

A Cuck and Cheating Wife on The Brink
Can Love Bring Them Back Together?

the Taste of
Her Truth II

Jessica's Game Series - Book 4

M. L. PATTERSON

THE TASTE OF HER TRUTH, PART TWO

**BOOK 4 AND THE CONCLUSION OF THE JESSICA'S
GAME SERIES**

M. L. PATTERSON

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CHAPTER I

The sun poured into the resort office's main lobby through a large, open entrance and warmed the smooth, fieldstone paved floor. Resort staff wearing leis and white tunics stood on either side and greeted guests as they approached. The sound of trickling water danced through the air, coming from a fountain at the lobby's center. The sparkling stream issued from the palm of an uplifted marble hand. It ran down the statue's arms, split, and snaked around her hard, naked curves as they mirrored the warm glow of the island sun.

Kalei Kahue, the resort director, gestured to one guest seated in a lobby chair and pointed towards a pair of French doors.

"Please, come in here, Mrs. Abbas. Can I get you anything?"

Huda clutched a handful of her grey silk abaya as she stood and lifted it just enough to avoid the steps of her feet. Her white hijab surrounded her frowning face and ruffled in the soft breeze that blew through the open lobby.

"No, thank you. That won't be necessary," she said.

She followed the direction of his hand through the doorway and took a seat in front of his desk. Kalei took a deep breath and mustered a warm, professional smile as he closed the door and walked around the desk towards his chair.

“So, what can I do for you today? I trust your stay so far has been an enjoyable one.”

“No, it has not.”

“I’m very sorry to hear this. Is there something wrong with the accommodations?”

“No.”

“Have the staff been less than impeccable in their service?”

“No, the staff are fine.”

“Perhaps the food has not been…”

“It has nothing to do with any of that. I need to file a complaint about another guest.”

Kalei’s eyes widened and glanced to the side as his head shifted back on his neck.

“Oh. I see.”

“She parades around the island wearing the most disgraceful bikinis. Making a display of herself and distracting the other men on the island with her harlotry.”

“Mrs. Abbas, this is an island resort. It is acceptable for women to wear swimsuits here.”

“These are not swimsuits, Mr. Kahue. They are the devices of a witch, designed to seduce.”

“I see. Can you describe the swimsuits, Mrs. Abbas? What about them do you find so offensive?”

Huda's eyes narrowed, her posture stiff.

"There is more material in the lint in your shirt pocket than in one of her bikinis."

"Mrs. Abbas, my shirt doesn't have a pocket."

"Exactly."

"So, she is walking around naked?"

"She might as well be."

"Well, I suppose I could ask my staff to observe her when she is in the common areas, and if they feel her attire is inappropriate, they could ask her to change her clothes. Would that make you feel better?"

"No, it would not. Correct me if I am wrong, Mr. Kahue, but the mission of this resort is to provide a place for married couples to come and work on their relationship, is it not?"

"You are correct. That is our mission."

"This whore has no intentions of working on her marriage. She is only out to destroy the marriages around her."

"That is a very grave accusation, Mrs. Abbas. Other than your objections to her attire, do you have any evidence to back up what you are saying?"

"Yes. I witnessed another guest who was not her husband leaving her bungalow late at night."

Kalei Kahue raised an eyebrow, put his elbows on his desk, and folded his hands in front of his mouth. Huda continued.

"After he left, I knocked on her door, and she answered wearing a scandalous garment."

"Well, that sounds a bit concerning," Kalei said.

“When I confronted her about her attire and the man who left, she pointed to her husband and claimed to wear it for him, but she lied. She couldn’t have changed that fast. And what was the other man doing in their private quarters to begin with?”

“Well, Mrs. Abbas, I realize you find it inappropriate, but some guests befriend each other during their stay. Resort guidelines do not prohibit visiting each other in their rooms, especially after hours when common areas are closed.”

Huda scowled and leaned forward.

“This was not an innocent visit between friends. I assure you of that.”

“If I may ask, Mrs. Abbas, what other man did you witness leaving their bungalow? Can you describe him?”

“Yes, he’s an older gentleman with unkempt grey hair. His wife is a heavyset white woman with short, curly red hair.

Kalei smiled and sat up straight, clapping his hands together.

“Oh, you mean Brad and Alice. Mrs. Abbas, they have been patrons of this establishment for at least ten years. They are a lovely couple who adore each other. I cannot believe that Mr. Brad would ever do anything inappropriate like you are suggesting.”

Huda gritted her teeth and glared at Kalei.

“I’m sorry, Mrs. Abbas, but unless you can provide some kind of irrefutable evidence of your accusations… perhaps a photograph or testimony from some other witnesses… I am not in a position to…”

She slammed her open palm on the desk and stood up. Her eyes burned as she pressed her fingertips into the desk and hissed at the director.

“Do you know who my father is?”

Kalei shrunk back, his arm muscles tensing as his hands retreated to the armrests of his chair.

“I’m sorry, should I know?”

“He is an influential member of the Qubth-ut-Allah.”

“I am not familiar with…”

Her stern tone pummeled Kalei’s chest and caused the tendons in his neck to tighten.

“They are the fist of God. And they do not take the matter of a wayward woman lightly.”

“Ok. Well, Mrs. Abbas…”

“If you do not have the tramp Jessica removed from the island at once, I will have to tell my father, and trust me; you do not want the Qubth-ut-Allah to address the situation.”

Beads of sweat surfaced on Kalei’s forehead. He pressed his lips together as he stood and extended a shaking hand – fingers spread and palm down – towards Huda.

“Please, Mrs. Abbas. Let’s not do anything drastic. I believe you are referring to the Stokers. They are new to this resort and may not be aware of the community guidelines. I will go over the rules with them. I am committed to preserving an environment at this resort that is conducive to couples focusing on their marriage and working to improve it. We do not tolerate a situation that detracts from that.”

“Then, Mr. Kahue, you need to give your full attention to this matter. I know a villainous slut when I see one, and I assure you that this one is a heinous fire that threatens to burn down your resort and every marriage on this island.”

“I promise I will get right on investigating the matter. No need to involve your father.”

Kalei’s heartbeat pounded in his ears while he suffered what seemed minutes under the radiating heat of Huda’s piercing eyes.

“We shall see.”

She turned towards the door.

“Can I escort you?”

She raised a hand, not looking back.

“No need. I know the way out. And I know the way back. Next time I return, I expect to hear your resolution to this situation, Mr. Kahue.”

“Trust me. I will get right on it.”

He followed her to the French doors and watched as she exited the lobby, holding his breath and a smile until she left his sight. Then he closed the doors, turned, and leaned back against them. His chest heaved as he gasped for breath and wiped the sweat from his brow.

“Oh, god, I need a drink.”

CHAPTER 2

Ron melted into the soft cushions of the lazy boy tucked in the corner. Next to him, a sliding glass doorway opened onto a private deck, and a warm ocean breeze blew in. He inhaled the scent of salty mist it carried. The crash of waves underneath the bungalow mixed with swishing sounds from the bathroom as hot water sprayed against naked skin. He closed his eyes. Jessica humming in the shower inspired a tingle in his chest and a grin on his face.

This was paradise. Or the closest he'd get to it. His cooperation in executing the first of Jessica's nefarious schemes on the island shattered any hopes for eternity in Heaven. If such a place existed. The morning sun grazed the spot on the bed where Jessica had laid, her legs wide open, taking Brad's mouth and cock in between them.

And I was her partner in crime, Ron thought.

Alice's bigotry and shrill voice annoyed Ron, but she didn't deserve Brad's betrayal.

The shower cut off, but Jessica's humming continued. Ron smirked as he listened. Was her bliss over her success at drawing another innocent into her web? Or from her many orgasms since arriving on the island? She slid the bathroom door open along its track and stood in the doorway, a plush towel wrapped around her wet, naked body.

"Good morning," Ron said.

"Yes, it is."

Ron's heart rate picked up as she stepped into the room. The thought of her bare skin under the towel stirred him.

"I've been contemplating how to seduce Rayan into betraying that harpie."

Ron chuckled.

"We planted the seeds. After all..."

She eyed Ron as she walked towards the open, sliding-glass doorway, tracing the top of the towel with her hand. Her thumb and fingers loosened its grip on her breasts, and it fell to the floor. Her hands reached for the doorframe, rested on the metal, and glided up their rails. Her back arched, and her firm abdomen stretched out into the morning air.

"...he got an eye full of this decadent body."

Ron leaned on the arm of the chair and rested his chin in his palm. His eyes traced her naked form, now glowing in the sunlight. The tingling in his chest intensified, and his cock twitched in his pants.

"That he did. I think our neighbors are getting an eye full right now."

Jessica's head turned to the bungalow next door. Her hair danced with the wind, and her nipples stood erect under its caress. Tiny chill bumps rose on her bare ass.

“I’m planting all kinds of seeds.”

She turned and winked at Ron, walking back into their room.

“But Rayan will put up a fight. It’s going to require some creative bitch craft to get him to fall,” she said.

“I’ve never known you to shrink from a challenge.”

“It’s not fun if it’s easy.”

She walked to the edge of the bed, turned, and sat down in front of Ron. Her eyes simmered as they locked into his, and her fingers stroked the inside of her thigh.

“I love a challenge,” she said.

Her elbow behind her, she leaned back and spread her legs wide. They formed a perfect “V,” and her toes pointed like a gymnast.

“Imagine that dutiful, religious man caving under the building pressure of his desire. His hateful wife wondering where he could be.”

Her fingers slid across her skin towards her opening lips and parted them wider.

“Imagine him burying his married cock in this evil pussy.”

Ron’s heart pounded, and his prick begged to be free. Jessica closed her eyes and began circling her clit with her fingertips while he stared, mesmerized by it. The sunlight reflected on the beads of dew emerging from between her folds, and her lips fell open.

“Oh, god, yes.”

Her circles quickened. Ron slid off the chair onto his knees, bringing him closer. His mouth watered, and he swallowed hard. His chest and neck muscles tightened as he absorbed the radiant energy of her arousal.

But she stopped.

Her hand glided up her abdomen, between her breasts, and lifted to her mouth. She eye-fucked Ron as she placed the wet fingers between her lips, keeping her legs wide open to him. The vibrations of her cooing through her closed lips tickled his ears. She took her fingers out of her mouth, stuck them deep into her pussy, and then extended them to Ron.

“Here, Ron. Taste the evil truth.”

A thick coating of her juices drenched her fingers. Ron shivered as he took them into his mouth, tasting her.

“You know why I’m so wet. Evil excites me. And I’m planning to do evil things.”

Ron’s cock ached from the pressure and hunger brimming over inside of him, and his mouth clung to her as though he were dying of thirst.

“Yess. Look at Saint Ron. Bewitched by the wickedness. Suck them clean.”

Her words melted Ron, pulling him like gravity into her vortex of depravity. His body shifted forward as if he lost his balance, and he did her bidding, sucking her fingers until she removed them. She stroked his cheek, leaving a trail of his saliva on it.

“Glad to see you inspired, Ron. I’ll have more tasks for you soon.”

A pang of sadness broke through Ron’s trance. A familiar fear. That to her, he might be only a pawn in her game.

A knock came at the door.

Jessica rose and walked over to it. Ron’s eyes widened.

She has no fear, he thought.

Her silky skin and hourglass figured mesmerized him. The shift of her hips back and forth. Her brief stint doing runway modeling equipped her

with a dangerous talent. An ability to turn heads just by walking. Before she opened the door, she turned and winked at Ron, laughing. Then she jerked the door open. A resort bellhop stood on the other side and clasped a hand over his mouth, eyes glancing at her bare breasts.

“Ma’am. I’m so sorry. I can come back.”

“Relax, Tattoo. I’m sure you’ve seen a naked woman before. What can I do you for?”

He stuttered.

“Well, um, we request your presence at the communal circle.”

“Just me? And will this outfit be suitable?”

Ron smirked, hearing the playfulness in her tone.

“I’m sorry, ma’am, but no. You need to put some clothes on. And we request that both of you be there.”

Jessica left the door open and turned to walk back into the room, speaking over her shoulder.

“So, who else is going to be at this circle?”

The bellhop’s eyes clung to the floor.

“Everyone, ma’am.”

She whipped around and planted a hand on her hip. With the other, she gestured down her naked frame.

“And you don’t think I should wear this? It might be a real hit.”

He glanced over at Ron, puffing his cheeks and blowing through pursed lips.

Poor little guy, Ron thought. He’s about to have a heart attack.

“I guess I’ll cover up. What time are we expected?”

“In an hour, ma’am.”

“Ok, Scaredy Smurf. We’ll be there! Toodles!”

She waved at him and winked.

He stepped away, stopped, and looked back. With a pained grin, he reached for the doorknob and pulled it shut. Jessica looked down at her breasts and placed her hands on them.

“So, we are going to a communal circle with all the other couples.”

Her fingers moved in circles, teasing her nipples.

“I can see your devil horns from here.”

“You mean these?”

Jessica pointed at her nipples and laughed.

“Ron, darling, in an hour, everyone will see them.”

CHAPTER 3

“Follow me,” Jessica said. “Time to turn some heads.”

She winked and walked down the left aisle of the outdoor amphitheater. Rows of tree trunks – debarked, split in two, and finished – served as benches. Several couples sat on them, scattered across the space. Some chattered amongst themselves. Others faced forward quietly. Ron followed Jessica as she made her way towards the front and across a row until she reached a sunny spot. Before sitting down, she turned to look over the small crowd. The sunlight passed through her thin sun dress and warmed her skin. She grinned, imagining the silhouette of her bare breasts and legs illuminated for the gawking eyes of judgemental women and their lustful husbands.

“Hey, girl!”

Alice waved at her from three rows back. Brad sat next to her, his eyes trained on his feet. Alice nudged him.

“Look, Bubby. It’s our friends!” she said.

He glanced up and blushed as Jessica waved at him, blowing a kiss. Alice laughed and waved.

“Girl, you are too much!”

She has no idea, Jessica thought.

Her heart beat picked up, and a warm tingling sensation moved from her chest, down her abdomen, into her pussy as more eyes turned towards her body. Several seats over, Huda folded her arms across her chest and wore a smug grin as she stared. Jessica wondered what reasons inspired her stupid grin.

“Welcome, everyone! Please, take your seats.”

The resort director, Kalei Kahue, directed his voice to the group but eyed Jessica.

Jessica sat, leaned into Ron, and whispered.

“I think I just got in trouble.”

He snickered.

“Here at Second Chance Retreats, we know you are all here with different situations but the same goals. To enrich your relationships with your partners, to strengthen your commitments to them, and to grow deeper in love.”

Jessica’s throat thickened. The hardness of the tree trunk bench under her ass reminded her of the firm oak pews in her father’s church. The skin on the back of her neck prickled, sensing hateful eyes glaring at her from behind. For a moment, the image of Charles Gamble’s coffin flickered in her mind’s eye, resting in sharp focus behind the blur of the resort director walking back and forth and droning on about the virtues of love and marriage. She clenched the fist lying

in her lap, and the tingling sensation in her body escalated to a buzzing vibration.

All your pomp and circumstance, she thought. I'm going to burn it down.

“Some of you have already met each other, but many of you have not, so I'd like to give each of you a chance to introduce yourselves and tell us something about your partner that you cherish. Who would like to go first?”

Huda's voice sliced through the air and scraped Jessica's eardrums.

“I would like to speak.”

“Of course, Mrs. Abbas. Thank you for volunteering,” said Kalei.

Jessica's eyes met Ron's, and she rolled them before grinning at him.

“My husband is a godly man, devoted to Allah. It makes me happy to honor him, as we do in our culture, by covering my body and keeping it only for him to see.”

“That's beautiful, Mrs. Abbas. Does Mr. Abbas want to share anything?” Kalei said.

Jessica turned in her seat, and a devilish grin crept across her face as her eyes smoldered at Rayan. He stood, smiled, and waved at the group.

“Hello, everyone. My name is Rayan.”

He stuttered, folding his hands together in front of him.

“My wife, Huda, is a powerful woman. Strong in spirit. No one messes with her.”

His shoulders lifted towards his ears as he chuckled and looked back at Huda, who met his eyes with a tight-lipped grin. Ron whispered in Jessica's ear.

“Well, we know that’s not true.”

Jessica cocked an eyebrow and smirked back at Ron. Rayan waved again to the group and sat back down.

“Wonderful. Who will go next?”

“I guess I’ll go.”

Rex stood up from his seat on the far side of the amphitheater. He towered over Jennifer, who stood up with him and nuzzled herself under his strapping arm. He wrapped it around her slender frame, and her doting eyes gazed up at him as he spoke.

“Well, Jenn is really smart. And, as you can see, she takes great care of her body. Fitness is a big deal to both of us.”

Jessica sat up straight, her eyes attentive to Rex’s moving lips, as her fingers crept across Ron’s thigh and slipped down between his legs. She wiggled her fingers, prompting him to spread them. He whispered in her ear.

“Um, what are you doing?”

She pushed the heel of her hand into his crotch and pressed her fingertips into Ron’s thigh, rubbing them up and down. His cock twitched against her subtle stimulation, and her eyes lit up as she smiled at Jennifer.

“Rex is my rock. I couldn’t live without him. And I can never get enough of him.”

Jessica continued her act, directing her attention to each couple as they spoke, while quickening the up and down grinding of her hand into Ron’s growing erection. The resort director turned towards them.

“How about the Stokers?”

Jessica turned to look at Ron with a wicked grin. His face glowed beet red, and the veins in his neck popped out.

“How about you, Ron? Why don’t you stand up and tell us something about Jessica?”

“Well, um…”

“C’mon, honey. Tell the nice people about me.”

He cast a glance aside at Jessica, grimacing. Then he groaned, rising as though suffering from arthritis, and his erection pushed a small but noticeable bump in the front of his shorts. Kalei pressed his lips together and locked his eyes on Ron’s. Ron closed his eyes and took a deep breath. Jessica looked him up and down, smiling as she put a hand down on the bench and leaned back into it.

I’m evil, she thought.

“So, Jessica…”

He looked up at the sky and put his hands on his hips. Jessica tilted her head to the side and wrinkled her nose. His changing posture surprised her a bit. She wondered what he might say.

“My life would be pretty dull without her. I’m pretty straight-laced. I don’t take risks. Don’t venture outside my comfort zone much. No one would want to read my life story if I were the only author of it.”

He opened his eyes and looked down at Jessica. Tenderness filled them, and his lips curled up into a warm smile.

“But she came into my life and wrote on my soul with her electricity and her wild imagination. And it hasn’t all been highs. Some of it has been lows. Some of it has been very uncomfortable. But it made for a much more thrilling ride.”

Jessica’s eyes glistened as Ron placed a hand on her shoulder.

“She’s at the center of all the moments in my life when I felt most alive. I have no regrets,” he said.

Rex called out.

“Woo-hoo! Tell it, Sugar Ron!”

A warmth expanded through Jessica’s chest, and a prickle formed behind her eyes. Kalei interjected.

“Thanks for sharing that, Ron. How about you, Jessica?”

“Um…”

Jessica’s voice cracked, and she pressed her lips together as a tear welled up in her eye. She turned to look at Ron and smiled.

“He’s a good man.”

Her hand rose to her cheek and wiped the tear away to make way for another.

“I don’t deserve his love.”

Ron put an arm around her as she leaned her head on his shoulder. The warmth continued spreading through her body, and her head felt light. She melted into him and whispered.

“I’m sorry, Ron.”

He rubbed her thick, satiny brunette hair.

A pang shot from Jessica’s heart down the left side of her body, and she clenched her teeth. The ground beneath her feet felt distant.

Ugh, I hate feeling needy, she thought.

She took a deep breath and sat up, removing her head from Ron’s shoulder. Wiping the tears from her eyes, she straightened her spine and whispered again to Ron.

“Well, enough of that.”

Kalei gave some parting blessings and dismissed everyone. Jessica stood and perused the group as they made their way out of their seats and into the aisles. Then she snapped her head back to Ron and gave him a wry grin.

“What do you say we invite your boyfriend and his little shadow to join us for lunch?”

Ron’s eyebrows drew together.

“Umm...”

“Oh, c’mon, Sugar Ron. You two can talk about your next workout date plans.”

She grabbed his hand and pulled him down the row towards Rex and Jennifer.

Time to plant more seeds, Jessica thought.

CHAPTER 4

“I’m so hungry, I could eat a horse,” Rex said.

Jessica peered at him over the brim of her menu. Her devilish smile and mischievous tone hid behind it.

“I don’t know about a horse, but a big, juicy piece of meat sounds fabulous.”

A sharp stabbing pain shot through Ron’s chest. At that point, he could deal with Jessica seducing every man on the island. All except one. He never expected a muscular, handsome man to like him, much less take him on as a workout buddy. In his experience, jocks made fun of nerds. Beat them up. Toyed with them. But Rex befriended him. Even invited him to workout together.

“What about you, Sugar Ron?” Rex asked.

“I don’t know. I’m kinda craving Mexican. But would they have that here?”

“Even after you devoured my taco the other night?” Jessica asked.

Ron smirked, casting a side glance at her and shaking his head.

“How did you make tacos here on the island?” Jennifer asked.

She frowned as her eyes narrowed on Jessica. Ron interjected.

“She didn’t. Honey, you must be referring to the night before we left to come here. That was a week ago.”

Jessica lowered the menu and sat up, her shoulders back, as she turned to look at Ron.

“Oh, that’s right. I remember now. You inhaled my taco, and after that, we both came.”

Ron blinked as he pressed his lips together.

Oh my god, Jessica, just stop, he thought.

Rex chimed in with an ignorant, giddy tone.

“And then we met you and Sugar Ron at the airport!”

“Like it was destiny,” Jessica said.

Her tone carried dramatic flare, finished off with the wry grin on her face.

“Well, you joke about it, but I haven’t had a workout partner in years,”

Rex said. “Sugar Ron, over there, can really pound a punching bag.”

Ron’s ears grew hot as he smiled and shrugged.

“What can I say? Punching is kinda my thing. But what about you, Rex? I’ve never seen someone lift as much weight as you do. You’ve got some serious guns.”

“You mean these?”

Rex lifted his arms on either side of his head and flexed his biceps.

Jennifer smiled, looking up at him.

“Sometimes, Rex uses me for a bench press. He just lies on the ground. Then I lay on his hands, and he lifts me over and over,” she said.

Jessica turned to Ron and put a fingertip between her teeth.

“Just imagine that, Ron. Little Jennifer over there getting on top of Rex and letting him use her.”

“It’s not much of a workout. She’s light as a feather,” Rex said.

“But it’s fun. I feel like I’m flying when you do it.”

“Oh, I bet you do,” Jessica said. “I know I would.”

Jessica turned to Rex and reached out a hand to touch his bulging bicep, still lifted and flexed.

“Rex, honey, I imagine any woman would be happy to let you use them for your workouts.”

Jennifer’s tone turned stern.

“Jessica, do you always touch people without asking?”

Jessica withdrew her hand, and Rex lowered his arms, reaching out to Jennifer to stroke her shoulder.

“It’s ok, babe. She just wanted to feel my guns. I get that all the time.”

Jennifer continued, nostrils flared, glaring at Jessica.

“I realize you probably cut your preschool classes, but when the rest of us were two, we learned to keep our hands to ourselves.”

They all returned their eyes to their menus. The table shook from Rex’s restless leg, twitching up against it until he stopped.

“Sorry,” he mouthed.

Ron turned the menu over. The sounds of seagulls in the distance failed to penetrate the thumping of his heart inside his head. He dared not look at Jennifer. The heat from her temper radiated across the table towards Jessica, roasting him in the crossfire. He pretended to

study the menu, but he knew what he wanted. A large helping of “get me out of here.” He hated awkward tension.

“I hope I’m not interrupting.”

Ron looked up, relieved at Rayan standing next to him.

“Hey, Rayan. Not at all,” he said.

“You can take one of our seats. Rex and I were just about to leave,” Jennifer said.

Her smug smile clashed with her curt tone and cold eyes. Rex frowned.

“But babe, we haven’t even ordered,” he said.

Jennifer turned to him, her tone instructive.

“I’m not hungry. I’ve lost my appetite.”

“But I’m…”

“Leaving. Now.”

She glared at him, and Rex put his menu down on the table.

“See y’all later. Sugar Ron, maybe we can hit the gym again soon.”

“Sounds good, man.”

The feet of Jennifer’s chair scraped on the pavement as she stood and turned her back to Ron and Jessica. She extended a stiff arm and open hand to Rex, who waved at the rest of the table. Jennifer huffed.

“C’mon, Rex.”

She grabbed Rex’s hand and dragged him away from the table.

Wow. Demure Jennifer can be assertive when she wants to be, Ron thought.

“I’m sorry if I interrupted something,” Rayan said.

“No, your timing was perfect,” said Jessica. “Wanna have a seat? Those two are still warm.”

She leaned back, gestured to her lap, and winked.

“This one is even warmer.”

Rayan’s voice cracked as he laughed.

Ron’s nerves clawed at the inside of his skin, his mind still anchored to the departure of his workout buddy with an angry wife.

“I won’t stay. I just wanted to apologize again for my wife’s behavior.”

“Relax, Rayan. You have done nothing wrong,” Jessica said. “Not yet, anyway.”

Jessica pursed her lips and eyed Rayan like prey. He swallowed hard and shifted to stand behind Jennifer’s vacated chair.

“She’s a very charitable woman. We come from a very conservative culture. She is not used to the ways of a more modern woman like yourself, Mrs. Jessica.”

Jessica grinned at Ron and stroked his arm with her fingertips.

“You hear that, babe? I’m modern.”

Ron still held on to his menu, his smirk appearing for an instant before fading to flat, his forehead wrinkled from the thoughts still racing in his mind. He wanted to feel playful with Jessica as he had over the last several days, but her flirtations with Rex vexed him. Rayan continued.

“But she can also have a mean side. Mean as a viper. It is best not to awaken her anger, Mrs. Jessica.”

“Trust me, Rayan. I’ve dealt with vipers before. She’s not the first.”

“I just wanted to caution you. I will leave you two alone. Have a beautiful day.”

Rayan bowed and turned to step away. Jessica called after him.

“Don’t be a stranger!”

Her eyes tracked him as Rayan’s steps scuffed the stoned path, dirtied with sand grains.

“Do you ever worry that you’re going to burn in hell for these games?”

Ron asked. “Because I do.”

“You worry for me?”

“I’m worried for both of us.”

Jessica looked down at the arm of her chair and stroked it with her fingers.

“What’s the story? That some guy named Peter guards the pearly gates?”

“That’s the story.”

“Well, with a name like that, he’s bound to have a cock capable of a rock-hard erection.”

Ron sighed.

“See what I did there?”

“Yeah, clever.”

“I mean, I do have heavenly tits, and I can give one hell of a blob job.

Those have opened doors for me in the past.”

Ron shook his head and rolled his eyes.

“I’m serious.”

“I know.”

She looked away. A breeze passed across the patio and brushed at her hair, causing it to dance.

“I think I’d rather burn in hell for being my authentic self than live forever among righteous people who are not my people. It’s what I

love most about my new job. My boss. She's just as evil as I am."

Ron raised his eyebrows and curled his lips. He admitted to himself that he respected her response. Honest. Twisted. Real. He folded his hands in front of him on the table and stared at them.

"You are evil, but you catch blame for things that aren't your fault. All these men you've seduced. They are adults. They make their own choices."

He reached for a fork and poked at a folded cloth napkin.

"I think it's easier for people to blame the woman. To label her the slut. To give the man a pass. Like he couldn't help it."

"I am pretty persuasive."

"Yes, but they have a choice. When they choose you, it's because you radiate something that resonates inside of them."

"I know. And I love bringing it out of them. Exposing the truth."

"That said, Jessica. Please, stay away from Rex."

She turned her head towards Ron and leaned back in her chair. Her eyes narrowed.

"Don't want me to seduce your new boyfriend?"

"C'mon, Jessica. You can fuck every other man on this island for all I care, but I haven't had a guy friend in a long time."

"Which would make it so evil of me to seduce him. Just think of it. Your hateful wife using her wicked mouth and body to lead him to betray his new friend."

Ron's crotch pulsed, and his heart fluttered.

"I mean it. Stay away from him."

"You don't want me on my knees sucking his big, beautiful cock?"

She licked her lips and looked down at Ron's shorts. They pressed against his rising erection, and his balls drew up underneath it.

"Jessica, oh my god. Seriously, no. I don't."

"Mmm-hmm. Ok," she said. A wry grin on her face. She picked her menu back up and returned her gaze to it.

"Jessica, please. Not him."

"Relax, Ron. I won't fuck your boyfriend."

He studied her face as it perused the menu in front of her.

I don't believe you, he thought.

He adjusted his shorts and felt a wet spot where the tip of his cock pressed against them.

"Thank you," he said.

CHAPTER 5

A pale orange sliver of sunrise peeked above the dark blue horizon of the ocean. Jessica slipped out of their bungalow, easing the door to a quiet close. Her black lace cover-up hid all but hints of her red micro bikini and slowed the cool air that brushed against her body. Her ruby-painted toenails shimmered in the fading moonlight as she placed a foot on the boardwalk leading away from her slumbering husband. Perhaps she wanted to practice a quiet escape. Or maybe she just wanted to go for a walk to think. She wasn't sure.

Brunch with Ron the day before both stirred and irritated her. Sure, Rex caught her eye with his ripped physique and rugged good looks. With his wedding ring. And with the desperate clinching of his wife's arms around him. But Ron erected a new wall between her and Rex. Set down new rules. And made the fruit of Rex's cock even more forbidden. Jessica's favorite kind.

Ron should know better, she thought.

She made her way down the boardwalk and onto the beach. Before long, the bungalows over the water and rows of rooms further back on the resort green all lay quiet behind her with their sleeping occupants. Her skin tingled as she turned to look back at them. She felt like a predator prowling among helpless victims. The whole place stood like a monument of judgment over her. Over her kind. Wild, untamed women like her and her boss, Erika. Every couple at the resort, devoted followers to this suffocating religion of fidelity and piety, had gathered for jury duty. Her shoulders pushed back as she squared her stance in the sand, facing the resort, and her chest rose and fell with heavy breaths.

She whispered to them.

“I could topple any of your precious marriages.”

The morning light of the sun grew stronger on her skin, warming it. She turned to face it, and a lump formed in her throat. Her eyes fell to the sand as the rays spotlighted her with increasing intensity. Ron’s words came back to her. His question. “Do you ever worry that you’re going to burn in hell for these games?” The sunlight pierced her soul with a divine and disapproving glare.

A tear formed in the corner of her eye as she responded to it.

“You were never on my side. Where were you when I needed you?”

She took a deep breath and grabbed the hem of the cover-up. Lifting it over her head, she tossed it on the sand in front of her. Then she reached behind her back for the clasp holding her bikini top in place and unfastened it. As the rising sun heated her bare tits, she raised her chin into it, gritting her teeth, and hissed through them.

“I choose me. Whether you do or not, I will always be on my side.”

Tears flowed freely, burning on her cheeks. She put her thumbs under the strings of her bikini bottom and pushed it over her hips so that it fell to her ankles. Air filled her lungs as she drew it in. Her eyes closed, and she lifted her hands to run her fingers through her hair. The warmth of the sun on her bare labia provoked her body to arousal. Her nipples and clitoris hardened and pulsed. Tiny sparks jumped between her skin and her fingertips as she moved them down over her breasts, grazing the tips of her nipples, down her abdomen until they rested on her hipbones. Her lips fell open.

“Yesss. I choose this body.”

Electricity coursing through her veins, she turned back towards the resort. Leaving her bikini and cover up on the sand, she took one step. Then another. Her strides widened, and her arms swung with them. Spray from the ocean misted her bare breasts. She imagined the early risers on the island might notice her walking back towards her bungalow. She cocked an eyebrow, and her mouth curled up on one side. With each stride, the bungalows and resort rooms with their potential witnesses grew closer.

Near one building, in the shadows, she noticed two figures. Women. Her hand raised to her forehead to shield her eyes from the risen sun so she could better see.

Huda and Jennifer. My favorite people, she thought.

Huda disappeared from view, but Jennifer marched towards Jessica.

“Oh boy,” Jessica said.

She kept walking back towards her bungalow, pretending to be unfazed by the approaching steam train.

And she seemed so shy when we first met, Jessica thought.

The muscles in her stomach tightened.

“Jessica, what the hell are you doing?”

Jessica’s eyes narrowed on Jennifer, who stopped a few feet from her.

“I’m going for a morning walk.”

“Obviously. Where are your clothes?”

Jessica turned back towards the distant spot where she disrobed and pointed towards it.

“I left them back there.”

“Well, go back and get them. Now.”

Jessica laughed and placed a hand on her hip, cocking it to the side.

“Excuse me, Jennifer, but you’re not the boss of me.”

“Who the hell do you think you are? This is not a nudist resort. It’s a couple’s retreat. The rest of us are here to work on our relationships with our partners, and we don’t need a trashy slut parading around the island in the butt floss you’ve been wearing, much less naked.”

“What does my naked body have to do with you working on your relationship?”

“Are you serious? Just go get your goddamn clothes on.”

Jennifer leaned forward and planted her open palms on Jessica’s shoulders, pushing her back. Jessica brushed her hands away.

“Bitch, don’t touch me.”

Jennifer’s eyes burned as she put a finger in Jessica’s face.

“I’ll do a lot worse than that if you don’t get your ass over there and put your fucking clothes back on.”

“Afraid your muscle man will see something he’d like to get his hands on?”

Jennifer's mouth fell open. Then she reared back and slapped Jessica across the face so hard, it knocked her back. The tendons in Jessica's neck tightened as she gritted her teeth. Heat from the slapped skin mixed with her erupting anger, and she came back at Jennifer with an even fiercer slap. Jennifer cried out as she spun around and returned with a closed-fisted left hook across Jessica's mouth. Then she grabbed Jessica's hair and drove a knee into her stomach. The blow knocked the wind out of Jessica, causing her to double over and fall to her knees. Jennifer stood over her, snarling.

"Listen, you cunt. Stay the fuck away from my man!"

Jessica's chest ached as her lungs fought to recover from the blow and grasp even a little air. A crushing pain spread through her jaw, followed by a burning sting from the broken skin of her lip. She lifted her finger to her mouth and felt the wetness of blood trickling from it. Looking up, Jessica saw sand kicking up from Jennifer's heels as she stormed away. Jessica spat blood onto the sand and winced at the pounding in her head.

You messed with the wrong bitch, she thought.

Jessica grunted as she lifted one leg and put a hand on it, pushing herself up from the ground. Once standing, she looked down the beach at the pile of her cover-up and bikini lying on the beach. She liked that suit and would get it later, but for now, she had a naked walk to finish. She watched Jennifer disappear around the same corner Huda exited behind earlier.

"Just try to tell me what to do with my body," she said. "See what happens."

CHAPTER 6

“Take a seat.”

Kalei Kahue gestured to the two chairs placed in front of his desk. Ron shuffled in like a dog with its tail between its legs, and Jessica followed. She attempted to make eye contact with the resort director, but he looked away as she passed him. Her perfume wafted by his nostrils, causing a momentary intoxication to ripple through his synapses. Once she passed him, Kalei’s eyes traveled down her curvy frame and stole a glimpse of her ass hugged by her crochet beach shorts. A wave of fluttery sensation rolled through his chest and stomach. He closed his eyes.

Focus, Kalei, he thought.

He reached with his eyes for a focal point on the far wall and walked around his desk as he clung to it with his stare.

“Thank you for coming in today, Mr. and Mrs. Stroker.”

Jessica’s leaned back, crossed her legs, and grinned.

“Our pleasure, Mr. Director, sir. We’ll come whenever you want us to.”

Ron pressed his lips together, almost grinning.

Kalei swallowed hard as he took a seat and folded his hands in front of him on his desk.

“I asked you to come in today to talk to you about some complaints I’ve received from a few of our guests.”

Kalei tried to get a handle on the rapid blinking of his eyes as he cleared his throat and glanced up at Jessica.

“Mrs. Stroker…”

Her eyes twinkled as she grinned and stared at him.

“Call me Jessica. Or call me whatever you want, Mr. Director.”

He squirmed, glimpsing her teeth biting her grinning bottom lip.

“Right. So, a few of our guests have come to me concerned about your attire.”

Her gaze on Kalei paralyzed him and made his heart pound in his chest.

“And how do you feel about my attire, Kalei?”

“Um… I didn’t ask you here to share my opinion of your attire, Jessica.”

“But you have one.”

“Personal feelings aside, as Director of this resort, I have to listen when guests come to me with complaints. Especially when it’s not just one guest.”

Ron interjected.

“What are the complaints, exactly?”

“I’ve been told that Mrs. Stroker… Jessica… has been wearing very skimpy bikinis on our beach. Or going topless.”

He shuddered.

“Or even completely naked.”

“Well, now, that would be very naughty of me, wouldn’t it? Someone should spank me.”

His heart fluttered.

“Please, Mrs. Stroker.”

“Jessica,” she replied.

“Please, Jessica. This is a serious matter.”

She sat up straight and placed her hands on her knee, leaning forward as her eyes narrowed on Kalei.

“Let me guess. Huda complained. And maybe Jennifer?”

“I’m not at liberty to reveal the source of the complaints.”

“You don’t have to. I know where this is coming from.”

“There was also an accusation that you were seducing other married men on the island.”

Ron’s ears flushed red.

“And you believe these accusations?” he asked.

Kalei shrugged and dropped his gaze to the space on his desk just in front of his folded hands.

“When multiple guests grumble about the same thing, it gives one reason to think they may be credible complaints.”

Jessica’s hand glided across her breast to the top button of her semi-sheer, white beach romper and unfastened it. Her fingertips slid beneath the open collar to caress her skin, and her voice dropped into a slow, husky tone.

“Tell me, Kalei, in all your time as the director of this fine establishment, have you ever done anything, shall we say, inappropriate with a guest?”

The director's forehead glistened with the damp sheen of fresh sweat, and his chin trembled as he responded.

“I don't see what that has to do with…”

“Have you ever, perhaps, wanted to do something inappropriate?”

Jessica rose and put her hands on the desk, leaning forward. The neck of her romper fell open, revealing her ample cleavage. Kalei fought to keep eye contact with her, but the gravity of her bare skin pulled his eyes down.

“That's not at all what we're here to talk about.”

“Isn't it? You're suggesting that I'm the type of person to do something inappropriate. You know, I've never sucked a resort director's cock before, but…”

Jessica cocked an eyebrow and reached for him, but Kalei jumped from his chair, his face turning white.

“No, Mrs. Stroker, you must stop this at once!”

He pointed a quivering finger at her, looked at it, and then pulled it back to his chest. His voice whimpered as he attempted to raise it and find sternness.

“I have a responsibility to protect the mission of this establishment. I will not compromise my duty to indulge in such behavior. And I will not tolerate any such inappropriate behavior on the island between guests.”

Jessica maintained eye contact, her arms stiff and palms still planted on the desk.

“Ahh, but you want to, don’t you?”

Kalei lifted two clinched fists, eyes wide.

“Sit down, Mrs. Stroker. Listen to me, both of you. I know why you are here. I know about the will.”

The smile faded from Jessica’s face, and her gaze fell as she drifted back to her seat.

“You both need to leave here with an excellent report from our staff, and that includes me. Assuming you want to qualify yourselves for that inheritance money.”

Ron spoke up.

“How did you find out about this?”

“Everyone on the staff knows about it, Mr. Stroker. The attorney’s office that booked your reservations here informed us of the conditions of the will, and they requested a report of your attendance, participation, and cooperation after your stay.”

Kalei’s posture slumped as he ran his fingers into his hair and clasped a handful.

I need a vacation from this place, he thought.

He took a deep breath and raised his hands for emphasis, eyebrows raised.

“So, can you please stop whatever games you two have been playing? I don’t want to hear any more complaints from my guests about you streaking or seducing married men. Do you understand?”

Jessica made a tiny triangle with her index fingers and rested them on her lips, her head tilted forward and eyes glancing up at Kalei. He raised his voice.

“Do you understand?”

Ron glanced over at Jessica and then at the director.

“Yes, we’ve got it. You won’t hear of any more trouble from us.”

“I hope not.”

Ron made eye contact with Jessica and nodded towards the door. They both rose and turned. Jessica’s eyes trailed, leaving one last glance back at Kalei with a smirk. Her body slinked out like a serpent, and Kalei’s eyes failed him, following the hypnotic movements of her hips until she disappeared through the doorway to his office. He walked over to the door and closed it, leaning his head against it and catching his breath. His heart pounded.

“Those two are going to be trouble,” he said.

CHAPTER 7

“I think we have to stop,” Ron said.

Jessica grinned at Ron and stepped ahead of him into their bungalow.

Her open palms rested on her hips as they swayed with her steps.

“I know what you’re trying to do, but I need you to listen to me, Jessica.”

Her thumbs hooked into the crocheted shorts and slid forward and back around the rim, teasing them down just far enough to reveal the tops of her ass cheeks.

“Oh, I’m listening, Sugar Ron.”

Ron felt a tingling sensation behind his forehead that cascaded down through his chest into his crotch.

“We have to think about what we’re risking, Jessica, and why we came here to begin with.”

She pushed the shorts over her bare ass cheeks but spread her legs, keeping them from falling to the floor.

“You’re worried about getting caught, but Ron, I never get caught. People only find out about my cheating if I want them to.”

“I see. And that’s how you lost your job at Starlight?”

Jessica turned her head towards him, her mouth wide open.

“Yes, I know about that. And don’t worry. I’m over it.”

“How did you find out?”

“You think Steve’s wife was going to keep that secret from me? She hates you.”

Her eyes narrowed.

“That bitch.”

“You’re missing the point. You’re crafty, Jessica, but you can still get caught. And you heard what that resort director said. If that happens, we lose the money.”

Jessica cocked an eyebrow and pulled her thighs together, letting the shorts fall to the floor. As she turned her body towards Ron, her bare labia drew his gaze, and he shivered as his voice cracked.

“Please, Jessica. We need to stop this game.”

Jessica lifted the romper up over her head and tossed it on the floor. Her eyes fucked Ron’s as she reached behind her neck to untie her bikini top.

“What if I can’t stop, Ron? What if I’m too evil to resist the taste of infidelity?”

Ron’s cock twitched, and his heart knocked at his chest bone.

She took the untied ends of her top and held them up in front of him, the cups still hiding her breasts from his view.

“What if my pussy can’t stop taking married cocks from their wives? What if it can’t stay faithful to you in these last weeks of our marriage?”

No matter what it costs me?”

Her fingertips let go of the strands, and they fell. The cups of her bikini floated down with them and revealed her breasts. Ron’s cock pressed up against his shorts, and the hair on the back of his neck stood on end.

“Jessica…”

She stepped towards him, raising a finger to his lips to stop him. Her fingers took the top button of his shirt and unbuttoned it.

“And what if you want to feel these tits against you so bad that you can’t bring yourself to stop me?”

She unbuttoned the rest of his shirt and pressed the soft warmth of her breasts into Ron’s bare chest. Her mouth hovered close to his neck, and her fiery breath electrified his skin.

“What if your cock aches so much to be in this pussy that you don’t care if it has taken other forbidden cocks? Don’t care that I risked your precious millions so my slutty pussy could have what it wanted?”

Her hands took hold of his waistband and fiddled with the button. Ron’s eyes closed as his head fell back. All his willpower melted in the heat of her seduction. She was right. His body betrayed him. It wanted her, no matter what it might cost him. Or what she had done.

“Oh my god,” he muttered.

“You mean, your goddess?”

She chuckled as she unfastened his shorts and pushed them to his ankles. Her fingers jerked his boxers down as her breasts left his chest, and the wet heat of her mouth surrounded his cock. His heartbeat thundered through his forearms, slamming into the knuckles of his clenched fists. He opened his eyes, pleading with the ceiling for

the resolve to wrench himself free from her alluring assault. Her mouth popped off the head of his hardness, and her thumb and index finger encircled it. She teased it with slow strokes up and down the shaft.

“Yesss, your cock can’t resist. And what if this mouth continued to suck other married cocks on this island? Drink their cum? And then come back to slather my unfaithful saliva all over your unsuspecting dick?”

Her salacious words and wicked laugh reverberated in Ron’s chest, and his erection twitched in her hand. She extended her tongue and licked the underside from the base up to the tip, sending shock waves from it into Ron’s abdomen that tingled in his nipples. She enclosed her lips around the head again and plunged down to the base of the shaft with the enclosure of her mouth. Her suction held Ron like a dying antelope in the jaws of a lion. Her fingernails dug into the sides of his hips, and the pain intensified the sensations of pleasure radiating from his hard cock. Ron’s head fell in surrender, and his gaze flew like a moth into the raging flames in her eyes. They consumed him. Her stare locked on him as she slid her lips up his shaft and off his pulsing head.

“Fuck me,” she said.

She rose, walked over to the bed, and bent over, propelling her ass towards him. Her back arched down, causing her pussy to push out into the open air and beckon to his throbbing member with its shimmering wetness.

“Look at it, Ron.”

His mouth watered, and he swallowed hard.

“Just imagine the cocks it has taken. That it will take.”

She swayed her hips to the left and right, drawing him into a trance.

“Come grab these hips and drive your hungry cock into its evil. Spank this ass for what it wants to do behind your back. You know you want to.”

Ron trembled from head to toe as he stepped forward. Images of Jessica kneeling in front of Rayan and Rex inundated his mind, pressing the accelerator of his arousal. He placed a hand onto her ass, and a jolt of liquid heat rushed up from his fingertips into his brain. She hissed at him.

“Yesssss, let the evil overtake you.”

His hands took hold of her and tightened their grip on her soft skin. He slid his cock into the dripping fire of her pussy, and she groaned. Her ass drove back into his hips so that she engulfed him. He inhaled as he soaked in her dark energy, and his hips flexed and drove into her. His hand left for a brief second to spank her ass before grasping back at her as though he might lose his balance.

“That’s right, Ron. Spank that ass!”

She clenched around him as she howled.

“I’m cumming on your cock with this evil pussy!”

The sides of his neck pulled tight with burning pain that shot into his skull, and sweat dripped down his forehead into his eyes. His heart thrashed inside him, and his cock exploded. He cried out.

“Oh, fuck!”

“Give me your cum!”

Her pussy squeezed his pulsating shaft, and she reached back to fondle his balls as if to milk every drop out of him. It drained from him like blood into the bite of a thirsty vampire. His energy melted away,

and his legs trembled. The heat in his chest and skull rolled over him like waves with each pound of his heart. He stumbled back and dropped to his knees, putting a hand down to steady himself.

Jessica rose, turned, and walked over to him. Her fingers ran through his wet hair and took hold of a fistful. She lifted his head as she thrust her pussy into his face. He saw his cum mixed with hers, draining out of it.

“Your essence mixed with my evil juices. Just like you. Unable to separate from it.”

Ron whimpered in agreement.

“Lick it,” she said.

She pulled his head into her, and he extended his tongue in obedience. The abrasive taste of his seed reminded him of having his mouth washed with ivory soap. Like punishment. His stomach turned, and he winced, but he continued, burying his tongue inside her dripping folds.

“So pussy-whipped.”

She snickered.

“And you’ll just have to wonder if I’m respecting your wishes or risking your precious inheritance with my wicked cunt.”

CHAPTER 8

Tiki torches burned on either side of the entrance to the large tent, and thick red tassels spread out from the bottom edge across the stone pavement around it. Jessica winced at the brick in her stomach as she approached. Smoking pot had gotten her through her last visit with Siddhi, the island therapist, but no intoxicant could quell her inner torment this time.

She paused outside the entrance, taking a deep breath.

“C’mon, Jessica. Just get it over with.”

Shaking her head at the ground, she stepped through the beaded curtains and into the incense-filled air inside. Siddhi sat in the center on a small, faded oriental rug.

“Ah, Jessica. So good to see you again.”

The warmth of her smile pried at the steel cage around Jessica’s heart.

Wipe that grin off your face, bitch, Jessica thought.

“Come. Have a seat with me.”

Jessica rolled her eyes as she stepped forward and took a seat in front of Siddhi.

“I almost didn’t come today.”

“Why is that?”

“Because I hate this shit.”

Siddhi chuckled.

“Untangling the mysteries in our souls is challenging work, but it is always worth the price we pay.”

Jessica groaned.

“So, what tortures have you concocted for me today?”

“I want to show you something.”

Siddhi reached behind her and pulled out a book.

“What is this?”

“The Canterbury Tales. By Geoffrey Chaucer.”

“Uhhh… ok.”

“Have you read them?”

“I was supposed to read them in my English Lit class back in college, but I had other priorities. Ya know? Like having fun.”

Siddhi grinned.

“Yes, I imagine those are the priorities of most college students. I want to show you something.”

She opened the book resting in Jessica’s hands and thumbed through the pages.

“Here it is. The Miller’s Tale. Read this part right here.”

Jessica sighed and let her eyes fall to the page.

“You know there’s a reason I avoided this stuff the first time someone tried to get me to read it.”

“Trust me, Jessica. It will interest you.”

Jessica’s eyes perused the words, and her eyebrows lifted.

“Wait. So, this Alison chick cheated on her husband Nicholas with this dude, John.”

“Yes, keep reading.”

After a moment of more reading, Jessica laughed.

“And they tricked the husband into believing a flood was coming just so they could fuck in his bed?”

“That’s right. Let me show you another story.”

She turned a few more pages.

“Ahh, yes. The Merchant’s Tale. Read that passage there.”

Jessica read for a few minutes. She smirked at the thought that such smut existed in classic English literature. Then her jaw dropped.

“This bitch May used her blind husband’s back to climb into a tree to fuck this Damyan? While her husband was right there?”

“That’s right. And when the god Pluto granted Januarie his sight back, he saw the betrayal, but his wife convinced him it wasn’t what it looked like. And Chaucer ended with the hint that she continued to cheat on her husband.”

Jessica shrugged and shut the book.

“Ok, so what’s your point? That I should have paid more attention in English Lit. Got it. Thanks for catching me up.”

“No, Jessica. That’s not my point. These are just two examples of a theme that occurs all over Medieval English literature. The people of that time believed women to be sexually insatiable and inclined to cheat on their husbands.”

Siddhi took the book back.

“Of course, the Church frowned upon it.”

“I’m sure they did.”

“But, Jessica, you are not as much of a freak of nature as you think you are. Modern views of women and sexuality have left you, and many women, with the idea that they are, or should be, far less sexual than men. But it wasn’t always that way. Did you think about the questions I asked you?”

“What questions?”

“The ones I asked you at the end of our last session.”

Jessica smirked.

“You know you got me totally fucked up in that session. I don’t remember anything we talked about.”

“I asked you if you thought you would cheat on your next partner. And if so, why?”

“Oh, well, that’s easy. Yes, I will probably cheat because I’m an evil bitch.”

“That’s too easy.”

“Oh, I’m sorry. What? You don’t like that answer?”

“No, Jessica, I don’t. Because it’s too easy to hate yourself. It’s hard… very hard… to learn to love yourself. Because of what you learned from your father.”

A sharp pang shot through Jessica’s chest, and her blood boiled.

“Don’t bring that son of a bitch into this! I didn’t learn shit from him!”

“Jessica…”

Tears formed in Jessica’s eyes.

“And thanks for the fucking history lesson, but in case you haven’t noticed, we’re not in the Middle Ages, Siddhi. This is the goddamned

twenty-first century where women get crucified for cheating!”

Jessica stood up and turned to exit.

Siddhi called after her as she stormed away.

“Jessica, they do, but what if they shouldn’t be? What if your truth is that you are a slut? And what if that’s ok?”

Her words stopped Jessica in her tracks. She spun around, her eyes burning through her tears, and she pointed at Siddhi.

“Quit pretending that I’m not a horrible person. I know what I am!”

Jessica’s chest inflated with the eruption of grief that Siddhi uncorked as she choked out her words.

“No one could love me! Not if they know the truth about me!”

“But what if someone could, Jessica? What if they do?”

“Who? Like Ron? Don’t give me that shit, Siddhi. Hope is a cruel joke, but I’m not fucking laughing. And I’m not falling for it. I’m not some starry-eyed innocent just waiting to have my heart broken by reality. I’m a whore, ok? And Ron doesn’t love me. He may think he does, but he doesn’t. He can’t.”

Jessica leaned forward towards Siddhi, annunciating her words as if they were blades slicing the air.

“I’m unlovable!”

She headed back for the door, her vision clouded by the swirl of tears. The back of her throat ached from the forceful pounding of her sobs against it. Siddhi’s mouth turned down, and her eyes saddened as she shook her head.

“Jessica, you learned that from your father.”

The words bounced off Jessica’s mental shield. Her teeth gritted in a fierce stance against the seeds that Siddhi tried to plant in her head.

Just before passing through the hanging beads, she stopped, looked back at Siddhi, and hissed.

“You’ll see. When I’m done with this island, you’ll see exactly what I am. And then you’ll know that no one, not even Ron Stroker, could love a cunt like me!”

She tore through the beads, stumbled out past the edge of the pavement until she fell to her knees in the sand. Her head pounded from the crying, and her chest ached. She clinched a fistful of sand and squeezed it until her palms stung, and her words whistled through her gritted teeth.

“I’m going to fuck every man on this goddamned island!”

CHAPTER 9

A figure moved from darkness into the light pouring from two halogens at the corner of a guest building. Its ghostly shadow darted across the wall of the building next door. Moonlight rained down to highlight their black hood as they continued out into the blackness of the open field. The figure stopped in the center, far from all the buildings, and an eerie blue light illuminated her face.

Huda's fingers pecked at her phone screen as she scowled into its unnatural glare. Then she held it to her ear. A deep voice with a thick Middle Eastern accent spoke through it.

"Yes, my dear. It is very late. What is it? Is something wrong?"

"Yes, Baba. Something is very wrong."

"What is it? Are you hurt?"

"Not yet, Baba. But there is a shaitan at work here at the resort. It lives inside a vile woman who sews seeds of lust and seduces married men into Zina."

"Are you sure of this?"

“Yes, Baba. I am certain of it. I can feel it in my very bones.”

“But, Huda, have you actually seen her seducing these men into an act of Zina?”

Huda whined as she raised her voice.

“Baba, no. How could I have seen it? But I know she is doing it.”

Her father released a heavy sigh through the phone.

“My dear Huda, do you remember Raghilah?”

Huda hung her head, and her voice dropped to a mumble.

“Yes, Baba.”

“Do you remember coming to me with these same accusations about her? You were certain, because you saw her always going into the home of Saafir and Deema, that she was seducing Saafir.”

“There was more than that, Baba.”

Her father cut her off.

“We brought both Raghilah and Saafir before the elders. We investigated them. They were both brought to shame by just the insinuation of guilt.”

“I know, Baba.”

Her father’s voice grew stern and louder.

“But they were not guilty, Huda. Raghilah was caring for Deema’s aging mother. She was like a daughter to them.”

“I still don’t believe…”

“Huda, my dear, you are a smart woman, and I am quite proud of you. But you are a very suspicious person, and sometimes your suspicions are just that. Nothing more.”

“But Baba…”

Huda’s whining took a sudden turn into blubbing.

“She is after Rayan!”

Her boo hoo’ing traveled across the green, but no tears fell from her eyes.

“What?”

“Yes, Baba. And you should see the way he looks at her. I am worried he will not be strong enough to resist the power of her temptations. That he may fall into Zina, Baba!”

“I see.”

“Baba, please, help me. I do not want this harlot to ensnare Rayan.”

“No, I do not want that either.”

Huda’s shoulders rose and fell with her heavy breathing. She pushed out her bottom lip and lowered her voice to a whimper.

“Please, Baba.”

“I want to believe Rayan will be strong in the face of any such temptation. He is like a son to me. But if it as you say, and this woman is after him, then I cannot have my daughter’s marriage destroyed by Zina.”

“Baba, she is a beguiling witch. She walks around the resort wearing almost nothing. Using her body as a trap to pull men into sin.”

Huda added a few more sobs for effect as she waited for her father’s response. Her eyes glared into the distance, focusing on her imagined target.

“There are challenges with this, Huda. The island where you are staying is outside the jurisdiction of the Qubth-ut-Allah. We do not have influence there.”

“But I have seen you work, Baba. I know there is nowhere on Allah’s green earth that the Qubth-ut-Allah cannot reach.”

“I wish it were so, my daughter.”

Huda raised her voice as though she hoped to wake the rest of the island.

“It is so!”

Her father snapped back at her.

“Huda, that’s enough!”

She dropped her gaze to the ground in front of her.

“Yes, Baba.”

“Listen to me. I cannot do anything based on just your… intuitions. You must have solid evidence. Do you understand?”

“I do.”

“You need witnesses. Recordings. Pictures. Video of this woman committing the crimes you are alleging. And it cannot be just pictures of her walking around in these outfits you described. The cultures of the world are not like ours. They are heathens. Such attire is acceptable to them. You will need irrefutable evidence of her in the act of Zina.”

“But how do you expect me…”

“Huda, dear, you will figure it out.”

She huffed a breath through her nostrils.

“You have your phone. You can take pictures and video with that.”

Huda’s foot swiveled as it dug into the grass as she faked sniffles.

“Ok, Baba.”

“I will talk to the elders about this matter and see how they want to handle it, provided you can produce the evidence. But in the meantime, dear Huda, try to focus on your husband. Do not neglect

your duty as a wife to serve and please him. This is your greatest defense against the Zina. Do you understand?”

She rolled her eyes but managed to sound sincere.

“Yes, I do.”

“Very good, then. I am proud of you, my daughter. Keep me informed. And may the blessings of Allah be upon you.”

“Thank you, Baba.”

She hung up the phone and stared into the darkness through stoic, dry eyes. Her thumb rubbed the glass on the phone screen, and her teeth ground together. Her chin jutted out as she whispered to the air.

“So, Jessica, it’s cat and mouse, then. And this cat will hide and wait for you to make your move.”

She lifted the phone to look at the screen, and she opened the camera app, switching it to video mode. Her eyebrows slanted inward as her eyes narrowed.

“And then, I will have you.”

CHAPTER 10

Kalei's chest tingled, and he struggled to swallow as he rubbed his wedding ring with his thumb. His fingers rested on the handle of his desk drawer. Taking a deep breath, he pulled it open and picked up the small decanter and shot glass that sat at the bottom of it.

I need this, he thought.

His hands trembled as he poured himself a shot of the whiskey and tossed it back. The burn of the alcohol singed his sinuses and rippled through his skull. The painful tension in his neck and shoulders eased. He poured another shot, got up and carried it over to a window, and pulled the shades open to let the sunlight pour into the room. In all those years as resort director, he only fell twice. Only gave in to temptation and engaged in adulterous sex with a guest just three – or no – it was four times. But there had been so many other opportunities he had resisted. Many lustful wives tried to seduce him, and he found the strength each time to resist. To hold on to fidelity. But none of them affected him like this woman. This Jessica Stroker. Was she a

witch? A sorceress? After her last visit with her husband, Ron, her seductive energy remained on Kalei. In him. Coursing through his veins, through the synapses of his brain, like poison. He whispered as he stared out the window.

“And she’ll be here any minute.”

He threw back the second shot.

“I hope you’re going to share.”

The silky voice came from behind him, startling him. He turned his head, and his eyes widened. Jessica Stroker stood in his office with a grin and cocked eyebrow. A bright green sundress hugged her voluptuous curves, plunging at the neckline to reveal abundant cleavage, and stopping high on her thighs, just below where he imagined her crotch to be. Over her shoulder, she held a handful of hangers carrying clothes.

“Thanks, Mr. Director, for agreeing to see me alone. I just wanted a chance to talk to you some about these accusations. I brought some outfits you’ve heard about so you could see them for yourself. Maybe it’ll help you decide if I should stop wearing them on your island.”

She chuckled. Kalei stood paralyzed, his eyes traveling up and down her serpentine frame.

“You might want to close those shades, Mr. Director.”

He shook from his trance and pulled the chord, closing it. She turned and pulled the shades closed on the French doors leading into his office.

“There. Now we have perfect privacy. So, we can talk.”

She tossed the clothes onto Kalei’s desk, winked, and bit her bottom lip. Then she lifted the sundress over her head, revealing her naked

body. A hot stake pierced Kalei's chest. Her buxom breasts hovered above a toned abdomen, and her waxed labia peeked out from between smooth, muscular thighs. A rich caramel color spread across every inch of her skin, barely interrupted by the faintest of tan lines. He stammered.

"Wha.. what are you doing?"

She reached for one of her bikinis lying on his desk and lifted it.

"I'm trying on my outfits for you, silly."

"But you're naked."

"Yes, well, a necessary evil if I'm going to show you these. You can close your eyes if you don't want to see."

A wry grin spread across her mouth as her eyes crawled down his body towards his crotch.

"Or keep them open if you do."

Kalei's cock pressed up against his pants as if responding to the call of her hungry stare. His jaw tensed, and his clammy fists clenched.

"This is the little red number I wore on the beach the first day."

She turned and bent over, her ass facing Kalei and her pussy peeking out at him. The pressure of his inflating shaft pulsed as his member twitched inside his boxer briefs. She stepped into the thin stringed loops and pulled them up around the taut curves of her calves. The red strands caressed her velvety hamstrings before nestling like floss in between the lustrous bubbles of her ass cheeks. Turning back towards him, she revealed the tiny red patch just covering her labia, hinting at their contours, and baring a long stretch of her firm, bronzed skin leading up to her navel. Her eyes burned through him as she reached for the top and stayed locked on him as she put it on. It also featured

tiny patches that just covered her nipples and little else of her ample breasts. She placed her hands on her hips.

“So? What do you think?”

Kalei’s voice cracked as he stumbled over his words, his eyes caught in a mesmerized stupor, glued to her body.

“I, um… Well, it’s very revealing.”

Jessica did a slow pirouette, giving him a full 360-degree view of her statuesque physique. Her voice grew husky.

“Hmm, so you think perhaps I’m being naughty by going around in public wearing an outfit so revealing?”

She stepped towards the edge of the desk, making her way around to Kalei’s side.

“Well, Mrs. Stroker, I…”

“I mean, walking around the resort wearing this, showing everyone so much of my tits and my ass. And a nice hint of my pussy lips. That seems like something a bad girl would do, don’t you think?”

The veins in Kalei’s neck pulled at his jaw, and he backed towards the window. Her steps slithered towards him, and she lifted her hands to cup the sides of her breasts and push them together.

“I imagine the married men on this island have struggled to keep their eyes off these tits, don’t you think? Maybe imagined their cocks nestled in between them.”

Kalei surrendered to the trap of her hands and her words, letting his gaze fall to rest on the soft curves of her cleavage. He took another step back, and his shoulder blades landed on the wall behind him. His breaths quickened, and his chest fluttered with a light stinging sensation.

“Maybe you’d like to feel your cock between them, Mr. Director.”

She slipped up to him and dropped to her knees, her eyes locked into his. He trembled as she unfastened his belt and unzipped his pants, and his voice whimpered.

“I shouldn’t do this.”

Her fingers took hold of the hem of his boxers, and her fingernails tickled the skin underneath.

“That’s right. You shouldn’t. But you can’t resist your need to feel them. To feel this mouth around your cock. No one can.”

She pulled the boxers down, and the air rushed in around the hungry skin of his erection.

“Oh my, Mr. Director. You have a very nice cock.”

His heart pounded as he pushed his head back into the wall and tightened his ass cheeks. The warmth of her lips grazing the head of his dick sent ripples of electricity up through his abdomen. It spread into the outside edges of his chest and armpits. He closed his eyes as she slid the hot, wet lasso of her lips down around his shaft, engulfing it. His body shook.

“Oh, god!”

Her hand planted into the crease between his stomach and thigh, and she pushed him back into the wall. With her other hand, she encircled the base of his shaft and dug into him so that his erection tightened and swelled. She ambushed the aching granite of his cock with voodoo of her mouth, slathering it with her saliva as her hand and mouth moved up and down his shaft, driving down into the base, gripping him, and then pulling up to the rim of his swollen head. Her head bobbed like a piston, milking him at full throttle towards the edge

of orgasm. And betrayal. He winced as his thumb again grazed his wedding ring in his clasped hand. Shaking his head, he cried.

“I’m sorry. I couldn’t help it.”

Then he groaned and convulsed as his climax roared forth. She hummed with delight, and the vibrations coaxed the full volume of his load into her. Reaching around him and grabbing his ass, she pulled at him and gored his pelvic bone with her lips. They pressed into him like those of a hungry lion, drinking every drop of his seed. He melted into the wall, and a tear ran down his cheek. He whispered.

“What have I done?”

The tip of his retreating cock slid off her tongue, and she stood. Her mouth hovered near his ear, and her hot breath blew into it as she hissed.

“Mmm, I love the taste of infidelity.”

He lay paralyzed against the wall, his strength drained from him. She turned and walked back around the table, grabbing her clothes.

“I’m so glad you approve of my outfits and don’t believe all those horrible accusations about me, Mr. Director.”

He opened an eye and furrowed his eyebrows. Jessica walked over to a small bookcase on his office's sidewall and reached for the top shelf. A phone leaned up against a row of books, and the camera pointed straight at Kalei. She picked it up and looked at it.

“Yep, looks like I got everything.”

Kalei’s heart thudded against the inside of his chest, and his head grew woozy. His mouth fell open.

“Wait, what is that?”

“Just a little insurance. Don’t worry, Kalei. No one will ever see this video. As long as you leave me alone and quit entertaining the hateful bitches on the island who have nothing better to do than be jealous.”

She winked and waved at him as she slipped out the door. He looked up at the ceiling.

“Oh, my god. What have I done?”

CHAPTER II

“Ron, darling, I think I’m going to need your help with something.”

Jessica held the plush towel around her wet head and massaged her hair around in it. Ron squinted into the morning light that invaded their room, his head still resting on his pillow, as Jessica twisted the towel into a turban on top of her head. She walked over to the bed and leaned over him, placing her hands on either side of his head. Her bare breasts hung in his line of sight.

“Could you help me?”

He lifted his hands to his eyes and rubbed them.

“Sure. I mean, I guess. What do you need help with?”

“Well, I’ve just been thinking about our situation. What we’re trying to do. If we’re going to make it on this island for the whole month, we’re going to have to repair some bridges we’ve burned.”

He smirked and narrowed his eyebrows.

“Ok, that I’ve burned.”

“Thank you,” he said.

Jessica hopped over him and flopped down onto the bed next to him. She put her leg over his comforter-covered thighs and propped her head on her elbow. Her eyes softened as her fingers rested on his chest.

“I think Huda hates me.”

“You think?”

“And Jennifer.”

“Well, she isn’t a fan.”

“I didn’t tell you what happened. She assaulted me on the beach. That’s why I had that fat lip.”

Ron sat up and scooted back into a sitting position.

“Oh my god, Jessica. Are you serious?”

“Yeah.”

“Ok, I know you’re parading around the island in your butt floss and making flirty eyes with the men, but that’s no reason to… I need to talk to Rex.”

Jessica slid up to sit next to Ron and nuzzled her head into his shoulder.

“It’s ok, babe. I can handle Jennifer.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yeah. I think I know how to mend that situation. Huda, on the other hand…”

Ron huffed out an exasperated laugh.

“Mother Superior would love to take her ruler to you. How do you plan to fix that situation?”

“Well, you can’t just walk right up to a bear and give it a hug.”

“Really? Then why do they call it a ‘bear hug’?”

Ron grinned as Jessica laughed.

“Proud of yourself for that one?”

“I kinda am,” he said.

“It was clever.”

“Thank you.”

“But no, you can’t hug a bear and live to tell about it. So, you have to be more crafty about putting it to sleep.”

“Mmm-hmm. And what exactly do you have in mind?”

Jessica grinned and looked into his eyes.

“Well…”

CHAPTER 12

“I appreciate you meeting me for breakfast, Brad.”

“Sure thing, Ron.”

The two men sat under a large canopy to shelter themselves from the rare showers that pelted the island from large, grey clouds. The static sound of droplets assaulting the patio pavement enveloped them in a cocoon.

“How are you and Alice doing?”

Brad smiled and shrugged.

“We’re actually doing well. I um…”

His fingers played with the napkin next to his plate.

“I imagine you heard about what happened between me and…”

Ron smiled.

“My wife? Yes. She told me. And don’t worry about it. I encouraged you, remember?”

“Yeah, I do. So, I kinda took a page from you and Jessica’s playbook. I just thought about how you were honest with each other about her

activities.”

Ron swallowed hard.

Not really, he thought.

“And I just couldn’t deal with my nagging conscience every time I looked at my wife. So, I told her.”

Ron’s eyes widened.

“You told her?”

Brad glanced up from his napkin and nodded. Ron leaned back in his seat. His breathing stopped, and his hands gripped the chair. A gust of wind blew across the patio, sending a mist into their dry space. It made Ron question if the moisture on his forehead came from the rain or a cold sweat emerging on his skin.

“What did she say?”

“Well, she was angry for a day. Didn’t talk to me. But, after thinking about it, she came back and said she would have done the same thing if she had a pecker.”

Ron gasped, and the tension in his body loosened.

“Then she wanted to know details. She’s very taken with your wife. Sometimes, I think she might be bisexual, but she would never admit that. She thinks gay people are, well, you know.”

Ron’s eyes stared off into space, but he huffed out a brief chuckle.

“Yeah, I know.”

“I’m glad we met. I needed to get that off my chest. But don’t worry. Alice said she wouldn’t tell anyone.”

Thank God, Ron thought.

“Was there anything you wanted to talk about?”

Ron shook himself from his stupor and sat up.

“Yeah, actually there is.”

He rubbed the back of his neck and blinked at his plate.

“I’m sure it won’t surprise you to hear that Jessica continues to get into trouble.”

Brad grinned.

“No, it wouldn’t. What else did she do?”

“She messed with the wrong couple.”

Brad’s lips parted as he lifted his hand to his mouth.

“Not the Muslims.”

“She knows how to play with fire.”

“She really does. Ron, you both might be in danger. I heard the wife comes from a radical extremist group within their religion. The kind you hear about on the news.”

He raised his eyebrows and stared at Ron.

“You know the kind?”

“Yeah, I do. And I’m not surprised.”

“So, what are you going to do?”

“Well, that’s what I wanted to talk to you about.”

Ron leaned forward, hunching over his plate, and folded his hands above it. His forehead rested against his thumbs, and he took a deep breath before looking up at Brad.

“I need to get a message to Rayan, the husband. And I need you to help me.”

CHAPTER 13

“Mind if I join ya?”

The voice startled Rayan. He opened his eyes and looked up into a silhouette of sunlight surrounding a figure. Was it the spirit of Muhammad in heaven coming to him in a vision? But the voice sounded nothing like he expected. As the figure approached, it eclipsed the sunlight, and the stranger’s face came into view. Its wrinkled skin gathered in a smile from underneath a sun hat, and messy, gray hair fell in curls around its ears. A tropical shirt with colorful shapes of palm trees opened wide at the neck and parted down between his chest, showing a dark tan decorated with silver coils of thick hair. Rayan’s wincing eased, and he opened his eyes to look on a man. He knew this man.

“Oh, hello.”

“Hello, Rayan. Sorry if I’m interrupting.”

“No, not interrupting. I was just finishing my morning prayers.”

“Where’s your wife? Don’t you two usually do this together?”

Slight nausea pulsed in Rayan's stomach, and his cheeks tightened.

"She wanted to do her morning prayers alone today."

The familiar face gritted his teeth through open lips. Rayan hung his head.

"Huda is not happy with me right now."

"I'm sorry. Marriage can be tough sometimes. Do you wanna talk about it?"

Rayan's stomach tightened. His head still down, he peeked up at the Bohemian. Perhaps he could understand. Rayan felt alone on the island with his secret thoughts. Shameful thoughts. But what if the man would judge him? Or worse, what if he would expose him? Rayan was too desperate not to take the chance. The secrets ate him from the inside. As though losing an arm-wrestling match with himself, he gasped and closed his eyes.

"Yes. I don't want to talk about it. But I think I need to."

The man took a seat in the sand beside him and took his hat off, laying it in front of him. His hands messed his hair, releasing the impression of the hat from his thick, grey curls.

"So, my man, what's your wife upset about? Oh, and it's Brad, by the way."

He extended a hand, and Rayan took it.

"Hi, Brad. Nice to meet you."

Rayan bit his lip and narrowed his eyes to study Brad, sizing him up one last time, deciding whether to trust him.

Well, here it goes, I guess, he thought.

"There's a particular woman on the island. A beautiful woman. She walks around the resort wearing very tiny bathing suits."

Brad smiled.

“You mean Jessica.”

Rayan’s chest heaved out a sigh, and his shoulders fell.

“Yes, Jessica.”

“Hard to keep your eyes off of her, isn’t it?”

Rayan’s eyes lit up, and he twisted towards Brad, holding out his hands. His voice lilted.

“Yes! It is impossible. And I am like a moth flying towards a flame that will consume me.”

“I get it. She has the same effect on me. And… “

Brad looked down and fingered the sand next to him.

“I flew into the flame. I got burned, Rayan.”

Rayan’s mouth dropped open.

“Wait. Do you mean you… “

Brad’s eyes stayed locked, staring at the sand, and he nodded.

“Oh, man.”

A lump formed in Rayan’s throat as he contemplated his next question. His voice lowered to almost a whisper, and he choked on the words.

“Wha… what was it like?”

Brad continued to stare, but his eyebrows raised, and his lips pursed to one side.

“It was the hottest, most amazing sex I’ve ever had.”

The words pierced Rayan, sending heat through his chest. He knew it. If he succumbed to this temptation, he would experience something unforgettable. He gritted his teeth and clenched his fists.

“I’m sorry, Brad. Thank you for telling me this. But I cannot give in to the temptation. I must not. In my culture, it is a heinous sin to betray one’s spouse.”

“Well, that’s what I’m here to talk to you about. I think I can help you with that. You’re going to have to do something, though, that you may not want to do.”

“I will do anything. Anything to be free from this temptation.”

Brad tilted his head to one side before looking up at Rayan.

“You’re going to have to meet Jessica. Face to face. Alone.”

Rayan’s head shrunk back on his shoulders, and his heart sunk like a brick in his chest.

“How can this help me? This is like walking right into the fire.”

“I know that’s what it sounds like. But hear me out. I had a chat with Jessica’s husband, Ron.”

Rayan folded his arms tight against his chest.

“Ok.”

“Here’s what he told me.”

CHAPTER 14

“Huda! Oh my god, you will not believe what I just found!”

Jennifer’s voice shook Huda from a deep trance, her knees resting on her prayer mat in the middle of the green. Perhaps her display of righteousness might prick the consciences of the heathen on the island who witnessed her. Her eyes narrowed on Jennifer as she ran over to her. Jennifer’s two-piece swimsuits revealed too much, inappropriate for a married woman to wear. American women needed the light of truth. At least, with Jennifer, Huda thought it reasonable to hope she could influence her and guide her towards a more righteous path. Besides, Jennifer held one thing in common with Huda. They both despised the vile harpie, Jessica Stroker.

“Look at this!”

Jennifer fell to her knees next to Huda and handed her a piece of paper. Huda took it and unfolded it. Her eyes widened as they studied the words scribbled on the paper. Then she read them aloud, her voice growling.

“R– Meet me tonight. On the beach. At the spot where we first met. Eleven thirty P.M. After H falls asleep. –J”

Huda’s eye twitched, and her forehead wrinkled as she turned to look at Jennifer. She crushed the paper and held it up in her shaking fist.

“Where did you find this?”

“On the ground near your room. I was coming this morning to see you, and I spotted it.”

Huda’s eyes broke away from Jennifer’s.

“This is my chance.”

“You chance?” Jennifer asked.

Huda nodded.

“Yes. My chance to get the evidence I need. So my father will believe me.”

Jennifer cocked an eyebrow.

“Why do you want your father to know about this?”

Huda looked at Jennifer with a steely glare.

“Because my father is a high-ranking member of the Qubth-ut-Allah. And they deal harshly with an adulterous woman.”

Jennifer grinned.

“How can I help you?”

CHAPTER 15

“You’re tearing up that bag today, Sugar Ron. Does it owe you money?”

Rex laughed as his heavy hand slapped Ron on the back. Ron looked at Rex’s reflection in the mirror. His bare chest rippled with the contractions of powerful muscles swollen from exertion. His tan skin shimmered under the gym lights, and tiny shadows outlined the ridges of each bump and crevice in his carved abdomen. Everything about Rex reminded Ron of his smallness, age, and weakness, yet Rex seemed to like Ron. Ron hoped his new friendship was real and not part of a game to get to Jessica.

“Yeah, I’ve got a lot on my mind.”

“Well, whatever it is, it’s working. With that kind of motivation, you’ll get jacked in no time.”

He put his hands out towards Ron’s reflection.

“Not that you’re not already fit, Sugar Ron. I’m just saying you should harness the thoughts. Use them.”

Ron smirked.

“It’s ok, Rex. I know what I am. You don’t have to patronize my fragile ego.”

“Whoa, buddy. What’s this stinkin’ thinkin’ we got going on here? Let’s rip that out and put some good stuff in!”

Rex grabbed Ron’s shoulders and rubbed them.

“You’re a tiger. Ya here, me? A ferocious animal. Nobody messes with Sugar Ron.”

Ron winced as he forced a smile. Rex’s well-intentioned pep talk fell on flat ears.

“Can I ask you something, Rex?”

“Sure, buddy, ask away.”

“Why are you doing this with me? Like, why are we friends?”

Rex made a face like someone shoved a lemon wedge in his mouth.

“What kind of question is that?”

“No, I’m serious. You’re this handsome, muscular young guy. I’m a much less attractive, wiry older guy. What made you want to hang out with me?”

“I don’t know. You just seemed like a cool guy. Didn’t put much thought into it.”

Ron frowned and nodded.

“Man, you think too much. Gonna make yourself crazy with those thoughts, Sugar Ron. You need to pump some iron. Come over here and get on this bench.”

Ron rolled his eyes.

“Trust me, bro. It’ll make you feel better.”

Ron's feet trudged over to the bench, and he dropped like a rock, sitting on the bench. He took a deep breath and leaned back, sliding himself under the bar. Rex got behind him to spot, his crotch very close to Ron's head. As Ron reached up to wrap his fingers around the bar, he imagined Rex to have an enormous cock, just like his muscles. Jessica had imagined it, too. He just knew it.

"Don't worry about the weight. I'll help you if it gets too hard," Rex said.

Too hard. Like the hardness of his cock that Jessica imagined between her thighs? Ron felt a twitch in his shorts.

Oh no, I gotta think about something else, he thought.

He focused on the bar, gripped it, and pushed it up off the stand.

"That's it, Sugar Ron. Get after it."

The bar lowered, and Ron's chest muscles screamed with pain as he struggled to hold the weight.

"I can't do it!"

"Yes, you can, Sugar Ron. Own that bar!"

Ron glared at the ceiling. The veins in his forehead bulged as if ready to burst, and his neck tightened. He pushed with all his might at the bar, and it lifted.

"That's it, Sugar Ron. You got this!"

His whole body shook the bench as he groaned in a high pitch, and the bar continued to rise.

"Keep pushing!"

Pushing. Like Rex pushing his hard cock deep into Jessica's pussy? Ron imagined the muscles in Rex's ass cheeks flexing as he pounded her. Until his arms popped into a straight position, the bar held aloft.

“You did it, Sugar Ron. Now, c’mon. You’ve got another one in you. I know it. Let’s do it again!”

Again. Like Jessica begging Rex to fuck her again. His powerful thighs, so close to Ron’s head now, tightening as he undulated his hips to gore her wet hole again and again. Ron’s hands burned from his tenacious grip of the bar as it lowered and raised one more time. His entire body tingled under the potent mixture of strain and imagination. The bar descended again towards his chest. Like Jessica’s ass lowering onto his chest to put her unfaithful pussy in his face. To force him to taste her infidelity. As Ron shoved at the bar to lift the vision of her off him, he imagined her raised hips above his head being penetrated by Rex. His balls dangling over Ron’s head, slapping into his wife.

“Umm, Sugar Ron?”

The bar clanked against the stands behind the bench, and Ron’s arms quivered as they lowered back towards his body.

“You got something going on there.”

Ron’s awareness of his body returned, and he felt a tight pull in his shorts pressing up against his cock.

Oh no, he thought.

He looked down to see a tent in his shorts and lurched up, hunching over it to hide himself.

“Don’t get me wrong, Sugar Ron. I get into my workouts. But you took it to a whole different level. You just manhandled that bar like it was your bitch.”

Rex’s words continued to stoke the imagery pulverizing Ron’s mind. He saw a fistful of Jessica’s hair in Rex’s hand as he rode her. She

moaned in submission to him. And in betrayal of Ron.

“Can I ask you something, man?” Ron asked.

“Sure, buddy.”

“And I realize this may appear an odd question, but would you fuck my wife?”

“Whoa! That is an odd question.”

“Yeah, I know. But seriously. Would you?”

“Ummm…”

“I promise I won’t be mad, whatever your answer. Tell me truthfully.”

Rex scowled and reached across his chest to rub his opposite shoulder.

“I mean, ya know, I’m married. And you’re married.”

His eyes fell to the floor, and he shrugged.

“But I guess if we weren’t married and Jessica was available for that, then yeah, I’d have sex with her. I mean, you know she’s hot, right? And the way she walks around, so confident, just flaunting her body. It’s sexy. You get that, don’t you?”

Rex’s eyes peeked up at Ron, whose chest tightened.

“Yeah, man. I get it.”

“But we’re cool, right? You’re not mad?”

Ron’s stomach sunk with a heaviness, but he forced a smile.

“No, I’m not, Rex. We’re cool.”

CHAPTER 16

The stars sparkled like diamonds in the dark blue night sky, and the tides rolled in, whispering with splashes of water on the sand. They sank in and sizzled with each wave, and a warm breeze rolled in from the water, brushing across Rayan's skin. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath, trying to slow his fast-beating heart. He scratched the dark stubble on his cheek and thought about his wife that he left slumbering in their bed. His throat thickened, and his face warmed. She would have been so angry with him if she had known where he was. What he was doing. And Allah. Allah indeed looked down on him with displeasure. He spoke into the air, looking up at the sky.

"But I'm putting a stop to it tonight. I promise."

He needed to silence the thoughts that vexed him since he arrived on this island. Thoughts of the vixen, Jessica Stroker. Rayan winced as his crotch pulsed in defiance.

In the brush behind him, a rustling sound startled him. He jerked his head around to look in the noise's direction. Tall palms reached up

against the sky, painting it with dark silhouettes of sharp-tipped leaves, spreading out like fingers over his head. The moonlight pierced through their darkness only in spots, highlighting the edges of a few of their trunks.

And then a figure emerged.

It was her. And she spoke.

“I’m glad to see you, Rayan. I thought you might not come.”

Rayan smiled, and his lips parted to speak, but words failed him. Jessica stepped out into the light of the moon and stars, and it bathed her curvaceous form, illuminating its soft and voluptuous features. She wore one of her bikinis under a sheer white kimono that rippled in the breeze against her body.

The devil dressed as an angel, Rayan thought.

The skin on the back of his neck tingled. His fingers ached to touch her bare skin, just beneath the translucent white fabric. His breastbone ached from the pounding underneath it, and his legs turned to jelly as she approached him. Her feet crept across the wet sand like a predator’s approaching its prey, and her sultry eyes swam with a dark elixir that reflected the moonlight. She reached out with her hand, floating her fingers through the air until they came to rest on his chest.

“Thank you for coming to talk to me,” she whispered.

Her fingertips walked up his chest to the collar of his shirt and played with it.

“I admit, I wanted tonight to be a night of decadent sex with you, Rayan. I’ve dreamt of undressing you, licking and sucking on every part of you. Taking your hard cock in my mouth. And my pussy.”

Her provocative words shocked him like tiny lighting bolts, stirring his senses and causing his chest to tighten.

“Jessica, I…”

She put a fingertip on his mouth, silencing him. Her eyes fell to the bare skin of his neck, causing it to tingle under her gaze.

“But I’ve thought about it, and I’ve realized that what you and Huda have is very special. It would be wrong of me to have sex with you.”

Rayan’s eyes widened, and his head shifted back on his shoulders as he stuttered.

“Oh… Well, I appreciate you recognizing that.”

“Trust me, Rayan, it was a hard decision for me. You’re a very sexy man.”

Rayan’s face grew warm, and he pulled his arms into his side as he laughed.

“Thank you, Mrs. Jessica. That is very kind.”

“I’m not kind. I know a good lover when I see one. Huda is lucky to have you.”

He shrugged his shoulders, looking to the side and chuckling.

“You are lucky to have her, too. She seems to be a wonderful woman. Stern. But a good person. I respect that.”

Rayan nodded, and he fought to suppress the sadness stirring inside him over Jessica’s decision. Part of him wanted her to seduce him. He thanked Allah for the grace extended to him, sparing him of the temptation he might have failed to resist.

“You are a good person, too, Mrs. Jessica. May the blessings of Allah be on you for your righteous choice tonight.”

She winked at him.

“Thanks, Rayan. Well, I better be getting back to my husband. And you should get to bed, too. Don’t want your beloved to wake up wondering where you are.”

Rayan swallowed hard as she turned and showed him the bare cheeks of her ass through the sheer kimono. The thin string of her bikini bottom nestled between the soft bubbles of tan flesh.

I wish Huda would wear something like that for me, he thought. But our beliefs do not allow it.

Jessica disappeared into the shadows of the palms. Rayan’s eyes stayed on the last spot where the moonlight kissed her skin, and the stiffness of his cock lessened as his sadness bubbled up to the surface. He thought of Brad’s words.

“It was the hottest, most amazing sex I’ve ever had.”

He couldn’t describe sex with Huda that way. Far from it. She did it out of marital duty to him, but he knew she didn’t like it. Jessica seemed to love it. And to want it from him. He took a deep breath, shaking his head, and whispered to himself.

“Go to bed, Rayan.”

His feet trudged through the sand, and his arms hung like weights from his shoulders. The darkness of the palm trees eclipsed the sparkle of the night sky as he passed under them and headed back towards his room. And his bed. And his stern wife.

CHAPTER 17

From the darkness of the shadows, Huda watched through the trees as her husband disappeared. Her legs ached from crouching, and her body pulled towards the ground like an anvil. She collapsed into a sitting position and picked up her phone. Her thumb rubbed across the screen as she scowled. Swiping back to the gallery of videos and photos, she replayed the recording she captured of the meeting between Jessica and Rayan.

“Ugh. This is Raghibah all over again.”

She groaned, tossed the phone onto the sand, and put her head in her hands.

“Father is going to tell me he told me so.”

Her heart shrunk inside her chest, and her stomach clenched with pangs of nausea.

Could she be wrong? Could she have misjudged Jessica? The woman's outfits were heinous, but was there some trace of good in her after all? She thought of all that she had said about Jessica behind

her back. To the resort director. To her new friend, Jennifer. Jessica deserved some of it, but would Huda have to take some of it back now?

She thought of Rayan getting back to their bedroom and finding her gone.

“Oh, shit!”

Huda grabbed her phone and jumped up.

I have to beat him back, she thought.

She tore through the trees, trying her best not to trip, until she paused at the edge leading out onto the green. Her eyes darted around.

“Where is he?”

Her eyebrows narrowed as she dashed out across the green for the path she had used so many times in her moving about unseen, spying on Jessica, or sneaking out to talk to Jennifer. She knew it like the back of her hand, and soon she reached her room and slipped back into bed. She fought to breathe and slow her pounding heart, waiting for Rayan to return. As she clutched her pillow, she revisited the events of the evening. A sour taste oozed into her mouth as her throat burned. Jessica may have abstained from Zina with her husband, but her claws still sunk into him before her eyes. Rayan giggled like a schoolboy, putty in her hands.

He wants her. I know it, she thought.

Her eyes narrowed, glaring into the dark, and her teeth ground together. She imagined holding a knife, approaching Rayan in his sleep, and castrating him. That would teach him a lesson.

Her heart skipped at the sound of the doorknob turning. Saliva pooled in her mouth, and she swallowed as she focused on the sucking

sound of weather stripping separating from the door frame.

Idiot. He thinks he has fooled me. Like I don't know he's been out. Or where he's been, she thought.

She pretended to wake up, making her voice sound sleepy.

"Rayan?"

A grin crept across her face in the dark as she imagined his panic.

"Yes, dear."

"Is that you?"

"Yes. I'm sorry to wake you."

"What are you doing? What time is it?"

"It is late. Go back to sleep."

She reached over for the bedside lamp and turned it on, fake wincing to appear as though the light hurt her eyes. Rayan stood still just inside the door, his eyes downcast. She raised her voice, careful to keep the sound of slumber.

"Where have you been?"

He stuttered, and his eyes widened as he held his hands out to her.

"I just couldn't sleep. I needed to go for a walk to think."

"By yourself?"

She scowled at him, and he lowered his hands.

"Yes, dear. I needed time to pray and get some fresh air."

Her eyes seethed, unblinking, as they moved up and down his body, and her lips pursed.

"You should be in bed."

"Yes, dear."

She reached back for the lamp and turned it off. And smiled with narrowed eyebrows.

I'll continue this guilt trip in the morning.

CHAPTER 18

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” Jennifer said.

She stood in the doorway of her bungalow, one towel wrapped around her body and another around her head, giving Jessica a death stare and planting a hand on the frame of the door.

“What the hell do you want?”

Jessica folded her hands at her crotch and held her arms in tight to her body. It pressed her massive tits together, so they spilled out of her ridiculous excuse for a bikini.

“Well, I know our men are at the gym together again. I figured you would be alone, too.”

“And that you’re the last person I’d want to see. Did you figure that part?”

“I did. And you’re right, Jennifer. Ok? I came to the island with the wrong wardrobe. That’s actually why I’m here. I wanted to talk to you about it.”

Jennifer pursed her lips before turning to walk back into her room, leaving the door open and talking back over her shoulder.

“I heard about your little rendezvous last night with Rayan.”

“You heard about that? But how?”

Jennifer rolled her eyes.

“Oh, I’m sorry, did you think you were good at covering your tracks? Please, Jessica. I have eyes all over this island.”

Jennifer turned back towards the door as she dried her hair between the towel. Jessica held a hand up to her chest, and one of her feet turned in towards the other. Jennifer’s voice scraped at Jessica, like raking claws into a leather couch.

“It sounds like you actually made a choice not to wreck someone’s marriage. I bet that was hard for you.”

Jessica lowered her head and stared at the floor.

“Don’t act so ashamed, Jessica. You don’t fool me. You’ve got some reason for this sudden display of repentance.”

Jessica brushed the mat at the threshold of the doorway with her foot.

“You’re right. I do.”

Her eyes crept up from the floor to look at Jennifer.

“May I come in?”

Jennifer scowled.

“Whatever.”

She stepped into the bathroom and picked up a brush, ignoring Jessica’s stepping into the room and shutting the door behind her. The brush glided through Jennifer’s long, silky hair as her fist clenched it near the roots.

“Ron and I are having trouble. He doesn’t like the bikinis in my wardrobe, either. At least, not when I wear them in public.”

“Well, duh.”

“I don’t want to lose him, Jennifer. He means so much to me.”

“So, I know you want something. Spit it out.”

“Well, I figured you, more than anyone else, would like to see me make some changes to my wardrobe while I’m here on the island.”

“I’m just the one talking to you about it, Jessica. Trust me. Several women on the island feel the same.”

Jennifer set the brush down on the vanity and turned to face Jessica. She unfastened the hold of the towel around her breasts and let it fall to the ground. Jessica’s eyes widened.

“Jessica, you’re not the only one on the island with a body. I just choose to keep it for my husband rather than walk around flaunting it like a tramp.”

Jessica stuttered.

“I, um, came here because…”

Jennifer laughed.

“Not used to someone giving you a dose of your own medicine?”

“I came here because I have a problem. All the outfits I brought are…”

“Inappropriate? Slutty? Why am I not surprised?”

Jessica swallowed, focusing on the ground.

“I can’t get anything here before the end of the retreat. I was wondering if you might loan me some clothes.”

Jennifer’s mouth drop open.

“Wow. You’ve got a lot of nerve. You know that?”

She pressed her fingers into Jessica's shoulder, pushing her aside as she walked through the bathroom doorway back into the bedroom. Her stomach burned at the presence of this bitch in her room with her. Who did she think she was, coming here to ask for help? And borrow clothes? Still, Jennifer wanted her to cover up in the common areas. She walked over to the bed, bent over, and pulled her suitcase out from underneath the bed-frame. Throwing it on top of the comforter, she unzipped it and opened it.

"None of this stuff is going to fit you with those bloated udders of yours."

"But it will still cover me up better than anything I brought."

"That's pathetic. You realize that, right?"

"Perhaps it will make you happy that they don't fit and feel uncomfortable. Think of it as my punishment."

"You deserve much worse, but yes, that will make me happy."

Jennifer dug a couple of bathing suits and shorts out of her suitcase and threw them at Jessica, who caught them.

"There. I hope they're exceedingly uncomfortable. Now, get out of here."

"Thank you, Jennifer."

"Oh, stop. Please. You're going to make me throw up."

Jessica turned and headed for the door.

"I'll give them back before it's time to leave."

"No, you won't. I won't want them after your filthy body has been in them. Just wear them and spare us your lack of class."

The door shut behind Jessica, and Jennifer massaged her jaw before shaking her head.

“Unbelievable.”

CHAPTER 19

Ron awoke from a deep sleep. Images from his dreams still lingered in his mind's eye. Images of Jessica bent over the edge of their bed. With Rex behind her, grabbing her hips as he thrust himself into her. Ron's cock pulsed against the sheets, holding it up like a tent. He looked around the room.

"Jessica?"

The waves crashed against the cedar pillars underneath the bungalow, and the seagulls howled as they flew over the beach nearby. In the room, silence enveloped him, drawing attention to the thumping sound of his beating heart. His hand slid across his hip bone to his throbbing member. Jessica's recent compliance with his wishes surprised him, while a part of him suspected her of insincerity and pretense. Her recent history of violating his trust loomed large in his mind. And stirred his libido.

What if she was lying to his face? Pretending to acquiesce to his request to stop, but secretly sneaking around behind his back,

continuing her games of seduction and deception? His cock jumped, and the tip left a small streak of moisture on the sheet. His fingers encircled his warm shaft, and the sensation of their touch joined forces with his provocative thoughts to intensify the electricity flowing in his body.

Where was she? What if she was somewhere, lying on her back, legs spread open, with Rex's tongue buried deep in her pussy? He imagined the tip of Rex's tongue parting her labia, tracing the edges of it, moving up to the hard crest of her clitoris. The sound of Jessica's moans filled Ron's mind. She knew what Rex's friendship meant to Ron. How evil would it be of her to disregard those feelings and seduce him? What if she even chose Rex, not just because of his astonishing good looks, but because he meant something to Ron? What if she wanted to stab Ron in the heart again?

His mouth fell open, and he gasped furious breaths through his lips. The inside of his index finger caressed the palpitating vein running up the underside of his aching member, and bolts of pleasure darted from his crotch up into his stomach and chest, causing his pectoral muscles to quiver and his armpits to tingle.

Like fast-forwarding through a recording, Ron skipped to another vision. Jessica's mouth wrapped around Rayan's cock and slid down to the base of his shaft. Her eyes looked up at him as she drooled on his dark skin and hummed with pleasure. Rayan's head fell back, and his eyes closed to hide the sadness and shame of his failure to resist. He stood broken, captured. Another victim of her witchcraft. Ron peered into Jessica's thoughts and imagined her pussy tingling at the thought of Huda, fooled and betrayed. Jessica's hand slipped around

Rayan's waist and pulled at him, and she moaned around his cock through her closed lips.

Ron's strokes quickened, and his grip on his cock tightened. His back arched, and his legs spread as waves of pleasure rolled over him, each one more powerful than the last. He broke the silence with a gasp.

"Oh, god!"

In his imagination, he stepped outside himself and looked at his convulsing body. So pitiful to jack off alone while his wife might be somewhere else, giving her pussy away, laughing at him. The humiliation of it stoked the fire, causing it to rise even higher in his body. His toes curled, and every muscle tightened. His orgasm came rushing at him like a tidal wave.

"No!"

He threw back the sheets to keep them from getting soiled, and his cum spurted from his head, spraying up onto his stomach and chest. Each hot squirt layered him with the disgrace of wearing his cum, alone and possibly betrayed. Again. His chest heaved, and the heat of his body pushed beads of sweat out onto his skin. Threads of semen continued to pump out, pooling on his stomach and gumming up his chest hair. A burning pain tore from one temple, across his forehead, to the other, and he let his hands fall at his side on the bed.

The sound of the lock on the front door startled him. The key ground into the tight slit of the doorknob, announcing Jessica's arrival.

Oh shit, he thought.

Whether he covered himself with the sheets or lay there exposed, she would know. His heart sank as he accepted his fate, closing his eyes

as the door opened.

“Ron?”

His heartbeat pounded in his ears, and heat rushed to his face. His chest continued to rise and fall, and the moisture of his cum tickled his skin. A hint of delighted accusation laced her voice.

“What have you been doing?” she asked.

He wanted to retort that he should ask her the same thing, but he swallowed twice, cowering naked and keeping his eyes shut.

“I thought you were going to meet Rex at the gym.”

He cleared his throat and pushed at the invisible weight on his chest, struggling for the air to enable him to speak.

“I was.”

“What happened?”

“I got tired and changed my mind.”

“Rex work you too hard last time?”

She chuckled, and her laughs dug at the scabs of Ron’s insecurity. The memory of Rex’s confession that he would fuck Jessica. And of the drastic difference in the reflections coming back at him in the mirror between Rex’s herculean physique and Ron’s. All reasons he stayed home to sleep instead of meeting Rex again.

“Something like that.”

“You gonna shower all that off?”

Ron scowled, slid his legs over to the edge of the bed, and got up. His eyes avoided contact with Jessica’s, and he made his way into the bathroom, closing the sliding wooden door behind him. As he stepped into the shower and turned on the hot water, he tried to chase away his self-tormenting thoughts. Perhaps Jessica meant to

honor his desires to focus on the money, follow the rules, and get off the island in the good graces of the resort. The steamy spray pressed into his skin and melted away the globs of his cum, washing it down his body and into the drain. And with it, the vexing thoughts of Jessica betraying him yet again.

He took a deep breath, inhaling the steam, and reached for resolve to focus on the mission. Behave. Get the money. Move on with his life. And maybe have a little fun with Jessica before it's over. Good, clean fun.

CHAPTER 20

“A pleasure to see you again, Mr. Stoker.”

Siddhi bowed as Ron entered her tent. Ron smirked as he bowed in return.

“Good to see you, too, Siddhi.”

She gestured towards the familiar pile of cushions.

“Come in. Take a seat.”

She patted his shoulder as he passed by her. Her little domain enveloped him in her warm energy and the smells of incense. Ron’s muscles softened as he breathed it all in and sat down.

“So, Ron, what’s been going on?”

“Well…”

He chuckled and looked down at the floor, shaking his head.

“It’s been a little crazy.”

Siddhi walked to her spot and sat down in front of him. He glanced up and found her eyes peering into him, and the light in them seeped into his soul. She reminded him of Jedi Master Yoda in Star Wars. Old and

wise. Wearing wrinkles on her face and a powerful magic around her spirit. He looked back down, and his fingers played with the tassels on a pillow as he searched for words.

“Jessica and I got in trouble with the resort. The director called us into his office. Some other guests had lodged complaints.”

He imagined she already knew this news. The resort staff probably had regular meetings where they shared and discussed these details.

“What sort of complaints?”

Or maybe not, Ron thought.

“Umm, well...”

His voice cracked.

“You remember I told you about the games that Jessica had roped me into playing with her?”

“I do.”

“Someone caught us. And told the director.”

Ron peeked up to check for any reaction from Siddhi. But found none.

“As you know, Jessica and I are here to fulfill the requirements of a will that entitles us both to a lot of money. The director knew about the will. He said our behavior jeopardized our compliance and ability to receive the money.”

Siddhi nodded.

“Mmm-hmm.”

“So, I asked Jessica to stop.”

Siddhi pressed her lips together in a grin.

“I can’t risk losing that money.”

“So, you asked her to behave.”

“Yes.”

“Ron, you know your wife as well as anyone. You know it’s not in her nature to do that.”

“Well, yes, but surely she can hold it together for a few more weeks so we can get our money, get off this island, and move on with our lives.”

“Be honest with yourself, Ron. Do you believe that? Do you believe she can hold it together?”

Ron scowled.

“She has to.”

Siddhi’s knees rose from the floor to support her elbows, and she formed her trademark tee-pee with her pointer fingers, touching her lips. Then she pointed the tee-pee at him.

“We don’t get to choose who a person is, Ron. Our only choice is to look bravely and honestly into the truth about the person they are showing us – the truth that we know deep in our hearts to be there – and choose. Do we want to continue to be present in their lives? To be a witness to their truth? Or do we want to part from them? That’s it.”

She lowered her knees and placed her hands back in her lap, smiling.

“So, Ron, what do you want?”

Ron’s head tilted forward, and his volume raised.

“I want a break.”

“So, you’re going to get your money, divorce her, and start over in a nice, quiet, stable life with no mischief or mayhem.”

Ron’s lips parted, but words failed him. His chest hung heavy on top of his rib cage, and he wrinkled his nose. When Siddhi said it that way, it sounded nothing like a life he wanted. It sounded dull—even lifeless.

But after the torment of the last several months with Jessica, the safety of boring sounded like a much-needed reprieve.

“I can’t handle her mischief and mayhem, Siddhi.”

Siddhi stood up, grinning as she looked down on me.

“I don’t think that’s true.”

She stepped towards the old board, which was covered in a cloak.

“With all due respect, Siddhi, you don’t know me. And you don’t know all the shit that Jessica has put me through. I need a break from it.”

Her eyes stayed on the board, and she rested a hand on it.

“Do you remember this, Ron?”

Ron’s mouth grew dry, and his stomach tightened.

“Yes.”

“And you remember of all the couples I told you about? Women who cheated on their husbands but never confessed?”

“Yes, but I don’t see how…”

“You remember I told you how Jessica took a substantial risk in revealing her truth to you. Because she believed in you. Because she respected you.”

“Siddhi, what does this have to do with my situation?”

Siddhi turned from the board and faced him.

“And you remember discussing your spirituality. How you were looking for a new place to worship. One that resonated with the darker shades in your soul.”

Ron’s face fell.

“Yes, I remember.”

“And that you found that new place to worship in Jessica.”

He whispered his response.

“Yes.”

“Ron, I don’t care what you choose for yourself as long as it’s honest. As long as you are true to yourself.”

Siddhi walked back to Ron, placed her feet shoulder-width and her hands behind her back. Her eyes narrowed as they dug into him.

“You have a choice before you, Ron Stroker. It’s time to choose who you are. Who you want to be. Not what I think you should be. Not what society thinks you should be. Or what your parents or your preacher think you should be. Who is Ron Stroker? What do you want to be?”

Ron’s body temperature rose, and the veins in his neck pulsed. He stood and shouted back at her.

“I don’t know. Ok?”

His feet turned him away from her, and he stepped towards the door.

“But I know one thing.”

He gritted his teeth as he passed out of the tent.

“I need a break.”

CHAPTER 2I

Ron shut the door to the bungalow behind him and stepped inside. His head and shoulders drooped, and his feet trudged across the threshold.

“You look like you’ve had a rough day.”

He looked up at Jessica and attempted a smile, but his eyes glistened as though he might cry.

“You could say that.”

Jessica lay on the bed wearing a hunter green bathing suit of Jennifer’s. The top pressed at her breasts, pinching them together and causing them to spill out.

“What do you think?”

“Of what?”

Her eyebrows furrowed, and her nose wrinkled.

“Are you serious? The suit, silly.”

Ron looked her body over and pushed out a bottom lip.

“I don’t remember seeing that suit before.”

Jessica grinned and cocked her eyebrow.

“You haven’t.”

Her fingertips pressed like claws into the comforter as she pressed herself up, and her back arched, pressing her breasts out even further. She pulled her knees up under her so that she crouched on all fours like a feline.

“It’s almost like I’m a different woman. Lying in your bed. Do you like it?”

His eyes fell.

“Wow, you’re gloomy tonight. Let me see if I can fix that.”

He put his hands up, and his head shifted away from her on his shoulders.

“Jessica, I don’t know if I’m…”

Before he could finish getting his words out, she leaped up from the bed, slid over to him, and unfastened his belt.

“Shhh, Ron. Just be quiet and let me do the rest.”

Dropping to her knees, she pulled out his hard cock and wrapped her fingers around it. Her insides clashed with a cacophony of feelings. Doing nasty things with Ron – or anyone – wearing Jennifer’s suit made her pussy throb. She wanted to get her juices and her sexual energy all over it. But her heart stung with a pang of sadness as she held Ron’s warm flesh in her hand.

This might be the last time, she thought. I should be kind to him.

Her lips wrapped around him and slid down the shaft, her tongue caressing the underside of his cock. This man got as close to loving her as any man could. Or ever would. She knew she would always remember this cock. Small, but precious for its weakness. Its

vulnerability. And its surrender to her. It always rose to meet her when she beckoned for it.

Her right palm rested on his thigh and glided up to his stomach with a feather touch as she washed his member with the slow, gentle strokes of her enclosed mouth. He moaned, and her heart warmed as she responded with the vibrations of her humming, emitting them into his body from her throat. Her other hand grasped the back of his thigh, and she began to bob up and down his shaft, quickening the thrusts of her head.

“Oh god,” he said.

He swelled inside of her, and she moaned affirmation, signaling to him to cum in her mouth. With a gasp, he released his seed, and the salty warmth of his essence hit the back of her throat. She plunged her lips to the base of his shaft and held them there as he shook, draining into her. Her moaning continued, coaxing every last drop out of him. And then she brushed the underside of his softening penis with her tongue until it fell off the tip.

Rising from the floor, she planted her fingertips in his chest and pushed him back on the bed. Her eyes fucked his as she pulled the cups of the bikini top aside, exposing her bare breasts. The suit cradled them, holding them up and together, and she bent over Ron, rubbing her soft tits up against his thighs, pulling his shirt up and continuing the tease against his stomach with them as she climbed up towards his head. Her chest felt light, and her pulse raced. Like a tiger, she spun around, putting her ass and pussy near his face, his cock near her mouth. Her fingers crept between her thighs and moved Jennifer's green suit to the side, exposing her pussy lips to Ron.

“See that naughty pussy?”

She grinned at his cock as it twitched, resurrecting from its post-ejaculation slumber. While two fingertips held the suit to the side, her pointer finger parted her lips and stroked her clitoris.

“You know the things it has done.”

Jessica curled her lip, smirking at the memory of her father. And her submissive mother, slaving and serving and honoring a man who abused and cheated on her. She sneered at his church friends, who judged her and dared to shame her sexual energy. And as she wrapped her fingers around Ron’s cock, her teeth gritted at the memory of her former fiancé who cheated on her with her best friend.

Now, I have the power, she thought. And I’m never giving it up.

Her pussy throbbed, and heat ran into her neck and face as she thought of the crimes she had committed with her pussy. She savored the thrill of breaking the rules of men, giving her hungry pussy whatever it wanted, no matter what fences anyone tried to erect to keep her from it. Her hand gripped Ron’s pulsing cock as she continued to stroke her fleshy bulb. Her juices seeped out onto her fingertips, and she closed her eyes as her lips parted.

“Yesss, look at this evil pussy.”

Her eyes opened again, and she looked ahead, into the future. Into her plans. Her fingertips rubbed circles around her clit as it hardened and tingled, and a delicious fire rose from her touch into her hips and stomach. Her heart raced, and her entire body vibrated with exhilarating electricity. Ron’s tongue grazed her clit, and it sent a charged wave up her body, smashing into her forehead like exploding fireworks. She pushed her hips back into his caress, and he buried his face in her wet

folds as she came on him. His fingers pressed into her ass, digging under Jennifer's green suit and pulling Jessica's body into him, and his face mashed into her pussy. She moaned and quivered as waves of rapture wracked her body over and over.

As they subsided, she collapsed onto him, her sweaty stomach resting on his. She kissed his cock, and her sadness returned as she whispered to it.

"After I'm done, you'll see the truth. My horrible truth. Again. And you'll know what a whore I am."

A spike of heat in her chest drew it in, and her throat thickened. A tear ran out of the corner of her eye and onto his skin.

"And that you could never love me."

Ron mumbled.

"What, honey?"

She closed her eyes, and her hand cuddled his genitals.

"Nothing dear."

CHAPTER 22

Rayan's temples twinged, and his forehead wrinkled as he slipped out the door, away from the slumbering tiger in his bed. Another day where he could cut the tension with a knife hung heavy in his body. He wanted to run away, but where would he go? His chest released his held breath as the door shut, and he stepped into the cool night air. The tightness in his neck and between his shoulder blades eased with each step away from the room.

I just need to clear my head, he thought.

A thick, dark cloud moved across the sky over his head, blocking out the light of the moon and stars. It made the path before him hard to see, but he knew it well. More and more, he retreated to it to find reprieve from the pressure cooker of his marriage. Why was this happening to him? He fought temptation and chose the path of righteousness, and yet, his wife still treated him with resentment as though he cheated on her.

I might as well have, he thought.

His nose wrinkled, and he winced as he scolded himself out loud.

“No, Rayan! You mustn’t think such things!”

His shoulders fell, and his legs wobbled as he remembered the night Huda walked in on him in the bathroom. She saw his fingers wrapped around his erect penis and his hand pounding at it. He didn’t confess his thoughts about the woman, Jessica, but his wife suspected and accused him of it, anyway. Attempts to deny it failed, as though she saw the truth written across his face. He felt like a horrible husband for finding relief and escape in thoughts of Jessica. Thinking about the things he might do with her if he did give in to temptation.

The distraction of his thoughts carried him through the trees until he reached the opening out on the beach. The same spot he met Jessica that night. He dug his feet into the sand, still warm from the sun’s baking. Looking around him and finding no one, he took a deep breath and unfastened his pants. The night air tickled the flesh on his growing penis, and he slipped his fingers underneath the shaft, holding it as it expanded. His eyes closed, and he envisioned Jessica that night. How sexy she looked.

“This seems to be our spot.”

Rayan jumped at the sound of the female voice coming from behind him, and he fumbled with his pants, trying and failing to put his erection away. He turned towards the sound, his heart pounding. Jessica Stroker stepped out from the trees. Through the darkness, he could just make out the glow of her bare skin, her sinuous curves, and her flowing hair. Her voice dripped like hot syrup.

“What are you doing out here, Rayan?”

His stiff phallus ached as he shoved it into his pants, and his hands trembled, failing to grapple with the zipper. Jessica slipped up to him like a ghost. Her fiery breath tickled the skin on his neck, and her warm fingers rested on his stomach just above his unzipped pants.

“Looks like someone is being naughty. Touching themselves outside on the beach.”

His voice stammered.

“I shouldn’t. We shouldn’t be seen out here together, Jessica.”

“Who’s going to see us? It’s almost midnight.”

Her hand glided down his stomach into his pants, and her fingertips grazed his hardness. He shivered as a bolt of delight shot from the place she touched up through his sternum, into his neck and chin.

“Well, Huda saw us the other night.”

She chuckled, and her husky voice sent soothing vibrations through Rayan’s bones.

“I know, Rayan.”

His voice cracked as her fingers wrapped around his shaft, pulling it up and out of his pants.

“You know?”

“Mmm-hmm. You can’t see it, Rayan, but I’m wearing a different suit. My new buddy, Jennifer, gave it to me. She doesn’t know it, but she also helped me out. I put a little note where I knew she would find it. And she did just what I thought she would. She took it to Huda.”

“A note?”

The low hum of Jessica’s laugh brushed Rayan’s eardrums.

“Yes, Rayan. A little note that hinted about our meeting.”

“Why would you do that?”

“I wanted to make sure your wife saw both of us repenting from our sins.”

Rayan swallowed hard. A sting sliced at his forehead as he considered his present failure. Jessica’s presence melted all his resolve – all his moral fibers – until only his surrender and desire remained.

“I imagine Huda has been pouncing on you with ravenous sexual appetite ever since she saw you choose faithfulness to her, but I haven’t been able to keep you out of my mind, Rayan. I tried to be good, but I can’t. I want your cock inside me.”

Jessica’s head lowered out of sight, and her free hand pulled at Rayan’s pants so that they fell to his ankles. His eyes closed as the warmth of her wet lips slipped around the head of his penis. His thigh and butt muscles tensed, and his member throbbed as electricity ripped through his midsection. He sneered at the thought of Huda pouncing on him with sexual appetite. If only. Perhaps he wouldn’t be standing there now, so ready to fall into sin. How could he resist the desire of this bewitching woman? She came to him like a refreshing drink for a man dying of thirst in a desert.

Jessica rose and turned her back to him. Looking back at him with a devilish smile, she bent over and pushed her beautiful bare butt towards him until her soft skin pressed into his pulsing penis.

“Fuck me, Rayan. Put your hard cock in me.”

As if in a trance, Rayan reached out his hands and took hold of her hips. The head of his penis slipped into her dripping hot vagina. Hot waves of ecstasy rolled up through his chest and smacked against the back of his head. He clenched her slender waist and pulled at it, and she moaned.

“Yess, take this pussy, Rayan. I’ve wanted it so much.”

Each time his hip bones smacked against her silky butt cheeks, pulses of forbidden bliss released in his groin, in his chest, and behind his forehead. He groaned, and his chest vibrated with satisfaction.

“Oh, god, Jessica!”

“Take it, Rayan. Make this pussy yours. Fill it up with your cum!”

His penis stretched to a painful hardness, and his heart ached as he grieved the coming culmination of his failure and betrayal of his marriage. He whimpered.

“Oh, god, I’m going to cum.”

She howled.

“Yes, Rayan. Cum inside me. Oh my god, I’m going to cum, too. I’m going to cum on your cock.”

He felt her body shake in his hands as he exploded inside of her. His seed burst out of him, burning like fire, and his entire body shivered like an icy hot liquid raced through his veins. The sensation spread to the tips of his fingers, to his toes, to his earlobes. He leaned back, still clinging to her, and his hips pressed into her.

“Oh, god.”

The waves slowed as the pumping of his semen into her subsided. His grip on her loosened, and he stumbled back. The night air hit the moisture all over his penis and sent a chill up his spine. Reality set in, and his heart sank.

“What have I done?”

Jessica bent over and picked up her bathing suit.

“Think about that later, Rayan. We need to hurry back to our sleeping spouses before they wake and wonder where we are.”

She kissed him and hurried off, leaving him standing there, his wet penis dangling. A tear formed in the corner of his eye as he repeated the question to the silence.

“What have I done?”

CHAPTER 23

Ron threw another flurry of punches at the bag. A trail of sweat ran down the side of his face. Another trail curved around the corner of his nose, resting on his lip. He stepped back from the bag and licked his lip, tasting the saltiness. His gloved hands fell to his side, and he looked around at the emptiness of the gym. Walking over to his bag, he pulled one of his hands out of its glove. He bent over and dug through it, finding his phone and waking it up. His eyebrows furrowed.

“He’s late.”

It wasn’t like Rex to be late. He loved working out and always got there before Ron.

Jennifer probably talked him into staying in bed today, he thought.

Ron grinned.

Maybe Jennifer took a page out of Jessica’s playbook. Used that fit body of hers to seduce Rex into cheating on his passion. Or she guilted him into staying. That seemed more her style.

Ron shook his head, walked over to a treadmill, and stepped on. With a push of a button, it came to life, and his legs started moving underneath him. His thoughts wandered into dreams of his future. Soon, he'd be back in Los Angeles. He and Jessica would receive a lot of money, more than he'd ever had before. With that money, he wouldn't need to work. He liked his job, and he hoped to keep it for personal fulfillment, but with the inheritance, he wouldn't need it anymore. It would give him the power to demand to work remotely. Or Ron would quit.

His heart warmed at the thought of being that free, and a smile spread across his face.

I'll move somewhere far away. As long as I have internet service, it can be anywhere. And, finally, I'll be free of Jessica's games, he thought.

The acoustic ceiling tiles lifted over his head, and the soft thud of air pressure changing rapped on Ron's eardrum. The sound of footsteps came from the entryway. Ron called out.

"Rex?"

He turned towards the sound, and his eyes widened. Jennifer stood in the doorway, wearing a robe, scowling with her arms folded. Her voice pelted through her gritted teeth.

"Where is he?"

"I thought he was with you."

Her eyes narrowed.

"No. He's not."

CHAPTER 24

“Hurry. We’ve got to be quick,” she said.

Jessica pulled Rex by the hands into the bungalow.

“If it makes it easier, you can imagine I’m her. I am wearing her bathing suit after all.”

She winked and smiled, but Rex shook his head.

“No, I’d rather do this with my eyes open. She’s not that fun in bed, anyway.”

“Oh, Rex, honey, you have no idea. But you’re about to find out.”

She shut the door behind him and grabbed him by the back of the neck, pulling his head down to her face. Her lips assaulted his, and they both dug into each other with their tongues. She grasped his throbbing cock through his shorts, and he reached for her thigh, lifting her off the ground. He carried her over to the wall while they continued to press their mouths into each other. Her shoulders hit the wall. Rex pushed his hips into her, plastering her frame against the side of the

bungalow. She groaned, feeling his hardness driving into her crotch through his shorts and Jennifer's suit that covered her quivering cunt.

"I want you inside me!"

He let her drop, her feet touching the floor. While his hands lifted his muscle shirt over his head, Jessica tore his shorts down to his ankles. She pulled the suit cups down, so they hugged the undersides of her breasts, pressing them up and out. With one hand, she pumped his hot shaft while she pulled the suit bottoms to the side, exposing her engorged labia.

"Put it in!"

She threw her head back against the wall as his thickness slid into her juices.

"Oh, god, Rex. Your cock is huge."

He picked her back up and drove into her like a bulldozer. His powerful hips sandwiched her pelvis between his and the wall, and his cock stretched her pussy, touching deep places she hadn't felt in a while. It set loose fireworks of pleasure that exploded in tiny flashes all across the space inside her body.

"Yesss, fuck me with that juicy cock."

He pounded her like a stallion. The pressure of his size. The vice grips of his hands. The wall behind her. And his pelvis against her. They all conspired to squeeze orgasmic juices from her pussy that squirted out from the sides of his shaft as it penetrated her. Every cell in her body vibrated. And sung.

She grasped the back of his head, taking his hair in her hand. With the other, she reached around and clawed at his back. Her lips hung open, rubbing against his ear from the shock waves of his thrusts.

“Oh god, Rex. Your cock is amazing! I’m going to cum so fast.”

She quivered as her climax blasted through her body. Her fingers weakened their grip on his hair as all her energy rushed to the epicenter of her pussy. Rex held her fast, continuing to pound her as she convulsed around his stiff shaft. Her body floated, levitating on a high orgasmic tide. The room's sensations around her faded, overtaken by the burning fire of bliss in her cunt. And the continued penetration of his cock as it pummeled her. She heard herself whimper.

“I’m cumming again!”

Her heartbeat sounded through a veil in her eardrums, and her eyes closed, flooded by light. The pressure of his swelling cock stretched her, sending ripples of bliss through the dense cloud of rapture that held her above the floor. Above existence. Jessica reached another climax. And another. They came in rapid succession, pulverizing her senses. Through the euphoria, she heard him hiss in her ear.

“I’m going to cum inside you!”

His groan harmonized with her moaning, both backdrops to the deep bass of her heartbeat. He stopped his thrusts and held her up against the wall. His member pulsed inside her, and they gasped together. The sensation of her heaving chest returned. Her ears tuned in to the sound of her gasps for air. The heat of their bodies – still pressed together – and their mixed sweat brought Jessica back from the orgasmic dimension his sex took her to.

“Wow!” she said.

He laughed through labored breath.

“That was amazing.”

He let her down, and her legs wobbled as her feet touched the ground. She clung to him to steady herself. She laughed.

“I’m not sure I can walk.”

Her head rested against his warm chest, and she grasped for her strength and focus.

“We better get dressed.”

Her quivering heart burned with a sudden piercing as she heard the bungalow door open. And Ron’s voice.

“What the hell?!”

CHAPTER 25

Rex turned around, his semi-hard cock glistening with wetness. Ron's chest ached. Rex's size exceeded his wildest imaginations about it. Rex put his hands up.

"This isn't what it looks like, man."

Ron scowled at him and responded in a dry tone.

"Your wife is looking for you."

"Ron, man, listen to..."

Ron's volume raised, and his muscles tensed as he looked at the floor to the side of where Rex and Jessica stood.

"Get. Out."

Rex hastened to pick up his clothes and get them back on, but Ron's eyes locked on Jessica. He shook his head and glared at her. She grinned in return with a cocked eyebrow. The tension in Ron's shoulders pulled into his neck as Rex passed him and exited, closing the door behind him.

"You just couldn't resist, could you?" Ron asked.

Jessica prowled up to Ron, reaching for his belt. Ron swatted her hand away.

“Don’t even think about it.”

But she persisted, dropping to her knees to get closer and grabbing at his crotch. Her hand grasped a handful of his shorts and the hardness of his shaft. Her eyes lit up as she looked up at him.

“I knew it!” she said.

“Fuck you, Jessica.”

She smirked.

“Wouldn’t you like to, Ron?”

He grabbed a fistful of her hair and pulled her up. Her lips parted and released a devilish laugh.

“Mmmm, what do you want to do to this wicked whore, Ron?”

His hand jerked her head back, and his other hand reached for her bare breast, taking the nipple between his finger and thumb. Jessica howled as he squeezed, gritting his teeth as his eyes burned at her and the sensation of adrenaline rushed through his body. Her howl melded into a chuckle. Then a hissing whisper.

“Yesss. You want to punish this whore!”

Ron slapped her breast with his free hand, and she howled again. Using her hair as a rein, he shoved her over towards the bed.

“Take this pussy, Ron! Fuck me with your rage!”

He pushed her onto the bed and growled at her.

“I don’t want to fuck you. Lay down!”

She complied, and he pulled out his hard cock. Her eyes narrowed, and she pursed her lips as he stroked it.

“Spread your legs and finger yourself.”

Her fingers obeyed and slid down her stomach towards her parting legs.

“Look me in the eye, you slut. Tell me how you did it. Every detail.”

“You mean how I got your boyfriend to betray you and his annoying wife?”

Ron reached out and slapped Jessica across the face, jolting her head to the side.

“Of course, that’s what I mean, you whore.”

Jessica’s mouth hung open in a grin as she turned her gaze back to him and parted her pussy lips with her fingers. One fingertip began circling over her shimmering, raised clit.

“It wasn’t that hard. Your workout lover had his eye on me from the moment I met him in the airport. And with a bitch like that for a wife, I knew he was starving for some sexual adventure. Provoking Jennifer only helped my cause. She became more controlling, forbidding him to talk to me. She played right into my trap. Nothing is more enticing than forbidden fruit.”

Jessica writhed on the bed as her finger danced in a fury on her nub. Ron stopped his stroking, grabbed her wrist, and pulled it away. Then he slapped her pussy, causing Jessica to cry out. Her eyes turned to steel, and she smiled at him.

“Rayan was just as easy.”

Ron’s eyes widened, and he slapped her pussy again, harder this time. She arched her back, wincing and moaning.

“That’s right, Ron. Punish this evil pussy. You hate it, don’t you? And you hate me.”

She turned her head towards him and opened her eyes, glaring at him.

“You don’t love me, do you? You hate me, don’t you?”

“How could I love a lying, cheating whore?”

He spat on her pussy and slapped it one more time before returning his hand to his erection.

“Keep stroking, slut.”

His fingers wrapped around his cock and stroked with furious speed.

“I’m gonna cum all over your face, you filthy cunt!”

“Ooo, yesss, show me your hatred!”

Both of them rubbed their genitals in a frenzy. Ron’s ass cheeks tightened as the pressure in the tip of his cock rose to a painful level. His stomach muscles tightened as the fire inside of him spewed forth from his cock onto Jessica’s face. He kept pounding his cock with his fist, milking it all over her. His eyes burned into her as thread after thread seared his penis opening and shot out, spattering her face and tits. She moaned and shook.

“I’m cumming!”

“Because you’re a whore!”

She licked her lips, catching some of his cum as she did.

“Yesss, I am!”

Ron’s heart pounded as he shook his softening cock to get every drop of his seed on her body. Her mouth and legs hung open, and her frame convulsed. He stood over her, scowling.

“I’m so glad I’m divorcing you.”

Jessica’s eyes remained closed, but she responded.

“Of course, you are.”

“You couldn’t keep to the plan for a few weeks. Goddammit, Jessica, was that really so much to ask? And you had to go after the only guy

friend I've made in five years. Do you realize what this does to us? To our chances of getting the money?"

"I don't give a fuck about the money."

Ron's forehead stung as a burning thread connected across it from one temple to another, and he clenched his fists as he shouted at her.

"But I do!"

He put his cock back in his pants and turned away from her, zipping them up.

"So does your little friend."

"Wow, you went there."

He turned back towards her.

"You bet I fucking went there."

Her voice softened, and the light in her eyes left.

"Look at the noble Ron Stroker. Punching below the belt."

"Give me a break, Jessica. You want to go down in flames? You can do that by yourself."

A knock came at the bungalow door, and paper slid underneath it across the floor towards Ron.

"What the?"

He bent over to pick it up, and his eyes perused it.

"That's rich."

He wadded it up and threw it at Jessica. She held her hands up to deflect the paper ball.

"We're invited to a couple's ball. Tonight."

She turned her head away and faced the sliding glass doors leading out to the deck.

“I’m not going.”

“Fine with me. But I am. The little flyer says all the couples are going to share something about themselves. What makes their relationship unique. And believe me, I’ve got plenty to share.”

Jessica turned back to Ron.

“You wouldn’t.”

“Oh, yes, I would. Jessica, I’m done with your games. I’m going to tell them everything. If they didn’t already hate you, they all will once they know the truth. I imagine the resort staff’s sympathy will be enough to get me an exception in the will. You don’t want the money? That’s good, cause you aren’t getting any. But you will not keep me from getting what’s mine.”

Jessica frowned, her eyes vacant.

“I knew it.”

“Knew what?”

“It doesn’t matter. Do what you must, Ron. It’s what any man would do.”

She turned away from him, and he fought the sudden twinge of concern for her that tried to emerge inside him.

Fuck her, he thought. She made this bed. She can sleep in it.

CHAPTER 26

“Everybody, please take your seats.”

Kalei Kahue, the resort director, stood up in front of the stage. A band of musicians behind him stopped playing tropical music, and the murmur of chatter died down as people took their seats at their appointed spot. Name cards written in a sweeping script sat at each place setting, and sparkling silverware flanked fine china atop crisp, white tablecloths. Condensation formed on the clear crystal glasses that accompanied them. Each filled with decorative shapes of ice and water.

Ron turned to look at the expansive crowd gathered under the large tent.

Wow, there are a lot of couples at this retreat, he thought. I feel underdressed.

“We gather here tonight from the four islands of Second Chance retreats. You all came here to find a retreat from the troubles and distractions of the world. To reconnect to your spouse. To your love.”

Ron grimaced and shifted position in his seat.

“By this time, all of you have rediscovered some morsel of beauty in yourselves. In your partner. And so, at Second Chance, we maintain a tradition. To gather on this night and to give each of you a chance to share with the community. To tell us about your sacred union.”

A wave of murmurs and a few chuckles in the crowd.

“Now, don’t worry. We’re all here for the same purpose. It’s natural to be nervous, but you don’t have to share anything profound. It can be simple. But over the years, we’ve found this exercise inspiring, so I want everyone to share.”

Beads of sweat formed on Ron’s forehead.

Oh god, am I really going to do this? Ron thought.

“Is there anyone who would like to be brave and start us out?”

Kalei looked across the group, gleaming with a Sunday school teacher sort of patronizing smile. A few chairs creaked, and ice rustled around in a glass that someone lifted to take a drink.

“I promise, we don’t judge here. We only celebrate. Who would like to share first?”

The familiar voice of a woman called out.

“I’ll share.”

“Thank you, Jennifer. So, stand up and tell everyone your name.”

Jennifer stood. An elegant blue dress hugged her firm body. The single diamond hanging on a delicate silver necklace around her neck sent glints of light into the air, reflecting the canned lights suspended from the tent frame.

“Hey, everyone. I’m Jennifer. Jennifer Snodgrass–Armstrong. And this is my husband, Rex.”

Jennifer placed a hand on Rex's shoulder, and Ron's stomach turned. His eyebrows furrowed, thinking of the curious shift in demeanor between the two of them. Shy Jennifer stood boldly in front of the group while the once commanding Rex cowered in her shadow.

"Rex and I have been together almost a year, but in that short time, we've faced challenges. Challenges from the outside. And challenges from within."

Her chin thrust out as if she clenched the back of her teeth, and her eyes glistened with a hardened resolve.

"Some of the toughest challenges have come in the last few weeks on this island. What I've learned is that some people will come against you. Try to disturb the peace that you have."

Her volume raised, and her tone became more stern.

"But they don't matter. They're petty, immature little girls with nothing better to do. And they will pass. But we..."

She looked down at Rex and smiled. He winced into the light as he tried to smile back.

"We will outlast their childish games. They will fade. We will remain."

Kalei clapped his hands.

"C'mon, everyone, let's show Jennifer some love. Give it up for our first sharer."

The group obliged with a brief round of soft clapping.

"Rex, would you like to share?"

He chuckled, and his voice cracked.

"Well, um..."

He stood up, his grand physique filling out the sports jacket and clean t-shirt underneath.

“I’m not much for words.”

Not now anyway, Ron thought.

“I’m just grateful for my lady, here. She’s the strong one in our relationship.”

He sat back down, and Kalei led the group in another round of applause.

“Well, beautiful thoughts. We do face challenges, don’t we? But we stand together as a couple, and we weather them. Thank you, Jennifer and Rex. Who will go next?”

Huda stood up and moved behind her chair, gripping it with lightening knuckles and squaring her shoulders.

“Ok, Mrs. Abbas. Thank you. What would you like to share?”

“Thank you, Mr. Director. And thank you to all of you who have come here in the spirit of morality and marital fidelity. Of charity and holiness. That is how my husband, Rayan, and I have come. To honor Allah and the sacred covenant of marriage. As I have knelt in prayer on the beach each morning and looked upon the mighty waves rolling onto the sand, I am reminded that righteousness will always prevail. The inequity of sin will be washed away by its power. And as I look at my husband…”

She glanced at Rayan, who kept his head down.

“I see a devoted follower of Allah, a servant of righteousness. And I am grateful that the temptations of the damned do not sway him.”

Kalei’s closed lips and wrinkled nose pushed into a smile as he nodded and clapped.

“Thank you, Mrs. Abbas. Rayan?”

Huda spoke again.

“My husband is taking a time of silence and reflection. To meditate on these truths.”

Kalei’s mouth shriveled into a small circle, and he cast a worried glance at Rayan.

“I see. Well, thank you both for being here. And thank you for those profound words of wisdom, Mrs. Abbas.”

The director put his hands behind his back and walked to Ron’s side of the crowd.

“Who else?”

His eyes glanced in Ron’s direction, and Ron’s heart skipped.

“I’m sorry to see that Mrs. Stroker couldn’t join us tonight, Ron. I guess you will have to speak for the both of you.”

A woman’s voice came from the back of the crowd.

“That won’t be necessary.”

Everyone turned towards the voice, and several gasped. Jessica Stroker stood at the edge of the tent wearing her red bikini. Her hands draped down to her sides with Jennifer’s green bathing suit in one of them.

Kalei cleared his throat.

“Mrs. Stroker. It’s good to see you, but perhaps you didn’t read the invitation? This is a formal gathering. The guests were all encouraged to wear something more…”

Jessica cocked an eyebrow, and Kalei’s voice dropped in volume.

“…appropriate.”

Jessica tilted her head to the side and narrowed her eyes.

“Really, Kalei?”

She stepped forward, her eyes locked on the director.

“You know, all my life, people have tried to tell me what to do with my body. Tried to tell me to cover it up.”

Her eyes left him and surveyed the crowd as she continued to walk through them towards the front.

“And I’ve been judged. Usually by women.”

She glared at the back of Jennifer’s head. Jennifer turned a fork in her hand and rolled her eyes as she looked at it.

“I’ve heard their lectures about being a lady. About practicing modesty and not giving a man a reason to be tempted.”

Jessica’s eyes returned to Kalei, and they burned at him.

“But I am NOT a lady.”

Jessica moved just in front of the table where Rex and Jennifer sat until she was on the opposite side of it from them. Jennifer didn’t look up to acknowledge her, but her forearm tensed as she continued turning the fork. Jessica’s voice lowered and growled.

“You snide bitch. You couldn’t handle my body, so you tried to cover it up.”

Jessica’s hand waved down her frame with one hand, and then she held out Jennifer’s suit in the other, her fingers clenched and trembling.

“And you were more than happy to give me one of your ugly suits so all these people could see less of me. Well, guess what? I like this body. I fucking love this body. So you can take your fucking suits back.”

Jessica threw the suit across the table, and it landed on top of Jennifer’s hand and turning fork.

“Oh, and wash that one. Ya know, since I used it to wipe your husband’s cum out of my pussy.”

Murmurs erupted in the crowd, and the tendons in Ron's neck tightened. Jennifer's mouth fell open, and her eyes moved to the suit laying on her hand. Her head tilted to the side, and her eyes filled with tears.

"Did you?"

Rex shifted towards Jennifer, shaking his head. He reached for her, but she shrunk back from him. Her voice raised.

"Did you have sex with this slut?"

"Babe, I..."

Jennifer jumped up from her chair and stepped back from Rex, her voice trembling.

"How could you?"

"I... I didn't. She's lying."

Jennifer shrieked, and Rex threw up his hands to guard himself as she beat his head with the suit.

"How could you do that to me?!"

He tried to get up, but she threw the suit at him and ran out of the tent. The murmurs of the crowd grew louder as they watched her leave. Kalei tried to regain control of his gathering.

"Now, everyone, quiet down. Mrs. Stroker, I think you've said enough. It's time for you to leave."

Jessica spun around and hissed at him, her fists clenched at her side.

"Oh, really, Kalei? You want to silence me? I bet you do."

Kalei shrunk back, his head shaking. His face turned pale, and he mouthed the word "no." Jessica stepped towards him and extended a pointing finger at him.

“Let me tell you all about this mother fucker. The one whose island you all came to so you could work on your marriages. This shining example of marital fidelity and relationship wisdom.”

Jessica turned away from Kalei and faced the group.

“His cum tastes a bit too much like dish soap. I’ve had better from other married men on this island.”

Kalei dropped into a crouch and put his face in his hands. Jessica and Huda locked eyes.

“And you…”

Jessica took a few steps towards her table and stopped, putting a hand on her hip.

“You hateful, self-righteous cunt. You’ve judged me from the moment you saw me, and you think you’re so holy. So honorable. But you’ve got hate and murder in your heart.”

Leaning forward and narrowing her eyes, Jessica dropped her voice to a growl.

“I’m not afraid of you. Or your father. Or the thugs that he runs with who hijacked a religion so they could oppress women. I had a father just like him.”

Jessica held up a shaking fist.

“He beat me until I bled because I showed my body. And his church loved him. Made a saint of him. While they called me a whore.”

Her voice raised, and she looked up at the larger group.

“Well, they were right. I am a whore. Because I love to fuck. And not just my husband. Not just the cock that the rules say I have to keep my pussy for. I love to fuck whoever my pussy wants. Especially if

someone's rules say I can't. Those are my favorite cocks to suck and fuck. Because when I take them...

Her voice cracked up, and a tear formed in her eye.

"That's when I feel free."

She continued facing the group but looked aside to Huda.

"So, if I fucked your husband, I would have no problem telling you right to your fucking face so you could go running back to daddy. But I'd rather let you wonder. Did my husband cheat on me? Or was he faithful? Well, bitch, you'll never fucking know."

Huda stood up, letting out an animal groan, and threw her knife at Jessica. The sharp edge grazed Jessica across the cheek, drawing blood. Rayan reached for Huda and grabbed her arm.

"Huda, no!"

Kalei also stood and walked towards Huda, holding out his hands.

"Please, Mrs. Abbas. I know this upsets you, but we cannot have violence here on the island."

Huda wrestled against Rayan's grip while she hissed at Jessica.

"You're a repulsive woman! The hottest fires of Jahannam are waiting for you!"

Jessica sneered, flipped Huda off, and raised her voice to talk over her.

"You can all hate me. I know you probably do. Because you haven't walked in my shoes. But this is MY body. This is MY pussy. And I can and will do whatever the fuck I want with it. I don't expect any of you to get that."

Her head dropped towards the floor, and she turned towards Ron. Tears were streaming down her face, and she glanced up at him.

“But I hoped you would.”

Ron’s mouth fell open, and his stomach ached with the weight of a brick sitting on the bottom of it. Jessica rushed for the nearest edge of the tent and disappeared into the darkness. Huda’s voice screeched above the rising buzz of chatter all around.

“You will burn, Jessica Stroker! Burn forever!”

CHAPTER 27

Kalei Kahue paced the floor of his office, patting his forehead with a handkerchief while holding a phone receiver to his ear.

“No, Mrs. Chestnut, there won’t be any more drama like last night. I promise. I have dealt with the situation.”

Ron stood in the doorway, leaning up against the edge of the frame. His head hung from his shoulders like an anchor, but he managed to peer up, watching the director’s erratic movements.

We did this, he thought.

“I know. She said a lot of things. But can you trust the words of a person like that? I don’t think so.”

Kalei waved at Ron, gesturing towards a chair in front of the desk, then turned to the side, closing his eyes. Ron came in and sat down.

“Thank you, Mrs. Chestnut. I appreciate that very much. Goodbye, now.”

He put the receiver down and released a heavy sigh.

“Putting out fires, I see,” Ron said.

“You have no idea.”

The director collapsed into his chair and looked at Ron. His eyes glistened with sadness. Or weariness. Ron couldn't tell for sure.

“I'm sorry for all the trouble,” Ron said.

“Ron, you don't have to apologize for what your soon-to-be x-wife has done. And if I have anything to say about it, she will not jeopardize your chances of getting that money you're entitled to from your inheritance. My secretary is drafting a letter to Barkley & Associates. It will state that you put forth significant efforts to mend your marriage and that Jessica refused to cooperate. It should satisfy the conditions of the will such that you receive the full ten million.”

Ron's chest and neck tightened. He should have felt relieved. Even ecstatic. But Jessica getting nothing?

Why do I care? he thought.

“She left you a letter,” Kalei said.

“What do you mean ‘left’?”

“Oh, you don't know? She's gone.”

The tightness turned to a sharp pang, and Ron's eyebrows furrowed.

“Gone?”

“She came in very early this morning. Insisted on being removed from the island. We don't normally do that kind of thing, but considering the trouble she has caused while here, I was more than happy to oblige her.”

“How did you get her off the island?”

“We have a cargo boat that comes here from the mainland once a week to bring in supplies. As luck would have it, they came this

morning and were just about to leave when she showed up in my office.”

Kalei pushed an envelope across the desk with Ron’s name on it, written in Jessica’s hand. Ron picked it up, and a lump formed in his throat. He opened it up, unfolded it, and read.

“Dear Ron,

During my stay on this island, I connected with one core truth about myself in all of my mischief. I need to be free. Free to do what I want with my body. Free to choose for myself.

In the middle of that epiphany, I understood why you want to get as far from me as you can. You are not free. As long as I am in your life, you will feel imprisoned by my sexual power. That is why you want the money. That is why you want to leave Los Angeles. Well, you don’t have to.

I am enclosing a letter taking full responsibility for the failure of our marriage. You should be able to give that to the attorney and get your money. I’m also putting the house on the market. When it sells, I’ll give you the equity. I’m going to move out of the city. Erika will probably want to keep me on board and open a new market wherever I land, but if she doesn’t, I’ll be OK. As you know, I’m a survivor.

Thank you for the memories. You were the closest I ever got to feeling loved as I am. For that, I will always love you.

Affectionately, Jessica.”

Ron thumbed the other letter tucked in the envelope, staring at it while he wiped his mouth.

“I can only imagine what she said in that letter. That woman is full of surprises,” Kalei said.

“Yeah.”

Light nausea tickled Ron’s stomach, and his voice fell flat.

“She is.”

“Is there anything else I can do for you, Mr. Stroker?”

Ron snapped out of his trance, blinking and sitting up in the chair.

“Um, no. Thank you. I…”

He looked out the window.

“I’m gonna go for a walk.”

Kalei cocked an eyebrow, putting on a plastic smile.

“Ok. Have a good day, Mr. Stroker.”

Ron waved a limp hand and stepped into the lobby, holding the envelope at his side. Everything came out exactly how he wanted. Jessica got the exposure and public condemnation that he hoped she would. The money was his. The plans he had for a new life could now become a reality. And yet, Ron Stroker felt hollow.

He stepped out into the sunlight. A resort gardener dug their hands into the mulch around a flower bed in front of the office.

“Beautiful day, isn’t it?” Ron said.

They looked up at him, wincing as they smiled, and their skin gathered into hard wrinkles around their mouth.

“You don’t speak English, do you?”

The gardener continued to smile and nodded their head.

Nope, they don’t, he thought.

He sighed, and his chest ached as though his heart hung out of it. His feet dragged across the ground, and he wandered the island for what seemed hours. No one spoke to him. They appeared to avoid him. After what happened, who would want to talk to him? His wandering

brought him to the edge of the steps leading from the green down to the beach. He placed a hand on the rail, and a tear formed in his eye. The memory of Jessica taking off her bikini and parading down those steps naked flooded his mind. His heartbeat picked up, which only caused the ache to worsen. He followed the memory of Jessica down to the sand, to the spot she seduced him into having sex with her. Sex on the beach. One of a hundred crazy things he would never have done without her. He hung his head and heaved out a heavy breath. And whispered to the space around him.

“But with her, I was free.”

CHAPTER 28

“Good evening, Mr. Stroker.”

Ron nodded to Siddhi as she smiled at him.

“Thank you for seeing me this late.”

“Well, I don’t normally see my couples at this hour, but given your situation, I believe it merited an exception. Why don’t you come in and have a seat?”

She guided him with a gentle touch on his arm.

“Can I get you anything?”

“No, thank you. Well, can you get me a new heart?”

He chuckled, but his heart ached at the sound of his own words.

Siddhi continued to smile, her eyes searching his face as he sat down.

“If only it were that easy, Mr. Stroker.”

She sat and crossed her legs. The inviting, comforting energy of her space pried at Ron’s soul, priming the pump of his emotions. A tear streamed from the corner of his eye, and that disturbed him. Yes, the

recent events in his world rocked him, but he couldn't put a finger on the reason for his tears. Yet they came.

"So, tell me. How are you doing?"

"I don't know."

"You have a lot to process."

Ron let out a hard puff of breath.

"You could say that."

"The last time we talked, you said you needed a break. It looks like you are going to get it."

Ron's eyes fell to the floor in front of him.

"Yeah. Looks like."

"How do you feel about that?"

"I don't know. Confused."

"How so?"

"Well, I..."

Ron hugged his arms around his chest and leaned over them, sandwiching them between his chest and knees.

"I thought I wanted a break. I thought I wanted justice. To see her pay for her crimes."

"And she has."

"Yes."

Ron nodded, his eyes frozen in a vacant stare.

"Yes, she has."

He closed his eyes and took a deep breath before sighing.

"And I thought that would make me happy. Make me feel vindicated. But I'm not happy."

He opened one eye, peeking at Siddhi, as though he expected an “I told you so.”

“I’m actually pretty miserable.”

She smiled.

“How can I shake this? How can I feel better?”

“I don’t think those are the right questions.”

Ron’s forehead wrinkled as he frowned.

“What are the right questions?”

“What do you want, Ron? You still haven’t figured that out. You are still sitting on the fence between one life and another. Now you have everything you need to create a new life free of her. The life you said that you wanted. But you are still holding on. Why?”

Ron lifted his hands and dropped them to the floor, raising his voice.

“I don’t know.”

“Let go of her, Ron. Move on. And if you can’t, then you need to be honest with yourself.”

“Honest with myself? What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Can you live without her?”

Ron’s mouth shriveled as though Siddhi squirted something sour into it.

“Oh, definitely.”

She cocked an eyebrow.

“Ok, then why are you struggling? Your new life awaits. Take your money and go create it.”

Ron’s shoulders drooped from his neck, and the great cavity in his chest ached.

“What does it look like? This life you want to create for yourself?”

Ron imagined Little House on the Prairie. In black and white. Peaceful breezes blowing across a field. A sense of security. Safety. Where nothing dangerous or scandalous ever happened. He scowled.

“I don’t know.”

“I think you do. And when you look into your future, does it make you happy? Does it make you feel alive?”

His voice dropped, and he rested his forehead on his hands.

“No. No, it doesn’t.”

It looked like a prison to Ron. Like a repeat of his childhood. Like dutiful observance of all the rules. Left to his own devices, Ron feared he would follow his patterns and create a life of boredom. That he would wither and die in a casket of the mundane. Siddhi’s hand rested on his shoulder.

“You have a choice to make, Ron. Until you decide, you are going to be miserable.”

Ron looked up and smirked.

“Thanks for that.”

She laughed.

“I have faith in you, Ron Stroker. Listen to your heart. It will lead you.”

It already is, he thought. I’m just not sure I’m ready to go there.

CHAPTER 29

Ron Stroker lay in a hospital bed. An IV in his arm. A monitor next to the bed emitted an occasional beep. A single, droopy plant sat on a table against the wall with a card tied to it. He moved his legs to the edge of the bed, took hold of the rolling IV bag pole, and pushed it over to the plant. His bony fingers opened the card. Type-written words – the work of someone’s secretary – expressed cordial “get well” wishes from his work colleagues. The cold air of the room sent chills up his spine as it grazed his bare back through the hospital gown. A mirror hung on the wall over a sink, and he stepped back to look at himself in it. A knot formed in his belly as he took in the visage of his aged face. Eyes sunken into his head. Skin hung from his skull. A few stray white hairs stuck up in disarray on top of a dry, patchy scalp. He scowled at himself.

“What happened to you?”

He looked around the stark white room. A photo album lay on the foot of the bed. Walking over to it, he opened it to the first page of

photos. All of them black and white. He saw pictures of mown yards. Painted mailboxes. Paid bills. He mumbled.

“Where is Jessica?”

Page after page. Ron couldn't find her in a single picture. But he saw himself. He smiled in all of them, but his eyes looked glassy. Void of any light. Of any life. He closed the book and walked back over to the mirror to get a closer look. His eyes looked flat like dull, opaque marbles. No vitality. And his heart sunk.

A knock came at the door.

“It's your nurse.”

He hobbled back over to the bed and climbed in. She came over to look at his IV bag and check a monitor, never making eye contact with him.

“Excuse me, ma'am.”

She stood up straight, her eyes wide, as though he hadn't spoken to her before.

“Yes?”

“Why am I here?”

She winced.

“Oh, dear. The memory is the last thing to go.”

“Last thing to go?”

“Yes, Mr. Stroker. You're on our palliative care unit.”

“Palliative care.”

“Yes, Mr. Stroker. We're just trying to keep you comfortable for the time that you've got left.”

Ron's mouth fell open.

“Time I've got left.”

“Yes, dear. We’ve already had this conversation several times.”

Ron’s nose and forehead wrinkled as he looked down at his feeble hands.

“If there’s anything you want to do. Someone you want to speak to. You know. Before your time is up, this is the time to do it.”

He looked down at the album at his feet, and a wave of nausea came over him. His chest tightened, and his breaths grew shallow.

Before my time is up?

“Mr. Stroker, you need to breathe.”

A loud beeping sound came from one monitor, and the nurse called out the door.

“I think he’s coding!”

Ron’s eyes grew dark.

His body lurched up in bed, and his eyes darted around the bungalow. They ached from the sunlight pouring in through the sliding glass doors. He jumped out of bed and ran into the bathroom.

“Oh, thank God.”

His hands cupped cold water from the faucet and splashed it on his face.

What a horrible dream, he thought.

He turned to look at the empty bed, and a pang stung his chest.

“I don’t want that to become my reality.”

His head turned back towards the mirror, and he peered into his eyes.

Still a glimpse of light, he thought. *But it’s fading. I can see it.*

He planted his hands on either side of the sink and took a deep breath, closing his eyes.

He knew what he had to do.

CHAPTER 30

Ron stepped through the doors to the gym and took a deep breath. On his last visit there, his friend stood him up. And he later found out that friend betrayed him. But now, Ron needed Rex. Ron stepped into the weight room. Rex's eyes widened and then fell to the floor. He lowered the dumbbell in his hand, setting it down.

"Ron, I..."

Rex's eyes glistened as he peered back up at Ron.

"I don't know what to say. Except that I'm sorry."

"I know, man."

"She just put some kind of voodoo on me. I can't explain it."

"You don't have to, Rex. Believe me, I know her. I know the power she has."

"It's scary."

Ron chuckled and sat down on a bench.

"Yeah, it can be."

"I guess you two are..."

“Well, we were divorcing before we even got here.”

Rex’s mouth dropped open.

“You were?”

“Yeah. For us, this was all about satisfying some stupid will to get some inheritance. Or at least…”

Ron looked out the window.

Maybe it wasn’t about that. Not really, he thought.

“How’s Jennifer?”

“Oh, she hates me now,” Rex said. “She’s divorcing me.”

Ron looked back at him and leaned forward, placing his elbows on his knees.

“Man, I’m sorry.”

“Eh, it’s ok. Ya know, Sugar Ron, this whole thing showed me I wasn’t that happy in my marriage. Jennifer’s too…”

“Cautious? Careful? Compliant?”

Rex laughed.

“Yeah, you nailed it.”

“She’s me. I get it.”

Ron sat up.

“She’s got a boring life ahead of her if she doesn’t loosen up.”

Rex smirked.

“So, are we good then?”

“Yeah, Rex, we are. And I need your help.”

Rex stood up, his eyes lighting up.

“Oh, yeah, man. Anything. Anything for my buddy, Sugar Ron!”

Ron smiled.

“I’ve got to get to Jessica.”

“Well, let’s go find her.”

“She’s gone, man.”

“Oh, dang. Like off the island?”

Ron nodded.

“Wow, that was quick.”

“You know how she is.”

“So, what’s your plan?”

“Well, here’s where you come in…”

CHAPTER 3I

Kalei Kahue wiped the sweat from his brow. The last two days ranked up there as the worst in his entire career as a Resort Director. In his whole life. The board almost took his job. His wife nearly left him. But somehow, he convinced them that the conniving witch, Jessica Stroker, had lied. That he could never do what she claimed at the couple's banquet. Given his years of service to the resort, the board elected to give him another chance. His wife showed more reluctance. She still looked at him with suspicion, and the tension between them gave him heartburn. The constant calls from guests wanting a refund – wanting to leave the resort – also pushed him to the edge. He reached into the desk drawer for his decanter and shot glass.

I need this, he thought.

A knock came at his door.

"I'm swamped," he called out.

Ron Stroker stepped in. Kalei shut the drawer to cover up the evidence of his drinking on the job.

“Mr. Stroker, I’m sorry, but this is a bad time. Can you come back…”

A lump formed in Kalei’s throat as Rex Armstrong ducked under the doorway, coming in behind Ron. His muscles bulged in the snug-fitting tank top, and his chin jutted out like a rock formation.

“Um… hello, Mr. Armstrong.”

“What’s up, Kay Kay.”

Kalei’s eyes blinked, and his fingers fumbled with a piece of paper on his desk.

“I’m pleased to see you both, but I am quite busy.”

Rex closed the door behind him with enough force to cause the blinds on the windows to shake. Kalei’s voice cracked.

“Of course, I could take care of my business later. What can I do for you two today?”

Ron took a seat, leaning forward and locking eyes on Kalei.

“Kalei, where did that ferry take Jessica?”

Kalei glanced up at Rex and then back at Ron.

“Well, she wanted to get on the next flight, so…”

Ron leaned back into his chair.

“The next flight?”

“Yes, Mr. Stroker. She was eager to get away from this place.”

“Aren’t flights out of here hard to get?”

“Oh, yes. Very. They only leave here once a week. From the mainland, and you have to buy the tickets in advance. The seating on those flights is limited.”

Kalei scratched his neck. Ron let out a sigh and looked over at a bookshelf.

“But given your wife’s power to persuade, I imagine she got a ticket for the flight that is leaving this afternoon.”

Ron’s eyes cut back at him.

“There’s a flight leaving this afternoon?”

“Yes. And there won’t be another one for a week.”

Ron turned to Rex.

“I have to get on that flight.”

Kalei interjected.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Stroker. But that’s impossible. There aren’t any boats available to take you back to the mainland for another several days.”

Ron scowled, his eyes narrowing.

“You really expect me to believe that there’s no way off this island other than that ferry?”

“Well, I…”

Rex stepped up behind Ron’s chair with his arms folded, flexing his biceps, and glared at Kalei. Kalei glanced up at him, and his heart pounded.

“I’ve never shared this with another guest before. I have a boat. A private one. I keep it in case I…”

Ron’s eyebrows raised.

“In case I need to get off the island.”

“Mmm-hmm. So, you’ll take us to the mainland then? Like right now?”

“Oh, I couldn’t possibly. Have you seen the wind today? The waves will be quite intense. That boat isn’t suited to…”

Rex stepped forward, placed his hands on the desk, and leaned over it, towering over Kalei.

“Maybe you misunderstood, Kay Kay. My friend needs a ride to the mainland right now. It’s urgent. And I’m going with you.”

Kalei shrunk back into his chair, his knuckles turning white as his hands gripped the arms.

“Umm, sure, Mr. Armstrong. That’ll be no problem. Let me just get the boat ready. I’ll meet you two at the dock in say an hour?”

Rex pounded the desk, causing Kalei to jump.

“Thirty minutes. I’ll meet you in thirty minutes.”

Rex straightened up, and Ron got up from his chair.

“Don’t be late, Kay Kay.”

Rex’s finger pointed at the director as they slipped out the door. As soon as they left, Kalei reached back for his liquor drawer.

CHAPTER 32

Salty spray whipped at Ron's face as he clung to the side of the small cabin cruiser. Waves crashed against the hull, one after another, sending jolts through the boat and into his wobbling legs. He yelled at Kalei over the roar of the motor and swishing sounds of the whitewater splashing up around the sides.

"How long to the mainland?"

Kalei shrugged and yelled back.

"Depends on the surf. And the wind. Maybe an hour. Maybe two."

Rex steadied himself by holding onto the boat's hardtop and reached over to pat Ron on the shoulder.

"We're gonna make it, Sugar Ron."

Ron gritted his teeth and turned to look at the horizon.

"I don't see any land."

Kalei hollered back over his shoulder.

"You won't for another half hour."

Ron's chest tightened as he calculated the math in his head, estimating the likelihood of catching Jessica's flight.

"You two might as well get comfortable. It's a long ride."

Ron sighed and guided himself hand over hand along the rail towards the stairs leading down to the interior cabin. Rex followed him.

"Wow, this ain't bad," Rex said. "Being a resort director has its perks."

Ron flopped his body down on a long cushioned bench seat by the window wrapped around the bow.

"So, when does Jessica's flight leave?"

"Two hours," Ron said. "I'm hoping it's delayed."

Rex dropped to the floor in plank position and started doing push-ups. Between reps, he grunted out words to Ron.

"Missed my workout today, Sugar Ron. But this is more important."

"Thanks, Rex. I really appreciate it."

"So, what changed your mind? The last time we talked about your marriage, you seemed unhappy. I didn't know you were divorcing, but I figured you were having some trouble."

Ron rolled on his side and watched the waves through the window.

"Yeah, I guess you could call it that. Did you have any appointments with a therapist?"

Rex laughed.

"Yeah, I kinda missed most of them."

Ron grinned, continuing to look out the window.

"Well, my therapist made a good point. She said I had a choice to make."

The sound of Rex's grunting stopped.

“She was right. I know what kind of woman Jessica is. I’ve known for a while. And I can’t change her. So, my choice is to leave her or embrace her as she is.”

“And you’re choosing to embrace her? I mean, don’t get me wrong. She’s hot. And a lot of fun. But you know she’s going to cheat on you again.”

“Yeah, I do.”

Ron rolled back over and faced Rex.

“I’m counting on it.”

Rex’s forehead wrinkled, and his lips parted.

“Ok.”

“Rex, before Jessica, my life was pretty dull. Because I am pretty dull. It’s how my parents raised me. And every once in a while, it’s nice to watch paint dry, but…”

Ron’s eyes prickled, and his body melted into the cushion.

“I had a dream. And it scared me because I know it would come true. It was my life without Jessica.”

Rex sat cross-legged, holding his knees in the crooks of his elbows. Ron’s eyes met his.

“No one thrills me like she does. Not even close. I dated a nice girl a few months ago. And it comforted me. But…”

“She didn’t set your soul on fire.”

“No. Not like Jessica.”

Rex rolled forward onto his knees and slapped Ron on the back.

“I’m happy for you, man. I hope I find that person for me someday. At least now, I have a chance.”

The boat lurched, throwing Ron a foot off the cushion and causing his teeth to clamp into his tongue. Searing pain mixed with a salty taste in his mouth. Rex called up the stairs.

“Damn! What’s going on out there?”

Kalei’s voice stammered.

“We’re headed into some pretty rough water. I think this is going to be closer to that two-hour trip.”

Ron rolled his eyes.

“Figures.”

CHAPTER 33

Jessica Stroker stepped up to the airport official's desk and handed him a boarding pass and her id.

"Oh, yes. Mrs. Stroker. I heard about you."

The official bent over, taking her bag, and placed a luggage tag on it with "Los Angeles" printed on it.

"I don't know who Erika Bloodworth is, but she has a lot of pull around here. This flight was full, but she must have offered a lot of money to someone in first-class, because they sold their ticket to her, and she gave it to you."

The bag landed on a conveyor belt that carried it towards a black rubber curtain.

"I wish I had friends like that."

Jessica forced a smile, but her heart hung like a weight in her chest. Erika came into Jessica's life at the perfect time. And at the worst time. Jessica knew she'd be leaving Los Angeles, Seminal Communications' home base of operations.

I'm letting her down, she thought.

"Yeah, nice to have friends."

The official's stamp pounded the boarding pass with a thud, leaving a black mark on it. He handed it back to her, cocking an eyebrow with a plastic smile.

"Ok, you're all cleared through to Los Angeles. Gate three. Enjoy your flight."

Jessica's sandals flapped across the grey tiles of the airport terminal floor. Through the windows, she saw small island hopper planes taking off and landing. She thanked a god she didn't believe in for the massive airbus that would carry her across the Pacific.

I hope they have booze, she thought.

Her radar for the lusts of men tingled. She noticed several men checking her out, and one of them tried to cover the wedding ring on his finger. But her usual energy for playing her games with men failed her. In her mind, she could only see Ron, and her body shivered with a chill, and her stomach gurgled. She kept her eyes glued to the floor in front of her and kept walking.

At the gate, a woman in airport uniform smiled as Jessica approached.

"Mrs. Stroker?"

Jessica's stomach fluttered as she tilted her head to the side.

"Yes. How did you know my name?"

"Mrs. Bloodworth sent me your picture. She wanted to make sure we took care of you. If you'd like to board early, you can. Your accommodations will be more comfortable than out here."

Erika, I don't deserve all this, she thought.

"Yes, I'd like that. Thank you."

Inside the spacious cabin, the hum of the airplane engine vibrated in Jessica's chest and her ears. She made her way to the third row, seat A. A first-class window seat. Erika never missed a detail. A woman with long silver hair sat in seat B, gazing out the window.

"Excuse me," Jessica said.

The woman looked up and smiled.

"Oh, yes. I wondered when you'd get here."

"Don't tell me you know my name, too."

"No, I just had a gut feeling I'd have some company."

Jessica nodded.

"Oh."

Oh dear, I'm sitting next to Granny Granola, she thought.

The seat enveloped Jessica with its soft leather, and her muscles relaxed.

"So, how was your time in paradise?"

And she wants to talk. Great.

"Eventful."

"Oh?"

"Yeah... I'd rather not talk about it."

"Oh, dear. Things went sour with a romantic partner, didn't they?"

Jessica's lips parted, and she cleared her throat.

"I'm sorry, I know it's none of my business."

Jessica pressed her lips together into a flat grin.

"But if you want to talk about it..."

Jessica's eyes narrowed, and she turned to face the woman, ready to give her a stinging reply. But she froze. The woman's eyes sparkled blue in the sunlight and flooded Jessica's soul.

“Oh my god,” Jessica said.

“What is it, dear?”

Jessica’s skin tingled, and her heartbeat raced. The woman’s eyes mesmerized her. And reminded her.

I know those eyes, she thought.

“Are you ok, hun?”

Jessica sat up and shook herself free of the trance.

“Um, yeah. Sorry. You just remind me of someone.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah, your eyes.”

The woman smiled, and Jessica’s heart warmed. The smile, too. They resembled those of her mother.

“Um…”

Jessica pulled her attention to her lap, trying to get a grip.

It’s not her. You’re just emotional.

“So about this man. You know, there’s just no telling what will happen with a man when you’re on these islands. This place is the rise and fall of many a love.”

The tension in Jessica’s chest eased, and she relaxed her shoulders.

“For me, it was both.”

“Oh, dear. I’m sorry. Those are the sweetest and the hardest. You’ll carry the memory of this trip with you for the rest of your life.”

Jessica turned her head and looked out the window. Her voice lowered.

“I’m sure I will.”

“So, this man. Was he tall, dark, and handsome?”

“No…”

Jessica chuckled as she wiped a tear from her eye.

“He was none of those things.”

Her head turned back towards the woman, and she trembled as their eyes met again. Tears rolled down her cheeks, burning her skin.

“But he filled a part of me that I thought no one could ever fill.”

The woman’s eyes glistened, and her lips pursed as she nodded her head, cooing with an affectionate hum. Jessica dropped her head.

“Or would ever want to fill.”

She took a deep breath in through her nose and straightened her spine, looking again at the older woman and flashing a pained smile.

“Turns out, he doesn’t.”

Her lip quivered, and another tear followed the wet trail on her skin.

The woman shifted in her seat to face Jessica, and she reached out, putting a hand on her shoulder.

“Awww, dear. Are you sure he doesn’t?”

The warmth in the woman’s eyes washed over Jessica, melting her as she pressed her lips together and nodded. She turned back towards the window and leaned her head against it. Her knuckle rested against the glass, and she stroked it.

“And I don’t blame him. I’m a hard woman to love.”

The woman’s hand rubbed Jessica’s arm. She closed her eyes and let the tears pour out as she absorbed the touch of this angel.

I’m so sorry, Ron.

CHAPTER 34

“Oh no, this is bad.”

Kalei’s voice dripped with gloom. Ron looked out the window of the boat as it rolled up to the dock.

“What is it?” Rex asked.

“The festival of Hina.”

“Of who?” Ron asked.

“Hina. She’s a powerful female goddess that some of the oldest tribes in these islands still worship. And they have a huge festival for her every year. It draws tourists from all over the world.”

Ron and Rex ran up the stairs to see, and Ron’s limbs weakened at the sight of the crowds. As far as he could see, an ocean of people.

“The festival is today. You guys will never get to the airport through all this.”

Rex scanned the area around the docks.

“The hell we aren’t!” he said.

He grabbed Ron by the arm and pulled him onto the boardwalk.

“C’mon, buddy.”

Kalei called after them as they ran towards the shore.

“You’ll never make it!”

Rex pointed to a vendor stand.

“Ron, grab a map!”

A rotating dispenser of maps stood just to the side of a vendor’s booth, and Ron grabbed a map from it.

“Hey! Mister! You need to pay for that!”

But Ron kept running, following Rex over to a large, black pickup truck with massive tires. He peeled off his shirt and wrapped it around his fist. Ron’s mouth dropped open.

“Umm, Rex, what are you doing?”

Rex stepped up to the driver’s side window.

“I’m getting you to the airport.”

His fist slammed into the window and shattered it, setting off the car alarm.

“Oh, shit, Rex! We’re gonna get arrested.”

Rex reached in and unlocked the doors.

“Get in, Ron!”

Ron’s chest tightened as he climbed into the truck. Rex leaned to the side of the steering wheel, ripping out the housing underneath it. Ron’s eyes widened as he watched Rex fiddling with the wires underneath. A sound of electricity and the site of sparks, and the engine started.

“Umm, how do you know how to do that?”

Rex winked at Ron and flashed a smile.

“Another story for another time, Sugar Ron. Fasten your seatbelt!”

Rex laid on the horn and revved the engine. In front of the truck, the crowd stepped back, yelling at Rex in some language other than English. Rex threw the truck in gear and drove, pushing the mob aside as he headed for the bushes on the side of the road.

Ron grabbed the handle above the door and the side of his seat.

“Rex!”

“Ron, we’ll never make it on the streets, but this baby doesn’t need them. Hang on!”

He plowed through the bushes into a yard, up a driveway, and through a fence.

“You’re my navigator, Sugar Ron. Look at that map. Figure out where we are.”

Ron threw his hands up.

“How am I supposed to figure out where we are when we’re not on the road?”

Rex pointed at Ron and patted him on the chest.

“Focus, Sugar Ron. We’re getting you to Jessica. You can do this!”

Ron stiffened his lower lip, and his chest puffed up.

“You’re right. We can do this.”

The truck lurched through mounds of grass and dirt, leaving behind a row of houses and heading into a row of trees. Ron unfolded the map and combed over it with his eyes.

“Ok, if the water is here, and that’s where we came in, then that means we’re headed north. Or northwest.”

“Find the airport.”

“Right.”

Ron's fingertip bounced across the map, thrown about by the shaking of the truck.

"I got it!"

"Great! Where do we need to go?"

"Um, you need to bear right."

Rex wheeled the truck to the right, the side mirror smashing up against a tree.

"Woops!"

Ron shook his head at Rex as he laughed.

"You're crazy, man."

"Hey, Sugar Ron. We're on a mission."

Ron's chest warmed, and his eyes softened.

"It's ok. I like the crazy."

The seatbelt tightened against his chest as they went over a log.

"Thanks, Rex. I couldn't have done this without you."

"Don't get all mushy on my now. Time for that later. Map!"

"Right!"

Ron traced a path through the trees with his finger, guessing at the angle of their direction.

"If we're headed the way I think we are, this should come out onto a big road. Maybe an interstate."

"That's perfect!"

"Let's hope it's just a nice smooth spot to get on."

Branches thrashed against the windshield, leaving streaks on the glass, and the sounds of sticks and gravel striking the sides and undercarriage of the truck made it hard to hear or think. Light pierced through the trees from up ahead. Rex cheered.

“Looks like we’re coming to our road!”

Ron’s jaw tightened as the light grew brighter, the edge of the trees drew closer, and the ground ahead disappeared over a ledge.

“Umm, Rex! Do you see that?”

“Yep! Hold on tight!”

The truck broke through the tree line and vaulted into the air. Ron’s chest expanded, and his body floated off the seat. His heart burned like it might explode, and the sound of his scream pierced his eardrums. All at once, his body lurched forward, slamming against the seatbelt as the truck’s wheels pounded pavement. Rex gripped the wheel, turning hard to steady the vehicle and straighten it. They sped onto the interstate from the ramp.

“Oh, my god!”

Rex laughed.

“We made it! Ok, map! Where we going?”

Electricity rippled through Ron’s body as hope crept up inside of him, his eyes widening as they studied the map.

“We actually might make it, Rex.”

“Of course, we’re going to make it.”

“Three miles. Then take exit 12.”

Rex rolled down the window and let the breeze flow into the cab. On the opposite side of the interstate, traffic backed up bumper to bumper, but only a few cars dotted the path ahead.

“Once we get to the exit, it looks like it’s about a mile to the airport. We’ll probably see it from the road.”

Rex held out a fist, and Ron bumped it with his. In no time, they reached the exit and sped down the ramp.

“Uh oh,” Rex said.

Ron looked up from the map, and a lump formed in his throat. Up ahead, two police cars blocked the road. An officer stood in front of them, directing cars to turn around. Rex stopped the truck in the middle of the road. The officer looked up at the truck and waved to the squad car behind him. Another officer got out and started walking towards them.

Ron grit his teeth.

“Oh, no. What do we do?”

Rex watched the officer and bit his bottom lip.

“Ok, I’ve got it, Ron. Get down and listen to me.”

Ron unbuckled his seatbelt and slid down from his seat into the floorboard.

“I’m going to pull over next to the side of the road. I’ll do it nice and slow so they don’t get too fired up. This truck is high off the ground. He’ll have no visibility into the cab to see you. When I tell you, slip out the door and into those bushes over there. Take the map. Run to the airport.”

“But what about you?”

“I’ll be fine. Don’t worry about me. Get to Jessica.”

Ron’s midsection fluttered.

“Rex, how can I ever repay you?”

Rex turned the wheel and eased the truck forward, his eyes glued ahead and his voice lowering.

“Go live your life, Sugar Ron. Save the love that makes your heart soar.”

Ron reached out for Rex’s thigh and grabbed it.

“Thank you, man.”

“You’re welcome, Sugar Ron. Now go!”

Ron’s heart skipped a beat as he opened the door and slipped his feet down to the pavement. The voice of the officer on the other side of the truck addressed Rex with a thick accent.

“Sir, I need to see your license and registration, please.”

Ron’s leg muscles flexed as he tried his best to avoid making any noise with his steps. His temples ached as the pressure of his held breath built inside his chest and head. His steps quickened once he passed the bushes. When the officer’s voice faded, he gasped and grabbed his chest. Through his panting, he whispered.

“Ok, Ron. Get it together.”

He looked at his watch.

“Shit.”

His hands trembled as he unfolded the map, checked his bearings, and then wadded it up in his fist. His feet kicked up dirt as he took off in a dash. He ran with all his might. Through trees. Jumping over bushes. His chest burned with need for air, and his ribs stung as though they might break through his skin and rip him open. A branch whipped at his face, but he escaped from the trees, and his feet pounded onto pavement. He looked around. It expanded all around him, and in the distance, planes! He launched himself forward again, and his eyes fixed on the terminal building and the few aircraft around it. Most of them small, but one towered over them.

It has to be that one, he thought. It hasn’t left yet.

A stabbing pain shot through his chest as his body struggled to produce the speed he required of it. His mouth hung open, and his

arms flailed at the air as he yelled out.

“Jessica!”

He winced. The plane started rolling backward.

“Noo!”

Adrenaline flooded his body, and his legs found new life. His feet floated across the ground, and his body weight diminished in the surge of heat and light radiating inside. The plane stopped and began rotating away from him. His feet crossed the threshold of the runway. He thought, only a football field’s distance between him and the plane that began rolling forward.

“Nooo! Jessica!”

The mighty jet lumbered. Slow at first. Ron closed the distance between himself and the tail. He flailed his arms in the air.

“Stop the plane!”

For a moment, the plane slowed, and he drew close, reaching the left side of the aircraft but staying clear of the wing. His eyes searched the passenger windows, and he struggled to keep his balance. His heart sank as the engine roared, raising the pitch of its hum. Then, in the third window back from the side entrance to the plane, he saw it. He could not mistake that hand, and the wedding ring still on it. The hand rested against the window, and the ring sparkled in the sunlight. Ron yelled with all his might.

“Jessica!”

But the escalating roar of the engine drowned out the sound of his voice, and the plane picked up speed. Tears began streaming down his face as he gave every ounce of his energy, trying in vain to keep up the pace. A gust of air blew from the plane’s engines, tearing at

Ron's body, and he lifted his arm to cover his eyes. It pulled away from him and barreled down the runway. He slowed and watched it lift off the ground and into the air. He whimpered.

"No."

He fell to his knees, panting for air. His tears and sweat blended on his cheeks, and he looked up at the sky, his shoulders falling back. The sound of a vehicle came from behind him, and he turned to see a luggage cart pull up to where he knelt. A driver wearing an airport uniform waved at him.

"You miss your flight?"

Ron's chest heaved, sucking in air, as he nodded.

"Aww, man. That sucks. That plane is going to the States. There's not another one going there for at least a week, I think."

Ron placed his hands on his knees and hung his head.

By then, she'll have disappeared and gone somewhere I may never find her.

CHAPTER 35

Jessica watched from the upstairs window as the moving truck pulled up in front of her house, and two men hopped out. The driver appeared to be in his mid-twenties with a curly head of auburn hair, broad shoulders, and a tank top that clung to his toned chest and torso. His partner possessed a similar physique but stood taller, with darker skin and long, dark hair. His biceps flexed as he reached back and pulled the length into a ponytail. Jessica's chest stung with a tightness, as though some part of her wanted to come out but strained under the weight of grief. She took a deep breath and descended the stairs. The expected knock came at her front door, and she reached for the doorknob.

You can do this, Jessica, she thought.

She dug deep for a smile to cover her heartache and pulled the door open. The driver beamed a smile, his blue eyes sparkling.

"Mrs. Stroker?"

"Yes, that's me."

“You ready to move?”

Jessica winced but nodded.

“Yeah. When do we start?”

The tall, dark moving man stood at the end of the truck and unlatched a tailgate lock. He shoved the door up, and it clacked like a train on tracks as it rolled up into the ceiling, revealing a third man standing inside the cargo area. Jessica’s chest tingled a bit despite her sorrow. This cargo passenger’s legs flexed in his tight jeans as he stepped down from the truck and waved at her, flashing perfect white teeth with his smile.

“So, there are three of you?”

“Yes, ma’am,” the driver said.

She clapped her hands together, hoping to snap herself into gear, and shoulders rose with her deep inhale.

“Ok, let’s get to it. Why don’t you boys come on in?”

Cargo boy smirked as he stepped up the stairs, and the skin on Jessica’s neck tingled as they each passed by her, entering the house. Closed cardboard boxes, sealed with packing tape and labeled “Kitchen,” “Den,” and “Bathroom,” stood in stacks around the walls.

“Looks like you’ve been busy, Mrs. Stroker. We could have done all this for you.”

“I know, but I needed something to do, and I’m kinda in a hurry to get out of here.”

“I understand.”

He bent over and picked up a box. The other two followed suit, and they began carrying her things out.

“I’m just gonna head upstairs and finish some packing up there.”

Cargo boy answered, grinning at her, and stepped across her door's threshold with a large box in his arms.

"Yes, ma'am. We got this."

Something about him stirred her, but she fought to press her primal urges back into their box.

It's too soon, she thought.

Putting a foot on the stairs and a hand on the rail, she remembered Ron. How he followed her up them many times, lusting after her ass. The other sights and sounds around her faded. As she drifted into that memory, her fingers and toes went numb, and a thickness grew in her throat.

A female voice came from behind her, interrupting the reverie.

"I like your moving crew."

Jessica turned, and her heart skipped a beat.

"Oh my god, Erika."

Her eyes prickled, and her lip pursed as she tried to keep a lid on her tears. Erika stood in the entrance hall wearing electric blue leggings and a fitted t-shirt. Even in comfy clothes, she owned her surroundings with her gorgeous body and sensual power, but the energy coming off her felt warmer and softer than usual.

"Hey, Jessica."

She held out her arms, and Jessica ran into her embrace.

"Thank you so much."

"Don't mention it, girl."

She patted Jessica on the back and loosened her hold.

"Ok, what can I help with?"

Jessica stepped back and put a hand up in her hair, looking around.

“God, Erika, you’ve already done so much.”

Erika waved a dismissive hand in the air, smiling at Jessica.

“Maybe come upstairs with me and help me sort that out. I’ve been avoiding it.”

Erika gestured towards the stairs.

“After you.”

Jessica’s chest tightened with each step up the stairs. For the last few days, she slept on the couch downstairs, unable to stay in the bedroom for long. Reaching the doorway, she froze. Erika’s hand rested on her shoulder, and her torso relaxed. Jessica’s voice cracked as she spoke just louder than a whisper.

“I did it in here, ya know.”

“Hmmm?”

“Cheated on Ron. In that bed.”

Erika’s other hand took the other shoulder, and they massaged the muscles.

“You know, I’ve never married, but if I ever made that mistake, I’m sure I would do the same thing. Over and over.”

Jessica sighed.

“Do you think I’ll ever find someone who can love me like this?”

“I haven’t.”

Her hands slipped off Jessica’s shoulders.

“I accepted I’m not relationship material.”

Jessica’s eyes glazed over as she stared at the bed.

“Yeah, I don’t think I am, either.”

“Men. They’re only good for a few things. And you don’t have to buy the whole pig just to get a little sausage.”

Jessica turned to look at Erika, struggling to find a smile. Her well-meaning words failed to comfort, but her presence eased the pain of facing reality.

“You know, I recognize one of your moving crew.”

Jessica’s head tilted to the side.

“Oh, which one?”

Erika grinned.

“The one with the perfect teeth.”

Jessica’s lip curled up on one side.

“Oh, yes. He was riding in the cargo bay.”

“Makes sense.”

Erika slid past Jessica into the bedroom and flashed her a devilish smile.

“He likes a rough ride.”

Jessica’s mouth fell open.

“Oh my god, you?”

Erika nodded.

“And he’s bisexual.”

Jessica’s head rocked back on her shoulders.

“Really?”

Erika’s lips smacked as she responded.

“Yep.”

“Huh.”

Jessica stood pensive. Erika’s lifestyle gave her a haven. A place to feel less of a freak.

“You sure I can’t convince you to change your mind?”

Jessica shook her head.

“Yeah, I’m sure.”

“It’s a damn shame. I was just getting to know you, and I’m already really going to miss you. We could have done some shit together.”

“Well, maybe you can visit me.”

“Where are you going?”

“I don’t know. Maybe Puerto Rico. Someplace I can disappear.”

Jessica turned and looked at the picture sitting on the bedside table. She picked it up and sighed. In it, Ron held her from behind and glowed with a boyish smile. Her teeth sunk into her trembling lip.

“Oh my god, you left that out? Are you trying to torture yourself?”

Erika swiped it out of her hands.

“Give me that! This is the first thing I’m going to pack. You know, you should let me take you out on the town. We could…”

Erika’s voice trailed off in a blur, and Jessica’s ears expanded to tune in to the sound of male voices outside the house. Her heart quickened. She interrupted Erika’s chatter, placing a hand on her.

“Do you hear that?”

“Hear what?”

“It can’t be.”

Tears welled up in Jessica’s eyes, and she tore out of the bedroom and down the stairs.

CHAPTER 36

Ron Stroker pulled up to the house he used to call home. His heart raced at the sight of the moving truck backed up to the front door.

“Oh god, I hope I’m not too late.”

His car came to a quick stop at the curb, and he hopped out and jogged up to the two men carrying a couch down the front steps towards the truck. Ron remembered the many times sitting on that couch with Jessica watching their wedding video. She bought it with one of her first commission checks at Starlight.

“Hey, guys…”

He reached out for one end of the couch to take it from a strapping young man carrying it.

“Hey, buddy. What do you think you’re doing? We’re trying to move this lady.”

“I know. And I’m sorry. Let me explain.”

The young stallion stepped back, scowling, and put his hands on his hips. The other set the couch down with Ron.

“This is my house. Well, it was my house. And that lady is my wife.”

The mover Ron took the couch from lifted his hands.

“Hey, man. We don’t want to get in the middle of your issues with Mrs. Stroker.”

“No, it’s not like that. Listen, I need you guys to help me.”

The movers looked at each other with raised eyebrows.

“I promise I’ll pay you double your fee for this contract. And you’ll be helping to save a marriage.”

Ron looked at the man he took the couch from.

“Are you the lead guy on this deal?”

The man nodded.

“Yeah, that’s me. Name’s Steve.”

Ron grinned.

“That could not be more perfect. So, the lady. My wife. Would you agree she’s hot?”

Steve shrugged his shoulders.

“I mean, you know.”

“Steve, listen. I know there’s this code where men aren’t supposed to look at another man’s wife. And we both know that’s a load of bullshit. You look. I look. And I’m not that husband who is going to get pissed. You can be honest with me. I need you to be honest with me.”

“Ok, yeah. She’s hot.”

“Like you would bang her?”

Steve chuckled.

“This is the weirdest conversation I’ve had in a while.”

“I know. I get it. But would you?”

“Yeah. Yeah, I’d bang her. I imagine all of us would.”

He looked at his partner for confirmation, and the tall, dark-haired mover nodded and spoke up.

“Dude, your wife is hot. I’m sorry, but that’s a fact.”

“Great! I’m glad you both think so.”

Another mover emerged from the doorway. He grinned as he spoke.

“Y’all don’t let me do all this moving by myself.”

Steve motioned to him.

“Mark, you’re gonna need to come listen to this. I think there may be a change of plans.”

Ron took a deep breath.

“Here’s the thing about my wife. About Jessica. She’s a very naughty woman. She loves to fuck. And she loves to cheat on me.”

Mark stumbled down the steps as he spoke.

“Whoa! What have I walked into?”

Steve held a hand out, palm down, and waved it towards the ground.

He held his other finger up to pursed lips.

“Just shut up and come here, man. And keep it down. I wanna hear what this dude has to say.”

He turned back to Ron.

“Go ahead, man. We’re listening.”

“It hurt me, and I didn’t think I could handle it, but I’ve had time to think about it. And I know I can. I know I want to.”

Ron’s throat thickened, and his voice cracked.

“Because I love her. And because I think she’s the most exciting, amazing woman I’ve ever known.”

Steve’s eyes bulged like saucers.

“Wow, dude.”

“So, here’s what I need you fellas to do for me. If she’s up for it, and I feel sure she will be, I need you to all fuck her. In front of me.”

Mark laughed.

“This is insane.”

“I’m serious, guys. Will you please help me? I know it sounds crazy, but this will save our marriage.”

Mark put his hands on his head and blew through pursed lips.

“I mean…”

They looked at each other as if having some kind of coded conversation with their eyes. Steve straightened up and looked Ron in the eyes.

“I don’t see how we can say no to the chance to save a marriage. Especially one that’s as crazy as yours.”

Ron raised his hands and looked up in the air.

“Thank you so much.”

A familiar voice interrupted their conversation.

“Ron?”

Jessica stood in the doorway, her arms folded across her chest as though she were naked and freezing. Her lip trembled, and her eyes glistened. Ron’s heart lurched out of his chest as he spoke to her.

“Babe.”

She stepped out onto the porch, still clutching herself.

“What are you doing here?”

“I had to get back… To see you. Over the last week, I realized something. Ever since you told me you fucked my boss, I’ve

struggled, and I'm sorry, but I know what I want now. I know what I need."

He stepped towards his wife. Her cheeks trembled as tears welled up in her eyes.

"I need my wife. Not some woman who behaves. Or falls into line with what the world wants from her. I need the woman I met at Joe's Burger Shack all those years ago. The one who cheated on her fiance with me behind the restaurant."

Jessica burst out into tears.

"Oh, Ron."

He got down on his knees.

"Please, let me spend the rest of my life worshiping my queen."

She put her hands over her mouth, and her body shook. A woman stepped through the doorway behind her and to the side. She spoke to Ron in a stern, business-like tone.

"Hey, Ron. I'm Erika, Jessica's boss."

She turned her head towards Jessica and put an arm around her.

"And friend."

Jessica turned her head into Erika's breast and sobbed.

"And I heard your idea."

She nodded her head upwards towards the bedroom window.

"I could hear you from up there. But if you're serious about this, I think you need to raise the stakes a little. When these boys finish fucking your wife, you're going to need to clean up the mess."

Ron's heart skipped, and his cock twitched.

"Mark over there likes a little action on both sides of the aisle, don't you, Mark?"

Mark's face turned beet red.

"Yep. He does. So, when your wife's juices mix with his cum and cover his cock, you're going to need to kneel and clean that off. And I don't care if you like that kind of thing or not. You're going to do it cause that's what servants do for their queens. If you really want this woman to rule you."

Ron looked up from the ground at Jessica, his eyes steely as he smiled at her.

"I do."

He stood up, and his shoulders squared back.

"So, what are we waiting for?"

CHAPTER 37

Amber Levinson's hand held onto the woman who became a mother to her. Her feet fumbled underneath her, feeling out her steps, and her eyes pressed shut under the blindfold. Her heart danced, and her little chest melted, reuniting with Mrs. Jessica after missing her for over a month.

"How much longer?"

Mrs. Jessica's laughter filled her ears and lifted her spirit. She loved Mrs. Jessica more than anything, and she loved her laugh above all other sounds in the world. Her feet wanted to skip, but she willed them to stay steady, not wanting to trip.

"Where are we?"

Mrs. Jessica's voice hummed like a playful song.

"You'll see."

Her hand pulled Amber up, and she lifted her feet to climb up a few steps. Something about the ground felt familiar to her, and her body tingled all over.

What could it be? she thought.

“Ok. We’re here.”

The strong, soft hands of her guardian angel rested on Amber’s shoulders. She felt Mrs. Jessica’s body stepping behind her, surging with intense, warm energy and the sound of a deep breath. The knot behind Amber’s head wiggled as Mrs. Jessica fiddled with it, and then the tightness around her head subsided. The blindfold fell away, and light flooded her eyes. Amber held her hand up over her eyes to allow them to adjust, and she squinted to see her surprise. Mrs. Jessica bent down behind her and put her arms around her.

“What do you think?”

Amber’s vision sharpened, and the house she grew up in came into focus. Her heart skipped, and her mouth fell open.

“Mrs. Jessica, is it?”

“Yes, dear. It’s yours.”

Amber’s eyes welled up with tears, and she turned into Mrs. Jessica. Her chest expanded like it might explode as she took hold of Mrs. Jessica’s face with her tiny hands.

“Is it really?”

She laughed and wiped a tear from her eyes.

“Yes, sweetie. I bought it for you.”

She dove at Mrs. Jessica and wrapped her arms around her neck, squeezing with all her might.

“Oh, Mrs. Jessica, thank you! Thank you so much.”

The woman who saved her rose to her feet, lifting Amber in her arms. Amber’s heart soared as her feet left the ground, and she trembled as

she wept tears of joy into the sweet-smelling tresses of Mrs. Jessica's hair.

"I can't believe it!"

The strong arms of her hero held her like a cradle.

"C'mon, let's go inside!"

She put her back down and took her hand. Over on the curb, a well-dressed man with salt and pepper hair leaned up against the car. Amber cocked her head to the side and shriveled her nose. Jessica chuckled.

"That's Mr. Ron. He's my husband."

Amber's eyes lit up.

"Ohhh."

"You know how you say I saved you?"

"Yeah."

Mrs. Jessica looked back over her shoulder at the man and smiled.

"He saved me."

Amber's mouth formed an "O" as the corners of it curled up in a grin. She called out in an exuberant tone.

"Very nice to meet you, sir!"

The man smiled and waved back. Jessica squeezed Amber's hand and whispered.

"C'mon! Let's go see your house!"

They beamed at each other as they skipped up towards the door.

"Mrs. Jessica, now I can make the shelter I told you about! Will you help me?"

"Of course, dear. Of course."

And the two of them stepped onto the front porch. And into their future.

Thanks for reading The Taste of Her Truth, Part Two! Did you like this book? If so, I could really use your help. Ratings and reviews are important for any book, but *especially* if it's erotica. You can post your review for this book [here](#).

Wanna join my inner circle of "Patter Peeps"? You'll get a free copy of the subscriber-exclusive prequel to this series when you subscribe to my newsletter [here](#).

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

When I was younger, I struggled with a great deal of shame about how sexual I was. I spent a long time trying to be less sexual. Running from my true self caused me to suffer from severe depression.

No more.

I have a vivid imagination, and my sexuality has always played a big part on that stage. Writing gave me an outlet to explore and share that part of my inner world with others.

I am deeply grateful for you, dear reader. Thank you for visiting the erotic places in my mind. If you enjoyed your visit, I hope you will come back often.

You can find out more about me and my writing on my website.

<https://www.mlpattersonbooks.com/>