

A Cuck and Cheating Wife on The Brink
Stuck in Paradise Together



the Taste of
Her Truth

Jessica's Game Series - Book 3

M. L. PATTERSON

THE TASTE OF HER TRUTH, PART ONE

BOOK 3 IN THE JESSICA'S GAME SERIES

M. L. PATTERSON

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CHAPTER I

Ron

The soft leather of my new Lincoln Aviator cradled my aching spine and supported my weary legs.

“I like your car, babe.”

“Yeah, it’s nice.”

I traced the cool chrome lining around the base of my gear shift.

“I kind of miss my Oldsmobile, though.”

Ally twisted her lips and furrowed her eyebrows.

“That ole’ thing? Ron, it was on its last leg.”

“Yeah, but… I had a lot of memories in it.”

She grinned and placed a hand on my shoulder.

“You’re making some new memories.”

A slight pang tickled the rear of my eyes as I smiled back at her.

Am I ready for that?

“So, how’s the new Director of Accounting doing?”

“You don’t really want to hear about that, do you?”

Ally beamed, turning towards me.

“Sure, I do! Tell me about the fascinating things you’re doing with your clever brain.”

She ran her fingers through my thinning hair and pointed the spotlight of her gaze on me.

“I’m not sure it’s that exciting.”

“Oh, c’mon, Ron. You’re a director now.”

She sat up straight and attempted a British accent.

“I’m dating a director.”

I chuckled, and my head pulled back as my shoulders rolled forward.

“It’s not all that.”

“Ron, you work for your idol. And you’re a genius. I know you’ve impressed the heck out of them.”

“Well…”

“Uh-huh, see! C’mon. Tell me.”

“It’s really not that glamorous, but I started a review of how we do depreciation of assets. We have an opportunity to change our methodology on some of them. Might save the company some money.”

“And how much are we talking?”

I shrugged my shoulders.

“Eh… you know…”

She raised her eyebrows and leaned in.

“Probably a few million dollars a year in tax savings,” I said.

Ally bounced backward in her seat.

“Dang!”

Her mouth dropped open, and she punched me.

“Ron!”

She leaned against the door, narrowed her glistening eyes, and pressed her lips together in a grin.

“That’s sexy.”

I chuckled and shook my head.

It’s really not.

“Tell me all about it after the service.”

She turned, reached for the door handle, and got out. A mob of parishioners converged on a massive red brick sanctuary in front of us. Her hand took mine as we followed them towards the entrance.

“Thanks for coming with me to check this place out, Ron.”

Thought I'd never get caught dead in a church again.

“Sure, babe.”

It's the least I could do after all you've done for me.

Her sleeveless, peach blouse billowed in the warm breeze, and her toned arms glowed in the fading sunlight. A pair of skinny jeans hugged her curves like a second skin, and her strappy sandals showed off the tropical scene painted on her toenails.

“Like my jeans?”

She glanced back over her shoulder, pulling me along. Her ponytail bounced as she skipped through the parking lot.

“They're not my leggings, but they have a similar effect.”

“Yeah, they do.”

She giggled and winked at me.

“I thought you'd appreciate them.”

They are killing me. Just what I need before walking into church.

As we walked through the entrance, a gust of cold air hit our faces. Bright spotlights cut through the dark auditorium and blinded my eyes. I lifted a hand to shield them. A long-haired hippie sat behind a drum kit on stage, beating them in rhythm with the rest of the band. Electric guitars screamed out licks, and keyboards chimed.

Is this a church service or a rock concert?

We found seats that reminded me more of the AMC Universal Cinema.

I've never seen a church this big.

The band stopped, and a middle-aged woman walked to the center of the stage. She wore a thin headset, designer t-shirt, and jeans.

“Thanks, Kevin,” she said.

She looked over at the musicians as they exited the stage, gesturing to them before looking out into the spotlights, now trained on her.

“Wasn’t that magical, everybody? Let’s give it up for Kevin and our worship team.”

The masses joined her in applauding. Her expression softened as she turned back to her audience, peering into the light.

“Thank you – all of you – for being here today. To join me in a celebration of humanity. A celebration of love.”

I shifted in my seat. Ally rested her hand on top of mine and smiled as she focused on the preacher.

God, you are gorgeous. With so many options. There’s no way you’ll want this forever.

Sitting just past her, a teenage girl glanced over at me and scowled. I smirked as I faced forward.

She knows. She’s probably thinking, “what’s is a pretty girl doing with that dinosaur?”

“Here at The Intersect, we have individuals from a variety of faiths and beliefs.”

A man’s voice called out from the dark.

“Amen!”

The woman gestured in the voice’s direction.

“We have Christians.”

She pivoted and walked across to the other side of the stage.

“People of different colors. Sexual orientations. Religions. We have Jews. Muslims. Hindus. Wiccans.”

A grin crept across her face.

“We even have a few atheists.”

She looked up at the balcony as though it were a star-filled sky and nodded her head.

“And we at The Intersect are grateful for a place where we can all gather as one.”

Wow, church has changed.

The woman continued with an uplifting message about acceptance and love of self. So different from my youth, sitting in the pews of Pastor Clarke’s church with my parents. When she finished, she gave parting blessings to the congregation. The lights came up and revealed a multitude of members rising from their seats and heading back to their lives. As we neared the exit, a tall man with a sturdy build spoke to Ally.

“Hello, miss. Are you new to The Intersect?”

She smiled at him.

“Why, yes, I am.”

“I didn’t think I’d seen you before.”

His crystal blue eyes sparkled as he flashed his perfect teeth at her. Thick, dark hair crowned his head, and a crisp, white oxford shirt adorned his Olympian frame.

“How did you learn about us?”

“Well, I was listening to an inspirational music stream, and an advertisement came on.”

“Oh, great! I placed that ad. I wondered if it would get anyone’s attention.”

He reached out his open palm.

“I’m Mark.”

Ally took his hand and shook it, her cheeks flushing.

“Hey, Mark, I’m Ally. And this is Ron.”

She nodded back at me. The towering Adonis glanced my way and smiled, keeping her hand.

“Very nice to meet both of you. Will you be returning next Sunday?”

He fit her so much better than I did. Young. Tall. Handsome. In fantastic shape.

Sooner or later – maybe sooner – a guy like this will replace me.

She glanced back at me.

“I hope so,” she said.

He released her hand.

“Great! We will look forward to seeing you again, then. You two have a blessed week.”

She cocked her hip as she smiled back at him, tilting her head to the side.

“Thanks, Mark.”

The daylight scraped my eyeballs as we stepped back into it.

“Well, he was handsome.”

“He was nice.”

She took my hand.

“C’mon. Let’s go. Take me home?”

My heart ached. I could tell she liked him.

God only knows what other dashing young devils are courting her.

“Sure,” I said.

In the car, as I drove her home, she broke the silence.

“So, how’s Jessica?”

My grip on the steering wheel tightened.

There's another reason you're probably looking for the exits.

"She's ok."

My neck tingled, and my face flushed as Ally's gaze crawled from the crown of my skull down to my shoulder.

"That's all?"

I sighed.

"She's Jessica, ya know? Same games."

"You sound like you're tired of them. Are you?"

I wish I were.

"Can we talk about something else?"

My Aviator rolled up to a stop sign a few blocks from Ally's house. Another car at the intersection took their merry time to move. I shook my head and scowled.

"Sunday drivers."

Ally turned and faced forward in her seat.

It's unfair, really. To keep her in this. I'm a good guy and all, but I'm no spring chicken. And she could have anyone she wanted.

I pulled into her driveway.

"You coming in?" she asked.

"I've got a lot on my mind, Ally. I think I'm just gonna be on my way."

"Yeah. Ok."

She leaned over to kiss me. Her eyes searched mine as she drew in close. I turned to face her but kept my lips sealed. Her mouth pressed into me like a rubber ball against a concrete wall. She inhaled through her nostrils, and her energy reached for me, but I walled her off. When she pulled back from me, her voice cracked.

"Well... Thanks for going with me, Ron."

“Sure.”

“See ya later?”

“Yeah. See ya.”

“Love you.”

You think you do.

“Love you, too.”

She got out of the car, and my thoughts turned to Jessica. As Ally walked up to her house, my fingers fumbled with my phone.

Ron, don't do it.

CHAPTER 2

Jessica

The plush carpet beneath my feet cradled them, and clear glass windows extended up from the floor, wrapping the dining room on one side. Over my head, large pendulum lights, surrounded by ivory cloth cylinders, dripped down from a two-story ceiling.

“Will you ladies be dining in the sunroom today or one of our private rooms?”

“We’ll be in my usual private dining room, James.”

“Excellent, Mrs. Bloodworth. I thought as much.”

“I want to show my new superstar the royal treatment. Jessica just scored her first big contract for Seminal.”

“Splendid.”

The maître de wore a charcoal suit and a crisp haute couture shirt. He led us past square tables covered in white tablecloths, napkins, and candles housed in a burnt orange stained glass. We turned out of the expansive space and followed him down a smaller, honey oak-paneled corridor. Soft mood lighting kissed the gilded frames on antique art photography that decorated the walls. He led us into a large private dining room with a vaulted ceiling joined to the walls by thick, sawtooth crown molding. The opposite wall housed an enormous, embedded aquarium full of colorful fish. Light passed through it, casting a rippling light on the walls. In the center, a larger table, also covered in white, held place settings of fine, white china and silverware that shimmered in the aquarium light.

James held our chairs out for us and pushed them in under us as we took our seats.

“Will this suffice?” he asked.

“Yes, James. Thank you,” Erika said.

He left us.

“Wow, this place is nice.”

Erika grinned.

“This is actual silver. How did they get this perfect shine?” I said.

I held the knife up and saw my reflection in the blade.

“Ron and I had a set, but I hated it. It was such a pain to polish all those pieces. He usually did it. I didn’t have the patience for it.”

I smirked.

“He can have those.”

“So, the divorce isn’t final yet?”

“Well, I’ve signed the papers, but he has to meet with his attorney. And she has to go before the judge.”

I placed the knife back on the table and used my fingertips to push it in small circles on top of the cloth. My lips curled to the side.

How will my life look without Ron?

“You gonna be ok?” Erika asked.

I swallowed hard.

“Oh, yeah. Men. Who has time for them?”

“Not successful women like us.”

I forced a grin back at her. A cheerful voice provided a welcomed interruption.

“Hello, ladies.”

“Ahhh, Marcus. Perfect timing,” Erika said.

I turned to see Marcus entering with menus in hand. Wearing little clothing. I lifted a hand to cover my parting lips, and a tingling sensation

emerged in my chest.

“Marcus, this is Jessica.”

Marcus flashed a radiant smile as he greeted me.

“Well, hello, Mrs. Jessica.”

My elbow rested on the back of my chair as I turned towards him and let my finger slip between my teeth.

“Hello, Marcus.”

I'm thinking less than 5 percent body fat.

He handed us our menus and placed his hands behind his back, uncovering his bulging package. A tiny, black leather thong wrapped it, and silver thread stitches lined the edges. His thigh muscles flexed, and his member twitched, growing within its cocoon.

I turned my head towards Erika, my eyes still locked on Marcus' package.

“What type of restaurant is this?”

“One where women like us can have whatever we want.”

“No one wore this attire in the main dining room.”

Marcus responded.

“This is the private dining experience, ma'am. Per Ms. Bloodworth's request.”

“It's ok to touch if you want, Jessica. Isn't it, Marcus?”

She reached out her hand, and Marcus stepped over towards her, within her reach. Erika's fingers traced the lines in his abs and snaked their way up to the chiseled granite of his pectorals. His chest expanded and contracted with his breath, like a purebred stallion ready to break from the gate to race. Erika's hand dropped, fingers grazing his abs and brushing his package before parting from his body.

My mouth dropped open, and Erika laughed.

“Thanks, Marcus. That will be all for now.”

He bowed and turned to leave.

God, nice ass, too.

I turned towards Erika, smiling and shaking my head.

“Erika, am I dreaming right now?”

“No, dear. You’re living.”

Marcus disappeared through the only entrance to our private dining room, but his visage remained in my mind’s eye. Associating with Erika came with some delightful privileges. Even the fish in the aquarium danced about, performing for us.

“Let me tell you what I know about you,” Erika said.

She put her elbows on the table and interlaced her fingers.

“You already know I learned about your affair with your old boss. And about your illicit activities with a purchasing manager at Solidarity, your last client with Starlight.”

Blood rushed to my earlobes.

“I believe he was your husband’s boss, right?”

Erika grinned.

“That was a nice touch, Jessica.”

“Thank you? But how did you find that out?”

“Amazing what you learn with persistence and for the right price. Here’s why I care. Seminal communications rose to prominence using an unconventional sales philosophy. I’ve found a high correlation between women with ravenous sexual appetite and disdain for rules and saleswomen who dramatically outperform their principled male competition.”

“I, um…”

“You’ve been careful these last 6 months working for me, Jessica. And I get it. You lost your last job because of your sexuality. You might lose your marriage.”

“Wow. What don’t you know about me?”

Erika sat back in her seat and folded her hands in her lap.

“What I’m telling you, Jessica, is that you can relax and be yourself at Seminal. Haven’t you noticed anything peculiar about the makeup of the staff?”

“All the salespeople are women.”

“Mmm-hmm. And?”

“All the assistants are men. Handsome men.”

I lifted my hand to run it through my hair, grinning.

“Very handsome,” I said.

“And those handsome men, you’ll find, will do whatever you ask.”

She leaned in closer and lowered her voice.

“And I mean, anything. Take your assistant, Matt, for example, who has an amazing oral skill set.”

I burst out in laughter.

“Ok, now I know I’m dreaming.”

“No, this is real. Jessica, let me share a story with you. One you won’t read in Women’s Business Daily.”

“A fine publication.”

“Oh, yes. Not knocking it.”

“Sorry, you were saying.”

“At the beginning of my career, I worked my ass off for Regency Telecom. Remember them?”

“Of course, I do. They dominated the industry. Well, until they went under.”

Erika grinned as she rested an elbow on the table and balled up her fist.

“Because I put them under.”

Damn.

“Men dominated Regency. No matter how good I was – and I was fantastic – it never mattered. I would never have moved up there based on my skills. My salary was shit. I couldn’t even make rent. So, I started working at Synn Gentleman’s Club.”

My eyes widened.

“That’s right. I was a stripper.”

“Wow, I had no idea.”

“It’s a detail I keep secret. But I learned some important lessons at Synn. I learned men’s weaknesses. And the power of my sexuality. The power of the pussy.”

A buzzing sensation lit up my fingers and toes.

This is my kind of bitch.

“The same men who blocked my advance at Regency came to Synn and did whatever I wanted them to. They never even recognized me. Too mesmerized by my tits and ass.”

“They are quite amazing.”

“Thank you. And see, you can be yourself. Feels good, doesn’t it?”

My cheeks and forehead softened, and my shoulders relaxed.

“Yeah, it does.”

“So, I tried out these powers back at Regency. I seduced a manager. Then a director. Amazing how doors opened for me. I got a big break.

Got a sales job. Started landing contracts.”

I laughed.

“Yeah, I didn’t read this in Women’s Business Daily.”

She laughed with me and shook her head.

“And you won’t.”

“But all along, I made a vow to myself. At Regency, powerful men made the world around them however they wanted and used women for their pleasure. I resolved to turn the tables. Make a company where women ruled and men served. And a company that would bury Regency.”

She picked up a knife and studied it.

“People close to me told me, ‘you’ll never be able to do that.’ ‘You’ll get sued.’ You know why I haven’t been?”

I smiled and shrugged.

She pointed the knife at me, narrowing her eyes.

“Because certain men will gladly do anything for a powerful woman who knows what she wants. I hire those men.”

We continued to talk about the future, enjoyed a lovely meal, and flirted with Marcus.

As we left, I waved to Marcus, rolling my fingers.

“Bye, handsome,” I said.

Erika walked next to me and tilted her head towards my ear, lowering her voice.

“You should set up some time with Matt. Learn about his other skills.”

“I think I’ll do that.”

CHAPTER 3

Jessica

I pulled my BMW Coupe into a parking place at the old hotel and smiled up at the doorway of room 737. An electric rush flowed through my body as I opened the car door and stepped out. I let a scandalous heel touch the hot pavement. They tapped it as I walked up to the hotel room in a hip-hugging micro dress that caressed my curves. I grabbed the warm doorknob, found the door open, and slipped inside. A man lingered in the shadows, wearing a trench coat and a brimmed hat. He hid his face from me, and the sound of his heavy breathing mixed with the humming of an air conditioner that needed maintenance. A small lamp sat on a dusty table in the corner and provided the only light. A wad of cash lay there.

"I see you got my message. I trust the full amount is there," I said.

He leaned to the side in his chair and lifted one hand to his chin as if studying me. I closed the door behind me and entered the room. An odor of age, like the smell of a run-down Best Western, hung in the air. I wondered what other scandalous activities had occurred there.

"You know what kind of woman I am, don't you?"

He opened the trench coat, revealing his button-down shirt and dress slacks with a noticeable elevation in the crotch. I grinned at the sight and removed one sleeve of my dress from my invigorated body.

"You realize I'm still married?" I said.

I slipped the other sleeve off my shoulders and slipped the dress down just below my bare breasts. My hands reached up and cupped them, pointing my nipples in his direction.

"I guess it doesn't bother you."

I grinned as the dark figure unzipped his pants.

“It doesn’t bother me. I love cheating on my husband. Why don't I tell you what I did to him?”

He pulled his cock out and encircled it with his thumb and index finger.

"I pretended to prepare a presentation for my husband’s boss. I told him, ‘Babe, I need this contract for my sales numbers, and I need you to pave the way. Can you put in a good word for me?’”

I cooed, and the vibrations from my throat rippled down through my rib cage and into my tingling pussy. My heart fluttered as my fingers caressed my skin.

“I had an intricate plan. Considered every meticulous detail. The anticipation excited me as much as the execution of the crime. I fingered myself many times, savoring every detail of my plan. My innocent husband…”

My chest expanded as I laughed.

"… he thought I left to present my sales pitch to his boss. But I knew my true intentions. That I would take his boss's cock in my mouth and my pussy. That I would cheat on that naïve stooge."

My back turned on the stranger, and my fingers reached for the zipper. They crept up the dress like a spider until they latched on, unzipped it, and revealed my silky skin, inch by inch.

“I wore a dress much like this one. It accentuated my curves. Flaunted them.”

Adrenaline pumped through my veins, sending warm electricity up through my chest into my skull.

“And I was selling something. But not phone service. I used this sexy body to seduce my husband’s boss."

I peeled the dress over my voluptuous hips, letting it fall to the floor, and revealed the black silk thong between my cheeks.

"You see this ass? My husband worships it. That's why it thrilled me to have his boss's hands all over it."

My palms caressed my hips as I glanced over my shoulder at him. He quickened his strokes on the shaft of his hard cock.

"I see you're enjoying this story. Perhaps you are drawn to wicked women like me who break the rules. Who do whatever they want with their pussy."

I reached my fingertips under the thin strings of the thong as I turned to face him. It slipped over my curves and down to the floor.

"Do you see this bare cunt? I fantasized most about giving this away. The ultimate betrayal of my marriage. To let his boss lick it, taste it, and put his cock inside it."

My hand ran across my silky skin and crept towards my clit.

"Just imagine my stupid husband. Sitting at home while I drove to his workplace, planning to betray him."

The stranger panted as he pounded his hard dick through his grip.

"Yessss. It excites you, doesn't it? Thinking about a woman so evil. So cruel. But trust me. You've never conceived of wickedness like mine. Let me tell you more."

I leaned back against the door, lifted one leg, and planted a heel on the chair. My back arched and hips pushed forward as my fingers stroked my clit. It pulsed under my touch, releasing tiny electric waves that rippled up through my abdomen.

"When I arrived at his work, I walked to the center of the lobby in full view of the security cameras and removed my top, baring these tits for

anyone watching. Then I persuaded his boss, convincing him to lead me into the building.”

I sauntered over to the bed, crawled onto it like a cat, and shifted myself around in front of the stranger. My legs spread open as I leaned back and showed him my pussy up close. One elbow propped me up as I reached between my thighs with the other hand.

“His boss had a nice cock. Nicer than my husband's. And he fucked me with the energy of a stallion. I enjoyed being pounded with such vigorous energy, but that isn't why I came several times. Want to know the real reason?”

I stroked my clit as the words spilled from my hateful lips and set my body on fire.

“I came over and over thinking about how humiliated my husband would be. How he'd have to face his boss every day knowing what I had done. That I fucked someone forbidden by my marriage. By men. By God. And that I betrayed the pitiful cock I promised to treasure for life.”

My voice dripped with sadistic mockery.

“Till death do us part.”

I threw my head back and cackled.

“Every time I came, I thought about that dumb fuck, sitting at home oblivious, while his boss's unprotected cock pummeled my pussy.”

The stranger's cock pulsed, and his body writhed in the chair. Like him, I climbed closer and closer to climax as I hissed.

“Isn't it delicious? Just look at you. Hungry as you stroke and think about it. I see the pre-cum on the tip of your cock.”

My body shook as I raced towards my edge.

“Oh, fuck! I'm thinking about my husband's boss dumping his cum into my unfaithful pussy. Staining it. Claiming it. Taking it from my husband, his dutiful employee.”

The stranger's cock surged, and cum began to spill out from the tip of it. As I watched it, I also came from the thrill, seeing him reach orgasm while listening to my evil confession. My body shook, and I moaned loudly, relishing my crime and imagining people in adjacent hotel rooms hearing the diabolical celebration. I continued to stroke my clit softly as my orgasm shook my body, sending waves of decadent pleasure to all my extremities.

"Yes! I am an evil bitch!"

The stranger's cum ran over his fingers and down onto his balls. He breathed heavily as the energy drained from his body. My orgasm subsided and I smiled, looking on his frail, dilapidated body.

"I suppose I have no business being married. I will only abuse the trust of whoever I am married to."

I brought my knees and legs together and lifted my fingertips up to my lips, tasting the wicked juices as I looked at the stranger. My eyes closed.

"The taste of infidelity. Delicious."

I slid away from the stranger to the edge of the bed, rising so he could look at the curves of my naked form one last time. The lamp light traced the dark silhouette of my curves as I walked over to the table where the wad of cash sat and picked it up.

“Thanks, darling.”

Reaching for my dress and shoes, I bent over, showing him a parting glance of my glistening lips. The stranger breathed heavily, lying as

though dead in his chair. I finished dressing and walked towards the door.

"Perhaps I'll be seeing you again?"

"Maybe."

I opened the door and looked back over my shoulder before exiting.

"Okay."

My voice softened, and my throat became scratchy.

"Bye, Ron."

CHAPTER 4

Ron

I sat outside Café Chez Marie wearing a thin cashmere sweater and my nicest jeans. Los Angeles winters rarely called for warmer clothes, and I preferred casual attire, but in just a few months of dating Ally, I developed a habit of dressing up for my dates with her. She dressed up, too, in stylish outfits that flattered her fit physique. Her white Toyota Corolla rolled into the parking lot, and she smiled and waved at me through the window as she drove by in search of a place. I forced a smile until she passed from my line of sight. And then sighed.

This is so hard.

I reflected on the past several months. The heartbreak of discovering Jessica's cheating. Losing my job. And meeting Ally in the middle of that turmoil. Moments of comfort with her. That day in the parking lot of my old work, rollerblading together. She looked so beautiful that day. And her kindness soothed me.

You've been a light for me in a dark time.

Her voice interrupted my thoughts.

"Hey, handsome!"

Her smile stretched from ear to ear as she quickened her steps, rushing to embrace me. Her body felt soft against mine, and her arms wrapped around my neck.

"Are you hungry?" I asked.

"Famished!"

We stepped inside the elegant old French-style home turned upscale café, and a hostess led us to a more private table in the corner of the outdoor patio. The Los Angeles sun warmed the tiles under our feet

despite the cooler temperatures. We collapsed the umbrella covering our table to let the sunlight offset the soft breeze that passed through. A server arrived and greeted us.

“Bonjour les amis!”

“We don’t speak French,” I said.

“He’s saying ‘Good Morning’, babe.”

Ally turned to the server with her usual glowing persona and responded.

“Bonjour à vous, gentil monsieur!”

They continued back and forth, and I grinned, watching her. Ally’s pride in her execution of some French pleasantries provided a charming distraction from the dreaded conversation I needed to have with her. The anticipation sat like an elephant on my chest, squashing any appetite for food.

“What do you want, babe? He’s asking.”

“Oh, I’ll just have some coffee for now, please.”

The server responded with a mixture of militancy and classy hospitality.

“Très bon!”

I watched him walk away, and my heart rose into my throat. I struggled to look at Ally.

“Babe, you seem preoccupied this morning. And at church the other day.”

The inside of my cheek stung under the clenching bite of my teeth.

“You’ve been pretty distracted.”

“Yeah, I’ve got a lot on my mind.”

“Wanna talk about it?”

Ally’s listening ear and kind, piercing gaze provided a blanket of soothing safety in past conversations. But this morning, they both dug

into me like needles.

“Ugh.”

I examined my fingers and picked at a cuticle.

“Not really, but I need to.”

She reached out and took my hands.

“Whatever it is, Ron, you can tell me.”

God, why do you have to be so perfect? And why the hell don't I want that?

“Ally, we need to talk about us.”

The stake of my words pierced my chest, causing my heart to burn.

Ally's back straightened in retreat, but her hands remained on mine.

“Ok,” she said.

“Look, you're amazing. You're gentle. Kind. Compassionate. You've been the perfect listener during this painful time for me.”

“Ron, I told you, I felt compelled to. It has been a pleasure to hear you.”

“I know, and I appreciate that.”

Oh God, this is torture.

“But I don't think I'm being fair to you.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well...”

My chest tightened. I took a deep breath and looked away, avoiding her gaze that beamed into my soul.

“I'm married, and while I am divorcing Jessica, my heart is still struggling with feelings about her.”

“Ok.”

Her hands slid back from mine.

"Ally, I'm sorry. I'm just bewildered right now. It's a hard time for me."

"But we can get through that together," Ally said.

I sighed.

"Ally, it's harder than that. Jessica is in my veins. We've been together for so long, it's like she owns me. Or has a spell on me. I don't know. But because of it, I'll never be the man you deserve. I'm not the person you should be with."

"I like the person I'm with."

"Besides, I'm older. You're young and beautiful. You should be with someone closer to your age, handsome, in good shape."

She leaned back in her chair.

"Ron, you don't know me at all if you think I care about that."

"You might think it doesn't matter. Maybe it doesn't right now. But eventually..."

"Ron, I'm not Jessica. I won't betray your trust just because some asshole with muscles pays me some attention."

"You say that, but..."

She sat up and leaned forward, putting her elbows on the table and palms down on it. Her eyes bored into me.

"Ron, let me be straight with you. I get hit on by handsome men all the time."

My teeth clenched, and a burning pain spread up into my throat.

I knew it. Tons of guys want her. Younger, more attractive men. All ready to snag her away from grandpa.

"I turn them down every time. They don't appeal to me."

"They don't appeal now, but we haven't been together that long, Ally. This is still new and... to quote you, 'interesting.'"

She scowled at my air quotes.

“Don’t mock me. It is interesting.”

“How long will that last?”

“Who knows? But, Ron, it won’t end over a good-looking guy. I know what I like and don’t like.”

“You’re missing the point, Ally. What I’m saying is…”

“No, Ron, you’re missing the point.”

She winced, and her chin trembled.

“I love what we have. What we had, anyway, before you wandered into this mind fuck you’re inflicting on yourself.”

My mouth dropped open.

“That’s right, Ron, I said ‘fuck’.”

“I’m sorry, I’ve just…”

“Never heard me say ‘fuck’? Cause I don’t say it. But this fucking sucks!”

She paused, taking a deep breath, and then lowered her voice.

“I am happy. Happy with you. Why is that not enough for you?”

I wish I knew.

“It’s just… Be realistic, Ally. I’m almost old enough to be your dad.”

She shook her head, tears streaming down her cheeks.

“Ron, I don’t care about our ages. Why are you stuck on that?”

I hung my head and sighed.

“Do you want out of this? You do, don’t you?” she asked.

“I just think you’re wasting your time with me.”

“Don’t you think I should decide what I do with my time?”

“Sure, but you’re young. You have your entire life ahead of you, and you don’t know what you want yet.”

Her eyebrows furrowed, and her voice lowered to a growl.

“I don’t know what I want?”

Ok, you’re right. A bit hypocritical.

“Listen to me, Ron. I’m here because I want to be. I like you. But I do not force things, and I won’t force you.”

The server returned with our drinks. She sat back and mustered half her former warmth and exchanged more French with him.

Why can’t I snap out of it? Live in the moment? Even if she’ll dump me for a younger model. She’s incredible.

I shook my head at myself.

That’s the problem. She’s amazing. Too amazing. Just when I get attached, she’ll be cozying up to a Mark. Or an Austin.

The server left, and her voice softened as she reached across the table for me.

“Ron?”

I drew my arms close to my chest and hung my head. She sighed, pulling her hands back.

“I love you, but you’re confused. If you want me, you have my number. For now, I’m giving you space to work things out.”

She rose from her chair and went to find the server.

It’s for the best, Ron. Now, she can find someone who doesn’t look like her aging father.

Ally returned but didn’t sit. She wiped a tear from her eye and sniffled as she spoke.

“Goodbye, Ron. Thanks for letting me walk with you this far.”

Part of me wanted to reach out for her, but I watched her walk away.

My heart sat like a brick in my chest. Her gorgeous figure, her

voluptuous, tight ass, and her beautiful, healing aura all faded until I sat at the table alone. I shook my head.

What is wrong with you?

My phone rang.

My attorney's office?

I answered.

“Mr. Stroker? This is Ms. Sullivan’s legal assistant, Stephanie. How are you today?”

I’m confused, but is that relevant?

“Doing great. How are things going with my case?”

“Well, that’s just it, Mr. Stroker. There’s a complication. Ms. Sullivan needs to see you here at the office at your earliest convenience.”

CHAPTER 5

Jessica

Back at the office, I stepped behind my desk and took a seat. The curtains were pulled away from the thick, black steel beams that separated my windowpanes and cut the backdrop of downtown Los Angeles. Above my head, a warm hue glowed from underneath the tray ceiling and can lights surrounded it, raining down a soft white light onto the mahogany paneled walls. The matching floor enveloped me in a lively visual blanket of reddish-brown. A polished chrome and leather reclining chair filled the open space. I grinned.

That looks like a great place to fuck.

The rounded edges of the desk framed a glossy reflection of the ceiling, clean and new.

I'm going to love this job.

A piece of polished, black marble, engraved with my name, sat next to a sleek phone. I reached for it and punched a button to summon my assistant, and a deep voice greeted me through the speaker.

“Yes, Mrs. Stroker?”

“Matt, I need you to come see me in my office.”

“Ok, boss. Be right there.”

I released the call and reclined in my chair, letting it cradle my hips and back like a soft hammock. I closed my eyes and pictured myself on top of Ron, confessing another slew of transgressions, provoking him to lust-driven anger and need to punish me.

And I might let him.

I shook my head and grinned. My hand slid the single drawer in my desk open and took out a small picture of Ron and me.

We've both been getting off on you having the power. Odd. I wonder how long that will last.

My fingers tucked the picture in the drawer and pushed it towards the back.

Definitely not forever.

"You called for me, Mrs. Stroker?"

"Yes, Matt, come in. And close the door, please."

He complied. I got up from the desk and walked around it, pointing at the floor in front of the reclining chair.

"Stand right there."

"Yes, ma'am."

He stood a good foot above me. His broad shoulders wore the white dress shirt well. I reached for the crimson necktie that collared him and stroked it between my fingers.

"This color is too powerful, Matt. I'd like you to wear something more subtle. More subservient."

He grinned.

"Whatever you want, boss."

I walked around him, studying his body up and down. His pants, pressed and clean, flattered him.

"Someone in your house knows how to use an iron."

"Yes, ma'am. I iron all my clothes."

Standing behind him, I slipped my fingers underneath his belt and tugged.

"This looks a little loose. Take it off."

He lifted his hands and unfastened the belt.

“Erika brought it to my attention that you have an exceptional skill set you failed to tell me about.”

“What’s that, Mrs. Stroker?”

I continued walking around him, tracing his large tricep with my fingertips as I came back in front of him.

“Look at me.”

His deep brown eyes reminded me of a puppy. Broken. Ready to learn. To be mastered.

I lifted a hand to his face, placing my index finger under his chin and my thumb just below his bottom lip. My gaze dropped to study it.

“I understand this mouth is rather… shall we say… gifted?”

My hand released him, and I turned and stepped away.

“Take off your pants, Matt. I’d like you stripped bare for your next assignment.”

“As you wish.”

I began unbuttoning my blouse in the front, my back to him.

“You have nice manners, Matt, but stash them for now. Unless I ask you a question, I want you to remain quiet and just be pretty for me. Can you do that, please?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

I grinned, and my eyebrows slanted towards my nose.

“Good boy.”

With the blouse unbuttoned, my arms reached underneath it and behind my back to unfasten my bra.

“Matt, take all of your clothes off except your underwear. You have underwear on, right?”

“Mmm-hmm.”

“Leave that on. For now.”

I slipped out of my blouse and bra and dropped them to the floor. As I turned towards him, he glanced at my breasts and then up at me.

“Go ahead, look at them while you finish.”

He swallowed hard as his gaze returned to them. His pants fell around his ankles, revealing his muscular thighs.

“Those are nice,” I said.

The pouch in the front of his cotton boxers twitched. I lifted my hands to my breasts, cupping them from underneath.

“Keep looking, Matt. You want to touch my tits, don’t you?”

“Very much.”

I chuckled as I watched him remove his shirt.

“Of course, you do. But you’ll only touch me when and where you’re instructed.”

I walked over to him, reached out, and fondled the growing bulge in his boxers. He exhaled, and his chest and stomach muscles tensed.

My fingers left his package and traced the lines of his chiseled thighs as I crouched to the floor. I picked up his belt and necktie.

“These might come in handy.”

As I rose, I brushed the belt back and forth across the pooch of his crotch. I held it up in front of his eyes.

“I want to use this on you, Matt, but that will make too much noise for normal business hours. People might question what we’re doing in here. So, I’ll need you to work late.”

My eyebrow cocked, and I pushed my tongue between my teeth into my cheek.

“Lay down here.”

I gestured to the reclining chair, and he obeyed.

“Lift your hands over your head.”

The necktie made the perfect restraint for his wrist as I used it to tie them together, pulling his arms tight above him and over the top edge of the chair. My hands explored his arm muscles.

“You’re a fine specimen, Matt.”

I unzipped my pencil skirt and slid it off my hips along with my panties.

“Now, let’s see about these oral skills.”

My lips caressed his chin as I hovered over him. I climbed up his body until my knees rested against the chair’s cushioning on either side of his head. Anchoring my feet on the armrests, I gripped the chrome bar at the top of the chair with my hands and lowered my hips, my bare pussy poised just above his mouth.

“Lick it, Matt.”

His tongue grazed my lips, and my eyes closed.

“Yesss.”

Another soft stroke. He explored my outer labia, first with the flat of his tongue. Then he lifted his head and opened his lips to caress them. My mouth fell open.

Erika, you were right.

He parted my pussy with his tongue and brought it up through the crevice of my inner lips to the top and brushed my clitoris.

“I hope you have a sturdy neck, Matt. You’re going to be doing this a lot.”

He lifted his chin and planted it at the base of my opening, anchoring his mouth and pressing me open. The tip of his tongue began dancing on my clit, and my whole crotch tingled.

“That’s it, little whore. Please your boss. Eat her pussy like a good employee.”

Heat spread from between my thighs into my ass cheeks and up my abdomen. The bulb of my clit hardened to meet his hungry strokes. His heavy breaths mixed with sounds of sucking as he closed his lips over my mound and buried his tongue deep into my hole.

“Fuck, yes!”

I ground my hips into him, and his neck strength supported me like a stool. Vibrations of intense pleasure ripped up through my torso into my chest, and my leg muscles tensed as my arousal built.

He began bouncing his face against my pubic bone, fucking me with his long, masterful tongue. With each thrust, it found its way deep inside me and pulled at my g spot, then slid out and up to brush my clit. Over and over. The simultaneous stimulation of all my spots made for a slow, intense build.

“Yess, fuck that pussy with your mouth.”

He pounded it, slamming his face into me. My pelvis held in place, positioned to receive his thrusts. I put one hand on the back of the chair, steadied myself, and took a handful of his hair with my other hand. My ass cheeks tightened as the electricity from my cunt intensified. It jolted up my spine, into the back of my neck, and tickled the crown of my head. My mouth watered, and the smell of fresh sweat on both our skin filled my nostrils. I pulled his face deep into me and pushed harder with my hips into his hungry mouth.

“I’m going to come on your face! Keep licking. Lick my clit!”

Matt’s tongue focused its repetitions on my hard nub, sending me over the edge. An explosive orgasm erupted from my cunt. It burned like

lava pouring out over the edges of my crotch and spilled across my skin.

“Fuck, yesss!”

My body quivered, and I released his hair, needing both my hands on the back of the chair to keep my balance. He kept his face planted deep in me to receive the gushing juices that poured out of me. My temples burned, and all the tension in my forehead, neck, and chest ebbed away in the sweet afterglow of my climax. I melted like butter on him, my hips falling onto his pectorals and sliding down to his abdomen, leaving a trail of my cum on his skin.

“Good boy.”

My chest heaved as I gasped for air, and my fingers played with the line of his glistening chin. I took a drop of my juices off him and pushed it into his mouth.

“Suck it off, little whore.”

His juicy lips wrapped around my finger, and his tongue licked it clean. His eyes sparkled as he gazed into mine. My leg wobbled as I put a foot onto the floor and struggled to stand on it.

“That was good.”

I walked to the back of the chair and unfastened his hands.

“You know, Matt, I like you this way. Powerless.”

He let his arms fall alongside his body, still reclined.

“You boys can’t be trusted with power. You’ll just break things. Now get your clothes on.”

He stood and bent over to pick up his pants and shirt. As he straightened up, I stepped up to him and grabbed hold of his stiff shaft through the tight mesh of his underwear.

“I’ll be playing with this later. Something for you to look forward to.”

I cocked my eyebrow as I smiled at him.

“Gotta keep you motivated.”

I chuckled.

“Now, go get me some coffee.”

CHAPTER 6

Ron

I pulled my Audi up in front of the tall glass-tiled building. A sizable, polished chrome sign read "Sullivan & Associates Family Law." Before he died, old man Sullivan left his practice to his daughter Sarah. With his death, his traditional approach to family law – turning every divorce into a long, expensive battle – passed with him. She adopted a fresh, more cooperative philosophy in her practice, believing civility and compassion achieved a more successful transition for everyone involved. I stepped out of my car and walked up to the entrance. As I approached, the door opened, and a tall gentleman in a tailored suit greeted me.

"Hello, Mister Stroker. Miss Sullivan is finishing up with another client, but she'll be with you in a bit. Follow me."

The gentleman led me to an elevator that took us to the top floor. As we exited, he waved his hand around the large waiting area.

"Take a seat anywhere you like. There's fresh coffee. Is there anything else I can get for you while you wait?"

"No, thanks."

I entered the lavish client lounge of Sullivan and Associates. Commissioned artwork in ornate frames hung on every wall, and rich antique furniture decorated the room. Each piece was built from dark cherry wood and re-upholstered in a soft crimson fabric. I took my seat and picked up a magazine. Sarah Sullivan's portrait looked at me from across the room. She stood next to her aged father in a charcoal suit that hugged her form and revealed her curvaceous, hourglass figure. The suit jacket parted just low enough to reveal slight cleavage.

I smirked. Despite her good intentions, most of her male clients hired her as a stab at their ex-wives, and so, her plans for civility were often thwarted. The legal teams of their exes made more money clinging to antiquated, antagonistic thinking, so of course, they incited their blood-thirsty female clients with news that their husbands hired an attractive female lawyer. Most of them played into their hands and dug in their heels for a long, bitter battle. But I was done fighting, and that's why I chose Sarah Sullivan. A door opened, and she emerged. Her warm smile radiated and filled the room when she saw me.

"Hello, Mister Stroker. Good to see you. Come with me, please."

I rose and followed her. Her business skirt hugged her hips, and her taut calves flexed with each step, further enhanced by the tall heels she wore. Her shoulders fit into the suit jacket that matched her skirt and tapered down to her slender waist. My heart beat as I watched her, mesmerized by her movement and her figure. I swallowed hard.

Focus, Ron. You are not here to lust after your attorney.

She stopped and turned, gesturing into a room.

"In here, please."

I stepped into a small, private office that reminded me of my last visit to my therapist. Two soft leather couches billowed with full cushions and faced each other. One wall bore a large, colorful tapestry depicting an abstract blend of swirls. The fabric shimmered, and the long threads reached out to me as though their softness offered me comfort.

"Take a seat. Can I call you 'Ron'?"

My face flushed. Just the sound of her voice saying my first name stirred my inner teenage boy.

"Sure, call me Ron."

She grinned, perhaps noticing my embarrassment, and sat across from me. I tried my best to avoid glancing at the cross of her shapely legs.

“Your assistant said there was a complication?”

“Ah, yes. Who is Austin Wilder?”

Oh my god.

I groaned as I leaned over and planted my face in my hands.

“Austin used to be my boss. He’s the guy that Jessica hooked up with. Right on my old desk.”

“Oh, my goodness.”

“Yeah, classy guy.”

The buzz of my attraction to Sarah evaporated in the heat that rose in my body. My neck stiffened.

“What does he have to do with my case?”

“Well, not much except I got an insider tip from a colleague.”

“A tip?”

“Yes. Just a tip. It might be nothing. But he may file a lawsuit against you for libel. He claims you cost him his job and career?”

“That’s rich. And a lie. But what does that have to do with my divorce?”

“Technically nothing, but imagine if you got sucked into an ugly legal battle with him at this time. I’d rather not have our otherwise simple case colored by the shadow of this other conflicting story about you.”

“It’s ridiculous. He lost his job because he’s a worthless employee.”

“I might be able to make this go away, Ron, but I need whatever information you have about him related to you.”

“I don’t know what to tell you. My wife called on him to sell phone service to my old company. Then he had sex with her on my old

desk. Lots of co-workers knew about it.”

“Do you have evidence?”

I leaned back as my chest caved, and my hands fell into my lap.

“I did. But I destroyed it.”

“You did what?”

“Yeah... I know. That was dumb.”

“Were there any witnesses?”

“Well, kinda.”

“Why do you say ‘kinda’?”

“Because no one witnessed the actual act. But I blackmailed them into reenacting it in front of several co-workers.”

Sarah rubbed her chin.

“Ok. Do you have anything else that might discredit his claims?”

I lurched up in my seat, my spine straightening, and my hand covered my mouth.

“I might. My new boss recovered a lot of financial documents from my old company. They showed Austin embezzling funds and running them into the ground.”

“Can you get hold of those?”

“I think so.”

“Ok, that’s solid. Work on getting them for me. With any luck, I can stop this before it gets traction. And as for your case, my legal assistant put together all your paperwork. I understand you have the signed papers from your x-wife?”

“Yes, that’s correct.”

“Aside from this Austin clown, this will be one of the easiest divorces I’ve done in a while.”

I gritted my teeth, thinking about Austin Wilder.

It wasn't enough that you fucked my wife and fired me, you prick.

“So, if you don't mind my asking, what will you do after your divorce, Mr. Stroker?”

Besides strangle Austin?

I shrugged, looking out the window.

“I have to find a way out of the city.”

“But you just got a new job. A good one.”

“Yeah, I did. I'm hoping perhaps I can transfer to a different office.”

“Didn't your company just relocate their home office here?”

I know. Wishful thinking.

“They did.”

“Why do you want to move?”

I took a deep breath and blew it all out.

“I'm great at my job, Ms. Sullivan. Some might even say successful. And I'm in decent shape for my age. But, with women, I am nothing more than a plaything. Now, this city holds vivid memories that rub that in my face every day. I want out.”

Her eyes filled with sadness.

“I don't know you very well, Mr. Stroker, but I feel certain there are women who would show you something different about yourself. Treat you better.”

I thought of Ally—the one woman who offered what Sarah Sullivan described. But I knew it couldn't last. How could it? I sighed again.

“Not that it's any of my business, but speaking as a woman, perhaps your recent experiences have colored your ideas about women. And I

can understand why, but don't let those ideas keep you from the good ones."

I frowned.

Easier said than done.

"Maybe so. All I know is this city sucks for me now, but my career is rooted here. As much as I want out, I don't have a place to land. No leads for jobs anywhere else, and as you pointed out, my company just moved here. They have offices elsewhere, but this is their home base, so they'll want me here. Everyone I know in my industry is here. I'm stuck."

I put an elbow into the thick cushion on the back of the couch. My head rested in my hand.

"It would take a small fortune to pick up and move my whole life somewhere else."

"Hmmm. I don't usually counsel my clients this way, but if you needed money, we could have gotten it out of your x-wife, given what she did. To your credit, you didn't want to go that route."

"No, as much as she probably deserves that, I don't want revenge. I just want out of the marriage. I'll have to find another way."

Sarah smiled.

"You're a great guy, Ron. A lot more than a woman's plaything, I think."

I pressed my lips together into a forced grin.

"I hope you find what you're looking for."

"Thanks."

"As for your case, don't worry about this little complication. Get me those documents, and I'll see what I can do. Then I'll get in front of a

judge. With any luck, neither you nor your wife will need to be there.”

“That’s good.”

“Once we get your old boss under control, I can get a court date. With any luck, I’ll have your divorce done as early as the end of the month.”

She stood and gestured towards the door. As I neared it, she put a hand on my shoulder and looked into my eyes.

“It has been an honor to meet you, Mr. Stroker. I’m certain there are better things ahead for you.”

My shoulder eased under her touch.

“Thanks, Sarah.”

I hope so.

CHAPTER 7

Jessica

My naked skin shivered in the bathroom air, pores opened and breathing after a hot shower. I ran my fingertips from my clavicles down the slopes of my breasts to my nipples.

“Mmmm.”

My mind conjured the memory of Matt’s tongue lapping at my pussy lips.

I quite like my new toy.

A sharp knock at the front door downstairs interrupted my reverie.

Really?

I reached for my bathrobe, wrapped myself in it, and headed down the stairs.

A second round of knocks rapped at the door.

"Okay, okay. Don't get your panties in a wad. I'm coming."

I opened the door to see Ron standing on the front porch. Sweat drenched his face, his shirt appeared stained with brown splotches, and his pants looked messy and wet.

“Dear God, what happened to you?”

"Can I come in, please?"

I frowned, looking him up and down.

"Did you bring the money?"

My tongue peeked out between my teeth as I smirked.

"Very funny, Jessica."

"Ok, grumpy. Geez. Come on in, I guess."

Ron was carrying an envelope in his right hand that appeared crumpled and soiled with wet spots. He walked into the kitchen, casting a

sideways glare at me as he passed.

Nice to see you, too.

"So, Ron, what's this about?"

He turned and extended the crumpled envelope to me.

"It's about this."

I took the envelope from him and opened it. It contained a letter with a header that read "Barkley & Associates." My eyes widened like saucers as they perused the words.

"Dear Mr. Stroker, I am writing to inform you that my client, the late Mr. Frederick P. Stroker, has named you and your wife, Jessica, in his final will and testament, regarding the dissemination of assets from his estate, to receive a sum of ten million US dollars."

"Holy shit."

"I know."

"So, who is Fred?"

"You remember old Uncle Fred."

"Not really."

"You met him one time at a family reunion. He talked your ear off and followed you around despite your best attempts to elude him."

Ohh, that Uncle Fred.

"I think he liked your ass, but he would never admit it. He was a church man."

I grinned and raised one eyebrow, looking up from the letter.

"Well, most men do. Especially church men."

Ron shook his head at me, smirking.

"Anyway, old Uncle Fred just died and left an enormous fortune to members of the family. Including you and me. Each of us is to receive

5 million dollars."

"Yes, maybe you forgot I can read."

"There's a catch, though. Did you see that?"

I returned my attention to the letter and continued to read aloud.

"The will specifies conditions for the disbursement of this money to you. Specifically, you and Mrs. Stroker must be happily married or make demonstrable efforts to repair your marriage. My client gave specific instructions for the validation of these conditions.

Please, see the enclosed brochure for a couple's retreat, which you and Mrs. Stroker must attend together for the entire month of your choosing, taking part in all required therapy sessions and workshops while on the retreat. My client's estate will cover all expenses.

I have contacted the retreat director and arranged for communications to certify your completion of the retreat and satisfaction of the will.

Please contact me if you have any questions. My card is enclosed.

Regards,

H. M. Barkley

Principal Attorney

Barkley & Associates"

A frown spread across my face.

"Oh, that is just bullshit."

"I know. When I first read the letter, I threw it in the trash. Then I woke up this morning in a panic. I had taken the trash out before bed, and the garbage gets picked up early in my neighborhood. So, I ran out and intercepted the garbage men as they emptied my canister into their truck. It took 30 minutes to dig through all that trash to find this stupid thing."

My chest erupted with laughter at the image of Ron fumbling through piles of trash in the back of a garbage truck.

"I'm glad you're amused."

I waved the letter in the air as I regained control of myself.

"We have to go to a retreat together? For a month?"

Ron laced the dryness in his voice with a touch of sarcasm.

"Well, you read it. We have to be in the throes of marital bliss or go on a retreat to get the magic back."

"So Fred used his money to push his personal values about marriage on us. That's rich."

I raised my head up to the ceiling and pointed at it.

"Fuck you, Uncle Fred."

I looked back at Ron.

"So why don't we stay married long enough to collect the money. Afterward, you can finish this divorce you started."

"No, I called the attorney's office yesterday after I read the letter. Uncle Fred thought of that. We get paid over 5 years every month if the conditions are met."

"As in, the ones where we stay married."

Ron nodded.

"There's one out. If we attend this dumb retreat, a certified therapist at the retreat can write a letter stating we tried our best but have irreconcilable differences."

"Well, let's just forge the letter."

"A representative from this Barkley and Associates firm has to witness the therapist signing it."

"Oh my God, Fred, you ass."

“And it has to be notarized. But if we go on the retreat and attend the therapy sessions…”

“Wait, we have to go to therapy sessions?”

“How’s a therapist going to write the letter, Jessica? Yes, we go to therapy sessions.”

“Fuck that, Ron. I’m not doing therapy.”

I put a hand on my hip, and my head sank on my shoulders as I glared at the floor.

"This is so obnoxious."

“Of course, it is. But Jessica…”

I pulled the brochure out of the envelope. And laughed.

"They named this place ‘Second Chance Retreats’. Really?!"

"I know. The whole thing is ridiculous. But imagine what you could do with 5 million dollars. You could start over. I could start over. If we get through the month and get that damn letter, we never have to see each other again."

I shifted my stance.

So that's what this is about.

"You just can't wait to get rid of me."

His lips parted, then pressed together in a flat line as his eyebrows furrowed.

I guess the crime and punishment games are getting old for you?

"C'mon, Jessica. Think about it. I need a fresh start."

“No, Ron, I get it. No one will want me if they know the truth about me.”

I dropped the letter and turned away from him, choking back the frog in my throat. Walking a few steps away, I took a deep breath.

"So, you want to do this?"

"Of course, I don't. But the real question is, can either of us turn our backs on 10 million dollars? On financial freedom? I can do anything for a month for that opportunity. Can't you?"

I didn't need the money. Even with 5 million dollars, I'd keep my job. The memory of Matt's tongue crossed my mind. I had a great job working for Erika.

It has excellent perks.

Still, 5 million dollars. I'd be an idiot to turn down a chance to score that kind of money. Even if it meant therapy sessions and time with my soon to be ex-husband. Besides, it included a beach resort.

"Can I think about it?"

Ron's eyes widened.

"Can you think about it? Jessica, it's 5 million dollars."

I mocked him with a whiny voice.

"5 million dollars."

"Oh, c'mon, Jessica. Give me a break. What? Just because you got a new job, now you don't need money anymore?"

"I kinda don't."

Ron gasped and threw up his hands, turning his back to me. He placed his hands on the counter as he muttered.

"You kind of owe me, you know?"

My mouth fell open, and I glared at the back of his head.

"Ron, don't you dare."

"You do. Not that you care, but you owe me big time."

I raised my voice.

“Not a convincing argument, Ron! I hate being backed into a corner. You know that. I told you I’ll think about it.”

“Fine!”

He waved a hand at me as he walked towards the door.

“Just don’t think about it long. We have to give the attorney an answer by the end of the month.”

I hollered after him.

“Find out if that resort has alcohol. Cause I’m gonna need a lot of fucking alcohol if I go through with this.”

The door slammed, and I sighed.

I may owe you. But I’m not doing anything for anyone against my will. Not even for you, Ron Stroker.

CHAPTER 8

Jessica

“Hold still, Lucy!”

Little Amber Levinson did her best to restrain her golden retriever, but Lucy’s enthusiasm for car rides made it challenging. I grinned, still looking at the road.

“Thanks for doing this with me, Mrs. Jessica.”

“You’re welcome, dear.”

We arrived in front of the house where Amber grew up, and I parked on the street. She turned her head towards the front porch and rubbed Lucy’s head as she took a deep breath.

“You sure about this, Amber?”

“Yeah. I’m sure.”

“Ok. Let’s go.”

We both got out of the car. She stood on the sidewalk as I walked around the car to join her. Her hand reached out to me. I gave her my hand, and she took me a few steps down the sidewalk. Away from the house. Towards the spot where we first met. When she reached it, she turned and looked up at me. I crouched down to look at her on eye level. A tear formed in the corner of her eye as she looked down.

“This is the best spot in the whole world.”

My eyes moistened, and a smile broke across my face.

“I think so, too.”

She leaned forward.

“You saved my life, Mrs. Jessica.”

I reached for her and wrapped my arms around her.

“You saved mine, too, sweetie.”

Her little arms squeezed my neck. I sighed in her embrace.

I do not deserve this little girl's love. But I'm grateful for it.

Lucy barked at a passing car. I chuckled at her.

“What d’ya say we get Lucy inside before she goes chasing a car down the street?”

Amber backed away and nodded her head at me, resolve in her eyes.

We held hands as we walked up to the home of the late Frank Levinson, her abuser.

I hope you're rotting in hell. When I get there, I am going to find you. Then you'll get what's coming to you.

A For Sale sign in the yard read, “Sally Stewart, Realtor.” I took out my cell phone and dialed the number on the sign.

“Hello, Sally. This is Jessica Stroker. We spoke earlier?”

Sally’s voice cracked as if choking on cigarette smoke.

“Oh, yes. Hello. Are you at the house?”

“I am.”

“Ok, there’s a keypad lock on the front door. The combination is 4856. Just pull it shut when you leave. It’ll lock. And if you have questions, just call me.”

“Thank you, Sally.”

Amber followed me up the steps to the front door, and I used the pin number to unlock it. The door made a sound like a bandaid being ripped off skin. Cold air from inside washed over my face.

“Ok, missy. Let’s do this.”

Amber yelled at her dog.

“C’mon, Lucy!”

Inside, the clean, dark wood floors shone with the soft reflection of daylight coming in through the windows. No furniture remained. No pictures hung on the wall. A scent of pine wafted by my nostrils.

“Look familiar?” I asked.

Amber scrunched up her lips and forehead as she looked around.

“Everything is gone.”

“Yeah, sweetie. People do that when they sell a house.”

“Who’s selling it?”

“Well, I don’t know. I’d have to ask the realtor.”

“I want to buy it.”

I laughed.

She frowned at me.

“I’m serious, Mrs. Jessica.”

I crouched down and reached for her hand.

“Do you have any money?”

“I have 5 dollars.”

Her innocence inspired the spread of warmth in my chest.

“You are precious. You know that?”

“I want you to call the realtor, Mrs. Jessica. Find out how much it is and who’s selling it.”

“Sweetie, I’m sure it’s more than 5 dollars.”

“Please, Mrs. Jessica.”

“Why do you want to buy it? I would think this place holds terrible memories for you.”

She looked around at the walls.

“It does. I want to fix it.”

Wow.

“I’ve been listening to Agnes at the shelter, Mrs. Jessica. They don’t have enough room. They have to turn people away.”

She walked into a large, empty room and placed her tiny hand on the wall.

“I want to make this place like St. Ruth’s. Help more kids like me.”

A sharp pain pierced my chest, and I swallowed hard. Tears formed in my eyes. My voice broke up as I spoke.

“Wow, Amber. That’s…”

Amber skipped back over to me.

“You could help me, Mrs. Jessica. We could call it St. Jessica’s.”

I lifted a hand to my mouth. A sharp prickle pierced the membranes behind my eyes and my throat thickened.

This kid.

She took my hand from my mouth in both her hands and squeezed it.

“Please, call the lady back, Mrs. Jessica.”

I blew a heavy breath through my pursed lips as a tear rolled down my cheek.

“Ok, sweetie.”

I stood up and pulled out my phone. My hand wiped away the tear as I pulled Sally Stewart’s number up in my history and touched it to dial. She answered.

“Hey, Mrs. Stewart. I… well,”

I looked down at Amber’s puppy dog eyes gazing up at me.

“We have some questions.”

“Oh, you and your daughter?”

“She’s like a daughter to me, but no, she’s just my friend.”

“I see. Well, what are your questions?”

“Who is selling the house?”

“My client is the son of the late Mr. Levinson.”

My mouth dropped open. I covered the phone and spoke to Amber.

“You have a brother?”

She crossed her little arms across her chest.

“Yes. I don’t know him. He left when I was little. But father always talked about him like he was sooo great. Why couldn’t I be more like my brother? Bla bla bla.”

My eyes narrowed. I took my hand off the phone and resumed my conversation.

“I see. Why does he want to sell?”

“He lives in upstate New York. He doesn’t have use for holding onto a house in California.”

“Ok. And how did he come into possession of it?”

“Mr. Levinson left it to him in his will, along with all of his other possessions. As you can see, the house is empty. My client had everything sold or donated. All that’s left is the house.”

My teeth gritted and nostrils flared.

Of course, you would give all your belongings to some son you have but neglected to leave anything to your precious daughter.

Fuck you, Frank.

“Mrs. Stroker?”

“Yes. Sorry, so how much does your client want for the house?”

“It’s priced to sell. He wants to dump it as soon as possible, so he’s only asking \$615,000.”

That is priced to sell.

“Would he consider taking any less?”

“I don’t know. I suppose if it stays on the market much longer, he might. Things have been slow. Even at that price, it might not sell right away. But he is eager to get rid of it, so he’ll jump at the first offer someone makes.”

“Ok, Sally. Thank you. That’s all my questions for now.”

“You’re welcome.”

I hung up the phone and looked at Amber.

“Sweetie, it’s more than 5 dollars.”

“How much more? I could make cookies and sell them.”

I put a hand on her head and smiled.

“It’s a lot more, honey.”

She pushed out her bottom lip.

“You just need a good job, one day, like Mrs. Jessica. Maybe then you can come back and buy it from whoever owns it.”

And then it hit me. My muscles became rigid.

“Unless…”

Her eyes lit up.

“Unless what, Mrs. Jessica?”

Unless I inherit 5 million dollars.

“I don’t know, sweetie. I’d have to do something very hard for me, but if it worked out…”

She jumped up and down, squealing with glee.

“Oh, Mrs. Jessica, please, do it.”

“I’d need to go away for a while.”

“It’s ok, Mrs. Jessica. I’ll be safe at the shelter. I’ll miss you, but oh, Mrs. Jessica, I’m so happy.”

“Don’t get your hopes up yet, sweetie. It’s a long shot.”

“I’ll pray every night that it works out.”

My cheeks ached from grinning so much.

She squeezed my hand.

“You do that, honey.”

Whoever is up there doesn’t listen to me.

CHAPTER 9

Ron

“Jessica…”

“Mmm-hmm?”

“Thanks for going along with this. I know you don’t care that much about the money.”

“Well, like you said, I kinda owe you.”

The cab stopped, and we both got out. I put my bags on the curb and grabbed Jessica’s from the trunk. She came around the side of the car and stopped. Her eyes studied me as I put her bags on the pavement and pulled them up to the curb.

“What?” I asked.

She smirked.

“I’m just surprised that you are getting my bags.”

“Oh.”

I looked down at them.

She has a point.

“Force of habit, I guess?”

A habit I should break.

“Do you want to get them?” I asked.

She cocked an eyebrow.

“Do you want to?” she asked.

I looked back down at the bags.

Why do I want to help her? She stabbed me in the back.

I scowled as I looked back at her. She shook her head, grinning, as she leaned over and grabbed her bags.

My cheeks burned, and my breath shortened.

I mean, she is my wife. Well, has been. The only woman I ever gave my heart to.

“Is that ok?” I asked.

“Is what ok?”

“You carrying your bags.”

“I’m a big girl, Ron. I can handle my own things.”

She walked up to the baggage check-in desk and turned on the charm as she exchanged words with the man at the counter. He blushed as she laughed and patted him on the arm.

Is there any man she can't do that to?

Her black yoga pants lined her curvy hips and toned thighs, and her fitted sweater jacket hugged her torso and breasts. As she walked away from the desk and entered the terminal, her long, wavy brunette hair shimmered in the sunlight and bounced, brushing her shoulders and back.

God, she's beautiful. Anyone seeing us together thinks I have money.

“Hello, sir. Do you have your tickets?”

The man at the counter glowed from his encounter with Jessica.

“I’m with her.”

“Oh, really? Your daughter is quite charismatic.”

I chuckled to hide my embarrassment.

My daughter? Geez.

“There you go, sir. You two have a glorious trip. You’re both cleared through to Bora Bora.”

I hurried to catch up with Jessica and found her bantering with a handsome, muscular man in the line for airport security.

“Somehow, I always get the pat-down search. I can’t imagine why,” she said.

She grinned at the man and winked. He laughed as his ears turned red.

He knows why.

“Hey,” I said.

“Oh, hey, I want you to meet someone. This is…”

The burly man stuck his hand out.

“I’m Rex.”

His firm grip almost crushed my hand. I did my best to squeeze him back as hard as I could.

“Nice to meet you, Rex.”

“Rex and his wife, Jennifer, are going to the same retreat.”

“Oh, wow. What are the odds of that?”

Rex shrugged his shoulders and smiled.

“Hey, maybe it’s fate, ya know? What was your name?”

“Oh, sorry. My name is Ron.”

“Ron, you’ve got a sturdy little grip on ya. Do you work out?”

“Yeah, I like to punch the bag at my local gym.”

His eyes widened along with his grin.

“A boxer! Nice!”

My chest swelled.

“Ah, ya know. I got keep up with all the young stallions like yourself.”

“I’m gonna call you Sugar Ron.”

I laughed.

I kinda like the sound of that.

Jessica interrupted.

“So, where’s your wife?”

“She had to freshen up.”

He turned his head towards the restrooms.

“Here she is. Hey, babe! Come meet our new friends.”

An athletic young woman approached, forcing a smile. Long, straight brown hair cascaded down her back. The smooth skin on her face surrounded her deep brown eyes as they betrayed her sadness. Or irritation. I wasn't sure which. She slid up close to Rex and wrapped her hand around his arm as she looked at Jessica.

“Hello, Jennifer. I'm Jessica.”

Jessica nodded back at me and smirked.

“And this is Sugar Ron.”

Rex laughed.

“See, it's catchy!”

He punched me in the shoulder. The impact sent a jolting pain from the point of contact through my shoulder and into my neck.

I forced a laugh, trying not to whimper.

“Babe, they are going to the resort, too,” Rex said.

Jennifer eyed Jessica up and down. She directed her cold voice at Jessica.

“Oh, really? How long have you two been married? I assume you're married.”

“Me and Ron?”

Jessica turned and looked at me. Her voice cracked.

“We, um...”

I chimed in.

“We've been together for almost 8 years.”

“Oh, wow, Sugar Ron. You made it past that seven-year itch.”

I nodded and grinned. And winced.

Please don't punch me again.

“Our anniversary is coming up in just over a month,” I said.

“That’s great. Jenn and I are coming up on our anniversary, too. One year. Ain’t that right, babe?”

She looked up at him with soft eyes and nodded, nuzzling her head into his arm.

The voice of airport security sliced through our conversation.

“Next in line!”

Jennifer tugged at Rex.

“Come on, babe.”

Rex grinned at both of us.

“Well, I guess that’s us. Jessica. Sugar Ron. Nice to meet you both. We’ll see you two in paradise.”

He tapped his chest with his fist and pointed at me, then winked.

“Sugar Ron, we’re gonna have to hit the gym together.”

The security agent growled.

“Next in line!”

Jennifer persisted, pulling Rex’s arm.

“Babe, we gotta go.”

I waved and grinned at him.

That’ll be a sad affair. I’m not even half the specimen you are, Rex.

“Well, they seem nice,” Jessica said.

Her eyes followed them, moving up and down Rex’s frame as they walked away. Her lips curled to the side in a pursed grin.

She never looked at me like that.

“Yeah, nice.”

Jessica turned to look at me. I put my hands on the slide-out handle of my carry-on and pulled it around in front of me. My eyes avoided her gaze, surveying the surroundings. People everywhere, but no signs of another couple like us. No beautiful women accompanied by a grey-bearded stick figure.

“You seem quiet. What’s on your mind?”

“Oh, nothing.”

She lifted a single eyebrow.

“Ok, keep your secrets, Sugar Ron.”

I glanced sideways at her and gave a weak grin. We proceeded through security and walked toward the gate.

“You know, Ron, I’ve been thinking about this trip. I think we should just try to have fun.”

The airport buzzed with the bustle of people heading for their flights. Everyone in a hurry to move forward and get away from their current circumstance.

“Yeah?”

“Yeah, I mean, we are going to be on a tropical island. We should make a vacation out of this. They have a gym. You can go do your Sugar Ron thing.”

I hmped a slight chuckle.

“I’m sure there’s a bar. I can hang out and get drunk.”

Her voice lowered and took on a slower, sultry tone.

“We could fuck.”

Her words tickled my ear and stirred a tingle in my chest.

“And we can both get paid 5 million and move on. Make it a nice last memory together.”

Her hand touched my arm and pulled me towards her as we approached a large group of people clustered at a group of gates.

“What do you say, Sugar Ron?”

You're unusually sincere.

The green in her eyes took on a brighter shade than usual. Daylight from the windows reflected off the facets of her irises, causing them to sparkle like pale emeralds. They moved from my eyes to my lips and back as she reached with her other hand and rubbed my chest.

“Sure, sounds good,” I said.

“Attention, flight 58008 for Tahiti is now boarding at gate D69.”

“I've never been to Tahiti before. This will be fun.”

“We're going to Bora Bora.”

“Ooo, like in the old movies.”

My eyebrows furrowed as I cocked my head to the side, looking at her.

“When have you ever watched old movies?”

“I haven't. But I figured you would get that reference.”

“Nice.”

She laughed.

“I'm just kidding, Ron. You're not that old. You're just sensitive about it.”

We followed the line, handed our boarding passes to the gate agent, and filed onto the large aircraft for the trip across the Pacific. Seated, Jessica wrapped a hand around my arm and leaned in.

“So, Ron, tell me. Which one of these stewardesses have you been checking out? Any of them have a nice ass? Maybe you’d like to bend one of them over in the aisle?”

The curt voice of a flight attendant cut in from behind us.

“Are all your bags stowed away?”

She scowled down at us with arms folded. My ears burned.

Well, we are off to a brilliant start.

“Yes, ma’am.”

She walked away. Jessica was right. A tight, navy pencil skirt hugged the attendant’s ass, and her authoritative steps caused it to flex under the grip of the fabric.

Jessica whispered.

“How about the grumpy one? She could use it.”

I forced a grin.

“Maybe.”

But with my little penis, I couldn’t give her the sex she needs. I bet Rex could.

I sighed.

You can do this, Ron. Just one month.

I reclined my chair and closed my eyes.

One month and you’ll be free.

CHAPTER 10

Jessica

The taste of salt on the air met my lips as I stepped onto the exit ramp. In the distance, the sound of squawking seagulls announced the proximity of the ocean.

This must be a small island.

The warmth of the sun kissed my skin, and the slightest scent of coconut oil caressed my sinuses. Tension in my shoulders that went unnoticed before melted away as my muscles soaked in the tropical island vibe.

Ron grabbed my bags this time. All except the small, colorful designer bag that hung over my shoulder.

Always the gentleman. Just can't help yourself, can you?

He walked ahead while I stood smirking at him. The heat of the sun reflected off the black tarmac under my feet. Towards the end of the runway, its light made the ground shimmer with the mirage of a water-like reflection.

I'm gonna come back with a kick-ass tan.

My steps bounced as I followed Ron towards the small terminal. Ahead of him, a pudgy couple took their place in a short line leading up a ramp into the terminal. The man covered his scraggly grey hair with a hat woven with fake palm branches.

You must have sat on that during the flight.

His wife offended everyone's vision with an abrasive shade of red that someone dyed into the large Brillo pad on top of her head.

And matching lipstick. Classy.

They both wore tacky tropical shirts with a matching pattern.

Oh god. Were all the "I'm with stupid" shirts sold out?

Behind the terminal, a gentle breeze ruffled the fanned branches of several tall palm trees. They waved in welcome, like greeters at the entrance to rolling hills of green that reached up to a crystal blue sky.

As I caught up to Ron, the joker's female twin pointed at me, beaming with a smile.

"Oh my god, I love your bag!!"

Oh my god, you have taste?

I forced a smile.

"Thank you."

She spoke to Ron.

"Is this your wife? She's gorgeous!"

He nodded with lips pressed together in a grin.

"This is Jessica, and my name's Ron."

"Ron and Jessica, our first island friends!"

Her husband laughed.

"Well, now, sweetie, that's not true."

"Oh, I know, Bubby. I'm just having fun."

She winked at him and made a large O with her gaudy red lips before patting Ron on the arm.

"We come here every year. It's one of our traditions. We kinda know everyone here. You two stick with us. We'll show you the ropes."

So we can hang ourselves with them?

"So, is the retreat on this island?" Ron asked.

Basketweave Bubby responded for a change.

"Oh, no. This is the main island. Outside the terminal, they will pick us up in shuttles that will take us to a ferry. That will take us to the

retreat.”

“Which will take me to the brandy?” I asked.

They both laughed. Loud lips patted Ron again, gripping his arm, this time with her short, chubby fingers.

“Beautiful AND funny!”

She looked at me, winked, and gestured with a hand.

“Brandy. Mai Tais. Pina Coladas. Whatever you want, girlfriend.”

“Do you two have names?” Ron asked.

They belted out hearty laughs.

“How rude of us? We didn’t even tell you. I’m Alice. And this is my Bubby. But you can call him Brad.”

Brad shook Ron’s hand. I waved at them.

“Nice to meet you, Bubby Brad,” I said.

He stammered.

“Nice to meet you, too.”

Alice put her hand on Bubby, spreading her tomato lips into another “O” face.

“Bubby, has the pretty girl got you all flustered?”

She turned and winked at me.

“Girl, he’s not used to pretty girls talking to him.”

Her nubs pinched his cheek and jostled it, but Bubby’s silly grin persisted despite the assault.

“My cute Bubby Boo!”

A gruff voice grumbled behind me.

“Rayan, you’re going to drop it. Just use the rollers.”

I turned my head to glance back.

“Huda, dear, I’ve got it. Just relax. Enjoy this beautiful place.”

The man carried a large bag in his hand, noticed me looking at him, and smiled, nodding in my direction.

“Hello,” he said.

He wore a loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirt with his head covering. A dark burka covered her entire body. I nodded back at them.

God, you must be dying in there.

Through an opening in the front of her headpiece, she looked me up and down with scowling eyes. Her voice pierced the fabric covering her mouth and grated my ears.

“What are you looking at?” she asked.

Bitch, I will slap that pious mouth right through that...

“I’m sorry. I’ve never seen someone wear so much clothing on a hot, sunny day.”

“Of course, you haven’t.”

Her eyes continued to shoot daggers at me. Ron joined the conversation, reaching his hand out to the husband, who put his bag down.

“Hello. My name is Ron. And this is Jessica.”

“Very nice to meet you, Ron. My name is Rayan. And this is my wife, Huda.”

Huda snapped.

“Which one of you two messed up?”

“Now, Huda dear, don’t assume. Not everyone has a troubled relationship.”

He turned to Ron and me.

“I’m deeply sorry. My wife can be quite sharp with her words.”

She interrupted.

“You are here for the retreat, are you not?”

“We are,” Ron said.

“So are we, dear, but we have a lovely relationship,” said Rayan.

Lovely must mean something different in your culture.

“Yes, but these two look like trouble.”

Huda’s glare moved from Ron and settled on me.

“Especially this one.”

Ron interjected.

“Jessica is a wonderful wife. I’m very lucky to have her. No trouble here. We just wanted to get away together. Celebrate what we have.”

His words poked my chest with a sharp sting. I bit my lip to keep my mouth from dropping open.

Wow. Where did that come from?

“You see, dear, we should never assume,” Rayan said.

He washed us with a warm smile and bowed towards us.

“It is very nice to meet you both, Ron and Jessica.”

Ron nodded.

“You, too, Rayan.”

The line moved up the ramp. A shuttle came and took us to a dock where a ferry waited. Iridescent blue waters lapped up against it and cast ripples of white light that danced along its glossy sides. The sun left a trail of sparkling diamonds across the bay that stretched from the dock out to the horizon. The songs of seagulls, now louder, blended with the swishing sounds of surf and tropical breeze.

We boarded the ferry, which carried us across the kaleidoscope of blues to a cluster of tiny private islands. As we set foot on the soft powder of the beach, an entourage of smiling, sun-kissed munchkins

in matching white tunics stood in a semi-circle, waiting to receive us. They folded their hands in front of them and bowed in our direction as we drew near to them. A small man stepped forward from the tip of the circle.

“Greetings, lovelies! Welcome to your second chance!”

Can we maybe put a bag over your retreat’s head, forget its name, and admire its gorgeous body?

“In a moment, we will escort you to your accommodations, but first, a few important guidelines to discuss.”

Bla, bla, bla. I super-imposed the pretend bag and tuned him out. Ron remained attentive, holding our bags like a dutiful husband.

Even now.

Out of the corner of my eye, I caught Bubby Brad stealing glances at my figure.

Like the view, Bubby?

I had my sites on Sugar Ron’s new boyfriend. The island sun created a soft glow on Rex’s bronze skin, highlighting the definition in his swollen arms and shoulders. His annoying wart, Jennifer, obstructed the glorious view with her arms clamped around his torso and her shoulder wedged up under his armpit.

It will be tricky to pry your shadow away and get a closer look, but I’m up for that challenge.

Hateful Huda shot darts at me from her muddy brown eyes a few times. I wanted to stick my tongue out at her, but my mind concocted more devious uses for it.

Keep it up, Huda. See if I don’t show Rayan what he’s missing.

Ron smirked, lowering his head in my direction and focusing his eyes on me. One of the retreat staff pulled his attention away, putting a hand on his shoulder and taking one of our bags from Ron.

“Come with me, Mr. And Mrs. Stroker. I will show you where you’ll be staying.”

We followed the white tunic down a winding path paved with flat stones of varied, earthy colors. Lush leaves flanked the sides of it, and green stalks lifted brilliant blooms of red and yellow above the leaves, leaning towards us as if to welcome us to paradise. Ron allowed our guide to move ahead and put his arm around my waist, pulling me close to him as he whispered.

“Sizing up your prey back there, were we?”

Damn. He knows too much now.

I grinned.

“I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

“Sure you don’t. There will be punishments for such crimes. You know this, right?”

The space around my heart tingled.

“That’s assuming that you catch me.”

I took his hand off my waist and twirled out of his embrace, walking backward in front of him. My hand lifted his to my mouth, and my tongue licked the tip of his index finger. I winked at him as I release his hand, and my body turned forward.

I think I’m going to enjoy this little retreat.

I skipped a few steps ahead, playing with my hair as I swayed my hips and laughed.

Let the games resume.

CHAPTER II

Jessica

Our guide led us to an overwater bungalow. Inside, we found rose petals scattered over a fluffy white comforter that draped over a queen-sized bed. A window in the floor revealed the ocean waters beneath, and the breeze whistled through the straw roof.

Not bad.

The guide pointed to a rope pulley hanging by the bed.

“If you need anything, pull the rope. Someone will come and tend to your needs.”

Hmm, I have needs. What kind of needs?

He left us. Ron stood looking through the sliding glass doors that opened out to a private deck off our bedroom.

“So, you want to sneak again? Pulling the wool over my eyes?”

I bit my bottom lip, grinning.

“What if I did?”

He put a hand on the glass and dropped his head.

“You know, I don’t know why, but it’s erotic to me. You fucking other men. Even you lying to me.”

He sighed.

“I wish it wasn’t, but it is.”

My nipples hardened under my sports bra, and a warm sensation stirred in my crotch.

“And there’s more than that,” he said.

He put another hand on the glass and rested his forehead against it. His back heaved as he pushed his breaths out and sucked them back in.

“I wish I could do that with you, Jessica. I wish I could hold on to us, but I can’t.”

He straightened up and turned to face me. A wet trail ran down one cheek, and a single tear rested on the side of his mouth.

“I’m sorry, Jessica.”

You’re sorry?

Heat spread through my chest.

You’re so innocent. And good. I never deserved you.

I walked over to my bag, lifted it onto the bed, and unzipped it. My fingers searched through the folded garments, all of them soft and light.

There you are.

I lifted the two scant pieces of the red bikini. Ron’s mouth fell open.

“Take a seat over there,” I said.

I nodded towards a natural wicker chair in the corner. Ron’s broken grin collided with the sadness in his eyes.

Let me make you forget your heartache.

I turned, walked into the spacious bathroom, and slid the wooden door across the track until it closed. Small, glossy black tiles formed a border around large, dark grey ones that covered the walls and floor. A large mirror over the dual sinks made the space feel more expansive. I slipped out of my clothes and stood naked, letting my hands trace my breasts and torso.

This body will burn this island down.

I placed the tiny red triangles over my nipples and tied the thin strap behind my back. My feet stepped into the stringy loops of the thong and pulled it up my legs and into place. The small square over my labia

hid nothing else of the firm skin between my navel and clitoris. Thin strings around my waist met in a small knot in the crevice of my ass cheeks before disappearing between them like floss.

Can't wear this in the States, but here...

I slid the door open and stood in the opening, facing Ron. My eyebrow cocked as I grinned at him, and I placed a hand at the top of the door frame. His mouth dropped open, and he swallowed hard.

“Wow.”

My hand slid down the rail of the door as I stepped into the room.

“That should turn a lot of heads. I imagine you'll have every man here eating out of your hand.”

My eyes dropped.

“Perhaps, but...”

For a moment, I wanted to repair the damage I had done to his soul. Rebuild a little of what I had torn down. But I didn't know how.

“But what?”

This time, I was wearing it for you.

A knock came at the door, and I reached into my suitcase for a cover-up.

“Could you get that, Ron?”

As he got up, he tilted his head and furrowed his eyebrows.

“Since when do you cover up for strangers?”

He had a point. Why did I feel exposed?

When he opened the door, a cheery voice scratched my eardrums.

“Good afternoon, Mr. And Mrs. Stroker. It's time for your first therapy session. If you follow me, I will lead you to meet your therapy partner.”

Ahh, that's right. Because I am here to be cross-examined by a fucking shrink.

Ron looked at me, and I held the cover-up over my chest.

“Let me get something on.”

Once dressed, we followed the happy elf down the boardwalk, away from our bungalow, to a large hut. Torches burned outside the entrance, and a curtain of tacky beads rustled in the wind. The elf gestured towards them, and Ron and I passed through the plastic rain that rattled against our faces and shoulders into what I assumed would be our mental torture chamber. The potent smell of incense hit me in the face.

So, they don't believe in chairs here?

Pillows lay everywhere. Maroon and gold and emerald green. All hemmed in by tassels and over-stuffed. Stacks of thick blankets accompanied them, and colorful, uncut crystals rested on multiple small tables.

“Ron, I think we've walked into the island's New Age Gift Shop. Look at all this shit.”

A female voice came from behind me.

“Greetings, friends.”

I winced and gritted my teeth.

Not a good start.

I turned to see a short, bronze-skinned woman wearing the island uniform of a white tunic and sandals. She folded her hands, bowed to us both, and gestured to a pile of cushions on the floor.

“Please, take a seat.”

“On the cushions?” I asked.

She smiled at me. Her dark brown eyes washed over me with waves of kindness.

“Yes, please.”

Uncle Fred, I hope you're burning in hell for this.

We sat on the cushions, and the woman took a seat in front of us. She crossed her legs and lay her hands on her knees, palms facing up.

“Take some deep, cleansing breaths, my friends.”

I scowled at Ron, who complied, closing his eyes with her and sucking in the incense that would lower our defenses.

Great. He'll be blabbing our worst secrets to this Oompa Loompa.

She opened her eyes and smiled at us both.

“My name is Siddhi.”

“Sid who?” I asked.

She nodded at me and slowed her speech, annunciating her name.

“Siddhi.”

“Got it.”

Nope. Don't got it.

“And your names are Ron and Jessica, am I right?”

“That's right,” Ron said.

“Why don't you two tell me a little about your relationship. How did you first meet?”

Ron began.

“Well, we…”

His voice cracked. I cut in.

“We met at a Bible study.”

The corners of Siddhi's mouth slackened.

"Really?"

"Yes, Ron is a devout Christian man. I was having a hard time in life, so I visited a Bible study, and he was there. He was exceedingly kind to me. An authentic example of Christian charity."

Ron put a hand up to his mouth, trying to hide a grin.

C'mon, Ron. Don't blow our cover.

"I see," she said.

She turned her head towards Ron, still looking at me.

"So, Ron, what drew you to Jessica?"

Bitch, why are you eyeing me?

"Um, well, like she said..."

"In your own words, Ron, tell me."

The crow's feet in the corners of her eyes grew extra toes as she turned her focus on him.

This raisin has been in the sun a bit too long.

Ron looked at me, propping his elbows on his knees and folding his hands in front of his mouth. The terror in his eyes and the beads of sweat forming on his forehead gave him away.

Bless your heart. You couldn't lie if your life depended on it.

Ron coughed up the frog in his throat and got words out.

"She seemed like she was distraught and needed someone to talk to. I reached out to her. While we talked, I found her interesting."

His muscles relaxed, and a grin crept across his mouth.

"Even entertaining."

"I see, and Ron, what is tearing you apart now?"

The terror returned, and his cheeks flushed.

“Well, umm…”

I interrupted.

“There’s nothing wrong with our relationship, Sidney.”

“Siddhi.”

“Sorry, Siddy. Like I said, we are good. We’re just here together. A loving couple. Looking to have some good times.”

She blinked several times.

“Right.”

She rotated her torso and reached behind her, under one of the many pillows, and pulled out a manilla folder.

“I hoped I wouldn’t need to do this, but I feared I would.”

She opened the folder, which had several pieces of paper in it. She removed one of them and held it up.

Oh, shit.

A copy of the letter from Uncle Fred’s attorney.

“Mr. Stroker’s attorney was thorough. They gave us all the information necessary to make sure we honored his wishes. So, Ron and Jessica, I’m well aware of what’s at stake here, and I’ve been a couples therapist for almost four decades.”

Looks like you have been in a smoker for almost four decades.

Her tone softened as she spoke to Ron.

“I know when someone is trying to be honest with me.”

She tilted her head and cut her gaze over at me.

“And when they are not.”

My heart rose into my throat. She began boring into me again with her searchlights.

“I’d say your chances of getting that money are pretty slim. But go ahead, if you must. Do your best to fake working on your marriage. You might end up saving it by accident.”

Her smile washed over me with a genuine warmth that made the alarming perceptiveness in her words even more disturbing.

“That’ll be all for today.”

The folding the hands. The bow.

That is going to get old fast.

She floated to her feet and glided out of the room.

I turned to Ron.

“Ok, now, I need a drink.”

CHAPTER 12

Jessica

“So, I’m entertaining?”

I smirked at Ron. The sunset sent beams of orange through the resort. They fell across our path as we wandered in search of a bar.

“Yeah, you are.”

“Are you going to miss being entertained?”

He took several steps, taking his time to answer. A gentle gust of warm air brushed past and ruffled the sarong that wrapped my body and covered my scandalous bikini.

“I am,” he said.

The sand between our feet and the stone-paved path made a scuffing sound under our slow steps. He glanced over with a soft, sad look in his eyes.

“I’m going to miss a lot of things.”

The salt and pepper in his beard and the hair brushed behind his ear made him look smart. Sophisticated, even. And the reddish hues of the fading sunlight cast a favorable tint on the wiry sinews of muscle in his arms. Arms that held me many times over the years.

Me, too, Ron.

“Well, we’ve got a month to make a few more memories before we call it quits,” I said.

He smiled.

“See? Non-stop entertainment,” he said.

I took his hand and moved in close to him.

“I’ve just been thinking about this place and all these couples.”

“Mmm-hmm?”

“All these perfect little marriages. Each one of them is like a church steeple towering over us in judgment.”

Ron shrugged and curled his mouth on one side.

“It does kind of feel like that. You’re right.”

“Makes me want to tear them down.”

“Jessica, I’m not sure you should…”

“Ron, listen to me. I’m not a good person. I’m an evil person. But you… you’re a good person. After the divorce, you’ll ride off into the sunset and find a kind woman to spend the rest of your life with.”

“Jessica, I…”

I put a finger on his lips.

“Shush. Just listen.”

I ran the finger down his chin, traced his chest down to his crotch, and stroked it as we continued to walk.

“This is your last chance, Ron. Your last hoorah to see your wicked wife in all of her terrible truth.”

His cock responded, twitching under my touch.

“We don’t know these people. We’ll never see them again. But imagine the memories you’ll have of watching me dismantle their fragile moral compasses, seducing them, making them the next victims in my wicked game.”

I grasped his cock through his shorts. He gasped, and his head leaned back as though too heavy for his neck.

“Oh, god.”

“Yesss. You know you want to see that.”

A shrill voice broke my hypnotic spell.

“Bubby, look! It’s Ron and Jessica!”

Ron and I stopped in our tracks. I whispered in Ron's ear.

"Gryffindor Tower is missing its guard again."

Ron cut eyes at me and grinned as Alice came lumbering up, gasping for air.

"Hey, you two!"

"Hey, Alice, have you been running in a race?" Ron said.

She winked at him as she put a hand to her heaving bosom.

"Just racing over here to see my friends."

Bubby Brad caught up. I cooed at him.

"Hey, Bubby Brad. You two know where we could find the bar?"

Alice squealed and tapped my shoulder.

"Yes, girl! Follow us. C'mon, Bubby, let's show them our favorite spot."

We followed the waddle train through winding paths, between huts and tropical plants that surrounded the little lamps casting a warm glow on the stones under our feet. The walkway opened into a large outdoor dining area with large grass-covered umbrellas over each wicker table. Alice threatened to skip and cause a minor earthquake as she brought us to a table of four large wicker chairs with plump cushions. As soon as we sat down, a server came to our table.

They like those white tunics.

"Good evening, friends. What will we have this evening?"

"Something fruity and strong for me," Alice said.

She gave me her winking, open mouth look.

Bubby must get a lot of head.

"I'll have a brandy. Make it a double," I said.

"Nothing for me, thanks," Ron said.

“I’m still thinking about it,” said Bubby.

The server left us, and Alice began the inquisition.

“So, what brings you two to this charming little oasis?”

“Well, Ron and I work so hard. We haven’t taken a vacation together in such a long time. It was time to get away and reconnect. Appreciate what we have together. Ya know?”

Alice’s eyes lit up as she glanced over at her husband.

“Isn’t that so cute, Bubby?”

She leaned toward me.

“Yes, girl, I know. Sometimes, you just need to unwind. Bubby and I have been together for twenty years of wedded bliss.”

She reached over to Brad and put a hand on his arm.

“We promised each other we would take time every year to get away and celebrate our relationship, didn’t we?”

He nodded at her, his eyes twinkling.

“So, we found this place, and it has been our getaway for ten years now. You’re going to love it here.”

Alice enumerated all her favorite things about the island, about Brad, about their perfect marriage, and about my “dress.”

“Bubby, aren’t you getting something to drink?” she asked.

“I was just waiting for you to finish your story. Not sure where our server went.”

“He’s taking a break, sweet man. Go talk to Mahana at the bar. I’m going to head back to our little love hut.”

She winked at him.

“Oh, I can get my drink later. I’ll come with you.”

“No, Bubby. Get your drink. And keep our new friends company. I’ll be doing my crossword puzzles until my handsome man gets home.”

She pried herself from the chair and waved at us before walking away. Bubby Brad looked at us with the forced, wincing grin of a nervous adolescent.

“Guess I’ll go get my drink.”

He hopped up and hurried off towards the bar. I got up, crosshairs trained on him, and removed the sarong, handing it to Ron.

“Watch this.”

Ron shook his head, grinning.

I sauntered over to the bar where Mahana tried to help Bubby decide what to get.

“Hey, Boys.”

Bubby’s forehead shimmered with sweat, and he swallowed hard.

“What’cha gonna have, Bubby?”

He gritted his teeth and shrugged his shoulders.

“Uhhh, I don’t know.”

“Well, I know what I want.”

He glanced out of the corner of his fearful eyes at me. His voice trembled.

“I… I thought you were drinking Brandy.”

“I’m not talking about a drink.”

“Oh. Um. Wha… what are you talking about?”

My fingertips walked across the bar towards his arm.

“Brad, have you been with another women besides Alice?”

He burst out in a nervous laugh.

“Well, I…”

My fingers touched his hand and slid across his wrist up to his forearm as I moved closer.

“I imagine a handsome man like yourself must’ve had lots of women clawing at him before you settled down with your lovely wife.”

His body shivered as he puffed up his chest.

“Well, you know, a few.”

I feigned surprise.

“Just a few?”

His face flushed as our eyes met before he dropped his head.

“Actually… This is embarrassing.”

His voice dropped to almost a whisper.

“Alice was my first.”

I slid my hand further up his arm to his shoulder. My other hand rested on his, and my breast grazed his arm. I lowered my voice to match his volume.

“Brad, that’s unbelievable. A man as handsome as you? With these muscles?”

I traced from his shoulder over to his chest with my fingertips, pressing my breast into his arm.

“I would think the ladies couldn’t keep their hands off of you.”

His chest heaved as he looked at me.

“You think?”

“Yes, Brad. Just look at me. I’d love to strip you out of these clothes and feel this body up against mine.”

Mahana cleared his throat as he placed the drink in front of Brad.

“Mr. Brad, here’s your drink. I think you better get back to Mrs. Alice.”

Mahana glared at me as I backed away from Brad, whose voice stammered.

“Yeah, you’re right. Thanks, Mahana.”

I kept my eyes glued on Brad. My hand rested on the bar, and I stepped back to give him a good look at my body in the bikini, drawing his eyes to my breasts and hips.

“Well, uh, Jessica, I guess I’ll see you and Ron later.”

He trembled as he waved at me and backed away.

“I hope so.”

He hurried away. Mahana scolded.

“Mrs. Jessica, I think you should get back to your husband.”

“Mahana, sweetie, I think you should make me another brandy.”

He scowled. I turned and winked at Ron.

“My husband knows where I am.”

And he knows exactly what I’m doing.

CHAPTER 13

Ron

“There you are.”

Jessica’s voice found me through the auditory cocoon of the crashing waves. I turned to see her jogging over in a crystal blue bikini.

That one may be more dangerous than the red one.

“What are you up to our here? I’m the one that goes sneaking off.”

She winked at me. I grinned, glancing at the sand between us, then peering into her eyes. The morning light flowed into them and warmed their various green hues.

“I felt like taking a morning walk to look at the scenery.”

She stepped back and put a hand on her hip.

“How do you like this scenery?”

My gaze fell to her body. The sun coated her flawless skin in a soft glow. Every line of her form swept and curved like the brush strokes of a master artist. My heart stung as the dopamine released in my brain.

I will never stop worshiping you. But you aren’t mine. You never were.

“It’s really something.”

She frowned.

“Well, that was uninspired.”

“I’m sorry. I just…”

My bare feet dug into the sand, and I hung my head.

“It hurts to look.”

“Hey, Mopey Smurf…”

She reached out with her hands and took mine. Lifting them and opening my palms up towards her, she stepped into them and set

them on her breasts.

“Feel them.”

My cock twitched in my shorts as my hands melded to the soft, round flesh.

“That’s right. Grope your wife’s fabulous tits.”

I sighed.

“Hey, I’m still your wife until we get back from this trip. So technically, they’re still yours.”

The glimpse of pain behind my eyes reflected to me in hers. She turned away, taking one of my hands and moving it down to her hips.

“Now, grab that ass.”

I stepped back to look at it. My hands moved down her back and took hold of the bare skin on her ass cheeks.

“Yesss. There’s that ass you love.”

I chuckled.

She turned her head and looked back at me, grinning.

“Take that ass. Own it.”

I gave it a light pat.

“That’s the idea. But harder.”

My hand landed again and made a loud, smacking sound.

“Yes, daddy. Spank it.”

She laughed and turned around, grabbing my hand and pulling herself into me. For a moment, we weren’t divorcing. For that moment, we were almost a couple again.

“Feel better?”

We resumed walking down the beach, and I smirked, looking at her out of the corner of my eye.

“Yeah. I do.”

“Now, wouldn’t you like to see your wife cause some trouble today?”

What have I got to lose?

“Ummm…”

“C’mon, Ron. You know you do.”

Down the beach, kneeling on towels, Rayan and Huda faced the ocean. They closed their eyes and bowed with their hands out and raising up.

Great. The arbiter of judgment. And her poor husband.

“Now, there’s a challenge,” I said.

“Mmm, are you asking me to seduce Rayan right out from underneath his snide wife’s nose?”

“Well, I don’t know…”

“Challenge accepted.”

Jessica’s steps picked up into a skip.

“C’mon, Ron. Come play with me.”

She ran ahead, down the beach. Her nearly naked body moved with the grace of a gazelle as the sand kicked up underneath her heels. She slowed down and picked up a beach ball lying on the sand near her targets. As she stood up, her smile beamed from ear to ear, and she squinted one eye to guard against the rising sun. My heart warmed, and I grinned at her, shaking my head.

God, she is beautiful.

As I got nearer, she threw the ball to me. In my peripheral vision, I glimpsed Huda’s frowning face, but I played along and pretended not to notice. Jessica and I began tossing the ball back and forth. Each time, she jumped to catch it, and as she came back down, her

breasts jiggled, threatening to escape the tiny blue top. With each toss, she edged her way towards the crashing waves of the ocean.

I see what you're doing. Just add water.

Soon, the waves were crashing up against her back, and the water ran down her firm, curvy body, dampening the bikini and causing it to cling to her like tissue. Her nipples hardened and poked at the tiny blue triangles that covered them. Watching behind her, she waited for a wave to get close before tossing the ball. As it crashed into her, she released it toward Rayan and Huda.

Clever. Almost believable.

It bounced across the sand and landed right between them. Huda made a sour face at the ball's intrusion. Jessica ran up the beach towards them, her wet breasts bouncing.

"I'm so sorry, you two!"

Rayan spoke up, his complexion ruddy.

"Oh, no worries, Mrs. Jessica."

He picked up the ball and extended it to her. She took it and smiled at him.

"Thank you, kind sir."

She cocked her hip to the side and rested the beach ball against it, holding it in place with her forearm.

"Beautiful morning, isn't it?"

Huda grimaced at Rayan as he responded.

"Yes, it is. My wife and I were just saying our morning prayers."

Jessica took her free hand and played with her long, brown hair as she tilted her head to the side.

"Ohh, are you two Baptists or something?"

Rayan chuckled.

“No, Mrs. Jessica. We are Muslims.”

“I thought Muslims had fancy oriental rugs that they prayed on.”

“You mean prayer mats?” Rayan asked.

“Oh, is that what you call them?”

“Yes, Mrs. Jessica. We have them back in the room.”

“You know, I have a Matt back in my office. And whenever the spirit moves me, I just lay my Matt out on the floor, climb on, and talk to God.”

Rayan squinted into the sun as he smiled at my wife.

“Really?”

“Oh, yes. I got on my Matt the other day. Had a very spiritual experience.”

“That is beautiful, Mrs. Jessica.”

Huda cut in.

“Yes, well, Mrs. Jessica was interrupting our spiritual experience.”

“Oh, I’m so sorry. I’ll let you two get back to it. And sorry to intrude. I love playing with balls, but sometimes, things get out of hand.”

She waved at them and winked at Rayan before turning and sauntering back towards the water. Jessica called out to me.

“C’mon, honeybunch!”

I chuckled.

Wow, you’re selling it. Huda is no match for this.

Jessica carried the ball over her head, elongating her hourglass torso and highlighting the toned definition in her back. Huda glared at her bare ass cheeks and muttered to Rayan.

“Deplorable woman.”

I hurried away from them, mouthing “sorry” as I ran towards the water to catch up with Jessica. A wave crashed into her and knocked her off her feet. I ran to help her up, and as I pulled her out of the water, she wrapped her arms around my neck.

“My hero saved me.”

She caressed the back of my head with her fingertips and pressed her forehead against mine. The water from her body soaked through my shirt and shorts, and her breasts pressed against my chest.

I wish I could save you, witchy woman.

“The ball is getting away,” I said.

“Fuck the ball.”

She planted a kiss on my lips. Soft at first, and then we opened our mouths to each other. I tightened my arms around her waist and pulled her hips into me. The waves lapped at our legs, testing our balance, and we both had to dig our feet into the sand to steady ourselves together, but our mouths continued to meld. Our tongues caressed each other, and our lips kneaded together around them. My heart pounded through my chest against hers, as though it reached out for a shared rhythm. We stayed in a passionate dance of our mouths, reaching into each other. Neither of us wanted to let go of the love that neared its end. Her lips closed, and she pulled them away, nuzzling her forehead into my cheek. I rubbed her back as she laid her head on my shoulder.

“Thanks for playing with me, Ron.”

You're welcome.

“Guess I still haven't learned not to play with fire,” I said.

She snickered, picking her head back up and putting her mouth next to my ears. As she spoke, her breath tickled my lobe and sent chills down my spine.

“Oh, there’s no fire yet—just a few sparks. But wait and see, Ron Stroker. The fire is coming.”

CHAPTER 14

Jessica

“Sugar Ron!”

Ron’s eyes lit up like a kid’s on Christmas morning. Rex emerged from the line of palm trees wearing fitted beach shorts and shades. Nothing else.

Now, that is a tall, refreshing drink right there.

“Babe, wait up!”

I scowled at his little ankle biter. Jennifer hurried to catch up with her beautiful husband, who pat Ron on the shoulder so hard, it almost knocked him over.

“What are you kids up to this morning?” Rex asked.

“Oh, ya know, just getting some exercise. Tossing a ball around,” Ron said.

“Sounds fun. Mind if we join?”

Jennifer reached for Rex’s arm.

“Babe, no. Let them have their privacy.”

“Oh, you’re not intruding. The more, the merrier,” Ron said.

“See, Jenn. Sugar Ron says it’s ok.”

He turned to Ron.

“Toss me that ball. And go long!”

He winked at Ron, who took off faster than I’ve ever seen him run.

Don’t hurt yourself, Sugar Ron.

Rex threw the ball to Ron. I strolled up to Rex and Jennifer.

“Wow, who knew a beach ball could travel that kind of distance.”

Ron chased it down the beach. Jennifer slid up to Rex and grabbed his arm as I approached. Her shoulders curved around his bulging tricep

and her tight abs flexed.

“Well, if it isn’t the Ken and Barbie of the island,” I said.

Rex grinned. Jennifer tried to force one but only managed a wince.

“What’s up, girl?” Rex said.

“Oh, Ron and I are still reeling from our first lovely encounter with the island therapist, so we got out for some fresh air and sunshine.”

“Uh, oh. We haven’t met with our therapist yet.”

“Well, she’s a real peach. So, what brings Ken and Barbie to their second chance?” I asked.

I folded my hands and bowed to them as I smirked.

Rex laughed.

“Well, Mrs. Island Therapist, we haven’t been married long enough for a second chance, but we figured it’d still be a good idea. Set us up for success. Right babe?”

Rex smiled down at his human sleeve. She pouted as she nodded, looking up at him.

“What about you and Ron?” Rex asked.

“Oh, ya know, when you’ve been together a while, you get bored and need to spice it up. Keep it exciting.”

I bit my lip and put my hand to my forehead, guarding against the increasing glare of the sunlight as I looked up at Rex.

“You forgot your shades. Here, use mine,” he said.

Rex took his off, handed them to me, and winked. His eyes matched the deep blue of the ocean behind me.

“Why, thank you, Rex.”

I stepped over to Jennifer and pressed my fingertips into the arm she used to cling to Rex.

“Your husband is quite the gentleman.”

The beach ball hit me on the ass, and my mouth dropped open as I turned to look at Ron. He pointed at me, laughing.

“I’m gonna get you for that, Ron Stroker!”

He started dancing in the sand, making faces at me.

Somebody is feeling themselves.

I turned to Rex and Jennifer.

“Excuse me while I kick his ass.”

I took off after him, and he ran into the waves. I jumped up on his back, and we collapsed into the water. We both came up, gasping and laughing. I pushed my soaking wet hair back. Ron reached for my top.

“Ooops, you slipped out.”

I dropped my voice to a whisper.

“No, wait. Leave it.”

His eyes widened, and he grinned as he shook his head.

“Jessica, you devil.”

I winked at him.

Let’s see how this goes.

I turned around, my left breast hanging out of the tiny bikini top. My hands remained over my head, holding my hair up in a dripping wet ponytail as I walked out of the water. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Rayan turning his head and staring. Huda smacked him, and he raised his hands to protect himself.

Jennifer spoke up, pointing at me.

“Jessica, you’re…”

Oh, so now you talk to me.

She ran over, putting herself between Rex and me, and she lowered her voice.

“Your breast fell out.”

I looked down and feigned surprise.

“Oh, my, look at that!”

I lifted the small triangle, placing it back over my nipple, and leaned to the side to look past Jennifer at Rex.

“Sorry about that! Hard to keep these big things under cover.”

Jennifer’s mouth fell open, and she glared at me.

“Jessica, you might have more luck if you used more cover.”

I turned to wave at Rayan and Huda.

“Sorry you had to see that!”

Huda got up, huffing and sputtering at Rayan.

“Come on, Rayan! Let’s go.”

She gathered her towel and marched into the trees, running over Alice, who threw up her hands to let them by. After they passed, she shook her head and waddled down to the beach.

“Oh, my, what has gotten into her! And wow, Jessica, look at you in that suit!”

She covered her mouth with her short fingers before putting her hands on her hips.

“Girl, I wish I had a body like that. I’d spend all day just looking at myself in the mirror.”

Her kind words threatened to soften the jaded shell around my heart that found everything wrong with her.

Stop being nice, Alice. You’re gonna make it hard for me to fuck your husband.

“I wouldn’t even blame Bubby if he snuck off to play with those coconuts.”

Why, thank you, Alice. I’ll take that hall pass.

Jennifer’s mouth fell open, and she turned to grab Rex.

“C’mon, Rex.”

Rex waved at me and yelled out to Ron.

“See ya, Sugar Ron! We should go work out sometime!”

Jennifer’s toned calves pushed her heels hard into the sand with each step away from Alice and me, and she grumbled under her breath at Rex once he caught up.

“Don’t even think about playing with the coconuts. Cause I am not Alice!”

“Goodness, everybody’s got their bikinis in a wad this morning. Is it something I said?” Alice said.

I smiled at Alice.

You’re kinda dumb. But you’re growing on me.

“No, Alice. It’s not you.”

The adrenaline-driven tension in my body retreated, and my knees weakened. A thickening formed in my throat, and a flush came across my face.

It’s me. Ready to ruin all these marriages. I’m a bitch.

Ron came up from behind and put his arm around me.

“Hey, Alice. How are you this morning?”

She wiped the sweat from her forehead.

“I’m doing great. Hey, we’re in paradise! But gosh, is it hot. This one’s gonna be a scorcher. I think I’m gonna go find my favorite shady spot.”

She turned and started back towards the trees, hunched over her steps and laboring to walk in the sand. Her hand raised in a wave as she called back.

“Nice to see you two!”

She waddled back into the thick of the palm trees.

We turned away from them and strolled back towards the water.

“Looks like she doesn’t know about your little chat with her Bubby,” Ron said.

Or she does. And she doesn’t mind.

I looked back over my shoulder at the tree line where Alice disappeared.

“Yeah, I don’t know.”

“So, what is it about Bubby you’re attracted to?”

I tilted my head, laying it on Ron’s shoulder, and our steps slowed. My teeth pressed into my bottom lip.

“He’s just not your typical type, I would say.”

“No, he’s not. Not at all.”

“I mean, if he lost fifty pounds and hit the gym for a few months. Got hair extensions and a new wardrobe, then I could see it,” he said.

I grinned and smacked him on the chest with my free hand.

“Jerk.”

He laughed.

“I know the reason. And it’s messed up,” I said.

Ron stopped and took my shoulders in his hands, turning me towards him so we faced each other.

“He’s innocent.”

“And you want to corrupt him,” Ron said.

My gaze fell.

“Yeah, I do.”

He put his arms around me and pulled me into himself, and I sighed.

“I’m a terrible person.”

His hand slid up the back of my neck into my hair and massaged my scalp, holding my head against his shoulder.

“Then there’s something wrong with me, too, Jessica. Cause that’s what drew me to you all those years ago.”

I put my arms around him and melted into his body.

You’re the one person who knows me.

“I don’t suppose that means you’d be my partner in crime?”

He loosened his hold on me and leaned back to look at me, and he smirked as he cocked an eyebrow.

“What do you mean?”

A grin spread across my face.

“I’m working on that, Mr. Director of Accounting. Stay tuned.”

I poked a fingertip into his chest and winked at him.

Trust me. It’ll be a doozy.

CHAPTER 15

Ron

The boards creaked under our steps and radiated heat, absorbed and stored from a day's worth of blistering sun, and warmed the soles of our bare feet. The water cresting on the waves shone under the moonlight like white brush strokes on a dark canvas. A cool breeze blew in from the water and caused a few strands of Jessica's hair to quiver loose from the others and flutter across her face. She blinked as she brushed them away with her hand and smiled at me. My stomach fluttered.

So beautiful.

"Penny for your thoughts," Jessica said.

I turned and leaned on the railing, looking into the darkness.

Not telling. It just leaves me vulnerable to you.

"Oh, I don't know."

She joined me, her elbow grazing mine.

"Don't know, or don't want to say?"

"Umm..."

"Thinking you can't wait to get through this month and away from this devil woman?"

"No, that's not it."

Not exactly, anyway.

"It's ok if it is Ron."

"I was wondering if you figured out the details of this crime you want me to partner in."

Jessica's arm broke contact with mine as she leaned away. Her voice lilted.

“Ron Stroker! I figured it was hard enough for you just to think about watching me at my antics. Are you considering joining the team?”

I gritted my teeth as I smirked.

“Oh, it’s hard alright.”

She laughed and looked down at my waist.

That was a good one.

Her voice turned sultry.

“Do tell.”

I chuckled.

“I’m not saying I’m joining any teams, but I am curious what you came up with.”

“Well, as I said before, we have a whole month and lots of couples trapped on this island.”

“Mmm-hmm.”

“Of course, I had plans to see what trouble I could cause with this body.”

“I think you started some this morning.”

She winked and flashed a wry grin.

“I did, didn’t I?”

“That bikini is deadly. I’ve never seen it before.”

“So you like it? I bought it for this trip.”

“Yes, I’m a fan. You always push the limits, and it never gets old. As much as I might want it to.”

She pushed out a pouty bottom lip and leaned back in so that our arms touched.

“Well, so, lots of couples. And you were just going to watch from the sidelines, but that’s boring.”

“I liked that idea.”

“Yes, you like to watch, but it’s time to get in the game, Mr. Stroker.”

“Meaning?”

“Help me lead these lambs to the slaughter.”

My eyebrows jumped up, and I tilted my head to the side, stretching my neck.

Paving the path to hell for me, are we?

“Umm… how do I do that?”

“Get to know these women. Distract them so I can get to their men.”

“Jessica, I can’t talk to women. Especially not attractive ones.”

“So, we’ll start with Alice.”

I laughed.

“Ok, that’s mean.”

“You know you’ve thought it,” she said.

“Well, I could talk to her, but she’s one of the few.”

“Ron, you underestimate yourself. You’d be a brilliant partner in crime. You’re in great shape for your age.”

I rolled my eyes.

“Seriously, you look great.”

“Right.”

“You’re smart, but not arrogant. Women dig that. And when you talk about your number crunching, it’s very impressive.”

“It always bored you to tears when I talked about that stuff.”

“Not at first, Ron. When we first met, it drew me in. Your brainy talk impressed the fuck out of me.”

I pursed my lips together as I leaned back to look her in the eyes.

Are you serious?

“Ron, I was into you. Did you never feel that?”

“I just thought you saw me as easy to toy with.”

“That came later. I get bored with anything after a while. I have to entertain myself. You know that.”

Her gaze felt like a thousand tiny needles on the side of my head and neck as I looked away. The moonlight reflected on the wet sand. I pictured the sandcastles that once stood there, washed away by the ocean's games.

Like me, and I'd do it again.

“Yeah, I do.”

“So, yes, I toyed with you. And that was evil. I am evil. You know that, too.”

I relaxed back into closeness with her body. Waves crashing on the sand sent us pulses of soothing white noise, followed by the sizzle of air bubbling up as the water retreated.

“So you don't think I'm arrogant? That's not what you told Austin the night you fucked him.”

“I was just playing him and his juvenile ego. You intimidated him, Ron. It was an easy string to pull.”

She rolled several strands of her hair between her fingers.

“I like to play with men. See what I can make them do.”

“I know. Having power over them soothes you.”

I turned to look at her. She bit her lip and tilted her head, studying the sand just beneath us. Her face flushed.

Oops. Did I just strike a soft spot?

“It's ok, Jessica. I get why it would. After all you've been through…”

She cut me off.

“I’d say it thrills me.”

Her eyes left the fingers rolling her hair strands and looked into mine, her eyebrow cocked as she smirked.

“Don’t get all Jessica’s therapist on me, Ron. There’s already more of that on this trip than I ever wanted.”

I smiled.

“Ok. Sorry.”

“So, what do you say? Are you in?”

“I don’t know.”

“C’mon, Ron. It’s our last month as a couple. We are four thousand miles from Los Angeles.”

My eyebrows lifted. Jessica giggled as she leaned away from me.

“See, I got numbers, Ron. You like numbers. Look it up. Four thousand miles.”

“I’m impressed. You looked that up?”

“I did. But that’s not the point. The point is you won’t see any of these people again.”

She moved in towards me, opening her body into my arm and rubbing her breasts on my tricep.

“Let me make this one last mark on Ron Stroker. I don’t want you to forget me when you move on.”

“Oh, there’s no chance of that.”

She persisted, leaning in and putting her mouth close to my ear.

“Let me blemish this pristine soul. You know I’m a vampire. A demon. And you were always the innocent one.”

She rested her arm on my back, put her hand on my shoulder, and traced a fingertip on my neck.

“When I cheated on you, Ron, that was about us. About you and me. I wanted to write on your soul. Scar you. Steal your innocence away and poison it with my darkness.”

A chill ran down my spine, and my cock twitched.

“It makes my pussy wet, thinking about it.”

I stood up and stepped back, raising my voice.

“You always do that, Jessica. You always play that card. I don’t know if it’s real or another game to get in my head and toy with me.”

Her eyes burned like a predator’s, locked on their prey, hungry for the kill.

“I promise it’s real. If you don’t believe me, come and feel for yourself.”

I looked down towards her hips. The breeze ruffled the thin, white cover-up, wrapping it around her curvy frame.

“Come stick your fingers inside me. You’ll see.”

A tingling sensation emerged in my chest and groin, and my throat dried up. She opened the cover-up, and it fell to the sides, revealing the tiny blue bikini. And her firm but curvy body. She reached out her hand for me. My arm lifted, pulled by her gravity, and she took hold of my wrist. Pulling me towards her, she shoved my hand down the front of her tiny bikini bottom.

“Stick your fingers inside.”

I didn’t need to. The moisture leaking from her pussy had dampened the inside of her bikini bottom and now my fingers. Still, I slid them

inside, letting her potent poison soak my skin. The skin on my neck and shoulders tightened as my muscles tensed.

Wow, she's horny as hell.

“See? My body craves your innocence. Your goodness.”

“So you can turn me?”

She thrust her hips into my hands and dug her fingernails into my back.

“Yesss.”

“And then what?”

“Then you're mine. Even if you leave me, Ron. You'll never get me out of your soul.”

Wow.

I swallowed hard, and my heart rate accelerated. My strength in my spine drained, and I lost my center of gravity.

“How do you do that?” I asked.

Her fiery breath rippled against my neck as she chuckled.

“So, Mr. Stroker? What do you say? One last bite? Let me take you.”

“I hope I don't go to hell for this.”

“If you do, we'll be there together.”

I dropped my head and sighed.

I want this. So much. Need it, even. And I wish I didn't.

“Ok, Jessica. One last time.”

My fingers slipped out of her as my arm went limp. She kissed my neck. Her energy shifted from the hungry predator to a gentle affection.

“Thank you, Ron.”

Thank you?

“You’re welcome.”

I took a deep breath.

“So, what’s my first assignment?”

CHAPTER 16

Jessica

“Thank you so much for suggesting this, Ron. What a lovely idea!”

Alice tapped Brad’s arm.

“I’m so delighted to spend time with our friends.”

She turned to me and pursed her lips.

“And Jessica, your husband is so smart. We talked for quite a while about his work. Fascinating!”

“Enough to get you hot and bothered when he talks those numbers,” I said.

Under the table, I slid my foot out of my sandal and rubbed it against Ron’s calf. Alice chuckled, waving me off with a hand in the air.

“Girl, don’t put those thoughts in my head! Your Ron’s a gentleman.”

She cut eyes at Ron and winked. He forced a grin as he spread his legs to allow my foot up in between his thighs.

”You’ve got yourself a keeper there,” Alice said.

She blabbered on as the pad of my foot rested on Ron’s crotch. His cock pulsed, pushing out into my touch. I sat up straight in my chair, holding my torso still as the perfect cover for my illicit foot job under the table. I grinned as the veins in Ron’s neck tightened.

I’m so evil.

“You both seem so enchanted with each other. Just like my Bubby Boo and me!”

She beamed at Brad. I faked a well-practiced laugh.

Gag me.

All along, my foot massaged Ron’s throbbing shaft.

“He’s a gem,” I said.

I turned and looked at Ron, reaching over and taking his hand. As my skin touched his, a flush of warmth ran up my arm into my chest. My lips parted, but no words came out.

He is. And I'm going to lose him.

My foot stopped moving and rested against him.

I'm going to miss you, Ron.

I froze. My eyes softened as my mouth closed. I smiled and swallowed, and Ron's eyebrows furrowed with his inquisitive grin.

"We're both lucky," he said.

A warm breeze blew across the terrace, causing the white tablecloth to dance around the large circular table. A candle sat at the center, and the flame atop it flickered, casting a soft glow on Ron's face. Our server approached the table.

"Greetings, friends," she said. "I'm Aaliyah. I'll be serving you tonight."

The bright white of her tunic against her dark chocolate skin made both appear crisp.

Wow, girl, you've got a great complexion.

Large gold hoop earrings hung from her ears, and an ornate necklace around her neck reminded me of a mosaic of colorful porcelain chips my mother once owned. Aaliyah carried herself with an air of dignity. The calm in her voice and the warmth of her smile soothed me like a swig of brandy. Ron leaned in, mesmerized by her, chin in his hand as she spoke.

He'd be happy to be the one serving you. But he's mine. At least for this month.

She took our orders, her attention fixing on each of us as we spoke.

Sister, I bet you could sell some shit.

Alice watched her and spoke as she walked away.

“So nice, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” I said. “It is.”

“I think it’s one of my favorite things about this place. So different from back in the States. It’s just refreshing to see they know their place here.”

Her words ripped through my inner tranquility like a meat cleaver. I choked on my drink, and my eyes watered.

“Goodness, Jessica. Are you ok?” Alice asked.

I put out a hand as I picked up my cloth napkin and held it to my lips. My throat burned from water invading my trachea. I choked out the words.

“You were saying. Their place?”

“Well, yes, dear. Back in the States, these people ruined everything. They got a little. More than they deserved. And now, they’re just lazy.”

Alice scowled as she shook her head.

You need your extra-large white hood to cover that ugly makeup, Alice.

“Expecting a handout. Wanting something for nothing.”

I tilted my head and winced like someone stabbed me in the neck. Like Alice stabbed me in the neck, and she continued.

“You know, it didn’t use to be that way. It’s like this white tablecloth. I mean, look at it. So perfect. But if you spilled something dark on it… Well, it would ruin it, now wouldn’t it?”

I’m no saint, but damn, Alice. What the hell?

My stomach twisted in a knot, and I turned to Ron.

“Ron, dear. I think I got some water down the wrong pipe. Would you take me to the bathroom?”

Alice put her hand to her chest.

“I hope you’re ok.”

“Yeah. Good idea,” Ron said.

We both got up, and he helped me away from the table. I could manage on my own, and Ron knew it, but he played along.

Good job, Mr. Stroker. You’re selling this like a pro.

“Oh, dear, Ron. What’s wrong with her?” Alice asked.

He answered over his shoulder as we walked away.

“Don’t worry, Malice. Probably her allergies. Some things irritate them. You two enjoy dinner. We might be back.”

Malice. Clever, Ron. I could suck your cock for that.

Ron hurried me around the corner towards the bathrooms. Once out of sight from our dinner company, he stopped and put his butt against the wall, hunching over.

“Wow, that was unexpected,” he said.

“Yeah, it was.”

“But this feels familiar.”

“Takes you back, huh? Feeling those hard pews under your ass?” I asked.

“Yes. She’s just like the women I grew up around. Gushing kindness for people like them. Harboring bitter poison towards anybody different.”

“Makes this plan of ours feel less criminal, doesn’t it?” I said.

“Your plan. And yes, it does.”

“Almost justified.”

Ron rolled his eyes.

“I wouldn’t go that far.”

I laughed.

“Well, ready to go soil their perfect white marriage with our dark schemes?”

Ron waved a finger at me and smirked.

“Your schemes, devil woman.”

He stood up straight.

“And absolutely. Let’s do this.”

Yess. You’re joining the dark side.

I moved in closer to him and put a hand on his chest. My voice dropped into a sultry tone.

“Mmm, I like your enthusiasm. Saint Ron ready to fight bigotry with adultery.”

My hand slid down his abdomen.

“All those self-righteous women that surrounded you. Serving up their gossip disguised as prayer requests. Seeping shame into your soul, drenched in their syrupy Southern sweetness.”

“Rather poetic for you,” Ron said.

My mouth hovered close to his neck, tickling it with my breathy laugh while my fingertips grazed the bump in his crotch.

“I know my audience. Feels like you’re inspired.”

I wrapped my palm around his shaft through his shorts.

“Mmm, yes. Definitely inspired.”

My index finger rested on the base of his shaft and traced up the vein until I released it and summoned him to follow.

“Let’s unleash hell.”

CHAPTER 17

Ron

Alice called out as we returned.

“Oh, I’m so glad she’s ok!”

“We couldn’t stay away for long,” Jessica said. She pointed over at Brad.

“Besides, this one has been quiet all night. I’d love to hear from Bubby Boo.”

Jessica winked at Brad. I shook my head, grinning.

She’s mocking you, and you have no clue.

“It’s only fair, Alice. You got my man to tell you all his secrets.”

She flashed a playful smile at Alice. Brad’s hand trembled as he reached for his wine glass, and he smiled through gritted teeth. His fingers fumbled with the glass and knocked it over, spilling his Merlot all over the tablecloth.

“Dang it!”

Alice waved for Aaliyah, who came running with a hand towel.

“Goodness, Bubby. Mrs. Jessica has your number.”

She turned to my wife.

“I told you he gets nervous around pretty women, but I’ve never seen him like this. At least you know he’s not one of those homosexuals.”

Oh, god…here we go.

Aaliyah picked up the empty glass and hurried with her clean up, perhaps to avoid hearing what came next out of Alice’s toxic mouth. Brad stared at the dark wine stain on the tablecloth in front of him as Alice rubbed his arm.

“No, trust me, Mrs. Jessica. My Bubby likes him some lady bits.”

Ok, they didn't say that in church.

“Just how God intended.”

There we go. We're back.

Dinner continued with pontifications about the abominations of transgender persons, Muslims, and a half dozen other marginalized apostates. I wished Huda could have taken part.

You'd both have met your match.

“Alice, what do you say we ladies go for a walk and let these two boys have some male bonding time?” Jessica asked.

Alice's smile glowed, and she clapped her hands together.

“That's a lovely idea!”

As soon as the ladies got out of earshot, Brad leaned over to me.

“Do you realize your wife Jessica is flirting with other men?”

I smiled.

Time to get off the bench, Ron.

“Oh, yes. She does that.”

“And it doesn't bother you?”

I swallowed hard and looked at my water glass.

“No. Not at all.”

My chest tightened.

I'm not good at this.

“I can't control her, I've learned.”

Recently.

“She's a wild vixen. Has an insatiable appetite for sex,” I said.

Brad sat back in his chair and looked down the pathway at the shadows as they engulfed our ladies.

“I kinda wish my Alice was that way.”

I joined him in reclining and folded my hands in front of me.

“I’m pretty horny, too,” he said.

I fought to keep my eyes from widening.

How candid. Surprising.

“I love my baby, but we don’t have much sex. Once a month at the most.”

“I can see how that wouldn’t be enough,” I said.

“Right? I was hoping being here in this place would inspire her and get her juices flowing, but all she wants to do is eat and sleep.”

“That sounds rough, Brad.”

“I’ve never cheated on her. I’d like to think I never would, but I’ve never had the chance.”

He fiddled with his collar.

“Jessica said some things to me the other day.”

“She told me.”

His mouth fell open, and he leaned forward, planting his elbows on the table.

“She told you?!”

“Yes, she told me how attracted to you she was. How she wanted you.”

“And that didn’t upset you?”

“No, not at all, Brad.”

Here goes.

“If you wanted to have sex with her, you could.”

He recoiled and scowled.

“Oh, no. I would never.”

“It wouldn’t bother me, and Jessica is an amazing lover. It would be an experience you would never forget.”

“Alice would kill me.”

“Trust me, Brad. Alice won’t know. Jessica’s a master at sneaking around. If she doesn’t want me to know, she can even hide her sex games from me.”

My stomach gurgled, and my heart thumped in my chest.

“But I can’t hide like that.”

“You might surprise yourself.”

I scratched my face and shifted in my seat.

I’m going to burn for this.

“I don’t know,” he said.

“Brad, it sounds to me like you do. You’re just scared.”

“I’m terrified.”

He leaned forward and reached for his wine glass, but his hand trembled, so he pulled it back.

“God, look at me.”

“Jessica can take care of that, too, Brad. She’ll take care of everything. All you have to do is surrender to her.”

My chest burned.

I gotta get up, or I’m going to throw up.

“Well, Brad, I’m going to turn in. It was good chatting with you. Think about it.”

“Are you kidding me? I won’t be able to sleep now!”

I imagine I won’t either.

My feet pounded the stone pavers as I walked away, and sweat broke across my forehead. My head felt light.

I can't believe I'm doing this.

Jessica met me in the entrance to our over-water bungalow, grabbed my shirt, pulled me in, and closed the door.

“Tell me, Mr. Stroker, about your chat with Bubby.”

“I think I'm going to die.”

She laughed as she pushed me up against the inside of the door.

“Your tender conscience getting to you? Don't worry. It gets better.”

She winked as she dropped to her knees in front of me and started unfastening my shorts.

“So, tell me.”

“Well, it sounds like they don't have much of a sex life.”

Jessica pulled my shorts down and wrapped her fingers around my hard shaft.

“Mmm, see how the thrill of the crime sends the blood right to your cock?”

My head pressed back against the door as my chest heaved.

God, she's right. What's wrong with me?

She began stroking as she hissed.

“Tell me what Saint Ron said to the witless prey.”

I swallowed hard as my chest tightened. My cock tingled in her hand, and my balls drew up under me.

“He's never cheated before.”

“Mmm, I like a challenge.”

The vibrations of her voice and the wickedness in her words coaxed my arousal, and my hips clenched.

“Yess, now you see the way your wicked wife thinks. Planning their demise. Reveling in their destruction. Tell me more.”

Her tight grip jerked up and down my shaft, sending fire up my carotids into my temples.

“I told him he could fuck you.”

“Yess.”

“I lied and said it wouldn’t bother me.”

She taunted, and her words turned up the burners under my exhilaration.

“Mmm, but it would bother you if your wicked wife were to give her pussy to another man right here at a couple’s retreat where we’re supposed to be working on our troubled marriage. Wouldn’t it?”

All my muscles tensed as the heat and pressure inside my cock boiled over. Her hand released me and planted onto my thigh. With her open mouth, she darted onto my cock, capturing every drop of my life force as it attempted to escape. She hummed in predatory pleasure as she drank me dry.

“Mmmm.”

You’ve got me. Again.

The tension in my shoulders ebbed away, and my muscles grew limp. I melted into the door, needing its help to stand.

I’m your toy. And I don’t even care if you abuse me.

She released my cock from her mouth and straightened up, looking at me as she licked her lips.

“You’ve been inducted, Mr. Stroker.”

My breath burned against my lips as it pushed past them, and my conscience singed my synapses.

“Great. Am I done corrupting souls?”

“Oh, no. You are just getting started.”

CHAPTER 18

Ron

“It’s good to see you, Mr. Stroker.”

The wrinkles in Siddhi’s smiling face offered the comfort of her inner peace and wisdom, wrought from years of living through life lessons. The tension in my chest eased.

“Good to see you, too.”

Her hand gestured to a pile of cushions.

“Why don’t you have a seat.”

She assumed her favorite position. Legs crossed, seated on a cushion, hands resting on her knees, palms up. Her eyes closed, and she drew in a deep breath. As she exhaled, her eyelids lifted, and the light behind them poured out and seeped into me.

“How are you, Mr. Stroker?”

I pulled my arms into my stomach and leaned over them.

“I’ve been better.”

“What’s bothering you?”

“Well…”

How do I explain this?

“I was headed for divorce. I was going to be free. Free from her games. Her manipulations.”

I drew in a large breath and pushed it out.

“I’m getting sucked back in again.”

“So, you feel powerless.”

“Yes. Very much.”

“Are you powerless, Mr. Stroker? Or are you perhaps making a choice you don’t understand?”

Her words punched me in the gut.

Why would I choose this?

“I don’t know.”

“Tell me more about your relationship with Jessica.”

“Well, it’s very sensual. She keeps it that way. It’s how she controls me.”

I wrinkled my nose, and my lips pressed together in a grimace.

I sound like I have no power.

“Tries to control me.”

Siddhi nodded and grinned.

“A few months ago, while we were having sex, she told me she had cheated on me with my boss.”

Siddhi held her thoughtful gaze.

Did you hear what I just said?

I rubbed my chin.

“It crushed me. I worked there for two decades, and in one night, she wrecked my life. But I carried on. Got a new job. Filed for divorce. Had a new girlfriend. Things were going great.”

I fumbled with the stringed tassels on a pillow in front of me.

“We were playing with me punishing her.”

I peeked up at Siddhi.

“Keep talking, Mr. Stroker.”

“It was exciting. Almost intoxicating. Now, we’re here, and I feel myself being pulled back into her.”

I shook my head.

“She’s even got me helping her in a sick game to seduce other couples on the island. Get them to cheat on each other. That is not

how my parents raised me. It's like I'm becoming a different person. Like I'm an addict."

"But you're not."

"Excuse me."

"You're not an addict, Mr. Stroker. You are, however, choosing this, and that bothers you. Doesn't it?"

The knot in my stomach rose into my throat and squeezed. My face flushed.

"I don't want to choose this."

"Are you sure?"

Ugh. I don't know. Yes?

"She's toying with me. Making a fool of me."

"You mentioned your upbringing. Let's talk about that, Mr. Stroker. Whenever we are making choices we don't understand, we can often find the answers in our childhood."

Oh, man. Here we go.

"It's a long story. Where do you want to start?"

"Tell me about your mother."

"Well, she was beautiful."

"Interesting that her beauty comes to mind first."

"She was. In church, it wasn't polite for men to stare at her, and she tried very hard to hide her beauty, but I could still tell. They lusted after her. My father did, too."

"I see. And how was she towards your father?"

"Cordial at best. Icy much of the time. And resentful of his sexual advances."

Siddhi nodded.

“Tell me more about that.”

“Well, my father wasn't lewd. No one in the church was. But he would try to kiss her. Hug her. Compliment her. She would lean away from his attempts at physical affection. Roll her eyes. And if he complimented her, she seemed put off by it.”

“How did that make you feel?”

“Ummm, I don't know.”

I straightened my arm and rubbed it.

“She didn't like sexual affection. Or attention.”

“How was your relationship with her?”

“Well, she adored me. I was her pride and joy. She often bragged about me to the other women in the church.”

“Sounds like she put you up on a pedestal.”

“You could say that.”

“Were you ever afraid of falling off the pedestal and disappointing her?”

“All the time. As my sexuality emerged, I became a compulsive masturbator and felt so ashamed. I knew she would disapprove, and I believed God was looking down on me with disdain.”

Siddhi scowled and nodded her head.

“I had volumes of journals. Letters to God. All of them apologizing for masturbating again.”

“Were the other women in the church like your mother?”

“Well, none of them looked like my mother, but yes, they also avoided any appearance of sensuality.”

“And these were the only women you knew?”

“Yes. Until I met Jessica.”

Siddhi's eyes lit up.

"Ahh, I see."

My chest tightened, and I pulled my arms back into my body.

See what?

"So, tell me about meeting Jessica. What was it about her? The actual story."

"She was beautiful. And wore a flattering outfit. Was not hiding her figure at all. The night I met her, she came into a diner, all flustered. I would have found her unapproachable, but I had a rare moment of courage. She was a damsel in distress."

My arms relaxed, allowing my knees to rise into their embrace. My eyes glazed over as I stared at the pillow in front of me and remembered.

"We talked. We laughed. In no time, I knew she broke ranks from every other woman I had known. She seemed vibrant. Wild. Free."

"Hmm, a ticket out of your own prison?"

"Perhaps."

Siddhi raised an eyebrow.

"Yes, she was. Before the evening ended, we went behind the restaurant, and she was... well..."

"Showing you the freedom of her sexuality?"

"A nice way to put it."

Siddhi smiled.

"And she was cheating on her boyfriend at the time when she did it. I should have known then that she was a cheater."

"Did you not know? Or did you not care?"

"Well, when she did that..."

Siddhi leaned forward and lifted a finger as if pointing at a revelation in the middle of my forehead.

“Perhaps, you gravitated to her rebellion against the rules?”

Maybe. In which case, I deserve what I got. What I’m still getting.

My shoulders slumped away from my head, and I nodded.

“Ron, I’m not your typical therapist. A typical therapist would categorize your relationship as toxic for you both and everyone around you. They would pathologize your behavior and recommend extensive counseling to uncover the deep wounds that cause you to behave in such destructive ways.”

I dropped my head down to my forearms and hid my mouth behind them as a piercing flush of heat erupted from my chest.

I’m a terrible person. We deserve each other.

“But Ron, I believe that genuine love – not some fairy tale version, but the real, raw thing – manifests differently in every couple, because people are different. If you are true to love, it will guide you.”

“But is this love? Jessica has only stayed with me because I’m her plaything. She’s like a cruel little girl pulling the arms off a doll. She has no respect for me.”

Siddhi leaned back and got up.

“Ron, I want to show you something.”

She walked over to an ornate curtain and pulled it back. Behind it, a large, rustic board floated over the floor, mounted on two wooden legs.

“What is it?”

Siddhi pointed to tiny scratch marks on the board. Hundreds of them. Some were colorless indentions, but most were tinted red as if carved in blood.

“Those are all the couples I’ve counseled.”

“Wow. It looks like a lot.”

“One thousand, three hundred, and sixty-nine to be exact.”

“What are the red marks?”

“That’s what I wanted to show you. Most couples come into this sacred place with troubles, Ron. And most troubled couples come here because one of them – and perhaps both – has cheated.”

“The red marks are couples who have a cheater?”

“Yes. But, in every case, they kept the secret from their partner. They told me, of course. Many left this island still keeping their secret.”

She looked at the marks as if they were her wounded children. Then she turned, walked back to her cushion, and took a seat. Her head turned back to the board.

“Most of those cheaters were women, Ron. Our society treats the cheating woman with tremendous derision. Most women who cheat could never tell their husband, but Jessica told you.”

Her eyes burned with a clean, crystal fire as she looked at me.

“Not only does she respect you, Ron. She thinks highly of you. Otherwise, she would not have told you.”

“I don’t follow.”

“Most women know their husbands couldn’t handle the truth of their confession. Society cripples men from being able to handle it. They learn to internalize it and believe it is about them.”

She smiled and lifted her fingers like a tiny church steeple to her lips.

“Jessica believed you might be strong enough for her terrible truth. Not just to show you her betrayal of another, as she did by confessing her infidelity with her boyfriend. That confession alone risks judgment for the modern woman. But she chose to face you – the betrayed – with her truth.”

A sensation trickled in my chest, like ice thawing under the first sunlight of Spring.

“She took a monumental risk in telling you, Ron.”

Siddhi’s eyes drifted back over to her board and all those red marks.

“A risk most women would not take.”

She tilted her head and looked back at me.

“But she did it because she believed you were strong. That you might accept the worst of her truth. On some level, she may have chosen your boss because she wanted you to see the worst of her.”

Wow.

“You know this? Have you talked to her?”

“No. I have not. But, Ron…”

Siddhi gestured towards the board.

“I’ve counseled a lot of cheaters. Most of them want their partner to see them. To accept them. And I’ve got a hunch about Jessica and you. She wants to be seen.”

Waves of warmth rolled through my body, making my extremities tingle.

“May I suggest why you are still in this with her?”

I bit down on the inside of my cheek and nodded.

Uh oh, here it comes.

“You are a spiritual person, Ron. I knew it the second I saw you enter this place. And you were looking for a place to worship. One that would harmonize with the darker currents flowing in your soul.”

My ears grew warm, and I winced.

“Do not be ashamed of your darkness, Ron. We all have darkness inside of us. It is part of the balance.”

My lungs released the breath they held back.

“She became your goddess. Your inner worship found her worthy of your devotion. Your sacrifice.”

A tear formed in the corner of my eye, and my arms turned weightless.

“You are stronger than you think, Ron. But Jessica sees you. She believes. And you believe in her. In her truth. Her dark truth.”

Siddhi leaned back, smiling at me, and placed her hands behind her for support.

“I think we’ve covered a lot for one session, Ron. Why don’t we end on that note?”

I stared at the floor as my eyelids blinked in slow motion.

“Yeah. Ok. Sounds good.”

Perhaps it’s time for me to get back to church.

CHAPTER 19

Jessica

The soft grass under my feet extended out on either side of me to a row of flickering torches. They stood guard in front of huts flanking the lawn and led down to the darkness of the ocean. My head tilted back on my neck, and my nostrils took in the fragrance of sea salt and hibiscus. The stars filled a cloudless sky with light that illuminated our path. And Ron's salt and pepper hair.

"How was your day, Mr. Stroker?"

My hands swung like trapeze artists dancing through the air above a circus crowd. I let one of them swing his direction and hover, holding it out to take his hand. He smiled and took it.

"Thought-provoking."

I twisted my upper body towards him and grinned.

"Really? Do tell."

He smirked and looked at the grass.

"Some things Siddhi said today got me thinking."

"Good. Maybe you can go for me, then."

He looked up at me through narrowed eyelids and pressed his lips together, causing me to laugh.

"I'm kidding, Ron. I'll go."

My hand tugged at his to pull him along as I stepped towards the crashing waves in the distance.

"I'm not looking forward to it, though. So, tell me, Mr. Stroker, about these thoughts you've had today."

"I've just been thinking about what you did. Cheating on me with Austin. Coming home and telling me about it."

I reached up with my free hand to play with the collar of the thin beach dress and blinked several times, guarding my eyes against the breeze.

Oh, dear.

“What you did… it was…”

“Evil?”

Ron chuckled.

“Well, yeah, but that’s not what I was going to say.”

“Slutty?”

His eyes softened as he smiled at me.

“I was going to say brave.”

The backsides of my eyeballs prickled, and heat expanded through my chest.

Brave? I need more alcohol for this conversation.

“That was my next guess.”

We smiled at each other. I turned to square my head and shoulders towards the sand and water ahead, and my chin pressed out at them, still holding Ron’s hand.

“I am a bad bitch. Won’t take shit from anyone. I guess you could call that bravery. Or recklessness.”

My feet kicked at the grass.

“I imagine I learned it from my piece of shit father and his piece of shit church fanatic friends.”

The sound of waves crashing on the sand grew louder as we got closer to them. I glanced back at Ron. The warm light coming from the huts blended with that of the torches in front of them, creating a wreath of yellowish–orange light far behind him.

“All their rules about my body. My clothes. Like it was any of their business. While that asshole beat Mom and me. Which should have been their business.”

My muscles twitched, and I released Ron’s hand, stepping out in front of him.

“But they can all rot in Heaven. This is my fucking body.”

I squinted as I sneered at their memory, putting my fingertips on the top button that fastened the front of the dress.

“And a damn fine body it is.”

My fingers pushed the first button through the hole and dropped to the second one. Ron’s eyes lit up, and his mouth curled into a grin.

“And I’ll do whatever…”

I popped another button free.

“the fuck…”

Another button.

“I want with it.”

I pulled it apart, popping the remaining buttons off the dress, and revealed my naked body to Ron. And to anyone else watching from their huts. The dress fell to my ankles and lay in a pile on the grass. Ron bent over to reach for it, but my stern tone stopped him.

“Don’t.”

He raised his hands as he stood back up.

“Yes, ma’am. I just thought…”

“Thought that I’d want a way to cover myself if they catch us?”

I shook my head as my eyes smoldered at him.

“No. Leave it. You said it yourself. I’m brave.”

My feet kicked off their sandals and turned to continue walking towards the water. Grass gave way to sandy steps made from railroad ties.

“Let them look.”

I lifted my hands over my head and ran my fingers through my hair. A slow pirouette and a hand extended with a motioning finger kept Ron following. I winked at him and blew a kiss.

“Come, Mr. Stroker. Come join me in the moonlight.”

I turned back and continued down the steps towards the water. My hands traced from my thighs up the sides of my hips, and I chuckled.

Follow this siren and see what she does with you.

My bare feet slid into the sand, and the spray coming off the waves left a cool mist on my breasts. My nipples hardened under its caress, and my mouth fell open to catch my breath.

God, I love being free.

I turned and grinned at Ron, my eyebrow cocked.

“Wanna fuck?”

His voice cracked.

“Out here?”

I nodded as I stepped up to him, taking his hands and placing them on my breasts. His Adam’s apple rose and fell as he swallowed. My hand slid down his side and moved towards his belt to unfasten it.

“Who knows who’s watching,” I said.

“That’s what I’m afraid of.”

“But it’s thrilling, isn’t it?”

The belt buckle came loose under my fingers, and I unfastened his shorts, unzipping them as I dropped to my knees. His little cock popped out.

“Mmm, someone’s hard.”

I engulfed it with my lips, sliding them down to the base of his shaft as I pulled the shorts to his ankles. He gasped. My hands slid around to his ass cheeks, and my fingertips dug in as I pulled him into me. I bobbed my head with quick thrusts, my lips locked along his shaft, and my saliva covering it. His breathless voice interjected between crashes of water on sand.

“Oh, god!”

My closed-mouth chuckle vibrated a humming sound around his cock. I pulled back, removing my suction lock on his head with a pop, and looked up at him.

“I want your cock inside me.”

I got up and bent over, planting my feet, spread apart, into the sand and facing the huts with the water at our backs. His hands grabbed my hips.

“Yesss.”

He slid inside me. I tightened my pussy around him to compensate for his size and arched my back, pushing my shoulders up and my ass back into him.

“Fuck me!”

He began thrusting, and my wetness seeped from my lips and trail down the insides of my thighs. I leered at the flickering torches and shadows near the huts as I thought about all the sweet little couples in their huts. Proud – even arrogant – in the daylight but struggling in the dark to find sexual chemistry together. All of them ready for me to take them down if I wanted.

“Give me that cock!”

The smacking sound of his hip bones against my ass rose above the muffling sounds of the ocean. I defied the resort's propriety and fragile peace, adding volume to my moans.

“Pound this evil pussy, Ron!”

My eyes scanned the lawn and lights for witnesses. In the shadows, I spotted a figure. The sight sprayed gas on the fire in my pussy, and I quivered around Ron's cock. Warmth spread through my body as it swelled, pressing back against the grip of my cunt.

Feast your eyes, peeping pervert.

The sway of my bare breasts beneath my frame inflamed my libido, amplifying the thrill of being naked and fucking in the open. The figure in the shadows stood up, and the moonlight outlined his facial features.

Brad!

I expelled an orgasmic howl for his benefit.

Those white tunics will hear about this in the morning!

The muscles in my neck tensed, and my chest tightened. Hot splinters of pleasure shattered across my forehead and raced down my spine.

“I'm cumming on your cock!”

He moaned as his dick exploded inside of my trembling twat. Swells of ecstatic heat rippled through my body and slammed into my skin, pushing bliss out through my pores. Ron's fingertips dug into my flesh, and his hips and thighs trembled against my ass. I pressed the heels of my hands into my knees to steady myself as my legs wobbled. My skin tingled with the warm release of sweat, and my eardrums throbbed with the repeated thump of my heartbeat. I gasped.

“Oh, god.”

His grip on my hips loosened, and my vision of Brad and the resort lights blurred. I closed my eyes and simmered in the undulations of euphoria that rolled through my body. My chest heaved, grasping for air.

“God, that was good.”

Ron slipped out of me, and I stood up, staggering in the sand. I straightened up, stepped over to him, and flopped my arms around his neck. We steadied each other. The side of my open mouth pressed against his cheek, and a trailing drip of his cum rubbed off on my thigh from his flaccid cock. Our heartbeats pushed through our chests into each other’s skin. I whispered into his ear.

“Did you see our audience?”

“I did.”

I snickered.

“We’re gonna get in trouble,” I said.

“Don’t sound so concerned.”

I leaned back. Ron’s eyes sparkled under the light of the stars as he smirked at me. His cum trailed from my pussy and ran down the inside of my thigh.

“I’m not.”

“As long as it doesn’t affect our ability to get…”

I know—the money.

My fingertip rested on his lips.

“Don’t get all practical on me, Mr. Stroker.”

He smiled and kissed my finger.

“Ok.”

“Why don't we take a nice naked walk through the resort back to our room while your cum runs down my leg?”

He laughed.

“Seems like a terrible idea. Let's do it.”

CHAPTER 20

Ron

“Thank you, friends, for spending this time with us. May the blessings of the sun and the sand be yours this beautiful day.”

The island shaman’s raised hand waved over the gathering of couples seated on the sealed surface of split logs turned into benches. One by one, they rose from their seats and moved into the sandy aisles of the outdoor amphitheater. Majestic palms stood along the back and cast thin shadows across the rustic rows.

“Well, that was inspiring.”

“I feel inspired to seduce a shaman,” Jessica said.

“Now, that would be impressive.”

And messed up.

Jessica cocked an eyebrow.

“Don’t challenge me. You know I’ll do it.”

I chuckled.

“Oh, I know.”

A familiar male voice boomed across the departing crowd.

“Sugar Ron!”

Jessica smirked.

“Oh, look. It’s your boyfriend.”

The back of my neck prickled as I tightened my stomach and raised my hand to wave at Rex. My smile stretched the skin in the corners of my mouth.

“Rex! What’s up?”

“Man, after that snooze fest, I need to wake up. I was thinking about hitting the gym. Wanna come with me?”

My heart skipped a beat.

Oh, man. Time to step up my game.

“I’d love to, but I don’t know if I can keep up with you, Rex.”

He slapped me on the shoulder.

Ouch.

“Sure you can, Sugar Ron. C’mon. Let’s go pump some iron.”

I looked at Jessica. She glanced towards Rex’s hard body and took a quick tour up and down, biting her lip.

“Don’t look at me, Sugar Ron. You boys go have fun.”

Jennifer tugged at Rex’s arm.

“Baby, can I come?”

“Aww, Jenn, you know I love working out with you, but this is bro time. Me and Sugar Ron.”

She pushed out a pouty bottom lip.

“What am I going to do?”

Jessica jumped in.

“We could go get our nails done. Braid each other’s hair.”

You just couldn’t resist. You know she’d rather pull out your hair.

Jennifer scowled to the side at Jessica, refraining from direct eye contact with her.

“I’ll wait in the room. Don’t be long.”

Jessica watched her walk off like an alpha lioness watching a defeated feline limp away.

“I guess I’ll go find some trouble to get into it. Don’t hurt him too much, Rex,” Jessica said.

She chuckled. Rex threw an arm around me and clenched my shoulder with his firm grip.

Dang, that's gonna bruise.

“Have you seen this gym yet? It's pretty sweet. And I saw a punching bag for you!”

Ok, I can do this.

A grin eased across my face. I followed Rex through a few turns of the network of paved stone pathways until we approached a larger grass-covered building. Unlike most others, stucco walls enclosed this structure. We pushed through perhaps the only double glass doors on the island.

“They have air conditioning in here?”

“Nice, right? Coolest place on the island.”

“Yeah, this could become a regular thing.”

“Could become? C'mon, man. I say we hit this three times a week. Deal?”

“Umm...”

Rex pointed at me and winked.

“You know you want to. Say yes.”

I chuckled.

“Well, I mean...”

“C'mon. You're my island bro, Sugar Ron. Don't play with me like that.”

“Ok, ok. You're on.”

“Yes!”

He held up a hand to high five me. I slapped it as hard as I could.

“Nice, Sugar Ron, but don’t go so light on me. Next time, hit it like you mean it.”

I am so out of my league.

Rex gestured around a mirrored corner.

“Punching bag is over here.”

His massive size reflecting next to mine reminded me of the movie Twins.

At least I have more hair than Danny DeVito.

Mirrors lined three walls that formed a nook around the punching bag.

“Dude, you’ve got your own spot here. And look, you can see yourself from every angle.”

He flexed his bicep and eyed it in the mirror.

“I love mirrors.”

“If I had biceps like yours, I would, too.”

Rex laughed and gave me a less jarring pat on the back.

“So, you and Jessica had fun walking after dark last night?”

I froze and winced.

“You saw that?”

“Sugar Ron, I think half the island saw that. You two have some serious stones.”

“Well, it was Jessica’s crazy idea.”

Rex picked up a pair of sixty-pound dumbbells and started alternating curls while watching himself in the mirror.

“I wish Jenn were gutsy like that. I’d be down.”

“Whether or not I’m down, Jessica always talks me into it.”

“I don’t know what Jenn’s afraid of. She’s got a smokin’ body, but she’s so shy with it. For the first several months that we dated, she

wanted to have sex in the dark.”

“Yeah, Jessica likes the lights on. She wants me to see her.”

I threw a punch at the punching bag.

“Not that I mind.”

“I bet you don’t. I think Jenn got a little jealous the other day over that bikini your wife wore.”

“You mean the blue dental floss?”

Rex snickered.

“Yeah, it was pretty skimpy. But, hey, that’s her prerogative, right? With a body like that, why not show it? She must work out a lot.”

“She does enough to keep it tight.”

I winked at him.

Tight? When have you ever said that? Sad, Ron. You’re trying way too hard.

“You two must have a crazy sex life,” Rex said.

I threw another punch and found a rhythm with the bag. I lost count of how many reps Rex managed with those anvils in his hands.

“Crazy is a good word for it.”

Rex set the dumbbells down and walked over to a bench.

“Spot me?”

The color left my face as I clenched my fists and let them fall to my side.

“Umm, I’m not sure I can…”

“Don’t worry, buddy. I won’t max out or anything. Just give it a light tap on the last rep. That’s all I need.”

Rex put plate after plate on either side of the bar. Sweat broke on my forehead, and my mouth turned dry.

“I envy you, Sugar Ron. I’m a very sexual person. And I like adventure. I’m grateful for Jenn’s tight bod, but I wish she’d walk on the wild side occasionally.”

He laid on the bench and lifted the bar. My heart raced as I imagined having to help when the weight got challenging for him. His veins surfaced on the brown granite boulders that bulged under his skin.

You’re like a tan Incredible Hulk. I bet Jenn respects you. No way a woman would toy with you.

When he finished, he talked me into a set. We removed most of the plates, but not enough. I managed six reps one time. Three the next.

I’m going to pay for that later.

I followed him from station to station for an hour, watching him achieve unimaginable feats of strength. And talking me into further torture of my muscles.

“Sugar Ron, you are a beast.”

I think I’ve been trampled by a beast.

I hunched over my knees and held myself up with stiff arms.

“I think I’m done for today,” I said.

“Fair enough. Don’t wanna burn all that energy in the gym, right? Gotta save some for that wild vixen you’re married to, huh?”

He laughed as he punched my shoulder and winked. His fist landed like grease on the fire of my burning muscle, and I retreated towards the exit, wincing.

“Sorry, Sugar Ron. Guess you’re kinda sore.”

“No worries, Rex. If it bruises, it’ll be my bro tat.”

Bro tat? I think it’s more like Bro-ken.

I pulled together my bravado and pointed back at him as I exited through the glass doors.

“See ya next time, Rex. It’s you and me.”

“There you go. That’s what I’m talking about.”

Just past the door, I released the tears dammed up behind my ego.

Despite them, my heart warmed at my new friendship.

Can't remember the last time I had a guy friend.

I massaged my aching shoulder.

Hurts so good.

Back in the room, I headed for the shower and more tears. When I emerged, Jessica pointed to the bed.

“As much as I’d love to...”

“I know, Ron. I could hear you sobbing. Lay down.”

I collapsed on the bed. She took ice from the mini freezer and wrapped a towel around it.

“Where does it hurt?” she asked.

“Everywhere.”

“How about we start with this nasty bruise?”

She held the makeshift ice pack against my shoulder.

“Geez, Ron. What did you do?”

“Oh, ya know, I tried to keep up with John Cena.”

She shook her head and stroked my hair with her free hand. Her eyes softened as she watched her fingers run through it. I wrinkled my brow and studied her face.

“You’re being nice,” I said.

“Yeah, I know. Don’t tell anyone, ok?”

“Why? Are you trying to lure me deeper into your crime ring?”

“Of course, I am.”

She stuck her tongue out at me and chuckled.

“No, I just figured... “

Her eyes met mine, and the playful grin melted to something sadder.

“...I should do these things while I still have the chance.”

A prickle in my nostrils followed a fluttering in my stomach.

Wow. What has this place done to you? We should have come here years ago.

“Oh, by the way, while Sugar Ron was busy getting his ass kicked, I talked to Brad.”

“He talked to you?”

She nodded and cocked an eyebrow.

“He did.”

“And?”

“He’s in.”

CHAPTER 21

Ron

Tiny flames danced inside the lanterns that dangled from wall fixtures around the bungalow. Their light leapt around like dark spirits and cast a haunting glow on Jessica's voluptuous frame. The sheer black lace of her bodystocking lay against her like tattoo ink on her caramel skin. Her stilettos knocked on the hard floor as she walked to the corner and pulled a large chair out from the wall.

"Hide behind this."

"Jessica, he'll see me."

"Ron, think about it. His eyes won't be able to look anywhere but here."

Her hands glided down her body and floated out like wings.

"I promise you, he won't know you're in the room."

I walked over to the chair.

She's right.

In the low light, the darkness behind it offered a perfect cover. I crouched down, and she pushed the chair back, crowding me against the wall and pinching the skin on my feet.

"Ouch."

She snickered.

"Whoops."

I leaned out enough to see the bed turned back. A knock came at the door. My heart skipped, and I sucked in my breath.

You're going to have to breathe, Ron.

The door clicked as Jessica unlocked and opened it.

"Hey, Brad, you look handsome!"

Her voice dripped with desire. Fake. But only I would know.

Or would I? I'm sure she's done the same to me.

“What do you think of my outfit?” she asked.

His voice stuttered.

“Looks good.”

“So, Brad, why don't you come in and get comfortable. Maybe take a seat over there?”

Oh my god, Jessica, really?

I hunched deep into the shadow until my ribs ached from crowding together. Jessica closed the door and locked it. Brad's steps scuffed across the floor, and his body lowered into the chair, pushing it harder into me and my sore muscles. I bit my lip to restrain a yelp.

“I believe Merlot is your beverage of choice? And don't worry, no pristine white tablecloths in here to mess up.”

She chuckled.

“You just drink that, relax, and watch.”

I focused on drawing a slow breath through my nostrils, trying my best to avoid making any noise. My hand rested on the floor to support me as I leaned out inch by inch, trying to glimpse her over the edge of the chair. She pressed her knees together and bent them just enough to cause her thighs to flex. Her waist twisted, and her hips swayed. She moved like a cobra in front of him, hypnotizing with her curved lines.

“Has a woman ever danced for you, Brad?”

I could see the top of his head shaking. His voice stammered.

“Whha... Where's Ron?”

“I sent him out. Don't worry, Brad. No one will interrupt us.”

Her hands slithered up her body as it pulsed to an imaginary beat. With her fingertips, she caressed the undersides of her breasts through the black lace that obscured only patches of them from view. I swallowed and fought to muffle the sound.

If he's a breast man, his heart just exploded.

Her eyes crept from the floor until they locked on his face, unblinking, like a predator about to pounce. She painted invisible strokes on the floor with the brush of her steps until her statuesque form hovered in front of the chair.

God, you're beautiful.

With a whip of her lengthy hair, she turned her back to him, planting her stilettos on the outsides of his feet. Her hands slid down her straightened, flexed legs as she lowered her head towards the floor, and her pussy peeked out through a small opening in the crotchless hose. Brad gasped. Jessica's fingers reached around the back of her thighs as she leaned deeper forward. She pushed her ass towards him as she pulled her pussy lips apart, showing him her pink insides.

"Before we're done, Brad, you're going to bury your cock deep inside this pussy."

Her perfume's intoxicating smell singed my nostrils with a sweet sting that rippled up into my brain. The brushing sound of her fingers against the lacy mesh tickled my ears, and the hair on the back of my neck stood up. As did my cock. She turned to face him and dropped to her knees.

"You've had these pants on long enough."

Brad's hand gripped the arm of the chair just inches from my face, and his knuckles turned white. He disputed the sound of his belt coming

unbuckled with a frantic whisper.

“Oh, god, Jessica. I’m not sure about this.”

“Yes, you are, Brad. You didn’t come here tonight to play cards.”

I grinned.

Oh, but you are playing yours.

She unzipped him, and he whimpered.

“Wow, Brad, you have a nice cock.”

I pressed my tongue against the roof of my mouth and clenched my teeth until my temples throbbed.

I wonder if she’s lying to him.

He gasped.

“Oh, god.”

I pushed with my hips to raise myself so I could get a better view. The soft satin sheen of Jessica’s dark hair bounced in and out of sight, and the sound of wet suction around his shaft pierced my chest. An invisible grip tightened around my ribs as I pictured her fingers wrapped around his cock, sliding up and down it, just beneath her expert lips.

You want me to hear this, don’t you? Hear how it sounds when you suck another man? Like you’ve been doing behind my back?

My cock pulsed against my shorts, causing the head to sting from the pressure on my tender skin. I clenched my eyes shut and tried to control my breathing. My sweaty palms ached with the need to wrap around my throbbing member. Her mouth made a popping sound as it pulled off him.

“You’re about to cum, Brad. I love how much you’re enjoying this, but let’s savor the sweetness of your sins, shall we?”

He panted, now a prisoner at the mercy of her will.

“Oh, fuck, Jessica. I’m so hard.”

“Aching to cum?”

The chair jittered, and Brad’s hand smacked the sweaty spot he left on the arm of the chair before gripping it again.

“Yes, aching.”

Jessica’s eyelids narrowed over her tigress eyes, and her lips parted, revealing the tip of her tongue.

“So, Brad, your wife had some interesting things to say at our dinner together.”

He pushed a pained breath through his nostrils.

“Mmm-hmm.”

I pushed up on my knees. She glanced over at me and grinned before looking back at him. His head pressed into the chair as her fingers crept along his shaft.

I thought so. Your favorite game. Dangling them on a string and making them beg.

My cock throbbed like it remembered the many times she ruled me with her ruthless, slow strokes right at the edge of my climax.

“Do you share her disdain for black people, Brad?”

“Huh? Oh, no.”

“Because, Brad, I’m going to share a secret with you. A secret even Ron doesn’t know.”

She winked at me.

“These lips have sucked quite a few black cocks. How would Alice feel knowing you’ve had lips wrapped around your cock that have sucked a black man’s cock?”

He swallowed and gasped like a man dying from pierced lungs.

“She’d be mad.”

“Because she’s a racist bitch?”

He squirmed and sputtered.

“Brad, it’s ok. You can say it. No one will ever know. It’ll be our little secret.”

The frame of the chair creaked under the force of his writhing body.

“Has a woman ever swallowed your cum before, Brad?”

“No.”

“Mmm, I’d love to drink every drop. Imagine releasing into my mouth, Brad. This married mouth that has sucked many black cocks, sucking on your married cock. Betraying your Alice. Your racist bitch wife.”

My arm stung as the chair slid back into me like a vice grip against the wall. He squealed.

“Oh, god!”

“Say it, Brad, and I’ll let you cum in my mouth. Suck up every delicious drop of your unfaithful load.”

He whispered.

“She’s a racist bitch.”

“Louder, Brad. I need to hear you.”

He raised his voice in a wail.

“She’s a racist bitch!”

“Say her name, Brad. My mouth is watering for your cum.”

“Alice is a racist bitch!”

Jessica’s head plunged into his lap like that of a vampiress attacking the neck of her victim. Brad wailed.

“Oh, god!!”

The chair shook, and his hand stretched into the air, swatting at it and slamming the arm.

“Fuck!!!”

My heart pounded against my sternum like a boxer unleashing knock out blows in the last round. Huge beads of sweat dripped from my forehead onto the floor under me. Spots of light twinkled in my vision, and intermittent stabbing pains shot out from my brain through different points in my skull. My cock throbbed with the need for release. Brad’s arm collapsed over the side of the chair, and his lifeless hand dangled. Jessica rose, wiping her fingers across her lips, and walked into the bathroom. I knew why.

She’s not done with him.

She came back with wet hand towels. Hot and cold. A trick she often used on me. And, I was sure, many others behind my back.

“You’ve still got work to do, Brad. Your cum tastes delicious, but I’m going to need you to fill my pussy with it.”

Soon, she had him on his feet at the edge of our bed, her legs spread wide open, and him plowing into her. Her heels bounced in the air on either side of his naked ass as he drilled her.

“Yesss, Brad, fuck Ron’s pussy!”

He threw his head back as his ass cheeks clenched.

“Give me Alice’s cock. Give me her cum!”

His moan vibrated into the walls as he unloaded into her.

There’s no way other bungalows can’t hear this.

He stumbled back and put his hand up to his forehead. Jessica kept her legs lifted and spread, and his cum ran out of her bare pussy. Her eyes darted over at me and back at him.

“Mmm, just look at it, Brad. Your married cum running out of this evil cunt.”

He whimpered as he stared at it.

“What have I done?”

“What you wanted, darling. Now, run along to your unsuspecting wife. Crawl into bed next to her with my juices drying on your cock. Your secret is safe with me.”

He hobbled towards the door. Once it clicked closed, I crawled over to the bed to get a closer look. Sloppy wetness covered her labia and shimmered in the light of the flames flickering around us. My head floated towards her as if gravity pulled me to her pussy. I opened my mouth and extended my tongue to clean her.

What are you doing, Ron? Why?

I buried my face into the blended brew of her cum and his. The familiar sting in my chest connected with a similar sting in my cock, which pulsed against my shorts.

Maybe I better do these things while I still have the chance.

CHAPTER 22

Ron

The door rattled with repetitive banging from the outside, startling us both from our trance.

“Holy hell,” Jessica said.

She sat up and put a hand on my forehead, pushing me back. The room air laid a refreshing cool on the wet heat all over my face. My lungs drank in the oxygen as though I had surfaced from the depths of a pool. Jessica’s tight ass cheeks and calves flexed in a hypnotizing fashion as she sauntered towards the door and looked through the peephole.

“It’s Huda!”

Her mouth opened, and her eyebrows furrowed. She put one hand on her hip and the other on the doorknob. For a moment, she scowled, looking at me with her lips pressed together.

Don’t do it.

Jessica took a deep breath, painted a mischievous grin across her face, and turned the knob. It opened to a sour-faced Huda, steam coming out her ears and arms folded across her chest. Her eyes and mouth widened as she looked Jessica over.

“You harlot!”

“Excuse me?” Jessica asked.

“What was Mr. Brad doing coming out of your room so late?”

“Who?”

“Don’t pretend like you don’t know, Jessica. I just saw Mr. Brad leaving your room.”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

“You’re lying! Look at your outfit.”

Huda’s eyes narrowed, and she hissed.

“You were trying to seduce him! A married man! And you are a married woman!”

“Not that it’s any of your business, Huda, but I’m dressed like this for my husband. We were having a very sexy moment. In fact, his face is covered in my pussy juices right now.”

Huda peered into the room and looked at me.

“I was about to return the favor with this mouth before you interrupted!” Jessica said.

You were?

My cock twinged.

“Well, you should have used the privacy of your room the other night! I saw you both having sex out on the beach. And you!”

Huda pointed at Jessica with a trembling finger.

“You were naked! I caught my Rayan looking through the curtains with his hand down his…”

I raised an eyebrow.

Uh oh.

“Anyway, who do you think you are? Flaunting your body for other married men to see? Don’t you know that it will tempt them? They could fall into Zina! It is an abomination to God!”

Huda’s loud voice and shrill tone scraped the insides of my skull.

So, this must be the Islamic version of hellfire and brimstone.

She folded her arms across her chest again as her eyes looked down at Jessica’s lace clad body.

“In my country, it is a crime punishable by death.”

She leaned towards Jessica and arched her neck out like she would spit in her face, but she only spewed poisonous words.

“It’s unfortunate they don’t have such rules here on the island, but know that I have reported you to the resort staff.”

She pointed one last time, getting closer this time to Jessica’s face.

“I’m watching you.”

“So is your husband.”

Oh, snap.

Huda shook her fist and growled.

“Devil woman!”

“Good night, Huda. Better go keep an eye on him.”

Jessica waved at her, winking and blowing a kiss, and closed the door.

She turned and leaned up against it.

“That bitch makes me want to suck Rayan’s cock.”

“Yeah, I kinda want you to do that, too.”

Jessica cocked an eyebrow and grinned.

“Really?”

She stepped towards me, letting her hands fall and swing in rhythm with her strides.

“Saint Ron wants his evil wife to seduce another husband?”

I tilted my head sideways and looked at the floor.

“Well, I mean…”

“Suck his cock with this wicked mouth?”

I smirked.

“Get up,” she said.

My stomach tightened. The sudden shift in her posturing surprised me, but it also stoked my desire for her. For her domination.

Again? Ron, really?

My eyes fell to the floor, and I raised myself up. Jessica placed her fingertips on my chest and pushed me back on the bed. She cooed as she leaned over, and her hands slid up my thighs, grabbing my waistband.

“Want to see me take him from that hateful Huda?”

She pulled my shorts and underwear down my thighs, and my cock sprang out.

“Mmmm, you do.”

She stared with the hunger of a gorgon and climbed onto the bed, placing her palms on either side of my exposed hardness. Her lips parted as her head hovered over my throbbing member, and her heated breath on the skin of my inflated head unleashed waves of need through my thighs and abdomen. I arched my back, and my knees lifted and spread out under her.

“Look at you. So hungry to be taken. So stirred by the sight of me corrupting Brad. Thinking of me doing the same to Rayan.”

My mouth fell open, and my palms moistened with sweat.

She's right. I'm addicted to this.

I winced, thinking of the sky above the bungalow and a God who frowned on me, shaking His head in disappointment.

“You can't help it, Ron. You want to fight it, but you can't resist the allure of evil.”

The heat that gusted from her mouth, so close – every word enveloping my cock – teased and tortured it. A sinister laugh from her chest pushed a flurry of more small puffs over it.

“You want these wicked lips around your cock. The same ones that just sucked the fidelity right out of poor, innocent Brad. Don’t you?”

I squinted, unable to fight anymore, as I nodded my head. My soul lay ready to surrender more than just my cum. She held the key to a part of me no one else understood. Ally glimpsed it but could only be a witness. Her light prevented her from entering into it. But Jessica summoned it, gave it wings, and made it her pet. A pet that craved slavery to her and freedom from the shackles of morality. My voice cracked as I pledged my drunken allegiance.

“I’ll do anything you ask. Tell me what your wicked heart wants from me.”

Her gaze burst into a wildfire, and she rose, knees on either side of my legs. She brought her hands together and rubbed her flattened palms against each other, fingers stretching out.

Then they stopped.

The fire died in her eyes, and the hunger drained away.

“You think you are ready for that. But you aren’t, Ron.”

She lifted one knee and brought it together with her other at my side. Her hands rested between her thighs on her lap.

What is this?

“Ron, I’d love to take you and twist you. Torment your innocent soul with my darkness until it’s corrupted like mine.”

She reached out to the mattress with her fingertips.

“I’ve done enough to you.”

My breathing stopped, and a warmth expanded through my chest. The servant inside reached for its unresponsive master and ached, but the wounded man found comfort in her curious restraint and consideration.

Why did you wait until the end to show me this side of you?

The back of my eyeballs tingled, and a thickness formed in my throat. A tear emerged in the corner of my eye as she lowered herself and nuzzled her head into my shoulder. My erection retreated, and my muscles released the tension of my fading arousal. Her torso and shoulders went limp as they melded into my body, and she draped her gorgeous leg over my thighs.

“I’m sorry, Ron. I really am.”

“You’re confusing, you know that?”

A soft chuckle pushed a breath out through her nostrils.

“I do. And not just for you.”

She laid a hand on my chest.

“I confuse myself.”

I wrapped my arms around her and held her like it might be the last time. Her voice broke as she muttered.

“Don’t hate me forever.”

“I don’t hate you now.”

She looked at me with glistening eyes. The fierce goddess stepped back and allowed something softer—even innocent—to step into the light. A little girl inside her clung to my soul as she took a deep breath and let it out.

What am I going to do with this?

My tenacious hold on my resentment continued to slip and give way to forgiveness. My heart quivered with a tiny pang as I contemplated the trap door about to open under me.

What happens if I let myself fall again?

I placed a hand on the soft tuft of dark silk strands that streamed from her head. My wife's breathing deepened, and her eyelids closed.

Good night, Jessica.

CHAPTER 23

Jessica

Siddhi's voice lilted as I entered her hippie lair.

"Jessica! So good to see you."

I slowed my steps and looked around the room.

Where are you hiding your grumpy twin?

She walked over to me and put a hand on my shoulder, and her smile oozed with a jarring amount of warm energy.

"Come on in. Have a seat."

"You know, would it kill you to have chairs?"

She grinned at me as she took a seat on a cushion and waited for me to join her.

Oh, alright.

As I sat, she watched me as if studying the mechanics of a person sitting down. Her soft gaze pried at some chamber that hid all my dark secrets.

Girl, back up with those searchlights.

"So, are you ready to be honest with me?"

"Um..."

"I have something for you."

She swiveled her torso and reached behind her, fidgeting around in a brass box. She turned back to me and held out a thin cigar and a lighter.

"Is that a..."

"It's a blunt."

My mouth dropped open.

Are you fucking kidding me?

“I haven’t done one of those since college.”

“It’ll help you relax. I find it’s beneficial for my patients in therapy.”

She stroked the wheel on the lighter and held the flame under the end until it smoked.

This is a horrible idea.

I accepted it as she held it out to me, put it up to my lips, and drew a hit off it. The smoke-filled my lungs, and I coughed. My eyes burned and watered, and I handed it back to her.

“There. Happy?”

“Take a few more puffs of it.”

Ok, you’re trying to fuck me up with this shit.

“What have you got to lose, Jessica?”

Ouch.

I looked at the smoke rising off the end of the blunt. A soothing warmth bubbled up in my chest.

Fuck it. She’s right. I’ve got nothing to lose. I already lost it all.

“I told your husband, I’m not your typical therapist.”

“Yeah, I’d say.”

I took another long hit and coughed out my words.

“I hate therapists. No offense.”

She grinned.

“None taken.”

“Here. Take this,” I said.

She took it from me and placed the burning end in a small dish in between us.

When did that get there?

The dish reflected the light in the room off its shiny surface. The burnt red color in the ceramic reminded me of lava rolling down the sides of a volcano, and the room's light that bounced off it appeared to cut through the lava in soft slivers of white. I stared at it for several minutes, mesmerized by its beauty.

"That's a pretty bowl."

Siddhi sat, smiling at me. She sparkled like the brightest star in the entire universe.

"And you have pretty eyes, Siddhi."

How long has she been staring at me?

"Damn, I think I'm high. That's some good shit."

"Yes, well, we have good shit here in paradise."

Paradise. Damn, the raisin is right. This place is a fucking paradise.

The deep reds, greens, and purples all around me soothed me as the sight of them caressed my vision with their bold brilliance. All around, the soft shimmer of gold threading trimmed their lines. The beaded curtains in the entryways twinkled with the sunlight grazing them from outside. They tapped against each other like the percussive section of an orchestra as the gentle breeze brushed by them.

This place is like a palace. Siddhi must be one rich bitch.

"Tell me about the men in your life before Ron."

Her question grabbed at my stomach like twiddling fingers, unleashing an explosive belly laugh. I put a hand down to steady myself as tears streamed down my cheeks, and my chest erupted with an orgasmic fit of guffawing. After several minutes, my temples ached from the pounding of my continued hysterics.

“I’m sorry. I’m sorry.”

I lifted the back of my hand to my mouth.

God, I didn’t think anyone could laugh this long. But that was fucking funny.

“Ugh. God. Ok, let’s see. The men in my life.”

It started again. My sides burned now, and my chest vibrated with tingles. It took another several minutes for me to pull myself together.

She must think I’m a bimbo. Get it together, Jessica.

“Um, the men. Well, do you wanna hear about my abusive father who cheated on my wonderful, selfless mother? Or maybe you’d like to hear about my asshole fiancé who cheated on me with the bitch I thought was my best friend?”

I continued to struggle with suppressing intermittent chuckles, and my tears made Siddhi’s face look fuzzy. I wiped the wetness from my face and squinted at her. Her eyes glistened like she might cry.

She thinks I’m pitiful. I mean, I am pitiful.

“Don’t cry for me, Argentina. Fuck those shitheads. Ya know? Like FUCK. THEM.”

I put a hand up to high five Siddhi, but she just smiled.

Ok, definitely thinks I’m a bimbo.

“Besides, I figured what’s good for the goose is good for the mother fucking gander.”

My fingers snapped my fingers while I moved my hand in the air, drawing a letter “Z.” Then, I pulled it back. The indentation in my ring finger from Ron’s ring had almost disappeared.

Hmm, that didn’t take long.

I cocked my head to the side and frowned at it, blinking.

Focus, girl. What was the question? Oh, right.

“Yeah, my fucking father. Beat my mom. Beat me. He loved to use his belt. And the fiancé, well…”

A flash of my girlfriend rushed at me from the depth of my memory. On her knees in front of him, sucking his beautiful cock.

“I walked in on him with that cunt who pretended to be my friend.”

My hand raised, and I waved my finger at Siddhi.

“Shiddy, girl, never give your power over to a mother fucker. I don’t care if they seem harmless. Maybe they are harmless, ya know? But don’t take the chance. You don’t want to know what happens when they get some power.”

I smacked my lips to find any moisture in my mouth.

Hmm. I guess this salty ocean air took it all.

“Speaking of salt…”

My mouth scrunched up, and my eyebrows furrowed.

“Did I say something about salt?”

“No, dear. You were telling me about men and power.”

“Oh, right. Well, I could use some pretzels. Do you have any?”

“I’m sorry, Jessica. I don’t.”

My mouth bent into a scowl.

Well, that sucks. I’m gonna starve to death.

“So, Jessica, let’s talk about Ron.”

“Now, there’s a sweet guy. I mean, if there is a sweet guy on the planet, it’s Ron Stroker, but to prove my point, as soon as he got some power, he wanted to punish me.”

“Because you cheated on him.”

“Well, yeah…”

“With his boss.”

“Yeah.”

“Is that the first time you cheated?”

I looked around the room for cameras.

Do they execute people on this island? Like, burn them at the stake? Or maybe crucify them?

I pointed at her.

“Look, Sidley, if you’re about to bring the tunic brigade in here to haul me off, don’t let them nail me to a cross or some shit…”

She chuckled.

“No, no crucifixions here. Not in my sessions. You’re safe.”

I wrinkled my brow and turned to examine the room behind me. The curtained exits continued rattling in the breeze, but no one came through them.

Maybe she’s telling the truth.

“Yeah, ok. I cheated before. With my old boss, Steve, on a business trip. That’s when it started.”

“And what did cheating on Ron do for you?”

“I mean, it was pretty exciting. Breaking the rules and all.”

The skin on my forearms itched.

“My father had rules. Lots of rules.”

My voice became gruff and oafish, and I scowled as I pointed at the air.

“You can’t wear that in public, Jessica. You look like a whore!”

I stuck my tongue out.

“Fuck you, Charles. I am a whore.”

My eyes crept back to the old woman, looking for signs of judgment. She just kept that locked gaze on me.

“So, yeah, being a whore. Doing what I want with my body. Fuck the rules. It felt good. It felt fucking amazing.”

“Did you tell, Ron?”

“Not that time. I wasn’t ready. But with Austin, his boss, I told him.”

“And why did you tell him?”

My head jumped back on my neck.

That’s a fucking brilliant question.

My chest puffed up with the memory of driving home that night. Armed with the poisonous truth, ready to unleash it on Ron’s tender soul. And to see how he would react.

“I felt powerful, ya know? Telling him. And I think…”

My voice cracked, and a warmth expanded in my chest.

“I don’t know. I wanted to know what he’d do.”

“What were you expecting?”

“I don’t know. Same shit. That he would crucify me. He could have, ya know. And he kinda did, but he kinda didn’t. I guess I wanted to know if he was different. Or just like the others. If he saw the horrible whore inside me, would he still be the adoring husband, or would he turn into my monster of a father?”

My ears burned, and my toes curled.

“Shit. Did I just say that out loud?”

Siddhi grinned at me.

“What do you keep smiling at?”

“You, Jessica. You’re amazing, and you’re on the brink of a breakthrough.”

“Pfft! More like a breakdown.”

Am I laughing or crying? Or both?

I poked at my lips, testing them for feeling.

“And amazing? Like an amazing shit show, right?”

Ok, this is laughing. Damn, I’m funny.

Siddhi smiled but failed to appreciate my brilliant comedy routine.

“No, you’re a survivor,” she said.

Ok, that’s a stretch, sister. Let’s bring this back on down to earth.

“I’m a lying, cheating whore and an evil cunt. Ron deserves better.”

“I agree with the first part, but not the second.”

I raised my eyebrows.

Bitch, say what?

“Jessica, a lot of therapists would disagree with what I’m about to say, and that’s their right. But I’ve worked with a lot of couples. A lot of cheaters. There are men for whom a lying, cheating whore is the perfect partner.”

“Where can I find these men? Mars? I heard there are men from there?”

I snickered.

Men are from Mars. Nice one, Jessica.

“Are you sure you don’t have one of them?”

“Uh, yeah, in case you forgot, he’s divorcing me.”

“So what.”

“Whoa, chickee. Look, don’t take this the wrong way, ok, Sliddlee? How much of this stuff do you smoke every day?”

A brief chuckle? That’s all I get? C’mon.

“Here are some questions to ponder, Jessica. And I’ll leave you with them. What if Ron is leaving because he thinks your cheating is about him? What if he thinks you have no respect for him? That he is just an unloved toy to you?”

“I mean, I can see how he might think that.”

“But is it true? Does your cheating have anything to do with him? Or does it reveal a truth about you?”

“That would be a horrible truth.”

“Take ‘horrible’ out of it. Try not to judge yourself, Jessica. Seek to understand.”

“Yeah, I’ve been digging at that scab since I fucked Steve. There’s no understanding me.”

“Let me put it another way. How likely is it you’ll cheat on your next partner?”

Hmmm. Pretty damn likely.

“And if it’s likely, why?”

“That’s some deep shit right there.”

“Yes. Deep shit. Now, go ponder.”

“And you don’t have any pretzels?”

Siddhi smiled.

“I’m sure they have some at the bar.”

“My favorite place. Well, namaste and shit.”

“Yes, Jessica. Namaste.”

CHAPTER 24

Jessica

I'm going to miss these bungalows when we have to leave.

As I strolled the long boardwalk to our little hut over the water, the powerful buzz from my house party with Siddhi lightened. Waves rolled underneath me and offered a swishing sound through the warm boards.

Ron's probably napping.

I wrapped my hand around the doorknob and took a deep breath, hoping to slide in without disturbing his rest. As it opened, I put a hand up to my mouth. Inside, tea lights around the room cast a warm flickering light against the walls. On the bed, rose petals formed the shape of a heart on top of the plush comforter. A stereo I didn't know we had filled the air with a slow, smooth jazz. In the far corner, Ron stood wearing a clean white shirt, shorts, and a tender gaze with his grin.

"Whoa, what is this?"

"It's a weird mood I'm in."

"Yeah, I'll say. Wanna tell me about it?"

"Well..."

Ron picked up a remote from the bedside table and paused the music. He looked at the petals and pushed his hands into his pockets.

"I'm not saying I want to rip up the divorce papers or anything, but I do, um..."

He choked on his words and cleared his throat. His lips pressed together as a tear rolled down his cheek.

"I do love you."

My mouth dropped open as his words ignited in my chest.

“And not just part of you. The total package. Your iconoclastic, wicked bent. Your spontaneity. Your sarcastic wit. Your fearless, charismatic powers of persuasion.”

His words lapped against my body like warm ocean waves, melting my defenses and weakening my knees. I grasped for my humor, hoping to recover my balance.

“My amazing ass?”

He chuckled.

“It is pretty special.”

The brief lightness of humor failed to protect me. His pupils enlarged and returned to a softness.

Where is this coming from?

“But I’m being serious. Jessica, I’m grateful that you came into my life. Grateful you’re the person you are. I’m…”

He lifted his fist to his lips as another tear rolled down his cheek. His voice cracked again and quivered as he pushed his words out.

“…grateful for this scar on my heart that I’ll always have where you betrayed me.”

“Ron, I…”

“No, just let me finish.”

His head dropped like a weight dangling from his neck, and he searched the bed for words.

“It’s weird, but I think it’s an honor to bear it.”

With that, he ripped off the armor around my heart, causing my chest to expand. I grabbed my mouth as tears filled my eyes. He turned towards the sliding glass doors that lead out to our private deck and

watched the waves crash against the pillars under the bungalow next to ours.

“We fear hurricanes for their destructive power. They rip trees out of the ground and roofs off houses. They are terrible and awesome. Their sheer force is a wonder to behold. And they are a part of nature. And you…”

He turned his head back towards me.

“…are like a hurricane of sensuality. Terrible and awesome. My heart will never stop revering that.”

He walked over to me as my shoulders hitched from my attempt to suppress a blubbing eruption. I took a deep breath and looked away.

“Wow.”

His voice steadied as he took my face in his hands. The musky scent of my favorite cologne wafted off his chest.

Even put on cologne for me. This man.

“If you’ll let me, I’d like you to lie down on this bed. Let these hearts be a symbol of my love for you. For the Jessica I now know in the most intimate way. Because I bear that scar.”

Oh my god, what prompted this?

“I want to make love to you. Not punish you. Not hurt you. I want to make love to the cheater whose brand will forever be on my soul.”

And that unleashed ugly crocodile tears. My sobs exploded from deep in my chest and shook my entire body. He steadied me with his hands, and I fell into him. His arms wrapped around my shoulders and pulled me close.

“Just this once, may I take you?”

My head nuzzled into his chest as I nodded and wrapped my arms around his torso. His surprising display of strength held me up as I melted and wept. He waited, holding me, until my bawling subsided to snuffles. Then, he took my arms off his waist and set them at my side. His hands returned to my cheeks, and he pulled my face to his. My tears mixed with his as our mouths opened to each other. His tongue slipped into my mouth and into my soul. It caressed the deep shame I kept locked away, stroking it with his acceptance. Another gush of tears pumped from my ducts and rolled onto his upper lip, wetting our mouths with their salty warmth. He whispered as he slipped one hand around to the back of my head.

“I love you, Jessica.”

His mouth returned to consume my mouth with the disarming torrent of his affection. Waves of warmth rolled through my body, from the connection of our lips, rising like steam into my sinuses and rolling like a hot spring down my neck into my chest.

This can't be heaven. I don't deserve it.

My hands rose to rest on him – one on his side and the other on his cheek.

And that's ok. I'd rather be here.

Ron's hands slid down to my shoulders and gripped them, directing me to the bed. I stood at the edge while he peeled my clothes off my body, his mouth caressing my skin as he uncovered it. My head tipped back, and I closed my eyes. The soft touch of his lips as they inched across my flesh spawned electric ripples outward like a pebble he skipped across a pond.

Am I still high?

Weeks of surrendering to his wrath gave me an unexpected thrill, but this – surrendering to his love – terrified me. Still, I wanted to. Even yearned to. Heat moved and swelled in my naked body, and my lips became engorged. My folds wet.

“Lay down.”

I sat on the edge and laid back into the cradle of the pillowy bedspread. My head turned to the side, grazing one of the red petals with my cheek. They surrounded me like satellites of his adoration. I reached out with my hands to touch their softness.

“Ron?”

“Yes, dear.”

Wow. You haven't called me that in a while.

“I've never done this before. I'm scared.”

His hands slid up my shins and rested on my thighs.

“I know.”

My body's weightlessness in this unfamiliar state of real surrender caused my heart to pound in my chest. I expected my instincts to kick in and catch me from this fall. But no. Instead, Ron's love caught me and held me up in it, my feet dangling. He pulled himself up on the bed and hovered over me, peering into my soul.

“Do you trust me?”

I think I do. You have never done me wrong. Never hurt me. Not really. I've never met another man like you.

Heat bubbled in my chest, and my eyes prickled as they looked up at him. My bottom lip pushed out as I nodded. He lowered his mouth to mine and kissed me. First on the lips before his caress moved to my chin. Tracing along my jawline and down my neck, he set off a cool

rush of happy juice that shot from my forehead, down my neck, and into my arm. His mouth continued onto my collar bone, and electric bolts of pleasure fired back and forth under my scalp. I pressed my hands into the bed as every pore in my skin opened to his attentive mouth and hands.

I have done so much fucking. But what is this? This is something different.

He floated down my body, touching every inch with the soothing balm of his gentle caress. I slid further up on the bed as he placed his hands on my thighs and spread them open. He massaged them with his hands and covered the inside of them with slow, open-mouthed kisses, drifting in towards my wet lips. When he brushed them with his tongue, he unleashed a shock wave of blissful heat down my legs and up my torso. My fingers grabbed a fistful of the petals, and I whimpered with a broken moan.

He offered me something I didn't know I needed until that moment. Something I couldn't take by seductive force. Something I could only have by laying open and receiving it. His tongue parted my lips and slipped inside me, and his lips enclosed around my hood. In so many of our sexual encounters before, I dominated him. Took him. Reduced him to be my slave. But at that moment, he dove into me freely, knowing me fully. Knowing I had cheated on him multiple times. Knowing I had chosen his boss to humiliate him. He knew the darkest corners of my soul, and he made love with his mouth to the part of me that bore the responsibility and memory of my most vicious crimes.

Oh, Ron. I love you, too.

My thighs and forehead tensed, and I moaned a wordless prayer of gratitude. Wet volts of pleasure danced down my spine and split out into my hips. My orgasms rolled one after another, not crashing into him with poisonous hostility. These reached out to harmonize with him in an intimate spiritual union. And a longing to have him inside me. As if he read my mind – or perhaps my body – he got up and stood beside the bed to remove his shorts. As he bared himself to me, my opening convulsed, beckoning for him. His small size, often a favorite target for my derision, comforted me.

I've been so mean to the kindest penis that ever entered me.

I took my hands to the insides of my thighs and held myself open while I looked Ron in the eye.

“Take me, Ron. I want you to.”

He took my calves in his hands and pressed my legs open wider, tilting my hips back. As he entered me, my body transformed into a vibrating temple of intoxicating pleasure. Not from the thick penetration of a monstrous member, but from the penetrative rawness of his fearless choice to love me. To put his manhood inside the deep cavern of my dark truth. As if he took the knife I stabbed him with and cleaned it, took care as he handled it, and placed it in the safekeeping of his most treasured belongings. I wrapped my wetness around him as he slid into me and rocked my hips back under the firm pressure of his grinding thrusts.

“Oh, god, Ron. Yes.”

My back arched, and I tilted my head back and closed my eyes. He drove his affirmation into me with undulating movements and hovered his mouth over my chin and neck, laying soft kisses on them,

unwrapping my soul. The trappings of the bungalow faded as his body radiated into mine. Stars swirled around us as our spirits intertwined and melded together. His fiery breaths poured from his open mouth on the tight tendons in my neck.

“I love you, Jessica. All of you.”

My body pulled into a tight ball of energy, clamping down on him, clinging to his penetration of my soul. I put my arms around him, dug my fingertips into his lower back, and thrust my hips up into him.

“Oh god!”

An epicenter of orgasmic dynamite detonated and shattered my senses. My body convulsed, and I tore the air with my screams. He shoved his brand of love through the open portal in between my legs and unloaded it, spilling his knowledge of my deep secrets, his profound adoration, his fierce worship.

“Yes, fill me up!”

My pubic bone drove up against his, and our climaxes twisted together into an unbreakable cord of light and darkness. He panted, and his chest heaved as he collapsed onto me. I continued to tremble around him with aftershocks. The fire of his passion settled into smoldering coals of warmth against my chest and stomach. I wrapped my arms and legs around him – for one last time, for the first time – with the love of a partner. Something I never knew I possessed. Now with him. The only man who ever knew me. The only man who accepted my truth.

He lifted his head and looked into my eyes. My hands slid off his back, and I lifted them to his face, my fingertips grazing his firm chin.

“I love you, Ron.”

“I love you, too.”

He fell to my side, still holding onto me. My legs still wrapped around him. We clung to each other and that moment, free from thoughts about the past or future. Our blended psyche's simmered in the cauldron of our deep, penetrative understanding of each other. My lips brushed his as our bodies melted, and we yielded to the onset of exhaustion. Sleep moved like a magical mist over the bed and blanketed us with a profound peace.

I don't know about tomorrow, but tonight, Ron Stroker, I'm yours.

CHAPTER 25

Ron

I woke to the sound of the shower. The sliding wooden door that led to the bathroom kept steam and song from rushing into the bedroom. Jessica hummed a light melody I didn't recognize, but I knew the nature of it. A childlike bliss that appeared so seldom but floated on the air like a flock of birds soaring in the morning sun.

I pushed the covers back and placed my feet on the floor.

What now?

My heart wrestled with the plans I carried with me onto this island, plans to get through and be rid of her. They crumpled in the fire of last night's spiritual supernova. I watched them in my mind's eye as they crackled and reduced to ash.

Why do I need a plan, anyway? For once, Ron, live in the moment.

I rose and went over to my suitcase, unzipped it, and stroked the folded soft cotton shirt on the top. I took a deep breath and pulled it back along with several others stacked, giving me access to the bottom. And there it was.

Why did I bring this? Did I know? Somewhere deep down?

The tip of my index finger grazed the ring I wore for years that left an indentation in my skin. At times, it represented a prison of torture for my soul. But at that moment, it represented the precipice of a new adventure.

Dare I jump?

I picked it up and held it in the sunlight that poured in through the glass doors. Tucking it in my palm, I turned towards them and slid them

open. The ocean breeze and the sound of crashing waves washed over my face and ears. My heart swelled in the magic of that place and the memory of an unforgettable night with Jessica. Like no moment we shared before. A culmination of years. Learning each other, suffering at each other's hands. And remaining.

But you were ready to leave, Ron. The divorce is almost finalized.

CHAPTER 26

Jessica

The hot water massaged life into my slumbering muscles. I rubbed my shoulder as I turned my back to the spray. My naked body still buzzed with the imprint of Ron's energy on it. His choice.

But what now?

I closed my eyes and placed a hand up on the ceramic wall beside me. The steam rose into my nostrils and opened my passageways. They shared a tenderness with my chest cavity, both still tender from the previous night's sobbing.

I don't know about tomorrow, but I know how I feel right now.

I turned off the water, stepped out of the shower, and took hold of a plush towel hanging nearby. My toiletry bag sat on the counter.

Jessica, are you sure?

I stepped over to it. My heart fluttered as I looked at the collection of my favorite beauty products, knowing what they concealed. I wrapped the towel around me and dug through the bag.

I think it's here.

Mascara and lipstick. A half dozen eyelash curlers. I grinned and shook my head.

Do you need that many?

I pushed them aside and saw it. Zipped in a clear plastic side pocket. My fingers trembled as they tugged at the zipper and dug it out.

This is crazy.

The ring that Ron gave me eight years ago. Humble compared to the first engagement ring I received, but so much more valuable. A douchebag gave me the first trinket. But the second? A heartfelt gift

from a true prince. I curled my lips to the side as I held it up, glimpsing my reflection in the mirror.

Oh, what the hell.

I slipped it back on my hand and placed it on the counter. My head tilted back, and I searched the ceiling. My heart skipped as I heard the door behind me slide open. In the mirror, back over my shoulder, I saw Ron's face. His affectionate energy washed over me as he stepped up to my back and put an arm around my waist. With the other, he stroked my bare shoulder. His hand glided over my skin, down my arm, until his hand came to rest on top of mine. The backs of my eye sockets prickled at the sight of it. His hand bore the ring I gave him. A ring that represented my broken promises. Yet he wore it. Our rings touched each other, and my eyes welled up with tears.

"Oh, Ron."

He chuckled.

"I know. I don't know what this means. Right now, I don't care."

He kissed my bare neck.

"I love you," he said.

"I love you, too."

CHAPTER 27

Jessica

“I’ll be right back. I want to see what’s on the buffet.”

Ron smiled at me as I got up from our table for two. I batted my eyelashes at him.

“See you soon, Bubby Boo.”

My tongue slipped out, and I winked. He laughed, shaking his head. As I walked away, the after tingle from amazing sex flitted around in my hips. The buffet sprawled over three serving lines, and resort staff scurried about tending to its many stations.

How many people do they think they have to feed?

More guests were arriving and taking seats, and the terrace hummed with their conversations and the distant cries of seagulls. The smells of freshly cooked eggs, potatoes, and bacon beckoned from the bars in front of me.

Mmm, smells delicious.

A woman in a white chef’s uniform carried a silver tray out and set it into an open slot in the buffet. She lifted the lid, and steam rose from the mountain of golden, fluffy biscuits underneath.

Oh, my god. Yes.

I skipped over to them and grabbed a plate.

“Good morning, Mrs. Jessica.”

I turned towards the thick accent speaking to me and saw Rayan.

Oh, dear.

“Hey, Rayan. How are you this morning?”

His voice shook, and his knuckles whitened from gripping his plate.

“I’m good. Exceptionally good. Thank you! And you?”

I smirked and put some syrup in my voice.

“I’m fantastic.”

Jessica, you need to stop.

His hand fumbled with a pair of tongs laid on top of a pan of bacon and sausage.

“Listen, Mrs. Jessica. I feel I should apologize. I understand that Huda came to speak to you the other night.”

“Rayan, you don’t have to apologize for her. She did that on her own. I’m sure you had nothing to do with it.”

“Well, I may have been a bit to blame. She found me looking out the window of our room, and you were outside.”

I grinned and cocked my hip to the side.

“Oh, really?”

He pursed his lips in a smirk as he tilted his head left and right.

“Yes. She was not happy.”

“Rayan, were you being a naughty little peeping Tom?”

“Excuse me? Peeping Tom?”

“It’s an expression. Means you were hiding and checking me out.”

“Oh!”

He shrugged his shoulders and puffed out a nervous laugh.

“I suppose I was a peeping Tom, then.”

“And did you liked what you saw? Was it worth the trouble you got in?”

He cast a quick glance over his shoulder back towards the terrace.

“I… um…”

“You know, Rayan, Huda gave me a little education during her visit the other night. She told me about this thing called Zina? Sounds serious in

[Truth, Part Two](#). If you want a taste of what's coming next, check out the excerpt that immediately follows this page.

If you'd like something less gut wrenching that still has loads of hot sex, check out the first book of my [A Hotwife Rides Dirty](#) series, [Mya's First Ride](#).

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](#).

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](#).

EXCERPT

The following is an excerpt from the final book in the Jessica's Game series, [The Taste of Her Truth, Part Two](#).

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 heavysset 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.”

Thank you for reading this excerpt from [The Taste of Her Truth, Part Two](#)! Want more? Grab your copy [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/>