating our lust, I felt it rushing through me, raging like a wildfire. It was hot and fast and intoxicating, driving me forward into sensual abyss. I knew it would fade. I knew I'd come to my senses. It was fleeting and temporary, but no less potent for it.

I wanted nothing more than to please him, and in doing so, please myself. That's what partners do. That's what love is. Giving. Taking. Selfishness couched in selflessness, inextricably intertwined, dependent.

I reached out a tongue, licking him gently. It was a familiar taste, and I relished it. No one tasted quite like James. I couldn't delay it long. I knew I'd have to make good on my tongue's promise, lest we both become frustrated. I walked the edge for a long moment, teetering on the brink, teasing him so deliciously.

And then I did it, wrapping my lips around his manhood. I sucked. I licked. I kissed. Expertly and without hesitation. But I didn't let him cum. No – I wanted that somewhere else. I wasn't done with him.





I climbed atop him, feeling his hard cock brushing against my own limp excuse for a penis. It was a telling comparison, his against mine; I couldn't help but note that next to him, I never could have measured up. It was in moments like that that I was glad I'd followed the path I had; even if I hadn't been forced to accept my lack of masculinity so abruptly, I would have eventually caught on. At some point, I would have realized how poorly equipped I truly was.

I reached back, grasping his thick representation of his virility. It was heavy and felt like it belonged in my hand. More, though, it belonged somewhere else. And I knew just where to put it.

With only my saliva as a lubricant – it was all I really needed – I guided his cock home, gasping at the oh-so-welcome invasion of my ass. It had only been a couple of days, but I'd gone practically crazy without sex. And as much as I claimed otherwise, there was no real substitute for the real thing. Toys were all well and good, but a cock is necessary for true satisfaction.

There's something so cathartic about good sex. Not only is it pleasurable – it is – but there's far more to it than that. And it's not just about expressing love or lust. It's that too. No, it's about relieving stress. It's about endorphins and adrenaline, hormones and sweat. It's about losing yourself to something primal, to something ancestral. It's about being a human animal. And God, I loved it.

Never is life so clear than when I'm atop a man, his cock giving me everything I really want. Bouncing up and down, savoring the sweet sensation of his cock slipping in and out of me – it's my own personal heaven. What's more, it opens my eyes to what's truly important in life. It's not money. It's not power. Or kindness. It's all about sex. And with James, I had that and so much more.

I don't know how long it lasted – I never do, honestly – but by the time I'd reached completion, my path seemed so clear. James' cum still dripping down my leg, I realized that none of it mattered. Not my mother – or whoever she was – or my absentee father. Maria was irrelevant. So was whatever plot circled my family. As long as I had James, nothing could hurt me. So long as I had James, I was content.



"I want you to live with me," James said, leaning against the bedframe. I lay on my stomach, staring into his eyes.

"You don't want that," I said.

"I think I know what I want," was his response. He caressed my bare breast, tweaking my nipple. "And I want you. Here. With me."

I shook my head. "You think that," I said, rolling over. I wanted nothing more than to live with James. There was far more than sex between us, and I was eager to see what it all meant. However, the mess that was my life wasn't going to just go away. Despite my moments of clarity that said otherwise, the circumstances surrounding my parentage did, in fact, matter. I did care if my mother was who she said she was. And I certainly cared that my father had abandoned me. "But I have baggage, James. A lot of it."

"I can help you carry it," he said without hesitation. "I love you, Carly. I do. And it's not in an obsessed-older-guy kind of way, though I'm certain that's what you'll call it. I love you. Deeply and without reservation. I have since the moment I first saw you."

"What about your wife?" I asked. "She is still your wife, isn't she? I know she doesn't live here, but —"

"The divorce will be finalized next week," he said. "And I don't care what Cameron thinks, either. Jesus — I don't care what anyone thinks, Carly. All I care about is you and me. Together. For as long as you'll have me."

It was a surprise, the depth of his devotion. And it was that — devotion. Obsession. I could see it in his eyes. He didn't love me — not the real me — because he'd never met that person. No — he loved the idea of me. A beautiful, sexy, and adventurous girl with a cute, little dick — that's what he loved. That's what he really wanted.

"You seem set on this," I said. He nodded, and began to profess his love once again. I cut him off. "I'm not going to argue with you, James. You say you love me, and I'm prepared to accept that. I'm fond of you too. I don't know if it's love or whatever, but there's something there. And we can explore that. I'm willing to see if this is in any way real."





“You don’t get it,” I said. “He wants to be a real couple. Like, you know, boyfriend and girlfriend.”

“No – I get it,” said Maria. James had gone out of town, leaving the house all to me. I’d invited her over, hoping to discuss the whole situation with her. “I just don’t understand what the problem is. That sounds like exactly what you’d want.”

I chewed on my fingernails, a nervous habit I’d had since childhood. Why couldn’t I just tell her? Why was it so difficult to open up? I wanted to. God, I did. But there was something blocking me, something holding me back.

I sighed. “I don’t know who I am,” I admitted. And then I told her everything. I didn’t pull any punches. I explained how resistant to the idea of homosexuality I’d been. I told her that I still didn’t really think of myself in those terms, that I didn’t even consider myself transgender. The whole thing, I said, had been foisted on me by my mother. That I enjoyed parts of it was irrelevant. It wasn’t me, I claimed. It couldn’t be me.

“And this whole time, I’m fighting, you know?” I said. “I’m scratching and clawing, trying to maintain some semblance of my identity. But I couldn’t. I can’t. Everywhere I turn, I’m surrounded by feminine things. Everywhere I go, people treat me like a girl.”

“Can you blame them?” she asked.

“What?” was my response.

“Seriously – look at yourself,” she said. “I don’t know what you were like before. I mean, from the sound of it, I didn’t meet you until you were well on your way. But I never even considered that you were anything else. You can’t blame the rest of the world for thinking the same thing.”

“I know!” I exclaimed. “I know. I just don’t know what to do about it. Any of it, I mean. My mom. James.” I gestured to my feminine body. “This. I’m lost, Maria. I am, and I don’t even know where I’m trying to get.”



"You really think I'm going to let you quit," my mother said. "That's adorable that you think you have a choice."

"I do have a choice," I said, wishing my voice had even a little bit of steel in it. "You told me that when I started out, remember? I could do what you wanted me to do, or you'd kick me out. Well, this is me telling you that I'm cool with that deal. I'm done."

"Just like that, huh?" she asked, looking back at me through the mirror. She wore a black lingerie set that screamed that she expected someone to see it later that night. I ignored her revealing attire. "Just leave, right? Leave me here all alone. Take everything I've built for us?"

She turned on me. "You think you're going off on your own, don't you?" she asked, looking over me. "You think you can do what I do, don't you? You can field those calls. You can take those emails. You can do it all, huh? How about collecting money? You really think you can do that? You don't see everything I do. You don't see the two guys who follow you on your dates. I pay them from my cut, and they keep you safe. But you know all that, don't you? You know everything."

"You're wrong," I blurted. "I'm leaving it all behind. I don't want to do this anymore. I can't do this —"

She cut me off with a harsh laugh. "What the fuck else are you going to do?" she asked. "I've seen you. I watch, sometimes. And let me tell you something you might not have realized yet — you've loved every fucking second of this. You have. You're a born whore."

"You don't know what I am," I said, wiping a tear from my cheek. I sniffed. "You have no idea who I am. You don't know anything about me."

She laughed mirthlessly again. "I know everything about you, little girl," she said. "I know better than you do. I saw it when you were little, and I see it now. You go on and on about what you are, but to anybody with eyes, it's as plain as day. You were a girl pretending to be a boy back then, and you're a girl pretending she wants to be a boy now."

"I'm not —"

"I don't care," my mother said. "Whatever. You're done. Cut off. Get your shit and go. I don't want to see you crawling back here anytime soon."

Tears streaming down my face, I pushed my shoulders back. Chin held high, I said, "Don't worry. I won't be."

"That's the spirit," she muttered.







“You seem happy,” said James. “Happier than usual, I mean.”

I smiled, holding my lacy bra to my chest. “I am,” I said. It had been a week since I’d left my mother’s house, and I was in high spirits. Being out from under her thumb had been a godsend. I felt freer than I’d felt in years.

He wrapped his strong arms around me. “I hope I’m at least partially responsible for that,” he said. I could feel his growing erection pushing against my hip through his slacks. It was not an unpleasant sensation, the physical feeling augmented by the knowledge that my mere presence could send him into such a reliable frenzy. He kissed my neck, whispering, “We should stay in today. They won’t need me at the office.”

“Are you sure?” I asked. “You said you had that big meeting with —”

“Oh, shit — with Danvers,” he said. “I forgot. That’s what you do to me, you know. When you’re around, nothing else matters.”

It was a nice sentiment, but it was also a scary proposition, I knew it wasn’t love, but rather an obsession with him. For the moment, it was perfectly fine, but obsession, I knew, could burn out quite quickly, leaving quite a void. One wrong step, and he’d turn on me, I was convinced.

But what choice did I have? And even if I did have another option, would I take it?

With James, I had everything I could possibly want. What’s more, his obsession resembled love in a lot of ways. It was only when I looked closely that I could truly tell the difference.

A part of me wanted to ignore those differences. A big part. After all, it felt good, being the object of his fervent affection. He practically worshipped the ground I walked upon. Certainly, it wasn’t healthy for him — obsession never is — but that wasn’t my problem, was it?

“Go,” I said, smiling. “Work. I’ll still be here when you get home.”

“Promise?” he asked. His tone was playful, but I could hear a questioning note just beneath the surface.

“Of course,” I said. “I’ll always be here.”



As the weeks went on, I realized that something was missing. James showered me with gifts – clothes, jewelry, even a brand new car – but it wasn't enough. I suppose I knew even then what the issue was, but I wasn't altogether prepared to accept it. I didn't love him. If I was honest, I didn't even like him. And that lack filled me with disdain.

I resented his devotion to me. Each time he tripped over himself trying to please me, I lost a little respect for him. I knew it made no sense; lots of girls – and more than a few boys – would have killed to switch places with me. But I grew to hate him. I hated the gifts. I hated the sweet nothings he'd whisper in my ear as we made love. I hated his smell. I hated the way he combed his hair. I hated everything but the sex. And even with that – the foundation upon which our entire relationship was built – was only tolerable because I could imagine I was with someone – anyone – else.

And I hated myself for it all, too. I knew I should have been happy. He'd rescued me from a life I knew to be destructive. He'd given me everything I could ever want and so much more. Didn't I owe him more than mere compliance? Didn't I owe him some sort of affection? Shouldn't I at least pretend to like him?

But I couldn't. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't force myself to pretend. With clients, it was easy because our time was limited. And that time was spent having sex, more often than not. It wasn't difficult to pretend to enjoy that, no matter the partner. But with James, I had to see what happened outside of the bedroom. I had to see his little quirks. I had to see try to connect. And I couldn't. God, I tried, but I couldn't.

We were so very different, and we had very little in common. He belonged to an entirely different generation, and I simply couldn't relate to his interests, such as they exceeded pleasing me. And he certainly couldn't relate to mine.

All in all, no matter how I looked at it, I was treading water. I knew I'd never commit to anything long-term with James. I couldn't fathom spending years with the man. But in the short term, he provided what I needed – safety.





“That is one tight little ass you have there,” the man said, his thumb pressing against my anus. I bit the blanket, squirming with anticipation. “You’re just aching for it, aren’t you?”

I was. God, I was. After two months of being monogamous, I was trembling with need. And the man had sensed it somehow. He knew what I needed the moment he laid eyes on me.

Looking back, I understand why I did it. Not only was it an act of rebellion, but it was also so very natural. I’d spent almost two years with a new partner every night. To suddenly try to limit myself to one was always going to be a futile effort. And given the way I felt about James, I think it’s amazing that it didn’t happen sooner. Even so, I hadn’t gone looking for it. No – I’d completely intended to be faithful – that is, until he approached me.

At the time, I didn’t even know his name. That kind of detail hadn’t seemed all that important – not next to the sexual chemistry sparking between us. The conversation hadn’t been particularly witty, but it didn’t need to be.

If I’m honest, he could have just grunted, pointed to the bathroom, and dragged me in there, and the result would have been the same.

The weird part is that he wasn’t really handsome – not in the conventional sense, at least. No, his nose was too large and far too crooked. His eyes were a little too narrow. And his skin was weathered, beaten to a leathery texture by a life lived in the elements. But his jaw was square, and his eyes – too narrowly set, to be sure – were the deepest blue. I never stood a chance.

He unbuttoned his faded jeans, revealing a thick cock sprouting erect from a tangle of coarse hair. He wasn’t the sort of man who trimmed, that was certain. But I liked it. He was wild and masculine in all the ways I needed him to be.

He never said a word about the fact that I had a penis. I suppose that to a man like that, it didn’t matter. He didn’t need me to fit into some feminine mold. To him, I was a girl. He was a man. And that was all that really mattered.

And he fucked like an animal. Hard. Fast. Without restraint. As well-experienced as I was, I knew I’d be sore, and in exactly the right way. It was everything I didn’t know I needed.





I toyed with the belt, looking down on Maria. “You’d better not be judging me,” I said. I shook my head. “You are. I knew you would. I shouldn’t have told you.”

“It’s not like you’re making it easy, you know,” she said. “I mean, this is kind of a pattern with you, isn’t it?”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” I asked.

“Well, with what’s-his-name – you know, James’ son,” she said. “You kind of cheated on him, too.”

“That was different,” I insisted. “We weren’t really together. And I’m not...”

“You’re not what?” she asked.

I’d been about to repeat the refrain I’d clung to at the time, that I wasn’t really gay. But under the circumstances, such a claim seemed silly. It was probably sill then, too, if I was honest.

“Nothing,” I said. “You don’t get it. You don’t understand.”

“That you fucked some rough-and-tumble bad guy?” she asked. “I bet he drove a motorcycle, too, huh?” I nodded. He had driven a Harley Davidson – all chrome, black paint, and delicious, rumbling exhaust. “You’re not the first girl to fall for that, you know. And God knows, you won’t be the last.”

I remained silent, mostly because I knew she was right. I was practically a cliché. Finally, I asked, “What am I going to do? Should I tell him?”

“God no!” Maria said. “If even half of what you say about Mr. McCarthy is true, telling him is the last thing you should do. No, you take this to the grave. Or better yet, save it for when he cheats on you.”

I shook my head. “He’d never do that,” I said. However, as sure as I was that he’d never even consider such an action, I wondered how I’d feel if he did. Would I be relieved? Angry? Hurt? Something in between. The fact that I didn’t know said more about our relationship than anything else, I think.