

A man with a grey beard, wearing a white shirt and a dark vest, sits in a brown armchair. He is holding a glass of whiskey in his left hand. In the foreground, a man in a white shirt and tie is leaning over a woman in a white blouse, their faces close together in a tense or intimate moment. The background is dark, and the overall mood is dramatic and suspenseful.

A Cuck
Switches.

A Cheating
Wife Gets
Punished.

the **Taste** of
His Wrath

Jessica's Game Series - Book 2

M. L. PATTERSON

THE TASTE OF HIS WRATH

PART 2 OF THE JESSICA'S GAME SERIES

M. L. PATTERSON

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CHAPTER I

Jessica

My thumbs tapped away on my phone's screen as I stood up from my desk.

“Ron, dear, when are you gonna let go of this tough guy act and come home to your queen?”

Send.

I set it down and headed for my new manager's office, grinning as I passed the desks of the sheep.

They suspect nothing.

My hand turned the knob on his office door, opening it just enough, and I slid myself in. He sat in his chair facing his computer, back turned to me. Drawn blinds covered the surrounding glass windows and guarded against observation by any witnesses. The speakers on his desk played Creedence Clearwater Revival “I Put A Spell on You” at low volume.

Too perfect.

My eyes kept tabs on him, and my lips parted as my hand guided the door to a quiet close.

Ninja skills.

I turned and stood facing him. He held his head in his hands and sighed as he looked over numbers on the screen.

Someone needs some stress relief.

I began unbuttoning my blouse. The placket popped open one buttonhole at a time, relieved from the strain of holding my shirt closed over my breasts. My fingers worked their way down until the shirt fell open around the sides of my red satin bra.

“Hey, boss.”

He jumped and knocked over his coffee, spilling it on himself.

I covered my mouth to stifle my laughter.

“Holy shit!”

“So jumpy in your new responsibilities, Steve.”

He turned his chair around, focusing on his coffee-stained lap, until he noticed my bra.

“Jessica, what the hell?”

“Oh, c’mon, Steve. Don’t act like you haven’t seen them before.”

He tilted his neck forward and turned his head to the side.

“Yeah, but not here.”

I sauntered over to his desk as I finished unbuttoning my blouse.

“I’ve been doing crunches. Can you tell?”

He glanced at them but jerked his eyes back to mine.

“Jessica, in case you haven’t noticed, I’m a manager now. I can’t check out my employees’ abs. It’s illegal, and I don’t wanna get fired.”

“Oh, now, Steve, I know you better than that. You don’t expect me to believe you’re well-behaved now that you’re the boss?”

I traced the edge of his desk with my fingertips as I made my way around the side of it, fucking him with my eyes.

“Jessica, I can’t do this now. Things will have to change between us.”

“Steve, darling, just stop. You know you want to feel these tits again.”

His gaze fell to the curves of my breasts – pressed together and lifted by my bra – and his mouth fell open.

“Yesss, that’s right. You know you want to feel them against your bare chest again.”

“Jessica, I…”

“Remember that night at the hotel, Steve?”

“I do, but…”

“Remember the way you plowed your cock into me with my back up against the wall?”

His voice cracked.

“Jessica, dammit, we can’t talk about that here.”

“Who says I want to talk about it?”

My tongue slid out between my lips as I reached the spot in front of him. Steve’s knuckles turned white as his hands gripped the arms of his chair.

“Just let it happen. You know you want to.”

I looked down at the bulge growing in his pants and smiled with a cocked eyebrow.

“Looks like your dick wants it to happen.”

I knelt in front of him and looked up into his eyes.

“Mmm, you know, Steve, I’ve never sucked my bosses’ cock before, but I’ve always wanted to.”

His voice softened to a whimper.

“Jessica, please, no.”

I chuckled.

“Just listen to you trying to be the responsible manager, but you can’t help it, Steve. You remember these lips. You’ve never forgotten them draining your delicious cum.”

His body tensed up, pushing the back of his chair to recline, as my hands rested on his knees.

“You told me your wife had never tasted your cum. I bet she still hasn’t.”

I chuckled, winking at him.

“I’d love to taste it again.”

His eyes locked on my hands as they moved up his thighs. His muscles flexed under my touch, and his breath quickened. I reached for his pants zipper.

“But, you know, Steve, you weren’t my boss back then. This is so much naughtier.”

His office door opened, and a woman’s voice screamed.

“What the hell?!”

Steve’s new secretary dropped a large stack of papers that hit the floor and scattered in all directions. I jumped up, turned my back to her, and began buttoning up my blouse.

“Am I interrupting something?!”

Steve reached out his hand towards Margaret.

“No, Margaret, you’re not.”

“It looks like I am!”

“No, it’s not what it looks like. Please don’t go.”

Steve turned and glared at me with gritted teeth.

“Jessica was just leaving.”

I looked up at a portrait of the company founder that hung behind Steve’s desk, stalling while I continued buttoning.

“You know, I like this picture, Steve,” I said.

My voice dripped with pretend enthusiasm.

“Mark always said that man was an inspiration for him. I’m gonna miss ole’ Mark.”

“Jessica…”

“And thanks so much for showing me your nice, new cabinets.”

I nodded at a group of office cabinets resting near my feet as I finished the last button. They appeared to be ancient.

Woops.

“Jessica, get out.”

“Ok, ok, grumpy cat.”

I turned back towards Margaret and manufactured a warm smile, showing her my buttoned blouse. She lasered me with her eyes, but I pretended not to notice.

“That’s a lovely necklace, Margaret. It goes nicely with your eyes.”

She scrunched up her lips and eyebrows at me as I walked past her, leaving Steve’s office.

I waved back at them on my way out, singing my farewell.

“Bye, Mr. Boss Man.”

Having my boss under the spell of my pussy. Can it get any better than this?

CHAPTER 2

Ron

The knots in my stomach tightened as I approached the entrance to Solidarity Insurance, along with a herd of other employees arriving for work. Thin beams of steel joined four floors of glass windows that reflected the sunlight, heating the pavement beneath our shoes. Even the tall green trees that flanked the walkway couldn't shield us from it. I held my hand like a visor over my eyes until I pushed my way through the revolving doors into the lobby.

Once inside, the surrounding walls whispered about events they witnessed between my soon-to-be x-wife and Austin, my boss. My eyes searched the space.

What exactly did those two do? Where did they do it? And who knows?

Glances from co-workers pierced me like spotlights, exposing my nakedness. Perhaps they knew and pitied me. Or maybe they spent lunch breaks gossiping behind my back and laughing at me.

Taking one personal day was not enough.

The clerk at the front desk greeted me.

“Mornin’, Ron.”

He maintained his usual bored expression.

Maybe he doesn't know.

“Mornin’,” I said.

My eyes avoided contact with others, staying glued to the safety of the floor, as I walked down the hallway towards my desk. The sound of office chatter pressed in on my ears, heightening my awareness of people all around me.

People who might know that my wife cheated on me.

With my boss.

In this building.

Once I reached my desk, I grabbed my coffee cup and headed for the break room, hoping to avoid Austin. It would happen soon enough, but I had no desire to rush into that dagger. In the break room, Joe, the mail runner, sat alone at a small table looking at a comic book and eating a twinkie.

The other caffeine addicts are running late today.

The coffee maker bubbled with the sounds of cheap coffee in production. I walked over to it, placed a hand on the counter, and awaited my chance at the first cup. The large bulletin board on the wall offered nothing new. A prominent notice featured bold print on mint green paper and read, “These offices are under 24-hour video surveillance. Anyone caught stealing company property will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.”

What about fucking your employee’s wife? Wait...

My chest stung, and my lips fell open.

“Oh, god.”

Joe looked up from his comic book. The mint green image before me pulsed with my pounding heartbeat.

Someone has seen everything.

The sound of voices entering the break room interrupted my thoughts. Two women, Brandy Johnson and Candace Whitaker, laughed as they chattered their way into the room.

“He is SO dreamy.”

“Girl, I know. And I heard he’s single!”

“Omg, he’s single?!”

I tried to focus on pouring coffee into my cup, but ignoring them proved impossible. Both flaunted their youthful bodies with flattering outfits. Candice wore a snug, short-sleeved top with light green stripes that stretched across her ample bosom and her firm abdomen. The top rested untucked on the waistline of her matching leggings, hiding none of her curvaceous hips.

Amazing what passes for office attire.

Brandy wore a solid pink sheath dress that hugged her body and revealed an abundance of cleavage over a plunging neckline. Both women sported high heels.

“Have you seen his car?”

“Yes, girl, that red. And the way the engine revs when he comes into the parking lot. I can feel those vibrations in all the right spots!”

Candice smacked Brandy on the shoulder as they giggled.

Great. More women who want to fuck my boss.

“I wonder if he’s… you know.”

“Girl, I bet he is. You can tell by the way he carries himself.”

“I bet Ron knows.”

Oh, god, kill me now.

“Hey, Ron, let me ask you something.”

I turned from the coffeepot to look at them. They both looked at me with pretty eyes and beaming smiles. Blood rushed to my face, causing my skin to burn. I pretended to cough to mask my stuttering.

“Yes?”

“You work for Austin. Does he have… you know?”

I felt myself melting into the sound of Brandy's voice, but I didn't know how to field her question. I feigned ignorance.

"No, I don't know. Does he have what?"

Brandy walked closer to me and lowered her voice as her gaze dropped towards my crotch.

"You know what I'm talking about, Ron."

I swallowed hard. And lied.

"I'm sorry, I don't."

Brandy motioned with her head for Candice to come over, and Candice giggled as she complied.

"Ron, tell us. Does he have it where it counts?"

"If you're asking what I think you're asking, I have no idea. We don't discuss it. And why are you talking about stuff like that? This is a professional environment."

Brandy pushed out a pouty bottom lip.

"You're no help, Ron. I guess I'll just have to find out for myself."

She winked at Candice, and the two turned away. I felt a pang in my soul, and an impulsive comment erupted from my throat.

"It's always the dumb jocks."

Brandy stopped. She faced the door but turned her head to the side.

"Excuse me?"

"You women..."

Why did I open my mouth?

"Nevermind."

She turned around and put a hand on her hip.

"No, Ron, let's hear it. What about us women?"

I lowered my eyes and my voice.

“You always go for the dumb jocks.”

“As opposed to what? Nerds like you, Ron?”

Candice put a hand up to her opening mouth and smiled, shaking her head at Brandy.

“Listen, Ron, no offense, but I go for men who have what it takes, you know? And I can tell the men who do and the men who don’t.”

She looked me up and down with a scowl.

“You don’t. I’m not sure what your wife sees in you, but she’s not with you for the merchandise.”

Her words pierced my chest like a hot stake.

“C’mon, Candice. We’ve spent enough time with the dork club.”

They strolled out as I stood paralyzed by the verbal gut punch I just took. Joe spoke from his spot over in the corner.

“Wow, man, that was cold.”

He stared, wide-eyed, at the open doorway for a moment before looking at me.

“You know, my momma used to say the whole world can think you’re a loser, but it doesn’t matter if you believe in yourself.”

I blinked and forced a grin.

Really, man?

“That’s, um, nice. Wise words.”

“Yeah, man. Momma said a lot of good stuff. Before she tripped over that rake and fell out of a loft.”

My eyes widened.

“That sounds horrible. Well, Joe, thanks for the pep talk. I gotta get back to work.”

“Sure, man. We nerds gotta stick together.”

“Yeah, right. Go, nerds.”

Fuck my life.

CHAPTER 3

Jessica

The fragrance of lilac and pine sol filled my nostrils, and the bathroom floors glistened with the shine of a fresh mopping. My heels tapped them, echoing as I made my way past the granite countertops to one of the dark walnut doors of a stall. The polished chrome handle on the stall door felt cool in my hand as I turned it and entered, closing the door behind me.

The bathrooms at work topped my list of favorite things about my job. Well, and decent money. And flirting with male customers. And my new favorite, fucking a customer who happened to be my husband's boss. *Ron must still be sore about that. He's not responding to my texts.*

I leaned my back against the side of the stall and reached between the buttons of my shirt. My fingers crawled under the cup of my bra and pulled my phone out to punch out another text to him.

“Don't be silly, Ron. Do you really think you will find a woman that can excite you like I do?”

I slid it back in place, rubbing its rounded corner against my hard nipple. Images of Austin's cock entered my mind. I remembered how it stuck out from his unzipped pants while he stood next to Ron's desk. How I knelt before him and took it in my mouth.

I pulled up my skirt to allow the bathroom air to caress my bare pussy lips. My finger slipped in between them, gathered my wetness, and pulled it forward to coat my throbbing clit. My mouth opened and spread into a grin as my eyes closed, and I thought about my mischief in Steve's office.

I could've fucked Steve if that bitch hadn't interrupted.

I put one foot up onto the toilet seat, spreading myself open to my stroke. My heart skipped a beat at the sound of the bathroom door opening. Footsteps crossed the floor towards the sink, and a woman's voice spoke.

“Can you believe she had the nerve to do that?”

The swish of water and the splashing of hands washing masked the sound of my breathing. My fingertip danced on my fleshy bulb. Bolts of pleasure shot up through my body and surfaced on the back of my neck behind my ears.

“You said she was on her knees in front of him with her shirt unbuttoned?”

“Yes, girl. If I hadn't walked in, I'm sure she was about to... ya know.”

I fingered myself with ravenous hunger, my climax building.

Oh, bitch, you have no idea.

I peeked through the slits between the faux blinds in the stall door at the floor on the other side. The thin separation between us reminded me of the blinds in Steve's office. I imagined bending over his desk to take his hard cock in my pussy with them sitting outside, oblivious.

I'm gonna fuck him while you're in your cube, typing one of his memos.

The sound of their steps moved in concert towards the bathroom door exit. I bit my bottom lip as my body shook with explosive waves of ecstasy. My finger continued dancing on my clit to milk out every ounce of stimulation until sensitivity took over, and my orgasm rolled through my body.

The bathroom door closed with a thud.

“Oh, fffuuccccck!!”

I released all my pent up orgasmic moans as my body continued to quake. My heart pounded in my chest as waves of heat surged, exploding from my core out to my extremities, and my legs struggled to support my shaking body.

The bathroom door hissed air from its metal arm as it opened again.

“Jessica, are you in here?”

What the fuck? Are they watching my every move?

I pressed my lips together and clenched all my muscles, attempting to halt my body's lingering tremors and gasps.

"Jessica?"

I belted the words out, trying not to gasp.

“Yes, I'll be right out.”

“You'll be late for your appointment.”

Goddamnit, mind your own business.

“Thanks!”

I pulled my skirt down, legs still trembling.

Damn, that was good.

The door swung wide and banged against the adjacent stall. I darted out, checking myself quickly in the mirror.

It'll do.

I swept by my desk to scoop up my briefcase and rushed out the door to my car.

If they had an Olympic event for running in heels, I'd crush it.

As I climbed behind the wheel, I spoke to it.

“Thank God you can turn heads *and* burn treads.”

I needed to close this deal, and being late would not help my chances. My recent personal life stunted my sales performance, which caught the attention of the company execs.

“You’re only as good as your last month,” they said.

Didn’t matter that I held all the company sales records. Two bad months and they forgot. Recognition turned to scrutiny.

It’s bullshit.

I peeled out of the parking lot. Up ahead, the light turned from green to yellow.

Oh, no, you don’t.

I put my foot to the floor. The sound of my engine revved, and the g-force pulled me into the seat, sucking half the wind out of me.

God, I love this car.

The light turned red the instant I passed through the intersection. My tiny sense of victory got curtailed by the sound of a police siren behind me.

“Fuck!!!”

I slammed my hand on the steering wheel.

“Are you fucking kidding me?!”

I looked in my rear-view mirror. Blue lights flashed from the top of a squad car that followed me, and the amplified sound of an officer’s voice pierced my eardrums.

“Pull over!”

“Ok, ok, don’t get your panties in a wad.”

I rolled my eyes as I pulled my car over to the side of the road. My side mirror showed a large, muscular man in black uniform climbing out of his car. My irritation with the delay lessened as I studied him.

Oooh, he looks delicious.

After pulling my registration from my glove box, I unbuttoned my blouse and adjusted my bra to maximize my cleavage.

C'mon, girls, get me out of this.

I rolled my window down as the officer reached it.

“Driver’s license and registration, please.”

I gave him a sultry eye gaze as I handed him my paperwork, but his shades prevented me from reading him.

“You have any idea how fast you were going, ma’am?”

I winked at him.

“Not as fast as I can.”

His forehead wrinkled and lips pursed as he looked at my license.

“70 in a 30.”

“Oh, dear, officer. Sounds like I’ve been a bad girl.”

“15 over is reckless driving. We don’t have a term for what that was.”

I considered my next words.

Tough nut to crack. But I’ve cracked tougher.

“Are you going to use those handcuffs on me? Maybe spank me with your big stick?”

“Stay right here.”

Damn, that usually works.

I checked out his firm ass while he walked back to his car. He stayed in it for what seemed like 15 minutes. The blue lights continued to draw the attention and sneering stares of people walking by.

Keep walking, shit heads.

I looked at the clock on my dash.

C'mon, officer. Don't keep a girl waiting.

The squad car door re-opened, and the officer approached my door again.

“Ok, ma’am. Here are your license and registration back. And if you’ll just sign here.”

He handed me the ticket. As I reviewed the charges, my eyes almost popped out of my head.

“550 dollars?!”

“If you have questions about it, you can ask them in court. There’s a date on the ticket.”

I curled my lips to the side, contemplating.

Got nothing to lose.

I looked up at him and rested a finger on my bottom lip, nudging my mouth open.

“Can’t we find a more entertaining way to make me pay for my transgressions, officer?”

“I can take you to jail if you’d like.”

I gasped, scowling at him, and hit the door with my hand.

“My god, are you gay?!”

“Not that it’s any of your business, ma’am, but yes, I am. I’m also very close to taking you to jail, whether you like it or not.”

Fucking figures.

“That won’t be necessary, officer.”

“Have a good day, ma’am.”

I rolled up my window as he walked away.

550 dollars. Now, I really need to land this contract.

CHAPTER 4

Ron

I plopped my body down in my office chair, put my elbows on my desk, and planted my forehead on my fingertips. The memory of Jessica coming up behind me while I sat there, bear-hugging me and cooing in my ear, stuck like a thorn in my temple. When she did it, I thought her exuberance came from genuine excitement to see me. Until I saw Austin standing behind her. It bothered me that day, the way she glowed looking at him, but I trusted she wouldn't cheat on me. Not with anyone. And definitely not with my boss. I massaged my forehead, hoping to drive the thoughts from my mind.

Working here will suck now.

I pecked at the keyboard to wake my computer and redirected my thoughts to work tasks, but a voice interrupted my sanctum.

“Hey, Stroker, Austin wants to see you in his office.”

Great. Let's see how well I can hide my desire to choke him to death.

I got up from my chair and walked around the corner towards the office that should have been mine. His secretary, Janice, sat just outside his office door, typing away. She spoke without so much as a glance away from her screen.

“Go on in. He's expecting you.”

Nice to see you, too, Janice.

As I entered, Austin's voice hit me from across the room like a sledgehammer to the face.

“Stroker!!”

He beamed.

This can't be good.

He sat in a luxurious high-back leather chair that swiveled on a heavy caster stand. Brandy sat in his lap with an arm around him, and Candice stood near his chair, back to me, resting her ass on his desk.

“I'm sure you've met Brandy and Candice, right?”

“Yeah, we've met.”

“You'll be seeing a lot more of them. They will be helping me out with some special projects.”

“I see. Is that what you wanted to speak to me about?”

Austin laughed as he looked up at Brandy.

“Gotta like ole' Stroker. Always getting down to business.”

She cooed back at him.

“Depends on what kind of business you're talking about, Wild-man.”

Oh, geez. He has a pet name now? Barf.

“Oh, not that kind of business, for sure,” Austin said.

Brandy cast a sideways glance down her nose at me, cocking one eyebrow. They all laughed.

“So, Stroker, I wanted to talk to you about this.”

Austin pointed to the Standard Operating Procedure manual sitting on his desk.

“What about it?”

“Didn't you write this?”

“I did.”

“Ladies, just look at this thing. It must be like 400 pages.”

“486,” I said.

Austin winked at me.

“Always so precise, aren't you, Stroker?”

“So, what did you want to discuss?”

He picked it up off the desk and held it in his palm as if weighing it.

“How long did it take you to write this thing?”

I frowned.

“About three months. We did thorough review of our existing practices at the time to identify areas that needed remedial processes. I found 78 risk factors. We formed solutions and created workflows to address them. It’s all in there. I’m sure you’ve read it.”

“Are you kidding me? Nobody reads this thing.”

He tossed it back onto his desk.

“Austin, it used to be required reading for everyone in the department.”

“Yes, well, not since I’ve been here.”

“You mean, not in the last 3 years?”

Austin pointed at me and winked.

“There he goes again with those numbers. Stroker likes number, ladies.”

They giggled.

“So, Stroker, I’ve decided it’s time for some changes.”

Austin picked up the SOP and tossed it in the trash. Candice’s mouth dropped open.

“Oh, snap, Wild-man,” Brandy said.

“Austin, you’ll need an SOP when auditors come through here.”

“When was the last time we got audited, Stroker?”

“Last year, and the top five items on their list included a thorough review of our SOP.”

“I don’t remember that.”

Big surprise.

“I believe you were busy that week, playing golf with Jack.”

“Oh, right. God, I love that guy. He’s the one that picked me for this job. Did you know that, Stroker?”

My tone flattened.

“I suppose I did.”

Austin winked at me again and smiled.

“Yes, I suppose you did.”

I suppose I’d like to punch you in your pretty face.

He nudged Brandy off his lap so he could get up. She backed away to let him pass, and he moved around his large, cherry wood desk to a matching credenza on the far wall.

“Can I pour you a drink, Ron?”

He has a decanter set in his office. Of course, he does.

“In the middle of the day? No thanks.”

Austin looked back at the girls while he gestured at me.

“You see? Integrity. Always takes the high road.”

He picked up the decanter and poured himself a glass.

“How’s that working out for you, Ron?”

“Excuse me?”

“Following the rules. Doing the right thing. Is that getting you where you want to be?”

”I don’t follow.”

Austin turned and leaned back on the credenza while he sipped his drink.

“How’s your wife doing, Ron?”

The skin of my forehead smarted as it wrinkled.

“What does that have to do with anything?”

My fists clenched, and my muscles tightened.

He's trying to get a rise out of you, Ron. Don't let him.

“She's an amazing woman, your wife.”

I glanced sideways at the girls.

Do they know? Like, is this part of some cruel, junior high school game?

“Austin, is there anything else of a professional nature that we need to discuss?”

“Well, speaking of your wife, the installers from her company will be here this weekend putting in the system I bought from her.”

“And?”

“I'll need you to be here to let them in, direct them, help them with any issues they may run into. I'd be here to do it, but...”

Austin looked over at the girls. His eyes moved up and down the length of their bodies as they smiled back at him.

“I have important things to do this weekend.”

Brandy bit her lip as she looked at Austin. He winked at her and then looked back at me.

“They'll be here at 8 am.”

“Got it,” I said.

I turned to leave.

“Oh, and Ron, tell Jessica I'm excited to have her services all over this building.”

I walked out, biting my lip and squinting my eyes to keep from exploding in a fit of rage.

Oh my God, Jessica, I hate you so much.

CHAPTER 5

Jessica

My voice dripped with syrupy seduction.

"Margaret said you wanted to see me."

Steve faced his computer.

"Sit down, Jessica."

"If I do that, you might find out if I'm wearing underwear."

The chair swiveled around, revealing his frowning, pale face.

Wow.

"Dude, you don't look so good."

He leaned over his desk and exhaled.

"Listen, Jessica..."

"If you want, Steve, I can arrange a personal therapy session to take some of that stress off your mind."

He slammed his hand down on the table.

"Jessica, dammit, stop!"

My mouth dropped open.

"Who peed in your cheerios?"

He glared at me.

"That would be you."

"Oh, c'mon, Steve. Give a girl a break."

He collapsed back in his chair, looked at the ceiling, and his voice dropped to a whisper.

"I wish I could."

Wish you could?

"What did you just say?"

He stood up and turned his back on me.

"Look, this is the hardest thing I've ever had to do."

My lips quivered.

"Steve..."

He raised his voice again and turned to look back at me.

"Don't 'Steve' me, Jessica. You gave me no choice."

My bottom lip grew heavy and let go of my top lip as my eyebrows pushed down, wrinkling my forehead.

There's no fucking way.

"I'm the best damn salesperson you have in this department."

"It's out of my hands, Jessica."

Holy shit, he's firing me.

My voice trembled as it grew louder.

"The fuck it is, Steve. You're the goddamn boss."

He faced me, placing his hands on his desk, and matched the escalating volume and sternness of my voice with his own.

"I'm a manager, Jessica. It doesn't mean I can do whatever I want. I don't own the company."

"So, where the hell is this coming from?"

"It's complicated."

"I'd say it's pretty simple, Steve. You're saying I'm out of a job. Do you know what that means for me?"

The lines in his face and tone of voice softened. The light from outside his office door reflected off his glistening eyes.

"Jessica, I'm really sorry."

"So, spit it out, Steve. Whose ass are you kissing?"

He went to the office door to close it, then turned and leaned his back up against it and took a deep breath.

"Remember, after our stay in that hotel, I told you things had gotten rough between Peggy and me?"

"I don't see how that has anything to do with my employment here."

"Jessica, just listen."

"Then, get to the goddamn point, Steve."

He gasped and shook his head, and his speech quickened.

"We were going to counseling and, and in a moment of weakness, I confessed to what happened."

My eyes grew wide as saucers.

"Okay, that was stupid, Steve. But I still don't see what it has to do with my job here."

"Well, Peggy made friends with several of the women here in the office. Including Margaret. They've been thick as thieves ever since."

"Good for them. I still don't..."

"They all know what we did, and they hate you for it."

"Well, fuck them. It's none of their business. Well, maybe it's Peggy's, but fuck her anyway. She's a bitch."

Steve threw his hands up.

"Jessica, my God."

He walked across the floor to a window and peered through the blinds.

"She is, and you know it, Steve. And this just proves it. She's behind this?!"

The blinds made a rippling sound as he released them. He looked down, putting his hands on his hips.

"When Margaret walked in on us, she called Peggy."

"Oh my God, Steve, you fucking coward!"

He gritted his teeth, still speaking towards the floor.

"Jessica, give me a break. It's my marriage and possibly my job at stake."

I marched over to him, pulled him around, and got in his face.

"Your job? What about my job? And I don't give a flying fuck about your marriage! I have bills to pay. Ron is leaving me."

"He's leaving you?"

I stepped back and turned away.

"Never mind. It's none of your business."

"Jessica, I'm so sorry. I had no idea."

I snapped back at him.

"Oh, spare me. Like I said, Steve, none of your business. I still don't understand why you think you need to fire me just because your wife doesn't like me and talks to the damn secretary."

"Jessica, what you did the other day, that's grounds for termination."

I spun to face him again and pointed at him with my trembling hand.

"For a pussy manager, it is."

Steve's mouth fell open. He gestured with his palm up, pointing towards the bitches outside.

"Jessica, they filed a complaint with corporate. I got the phone call an hour ago. They told me I have to let you go. For legal reasons."

"Legal reasons?! What legal reasons?"

"These women are threatening to sue the company, Jessica. Managers can't give any appearance of favoritism. And Margaret caught us in a compromising situation. One that we were in because you wouldn't listen to me!"

"Oh God, Steve, don't lecture me. I drank your cum."

"Jessica..."

I stormed towards the door.

"Margaret will have to escort you out."

The door opened, and Margaret stood there, arms folded across her chest, sporting a sly smile.

"Hello, Jessica."

My voice boomed at Steve.

"If this bitch tries to walk me out, I'll cut her."

I ran over Margaret and headed for my desk. She followed.

"Jessica, I packed up your things. Nothing is at your desk."

I stopped, turned on a dime, and squared off with her.

"You're having quite the time with this little charade, aren't you, Margaret?"

"Jessica, don't be mad because you, for once, got what you deserve."

"Bitch..."

The tendons in my neck pulled and pulsed as I clenched my fist, ready to strike her.

"Go ahead, Jessica. I'd love to see what you look like in orange."

She had a point. I didn't need to go to jail. So, I spat on her ugly blouse, turned, and walked towards the exit. The sound of her footsteps following me grated my nerves like fingernails on a chalkboard.

I hope she lays a finger on me. I'll lay her ass out.

Out in the parking lot, two cardboard boxes sat next to the driver's side door of my car. Flaps closed and taped shut.

Are you fucking kidding me?

I bent over and ripped one of them open.

“Where the fuck is my…”

Margaret stood a few feet back towards the entrance, her face smug, holding my purse out with her extended hand. I stormed over to her and snatched it from her hand. She chuckled as I walked back to my car, fumbling through my purse, looking for my keys.

“What are you snickering about, you catty bitch?”

“I think this is fitting.”

“Really? You think this is fitting? How about I fit this foot up your ass?”

“I think it’s fitting that you’re struggling to get your door open. You know, Jessica, I imagine you’ve used your body and your loose morals to open doors your whole life. But look at you now.”

“I imagine you’ve spent your whole life sporting that fat ass, making close to minimum wage, and hating women like me who had the power to do better. So look at me now.”

I flipped her a bird. She scowled.

“You can manipulate a man, but it’s a lousy way to get a door open.”

“Oh, I get it. You’re gonna teach me about men? That’s fucking hilarious.”

She folded her arms as she huffed.

“Jessica, a good man will open a door for a good woman just because they choose to. If you let them, that is. But you wouldn’t know. You’re a horrible woman.”

“Don’t you have some terrible coffee to make?”

“Goodbye, Jessica.”

I found my keys and stuck them in my car door as I glared at her dumpy ass waddling back to the building.

I open my own damn doors.

My body collapsed into the car seat, puffing hot air through my lips.

Tears began rolling down my face.

What the hell am I going to do now?

CHAPTER 6

Jessica

I lay in bed, listening to the soft drumming of raindrops on the window. My chest ached as though my heart pushed against the inside of my sternum. I pulled the comforter up to my chin and lay the full weight of my head into my pillow. My ears searched the space around me for any other sound than the patter of rain, but found none.

The ceiling above swirled with images of my brief history at Starlight Telecom. Sales meetings where they recognized me for record-breaking sales. Delicious flirtation with Steve. Our scandalous business trip that launched my adventures into cheating on Ron. And all of it ending with the useless words, “Jessica, I'm really sorry.”

Fuck you, Steve.

Ron's spot, if I could still call it that, remained vacant beside me. I ran my hands over it and found the impression of his body in the mattress, now colder and shallower.

How many days has it been?

I picked up my phone and looked at my texts. Several that I sent to Ron without responses from him.

A text from Austin, three days old.

“Ron didn't show up. He's never done that. Does he know something?”

Ahh. So, this must be day four.

Another text from Austin this morning.

“I can come over again tonight if you're craving some more of this D. Haha.”

The thrill of taking his cock in my marital bed gave me a momentary reprieve from the intolerable melancholy of being home alone, but I was over it now. No cock could fill the gaping hole left by the news I just got.

No, Austin, no more cravings. Unless you wanna hire me.

Besides, what was the point if my marriage was over? Betraying Ron was no fun if he wasn't there to feel the sting. If I couldn't look in his eyes and see his pain when I confessed, well, then I'd just be fucking an arrogant prick that bought some phones from me.

Starlight better fucking pay me my commission for that sale.

Getting canned drained the feeling of power right out of my chest. I put the phone back down on the bedside table.

My marriage is over? I'm fired? Fuck my life.

I got up and pushed my feet to carry me across the floor and downstairs to the kitchen. They drug on the carpet, making a scuffing sound with each step. The stairs threatened to trip me as I descended. A hand on the downstairs wall helped to steady my lifeless steps.

Yay. I made it to the kitchen.

I opened the liquor cabinet and found an unopened fifth of Jack Daniel's.

"Thank God."

I fumbled through the cabinets over the counter, looking for a whiskey glass.

"Where the hell are they?"

Ron always did this for me. He did a lot of things for me.

I exhaled a heavy sigh.

Fuck the glass.

Grabbing the whiskey bottle, I lumbered into the den and collapsed onto the couch. A pile of photo albums sat stacked in the middle of the coffee table. I reached for the top one, brushed off a thin layer of dust from the cover, and opened it in my lap.

As my eyes perused the pictures, a stream of fond memories began trickling through my mind. Photos of the first house Ron and I bought together. Of the surprise birthday party he threw for me. The time I got out of the hospital after a long bout with acute bronchitis. Ron rolled me out in a wheelchair to a fancy Town Car he rented.

And you stayed at my bedside the entire time.

I took one picture out of the album and held it up in front of me. As I studied it, a tear formed in the corner of my eye. In the picture, I sat on the back of a majestic chocolate thoroughbred. Ron stood in the distance behind a rail, watching me with a ridiculous grin. One of my “bucket list” dreams – riding a genuine thoroughbred horse on the Churchill Downs racetrack – became a reality that day. From the moment I told Ron about that dream, he worked on making it come true. He wanted to make all my dreams come true.

That was a silly dream, Jessica.

I wiped a tear from my cheek and reached for the Jack Daniels.

Girl, you fucked shit up really good this time.

I opened the bottle and turned it up. The sweet sting of the whiskey shot through my sinuses and lit up my temples with a soothing burn. My body melted into the buzz. I looked around the room. Our wide-screen tv – encased in a rich, dark mahogany case mounted in the

wall – sat cold from lack of use. In Ron’s absence, I didn’t feel like watching it. We did that together.

I hate TV anyway.

Plush, pearlescent curtains hung around the large windows, overlooking the green canvas of our backyard. I loved those curtains. They cost a small fortune, but Ron encouraged me to get them. Just touching them in the store made my nipples hard. That’s what I told him, anyway. I often watched Ron through those windows as he labored in the backyard, sweating over some azalea bush or weeds he wrestled out of the flower beds. All trappings of a life afforded by two incomes, mine being the more substantial.

Well, that’s about to change, isn’t it?

The photo album slid off my lap and onto the floor as I got up.

He’s not gonna respond, Jessica. Don’t even try it.

My muscles ached with each step up the stairs. I went into the bedroom and picked up my phone. The dark glass fogged under my touch, and my hollow eyes looked back at me through the reflection.

God, girl, you look like shit.

I took a deep breath, brought the phone to life, and typed.

“Ron. It’s me. I know you’re angry. You have a right to be.”

Send.

I looked at the phone for another minute, rubbing my thumb across the surface of the screen. My puffed cheeks blew a long exhale through pursed lips.

Fuck it. He’s the one I would tell these things to.

“I got fired today.”

Send.

I set the phone down on the bedside table and climbed into bed.

That was dumb.

The flow of tears resumed in my eyes, more plentiful this time. Until they gave way to drowsiness. My eyes closed, and the weight of slumber rolled over my body. Sleep approached but stopped short, halted by the vibrations of my phone.

I picked it up. A notification showed a text icon, Ron's name, and two words.

“Hey, Jessica.”

CHAPTER 7

Jessica

I walked into Joe's Burger Shack. Ron sat in a booth and looked at a menu he could recite in his sleep. He held it up, half covering his scowling face as I slid into the booth across from him.

"Hey," I said.

He continued to peruse the appetizers. Or the specials. Perhaps, the sandwiches. Hell if I knew. A waitress came to the table.

"What can I get you two started with?"

I looked across the table at the back of the menu, waiting for him to say something. He coughed.

Ok, then.

"I'll have water," I said.

"And you, sir?"

For her, Ron produced the warm, gentle voice I remembered.

"I'll have water and a house salad with lite vinaigrette dressing. Thank you."

A salad? He never eats salad.

"Ok, sir. Ma'am, can't I get you anything else?"

"I think I'll have a salad, too. Ranch dressing on the side."

She left us. Ron continued to hide behind the menu. For the first time since I met him, his eyes weren't on me. Still, sitting across the table from this familiar, stable man soothed me. My shoulders relaxed.

"It's good to see you."

He kept holding his menu shield.

Oh, c'mon, Ron.

"Look, Ron, I know you're mad at me."

I reached for the brim of his menu to pull it down.

“Hey, look at me, would ya?”

Ron shot daggers at me from his eyes.

“Don’t. Touch.”

He never looked at me like that. Usually, so gentle, now burning with rage. I put my hands up in surrender.

“Sorry, Ron. Keep the menu.”

He lifted the menu back up like the iron bars of a cage. A wounded tiger sat across from me. It wanted to tear me apart. His anger – the intensity of it – sent a flush through my chest. And something else. Something surprising. Disturbing, even. The skin between my thighs tingled.

Really, Jessica? How is this sexy?

“So, the sales superstar, Jessica Stroker, gets fired,” he said.

Ron lowered his menu to glare at me over it.

“What? Did you fuck your boss, too?”

My mouth dropped open as heat rushed into my face.

Chill out, Jessica. There’s no way he knows about that.

“Of course not, Ron. Geez, I’m not stupid.”

He raised the menu, hiding his eyes again. I looked at Ron’s menu and contemplated the fire I started that burned behind it. As I did, the tingling between my legs spread, connecting to the growing warmth in my chest. I saw both my victim and a threat. A man whose heart I tore apart and who wanted to tear me apart. I also thought about Steve doing damage control with his petty wife and new employees. I rested my palms on the edge of the table and flexed and curled my fingers. My chest expanded.

Burn, baby, burn.

A glint of haughty defiance crept into my eyes, and a grin threatened to surface on my lips.

Not the time, Jessica. Lose the grin. Maybe try damsel in...

“Ron, it’s just… you’re the one I’ve always talked to when awful shit happens. I’m not comfortable with anyone else…”

I pushed out a pouty bottom lip.

“Our bed isn’t the same without you in it.”

WHAM!

Ron’s slammed the menu on the table, and his eyes fired a second round of daggers.

“Do you think I give a damn about any of that, Jessica? Do you have any idea what my life is like now because of your shit? I’ve got only one thing to say to you. One. You wanna hear it?”

“Ok. Yes, I guess so.”

“I want to fuck you.”

My lips parted.

“Ummm”

“Not make love to you. Fuck you. Hard. So it hurts.”

I leaned away from the table, back into the cushioned seat. The curious warmth and tingling between my pussy and chest intensified.

“I worked there for twenty years, Jessica. Twenty fucking years. And now, I have to go there every damn day and look at floors. Desks. Chairs. And wonder which of them you fucked my god-damned boss on.”

Ron’s hands clenched, and his nostrils flared.

“I’ve been nothing but good to you, and you stabbed me in the back. Right in the fucking heart. What did I ever do to deserve that?”

I dropped my gaze and suppressed the sadistic amusement bubbling under the surface. I could almost picture drops of blood dripping onto the table from his heart. His raw energy fanned the flames between my legs, provoking my pussy to wetness.

“I know what you deserve, Jessica. You’re a bitch. A fucking cunt. And you deserve to be treated like one.”

The c-word. Wow, Ron. Never heard that from you before... I like it.

“May I speak now?”

He fell back in his seat, folded his arms across his chest, and nodded, clenching his jaw.

“What treatment would you wish on a fucking cunt like me?”

“Exposure. Humiliation. Pain. It won’t fix anything, but I still want it.”

“If I let you do that to me, what do I get out of it?”

He stared at me for a moment before narrowing his eyes and tilting his neck forward.

“You’re not getting me back, that’s for damn sure. Our marriage is done.”

His unwavering tone dented my confidence that I might seduce him back.

Ouch. This day just keeps delivering defeat.

I sat stunned with a lump in my throat, searching his eyes for some sign of hope. Or weakness in his resolve. I found none.

What else do I have to lose?

I exhaled a long sigh.

Weird. Kinda refreshing to have nothing left.

My body released its tension and melted into my seat. Karma had caught up with me, and the running could stop. I could surrender to whatever fate held for me. My legs fell open, and my hips rocked forward.

God, I want to get fucked. Why am I so horny?

“So, I may get nothing out of it.”

“I didn’t say that.”

“Ok. So?”

“I would pay you.”

I laughed out loud.

“Pay me?”

My mouth hung open as I surveyed his face.

“Yes. Not that you deserve anything from me, Jessica. But I would pay you. Treat you like the whore that you are.”

“But you won’t tell me what tortures you have in mind. Sounds fair.”

Sounds fucking insane. Why am I considering this? Oh, maybe because I just lost my job.

He rolled his eyes.

“You mean fair like you fucking my boss behind my back and humiliating me at my company? That kind of fair? Fuck you, Jessica.”

He got up from the table, walked over to the waitress, and handed her a wad of cash before leaving me alone in the restaurant.

I sat, both stunned and stimulated. Wanting this new angry beast to tear into me and to yank me out of my current, horrible reality.

Treat me like a whore? I kinda like the sound of that.

I slipped my hand beneath the table and under the waistline of my yoga pants. Watching the doors, I slid my fingers between my spreading legs to assess the state of my pussy.

Omg, I'm so wet.

My engorged lips and clit tingled under my touch. As soon as my fingers touched them, a delicious burn rippled into my hips and stomach. I started to stroke.

So, Ron wants to be my customer. My angry customer.

I pictured my house and the office I left. The June Cleaver life Ron and I made together. The ordered prosperity of the sales office that ousted me. All of it went up in flames. I dropped my head back and closed my eyes, sinking into the escalating sensation, as my fingertips brushed my clit with the slick dew that dripped from my pussy.

I'm a devil.

The subtle sensation of a presence interrupted my fantasy, and I opened my eyes to find the waitress standing over me, her eyes and mouth wide open. She laughed and shook her head as she refilled my water. I sat up, but she put a hand on my shoulder.

“No, ma’am. Things must be pretty bad for you to need to do that here. I’ll let you finish. I can come back.”

CHAPTER 8

Ron

“I hate her! I fucking hate her!!”

The edges of my fists burned from pounding my steering wheel. I gave my forehead a turn.

“Ugh!”

I pressed my head against the hard vinyl of the wheel. My eyes closed while my mind spun in a whirlwind of memories. The headlights of my Cutlass lit up an area behind Joe’s Burger Shack. A specific spot.

The spot.

This old car saw many things over the years, including that night fifteen years ago. I remembered sitting in the front row at Wednesday night church, listening to one of Pastor Clarke’s greatest hits. He revisited it often.

“Brothers and sisters, we must all resist the temptations of the flesh!”

His voice echoed off the back walls of the church and stirred several members of the congregation to respond.

“Amen, pastor.”

“Mmm-hmm.”

“I’m grateful, dear brothers, that our sisters know how to spare us of exceeding torment by cloaking their bodies in the garments of modesty and the armor of virtue.”

Many ladies nodded their heads in response. A few raised their hands.

“And it is right that they should keep themselves pure for the husband that God will bring to them. The holy man that will care for them and keep them safe from the vile lusts of the godless. And you, dear brothers, seek to be that man. Do not be like the godless, my

brothers, for much sorrow and anguish await them. Keep your hearts and minds pure!”

The smoldering gaze of Pastor Clarke’s eyes shone on me, cutting through the veils I hid behind, piercing the safety of my darkness and exposing me. My chest burned as I knelt in that pew, praying.

Forgive me, Lord, for my many lustful thoughts. I promise I’ll do better.

After the service, everyone filed out, shaking hands with Pastor Clarke at the back of the church. I dreaded the encounter as my turn came. He grabbed my hand, squeezing it as his eyes blazed and probed my eyes. I dropped my gaze from his.

“Stay on the path, Brother Ron. The Lord will reward you.”

He patted my back and released me to the parking lot. I climbed in my Cutlass and headed for Joe’s Burger Shack, hoping a greasy burger would numb my blistering sense of guilt. Sitting alone in a booth, I struggled to keep my mind from entertaining thoughts of the waitress’ butt. I held the menu in front of me, clinching it in my hands, and laboring to focus on the specials. Or the salads. Anything but her butt.

Lord, help me be strong.

That’s when I saw Jessica Gamble enter the diner wearing a body-hugging sheath dress and high heels. I recognized her immediately. Pictures of her graced the local high society magazines, and she graced the fantasies of every young man in Los Angeles. More recently, the photos of her engagement to a prominent Los Angeles businessman broke all our hearts. She beamed in those pictures, but that night, she wasn’t smiling. She shifted her weight back and forth on her feet as she waited at the “Please Wait To Be Seated” sign,

fingering the necklace around her neck with one hand and clutching her small purse with the other.

Under any other circumstance, speaking to such a stunning young woman would have terrified me. Still, she needed a seat and maybe a listening ear. Dad raised me to put fear aside and be a good Samaritan when anyone needed help. My heart raced as I got up, walked over to her, and invited her to sit with me. She thanked me and accepted. We sat and chatted for hours. I floated on her words as she talked about frustrations in her relationship, about her dreams, about anything.

Laughter, tender moments of eye-contact, and holding hands led to the two of us behind the restaurant. In the spot my headlights now focused on. Jessica dropped to her knees that night and pulled out my penis.

“What about your fiance?!” I asked.

She just winked at me and took me into her mouth. My heart pounded out of my chest as I climaxed, unloading into her. She swallowed every drop. The memory would haunt me for years before we would finally reconnect and ultimately get married.

I looked up from my steering wheel at the precise spot where she captured my soul and my cum in her mouth.

I fell in love right there.

I realized I met a cheater that night. A rule breaker. It drew me to her. Somehow, though, I convinced myself that this cheater wouldn't do the same thing to me.

I sighed heavily.

I'm so naïve.

I turned the headlights off and sat quietly, watching Jessica leave the restaurant. Her yoga pants fit her ass like a second skin, and her jacket hugged her curvaceous torso and breasts. In the restaurant, I tried my best not to divulge my awareness of them when I sat across from her. I didn't want to give her the satisfaction. But I noticed. I always noticed. Everything about her physical appearance – her striking eyes, gorgeous hair, silky skin, and curvaceous body – captivated me. No amount of hatred could overpower that lust for her. All the women I knew before her – righteous women of God – tried to protect me from the fires of lust. Well-meaning. They did their best to follow the teachings of Pastor Clarke. But I longed for someone who would embrace the fires of lust inside me. Those flames didn't scare Jessica. No, she poured gas on them.

She got into her car and drove away.

You played with fire, Ron, and got burned.

As the taillights of her car disappeared into the night, my thoughts turned to the next day and the likelihood of another encounter with Austin. My stomach churned, and my chest tightened.

You don't need to fuck Jessica, Ron. After what she did? What were you thinking? You need to get away from her. For good.

If I purged my life of her, maybe then I could shed the painful reminders that lurked behind every corner of Solidarity. Keep my job and career that I worked so hard to build. Maybe Austin wouldn't last forever. Surely, his lack of any genuine talent would eventually catch up with him, and then my merits would shine. Perhaps I'd even get the job that should have been mine to begin with.

Stick to your guns, Stroker. You took the wild ride and tasted the forbidden fruit. See how that worked out? Time to repent.

I put my key in the ignition and started up the old Cutlass. My brow furrowed as I looked over the steering wheel and focused on the hood of my car.

You don't need to punish her. You need to forgive, forget, and let her go. Be the bigger person.

I wanted to believe my own encouraging thoughts, but my heart dreaded facing reality in the morning. I might not give in to any more of Jessica's games, but how would I survive in the aftermath of the last one?

CHAPTER 9

Jessica

“Hell, no! Get a fucking grip!”

I shouted at myself and into the silence of my car as I drove towards St. Ruth’s Safe Haven and, hopefully, some perspective.

“He wants to punish me, AND he wants to pay me for it!”

I shook my head at the road.

Why the fuck would I get turned on by that? I HATE angry men.

By the time I pulled up to St. Ruth’s, I had filled my tank full of hatred for anything with a penis.

You can be under my thumb or out of my life, Ron Stroker. I don’t need you. I don’t need any man.

I tried to shelve the bitterness and put my focus on the precious 8-year-old girl living inside the walls of the shelter. Little Amber Levinson brought much-needed light into my world ever since I picked her up off a sidewalk. She lifted my spirits with her innocence, her smile, her laughter, and her ability to hope. Our relationship started with me rescuing her, but I suspected Amber came into my life to rescue me.

As I walked through the entrance, the receptionist smiled and greeted me.

“Why, hello, Mrs. Jessica. It’s good to see you!”

She stood and walked around the desk to embrace me. Hardened creases in the sun-kissed skin on her cheeks and around her eyes reminded me of my mother. Her embrace did, too. Hugs like that flow from a broken heart.

“It’s good to see you, too, Agnes. Where’s my little girl?”

“She’ll be so happy to see you. She talks about you non-stop. Come with me.”

I followed Agnes down a painted cinder block hallway that provided the backdrop to a sea of colorful children’s artwork. All around, the sound of kids’ voices laughing and playing warmed the icy shield of cynicism that surrounded my heart. We turned into a doorway and entered an expansive space full of children sitting at various small tables scattered about the room.

“Mrs. Jessica!!!”

Amber’s exuberant voice broke through the commotion as her beaming smile and little legs raced towards me. All the weight on my soul lifted as I crouched to catch her in my arms.

“Hey, sweetie.”

Her tiny arms wrapped around my neck as I picked her up. She leaned back from our embrace enough to look into my eyes and fill me with the warm affection of a lamb rescued from slaughter.

“I’m so happy to see you, Mrs. Jessica.”

As soon as I let her down, she took my finger in her hand and skipped as she led me over to a table.

“Come sit with me. I wanna show you my picture.”

I looked at Agnes over my shoulder. She smiled and waved at me as she turned back down the hall towards the reception desk. Amber and I sat down at one of the munchkin tables, and she pushed a large piece of white construction paper in front of me covered in colorful crayon drawing. On the right, a tall, dark figure stood with its mouth open to show its fangs. It lifted its arms over its head like it was about to pounce on its prey. The figure appeared to wear overalls and stood in

front of a large, black house. On the left, a little girl ran away with big blue teardrops running down her face. And in the center...

Oh, my God.

Tears formed in my eyes as I looked at the woman in Amber's picture who stood between the little girl and the dark figure. She wore a blue woman's business suit and extended her arm towards the dark figure with a stern look on her face.

"It's you, Mrs. Jessica. I made it for you."

The tears streamed down my cheeks. Amber's little mouth curled down into a frown.

"Mrs. Jessica, don't you like it?"

I grabbed her and pulled her tight to me.

"It's beautiful, honey. It's the most beautiful picture I've ever seen. I love it."

"Thanks for saving me, Mrs. Jessica."

"You're welcome, sweetie."

She let go of me and stepped back, and her eyes and grin widened.

"Hey, you wanna go see Lucy?"

I wiped the tears from my face as I smiled at her excitement.

"I'd love to."

She took me again by the finger and led me out of the room and down a hallway until I could hear an approaching symphony of animal sounds. Barking, chirping, and purring. Inside the "animal room" large cages containing various animals surrounded us. Two staff members moved from cage to cage, talking to them, opening each cage to feed and pet them.

"Lucy's over here."

Amber spoke to one of the staff.

“Miss Tracy, can I visit Lucy?”

Amber looked her directly in the eyes and smiled.

Miss Tracy laughed. A smile spread across my face.

She's right at home here.

“Yes, Amber. She'll be happy to see you. Who is this?”

“This is Mrs. Jessica. She's my guardian angel.”

I placed a hand over my heart and smiled at Amber. The shelter taught all the kids to recognize those adults they could count on for safety and advocacy. They called them “guardian angels.”

Miss Tracy looked at me and extended her hand.

“Well Mrs. Jessica, it's an honor to meet you.”

My eyes glistened, and my voice cracked.

“It's nice to meet you, too.”

Amber unfastened Lucy's cage who jumped out on top of her and licked her face. She squealed with laughter as she hugged Lucy's neck.

“Lucy!!”

I crouched down and stroked Lucy's golden coat. We took her into the petting area and found a spot to sit and hang out together.

“You know what I learned, Mrs. Jessica?”

“What's that, dear?”

“Well...”

She wrinkled her nose and mouth while she searched for words.

“I've learned the difference between anger and abuse.”

I swallowed hard, and my voice cracked.

As in, they're spelled differently?

“So, what have you learned about it?”

“Well, I love Lucy, but sometimes she makes me mad. Like the time she chewed up my favorite toy. That made me very angry.”

Amber looked at me with her little eyebrows furrowed and her mouth twisted. My heart warmed.

She is so damn cute.

“And I told her I was angry at her, but I didn’t kick her or hit her.”

Amber looked at Lucy and petted her head while she panted and looked back into her young owner’s eyes.

“Even when I am angry at her. Very angry. She’s still safe with me. I would never hurt her.”

Wow.

I put a hand down to support myself and shook my head, amazed at her maturity, as I thought about her words. And about Ron.

“What is it, Mrs. Jessica?”

I put my hand on her head and stroked her hair.

“Oh, Mrs. Jessica is just thinking about someone like that. Someone safe for me, even when they are very angry.”

She smiled as she looked up at me with that light of innocence.

“I’m glad you have someone like that.”

My heart stung, but I blocked my sadness from surfacing. No need to confuse her with the complexities of my adult life.

“Me, too, Amber.”

CHAPTER 10

Jessica

I left the shelter after midnight and got into my car. My legs ached and pulled towards the floorboard like lead weights.

Can't someone drive me home?

I let my body fall back into the car seat. My thoughts turned to Ron, and my weary body craved the warmth and ease of his affectionate embrace.

You can forget that, Jessica. That door is slammed shut, locked, and dead-bolted.

I raised my knee, rested my elbow on it, and let my head fall onto the support of my open hand. My eyes searched the darkness outside my car for a comfortable place to park my gaze.

I sighed.

“What have I done?”

Before my charade with Ron's boss, our marriage resembled a cute cottage in a peaceful forest. Birds always chirped. The sky always blanketed us in soft blue. Too perfect. God knows why I couldn't take it. I needed to shake it up.

Well, you did a damn fine job of that, didn't you?

I started my car, pulled it out of my parking place, and headed home, thinking as I drove.

Even Ron's vague plans of torture sounded appealing, if for no other reason than to be close to him. And because I now needed the money.

What exactly does he want to do to me?

Whatever it was, it could never approach the real cruelty of men like my piece-of-shit father. Or Amber's.

I remembered feeling the wetness dripping from my tingling pussy as I sat in the diner, feeling Ron's radiant anger.

What was that about?

I pulled up to a stoplight. Ghostly images of the usual cars and foot traffic projected from my mind's eye. They faded to the reality of silence. On all four corners, these roads and buildings that buzzed with life during the day sat quiet and dark, save for a few lights left on as a theft deterrent. I put my car in park.

Maybe a ride on the waves of Ron's anger could cure my boredom. And pay some bills. Maybe it could even spawn a new relationship with him. Or be the last chapter in the one I destroyed. Either way, this new side of Ron offered the prospect of a new adventure with an uncertain destination. I also suspected his wrath served only to veil an undying lust for my body that drew him to me in the beginning. I blew strands of hair out of my face.

Wishful thinking.

The light turned green, but with no one on the road, I left it in park and leaned my seat back. My tongue slid out to wet my fingertips. I lifted the waistband of my yoga pants to make way for those fingertips to slide down between my legs. My legs spread open to receive them, and my eyes surveyed the roads and rear-view mirrors as I began to stroke.

Allowing this new, angry Ron to have his way with me might lure him back under my spell. It sounded like an intriguing new chapter in the

Ron

The morning sun spilled through the windows of my apartment bedroom, warming my face as I looked out onto the common area. Standing in my flannel pajama pants, I took a deep breath and closed my eyes. The air filled my lungs and brought hope of a new day with new possibility.

Today, I will leave my past behind and focus on my future.

I stepped over to the bedside, picked up my phone, and walked back towards the window. A notification icon on the top of my screen showed I had a new text message from Jessica.

I sighed. Hovering my thumb over the phone screen to open it, I hesitated.

I should just delete it.

But I opened the message and read it.

The words shot straight to my groin, awakening a pulsing pressure.

So, you want to accept my proposition?

All my mental focus collapsed and slid back to images of Jessica and her decadent body surrendered to me. Mine to do with as I pleased. Blood rushed through my chest as I contemplated having boundless license to express my most extreme fantasies – to push her and make her fulfill them. Because she owed me.

You'd be a prisoner to my lust.

My cock throbbed and poked out from the flap of my pajama pants, reaching into the sunlight to bathe in its exposure. I leaned back and pushed my hips forward to fuck the air.

In my mind, Jessica knelt before me, naked, mouth opened. Wrists bound in submission. Ready to do my bidding.

I typed out a response.

“That depends on how willing you are to be my whore and pay the price for your crimes.”

Send.

Moments passed.

I set the phone on the windowsill and touched my hard cock, tracing it with two fingertips. Each delicate stroke on the swollen vein underneath sent ripples of electric pleasure through my body.

The phone vibrated.

“I’ve been a very naughty bitch. I deserve lots of punishment.”

The words trickled like lighter fluid on the fire of my arousal.

I responded.

“You’ve been a lying, cheating whore.”

“Yes. An evil cunt.”

My strokes quickened.

“You are ready to surrender to what you deserve, you fucking whore?”

Juggling between stroking and texting drew out my climax and teased my cock with torturous pleasure.

“Yes, Ron. Take me and punish me in all the ways you are thinking. Do your worst.”

I stroked with feverish speed until my cum exploded forth with the morning sunlight as a witness, hitting the window in repeated squirts and running down the glass. My moans vibrated in my chest as waves of pleasure wracked my body.

My phone vibrated again. I opened one eye to read the text as my chest heaved, gasping for air.

“So, Ron, you didn’t answer my question. How much are we talking about?”

A devilish grin emerged from deep in my chest and crept across my face.

Enough to make you do whatever I want.

CHAPTER II

Ron

The smells of Old Spice and sweat floated in the air of the YMCA men's locker room. I sat on a bench and set the package down. The address label read:

Ron Stroker

5225 Blakeslee Avenue, Apt C12

North Hollywood, CA 91601

That will take some getting used to.

I opened the box and pulled out the black leather boxing gloves I ordered. My last pair disappeared years ago after collecting dust in the attic. I suspected Jessica snuck them out in the trash. None of my contemporaries could believe I once spent my weekends punching a bag. Or a sparring partner. I never got in fights. Never blew my stack. Sparring was different, though. I saw it as more of a cathartic partnership with another human who had things to work through, just like me. Punching stuff always made me feel better.

Hope it still works.

I laced up the gloves and looked for a free training bag. The gym buzzed with the sounds of grunts, whirring treadmills, pounding footsteps, and clanking weights. A curvy woman in hot pink leggings and a sports bra walked in front of me. The fabric cut in between her ass cheeks, leaving little to the imagination.

Someone has been doing her squats.

I tried not to stare, but her firm glutes taunted me with an alternating flex-and-relax hypnotic dance as she walked.

C'mon, Ron. She didn't come here to be ogled.

I pulled my eyes away from the hypnosis and sighed at the sight of an available punching bag, grateful for something flatter to focus on. I walked over to the bag and threw a warmup punch. A tingling sensation spread from my chest into my arms when the leather connected.

I've missed this.

My punch lacked power, but it still triggered a release of endorphins in my brain, like cool waters rippling behind my forehead and trickling down my spine. I threw another. And another.

As I got into a rhythm, my thoughts turned to Jessica. And what she did. I imagined her looking into Austin's eyes, placing a hand on his chest and crawling up it with her fingers.

You evil bitch.

Wham!

My punches grew more forceful as a sharp stinging grew in my chest. In my mind, I saw her getting on her knees and taking his cock out. I imagined it to be huge. She took it into her mouth and sucked it.

Wham!

The sights and sounds swirling in my mind muffled the rattling from the roof above the bag. Jessica took Austin's cock out of her mouth for a moment, looked up at him, and told him it was so much bigger than mine. They both laughed about the size of my cock. Her pussy grew wet. I could tell she got off on talking shit about me to my boss and humiliating me.

Wham!

My punches sent jolts up my arms into my shoulders. Tears formed in the corners of my eyes. Or was it sweat? Maybe both. My cock stirred in my shorts and tingled as Jessica's lips wrapped around

Austin's cock and bounced up and down his shaft, leaking saliva from the sides. I wanted to grab the back of her hair, call her a bitch and force her to continue.

Wham!

Austin moaned, and she sped up her sucking, thrusting her mouth down on his shaft, gripping his bare ass with her hands. I saw her mind. She thought about me as she did it. Thought about me sitting at home, oblivious. Her pussy radiated waves of ecstasy as she reveled in betraying me. In pulling one over on naïve Ron. I yelled at her in the privacy of my thoughts.

“You fucking bitch!”

Wham!

Austin moaned louder, saying he was about to cum. She responded by pulling at his ass and thrusting her mouth down to the base of his shaft. Her eyes glared at me as his cum spilled onto her tongue and down her throat. She came, too, savoring the thrill she got by cheating on me.

I cursed her as I watched.

“You're a whore, Jessica! A dirty cunt!”

The sounds and sensations of the punching bag had faded to distant background noise. My punches continued flying on the wings of muscle memory and the turning wheels of my subconscious mind. At the forefront, my whore wife showed her true, evil colors with reckless abandon. She pulled her mouth off Austin's cock to show me his cum running out of her mouth down her chin while she glared up at me.

My deep trance skipped and sputtered, interrupted by the feeling of a soft hand gripping my shoulder.

“Excuse me, sir?”

CHAPTER 12

Ally

Just one more set.

I put down the dumbbells, trying not to make too much noise with them. Not that everyone at the gym gave me the same courtesy of a peaceful workout environment.

Take that guy, for example.

A wiry gentleman with salt and pepper hair stood a couple yards behind me, walloping the punching bag like it owed him money. His reflection in the mirror in front of me distracted me from my usual focus.

C'mon, Ally, stop stalling. Let the poor guy punch his bag in peace.

I picked up the dumbbells and gave myself a stern look in the mirror as I began my last set of curls.

“I hate you!”

The shout from behind me startled me so much, I almost dropped the dumbbells. I surveyed the room, looking in the mirror at the various other gym rats behind me. Most of them turned their attention to the gentleman punching the bag.

He grunted and yelled again.

“You fucking bitch!”

My eyes widened as I put down the dumbbells and turned towards Mr. Angry Fists. Everyone else just shook their heads in disapproval and put their headphones back on to drown him out. I studied his face. His eyes squinted and teeth gritted as if he felt great pain. The more I watched him, the more I wanted to know what in the world went on

between his ears. His fists flew in a flurry, striking the bag with such force that the rafters shook.

Impressive for a smaller guy.

No headphones.

How can he not hear himself?

And...

Oh, dear.

His shorts stretched around a protrusion coming from his groin area. My eyes cut away as a grin surfaced on my face.

Well, you got your blood flowing.

His voice pierced my ears and pulled my attention from the tent in his shorts.

“You’re a whore, Jessica! A dirty cunt!”

My mouth dropped open as my eyes surveyed the room again for onlookers.

I’ve got to stop him.

I moved in near to him and reached out to tap him on the shoulder, trying not to catch a flying fist across my face. When I touched his shoulder, his energy flowed through my fingertips, up my arm, and into my chest. Heavy sadness came over me.

Dude, what happened to you? And who’s Jessica?

I pat his arm, hoping to intercept any more crude expletives before they escaped his mouth.

“Excuse me, sir?”

He snapped out of his trance and collapsed into the bag. When his eyes opened to look at me, I saw brokenness in them like he might cry right in front of me.

“Are you ok?”

He looked around the gym and flinched at the sight of several glares coming at him from his audience. Sweat poured down his face, which turned white as he lowered his gloves to cover himself. I tried to act oblivious to that situation.

“I hate to interrupt you, but you were getting pretty intense there.”

I looked around the room, lowered my voice, and leaned in closer.

“You know this is a family-oriented establishment, right?”

The color in his face turned from pale to bright red.

“I’m scared to ask. What was I doing?”

I wrinkled my nose, looked to the side, and blew through puckered lips.

“How to tell you this? Umm, apparently there’s some woman named Jessica that you hate. You called her some colorful names.”

“Oh, my God.”

He bounced his forehead like a basketball against the punching bag.

“You seem pretty upset. Do you need to talk to someone?”

I waited for him to open his eyes and look at me. When he did, the tightness in his cheeks appeared to loosen. His shoulders relaxed and fell.

“Thank you very much, ma’am, but…”

“It’s Ally.”

“Excuse me?”

As I contemplated my brief glimpse of the tumult inside him, I wanted to hug him but just gave him a warm smile.

“My name’s Ally.”

He looked down and then to the side.

“Thank you, Ally. My name’s Ron. Honestly, I need to go take a cold shower before they throw me out of here.”

Poor guy.

I winked at him and patted him on the shoulder.

“I understand. Well, when you’ve cooled off, if you want to talk, I’m around. I work out here all the time.”

I turned and walked away, hoping to get that chance.

Not sure what it is about you, dude, but I want to know more about you.

CHAPTER 13

Ron

I made my way to the showers with my gloved hands folded across my crotch, struggling to make it look natural. My erection never quit. I wanted to attribute it to Ally's ass in her pink leggings, but the truth clawed through any denial and gripped my libido with electrifying black magic. As I stepped into a shower, imagery of Austin with my back-stabbing wife haunted my mind. I looked down at my throbbing dick.

Why, in God's name, would you find that erotic?

I needed cold water, but I chose hot. As it pelted my face and chest, I reached down to touch my shaft and stroked.

Are you trying to torture yourself?

I continued stroking as I pictured Jessica now naked, lying on her back in Austin's office, beckoning for him to put his dick inside her. I imagined her eyes lighting up with a fiery red glow, as if she hosted some diabolical spirit inside of her.

My mouth formed an "O" as I blew air out, and my head shook like a slow pendulum from side to side.

You're evil. Pure carnal lust.

The wild beast had the power to destroy whatever she wanted. She had no need or regard for marriage. No regard for me. Only her appetite and her hatred of the constraints a decent society put on her. Heat infused my body from within, meeting the heat from the water. My chest expanded as I continued fondling my cock. I wanted to worship her with it, stroking towards an imaginary altar dedicated to her wickedness.

Why?

I made the sharp pain that stung my heart into an offering. Like a sacrificial lamb, I beckoned for her predatory evil to manifest itself and feed on my soul.

My cock teetered on the edge of climax. I paused just short of cumming, compelled to savor the electric pain. I could hear other men in the surrounding showers.

*What if she has been fucking around behind my back for years?
What if she has fucked dozens of men?*

The thought sent a burning sensation through my body, from my cock up into the crown of my skull. A pendulum swung in my soul between worship and violence. Not hatred. I chose that word so many times since finding out, but I didn't hate her. I wanted to discipline her. To take her by the throat and slap her face. Slap her tits. Make her confess every sordid detail of her crimes. I wanted to force the dragon from its lair and get burned by its fire. Provoke it to do its very worst and expose it for its scandalous, terrible true colors.

My cock couldn't hold back anymore. My cum burned the inside of my shaft as it shot out and splattered against the side of the shower. I bit my lip to keep from moaning out loud. My orgasm continued for minutes with my cock pulsing and pumping out squirt after squirt. Energy drained from my body like blood draining from the wound of a dying soldier on the battlefield.

As my orgasm subsided, the hysteria of eroticizing Jessica's crimes against me faded until only the pang in my soul remained. My tears returned, and my chest heaved. I couldn't help it. I sobbed in the shower.

Maybe she never loved you, Ron. Maybe she only keeps you cause you're easy to kick around.

I placed my forearm against the shower wall and my head on my forearm. The water ran over my body as I continued to whimper. I wanted to hate her, but I couldn't. Maybe I was addicted to her. To her intoxicating sensuality. Her decadence. The fires that burned me gave off a warmth that drew me to her. And I still yearned for them.

I've gotta get out of here.

I turned off the water, reached for a towel. A sharp pain burned from inside my belly.

What's that about?

Gurgling followed. I winced as I wrapped the towel around my waist and headed for my locker. Despite the hot shower and sexual release, my muscles stiffened, resisting my efforts to move. I reached up with one hand to massage my shoulder.

Dang, that's tight.

My clothes hung like chain-mail armor in my weary hands as I pulled them on. When I emerged from the locker room, I found Ally waiting on a nearby bench. She looked up and smiled at me.

Still wearing her pink tights.

God, I hope she can't read minds.

CHAPTER 14

Ally

I threw a towel over my shoulder as Ron walked off towards the men's locker room. For a smaller, older gentleman, he still projected a subtle, quiet strength. Like a large rock formation on a beach that withstands the ocean waves crashing on it and remains unbroken, stable, and erect.

Like what was under his shorts?

I giggled and shook my head at myself as I patted my face with the towel.

Time for some crunches.

I picked up a mat and rolled it out on the gym floor, dropping the towel beside it. The sounds of a busy gym subsided as numbers dwindled. Only the hardcore gym rats like me remained. I got on my back with my knees up and began crunching away.

“100...”

My abs engaged and lifted me, and my elbows touched my knees. My thoughts turned back to Ron and the immense, energetic wave of pain that rolled off him into my touch. It melted my heart and made me want to touch him again. To perhaps comfort him. Even heal him.

No one should be left to hurt that much.

“89...”

The warmth of my blood flow built in my core and spread through my body. I loved that feeling. The feeling of being alive. My eyes looked up to the ceiling as I continued to raise myself up for another repetition. I thought about what lay beyond it. The heavens. God. I didn't believe that things happened by chance. Everything happened

for a reason. Maybe meeting Ron tonight had a purpose. Maybe God wanted me to help him.

“78…”

I closed my eyes and pictured him lying face down on my massage table under a towel. My hands rested in the center of his back and opened a floodgate of his pain. My hands kneaded into him as I met that onslaught of pain with my healing energy.

“73…”

In my vision, the skin of my palms and fingers glided across Ron’s back. He moaned under my touch. In my vision, I became naked. My bare breasts brushed against his back, their soothing power washing over him.

“69…”

“What’s up, Ally Cat!”

My heart sank as I opened my eyes to find Mark Williams kneeling beside me.

“Looking good there,” he said.

“You’re a little close, Mark. Some space, please? 64…”

“Excuse me, Miss Hard Core.”

“What do you want, Mark? 62…”

“Well, we never got to do our second date.”

“That’s because you were a jerk on our first date. 60…”

“Aww, c’mon, Ally Cat. Can you blame a guy for trying to get some action?”

“I can when I made it clear I didn’t want that action. And quit calling me that. 58…”

“I think you want it. You’re just trying to hold on to those old-fashioned values.”

“I like my old-fashioned values. 56…”

“C’mon, you don’t like them *that* much. We both know you didn’t keep your virginity all this time because of your morals.”

I stopped and hugged my knees, glaring at him.

“What?”

“Well, I mean, you didn’t always look like this.”

“What are you saying, Mark?”

“Ally, you know what you looked like in high school. I’m just saying it’s easy to stay celibate when you don’t have any chance of getting laid.”

“Wow. You know, Mark, it’s easy to stay celibate when your chances are with arrogant jerks who don’t know when to shut up.”

I put my hands back behind my head.

“54…”

“Someone’s in a foul mood.”

“Bye, Mark! 52…”

“Whatever.”

He stood and threw his hands in the air. I blew some loose hair strands out of my eyes and scowled at the air.

You have no clue how hard this virginity thing is, Mark. Even with jerks like you.

In the meantime, while I waited, I could let my sexual energy flow in other ways. As part of my gift to heal. And at that moment, that energy appeared to be flowing towards this Ron guy.

“40…”

Sweat poured from my body as I finished my set. I took the towel, dried myself off, and headed for the showers. I stripped my workout clothes off and let the locker room air roll over my naked skin. It tingled, and every pore opened to breathe as I stepped into a shower stall and turned on the water. Typically, I lingered in the shower and let my hands run over my musculature carved through years of hard work. Tonight, however, I hurried through my after-workout routine. I didn't want to miss Ron before he left.

In no time, I got out, got dressed, and sat on a bench outside the exit to the men's locker room.

I hope I haven't missed him.

I passed the time by praying for him.

Dear Father God, I don't know why you have brought this man into my path, but I hear you. I will answer. Use me to minister to his broken heart.

My heart leaped for joy when Ron exited the locker room. The warmth I now felt towards him flowed up from my chest and out through my smile as I got up to walk over to him.

"Dude, you look like you've had quite a workout today."

He smirked and looked at the ground. Almost like he feared I would hit him.

"Yeah, I guess so."

"Listen, Ron, I know I should mind my own business, but I haven't been able to get it off my mind. Ever since seeing you punch that bag and hearing you yell the things you yelled, I've just been thinking, I don't know, maybe you'd like to grab some dinner with me and vent some more."

His smirk melded into a grin. His head lifted, and his eyes softened. He took a deep breath, and I watched the tension ebb away from his body.

“Sure, that sounds good.”

I gave him a vigorous pat on the back.

“That’s the spirit! Let’s go grab some tacos, and you can tell me all about this horrible Jessica chick.”

Ron squirmed as he put a hand on his stomach.

“Maybe not tacos.”

“Haha, ok. Eggs and toast at the Pancake Hutt it is!”

CHAPTER 15

Ron

I pulled my car up to the curb in front of my old house. The bushes bulged from overgrowth, and the long grass mingled with a scattering of new weeds. A tree limb laid on top of the roof.

Too busy defiling our house with other men to notice the limb on the roof, Jessica?

I shook my head and scowled.

Tonight, you pay for your crimes.

The previous night's dinner with Ally refreshed and comforted me. Her kind eyes and gentle encouragement washed over me like cool waters on my scalded soul. And yet, my cravings for Jessica grew, and my anticipation of turning the tables on her consumed my thoughts.

I'm a man living two lives.

My chest tightened, and my breath quickened. I looked at my last text conversation with Jessica. I told her I'd be here at 7 p.m. My watch read 6:45 p.m.

Ugh.

The anticipation clawed at me like an alien from within. She had agreed to my demands to spend the entire day naked, wearing only the shoes from the night she cheated with Austin. If anyone came to the door, she would answer. I sent a package to be delivered, and I called an old neighbor, asking them to go check on her. My mouth watered as I pictured these visitors looking on her naked form in the doorway.

Just like Austin did. And who knows who else, you evil whore.

I gritted my teeth and repeated my thoughts like a mantra. My core swelled, thinking of the darkness in her soul. I rechecked my watch.

Almost time.

I turned off the car and looked through my backpack. A new bottle of Pepcid rested on top of the other contents.

Better leave that here.

I set it aside, and after double-checking the other contents, I zipped the bag up.

Looks good.

I got out of the car and walked up to the front door. Dusk spread across the sky. The departure of light activated the front porch lamps and illuminated the doorway. I grinned.

Perfect.

I rang the doorbell, imagining my fingertip muddied the prints of other men who came for an illicit rendezvous in my absence. A look around at nearby houses revealed some signs of life. I stepped back to give the neighbors an excellent view when the door opened.

Maybe they've seen this already, but with another man on the doorstep.

Jessica opened the door, naked as requested, save for those devilish shoes. I let my eyes peruse the sight of her bare skin. A slight breeze blew at her long, dark hair. I imagined the sensation the wind caused on her naked breasts and labia as it tickled them.

“Hey, handsome.”

“Don't.”

“Sorry, Ron. I just... do you wanna come in?”

“Not yet. I'd like us to stand here for a moment. And, unless I specifically ask you to speak, Jessica, don't say another word the entire time I'm here.”

She opened her mouth but stopped.

Good. You're getting it.

Her eyes surveyed the neighborhood. Her teeth slid off her lip, releasing it, and she took a deep breath. As she let it out, she looked back at me and placed her hand on the door frame. Her eyebrow cocked as she slid it up the frame, elongating her curvaceous body under the light from the porch. Her mouth formed a wry grin as her other hand found its way to her hip.

“Did you get my package? A nod will be sufficient.”

She nodded.

“Did anyone come check on you today? Again, a nod will do.”

Her mouth opened for a split second, and her eyes narrowed. She nodded again.

“Step out on the porch, please.”

She took her hand from the doorframe and placed it over her throat. She shook her head and grinned as she stepped out into the porch light, under the last haze of dusk. My heart pounded at the thought of who might see her.

“Turn around. Slowly.”

Her eyes locked on mine as she rotated her shoulders away from the road. She swiveled until her ass faced the street.

“Walk in.”

I stayed in my spot on the porch and watched her body move. She possessed the seductive grace of a trained belly dancer. Without trying, she could turn heads with it.

“Go up the stairs. Slowly.”

I followed her in and closed the door behind me. Standing just inside the entryway, I watched her voluptuous ass and toned legs as they flexed and released with each of her steps up. Her hand grazed the stair rail as if teasing another man's cock. She glanced back over her shoulder to show me her sultry eyes. I turned on the stairwell lights to get a better view of her before following her up.

"Head for the bedroom. The one that used to be ours. I'm sure you've soiled it with your cheating."

She bit her bottom lip with her teeth as she reached the top of the stair and walked into the bedroom.

"Get on the bed, lay on your back, and stretch out your arms and legs towards the four bedposts."

Her eyebrows lifted in response before she grinned and climbed onto the bed and followed my instructions. I surveyed her naked body spread out. Her succulent thighs and calves melding up into her curvy hips. Her bare labia exposed for me to have my way with if I chose. Her slender, toned waist that undergirded her soft, ample breasts. The nipples standing erect and firm.

"You know I should punish you," I said.

My breath shortened, and my chest pounded. Electricity coursed through my body as I embraced this new power over her to take her stunning body and do whatever I wanted with it. To fuck her if I wanted. How I wanted. To punish her if I wanted.

I set my backpack down on the bed and pulled out some long, black straps and a flogger. I held it up for her to see and stroked the long collection of leather tails that extended from the handle. Her head jerked in a double-take, and her eyes popped out of her head.

“I told you this will hurt, but not as much as you deserve.”

CHAPTER 16

Jessica

Ron looked down at his backpack. His voice softened.

“I wouldn’t do that to you.”

The words pierced through the stony armor I kept around my heart. His kindness, even amid his wrath, both touched and shamed me.

God, Jessica, you’re such a bitch.

I laid back in surrender and closed my eyes. Ron wrapped something around my wrists and ankles and pulled tight, stretching my limbs. He pulled my legs wide apart so that my ankles rested on either edge of the bed. He then put a blindfold over my eyes and tied it behind my head. The sound of more rustling in the bag tantalized my ears, and then the brushing sensation of heavy, leathery tendrils crept from my ankles up my leg. The sternness in his voice returned.

“Now, Jessica, you will tell me everything.”

My heart leaped up into my throat. The Jessica from a couple weeks ago – the one who confessed only enough to pierce him – had abandoned me to the insanity of willing surrender. Now, I laid helpless and at his mercy. My guard melted away like butter in my palms, giving way to a powerful urge to open my stupid, fucking mouth and spill any details he required of me.

“I already know that you fucked him. Without protection. And that you brought his cum home to me in your cheating pussy and rubbed it all over me.”

Crack!

My body jerked at the sudden, sharp sting across the tops of my thighs.

Dammit to hell, Ron!

My mouth opened again, grabbing for air. My wrists pulled at the restraints, wanting to cover my mouth or guard myself. My heart sped up its pounding and thumped hard in my chest. As the pain faded to a dull warmth, blood flowed towards my pussy.

I'm in the fucking twilight zone with this shit.

“Did you suck his cock, too?”

I gritted my teeth, expecting another stinging sensation. Ron's voice hammered my ears with unusual sternness.

“Answer me, Jessica.”

I nodded my head.

“I want to hear you say it.”

“I did.”

“Did what?”

“I sucked his cock.”

“You sucked my bosses' cock?”

No amount of air could satisfy my hungry lungs, and I struggled to get the words out.

“Yes, Ron, I sucked your bosses' cock.”

Crack!

This time, the stinging sensation landed on the exposed inner forearm nearest to Ron. My body writhed. The sensations rippled from the point of contact through my body with frenetic energy.

Where the fuck did Ron Stroker get a whip?

“And you loved fucking and sucking him, didn't you?”

The leathery tendrils dragged up my abdomen and across my breasts. As my arousal increased, so did my rebellious streak and a desire to

fire back at him.

“I loved it.”

Crack!

He struck my thighs again. This time, harder, and while it stung, it didn't frighten me. The adrenaline gave me courage – or foolishness – that emboldened me to face the punishment. I also felt Ron. He ached to know the whole truth. Lusted for it. And his palpable desire fanned my arousal.

“Did you swallow his cum?”

Each layer of revelation that he peeled back sent fresh waves of tingling warmth through my pussy.

“Every drop. It tasted delicious.”

Crack! My arms again. For several seconds of touch-less silence, the sting pulsed on my skin. Until the brush of Ron's whip grazed my exposed labia as he dragged it from the space between my legs upwards towards my stomach.

“And you came on his cock when he was fucking you, didn't you?”

“Several times. More than I've ever come with you.”

How 'bout them apples, Ron?

Following my last quip, the only sound came from my heart pounding in my ears.

Then his fingers touched my pussy and slipped inside.

“You're wet.”

My mouth fell open, and I moaned as he began a come-hither motion with two inserted fingers, massaging my g-spot, while he rubbed my clit with his thumb.

“Let’s talk about why you came so much with him. You loved his cock, didn’t you?”

“Yesss, his cock was amazing!”

He slid his fingers out for a moment.

Smack!

My pussy lips stung. His slap amplified the vibrations of my arousal that buzzed in my body. I couldn’t help myself. I moaned my response.

“Oh God, that fabulous cock of his.”

His words, while harsh for Ron, sounded more lascivious than hateful.

“You’re a fucking bitch, Jessica.”

His fingers slid back inside, and his thumb returned to my clit.

“His cock wasn’t the only reason you came so much, was it? You loved cheating. You reveled in being a dishonest, unfaithful wife.”

I bit my lip, feeling his fingers gliding in and out of my pussy, my orgasm building. He continued.

“You get off on lying. Sneaking. You thought about me being here at home while your pussy took his cock, didn’t you?”

“I did!”

“You probably even talked about it with Austin as his cock was pounding this pussy, didn’t you?”

“Yesss!”

I came close to climaxing, but he pulled his fingers out and spanked my pussy again. Then he slapped my tits, leaving an after burn in the skin on the sides of them. My head tilted back and pressed into the bed as my mouth opened to release a moan. I deserved this, and embracing the punishment with bold confessions only stoked my desire for more.

Omg, I want to cheat on him again. I'll never learn.

His fingers were back inside me, thrusting in and out. I could hear his breathing now. Heavy. Like someone short of breath from running. And a thumping sound.

He's masturbating with his left hand?

A smirk blended into the open-mouthed orgasmic expression on my face.

“You’ve always been a cheater, haven’t you? You cheated on your fiancé when you sucked my cock. And now you cheated on me. Your pussy just can’t be faithful, can it? It hungers to betray. Doesn’t it?”

“It does. It fucking loves it!”

He let out a loud groan of pleasure.

A hot, wet spatter hit my face, and the familiar scent of his cum filled my nostrils. He continued squirting it on my neck and tits.

Damn, Ron. You've never cum this much before.

He continued pounding my pussy with his fingers.

“Oh, fuck, I’m going to cum, too!”

“No, you’re not!”

He ripped his fingers out of my pussy and gave it his hardest smack. I lay there, writhing, aching to cum. My body arched upward, and my wrists burned, pulling at the restraints, as I tried to reach for my pussy with my hands.

I yelled at him.

“Dammit, Ron!!!”

I heard him panting.

“You can finish yourself off.”

He unfastened my wrist on the side of the bed nearest him.

“And you can undo the rest of your restraints.”

I didn't waste time with the other restraints but plunged my fingers on my free hand into my pussy.

“Oh, fuck!!”

It gushed with my juices, and violent waves of pleasure rippled like an earthquake through my body as I started to cum. I hissed at Ron.

“I fucking loved cheating on you, you pissy little bitch!”

I expected his hand across my tits or my face, but no slap came. My fingers pounded my throbbing hole as the repeating surges of my climax continued to wrack my body with ecstasy. A deep, guttural moan exploded from my lips into the air, and I soared on a fiery high for a few minutes before coming down.

As my orgasm subsided, my body collapsed onto the bed from its convulsing state. The erotic hysteria ebbed away and gave way to the sensation of sweat on my body. My chest heaved as I gasped for air.

“Fuck, Ron!”

No response. Only silence. I unfastened the other restraints and removed the blindfold from my eyes.

A stack of one-hundred-dollar bills sat on the bedside table.

And he was gone.

CHAPTER 17

Ron

“Café Chez Marie. Nice!”

Ally took my hand. A few of her steps turned to skips as she giggled.

“This will be fun,” she said.

My heart stumbled between warmth at her enthusiasm and heaviness over my own shameful lust. I might not be old enough to be her father, but I definitely had a decade on her. A nice girl like Ally would undoubtedly find my thoughts about both her and Jessica repulsive.

“What’s wrong?”

Her piercing eyes cut through all my veils and cast a warm light into my dark places. I leaned away from her, still looking in her eyes.

“How do you do that?”

She cut her eyes to the side and pursed her lips, curling the corner of them into a smirk.

“I have powers.”

“Apparently, so.”

“Sooo, what’s wrong?”

I looked down as I took a deep breath and pushed it out.

“Honestly, I don’t know why you’re here with me.”

“You’re intriguing. And maybe I like you.”

She reached with her hand up to the side of my head and played with my hair.

“I don’t know why. I worry you’ll feel differently the more you get to know me.”

“Well, I definitely want to know more about you, and give me some credit, Ron. I met you cussing at a punching bag with a bulge in your

shorts, but I'm here."

She has a point.

"Just don't say I didn't warn you," I said.

"Deal."

We followed a hostess to a secluded table on the terrace under a clear night sky. Ally clasped her hands together as we took our seats.

"This is lovely!"

She gave me a second to get settled and then reached across the table, taking my hands.

"Ok, Ron, let's have some dark secrets. What are you afraid for me to know about you?"

I turned my head to the side and licked my lips.

She's not gonna let this go.

She laughed.

"C'mon, Ron, give up the dirty deets."

"Ok. Well, for starters, I'm technically still married, and it's a constant battle for me not to think about your as... err... your butt."

I swallowed hard and reached for my water.

She grinned as she straightened up in her seat, casting a glance back over her shoulder.

"I mean, I work hard on it. I bet I think about it more than you do."

I took a sip, keeping my eyes on her. She leaned forward, grinning.

"You wanna grab it, spank it, grind up on it?"

I spat out my water. She slapped her thigh and busted out into laughter.

Damn, she can read minds.

I buried my face in my hands

“Ron, it’s ok. You’re a red-blooded male.”

I slid my hands halfway down my face and looked at her. She reclined in her chair and winked at me.

“You just seem like a nice girl with values.”

“I like to think so.”

I looked down at the table, reached for my fork, and fidgeted with it. Her foot nudged my shin under the table.

“That’s not a problem for you, is it, Mr. Stroker?”

“No, I just…”

My voice trembled. I struggled to draw a deep breath.

Oh, boy.

Ally put her elbows on the table and rested her chin on her folded hands, gazing at me with her soul-penetrating eyes.

“When I was young, I spent a lot of time in church,” I said.

I looked at her, awaiting a response.

“Go on.”

“All the women were nice people with values. I learned to bury my sexual thoughts deep inside out of respect for them. They dressed in colorful potato sacks to help men like me avoid the temptation to think bad thoughts.”

“So, you learned to be ashamed of a very natural part of yourself.”

I rested my elbows on the table and folded my hands in front of my mouth.

How is this so simple for her to understand?

“Ron, I’m not like those women. Yes, I’m a virgin, and I want to wait for marriage to have sex, but I live in the real world.”

A waiter approached our table, greeting us. We gave him our orders. The moonlight graced the soft lines of Ally's face and reflected in her eyes as she spoke to him. My chest tingled as I listened to the lilt of her voice.

She grinned, looking at me from the corner of her eye as the waiter walked away.

"So, Ron, I want you to know some things."

She looked down at the table as if gathering her thoughts and reached across for my hands again.

"When I was young, I was pretty heavy. I couldn't do things the other kids could do, and there were a few bullies that made my life miserable."

"If they could see you now."

"Exactly. Well, and some of them have."

Her mouth formed a mischievous grin, and she tilted her head to the side.

"Maybe by design."

We both laughed. Her eyes rose from the table and met mine. Her tone grew serious.

"After I graduated high school, I resolved to turn my life around. I started working out. It became my passion."

Her hands slid up my forearms as she leaned in.

"My deepest pain, Ron, was the belief that I was ugly and undesirable. Ever since I got in shape, a lot of men notice me. It doesn't always feel good. Some men are creepy. But not you. I know you're checking me out, but it doesn't feel gross."

It would if you could read my mind.

“I’m glad it doesn’t gross you out.”

“It doesn’t, Ron. I know you think you’re a bad person, but on your worst day, at your darkest, you are still good. Still safe.”

“I don’t know about that.”

“I do. I know it in my gut, which you’ve also been checking out.”

We both laughed.

“And Ron, don’t think you’re the only one at this table with a sex drive. I almost quit massage therapy because of my yoni energy.”

“Your ‘yoni energy’?”

She sat back in her chair and looked down, taking her hands and resting them over her crotch.

“Yes, Ron. My sacred entrance.”

“Ohhh, right. You’re ‘yoni’.”

Her lips tightened as one eyebrow furrowed.

“Don’t mock.”

“I’m not. I’m sorry. You’re teaching me a new word.”

“Massage therapists don’t let their sexual energy invade their practice. I had to find harmony with mine in spite of those rules, and I’m glad I did. I have a gift for healing. For feeling other’s hurts and mending them through touch.”

Wow.

I leaned back in my chair.

She smirked at me.

“What is it?”

“I know what you’re talking about. At least, I think I do.”

Her smile broadened.

“I think I felt it that day you touched me at the gym.”

“You did.”

My eyes narrowed as I grinned at her.

“You know, you’re a bit of a mystery.”

She picked up her water glass, turned her head to the side, and smiled, winking at me.

“You also sound like the perfect woman. I don’t suppose I could talk you into working on my shoulders sometime. They’ve been like granite.”

“Granite is my specialty. I guess you’ll just have to keep taking me to dinner.”

She stuck her tongue out at me and grinned. I chuckled.

I guess I will.

CHAPTER 18

Ron

My pants pulled against a growing bulge in my crotch as my Cutlass rolled up to the busy street corner. I rolled down the passenger-side window.

“Get in.”

Jessica climbed into the car, wearing the outfit I shipped to her house. The black, rhinestone-studded platform sandal shoes with 6-inch stiletto heels complimented the matching mini dress that cupped her ass. She even wore the thick, black choker with “SLUT” embedded in rhinestones.

“I’m surprised I didn’t get arrested in this outfit.”

I grinned, keeping my eyes on the road.

My breath quickened, and my chest fluttered.

Damn, she looks hot.

She probably saw my raging hard-on, but she wouldn’t get the courtesy of an open door for conversation. I put my fist to my mouth to stop a burning belch from escaping. It stayed in my chest, setting my throat on fire. I grabbed my Pepcid from the center console and popped two in my mouth.

“Since when do you need that?”

“You know the rules. Don’t speak unless spoken to.”

My grip on the steering wheel and my throat both tightened.

She deserved harsh treatment, but my parents didn’t raise me to act this way. And living a double life tormented my conscience. My dinner with Ally lifted my spirits. I think she even desired and respected me. A better life with her beckoned to me. Still, I couldn’t resist the tantalizing

Jessica

I better get every penny we agreed on.

As I stepped out of Ron's car, a flush crept across my cheeks, and my ears burned. On any other day, pushing the envelope with my outfits gave me a heady power trip, but this felt different. Now, my legs wobbled as I pressed my thighs together to hide my bare pussy lips from being exposed to the air that breezed up my short dress. This powerlessness took my breath away. Made my entire body warm and my nipples hard.

My chest tightened, and an intuition of ogling eyes gnawed at me as I followed Ron into the store. A mother pulled her child close to her as though a monster might eat them. A grey-haired man turned his head to watch me pass as he clung to his walker.

Why the fuck is my pussy tingling already?

I prayed I wouldn't run into anyone I knew. I usually came here later in the day, so...

Oh, fuck my life, it's Peggy.

I took a hard right down an aisle, hoping to avoid her, but Ron caught my arm.

"Owww!"

His grip both restrained and steadied me.

When the hell did you get so strong?

"Well, look who it is!"

Peggy's voice dripped with an ear-bleeding mixture of fake cheerfulness and real condescension.

"Jessica, just look at you. That outfit definitely suits you."

She turned to Ron with an exaggerated look of pity.

“Ron, I’m surprised to see you two together, but I wasn’t surprised to hear the news. I know it must have been tough for you to live with a snake in your bed. I hope you find someone who deserves you.”

It took restraint not to comment on the taste of her husband’s cum. But I felt sure Ron didn’t know about that. Yet. Plus, he paid for my silence, and I needed the money. She patted him on the shoulder, glaring at me as she rolled away.

“Over here,” Ron said.

He led me by the arm over to the produce section. We stopped in front of the apples, and he picked one up to look at it before dropping it on the ground.

“Now, keep your legs straight. Spread your feet apart. Bend over. Pick it up.”

My face turned a bright shade of red. The skirt would slide up my ass and expose at least the bottom of my ass cheeks when I did it, and my pussy would peek out to look at the world.

So, this is why you wanted me to go without panties.

I took a deep breath, looking around to see who might be about to get a show. The store hummed with the energy of a busy shopping day, but at the moment, no one shopped close to me.

Thank God the produce here sucks.

As I bent over, the air brushed against the underside of my ass cheeks and my bare pussy lips. Ron put his hand on the small of my back.

“Stay.”

His hand glided down my back, cupping my ass along the way, and then he slid a finger into my pussy.

Omg, I'm dripping wet.

“It looks like you are ready for your next task. Good. Get up.”

I pushed my tongue into my cheek and inhaled.

Great. My body has betrayed me and joined team Dom Ron.

I followed him over to the vegetable section, straightening my fingers and rolling them in a tiny, fanning motion.

What is with this Dom Ron, anyway? This man couldn't ask me for a blow job a year ago. Now, he's like Borat's grumpy, sadistic twin. And why am I so fucking intrigued?

My heart leaped up into my throat as I saw Ron examining the cucumbers.

Oh, God, no.

My pulse quickened, along with my breath. A fresh wave of tingling torment erupted from my pussy. It spread through my abdomen as I searched the store again for potential witnesses. I knew what Ron had in mind. He selected the biggest one and lifted it up, and a devilish grin spread across his face. Without looking at me, he handed it to me and began fumbling through his pockets.

My heart pounded as my hand gripped the thick, organic dildo.

“Face the cucumbers, put a hand on the rail, and squat down with your legs spread.”

I complied, my legs opening, forcing the dress to slip up my hips. I let out a heavy breath.

At least I have my back turned.

My open, bare pussy hid in the shadows, but I couldn't see behind me. I clenched the rail and hyperventilated at the thought of being

approached from behind and caught by surprise. Ron handed me a condom package.

“Put this on.”

Well, how considerate, Master Stroker. Good thing stilettos are my shoe of choice.

I tore the package with my teeth and sheathed the large green phallus with the ribbed, lubricated condom Ron provided. Not that I needed the lube.

I really am a whore.

Ron stood next to me, facing the opposite direction. I could only hope he paid enough attention to the store to warn me if someone got too close. As I placed the tip of the cucumber at my entrance, my body shuddered, and my chest tightened. Of all the crazy sexual things I did in my life, this might top them all.

I pushed it in. My lips fell open and mouthed the word “fuck”.

The sensation shocked me. The cucumber slid in and pressed up against the walls of my pussy, causing me to gasp for air. A searing fire shot through my abdomen and danced like flames in my chest. A soft moan escaped through my throat. I couldn't help myself.

Damn, Jessica, get a grip. Do you want to get arrested?

Ron's voice sounded direct but faint through the pounding in my ears.

“Fuck yourself with it.”

I started slowly, moving it in and out. Each deep glide into me sent waves of pleasure through my body. Tingling in my ear lobes. In my toes.

Oh, God, I love this vegetable.

My thrusts with my hand quickened, and my hips rocked in rhythm with it, pushing into the oncoming green member. My growing need for air made it impossible to keep my lips closed. The whimpering moans that pushed up from my chest began to escape. They grew louder in my ears. Waves began wracking my body as the thick cucumber pressed into the walls of my cunt. The heat of air exiting my nostrils burned their insides. The muscles in my legs grew tight. My climax came rushing at me, and I braced myself like someone about to get t-boned by an orgasmic tractor-trailer.

A sudden, tight grip on my wrist stopped my thrusts.

My heart pounded like an alien trying to escape my chest. I opened my eyes. Ron's face hovered a few inches from mine, and his eyes bored into me. His thumb and fingers stayed wrapped around my trembling wrist. My heartbeat thrashed my eardrums, and my chest heaved, trying to capture enough air for my aching lungs. I struggled to whisper.

“Are you fucking kidding me, Ron?”

He looked around behind me.

“If you want to finish, turn around and face the store.”

My vagina throbbed – its skin hypersensitized – and it ached for the re-insertion of the cucumber that rested against the entrance of my dripping hole. Fleeting sane thoughts drowned in my ravenous hunger for relief. I glared at him.

“Oh, fuck it.”

I swiveled around on the stilettos and faced the store. A couple pushed a cart into the checkout. A mother bent over to scold one of her kids. A grocery store clerk asked a bewildered-looking man if he

Ron

I pulled Jessica to her feet, her body quivering. The condom-covered cucumber lay on the floor, glistening in a large puddle of her juices.

“Leave it,” I said.

Jessica’s orgasmic screams had drawn the attention of several onlookers. Some frowned with wrinkled brows while others stared with mouths dropping open. Either way, we needed to leave before the police got called.

A store clerk approached me, blood draining from his face.

“Sir, she can’t do that here.”

I waved him off.

“I know. I don’t know what she was thinking. We’re leaving.”

CHAPTER 19

Ron

Janice jumped up from her desk, shooting her hand out from a stiff arm.

“Ron, he’s in a meeting right now.”

I gave her a stern glare and kept walking, pushing the door to Austin’s office open. Candice jumped up from Austin’s lap, and he turned his head, mouth open.

“I told Janice I was…”

I rolled my eyes.

“In a meeting? I heard.”

I walked up to his desk and tossed a backpack on top of a stack of papers. Austin’s eyes grew wide as saucers as Jessica walked into the office behind me.

“What the?!”

Candice and Brandy stepped away from Austin. Keeping their distance from me, they inched around the side of the office towards the door.

“Get out,” I said.

Brandy, always the cocky one, dared to get closer, leaning in as she passed.

“The nerd is getting snippy. Somebody’s panties are in a wad.”

I turned and flinched at her, making her jump.

“Oh my god! You’re a freak, Stroker!”

They both ran out, and I closed the office door behind them. Austin’s voice stammered at a raised pitch.

“Hey, Ron. Buddy. What’s all this about?”

I looked at Jessica.

“Take it off.”

She tilted her head to the side as her eyes cut away from me. Her hands took the top button on the front of her dress and unfastened it. And then another. All the way down the front of the dress, revealing her bare skin underneath, nothing else. Austin looked at her from the corner of his eye as he spoke to me.

“Whoa, Ron, what the hell?”

I glared at him and responded in a dry tone.

“Austin, let’s not pretend you haven’t seen her naked before.”

His lips pressed together as he sat back in his seat. His eyes ventured over to Jessica’s body and then to her face.

“Jessica, did he put you up to this?”

She rolled her eyes.

“Put me up to what? I have no fucking idea what he’s got up his sleeve.”

I stepped over to her and slapped her tits with my hand.

“No talking!”

Her eyes narrowed at me, and she bit her bottom lip. I went to Austin’s desk, opened the backpack, and pulled out a ball gag. Her eyes and mouth opened wide as I held it up.

“You’ll need to open your mouth wider for me to get this in.”

She blinked several times as she complied, and I inserted it, fastening the strap behind her head. Austin interjected.

“Ok, Ron, what is this about?”

I pulled a thumb drive out of my pocket and held it out to him.

“Put this in your computer. There’s one file. Open it.”

Tiny beads of perspiration glistened on Austin's forehead as he looked at the thumb drive.

"What's on this, Ron?"

My eyebrows turned down as I smirked at him.

"You'll see."

He grimaced as he placed a hand on the desk, still staring at the drive. After taking a deep breath, he leaned forward and stood. His eyes searched mine as he took it and turned back towards his computer.

Now, who's the boss?

I turned to Jessica and pointed to Austin's desk.

"Lay down."

She walked over, turned her back to his desk, and sat her bare ass on the polished mahogany edge. Putting a hand back for support, she lowered herself until her back was on the desk.

"Spread your legs and keep them lifted."

A video started playing on Austin's computer screen, and Jessica's voice came through Austin's speakers.

"Ron walks up and down these halls, doesn't he?"

Austin's voice followed, responding to her.

"He does."

Austin turned and looked at me, his face white as a ghost.

"How did you get this?"

"Keep watching."

Austin turned back to the screen and the sight of him leading Jessica down the hallway towards my desk. I picked up the backpack and walked around to the opposite side of Austin's desk.

"Jessica, give me your hands."

I took out a set of straps and clips from the bag, bound her wrists with the straps, and clipped them to the base of the desk so that her body stretched out. Her breathing grew more pronounced, and her bare tits rose and fell, riding on top of her air-hungry lungs.

Austin wrung his hands as the sounds of their betrayal continued to play.

“I don’t need to see any more of this.”

“Oh, you will watch every bit.”

He gritted his teeth as he watched me rifle through my bag and pull out a riding crop.

“Jesus, Stroker.”

I chuckled and walked back to where Jessica’s legs remained wide open, tapping the crop on her nipples and stomach as I passed.

“Turn this next part up.”

Austin swallowed hard and looked over my shoulder at the door.

“It’s still closed, Austin. Turn it up.”

He turned to his speakers and adjusted the knob. The sound of Jessica’s voice came hissing from the speakers.

“So, this is his little throne.”

Crack!

I popped Jessica’s bare pussy lips with the crop. Her back arched up, and her legs clamped together, attempting to protect herself. I barked at her.

“Keep them open, whore.”

Her arms and face tensed as she opened her legs back up. On-screen, she continued to seduce Austin to fuck on my desk. His eyes darted at me, and his face flushed as he slapped his desk.

“Ron, dammit, I demand to know how you got this video!”

I laughed and then walked over to face him, pointing the crop at him. He leaned back in his chair, sweat dripping down his face.

“You aren’t in a position to ask questions, Austin.”

Austin looked at the crop and pushed it away.

“Was it the security guys? Was it Sam?!”

I grinned and walked back towards the opening between Jessica’s thighs.

“No, they haven’t seen this, but they will along with the rest of the world unless you cooperate.”

Austin rolled his chair up to the desk, leaned forward, and furrowed his eyebrows. His voice lowered.

“Hold up. Old man, are you trying to blackmail me?”

I slid two fingers into Jessica’s pussy.

“You’re wet, you filthy cunt.”

Austin got louder.

“Stroker, what are you trying to pull here?”

I snapped back at him.

“Austin, don’t get righteous with me. You had the gall to fuck your employee’s spouse. There’s no garbage can filthy enough for that, so kindly shut the fuck up!”

He sat tight-lipped, his eyes burning, as he watched Jessica’s body writhe. My fingers thrust into her dripping hole, making a repetitive smacking sound, and her moans created a stereo effect, coming from beneath the ball gag and from Austin’s speakers.

Austin bellowed.

“Ok, Stroker, so what the hell do you want?”

I grinned with devilish pleasure at both of their predicaments.

Karma is a bitch.

My fingers continued to fuck Jessica, faster and harder, while I explained.

“I want you both exposed. How it happens is up to you.”

“Meaning?”

Jessica’s moaning sounds grew louder from both sources. Her hips rocked, trying to meet my hand, and her legs spread wider, flailing the air of Austin’s office.

“We will have a re-enactment. You and this little whore will put on a repeat performance of your little stunt, and this time, you’ll have an audience.”

Austin exhaled a heavy sigh and sneered at me.

“Like who?”

A long, muffled moan crashed against the ball gag in Jessica’s mouth.

“Who have you told? Invite them.”

“Ok…”

“Have you told Brandy and Candice?”

“No.”

“Too bad. They’re coming, too. So, they can see what you really are.”

Jessica began to cum. Her nostrils flared, and her cheeks pushed at the gag as her moans grew loud enough to penetrate the walls.

“You fucking psycho. You’ll get us both fired.”

“Oh, and Janice. She’s definitely coming.”

“What?! Are you kidding me? Ron, she works for me.”

I shoved Jessica's quivering legs to the side and stormed around the desk towards Austin. He rolled his chair back and put his hands up to guard against my fists clenched at my side.

"I work for you, Austin! Maybe you forgot that when you put your cock inside this bitch."

I grabbed a wad of cash from my bag and threw it at Jessica.

"There's your money, whore."

Throwing the bag over my shoulder, I turned and walked out.

"If you don't want to re-enact, I'm fully prepared to post the video on YouTube, YouPorn, YouWhatever. I'll even add narration, so viewers know exactly what they're seeing. Up to you, pretty boy."

The coolness of the office doorknob fled under the heat of my grip as I looked back at them both.

"You both have 24 hours to give me your decision. And, Austin, you can escort your little fuck toy out yourself."

Outside the door, I found Janice sitting with her arms folded, drawn up tightly to her chest, looking at me like I just shot her puppy.

Don't worry, Janice. You'll understand soon enough.

CHAPTER 20

Jessica

The last time I took these steps up to the glass doors of Solidarity, my heels struck the pavement with power and a playful bounce. Now, however, the moonlight shone down on a much different Jessica. The sound of my heels scraping textured concrete announced the arrival of a convicted criminal. I headed to my sentencing in the court of Ron Stroker, and my briefcase tugged my arm towards the ground. I shook my head at the tingling warmth between my legs. I no longer questioned it.

Apparently, I like being Ron's bitch.

Light from the lobby poured out through the glass. It illuminated a small gathering of people standing in front of the reception desk. Other than Ron, Austin, and his receptionist, Janice, I didn't recognize any of them. As I placed my hand on the door to push it open, my mind flashed back to the evening I came here to fuck Austin. Ron sat home, wishing me well on my proposal while I stabbed him in the back. Now, the truth would come out. A jolt of electricity shot through my pussy.

Ron looked me up and down as I walked into the lobby.

I know that look.

An erection formed in his pants.

“This is the outfit you wore that night?”

I nodded.

Ron cocked an eyebrow as he smirked at Austin.

“And these are all the people you've told.”

Austin leaned back against the reception desk, studying the floor with his eyes as he replied.

“Yes.”

“Yes, what?”

Austin sighed and dropped his head back to glare at the ceiling.

“Yes, Mr. Stroker.”

“Very good,” Ron said.

He motioned for us to all approach, and like kids in detention, we formed a semi-circle in the center of the lobby, heads down in shame. Ron strolled behind us, moving from person to person, stopping at each one to direct his voice at the back of their heads.

“You know, I worked here for twenty years. Put in extra hours. Worked my way up. I was good at this job.”

I peeked out of the corner of my eye at him. He pointed at Austin.

“But then this little shit came in here with his fancy car and his greasy smile. Kissing ass to Jack. Not doing a damn thing for the company.”

Austin shook his head in silence as he stared at the floor, gritting his teeth. Ron finished his trip behind our backs and re-entered the semi-circle, stepping in front of Austin and glaring him right in the face.

“And if it wasn’t enough that he took a job from me he didn’t deserve, he found a lower low by fucking my wife right here in the office!”

Ron turned to look at me.

“She won’t be my wife much longer.”

The thought still stung, and his public announcement salted my wound.

“But she and Austin will be re-enacting what they did the night he awarded her the contract for the company’s telecom equipment and services.”

His dry, sarcastic tone veiled his rage, but I sensed it.

“You’ll see what a fine job she did presenting the merits of her offerings for this responsible decision-maker.”

He came over to me and took my face in his hand.

“We’ll see why this lying, cheating cunt will soon be my x-wife.”

His hand slid off my face, and he stepped back like a director on the set of a movie.

“Take your places.”

I wiped my clammy palms against my hips. Austin and I stood frozen, looking at each other.

“C’mon, people, the show must go on.”

I took a deep breath that lifted my shoulders and blew it out.

Ok, here goes.

I turned and walked towards the door, my heel clicks echoing off the walls. When I reached the door and faced the room, Austin remained like a statue. Amused, Ron jeered at him.

“Did you forget your line, Austin? I figured you’d have no trouble remembering since you enjoyed telling it to almost everyone here.”

Austin scowled at Ron as he trudged towards me, and his lips vibrated like a tiny motorboat as he blew through them. My skin pulled tight around my forehead. My memories beat like a drum roll against it, bringing back the scandalous details we were about to reveal. My breath quickened as I spoke to Austin.

“Hold this, please.”

I handed him my briefcase and glanced at Ron as I walked back to the center of the lobby, shedding my suit jacket. The lobby air grazed the thin, spaghetti-strapped camisole and teased my nipples as they grew

hard. The eyes of our audience widened at the sight of my braless breasts rising and falling with my invigorated breathing.

“That night, only the security cameras caught the show, but now you’re truly exposed. Continue.”

Austin walked past me towards the hallway leading to Ron’s work area.

“Come with me,” he said.

I could hear Ron’s footsteps close behind me as I followed Austin. My stomach fluttered as I untucked the camisole and lifted it up over my head, dropping it to the floor. Ron’s voice hissed from behind me.

“You brazen bitch.”

My head pounded, and my heartbeat echoed in my ears as my fear surged to dizzying heights, anticipating Ron’s reaction to my next words.

“Could we stop by Ron’s desk?”

Ron’s hand seized a handful of my hair, and his other hand reached around me from behind to grab my left breast. His fingertips clasped around my nipple and pinched hard. A sharp pain seared it, and I screamed. As the pain dulled, an intense tingling in my vagina followed. Ron hissed in my ear.

“You fucking cunt! You went to fuck him on my desk, didn’t you?”

As he released me, adrenaline exploded through my extremities.

Oh, God, Jessica, really?

My rebellious inclination to poke the bear bubbled up. A devilish grin spread across my face as I continued walking. I turned my head to look back at Ron.

“Makes you want to crucify this wicked cunt, doesn’t it?”

Austin stopped and turned around to look at us, his face pale. As I stepped up to him, my heels left the floor. My teeth settled into my bottom lip.

Oh, Ron, you just think you're ready to see what a whore can do.

“Relax, little boy. He’s way angrier at me than you. Here, let me help you.”

Ron cut in.

“Stick to the script!”

I got down on my knees, unzipped Austin’s pants, and took out his flaccid cock. My chin jutted out as I looked up at him with a devilish grin, and I began stroking it.

“Look at me, Austin.”

CHAPTER 21

Ron

Jessica's enjoyment of her punishment only excited me more.

She knows she's a fucking whore.

I reached down and unzipped my pants. My hard cock sprung forth with pre-cum glistening on the tip. Austin closed his eyes as she took him in her mouth and began sucking him to hardness.

My heart pounded like a stake knocking at the inside of my chest cavity. My cock jerked with each beat, but I resisted the urge to touch it yet. Seeing Jessica exposed in a replay of her crime provided more than enough stimulation.

She took her mouth off his hard cock for a moment.

“Ron walks up and down these halls, doesn't he?”

I looked back at the others to assess their reactions. Even Brandy dropped her jaw at the words. Janice pressed a hand against her stomach, shook her head, and scowled. Austin looked as though he would puke at any moment. He trembled as he answered.

“Yes.”

Jessica cocked an eyebrow, licking her lips.

“Now, when he walks down this hallway, he'll walk right by the spot his wife gave head to his boss.”

I interjected.

“That's right, you hateful bitch. You relished the thought of desecrating a space that meant so much to me, didn't you?”

She turned to look back at me with a devilish grin. I grabbed her hair again.

“Open your mouth, whore!”

She gave me a wild-eyed look as she opened her smiling mouth. I used my grip on her hair and shoved my cock between her open lips.

“Show me how you sucked his cock, whore!”

She wrapped her lips around my cock and placed her palm at the base of my shaft. After only a few slides of her lips up and down my shaft, I came.

“Drink it, you cunt.”

I pressed against the back of her head as she plunged her head down around my exploding member. She grabbed my ass and pulled at me, sucking down every drop. As I drained into her, my body shook. I glared at Austin, whose pale face continued to study the floor. A smirk came across mine as I thought about his immense discomfort with this whole charade. I emptied the last drops of my seed into Jessica’s mouth and pulled her head off me, using her hair in my hands.

“Get up!”

She stood, smiling at me as she rose, and blew me a mocking kiss before turning to look at Austin. He took her cue and continued down the hall towards my desk.

“Here it is,” he said.

Jessica walked over to it, ran her hands across the surface, and turned. She faced Austin but eyed me.

“So, this is his little throne.”

I shook my head at her and mouthed, “fuck you.”

She laughed and turned her head to look at Austin. His face now poured with nervous sweat. She lowered her voice to a breathy whisper as she spoke to him.

“Don’t worry, sweetie. I’ll take care of everything.”

He twisted his watch around his wrist as he looked at me. I flipped him the bird.

“This is insane,” he muttered.

“No, Austin, fucking your employee’s wife on his desk was insane!”

Jessica kept her seductive eyes trained on Austin as she unzipped her skirt and slid it off her hips, letting it fall to the floor.

No panties.

I clenched my fists.

“You were never here to sell phones.”

She now stood and faced Austin, presenting her voluptuous, naked body to him. At the sight of it, my cock bounced back and became erect again.

Damn the spell she has me under.

She reached for Austin’s pants to retrieve his cock. It popped out at full hardness.

I’m not the only one.

“Mmmm, so much nicer than my husband’s.”

The bitch was toying with me now, but I restrained myself from interrupting them. I wanted to see everything unfold.

She leaned back on the desk and spread her legs wide open for Austin.

“Why don’t you take his most prized property on top of his precious little throne?”

Wham!

I slammed my fist against the wall, leaving a dent in the drywall. Austin jumped for a second, but Jessica laughed.

“C’mon, Austin, put it in me!”

Austin gulped as he stuttered.

“Sh.. shouldn’t I use a condom?”

I gritted my teeth as I remembered her bringing me home a flood of his semen in her pussy that night.

“If you only want to pretend to take his property, but don’t you want to take and ravage it completely?”

Her pussy glistened, dripping with wetness.

Austin inserted his bare cock into her unprotected pussy.

Her moan reverberated in my chest and echoed through the space.

“Yesssss! Fuck me!”

Austin’s eyes closed as he took her hips and began grinding into her. My blood boiled, and my cock throbbed as I watched them both fall into the pleasure of their genitals locking together. My desk – the one I slaved at day after day – rocked as he pounded her, and her moans grew louder.

Bitch, you sure didn’t care who heard you.

Brandy’s voice came from behind me.

“Omg, Candice, really?”

I turned. Candice had her hand shoved down the front of her dress and her legs spread apart. Her eyes rolled back in her head, and her mouth opened wide, sucking in the air. Janice shuddered and put a hand to her mouth as she recoiled from Candice.

Jessica’s cries pulled my attention back to my desk.

“Omg, I’m going to cum, Austin. You’re gonna have the juices of your employee’s wife all over your cock!”

Her tits bounced as he plowed into her.

“I’m going to cum, too,” he whimpered.

“Yes, fill me up! Defile his wife’s pussy right on his desk!”

My cock ached and burned. I remembered sitting at home at this very moment, hoping she was doing well on her presentation. My heart pounded, and the desire to cum gnawed at me.

I stroked while they both moaned and shook together. She clung to him with her legs. Her fiery eyes locked on him, and she pulled him into her, milking him with her pussy.

I couldn’t take it anymore and sprung forward, pushing him back. She lay there on the surface of my old desk, legs still spread wide. I grabbed her hair from the front and pulled her up. Shifting my hand to the back of her head, I spun her and pushed her face down on the desk. Her ass was up and bared.

“Stay there!”

I reached for my belt and pulled it out of my belt loops.

“Do it, Ron! Beat my unfaithful ass!”

My arms shook as I took the belt in my hands and lifted it over my head, ready to strike. I could see his cum running out of her pussy now.

“Oooh, I can feel his load running out of me! Do you see it, Ron? Do you see what I did to you while you sat at home?”

“Shut up!”

“Hit me, Ron! You know you want to!”

I looked at her ass and remembered her scars. Surgery removed them, but I couldn’t forget them. I dropped the belt on the floor. Tears burned my eyes as I grabbed her ass and plowed my cock into her sloppy, cum-filled pussy.

“Mmmm, yes!! Fuck this whore pussy!”

Jessica

I stood up as Ron stormed away from us down the hall. Loads of cum, both his and Austin's, streamed out of my pussy down the inside of my thighs. His colleagues – some of them strangers – all murmured as I stood naked in front of them. My chest swelled as my spine straightened.

I am a whore.

I placed my feet just wider than shoulder-width and let the cum run out. Softening waves of gratifying electricity continued to roll over my body, and the pounding of my heart slowed. My hands rested on my hips as I closed my eyes, took a deep breath, and listened to the continued whispering chatter of the night's witnesses. My hands slid down over my ass cheeks, and I remembered the moment I chided Ron to unleash his anger, to stoop to the level of my father, and to prove he was no different.

I placed a hand over my heart. Warmth expanded through my chest.

He couldn't do it.

My eyes opened again and looked down the hallway for Ron as my lips pressed together, beginning to quiver.

But he was gone.

CHAPTER 22

Ron

The usual walk into Solidarity came with a noticeable lack of eye contact from anyone. In fact, it seemed everyone kept their distance from me. Even the desk clerk diverted his eyes down at some papers in front of him as I approached.

What is with everyone this morning?

I walked to my desk and found a peculiar figurine standing in the middle of it. Maybe an inch tall, the tiny pickle wore a sad face and a dunce cap on its head. As I picked it up and looked at it, the sound of women giggling came from a nearby group of cubicles.

What the hell?

I frowned, opened a drawer, and exchanged it for my desk Pepcid bottle.

Empty? I just got these.

I tossed it in the trash and started thumbing through various papers on my desk. As I did, the hair on my neck stood on end with an irritating sense that someone stared at me from a nearby desk. I looked up and around. Janice stood at another co-worker's desk, whispering and glancing my direction.

Surely, they aren't talking about last night.

I didn't know Janice well, but she kept her head low and did her job. I imagined the sordid details from last night to far exceed her threshold for acceptable work conversation material. I tried to ignore them, grabbed my coffee cup, and headed for the break room. Joe, the mail runner, sat in his usual spot in the corner, looking at his comics. He never talked to others in the office, but he usually talked my ear off.

Today, however, he remained quiet and transfixed on his reading. I watched him out of the corner of my eye as my coffee brewed, and I pulled my head to the side, feeling my shoulder muscle refuse to stretch.

I really need Ally to work on that.

After a minute, I noticed a bead of sweat rolled down Joe's cheek. His eyes darted my direction and back to *New Avengers, Volume 26*.

Ok, something is up.

I took my cup and moved his direction. He dropped his comic and threw up his hands.

"I didn't say anything, man!"

I cocked an eyebrow.

"Didn't say anything about what?"

He looked away and blew out a heavy, exasperated sigh.

"Man, I promise I didn't say a thing."

"Joe, what are you talking about?"

His eyes fell to the table as I came over and sat down across from him.

"I'm sorry, man."

"Sorry about what, Joe? Spit it out."

"Dude, about what your wife did."

My mouth fell open.

"You know about that?"

He looked up at me with trepidation in his eyes and lowered his voice.

"Ron, everybody knows."

His words hit me like a punch in the gut.

"What do you mean, 'everybody'?"

“Well, not like everybody, but I’ve heard people talking.”

“What have you heard?”

Joe winced, looking at me as he gritted his teeth.

I slid into the seat across from him. My voice slowed, and my tone became stern.

“Joe, what have you heard?”

He sighed.

“Nicknames, man. Mean stuff.”

“Such as?”

“Such as ‘Little Ron’ and ‘Joke Stroker.’”

My head fell back as I slumped into my seat. My eyes searched the ceiling for a God who might take me out of my misery.

“Ouch,” I said.

“I heard Brandy calling you ‘Dicklet’ and ‘Teenie Peen.’”

My eyes widened as I shook my head at the acoustic tiles.

“Wow. Classy.”

“Dude, you can’t tell her I told you this.”

I groaned at a fiery jolt of pain in my shoulder as I sat back up.

“Who else knows this stuff?”

“I don’t know, man. A few people.”

“Who, Joe?”

“Man, I gotta go run the mail.”

He jumped up and grabbed his comics.

“C’mon, Joe. We nerds gotta stick together, right? Tell me what you know.”

“I’m sorry, Ron. I really am, but I don’t want to get pulled into any workplace drama. I shouldn’t have said anything. I gotta go. Got work

to do.”

He hurried out.

My stomach ached. The blood drained from my face.

God, I'm gonna be sick.

I imagined the twit twins gossiping to God knows who about the events of last night. What were they telling people, and who were they telling? Not that I expected them to spare the most salacious of details.

You people have no class.

I sighed and grunted as I lifted myself back up out of the break room booth.

After last night, neither do I.

When I arrived back at my desk, I found a can of Vienna sausages sitting in the middle of it. I shook my head as I threw it in the trash. My phone rang, so I answered it, and Janice's shrill voice came through the receiver.

“Mr. Wilder wants to see you.”

Great. Just fucking great.

I just crossed the threshold of the doorway of Austin's office when he hissed at me.

“Great job, Stroker! Now half the office is talking about this shit!”

He stood up and leaned over his desk, glaring at me.

“If Jack finds out about this and I lose my job...”

“What? You're gonna fire me?”

I laughed.

“I'll be sure and take you down with me,” he said.

“You don't scare me, Austin. And if you are asking me to give a flying fuck about what happens to you after what you did with Jessica,

you're dumber than I thought you were. I thought you were dumb already."

"Fuck you, Stroker."

"The only one you've fucked besides Jessica is yourself, Austin."

I squared my feet and folded my arms, staring at him.

"Is there anything else equally pointless that you wanted to talk to me about?"

"You're treading on thin ice, Stroker."

"I don't think so. You remember I have the footage, right?"

Austin's knuckles turned white as he clenched a crumpled piece of paper in one of his trembling hands. I smirked at his compromised position as I turned to walk out.

"Have a nice day, Austin."

As I walked back to my desk, I could see a new gift waiting for me. This time, a zip-lock bag containing several baby carrots. I rolled my eyes.

I work with a bunch of adolescents.

CHAPTER 23

Jessica

Sunlight poured through the windows, causing the black marble floors to sparkle. The sound of my heels hurrying across them bounced off the three stories of walls in the expansive lobby at Seminal Communications. I pranced up to the reception desk.

“Jessica Stroker. I’m here to see…”

The concierge smiled and responded before I could finish.

“Erika. She’s expecting you. Third elevator on the left. Take it up to the 12th floor, Mrs. Stroker.”

“Thank you.”

Erika Bloodworth shattered the glass ceiling by building Seminal Communications to become the juggernaut in the Telecommunications industry across the western seaboard. Before she took over, the company struggled and hurtled towards bankruptcy. She turned it around in just 3 short years and became a favorite cover story for every major regional women’s business magazine. So, when I received a call three days ago from her assistant asking me to come meet with her, I accepted.

When I stepped out of the elevator on the 12th floor, Erika stood there waiting for me with a warm smile and a firm handshake.

“Welcome to Seminal Communications, Jessica.”

Keep it cool, Jessica.

“Thank you for having me.”

“Come with me.”

Erika’s tailored suit moved in harmony with her body as she took long, steady strides. She led me down a hallway and into a large conference

room with windows that ran from floor to ceiling and down the full length of one side of the room. My lips parted. I walked over and looked out at the sprawling gardens and walkways that decorated the company grounds.

“Beautiful, isn’t it?”

“Yes, it is.”

“When I first joined the company, all of that was undeveloped dirt.”

The polished sandstone paths meandered through a sea of vibrant green grass. Scattered islands of bright yellow daffodils mixed with red chrysanthemums. Branches of a rippling brook extended out from a large fountain in the middle.

“Wow, it’s really something.”

She smiled at me.

“I’m sure you’re wondering why I asked you to come meet with me.”

I grinned at her.

“It wasn’t just to show me your beautiful gardens?”

She laughed.

“No, it wasn’t. Have a seat. Can I have Ken bring you anything?”

I smirked.

And she’s got men bringing her coffee. Nice.

“Ken can bring me a glass of water.”

“How about brandy?”

Oooo, I like this woman. Does she know that is my drink of choice?

“That sounds fabulous.”

She leaned over and tapped a console in the center of the dark mahogany table, gave Ken my order, and took a seat near me.

“Jessica, we don’t lose many contracts at Seminal. I make it a point to hire the very best salespeople and provide customers with the utmost in excellent customer service. But when we have lost a contract to a competitor, do you know who it was?”

Seminal had no actual competition in the region.

You all lose business? To anyone?

I shrugged my shoulders.

“Always smaller contracts. Nothing that would affect our bottom line, but it still pissed me off that this little company beat us in our own backyard. Still no idea?”

I shook my head.

“Most recently, we lost a contract with Solidarity Insurance.”

My eyes widened as I lifted a hand to my mouth.

“I did some digging. Do you know who the salesperson was for piddly Starlight who snatched our business away every single time?”

“I’m sorry, Erika, I honestly never knew it was your company I took the business from.”

“Well, that’s because we are exceptionally good at keeping our competition in the dark about who our customers are, but we weren’t good enough to keep you from sniping them. And don’t apologize, Jessica. All is fair out there in the trenches of commission sales.”

A wry grin surfaced on my face.

“Well, ok then, I’m not sorry.”

“My sources tell me you might be in the market for a new opportunity.”

My heart skipped a beat.

Omg, she’s offering me a job. Stay. Cool.

“I might.”

“I’ll make this simple. We designed our bonus structure to reward performers and weed out slackers. I’m confident, based on my research, that you’ll double and perhaps even triple what you were making at Starlight. You’ll be representing a far superior product backed by best in class customer service and warranties.”

My best efforts to contain my excitement deteriorated as a jubilant light pushed its way into my eyes, and Erika caught it.

“You’ll always travel first class, and we will pay all those expenses. We have excellent benefits and 401k matching if up to twelve percent.”

My mouth fell open.

“Ok, no one else is doing that.”

“That’s why our retention rate is ninety-six percent. I take care of my people.”

The specter of the volatile situation I left behind at Starlight floated into my mind and dampened my shine. If she called them, there’s no telling what she’d learn. Those catty bitches would probably risk a lawsuit just to expose me and sabotage my chances of getting back on my feet.

“I feel I should probably tell you something.”

“You should tell me you accept.”

“I do, but if you do a background check, you’ll likely learn that things didn’t end well with Starlight.”

“I know.”

The blood drained from my face.

“Relax, Jessica. I have exceedingly effective methods for finding out dirt on my competition. I know about your old boss and the complaints from women in the office. I also know you set company sales records and beat my people while playing with an inferior hand.”

She leaned in closer.

“I could tell you some of my own stories, Jessica. Men are easy prey.”

She winked at me as she stood and patted me on the shoulder.

“Maybe one day, when I get to know you better, I will.”

I wanted to pinch myself to make sure I wasn't dreaming or caught in the twilight zone. Could I really be going to work for a powerhouse of a woman cut from the same cloth as me?

Erika eyed me, grinning, as she walked towards the door.

“Do you need some time to think about it?”

Get it together, Jessica.

“No, I don't. When can I start?”

I got up and walked over to her, and she took my hand, giving it another firm shake and taking hold of my shoulder with the other.

“I'll see you on Monday morning. Welcome to Seminal.”

CHAPTER 24

Ron

The doorbell to my new apartment rung. I stepped away from my bathroom mirror and my preparations for dinner with Ally and went to the door to get it. My mouth curled in a grin as I thought about the much-needed comfort I got from times with her. The last 48 hours since making Jessica and Austin re-enact their crimes went nothing like I expected or hoped. It seemed I tossed myself from the frying pan to the fire.

A painful stab shot through my chest as I opened the door. Jessica stood on my front step. Black leather straps came up from her heels and wrapped around her ankles in a sinuous crisscross pattern. The skin on her smooth, toned legs gave a luminescent glow. A tiny purse rested on her hip, hanging from thin straps that lay across her fit, narrow torso. Her black dress stopped at the top of her thighs and wrapped her like a glove. It scooped at the neck, revealing the soft curvature of her breasts. Her hair shimmered and flowed around her shoulders, and her eyes dripped with sex from beneath smoky eyeshadow and long, black lashes.

My palms grew warm on the door handle as I tried to catch my breath and at least appear calm.

“You’re late,” I said.

She stepped through the doorway and traced a fingertip across my chest as she passed.

“I wanted to look nice for you, Mr. Stroker.”

“Jessica, I don’t have a lot of time. I’m getting ready for a dinner date.”

She cut her eyes back at me, her mouth forming a wry smile.

“Ooo, Ronnie has a date.”

Her hips swayed as she stepped into the small living room of my apartment, moving like a serpent.

“Not that it’s any of your business, but yes, I do.”

My mouth watered as my eyes moved from her flowing hair down her curves to her taut calves.

“The papers are on the table.”

She kept her legs straight as she bent at the waist over the coffee table, arching her back to push her ass out. The purse landed on the table, and her dress slid up her hips so that her cheeks peeked out and...

“Oh my, God, Jessica.”

Her bare pussy lips hid in the shadow underneath the dress, but I could see them. She picked up the papers and placed the tip of the pen up to her mouth, against her lips.

“You know, Ron, I’ve been thinking...”

As she stood back up, she pressed her lips open with the pen and cast a sultry glance in my direction. My heart pounded, and my briefs pulled tight from the stirring inside them.

“I realize signing these papers would make our divorce official, but I don’t think you really want that.”

I swallowed hard and struggled to push out the words.

“Oh, trust me, I do.”

She kept the pen, dropped the papers, and moved over to the love seat in front of the window.

“You’d go back to your roots and the safety of those boring, well-behaved women, hmm?”

She bent over the couch, placing a hand on the back of it. The dress slid further up her ass cheeks, and her pussy now emerged from the shadows. The light from my apartment reflected off glistening moisture that lined her lips.

“You really want to walk away from this naughty pussy?”

Ron, don’t let her do this to you.

“Jessica, just sign the damn papers.”

“Look at it, Ron. Think about your evil wife doing naughty things with it behind your back.”

With the pen, she traced the inside of her thigh and moved it up to her labia. She used it to spread the wetness of her pussy over her lips so they glimmered.

“By the way, Ronnie, I got a new job, so I don’t need your money anymore.”

She purred a devilish chuckle as she continued stroking her pussy lips with the tip of the pen.

“But I still have use for you. Just think about me putting this hateful cunt in your sweet little face and confessing my crimes. Do you really want to miss out on that?”

The bulge in my pants now ached and throbbed, and my chest tightened and tingled with electricity.

Dammit, Ron, fight back.

Her fingertips pulled at the backs of the couch cushions as she stood up. She swiveled on her toes and turned towards me. Her eyes fell to my crotch.

“Ron, your little cock says it needs this naughty pussy. And look at you. You’re sweating.”

Fuck.

She walked over to me, put her hand on my crotch, and stroked the outside of my pants.

“You know you’ll never be able to break free from my spell, Ron. You’ll always want to come back to the fire that burns you.”

My jaw clenched, and my fingertips pressed hard into my thighs. She had me, and she knew it, too, judging from the grin on her face. She tucked the pen under the seam of my briefs, turned away, and walked back to the coffee table.

“But Ron, it’s no fun being naughty with this pussy if I’m not married to you. To be evil like this pussy wants to be, it needs a devoted, pathetic husband to betray.”

The sound of her soft voice caused a tickle in the back of my neck.

“I like being a cheater. You know, like you carved in my hood?”

She winked at me and chuckled as she picked up the papers and her purse.

“It was a nice touch, Ron. I even kept it for a few days before having it fixed. To thank you, I brought you a present.”

She reached into her purse as she walked towards the door and pulled out a small bottle of Pepcid. I rolled my eyes as I took it.

“As for these papers, I’ll hold on to them and let you think long… well…”

She looked down at my crotch.

“…short and hard about this decision. You can come back to your dark queen, and maybe I’ll tear them up and let you be the sacrificial

servant you secretly want to be on the altar of this wicked cunt.”

She brushed her right hip against my crotch as she opened the door, sending electric waves from my crotch up through my chest. As she stepped out, she spoke one last shard into my soul.

“Or I can sign your damn papers and let you crawl back to your church ladies.”

She pulled the door closed. I fell back against the wall, and tears streamed down my face. My cock pulsed for its sinister goddess, beckoning me to surrender the fight and return to her temple.

I can't. I can't go back.

My alarm chimed.

“Shit, I've got to finish getting ready!”

CHAPTER 25

Ron

Ally's text read, "Meet me at your work in the parking lot. I have a surprise for you."

I tried to focus on the coming moments of my date with her. I needed it, and I needed to forget Jessica, but her fangs remained locked into the carotid artery of my soul. Her poison flowed through me, turning me towards her.

As I pulled into the parking lot, Ally stood by her car, wearing those hot pink workout tights and rollerblades. She held a second pair of rollerblades in one hand and two brown paper bags in the other. Her lips tilted to the side in a soft, grinning duck face. As I got out of my car, she set everything down, glided over, and wrapped her arms around my neck.

"Hey, handsome! I brought dinner," she said.

As she leaned back to look at me, my chest tightened. I tried to hide behind a grin. Her eyes studied me.

She knows.

Her hand slid down from behind my neck and rested on my chest.

"I wore the pink tights."

"I noticed."

She bit her bottom lip, and her eyes sparkled as she smiled wide at me.

"I know."

As she let go of me, she giggled, turned and skated back to her car to pick up the rollerblades.

God, her ass.

"Now put these on," she said.

My lips parted as she returned, holding out the rollerblades with one hand.

"I hope I don't fall and break my neck."

As I took them, she gave my shoulder a light punch.

"You'll be fine."

I sat down to lace up the rollerblades, and she moved around behind me, got on her knees, and began rubbing my shoulders.

"Ron, I know you're hurting. If you want to talk about it, you know I love to listen, but I thought we'd take your mind off it for a bit."

When I finished lacing up, she stood and moved around in front of me, reaching out her hands. I looked up at her with a wincing grin and raised my eyebrows.

"Ron, I promise you will be okay. I'll help you up."

I stumbled as she pulled me up, but she held on and steadied me.

"We'll start slow."

At first, I wobbled like a toddler. With each stride, my legs threatened to fly out from underneath me, but she balanced me with her firm grip. My mind and body started to work together. Awkward stumbling transformed into more comfortable glides, and we picked up speed, drawing the air towards us in a tender breeze. Ally's ponytail danced with her body and the flow of air around her. Her strong legs crossed and stretched with the smooth grace of an Olympic figure skater as she led me around the parking lot. A soothing warmth built in my chest.

Wow. She's an angel.

She turned her head and watched my legs move.

"You're picking this up fast, Ron."

I am, aren't I?

I even admired the curves and muscular definition of her body without falling or feeling the usual shame. After all, she chose the pink tights.

She kinda knows what that does to me.

The angst from my clash with Jessica washed away little by little in the gentle tide of Ally's playful company. After several laps around the Solidarity building, she led me back to our cars and the brown paper bags.

"How about some dinner?"

"That sounds great."

She held my hands as I sat down on the curb.

"You good?"

I smiled at her.

"I think I'm good."

Ally dropped herself down near me.

Oh, to be young and elastic again.

She smiled, handing me one of the brown bags. Her eyes, like pools of kindness, reflected the warm hues of the setting sun.

"So, what's going on in that troubled heart of yours?"

A hot sting pierced my chest, and the waterworks started behind my eyes. Her words pulled the scab off my heart, leaving it exposed and raw. My torso heaved as I choked back tears and tried to answer her.

"Ally..."

I couldn't control it. The tears spilled forth.

"I'm a sick person."

She might never want to speak to me again, but I needed her to know the truth. She shifted her body, turning towards me, and scooted in

close to me, opening her legs. Her fingertips stroked the hair above my ear. Her eyes followed them.

"So, Ron, I'm a young woman dating an older man. Who's married. Who I found cussing at a punching bag in a gym. And I wear leggings around him knowing he likes my ass."

Her eyes shifted to meet mine.

"You have a lot of shame, and I know this is hard. Trying to open up when that shame has such a tight grip on your heart. Just know that I do not judge you. I promise. I don't. This is a safe place."

I took a deep breath, trying to regain composure.

"I'm obsessed with Jessica. With her evil. Even though it hurts me, I'm drawn to it."

I looked away from her piercing gaze.

"That's the shame you're feeling, Ron."

My eyes closed, and my heart pounded.

"If you think this bothers me. It doesn't. I appreciate your honesty. Your bravery."

"She came to my place earlier today. She was supposed to sign the divorce papers, but she refused. Instead, she bewitched me with her words. And her vagina."

Ally smiled.

"She's a siren for you."

I turned to look at her.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, I think it was the Romans who told stories about these treacherous female creatures who lived on an island. They used their

charms to seduce sailors on passing ships and drew them towards the island, knowing they would wreck.”

“Sounds about right.”

“Da Vinci said they would kill the sailors in their sleep.”

“How merciful. I think Jessica keeps me alive to watch me suffer.”

Ally chuckled as she rested her hand on my cheek.

“I want to run away from her. Holding on to her is killing me. I’ve taken more Pepcid this month than I’ve taken my entire life, and my muscles are constantly petrified and sore. And, you’re so great, Ally. You deserve someone who isn’t distracted by a man-eating succubus.”

Ally stood up and reached her hand out to me.

“Well, I can take care of your muscles. And don’t worry about me, Ron. I’m aware of your situation, and I’m here by choice.”

I took her hand and stood up.

“I want to do something if it’s ok,” she said.

“Are you going to take me hang gliding now?”

She laughed and winked at me.

“That’s next weekend.”

Her eyes poured affection on me as she moved in closer so that our bodies almost touched.

“I want to touch you with my energy.”

My voice cracked.

“Okay, that was my next guess?”

She grinned and closed her eyes. Her open palm hovered a couple inches from my shorts and a growing bulge in them. My chest tightened.

“Just relax and listen.”

She hummed, her eyes still closed and hand floating in the air around my crotch. A warm, tingling sensation began moving into my body, like beams of morning light from her hand. She began chanting the same words over and over.

“Out beyond ideas of right-doing and wrongdoing, there is a field. I’ll meet you there.”

As she did, the warmth coming from her hand grew stronger, spilled into my legs, and rose up my torso. It rolled over me in waves until my knees turned to jello, and my body lost all sensation of gravity.

What is she doing to me?

It reminded me of a warm, fuzzy feeling I used to get singing in church, but the women there got nowhere close to my penis. Her voice washed over me with a soft resonance. It reminded me of Norah Jones.

I didn’t want it to end, but she stopped singing, opened her eyes, and looked into mine as she pulled her hand back. My entire body buzzed. She spoke, and the soft tone in her voice trickled like warm water between my ears and down my spine.

“Ron, I don’t know where we’re headed, and I don’t have to. For now, I choose to witness you. And I see goodness, generosity, strength. If Jessica draws you to her, maybe you should walk that path. And maybe I should walk it with you.”

“I wouldn’t wish that on my worst enemy.”

She tilted her head to the side and smirked. “Doesn’t he already know her?”

I laughed.

“Touché.”

She winked.

“I had a lovely time, Ron.”

She kissed my cheek, turned and walked to her car, and got in. I stood there, my body still buzzing from whatever enchantment she put on it, and watched her drive away.

“Me, too, Ally.”

CHAPTER 26

Jessica

“Please leave a message for... Ron Stroker... after the beep...”

“Perfect.”

I put the phone on speaker and set it down on the bedside table.

“You want him to hear this?”

I turned towards Frank, the neighbor who once got into a feud with Ron over the prominent front yard display of a huge political sign. Ron hated those signs.

“Hmm, first time he’s heard your voice in a while?”

“Umm, yeah.”

I unbuttoned my top as I looked at him.

“I suppose it won’t help repair the bitter feelings between you if he hears his wife fucking you in his bed.”

Frank chuckled, shook his head, and mouthed “No.”

Tossing my shirt aside, I unfastened my bra from behind, freeing my tits for his hungry eyes.

“Well, no one ever accused me of being a peacemaker,” I said.

I dropped the bra to the floor and walked towards him.

“I’m more the type to cause trouble. Lean back on the bed.”

Frank complied, and I leaned over him, pushing his shirt up to his armpits. He exhaled as my soft tits melted into the bare skin of his stomach. My shoulders pivoted back and forth, brushing my breasts to the left and right on his skin, as I unfastened his belt.

“I remember Ron being pissed after you boys got into it.”

Frank rocked his hips as I worked his pants off. My tits slid back down his body, over his crotch, and down his thighs. His full erection pushed

the tip of his cock out over the elastic band of his boxer briefs. I turned my head towards my phone and projected my voice.

“Mmm, someone is very hard.”

I pulled his waistband down with one hand, freeing his thick member and taking its taut, warm skin into my other hand.

“Wow, Frank, very impressive. Your cock is much nicer than Ron’s.”

Encircling my fingers around his shaft, I pulled down, causing it to stretch and inflate to full hardness. My eyes met his as my lips touched the swollen head, and my tongue ran along the underside of it. He tossed his head back and moaned.

"Oh, God."

I chuckled as my mouth enclosed around him. My lips slid to the base of his pulsing shaft, and his head grazed the back of my throat.

"Fuck, Jessica."

My hand continued to press down, planted at the base of his shaft, keeping him pulled tight in my mouth. With my other hand, I cupped his balls and stroked them. His cock pulsed, and his moans grew louder as my lips moved up and down in long strokes.

“Omg, Ron is a lucky man. Do you blow him like this?”

My eyes narrowed as an evil grin formed on my stuffed mouth. I responded by moaning and swiveling my mouth clockwise and counter-clockwise around his cock. He chuckled.

I slid my lips up, leaving ample saliva on his shaft, and wrapped my fingers around it. The suction made a loud pop as his cock left my mouth.

That should make a nice sound effect for Ron.

I continued stroking Frank to keep building his climax.

“Ron’s little cock isn’t much fun to suck on. I only get this ravenous for a thick, juicy piece of meat like yours, Frank.”

He gasped under the continued stimulation from my slippery grip.

“Would you like to blow your load into this married mouth, Frank?”

My strokes sped up.

“Oh, fuck, Jessica!”

“Wanna fill the mouth of Ron’s wife with your hot jizz while he’s away?”

“Omg, I’m gonna cum!”

I plunged my mouth back onto him and opened my throat to take him all the way in. He exploded, and his cum hit the back of my throat. His cry reverberated in the walls, and his member jerked as he emptied himself. I groaned long and deep, bathing his cock in vibration, as I swallowed his load. My body tingled as I thought about Ron hearing it all.

As he softened, I continued to caress him with the slight brush of my lips, not wanting to overstimulate.

You’ve still got work to do, Frank.

He murmured.

"Oh, fuck, you're amazing."

I slid my lips up his softened shaft and let the head fall off the tip of my tongue.

"You taste delicious. Stay right here, stud."

I grinned at my phone and the continuing tick of recorded time displayed. *Fifteen minutes and counting. But I’m not done yet. This voicemail is going to fuck you up, Ronnie.*

Frank's eyes followed me as I walked around the bed towards the bathroom. I found two hand towels, wet them with water – one hot, one cold – and squeezed them out. Returning to Frank's flaccid member, I massaged it with the rags, alternating between hot and cold. "Think you can go again? My pussy needs a good pounding."

His cock jumped in answer.

I grinned and stepped back, unzipping the side of my skirt and pushing it to the floor. Then my fingers slid underneath the silky waistband of my thong and moved it off my hips, revealing my bare pussy to Frank. Once they hit the floor, I lifted my feet out one at a time and placed them in a wide stance. My hips cocked to one side, and my hands combed through the length of my soft, brown hair. His dick now stood at attention as his eyes devoured my naked form.

"How bad do you want to fuck Ron's wife, Frank?"

"Omg, Jessica, you're even hotter than I imagined."

I turned and placed my hands on either side of the bedside table where my phone sat, still recording, and arched my back so that my pussy beckoned for his cock.

"Come fuck this cheating cunt."

"Do you have a condom?"

"I do, but don't you want to feel my warm pussy wrapped around your bare cock? Besides, Frank, it's hardly cheating if we use one. Where's the fun in that? I want you to fill Ron's wife up with your cum."

His hands gripped my waist as his granite rod slid into my dripping slit.

"Fuck, yes!" he said.

He plowed into my depths, eased by my wetness. I watched the minutes increment on my message to Ron as the sound of Frank's hips smacking against my bare ass quickened.

"Yes, pound that cunt!"

His cock swelled inside of me, pressing at my walls. I arched my back and pressed back into him. My chest and stomach fluttered in anticipation of his ejaculation.

"Call me a whore!"

"You want this cum, you fucking whore?"

"Yesss, I want your cum. Call me *your* whore!"

He grabbed my hair with one of his hands and pulled my head back, giving himself leverage to fuck me harder.

"You're my whore, Jessica! And you're gonna take this load like my good little whore!"

"Yes! Fill me up with it!"

My pussy erupted in orgasm all over his hardness.

"I'm cumming on your cock!"

I contracted around him, pushing him over the edge and causing him to climax.

"I'm filling your whore cunt!"

My pussy clenched around him, coaxing him to empty every drop of himself into me.

"Yes, Frank! Make me your whore!"

He moaned like an animal, sending vibrations through my hips and up my spine. I continued bouncing back on him as his seed seeped out onto my outer lips and down the insides of my thighs.

"Mmm, you got this pussy filthy with your cum."

I put my lips close to my phone's speaker.

“Frank just made me *h/s* whore, Ron. How do you like that?”

Click.

CHAPTER 27

Ron

I climbed into my car and sighed.

She's the one bright spot in the burning pile of garbage that is my life. Well, and my apartment. Two bright spots.

I liked how Ally decorated it. We had no plans for the future. Both of us wanted to take the relationship a day at a time, but knowing a fit, attractive woman wanted me gave my wounded confidence a much-needed boost. Just a year ago, I got similar satisfaction believing that Jessica wanted me, but the violent shattering of that illusion left a gaping wound in my soul that still bled.

I pulled my phone out and looked at my voicemail messages.

Don't play it again.

I needed to delete the long recording of Jessica's latest betrayal. The rim of my cock burned from repeated jerk off sessions while listening to it.

I knew she was fucking in our bed.

The thought of it caused me to swallow hard, yet it triggered a perplexing throbbing in my crotch. My hands ached to touch myself again.

I need to find a shrink. There's no way I should find this sexy.

I tried to drive back to my apartment, but a powerful urge to go by the house tugged at my heart. Perspiration from my palms warmed the steering wheel. Perhaps, at that very moment, Jessica had some other man in our home. I imagined her seducing him, plotting to add another brick to her tower of torture on my chest. It might even be Austin.

Go home, Ron.

My rational mind and my throbbing penis argued, but my penis won. As I drove to the house, my mind rotated adulterous images of Jessica like a masochistic slide show.

I pulled my car to the curb across the street from the house, getting just close enough to see the windows and driveway. But not too close. I didn't want Jessica to see and recognize my car. The burning in my stomach returned.

Dammit to hell.

I looked around at the other houses. I knew many of those residents. I even thought of some of them as friends. Did they know about Jessica's crimes and not tell me? Did she perhaps seduce some of them as well?

I looked up at the bedroom window. All seemed quiet, but I imagined Jessica on her knees by our marital bed, taking some man's cock out, putting it in her mouth to bring it to erection.

My cock pressed against the inside of my pants. The intense throbbing pained me and begged for release. I looked around the car for signs of any witnesses, but I found no one. As my breath quickened, I unzipped my pants and freed my cock. I stared at the front door of the house and pictured one man after another entering, invited in by Jessica. My mouth fell open as my fingers touched the hot skin on my hard cock, and I stroked while I looked up at the bedroom window, hearing her voice in my head.

“Hey stud, wanna fuck me on my marriage bed?”

She stood by the bed and ripped her dress off, exposing her naked flesh to a large, muscular man. His bare chest bore the marks of tattoo

artists and bar fights. His arms rippled, ready to take my wife's body.

“Defile this pussy while my husband is away!”

Red flames encircled them as their bodies came together. Her eyes turned solid black, like portals into the endless darkness in her soul. Her mouth opened to release a howl that echoed off the walls of my mind as he entered her with his monstrous member.

The skin of my cock stretched over my hardness and burned in my hand as I continued to stroke it. My mouth hung open, pushing air in and out, fogging the windshield in front of me. My entire body stiffened as my climax neared. Her voice hissed and reverberated as she bayed at him.

“Yes! Omg, your cock is amazing. So much better than my husband's pathetic little nub!”

My eyes glazed over. I cursed her and myself through gritted teeth as my cock pumped. Hot jizz shot from it and sprayed all over the steering wheel. My body shook while it unloaded my life force like a sacrifice on the altar of the succubus that still lived in the house. That familiar feeling of a hot stake burned through the front of my chest, piercing me, and sending its boiling tendrils up through my body into my temples. The electric sensations rippled through me for several minutes until my body went limp, and my forehead hit the steering wheel. I gasped for air as I held my softening cock in my hand, and the last dribbles of my semen ran onto my hand.

The intoxicating heat mutated from intense erotic pleasure to a searing pang of deep emotional pain, rushing in on the heels of my waning high. Tears returned to my eyes and streamed down my cheeks.

All my holes are leaking. Great.

My cheeks burned, and a thickness in my throat made it hard to breathe.

I'm an addict.

I had a wonderful woman in Ally offering me a chance at a new life, but my soul couldn't resist the powerful draw, like a moth to a flame, back to the wicked witch that stabbed me in the heart. Her devilry enchanted me. I wanted to get caught in a vortex of punishing her for crimes only to have her commit them again.

Seriously, Ron, go home.

I started the car, not even bothering to put my cock back in my pants. Some masochistic part of me wanted to leave it out in self-imposed shame as a parting salute to the siren who still beguiled my heart. I pressed my left foot into the brake and reached for the gearshift to take my car out of park, but I froze.

My eyes widened, looking into an oscillating flash of blue lights that rained on me through my center rearview mirror. I looked into the side-view mirror to see a female officer stepping out of a squad car parked behind mine.

“Oh, shit.”

CHAPTER 28

Ron

The officer got out of her car, grabbed the door, and slammed it. As she moved towards my driver's side window, her face shriveled with the sour look of a schoolteacher ready to reprimand a misbehaving student. She tapped on the glass. I swallowed hard as I reached for the switch on my door and rolled it down.

“Good evening, sir. Want to tell me what you’re doing here?”

I cleared my throat.

“Well, officer, actually, I live here.”

“You live here? So, do you usually park in front of your house, masturbate, and scare the neighbors?”

Blood rushed to my ears and heated them.

“Oh, officer, I wasn’t…”

“Did you know that lying to a police officer is a first-degree misdemeanor?”

She leaned to the side and drilled into my eyes with her stern glare.

“Hmmm? Yeah, it’s a crime. We received eyewitness reports of a man masturbating in his car on this street. Judging from the fresh semen dripping from your steering wheel, sir, I think I found who they were talking about.”

I looked at my cum, still glistening, and sighed.

“So, now that you understand what lying to a police officer will do for you, you were telling me you live here?”

“Well, no. I mean, I used to live here.”

The pitch of her voice rose and fell as she lectured.

“Ohhhh, I see. So, when you lived here, you didn’t park your car on the street, masturbate and scare your neighbors. So, why don’t we go back to my original question?”

Her voice grew louder. Her words pummeled me.

“What are you doing here?”

“Well, my wife lives here. And…”

My temples pounded as perspiration formed on my forehead. I held my hands over my still exposed cock and tried to force my eyes up to her face. Her hand clenched the top of my door as she hovered over my window with a menacing mean mug.

“And what?”

I looked away again, unable to bear the intensity of her scowl.

“Well, we’re getting a divorce.”

“Ahhh, that makes perfect sense. I’m sure your attorney will appreciate how this little stunt looks to the judge deciding your case. Speaking of judges, are you aware of the laws in this city regarding public indecency?”

I muttered, my head hanging down.

“I imagine it’s frowned upon.”

She snapped at me.

“What was that?”

I struggled to lift my head and look out my window at the LAPD badge on her lapel.

Thank God that show got canceled. I’d be on the next episode for sure.

“I imagine it’s frowned upon.”

The officer expelled an exasperated sigh.

“Yeah, it’s frowned upon. Like, 6 to 12 months in County, a thousand dollar fine, and add yourself on the sex offenders list.”

And I can kiss my career goodbye.

My heart sank like a rock to the bottom of my stomach. She snapped her gloved hand out a few inches from my face, open palm up.

“Driver’s license, please.”

My hands shook as I fumbled with my wallet, still trying to position my arms to keep my cock hidden. She took my license and walked away. Several neighborhoods gathered at a distance, drawn by the flashing blue lights that continued to illuminate the nearby houses. I couldn’t hide. They all recognized this car. I lowered my head to the steering wheel and closed my eyes, avoiding their stares like a child who hopes to become invisible. After what seemed like an eternity, the officer returned to my window.

“Ok, sir, I will need you to step out of the car. You’re coming with me for a little ride.”

My mouth fell open as I looked up at her, fighting back the tears that formed in the corners of my eyes.

“Officer, no, please…”

“I don’t have all night, sir, and I’m not the cop that goes easy on perverts, so save your breath and get out of the car.”

I looked down and worked my genitals back inside my pants and zipped my zipper.

She scolded.

“Yeah, you better put that away.”

I kept my eyes glued to the ground as I got out of the car, feeling the eyes of most of my neighbors. My shoulders hunched over with my

head.

Jessica is fucking the neighbors, but now I'm the one they despise.

“Put your hands on the car, sir.”

I turned and complied. She took one hand at a time behind my back and cuffed me as she read me my rights.

“You have the right to remain silent…”

My tears flowed now and became prisms for the blue lights flashing in my face. Her words faded, muffled by the sound of my heartbeat pounding in my ears. My movements from that point on became robotic. Turning to walk towards the squad car. Feet shuffling to carry me to the back door. Head ducking to get in. It played out like a surreal, out-of-body experience.

I blinked at the sound of the door slamming. Her voice spoke on a police scanner.

“Yeah, I've picked up the 311 in Hancock Park. Suspect was in his car. Came willingly. I'm bringing him in. Over.”

A male voice came over the scanner in response.

“Did you really just say ‘came willingly’?”

She put her handheld back on the cradle and sighed as she started the squad car.

“Men. Y'all are all pigs.”

I leaned my forehead up against the window. My skin bounced on the glass as the officer wheeled the car around. My car and old house passed in a blur before my eyes along with the small mob of my old neighbors that gathered to watch my arrest. For a moment, I thought of Jessica.

She probably wasn't even home.

What a cruel twist of fate that some criminals like her got away with murder over and over. Meanwhile, an innocent like me makes one mistake and ends up riding in a squad car on my way to the crucifixion of everything that mattered to me.

My chest pushed out a heavy sigh.

You win, Jessica. You win.

CHAPTER 29

Ron

My tiny hands formed the outer wall of the little edifice that I constructed out of dirt and rocks. The knee-length white tube socks with the broad, light blue stripes that hugged my calves also gathered dirt on them, but I didn't care. My navy shorts with the zipper pockets and key ring also gathered smudges. Mom would scold me for them, but I dismissed those concerns. The small castle I built for Ellen Davis and her favorite Barbie, Sandra Dee, needed my undivided attention. She knelt a few feet away, watching me.

"It's beautiful, Ronnie."

My heart swelled with pride as I looked away from my work for a split second to see her. The picture on her Care Bears T-shirt matched her pink shorts, and her dirty blonde hair ran down her back in a long, mesmerizing ponytail, pulled up by a matching pink scrunchie.

"Sandra Dee likes her new castle very much."

Ellen held out her Barbie and moved the arms to animate Sandra Dee's expressions of gratitude.

I smiled and laughed, returning my attention to my creation, but a blur of parachute pant leg and checkered Vans shoe flew in front of my face. It connected with my masterpiece, scattering it all over the sidewalk.

The chortling laughter of Jimmy Griffin mixed with a howling chorus of several other boys – his loyal gang. It pounded my ears as I stared at the broken pile of my creation.

"Aww, look, guys. I think Stroker is going to cry."

Jimmy grabbed the Barbie from Ellen, and puppet'd the doll, narrating his own scornful version of Sandra Dee's last lines.

"It looks so pretty, Ronnie. I can't wait to live in it."

He stomped on the pieces.

"Oh, shit! That meanie came up and destroyed your stupid house."

Jimmy pointed at Ellen with her Barbie.

"Why you want to play with a loser like Stroker, anyway?"

He glared at her as he grabbed the arm of the Barbie and pulled until it separated from its body.

She screamed and started crying as she ran inside. My blood boiled as I got up off the ground and faced Billy.

"Hey, what's the big idea?"

His eyes grew wide, and he bent over, putting a hand to his stomach as he laughed.

I planted my feet and folded my tiny arms, glaring at him.

His voice shifted from mocking laughter as his tone lowered, and he growled through gritted teeth.

"Look at the tiny hero. Stroker thinks he's tough."

His hands exploded into the joints between my chest and shoulders, sending me backward like a rag doll and jolting my neck forward. I hit the ground hard, smacking my head against the dirt with a thud. Billy sat on my chest and arms, and his body weight squeezed the air out of my lungs. I winced as the Barbie doll connected with my cheeks and forehead several times. The hard plastic against my skin left a sharp sting. Billy followed with harder, blunt blows, using his fists to pummel my face. My head pounded, and I saw stars.

"How's that feel, tough guy?!"

Unable to defend myself, my arms pinned, I could only lay and take the flurry of more blows than I could count. When Billy got off my chest, I gasped for air. He jeered at me.

“I’m Ron Stroker, and I play with girls because I’m a sissy just like them.”

Billy delivered one last, powerful kick to my ribs, sending a burning pain from my side into my stomach.

“You’re a pussy, Stroker, and you always will be!”

I lay on the ground with my eyes closed and waited, listening for the sound of their laughter to fade away.

I think I’m bleeding. Everywhere.

After laying and listening to silence for several minutes, I forced myself up and limped towards my house. Hot tears ran down my cheeks. Somehow, I made my way to my bedroom and into my bed, where I curled up like an infant, sucked my thumb, and cried. I heard a knock at my bedroom door.

“Hey, buddy.”

The sound of Dad’s voice brought slight comfort mixed with frustration.

Where were you when Billy beat me half to death?

“Listen, Ron, I saw what happened.”

I frowned, still not looking at him, and choked words out through my broken voice.

“Then why didn’t you stop them, Dad?”

“Because I know my son. You’re a Stroker.”

The words puzzled me, and I turned to face him with furrowed eyebrows.

He chuckled.

“Listen, kiddo, you will not understand this now, but maybe one day, you’ll remember it when you need to.”

He scooted closer to me on the bed and pointed his finger at my forehead.

“The only voice that really matters is in here.”

His fingertip pressed into my flesh. It stung on the skin that still burned from Billy’s beating.

“What punks like that kid say doesn’t matter. What they think doesn’t matter. What your little girlfriend, Ellen, thinks also doesn’t matter.”

My frown grew more pronounced. He smiled and continued.

“Even what your mom and I think doesn’t matter in the long run, Ron. None of it does. The only thing that really matters is what you think about yourself in here.”

His fingertip tapped on the swooning spot on my forehead.

“And you’re in control of that.”

He got up and walked over to the window, looking out towards the sidewalk where Billy thrashed me in front of his friends. And Ellen Davis.

“I imagine it wasn’t his fists that hurt the most.”

My dad sighed.

“It’s always the words. When the bruises heal, the words stay.”

Dad turned his head from the window and looked at me.

“You know, Ron, you’ve taken a lot of beatings in your short life. But you’ve always recovered. Always gotten back up. It’s like you’re unbreakable or something.”

He walked back over to the bed and sat down beside me.

“You just gotta get a handle on what’s in here.”

He put his hand on my head and stroked my hair.

“Nothing they do or say can hurt you if you do that. You have all the power, son.”

He patted me on the shoulder, got up, and left, closing the door behind him.

“CLANK!”

The door to the jail cell shut behind me, shaking me out of my reminiscent trance. Dingy concrete floors and walls sweat from poor climate control, and the smell of body odor and hopelessness filled my nostrils. A single streetlight shone through a small, frosted window, casting a cold, unnatural light into the cell. My shoulders hung like they struggled to suspend my lifeless boulders for arms.

Well, this sucks.

CHAPTER 30

Jessica

Bells jingled over my head as I escaped a busy downtown street into the bar. The smell of cigarette smoke filled my nostrils, and dim overhead lighting mixed with a kaleidoscope of neon signs. I walked up to the bar and dropped my purse on the counter. A bartender turned and greeted me.

“Hey, ma’am, what can I do for you?”

“Could I get a brandy? And make it a double.”

“Tough day?”

I gave him a “you have no idea” look as I slid onto a stool.

“You could say that.”

He walked away, and I pulled my phone out of my purse. Thumbing through texts, I came back to the text that ruined my day.

“Did you see that your loser husband got arrested?”

I shook my head and sighed.

Oh, Austin, junior high school, much?

A newscaster’s voice cut through the buzz of bar chatter, drawing eyes to three television screens hanging over the bar.

“Coming up in tonight’s news, police apprehended a man they caught sitting in his car, parked in a neighborhood after dark, and you won’t believe what he was doing. We’ll have eyewitness accounts for you, but first, the weather.”

Great. Just what I needed.

Further down the bar, a man swore at the television. An American flag bandanna pulled his greasy, red hair back from his forehead, and a torn, denim vest hung around his sunburned, tattooed shoulders.

“Goddamn sicko!”

He turned to a table of people sitting behind him and hollered.

“Can you believe that shit? The mother fucker got caught jacking off in his car. Parked in a neighborhood! I bet he’s a fuckin’ peeping tom!”

Hardly. He could never take his eyes off me.

The weather report ended, and Ron’s story started. Old news for me.

His stunt got local news coverage all day. The bartender returned.

“Here’s your double, ma’am.”

I lifted the glass to my mouth, hoping to drown out the tenacious guilt about Ron that haunted me all day.

“And now, we go to Sylvia, live on-site where police arrested Ron Stroker. Sylvia, what are neighbors saying?”

I choked on the brandy.

Fuck, they’re in front of my house.

“Well, Carl, first, viewer discretion is advised. This report is both disturbing and of an adult nature.”

“That’s right, folks. Send the kids to bed. Go ahead, Sylvia.”

“So, I spoke with several neighbors who knew Mr. Stroker in passing and are very disturbed to learn he was parked near their homes, pleasuring himself in his car. One woman, Mrs. Adley, told me…”

Oh, God, that bitch couldn’t wait to get on camera.

The loudmouth down the bar started again.

“If I’d have caught him, I’d have beat the shit out of that little pervert.”

Ok, Mr. High and Mighty. That’s enough.

I finished the brandy, set it down, and sauntered over to the resident redneck preacher.

“Hey, handsome. Those are some nice tats you’ve got there.”

He turned towards me with a crooked smile, sucking in his gut and puffing out his chest.

“You like those, little lady?”

My voice dripped honey.

“Oh, I do.”

I reached out, placing my hand on his chest where his denim vest opened, and curled his chest hair with my fingers.

“You know, I’ve had a long, hard day. I could use a man that knows how to handle a woman. I don’t suppose you know of anyone in here that might know how to take care of a woman’s needs, would you?”

He chuckled.

“Why, sugar, you found your guy right here. You don’t look like a regular in this bar, but people around here call me ‘Big Rick’, and they aren’t just talking about my muscles if you catch my drift.”

He gave me a dramatic wink, and I cooed in response, batting my eyelashes and moving in closer to slide my hand down his chest towards his crotch.

“Really? That sounds very enticing.”

“One ride with Big Rick, and you’ll forget all about that hard day you’ve had.”

I continued sliding my hand down, over a large, silver belt buckle until I touched his crotch, making him jump.

“Ooh, you’re a frisky little devil, ain’t ya?”

“Well, when a lady gets her sights on a Big Rick, it’s hard to keep her hands to herself.”

His cock hardened in his jeans as I stroked through the fabric.

“I see that.”

I leaned forward so he could hear me whisper.

“It’s kind of exciting, don’t ya think? I mean, just look at you, letting a strange woman touch your cock in the middle of this bar with these people all around. People who know you.”

He laughed, rubbing the back of his neck as he looked around.

“Your cock likes what I’m doing. It likes it a lot. Such a dirty boy. You know what some people might say?”

He snickered through his heavy breathing.

“I bet you’re gonna tell me.”

I clenched his shaft as hard as I could, making him double over and expel a heavy groan.

“They’d say you’re a fucking pervert!”

I held onto his shaft and lowered myself to the floor with him as he fell to his knees, his eyes wincing. He hissed through his gritted teeth.

“Let go, you bitch!”

My voice lowered to a stern scolding.

“So, where do you get off calling the guy in the car a pervert? You don’t know him.”

He grappled to protect his crotch as I released him and stood up. I raised my voice.

“You believe everything you hear on TV?”

I planted my toe into his chest and pushed his writhing body back onto the floor.

“Dammit, you cunt!”

My heel dug into him as I leaned my weight into it.

“That pervert is my husband. That’s my house in the background. He wasn’t there creeping on anyone.”

I stood up straight and took my heel off him.

“He was there…”

My voice broke. Guilt, regret, sadness for Ron. They all pushed their way to the surface. I turned away, and my voice lowered.

“He was there because of me.”

The dethroned lump of self-righteousness on the floor groaned and struggled to get up, clutching his package and cringing. As he reached a hunched over, standing position, he spat at my feet and grumbled at a bartender.

“This is bullshit, man. This bitch assaulted me!”

He stumbled towards the door, continuing to mumble.

“It’s bullshit!”

I walked back towards my purse, motioning to the bartender.

“Another double, please.”

I sat staring at the counter in front of me. The bartender leaned over the bar and lowered his voice as he pushed the drink in front of me.

“Wanna talk, ma’am?”

I took a deep breath and pushed it out.

“He’s a good man.”

“The guy on the news? Your husband?”

“Yeah. Him.”

I picked up the glass and took a large swig.

“What was he doing outside your house?” he asked.

“It’s a long story. But that’s not like him. I brought it out of him. I drove a good man to ruin his whole life.”

He eyed me as he dried off a glass with a towel. I glanced up from my drink.

“You know, ma’am, I know I don’t know you, but what you are talking about… I don’t think you could do it. I mean, you’re a tough cookie.”

He chuckled as he nodded at the door.

“Big Rick’s just a blowhard. He had that coming.”

He set the glass down and picked up another.

“But to do what you’re saying… that would take a manipulative bitch – someone sadistic and cruel – to get inside a good man’s head and bring him to ruin like that. You don’t look like the person to do that.”

I forced a smile.

“Thanks for that.”

I’m going to hell.

CHAPTER 31

Ron

My feet drug over to a bench. Or maybe it was a cot. Two chains extended from the wall and held it parallel with the floor. I collapsed down on the worn vinyl that covered a thin layer of cushion on top of it.

I wonder how long I have until work finds out.

Not that it could get much worse. Ever since Jessica fucked Austin, Solidarity felt like a prison.

“What are you in for?”

A grungy voice came through the bars from the darkness in the cell next door. My head hung like an anvil that my neck and aching body struggled to hold up, but I turned it to look in the voice's direction.

“Huh?”

A skinny man with bloodshot eyes and dirty face emerged from the shadows and approached the bars.

“How did you end up here?”

My head fell.

“I don't wanna talk about it.”

He pressed with his raspy voice.

“Man, we all done bad shit. That's why we're here. You keep that inside, you'll lose your mind. And that's all you got now.”

I expelled a “that's just great” puff of air, shaking my head.

“This sucks.”

The stranger chuckled.

“Yeah, it does, but betta make the most of it. Whatever you had out there, that's fucked now.”

“You really know how to cheer a guy up.”

“Must be your first time.”

I forced myself to stand and walk over to the door of my cell, putting my hands on the cold bars. My eyes peered out through them at dimly lit halls.

“Yeah, I never dreamed I’d be in here.”

“So, what happened, man?”

Guess I’ve got nothing else to lose.

My eyes stared into space as I answered him.

“I got caught masturbating in a car.”

The stranger burst into laughter.

“Holy shit, dude.”

My lips mumbled words in a flat tone.

“I was in my old neighborhood, outside my house.”

“What were you doing outside the house? You live there, don’t you?”

I pushed out a heavy breath.

“I did. Until my wife cheated on me…”

“Oh, damn, dude.”

“With my boss.”

“What the fuck! That’s cold, dude. I would have killed that bitch.”

Wow, these are the kinda people I’ll be talking to now.

“Yeah, she can be cold.”

I turned around and leaned my back up against the bars.

“She lost her job. I tried to take advantage of that. Paid her money to act like a whore and do whatever I wanted.”

My head dropped, and my foot brushed the floor.

“That felt good until she got a job. Then I lost all the power again.”

“This chick sounds like she needs a good beating.”

I lifted my head and scowled at him.

“Are you being serious?”

He shrugged his shoulders.

“Works for me, man.”

I shook my head and dropped it again, staring at the floor. This was the sort of man that raised Jessica. I thought about the flogger I used to whip her.

“Well, I tried that. Got me nowhere.”

“You just didn’t hit her hard enough, man.”

My stomach turned. My strokes stung her skin, but I spared her soul. I never unleashed my anger. No matter how angry she made me, I couldn’t do that to her.

“Can we change the subject?”

“Sure, buddy. So, what was your hustle before you wound up here?”

“My hustle?”

“Yeah, bro. How did you make bank?”

“Oh, you mean my work?”

“Yeah, bro.”

“Well, I worked at an insurance company for twenty years. Started at the bottom. Worked my way up. Made Senior Accountant.”

“Wow, fancy title.”

My eyes widened in a blank stare at the ground as my head bobbed with my heavy exhale.

“Yeah, that job meant a lot to me.”

“Until your bitch fucked your boss?”

I furrowed my eyebrows as I cut my eyes at him.

“Can you not call her that?”

“Hey, bro, I’m just calling it like I see it.”

I turned back around to look out through the bars.

“I slaved half my life away at that job. Now, they all think I’m a joke.”

I pictured Austin, Brandy, and Candice in his office, all laughing at the news of my arrest. My nostrils flared, and my hands gripped the bars. In my mind, my desk sat vacant, collecting juvenile trinkets to mock my penis size. The surface, a memorial to Jessica’s betrayal. The desk I labored at for years. Where I made most of my greatest professional achievements. Turned into another broken pile of dirt at the hands of bullies. My cheeks flushed with heat.

Jessica did this to me.

I pushed off the bars and turned, stomping back over to the bench. With both my weight and my anger, I thrust my hands into the thin cushion on top of it.

Wham!

The chains rattled.

“Bro, you keep that up, and the warden’s gonna be in here up your ass. You won’t like that. Trust me.”

The worn vinyl and padding veiled the toughness of the bench underneath my knuckles. I lifted my fist against and let it float down to rest on the padded bench. They felt familiar. My eyes widened, and I whispered.

“Unbreakable.”

“What’d you say, man?”

The childhood conversation with my Dad cut like a light through the darkness of the cell. My life flashed before me. Beatings that I got

back up from. Physical and emotional ones.

“I’m unbreakable.”

The stranger chuckled and started to speak, but I put my hand up to stop him. I stood and looked through the frosted glass window at the eerie light coming from outside.

“I used to go to the gym.”

My left hand wrapped around the knuckles of my right. The memory of sensations from rounds at the bag flooded my mind.

“I used to spend hours at a punching bag, and I never knew why I liked them so much. Why I could spend hours just hitting them.”

“Well, I know hitting stuff makes me feel better.”

I rolled my eyes.

This guy.

“Those bags are unbreakable. You can punch them over and over. Punch them hard. They can take it.”

My dad’s words now echoed in my mind.

“You just gotta get a handle on what’s in here. Nothing they do or say can hurt you if you do that. You have all the power, son.”

I walked back over to the bench, leaned over, and placed my fists against the cushion.

“Don’t punch it again. I mean, I get it, dude, but you don’t want the warden…”

“I gotta get out of here.”

He laughed.

“Don’t we all.”

I turned and looked at him.

“No, I will get out of here. I don’t know how. But I will.”

I'm the son of a Stroker.

CHAPTER 32

Jessica

“Hey, girl, where you goin?”

His teeth shimmered with gold. Stubble and dirt covered his sunken face. A man sitting with him whistled as his eyes looked up and down my frame.

Keep dreamin, boi.

I walked by them and the words “Twin Towers Correctional Facility” chiseled into a cement wall, towards the tall, narrow entrance of the towering, gray edifice. The hot metal of the door handle seared my palm as I tugged to pull it open. A cold gust of damp air pushed at my sun-kissed skin through the opening doorway. Inside, various vacant faces looked at me from seated positions on the floor scattered around the lobby wall. A sullen-faced woman in uniform sat at the long counter in front of me. She spoke to me in a robotic, dry tone.

“Can I help you, ma’am?”

“I’m here to post bail for Ronald Stroker.”

Her forehead wrinkled and mouth turned downward as she pushed a clipboard in front of me.

“Sign here, please, while I look that up.”

She stared at a computer screen. The sound of key clicks under her chubby fingers echoed off the walls.

“That’ll be \$8,765.”

My chin dropped, causing my mouth to open.

Thank the goddess for that fat sign-on bonus Erica just gave me.

Her eyes rolled from the screen over to me.

“You were saying?”

“No, it’s just… Never mind. Make the check out to?”

“Los Angeles County Corrections.”

She picked up her phone receiver as I scribbled onto a check.

“Someone is here for Ronald Stroker.”

I handed her the check, which she took and used to wave me to the side of the counter as she stared at her computer screen.

Charming.

I turned and faced the lobby entrance. Sparse beams of light cut through the thin, tall windows and irritated the downcast eyes of those seated on the floor.

This is no place for Ron.

A little girl sat next to a sleeping adult woman. Her child-like eyes rose from the floor for a moment to look up at mine. I looked into the pools of sadness.

What brought you to this miserable place?

She reminded me of Amber. And myself. What would she become? I hoped someone kinder. Even compassionate. Less bent on destruction and revenge.

I should be here instead of Ron. There’s no justice.

A familiar voice cut through my thoughts.

“Jessica?”

My heart warmed as I turned to see Ron walking towards me.

His eyebrows raised, and his lips fell open.

“Jessica, what are you doing here? I mean, thank you, but…”

“You’re surprised to see me.”

“Yeah, that’s an understatement.”

I grinned as I looked at the bags beneath his eyes.

“You look like shit.”

He smirked as he signed for his belongings and took them from the plastic basin held out by the frowning front desk fairy. He spoke to her in his usual polite tone.

“Thanks.”

She ignored his manners and returned to whatever must be so interesting in the green text displayed on her flickering terminal. I turned to walk with him towards the exit. Through the seconds of silence that felt like years, I could almost hear wheels turning in his head.

“So, can I ask why you did this?”

I squinted into the sunlight that poured onto my face as I pushed through the doorway. As he emerged with me on the other side, I answered.

“I’ve done you enough harm, Ron. I’m overdue to do something good for you.”

He stopped just outside the door. I turned and found him grinning with head shaking.

“Umm, wow. Thank you, Jessica.”

“You’re welcome.”

We continued to walk in silence away from the overbearing facade of the prison. I couldn’t help but remember other walks alongside him. Our walk down the aisle at our wedding. Walks in our neighborhood. Walks down sandy shores on a Summer night at the beach. Walks through the local grocery.

And this walk. Maybe the last.

As we neared the sidewalk, I reached into my purse, pulled out the divorce papers, and handed them to him.

“I signed them. I’m sorry I didn’t give them to you sooner. I just wasn’t…”

My eyes fell to the ground, and I struggled to fight back a tear. His eyes stayed on me, waiting for me to finish the thought, but I couldn’t. Taking a deep breath, I cut to the chase.

“Anyway, Ron, I’m letting you go. You’re a good man. You deserve better than I’ve given you.”

I stepped close to him, avoiding eye contact, and put my arms around him. His body stiffened at first, but then melted, and he returned my embrace.

“I think better of you than I’ve shown you,” I said.

His arms softened and surrounded me.

“I know, Jessica.”

I stayed for a moment, feeling his ribs expand and contract with his breath.

I’ll never feel this again.

My lips kissed his cheek, and I stepped back from him.

“You’re free now, Ron. I hope you find a kinder partner next time.”

I turned away from him to hide the tears that formed in the corners of my eyes.

“Goodbye, Ron.”

I began walking away, steps quickening as the tears multiplied.

“Jessica, wait.”

My feet kept moving.

“Jessica!”

The sound of his steps following me tugged on my heart. Followed by his hand on my shoulder.

“Jessica, wait.”

He pulled me around and into himself. I unleashed my tears on his shoulder, and the sobs I held back spilled out of my heaving chest. His arms wrapped around me like a cocoon as he held me.

“I’m so sorry, Ron.”

He continued to hold me, steadying me from falling over my legs that turned to rubber.

“I know. I forgive you, Jessica.”

As my uncontrollable bawling slowed, I stepped back from Ron, reached into my purse for a tissue, and lifted it to my nose. Blowing the buildup of congestion into the feeble tissue sounded like an angry goose.

God, I hate that sound.

My tears clouded my swollen eyes.

“Now, I look like shit.”

We chuckled together.

“Jessica, it’s not goodbye.”

I furrowed my brow.

“Ron, you don’t have to say that.”

“I mean it. We’ll stay friends.”

Oh, god. Not the tears again.

I nodded, trying to keep them at bay.

“I’d like that.”

“And besides, I have something I need you to help me with.”

I tilted my head to the side to look at him, and a smile worked its way across my mouth.

“Sure, Ron. Anything. What do you need?”

“Well, here’s the thing…”

CHAPTER 33

Ron

The blistering sun beat down on the hood of my cutlass as the engine purred underneath. I sat leaning with my arms on the wheel, peering out at the various people coming and going from the neighborhood YMCA. Moms with their kids. Young people coming to put in their daily contributions to their physiques. I imagined any of them might shrink away in terror if they saw me coming.

I'll never see the inside of that place again.

Ally emerged from the entrance wearing a matching green sports bra and leggings. Her shoes matched with green treads and scattered green spots on the shimmering white fabric. I grinned.

Always so put together.

Her ponytail swung back and forth as she hopped off the sidewalk and onto the hot asphalt. A smile crept across her face as she neared my car. Her head stayed pointed towards the ground in front of her, but her eyes searched around the parking lot.

Scanning for witnesses. This is sad.

She stepped up to the passenger side door, pulled it open, and plopped down in the seat beside me. Looking behind me and out the back windows, she reached across and wrapped her arms around my neck.

“Hey, babe,” I said.

She released my neck and smiled at me, looking into my eyes.

“Hey.”

She sat back in her seat and resumed looking around the parking lot out the windows.

“It feels kinda naughty to be meeting the infamous neighborhood stalker out in the parking lot. Are you going to kidnap me? Take advantage of me?”

She giggled.

Ouch. Too soon.

My eyes and head fell, and my smile retreated.

“Oh, sorry, Ron. I didn’t mean to…”

She put a hand on my shoulder.

“I’m sorry.”

“It’s ok. I’m still ashamed about what happened, though.”

Her hand slid up to my neck and gripped it.

“You’re still the same man to me, Ron.”

I looked up at her.

“I hope you still feel that way after what I have to tell you.”

A smile crept across her face.

“You’re still afraid some confession will drive me away. Haven’t you figured out I’m not going anywhere?”

“We’ll see.”

She sat back and turned to face me, still grinning.

“Well, ok, let’s have it then.”

My eyes searched her face. I found comfort from her effusive tenderness.

“Jessica is more than a siren for me.”

I exhaled and leaned over the steering wheel again, resting my arms on it. My eyes stared through my windshield.

“When I was young, all the women put me on a pedestal. Praised me as a fine young man. None of them knew I secretly burned with lust.”

I winced as I raised my fingertips off the wheel for a second.

“It’s like all the adults in my life orchestrated my world to protect me from temptation. The women dressed modestly. The men preached about resisting the sinful nature.”

“Sounds like I wouldn’t have fit in.”

I laughed and turned my head towards her.

“No, they wouldn’t like your leggings.”

Her mouth curled in a duck face, and she cocked an eyebrow before she giggled. My smile at her melted away as I thought back to my youth.

“None of that suppressed my need for the carnal. It only forced it into hiding. I learned to feel deeply ashamed of my darker desires. And they seemed pervasive inside me. I desperately wanted to escape them to please my parents, my church family, and the God they taught me to fear, but I couldn’t. My lust only grew. Like a cancer in my soul.”

I sighed and closed my eyes.

“Then, I met Jessica. If my life was an oppressive museum full of sacred statues and signs that read ‘Don’t touch,’ she was the bull that ran through the museum toppling all the statues.”

I looked at Ally.

“It’s ok, Ron. Keep going.”

“Jessica’s iconoclastic hatred of the rules. Her chaos. Her evil. It all tore like a hurricane through the prison that held me all those years. She burned it to the ground in the raging fire of her wicked sensuality. And she made a safe place for the darkness in me to come out of hiding.”

Ally's finger lifted towards my cheek and caught a tear as it spilled from my eye.

"I've known all of this somewhere deep down, but when she came yesterday and bailed me out of jail..."

The tears multiplied and burned my skin.

"Her betrayal of my trust... our marriage... shouldn't have surprised me. If there are rules, she will break them. It's a part of who she is. The part that set me free. I can't stay married to a person like that. I'm not sure I can even be in a normal relationship with a person like that. But I also am not mad at her. She saved me."

Ally's penetrative gaze, now familiar to me, soothed my soul.

"Well, I want to meet her."

I chuckled.

"Funny you should say that. So, the next thing I need to talk to you about..."

Ally threw her hands up and beamed a smile at me.

"How do I do that? Sometimes, I amaze even myself."

She resumed her listening posture, smiling.

My heart swelled with warmth as I looked at her.

God, I think I love you.

"I need to set things right. For myself. I've been trying to control the situation with her. My situation at work. There was a video."

My eyes fell. Shame washed over me, and I rubbed my face in my hand.

"Everything she did with Austin got caught on tape. I got hold of it. Used it to blackmail them. I thought it would give me a sense of

power. I thought that's what I wanted. But it just ate at my soul, gave me terrible heartburn, and turned my muscles to aching stones."

I lifted my head and looked out the window.

"When I was in jail, I had an epiphany. Genuine power doesn't come from controlling things outside myself. It comes from controlling how I respond to whatever life throws at me. And I can handle anything. If I allow myself to."

I looked back into Ally's eyes and smiled, feeling my chest swell.

"It's kind of like my superpower."

"And your most attractive quality."

"Thank you. I'm starting to like that part of myself, too. And I know now how I want to handle what life has thrown at me. I need closure. And I need to let go of controlling Jessica, Austin, anyone. It doesn't suit me."

"I love this. So, how do you do that?"

"A ritual."

Ally grinned.

"I want Jessica to be there. And I'd like you to be there, too. If you wanna be, that is."

"Are you kidding me? Ron, I'd be honored."

She leaned over to hug my neck and whispered in my ear.

"I'm so hot for you right now."

I laughed, and she winked at me as she sat back in her seat.

"So, when are we doing this thing?"

CHAPTER 34

Jessica

The field behind Solidarity Insurance waved in the wind with tall blades of overgrown grass. I frowned as I put my clean tennis shoes onto the dirt path, not hopeful for the prospects of them remaining pristine. A large sign rose above the swaying tips that faced the road and read “Coming Soon: South Side Shopping Plaza.” I walked past it down the path, following the directions that Ron gave. The morning sun graced my face with a warm kiss. The trail continued for at least a hundred yards before reaching an opening where a familiar voice greeted me.

“I don’t suppose you have any idea what this is about?”

Austin scowled at me, standing in the large circular clearing a few feet from the wall of tall grass.

Janice stood apart from him.

“You both disgust me.”

I rolled my eyes.

“Janice, I bet a lot of things disgust you.”

She huffed and folded her arms as she looked away. Ron’s voice came from the path behind me.

“Hey, Jessica.”

I smiled as I turned towards his voice.

“Hey, Ron.”

Over his shoulder, a few steps behind him, I saw her. Young. Fit. Radiant.

I hate her already.

“So, this must be Ally?”

“Yes.”

I took a deep breath and extended my hand to her, forcing a polite smile.

“Hey, Ally, it’s nice to meet you.”

Her eyes rose from the ground to meet mine and gripped me with their stunning beauty. I swallowed hard.

“May I hug you?” she asked.

My mouth dropped open.

“Umm, sure?”

She put her arms around my neck and whispered to me.

“I know a hug seems forward, but it’s genuine. I honor you, Jessica, and the place you hold in Ron’s heart.”

The place I hold... What planet are you from?

She released me but kept her soft gaze nestled into my eye holes as she stepped back.

Ugh. She’s better than me.

Ron’s voice cut through my thoughts.

“Thank you all for being here. This won’t take long.”

He walked to the center of the open space, carrying his backpack over his shoulder.

“I’ve had lots of time to think about what has transpired in the last couple of months. And how I’ve handled it.”

He set the backpack down and looked at Austin.

“I want you to know that I forgive you, Austin, for fucking Jessica. I know all too well how powerful her seductive advances can be.”

He turned towards me.

“And I forgive you. I know the woman I married. You’re a rebel. An untamed tigress. Chains and cages do not suit you. You did exactly

what is in your nature to do.”

My eyes blinked, and my chest tightened.

Wow.

My husband... well, soon to be x-husband, stood in front of me like a prince of a man. With a hot girlfriend. In all our charades with me playing the whore, I never felt more like submitting to him than I did right then.

Get a fucking grip, Jessica.

Ron bent over and reached into his backpack.

“I thought I needed to control you both. To punish you. And I tried, but I see the foolishness of that now.”

He pulled out some matches, lighter fluid, and a plastic bag full of thumb drives and set them on the ground as he looked at Austin again.

“I don’t know what our working relationship will be going forward, Austin, but I will not make it a power struggle. I’m giving mine up. You will either see my strengths and respect me, or you won’t. I can’t control that choice, and I’m perfectly capable of handling whichever one you make.”

Austin cocked an eyebrow as he listened. Ron picked up the lighter fluid and plastic bag, and he held the bag out towards Austin.

“These are all the recordings I have – all the recordings that anyone has – of what you two did. The first night when you did it behind my back. And the second night when I forced you to re-enact it.”

He tossed the bag on the ground, opened the bottle of lighter fluid, and began soaking the bag. Janice spoke up.

“Ron, not that it’s any of my business, but are you sure you want to do that? These two don’t deserve any mercy from you.”

“I know, Janice. I’m not doing this for them. I’m doing it for me. And yes, I’m sure.”

He picked up the matches and stepped back. Striking one against the box, he tossed it onto the dripping plastic. Flames shot up from the bag as it became engulfed. We all stood entranced by them as the evidence of Austin and I’s crimes melted away in a dance of oranges and blues. For a moment, the tiny tongues of fire made a flicking sound against the air. Austin broke the somber silence, speaking as the reflection of the flames flickered in his eyes.

“So, you said that was every recording?”

“Yes, that’s all of them.”

“There’s no other evidence?”

“Nope.”

Austin nodded his head, still staring into the fire.

“Wow, Ron, that’s…”

He shrugged his shoulders and exhaled.

“…that’s just stupid, man.”

He turned and looked at Ron. A menacing grin crept across his face.

“Like, old man, you are a fucking idiot for doing this. You’re fired.”

Oh my God, Austin.

Ron’s eyes grew wide as saucers. Janice spoke up.

“Austin, you’re not serious?”

“Oh, hell, yeah, I’m serious. I’m so tired of his arrogance, walking around like he’s so smart. I’ve been wanting to fire him for months. It was in the works. But then he got those damn thumb drives.”

Austin walked around the fire, watching it consume the evidence, and then looked across the flames at Ron.

“Oh, yeah, he’s definitely fired.”

Janice continued to protest.

“Austin, you can’t do that. I don’t particularly like him, either. But he’s the best accountant at the company.”

“I can do whatever I want, Janice. I’m the boss, remember? And I don’t fucking care if he’s the best accountant in the world. He’s out. Stay in your lane, or you might get fired, too.”

Her mouth dropped open.

“You know what, Austin, I’ll save you the trouble. I quit!”

She stormed towards the path.

“That’s fine. It’s not like it’s hard to find another person to make my coffee and type a few memos!”

Ron looked up from the fire at Austin.

“You’re even more of an asshole than I thought.”

“Old man, I don’t care what you think about me. This world doesn’t belong to self-righteous dinosaurs like you. It belongs to the tigers who know how to play the game. People like me.”

His eyes narrowed, and his grin widened.

“And your wife. Who is a great fuck, by the way.”

Ron shook his head and turned to walk towards the path. My blood boiled over. I marched over to Austin, raising my hand to slap him.

“Shut the fuck up, little boy!” I said.

He ignored me, hollering over my shoulder at Ron as he left.

“That’s right, old man. Walk away!”

I saw Ally out of the corner of my eye, following Ron out of the circle.

Austin continued yelling.

“You’re finished, you old fossil!”

My hand flew and connected with Austin's cheek. He just laughed.
Steam burned my ears as I pointed in his face.

"You better sleep with one eye open, you sack of shit."

I turned to walk away and follow Ron and Ally.

But they were gone.

CHAPTER 35

Jessica

I spotted Ron's car still parked in the parking lot and rushed up to the entrance of Solidarity. The glass door opened. Ron's arm held it open, and he leaned out, smiling at me. The sound of applause poured out from the lobby. My eyes widened.

I know I bailed him out, but... Why is he being so nice to me?

"Come on in. I'm just saying goodbye to some folks," he said.

Several people stood around the lobby, all looking at Ron and clapping. He took my hand and walked me to the center of the circle. The applause came to an abrupt halt. A few seconds of awkward silence preceded the voice of one frowning man.

"Ron, why are you holding that tramp's hand?"

Apparently, bad news travels fast.

Ron put his other hand up, smiling.

"Calvin, I know you don't get this, but this tramp means a lot to me, so please, for me, be kind to her."

I swallowed hard as his words pierced my heart.

Don't fucking cry.

Ally came over to me, smiling.

"Can I hug you again?"

I laughed.

This crazy bitch...

"Ally, you're a real mystery."

I shrugged my shoulders.

"Hell. Why not?"

I reached out for her, and we embraced.

Ron left us and spoke to the others that came up to him. I could tell Ally wanted to talk to me, but my eyes followed him. His co-workers patted him on the shoulder, shook his hand, smiled. I pressed my lips together as I took a deep breath in through my nostrils and pushed it out.

I can't believe I ruined this for him.

Janice emerged from the hallway carrying a cardboard box and brought it to Ron, keeping her distance from me.

“Ron, we didn't always see eye to eye, but I respected you.”

She handed him the box.

“And I always will. What you did today... You're a bigger person than I'll ever be. This whole thing feels like the twilight zone for me. What will you do now?”

He smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

“I'm not sure, but Janice, don't worry about me. I'll be ok.”

She shook her head and smiled back at him.

“I wish you the best, Ron.”

“Thanks, Janice.”

“Well, I've got to go gather my things. I don't want to stay here any longer than I have to,” she said.

“Sure. Good luck, Janice.”

Her eyes cut to me with an icy glare before she turned away.

Whatever, Janice.

Ally's voice cut through my thoughts.

“She doesn't get you two. Many people won't. I can't even say I do.”

I turned to look at her. Ally's eyes followed Janice as she walked down the hall.

"But none of us have to get it, Jessica. We just have to decide whether we want to remain witnesses to you both or not."

She turned and looked at me, smiling.

Where did Ron find you?

"So, what have you decided?"

"I want to keep watching."

She winked at me.

Ron came over to us, carrying his box.

"You ladies ready to get out of here?"

"Lead the way, handsome," Ally said.

Something about seeing an attractive young woman exude such palpable sexual chemistry towards my husband both upset and thrilled me.

Chill, Jessica. He's not yours anymore.

She followed Ron out, and I fell in behind her. I watched her fit little body move.

She does have a nice ass. I wonder how she feels about Ron's little dick.

Ron's eyes gleamed in the sunlight, and his elongated posture made him look taller. Funny how his new, commanding energy made his dick size less important. As we got close to his car, Ally spoke up.

"Babe, if you need a place to crash, you know you can come stay with me. You might need to move out of your place until you get a job."

He opened the trunk and put the box in.

“Thanks, Ally. That won’t be necessary.”

I spoke up.

“Ron, she has a point. What are you going to do now? You can’t afford to keep paying rent somewhere. If you really want to stay there, I could help you. Now that I’ve got this cushy job, I mean. I can afford to spot you until you get on your feet.”

He closed the trunk and took a deep breath.

“I appreciate you both. What you are trying to do. But listen to me…”

A smile spread across his face.

“I will be ok.”

“Sure, babe, but you’ll need help in the meantime.”

He put his hand on Ally’s shoulder.

“I love you.”

He looked at me.

“I love you both, but please, listen to what I’m saying. I need to do this myself.”

Ally pushed out her bottom lip and dropped one hip to the side.

“Ok, babe. Just know I’m here.”

She turned and looked at me and smiled.

“We both are.”

“I know. And thank you,” he said.

He wrapped his arms around her and then extended an arm to me. I threw my head back and laughed.

“So, we’re doing a group hug now? Okay, sure.”

I joined them, feeling both Ally and Ron’s arms slide in around me. It felt both odd and innocent. Awkward, yet refreshing. Like we threw the

playbooks out and just followed the path of caring for Ron. He released both of us, smiling.

“I’ve got to go now. Thanks for being here today.”

He turned, got in his car, started it.

Ally and I stood there, watching him drive away. As his car disappeared from view, she spoke.

“I’ve never wanted to lose my virginity to a married man so much.”

My eyes almost popped out of my head as my head jerked around to look at her.

“Wait. You’re a virgin?”

She giggled and beamed.

“Yep!”

I stepped back from her and put a hand up.

“So, hang on. I’m so confused.”

Now she laughed.

“You two aren’t fucking?”

“Well, it’s not for lack of desire, but no, we’re not.”

My lips pursed, and my eyebrows furrowed.

“Ok…”

She put a hand over her mouth to stifle her laughter.

“I’m sorry to laugh. I get this reaction a lot,” she said.

She’s definitely an alien.

“So, what exactly is the nature of your little relationship.”

She smirked.

“It’s definitely not little.”

Her eyes turned to the parking lot exit where Ron drove away moments before.

“I’m not sure what it is. I just know it feels right to be in it. Right in the middle of all the twists and turns.”

My eyes narrowed as I studied her.

This little child prodigy needs to get laid.

“I don’t know what it is about you, Ally. But you’re annoyingly likable.”

She laughed. Her head snapped back to me, and she smirked, resuming her maddening Bette Davis eye gaze.

“Thanks. I think. So, what about you, Jessica? How does Ron fit into your picture?”

I grinned, continuing to study her.

“That was a compliment. And I don’t know, either. But I’m here.”

My eyes turned to the parking lot exit.

“For as long as he wants me to be.”

CHAPTER 36

Ron

“Grant, c’mon. At least give me an interview. You know I could do the job with my eyes closed.”

“I’m sorry, Ron. I just can’t. Our human resources officer will never approve your hire after what happened.”

The phone screen felt hot and damp with perspiration as it rested against my ear and cheek. From heavy usage or the blood heating my skin Or both. I needed a break.

Two days straight of this, and nothing. I’m running out of leads.

“Ok, Grant. Well, if you hear of anything…”

“Ron, you know I will. Whoever gets you will be lucky to have you. I wish I didn’t have corporate hoops to jump through. I would hire you in a split second.”

“Thanks for that. Well, gotta go. More calls to make.”

“Good luck, Ron.”

A crumpled wad hit the floor, joining a growing collection of others already lying there. I set the phone down on the desk, leaned back in my chair, ran my fingers through my hair, and sighed.

What am I going to do?

I stood and stretched. A little lamp illuminated only the surface of my small desk. The darkness of the room enveloped me from behind. I turned and opened the door, letting the natural light of the rest of my apartment spill in. My eyes squinted.

How long have I been in there?

Looking at my watch, I shook my head and rubbed my face with my hand.

6 hours.

I walked into the kitchen. My heart hung like a brick inside my chest as I looked around at the cabinets and appliances.

I really liked this place.

My head fell, and I closed my eyes. I took a deep breath in and out.

A door will open. It has to. You just have to keep knocking.

Another deep breath. And another. My chest and stomach rose and fell with my breathing. The stretch across my expanding chest pulled my attention from the flurry of my anxious thoughts. My shoulders relaxed and fell.

Remember who you are.

I lifted my head, opened my eyes, and pushed with my eyes out into the space in front of me.

“I’m a Stroker.”

The sound of ringing and vibrating came from my office. I flipped around and darted into the office to grab it.

“Hello?”

“May I speak to Ron Stroker?”

“This is Ron.”

“Ron, I’ve heard a rumor that you might be in the market for a new opportunity. I’d like to talk to you about that, but I’d rather not do it on the phone. Are you available this afternoon?”

“Yessir, I am. Who am I speaking with?”

“This is Sam Wright from Apex Insurance Corp”

I bent over and mouthed, “oh my god,” as I held the phone away from my head. My heart raced as I pulled the phone back to my face.

“Wait, as in THE Sam Wright? The CEO of Apex?”

The man chuckled.

“That’s what they say. I can have a car at your place in 15 minutes if you’re available now.”

“I can make that happen, sir. I look forward to meeting with you.”

“Great. I look forward to meeting you, too, Ron. Talk to you soon.”

I hung up and held the phone to my forehead.

“Oh, my God!”

A smile erupted from deep in my chest and exploded onto my face.

“I’m going to meet Sam Wright. Shit! I’ve got to get ready!”

My socked feet slipped as I rounded the corner, racing into the bathroom. My hands dove into the sink and splashed water on my face, then grabbed for my comb. It ran through my hair several times as I reached for my toothbrush. My mind raced as my hands continued grooming on accelerated autopilot.

How did he find me? What is he doing here? Apex isn’t in Los Angeles.

I shook my head as my toothbrush rammed in and out of my mouth.

One of the few cities they aren’t in.

Fifteen minutes sped by like fifteen seconds, but I managed to make myself presentable by the time the doorbell rang. I took a deep breath as I opened the door. A tall man in a black suit greeted me.

“Ron Stroker?”

“That’s me.”

“Come with me, please.”

A sleek, black stretch limo sat parked on the curb in front of my apartment. My lips tightened to keep my mouth from gaping. The tall

man opened the door at the back and gestured for me to get in. I climbed into the limousine and saw a familiar face.

“Mr. Wright?”

He reached out from his seated position and offered his hand. An expensive-looking dress watch peeked out from the crisp white cuff of his shirt. I took his hand, and he gripped mine. My chest caved in, starving for air.

“Glad you could meet on such short notice, Ron.”

My heart pounded so hard, its beat reached up into my temples.

“Sir, I would have cleared my schedule if I had to for a chance to meet you. I’ve followed your career for over a decade. I’ve even gotten to be in the audience for several of your presentations. I’m a huge fan.”

He waved his hand, brushing at the air.

“Oh, I’m not that impressive. Guys like you do that hard work.”

I tilted my head forward and spoke with an emphatic tone.

“I’ve learned a lot from following you, sir.”

“Please, call me Sam.”

I shook my head, smirking.

“I’ll try.”

He chuckled.

“So, I hear you left Solidarity.”

How does he even know about Solidarity? They are such a small fish in his ocean.

“Uh, yessir, I did.”

“You mean, ‘yes, Sam’.”

I laughed.

“That will take some getting used to. Um, yes, Sam. My last day was three days ago.”

“Now, Solidarity. That’s an interesting little company. Did you know you can learn a lot about a company by what’s in their trash?”

“Their trash?”

He grinned.

“Yes, Ron. Their trash.”

He reached behind him and pulled out a book. My book. The Standard Operating Procedures manual that I authored looked tattered and stained from who knows what garbage, but in his hand, cleaned up as much as possible.

“Ron, this is one of the best procedural manuals I’ve ever seen. You know what else I learned from their trash? They’re not following your manual very well.”

I nodded and chuckled.

“No, Sam, they’re not.”

“Did you know they’re about 12 months away from filing bankruptcy?”

“That’s not possible. I see all the numbers.”

“Ah, but you don’t. Apparently, some management – such as your former supervisor – have been doing some creative things on the side. My people found all the statements in the trash. Ripped in half, but not shredded. Shredding was on page 127 in your manual.”

He smirked.

“I guess they didn’t get that far.”

“I’m thorough, Sam, but I never would’ve thought to look in our trash. That’s smart.”

Sam cocked an eyebrow, grinning, as he tapped a finger to his temple.

“So, Ron, here’s the thing. At Apex, I have a dashboard. All my people use it to report if they receive recommendations or referrals from any of their contacts. It could be a recommendation of a vendor who provides services we need. It could be a professional in our industry who has talent we need. I use that board to help identify resources our company needs to look at more closely.”

I curled my lips, looking to the side.

I could learn so much from this guy.

“That’s brilliant.”

“It really is. Wasn’t my idea. One of my people came up with it. And, I’ve scored some of my biggest staffing and resourcing discoveries using it, but in the last 5 years of using that board, it never lit up around a single person the way it has in the last two days.”

My eyes widened.

“Wow, do you mind me asking who caused that?”

He laughed.

“You know, Ron, I know you’re not dumb, but you’re too modest. You don’t know your worth. Apparently, Solidarity didn’t know it either. But, your industry colleagues do. And, I do, too.”

I swallowed hard.

“Sam, I don’t understand.”

“Ron, you lit my board up.”

“I did?”

His eyes sparkled as he grinned.

“Yes, Ron. So, I’ll cut to the chase. I’m moving the headquarters of my western division to Los Angeles. We want to strengthen our presence in California, and I need a new Director of Accounting. Normally, I’d promote from within for a director position, but you’re an unusual opportunity I don’t want to miss.”

I fell back into the cushioned back of my seat, shaking my head in disbelief.

“Based on my research, I’d estimate you’d start at triple your previous salary. It involves travel, all expenses paid, first class always. We have best-in-class benefits. I understand you enjoy punching bags.”

I put a hand up to cover my opening mouth.

“You don’t like punching bags?”

I grinned and let my hand fall to the side of my face.

“No, I love punching bags.”

“Good, you’ll have one in your office.”

I laughed.

“I don’t know what to say.”

“Well, how about ‘Yes, Sam, I accept your offer’?”

The light in my eyes brightened and then faded. I thought about my arrest, and my face fell.

“There’s a problem. I’ve had some recent trouble.”

“I know about that, Ron. No worries. I have expensive lawyers who can make all that go away. So, what’s your answer?”

He extended his hand. My heart pounded as I looked at it.

Can this really be happening?

I took it.

“Yes, Sam. I definitely accept your offer.”

CHAPTER 37

Austin

The Capital Centre towered over nearby buildings, reflecting sunlight down into the streets below and onto my face.

Yeah, this is my kinda speed. Fuck you, Solidarity.

I scurried up the steps to the multitude of glass doors leading into the lobby. One of the many bellmen greeted me.

“Welcome to Apex, sir. How may we assist you today?”

I smirked.

“I’ll have a double latte and this morning’s newspaper.”

The bellman grinned through tight, flat lips.

“C’mon, man, that was funny,” I said.

“Hilarious, sir.”

“I’m here for an interview.”

“Someone will help you over at the desk.”

He gestured to a long, granite counter that stretched at least 30 feet across the lobby. I marched over to it and picked a young brunette with nice brown eyes to help me.

“Hey, pretty lady. How’s your day going?”

She folded her hands and smiled up at me.

“It’s always a great day at Apex, sir. How may we help you?”

“I’m here for an interview.”

“Ok. And what’s your name?”

“Austin Wilder.”

“Thank you, Austin. Give me just a moment to look that up.”

“Take your time, gorgeous.”

Her fingers danced on the large flat screen in front of her.

“Looks like you’ll be interviewing on the thirty-fifth floor with the Director of Accounting. I’ll let them know you’re here, and someone will be down momentarily to escort you up.”

“Thanks, sugar.”

I turned and looked around the lobby.

Wow, this thing could just about fit Solidarity in it.

Glass windows extended up seven floors, forming an enormous atrium that overlooked the lobby.

Pendulums dropped from the ceiling, holding large, funky looking light fixtures.

It’s like a big spaceship in here.

“Austin Wilder?”

I turned to see where the voice came from.

A young woman in a grey business suit stood looking at me.

“That’s me.”

“Welcome to Apex, Austin. Come with me, please.”

She turned and walked into the center elevator lobby of five that extended off the main lobby. I followed her, checking out her tight ass in that snug, grey skirt.

Yeah, I’d tap that.

She swiped a badge over a reader on the wall, and the chrome-plated doors of an elevator opened. Inside, the granite floor and walls sparkled. I smiled at her as we stepped on.

“So, this place is a dump, right?”

“Well, we’re still getting everyone moved in. It’ll be nicer when we’re done.”

Damn, nicer?

“I was joking.”

“I know,” she said.

“So, who will I be interviewing with today? You all were cryptic about the details. Hard for a guy to prepare. Not that I need preparation.”

She cocked an eyebrow and smiled at me.

“You’ll be with the new Accounting Director. He’s new. I am just getting to know him. But so far, I’m impressed. He came to us with unprecedented high praise from local industry professionals. And he is a delightful gentleman. Open-minded. Great listener. Despite his talent, he treats all of us with respect. It’s refreshing to work with someone like that.”

I rolled my eyes.

“Sounds like he’s got a good poker face.”

The elevator doors opened.

“Come with me, Mr. Wilder.”

She led me down a hall into a large office with windows that overlooked the downtown area. And a shiny new punching bag hanging from the ceiling.

“Wait in here, please.”

I walked over to the windows and looked out over all the little buildings below.

Oh, yeah. Austin is moving up, baby.

“Hello, Austin.”

The familiar voice caused an irritating prickle on the back of my neck. I couldn’t place it and turned to meet my new boss. My mouth dropped open.

“You gotta be fucking kidding me.”

Ron Stroker chuckled.

“What are the odds, right?”

Ron appeared taller wearing a tailored suit.

“Did you get hair plugs or something?”

Ron laughed.

“Same ole’ Austin. Have a seat.”

I remained standing, resting my hands on one of the high back leather chairs arranged in front of the glossy dark wood desk

“Nah, I’m good.”

I scowled as he took a seat behind the desk.

“Suit yourself. So, what brings you to Apex, Austin? What happened at Solidarity?”

“I’m not telling you anything, man.”

Ron narrowed his eyes and leaned forward, placing folded hands on the edge of his desk.

“You came here looking for a job, right? I could help you, but you have to level with me.”

“Don’t bullshit me, Stroker. You’re not going to help me.”

“I’m capable of being objective. If you’re a good fit for a position we have open, Austin, it’s good business to consider you.”

I dropped into the chair, folding my arms, and glared at him.

“Some bullshit. That’s what happened.”

“Could you elaborate?”

“I’m sure you know all about it. You had someone file a wrongful termination investigation.”

Ron’s eyes widened.

Damn. He didn’t know.

“Wrongful termination?”

“Oh, c’mon, Ron. They investigated your termination. And that’s what started it. Then there were all these stupid allegations of mismanagement of funds. It all got up to Jack. He got pissed. Anyway, doesn’t matter. That place is lame. I’m on to better things.”

Stroker smirked. My brow furrowed, and I pushed back from the desk to get up.

“That’s right, Stroker. Go ahead and gloat. You know what? Fuck you and fuck this place, too.”

I stormed towards the door.

“Where are you going, Austin?”

“I’m not playing your little game, Stroker. You and this dumb company can both suck it. I don’t need you.”

I marched out and headed down the hallway. His voice came from behind me.

“Other way, Austin.”

Fuck.

I turned and headed back towards the elevators.

I’ll show you, Stroker. If it’s the last thing I do. I’m better than you.

CHAPTER 38

Jessica

I got out of my car in front of Joe's Burger Shack. As Ron requested, I wore a skintight mini dress that barely covered my ass and a plunging neckline that revealed lots of cleavage. And, of course, a pair of my sexiest heels.

I look like a hooker.

Cars occupied every parking space in the lot.

You knew this place would be busy right now.

As I entered, a few jaws dropped, eyes widened, and heads turned. My chest expanded, and my heart raced.

That's right, take a good look.

My lips pursed and shifted to the side.

Curious. It's like power and vulnerability. At the same time.

My pussy tingled, and my nipples pressed through my bra against the dress. I rolled my eyes and shook my head.

I've lost my mind.

God knows why, but I wanted to continue playing this game and comply with Ron's wishes. Maybe I wanted to atone for my sins. Or maybe I just wanted to see how low Ron Stroker could go. He grinned as he watched me walk in, and he looked around – no doubt, taking inventory of the reactions to my outlandish outfit. I slid into the booth across from him, but this time, he wasn't hiding behind a menu.

“Are you happy?” I asked.

“Happy is a strong word, but I'm pleased.”

“I hope so. I might get arrested in this outfit before the night is up.”

“Or at least handcuffed.”

His smirk made its way towards a smile.

“You gonna take your Pepcid?”

I stuck my neck forward and winked as I made a duck face at him.

“Very funny. Actually, no, I haven’t needed it since burning those thumb drives.”

The waitress came up to the table, grinning as she approached.

“Well, damn, sugar! If I could pull off an outfit like that, I’d at least double my tips.”

“Thank you,” I said.

“I’m surprised to see you two in here together. After your last visit, I felt fairly sure it would be the last time.”

“That makes two of us,” I said.

“Three of us,” Ron said.

He chuckled and sipped his coffee.

“Well, glad to be a part of the reunion. What will you two be having?”

“Do you have hard liquor?” I asked.

I pressed my tongue into my cheek and smiled with an open mouth at her. She placed a hand on my shoulder.

“Sister, I wish. I’d be hitting it in the back.”

“Do you know how I met this woman?” Ron asked.

The waitress turned to him, leaving her hand on my shoulder.

“I don’t believe I do.”

“We met here in this diner,” he said.

“Oh, wow, that’s nice. Soooo, this must be a special place for you two?”

“Well, I think so. She gave me a blow job behind the building after we had dinner.”

The waitress's mouth dropped open as she cast a side glance at me.

I smiled at her and put a fist up for her to bump.

She bumped it as she let out a heavy exhale.

“Thank God, girl. I was like, ‘oh no, he didn’t just say that,’ but you’re like ‘I don’t give a damn. Yeah, I did that.’”

She let out a hearty laugh.

“I really like you, chick. You know what? Dinner is on me tonight.”

Ron protested.

“Oh, no. You don’t have to…”

“Nope, I insist. Just don’t get too crazy. Well, not in here, at least. Whatever you do behind the building is your own business.”

She chuckled again.

“So, what’ll you have?”

Ron gestured to me.

“I’ll have a salad, and I’ll just drink water,” I said.

“Me, too,” he said.

“Well, y’all are easy!”

She winked at me and walked away.

“You seem to be in a good mood,” I said.

“Yeah. Weird, right?”

“I’m good with this weird.”

He leaned forward and put his elbows and hands on the table.

“So, tell me something. Did you call in a report of wrongful termination on Austin?”

I sat up, smirked, and looked to the side.

“You did!”

“I can neither confirm nor deny any such allegations.”

Ron laughed.

“But I can confirm that the mother fucker deserved it,” I said.

“Maybe so. So, change of subject. I’ve been thinking…”

Ron picked up a spoon and started tapping the back of it against the palm of his other open hand. I smirked, looking at it.

“You know, after what you did, I thought I’d never want to see you again, but I haven’t been able to get you out of my head. Mostly, I’ve thought about what you did.”

He laughed, watching the spoon tap his palm.

“You’ve been on my mind most of the time.”

His tapping stopped. He looked at me from his downward tilted head.

“You know I’ve been dating.”

“So, how is Ally doing?”

“She’s great. She’s great for me. But honestly…”

He looked back at the spoon and resumed patting his palm with it.

“…there’s a part of me she’ll never get. She’ll accept it. She’ll want to know all about it. But it’s not in her to be a part of it.”

My heart skipped at his words. Our marriage might be over, but I wasn’t ready to surrender all of him to another woman. Still, I played it cool.

“I’m sorry to hear that, Ron.”

He sat up and furrowed his eyebrows.

“You are?”

“Well, I just want you to be happy.”

“Thank you. I want to be happy, too.”

He put an elbow on the table and propped his chin on a lifted hand.

“Being with you turned out to bring a lot of misery, Jessica, but it also made my life interesting.”

I laughed.

“Interesting, you say.”

“Yeah, well...”

His eyes searched the room.

“You’ve been the spice in my life, and sometimes the spice burns my mouth, but without it, my life would be pretty bland.”

“I know you’re not saying you want to stay married.”

“No, definitely not. I also have no desire to control you. That nearly ate a hole through my stomach.”

My eyes narrowed on him.

“Ok.”

“But, I think I’m enjoying this crime and punishment chapter of our story.”

Ahhh, I like where this is going.

“You like punishing me?”

His eyes returned to mine as he smirked and nodded.

“My criminal intent excites you, doesn’t it?”

“It does.”

He leaned in and lowered his voice.

“Especially when I’m... ya know.”

I grinned a devilish grin.

“Playing with your cock? Oh, I know. I’ve thought about it, too, when I’m touching this naughty pussy.”

“So, what do we do with that?”

“I’d say you’ve shown you know exactly what to do with that.”

not, by the end of the series, Jessica and Ron will both find their happy ending. The story continues in [The Taste of Her Truth, Part One](#). 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 next book in the series, [The Taste of Her Truth, Part One](#).

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."

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/>