

OF
GODS AND
MONSTERS
MENOETIUS

WULF F GODGLUCK

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Love's Landscapes

An M/M Romance series

OF GODS AND MONSTERS: MENOETIUS

By Wulf F Godgluck

Introduction

The story you are about to read celebrates love, sex and romance between men. It is a product of the *Love's Landscapes* promotion sponsored by the *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* and is published as a gift to you.

What Is Love's Landscapes?

The *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* invited members to choose a photo and pen a letter asking for a short M/M romance story inspired by the image; authors from the group were encouraged to select a letter and write an original tale. The result was an outpouring of creativity that shone a spotlight on the special bond between M/M romance writers and the people who love what these authors do.

A written description of the image that inspired this story is provided along with the original request letter. If you'd like to view the photo, please feel free to join the [Goodreads M/M Romance Group](#) and visit the discussion section: *Love's Landscapes*.

No matter if you are a long-time devotee to M/M Romance, just new to the genre or fall somewhere in between, you are in for a delicious treat.

Words of Caution

This story may contain sexually explicit content and is **intended for adult readers**. It may contain content that is disagreeable or distressing to some readers. The *M/M Romance Group* strongly recommends that each reader review the General Information section before each story for story tags as well as for content warnings.

This story is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are the products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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Photo Description

The photo shows a young man with thick, dark hair pinned on a bed, hands clasped above his head by the man on top of him. The other man's circumcised cock is on offer, barely touching the young man's nose. The young man's tongue is placed directly against the other man's cock. There is a power exchange but also something else. The man beneath him is daring, teasing his cock—but look closer. Their hands tell an entirely different story. Their fingers are knotted together in a connection deep, powerful and strong. There is love here, with a passion and a playfulness that can only be understood between them.

This is their story.

Story Letter

Dear Author,

He calls me "Master", but I'm the one who's really a slave to his heart. I'm supposed to be strong, but I feel so weak every time I think about how we almost didn't have this... how close I came to losing him... my precious boy.

I'd prefer contemporary, but take it away from there!

Sincerely,

Wendy (wluvsbooks)

Story Info

Genre: contemporary

Tags: dark, businessmen, BDSM, SOB-alpha males, angst, hurt/comfort, illness/disease, tearjerker

Content Warnings: dubious consent, past child abuse and rape, swearing

Word Count: 80,977

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Sanet Nel – the nights, the emotions, the promises of chocolate fudge and wine.

I couldn't have asked for a better beta group. How I will ever thank you enough I will never know. Without you all, I'd be left in the dark with a small flame struggling against the chaos. Some of you sat up until the wee hours of the night working through my unreadable ramblings. THANK YOU! You guys are epic!

For my husband. Thanks for being patient with me and all that other jazz, Sir. Oh yeah, and thanks for the cover photo, too!

To Gabriel Goldberg – for permission to use said photograph, thank you.

And to Sir Daddy Jim – Thank you.

For the moderators of the M/M romance group for holding the *Don't Read In The Closet* event – Thank you. You guys are epic.

For my editor Alishea – thank you for not wanting to backhand me, being patient, and being just freaking awesome!

About the Title

Menoetius: The “doomed might”, deriving from the Ancient Greek words *menos* (might, power) and *oitos* (doom, pain). Menoetius was the Titan god of violent anger, rash action, and human mortality. Hesiod described him as hubristic, meaning exceedingly prideful and impetuous to the very end.

Menoetius also means “hubris”, which often indicates a loss of contact with reality and an overestimation of one’s own competence, accomplishments or capabilities—especially when the person exhibiting it is in a position of power.

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Prologue

“Master,” Beo whispers. As his warm breath deftly washes over my cock, he shivers beneath me. With my knees under his shoulders on either side of his torso, I keep him trapped against the mattress—using my bodyweight to pin what’s *mine* where I need him to be. He places his tongue flat against my cock’s base, teasing and moistening the skin under my shaft.

“Beo!” I reinforce my grip on his hands above his head, and he locks his fingers with mine. The feeling of air blown on wet skin forces me to push up on my knees and escape his sweet torture.

Beo growls as my cock is taken too far from his lips. No sub before him would ever dare such a gesture, but that changed three years ago. My life changed, I changed—for him. I needed to be a better man, deserving of his precious heart. His beautiful love.

“Please,” he begs, and I start to lower my hips. He parts his mouth, but not before a pleased smile cracks the corner of his lips. His eyes seek mine, and I am helpless against the burn in my cheeks. At forty-one, such a thing would be a sin for any man, yet he still succeeds in drawing it out of me. His brown eyes soften with contentment, and he focuses them on my cock once more.

Beo moistens his lips and swallows. God, I could merely sit and watch him the entire day, and I’d be forever grateful.

I hiss aloud when wet heat engulfs my dick. Snapping my hips forward, I thrust my meat down his throat. Beo gags, and I pull back quickly. His nostrils flare, blowing air in and out. “More. Please, Master.”

I rumble above him, and a pearl of precum escapes from my slit. Beo catches it with his tongue, taking it into his mouth. Savoring my taste like it’s a pure drop of heaven. Some days, there are moments I wonder if Beo is more in love with my cock than the Titan wielding it. Inwardly, I chuckle at the imprudent thought. We have been through too much for me to ever doubt his love.

I drop into his mouth again, slower this time, and he sucks. Beo works his tongue under the base of my dick, his lips move like liquid velvet over my meat, and his throat muscles vibrate as he hums. Softly, gradually, I fuck my boy’s beautiful mouth.

Christ, he knows how to make me howl, and I do. Rolling my head back, I let it out loud, flooding my seed down his throat. A watery burn pools in my eyes, my breath hitches, and my chest draws tight. Emotions of complete gratitude rock through my soul. I pull out of Beo's mouth, release my hold on his hands, and sit next to him. Beo reaches for me, and I cradle him into my lap, pressing him hard against my chest. A shudder rakes my body, and he wraps his arms around me.

"It's okay, Master." he whispers, moving his hand up and down my spine.

You'd call me weak; a man of six foot seven, two hundred and eighty-six pounds of pure supremacy, being healed by a twenty-five-year-old who is half my size, with half my muscle.

I am weak.

I will never be as strong as him, as courageous as my boy.

You should know that Beo is my hero.

There was a time, two years back, that he was going to be ripped from my arms, forever.

I thought I was a man, that my money gave me authority and power. Subs begged at my boots, as I took whomever and whatever I wanted. I thought I was untouchable.

Till I met Beo.

Through his pain, I was brought to the lowest point in my life, repentant and broken, shown that I could do nothing. That the money and power I had accumulated over the years meant nothing, and that his life was in the hands of another. A man who held power over my precious boy—a Dom like myself—and I was rendered incapable of doing anything about it.

Only, you won't understand my ridiculous ramblings. I need to start from the beginning, before I knew my boy existed.

Chapter One

“I never saw the point of love. Love was for other people, and not for me. Not that I didn’t believe in it, I just never wanted it. Little did I know, you can never run from love. It hits so hard and fast you barely realize what it is till it’s too late. And once it finds you, it clasps so tightly you can hardly breathe.”
— Colt Maxus.

Portland, Oregon. Carnival. There were too many fucking people around. I like my surroundings desolate and quiet, yet here I was accompanying a fellow Dom so he could make his dick happy.

“Stop being a dipshit, Colt!” Richard slapped me on the back, and I wanted to backhand that smirk off his face.

“Once the human race starts to make fewer of those things,” I gestured my hand to indicate a woman trying to manage three children on a sugar high, “it might be more pleasurable for other people.”

God alone knew why a supposedly sane, intelligent person would feed their offspring sugary treats then agree to stand in long lines for rides that got them even more hyperactive, resulting in sugar-induced tantrums. The noise levels seemed to increase with each child—and *who the fuck brought a baby to a carnival anyway?*

I didn’t like people. Period.

My life was mostly secluded, the less people, the better. I had my own home gym in my penthouse solely for the purpose of not waiting for a ’roid junky to grunt and finish his workout. Shopping was done online, or I had my assistant do it for me. I kept out of shopping malls like they were dogs’ hurl. Holidays were the worst; all that festive music made my stomach turn.

I’m not saying that growing up I had a bad experience with holidays, or that I had some phobia of people and crowded places, or that I was depressed. I was just a rude, arrogant prick that liked things my way. I wanted to be in control, all the time. I needed to be, and nowhere brought me more pleasure than The Bark. There the subs knew to tread carefully around me, other Doms respected me—*Would someone shut that fucking baby up?!?*

I turned to Richard, his gaze fixed on his sub hookup, walking a couple of feet ahead of us. "I'm going back to the hotel," I hissed. "You and *tight ass* go have your fun. I can't deal with this shit!" I ranted at him. *Jesus, why did I agree to this in the first place?*

Richard shook his head. "Okay, Mr. Scrooge." And, at that, he practically ran to catch up with his new toy, placing a protective hand over the boy's ass.

"Don't you go losing your heart, Mr. Flinór," I said under my breath.

If there was one man that deserved to have love, it was Richard—the complete opposite of me. How we remained friends through high school and college then ended up building an empire together, should be labeled the eighth wonder of the world. Richard always ended up with the wrong kind of sub. They stole money from him, manipulated him, were drug addicts, were mentally unstable, or were suicidal, cheating, little fucks, and he fell for their fucking tricks every time. I just hoped, for Richard's sake, James was what he appeared to be. The kid had a good head on his shoulders, and seemed like a genuine, career-driven young man. Cute, but not exactly my type, but with an ass like his, even I'd be tempted to fuck him. Maybe, probably never.

I turned and walked back the way we had come.

Ten minutes passed, and I knew I had taken a wrong turn. The trail became uncrowded, and the carnival's music, rides and lights faded into background noise. I was about to turn when a figure stepped out of an old Bow Top Vardo, holding a lantern in hand.

"Came to have a reading, master?" Her crooked, old voice sent a shiver down my back.

"No. Took a wrong turn," I said, with a bit more grit in my voice than intended. *Nah, it was fucking intended.*

She shook her head and stepped towards me, bells ringing as she sidled closer. "We will always be led to where we are supposed to be." She looked up, holding the lantern close to her face. One eye was a milky gray, the other green. Some teeth were missing, and a lock of greasy gray hair strained to get free from beneath her bandanna.

"You are here now, because you were meant to be. The choice of whether or not you will take the path life has pushed you towards is yours, however."

Would that be so bad? I didn't believe in God or some celestial being watching over us. Neither did I believe in magic, nor this hocus-pocus shit. So what could I lose, except ten bucks?

“Fine, tell me how I’m going to die,” I sneered.

“The cards don’t work like that, master.” She turned, guiding me back to the Vardo. “They don’t tell the future. They represent turning points in our life that have been and might be. They tell us more about ourselves and what we can come to accept or deny. Only you can write your future.” She stepped into the carriage.

Immediately, my nose drew in the incense burning—masking the smell of herbs, mothballs and, most likely, molding cockroach shit.

She pointed with a wrinkled and freckle-stained hand to a miniscule chair not nearly large enough to support my weight. I leaned against the red-flecked counter instead. My skin crawled at whatever might have been slaughtered there before.

She offered a deck of overly long tarot cards, “Shuffle them, master.”

I took the ancient, craggy and thin-looking deck, shuffled them, and handed them back to the woman. Setting them down, she drew the first card and placed it in the center of the table face up. A man on a throne, sprouting a white beard, stared up at the ceiling.

“The Emperor is a powerful leader who demands authority and dominance. He is able to create order out of chaos. This is the heart of the matter. However,” her eyes flashed darkly at mine, “domination of the mind over the heart is sometimes unwanted, or best avoided, master.”

What a load of cock fuck that was. I was perfectly happy dominating my empire.

The second card was placed over the first. “The Fool,” she smiled, “who has such purity. A new journey, one that is completely unknown and will take you to unfamiliar territories. A choice to be made—one of vital importance. One you must make wisely. Follow your heart, no matter how irrational or foolish your impulses may seem. This is the contradiction to the heart of the matter, one I see you will struggle with.”

I almost laughed out loud at the crazy old bitch. I’m Colt Maxus; there is nothing I struggle with. Except crowded places, but I can manage if I need to.

She drew the third card, placing it in reverse to her. “The Chariot represents the past you had little control over. People looked at you differently, despised you, smote you. Some envied you. You had so much, and yet, you still have nothing at all.”

Feeling my muscles clench, my chest drew tight from the liquid fire coursing in my blood. I knew what she was referring to. A drunken whore for a father, who fucked everything with a pussy. The worthless father who'd beat me into a pulp of blood, piss and tears. He always said I would amount to nothing, that I was useless.

And.

A drunken mother who raped her son from the age of eleven.

I bore a fucking grudge against the world. People always looked at me with hate in their eyes, and I hated them right back, violently, with my fists. *You think bullies and thugs are bad? They are nothing in comparison to me.*

There was money growing up, but there was never love—only cold isolation.

I had closed that part of my life. Laid them six feet under. Shut that fucking bitch down, and buried those memories so far that not even the fucking CIA could dig them up. I changed my name, and made it big. Showed those fuckers something. The results of that? I charred everyone in my path. No mercy. No fucking guilt. I didn't break hearts. I. Shredded. Them.

I bullied kids. Called them little, queer pussies, even though I myself was one. Call me a hypocrite? I'll take it, and laugh it off in your face—probably put you to ground, too. No one fucked with me anymore, and never would again.

I knew I was some special kind of fucked up in the head, but I didn't go blaming it on my shitty-ass childhood or my sad excuse for parents. It was all me. I chose to be the way I was, and I didn't want anyone's sympathy for it. My soul was the equivalent of Clive Barker's worst nightmare, all shredded up and bloody-angered scars. *Who the fuck cares?*

I grunted at the old hag, who only flared her crooked nose and reached for the fourth card.

A slow smile spread upon her face, her eyes softened and gently she placed the card down, revealing a man on a white horse holding a cup in his hand and dressed in white or silver armor.

"The Knight of Cups," she said, folding her arms across her chest. "Someone is going to come into your life, master. Someone young, innocent and pure."

Yeah, there was always some young-innocent-pure sub wanting to get fucked. So what was new. I only raised an amused eyebrow at her.

“Someone who is ruled by their heart, rather than their head.”

God! What a gimmick bunch of bullsh—

“Do not fight against it, master,” she said, with her hand already pulling the fifth card. Her tone made me clench my fists. No one—fucking no one—used that tone of voice with me or glared in warning like she did.

“If you follow your heart on the matter, and allow things to be as they should,” she placed the fifth card down, “you will be holding a treasured gift.”

I stared at that card. I fucking glared at it, wishing it would go up in flames, and burn the goddamned Vardo and all the bullshit this bitch was spraying from her tongue. And yet, I could not tear my gaze away from The Lovers staring up at the roof. The witch said nothing more, only placed the sixth card down in reverse.

“The Ace of Swords, events that will happen—some of your own doing, others out of your control. There needs to be chaos before there can be clarity, destruction before healing. Pain, hate and anger before forgiveness, acceptance and love.”

Fuck, she was just toying with me, putting on a fucking show to impress. I kept rotating those thoughts in my mind. Yet, knowing I could walk out, I still stayed.

“*Humph,*” she breathed and placed the seventh card down. “It suits you, master. Your true self.” She glared, and I looked down at the card.

“The Devil represents many things, master—egoism, lust, obsession, sexuality, vice, godlessness, tyranny.”

I was probably all of those things and a lot worse. Some people would even consider me to be the actual Devil.

The eighth card came up on the table, and at that moment, we both stared at the figure with its bony fingers wrapped around a scythe, wearing a black cloak, and riding a white horse.

“Do not fear him, master. Death represents many things other than his name.” I blinked at her and swallowed. Did I fear Death? Yes, everyone does. I was hardly the type of man to go easy; kicking, screaming and clawing would be my style. Her words couldn't have shocked me more.

“All good things come to an end—people part ways, and some let go of the old in order to give birth to the new. Yet, Death is also eternal. It is a fate we cannot escape, forcing us to face that which stands in the past and the present.”

She reached for the ninth card, “This is the one you should pay heed to, master,” and flipped it over, placing it horizontally to the table.

“It is the one that represents hopes and fears. The critical turning point which could determine all outcomes. The Nine of Swords I place down horizontally for it is not set in stone—it can swing both ways. Each card has two meanings,” She said, pointing to The Chariot in reverse, and The Lovers that was upright.

“There will be a great darkness, one that will make you doubt yourself. It is filled with fear and anxiety, pain and desperation. You will be brought to a point in your life where you will feel utterly hopeless, confused and weak.”

I froze. My mind stopped thinking when she said that word.

I growled from deep in my chest, “I am not fucking weak!” I gripped the end of her little table, shoving it aside and causing the cards to scatter and spread over the floor. All except for the last card, which she had already drawn.

Her eyes met mine, and I could practically smell the fear on her. No one called me weak. My father had once. Once, and never again. I wasn't weak, hopeless or afraid of shit. Fuck, even Death could go screw himself a new asshole. *I am Colt Maxus*. A fucking untouchable divinity amongst these shit piles of people. *Not. Fucking. Weak.*

“T-the last card, m-master.” she stuttered as my violent gaze pinned her where she sat.

“Fucking save it, bitch!” I turned towards the door, pulling out my wallet. Seeing only a twenty dollar bill, I retrieved it and threw it at her. I was out of the witch's little shithole, burying that fucking experience.

Little did I know, the last card she turned would come back to me, literally.

Four weeks later, I was back home in New York, seated in my office, watching Richard—who was deeply engrossed in his phone.

“Richard?” I said.

“Yeah?” He didn't look up, tongue swiping over his bottom lip, fingers making love to that phone's buttons, texting away.

“Richard fucking Flinór, look at me!” I growled, slamming my fist on my desk, feeling my tie coil tight around my neck.

“What the hell, Colt?” he snapped. “Who crawled up your ass?”

“Your boy.” My lips twitched, watching his face tremor and forehead wrinkle as he pulled back his lips.

My boy Richard was in love. Again. Just to make things clear, Richard is my boy, not like a sub, but my brother, and I was his. A private little joke only shared between the two of us.

I saw him clench and unclench his fists. Gritting his teeth, Richard hissed, “Colt, please tell me you didn’t.”

I would never, and he knew that shit. He was my only friend. The only person I could call a fucking moron, and still have him give a fuck about me. I would never purposely hurt him in any way. He was there for me when no one else was. He was my only family. The one person that had the courage to break through my walls and offer a hand.

“Now that I have your attention. No, I didn’t screw your new toy. Moving on to other things... We have the gig tonight with that fat face cunt, Rodolfo what’s-his-name?”

“Marche.” Richard pouted like a fucking two-year-old.

“Yeah, so what’s his deal? How much is he packing?” I drummed my fingers on my desk, staring at the smog-infested NYC skyline.

“Not much, about five million,” Richard said as his phone chirped.

Rolling my eyes at the lovesick puppy, I contemplated the charity event for tonight.

“Do I need to make arrangements for company?” I asked, already feeling my cock stiffen thinking of boy Finn, and his tight little ass.

“It’s up to you. James is coming, by the way... And Sam...” My eyes cut with killer intent to Richard’s when he used my old name. He knew how much I hated it, how much went with that name, but I also knew he never used it unless he was dead serious.

Clenching my teeth, I managed, “Yes?”

“Be nice to James. I like him. He’s a good man, still learning as a sub, but, yeah.”

Well, fuck. When the old Casanova's face went all dreamy and *sparkly eyed*, I knew I'd lost him.

A knock on my office door drew my attention. Usually my assistant would call before letting someone come to see me, and I knew I had no scheduled appointments for the afternoon.

"Come in," I droned, leaning back in my chair and scowling.

And come in he did. Hair a mess, or an attempt to make a mess look presentable, only resulting in it looking more like a vulture's nest of black curls. The blue dress shirt and wrinkled tie didn't match, and gray slacks... At least the shoes shone.

"Mr. Maxus, sorry to disturb you, sir. Your PA wasn't at her desk, so I wasn't sure if I—"

"Get the fuck on with it, kid. I don't have the whole day!" My tone of voice caused him to jump and spill the stack of envelopes he was clutching.

Quickly, he went on his knees, picking them up. Cheeks flushed, he stood and presented them to me.

"You're the new kid?" I asked.

He nodded, and his cheeks darkened. Sneering, I snatched the mail from him. Catching Richard's warning glare, I brushed it off. Richard knew I fucked what, when and how I wanted.

"Richard? You planning on giving birth in that chair, or do you have things to do?" I said and stood.

Oh, he was not a happy camper, that was for sure. I ignored him when he stormed out of the room, hissing at himself—though it might have been towards me. The stupid kid still stood in my office.

"Did you lose something?" I raised an eyebrow and adjusted my pants, my dick already granite from watching the boy blush.

"I just wanted to thank you, Mr. Maxus, for the opportunity. I will never be able to repay you for this."

I knew what he was bitching on about, since he had basically begged for the job. I didn't fail to see him glimpse at my tenting slacks and blush. Easy. Fucking. Prey.

"Close the door and fucking come here! I'll show you how you can repay me."

I blackmailed people. Used my authority and power to get what I wanted, and never gave a shit about the wreckage left behind.

The kid was sucking my dick like a little prissy-boy virgin having cock for the first time—too scared to take it all in, and down the throat, and fuck, did he suck softly. Fuck this shit.

“Harder!” I grunted above him. Blue, tear-stained eyes looked up at me.

Clasping my fingers in his hair, I forced him down on my dick, heard him gag, and that’s all I needed. Skull fucking the little shit’s lips, I emptied in his mouth.

“Swallow!”

He tried and choked, spilling some of my cum down his chin, onto his dress shirt and my shoe.

Pushing him down to the floor, I snapped in his ear, “Lick it clean, queer.” He blinked, confused, and whimpered when I fastened my hand in his hair. “You want to keep your job, want to keep paying Mommy’s asylum bills? You’ll fucking lick it clean!”

A small, pink tongue snaked out from swollen lips and lapped the translucent cum off my shoe.

I let go of the kid’s hair, tucked myself away and watched him slowly get back to his feet with a hard-on. His head was bent, tears glittering on his cheeks, followed by a debased sob.

Perhaps I was getting old, or the old bitch’s fortune reading played my hand. Call it what you will.

“What institution?”

His head perked up. “Sorry, sir?” he said hoarsely.

Letting out warm air, my nostrils flaring, I asked him again. “Your mother, what’s the institution called?”

“Mothers’ and Daughters’ Haven, Mr. Maxus.”

I knew the place, donated to them often. There the domestic violence and rape victims were only offered a place where they could feel safe and three meals a day. Any medical expenses, psychologist and therapy sessions still had to be compensated for by the victims or their relatives.

I picked up the phone and dialed the number.

“Mother’s name?”

The kid stared, terrified and quivering in my office.

“Kid!” I snapped.

“Helen Jones, Mr. Maxus.”

I spoke to the receptionist, then to the woman in charge. I watched the little shit’s face light up as if I was giving him a fucking diamond ring when I made arrangements for his mother’s bills to be sent to my finance department for payment, along with any additional costs to come in the future.

“Don’t take it as payment for sucking me off, kid. If I’d wanted a whore, I’d have called for one,” I said, placing the phone down. “You bending there, ass in the air, blushing like you did—my cock wanted up in that pretty little mouth of yours. Now get back to work, and if you see that PA of mine, tell her to reel her ass into my office!”

“Thank you, Mr. Maxus,” he said, walking to the door. I grinned and gripped his arm. Turning him to me, I brought his small frame intimately against mine.

“Sir?” His Adam’s apple moved under the skin.

“Got a suit, boy? And not something that looks like it came from the bottom of your closet!”

He shook his head.

“Find my PA—she’s probably doing Xavier in the stationary room—leave her your address and measurements. I’ll have one delivered. Be ready by eight tonight.”

Slowly, he nodded, and I let go of his arm.

“And don’t put shit in your hair! Wash and dry it. A comb won’t hurt either,” I barked, watching him walk out.

I knew the sexuality of all the employees in my office—even those that hid their true selves. Let’s simply say my gaydar is 99.999 percent accurate. Did I rape the kid? In my judgment, no. In his, it might have felt that way, though not once did he say no to sucking me off, nor did he fight me. If he did decide to report it as sexual assault, well, there are ways to shut people up, make them turn a blind eye. It all comes down to money and power. Always has, always will. The world’s greedy and fucked up that way.

Did I fuck the kid's face because I was horny? No. I needed to feel in control, needed to feel I had authority. My money and power couldn't provide it, not in those instances when I got reminded of my pathetic past. I needed someone to physically dominate, making them bend to my will and pleasure. He wasn't the first, but I never knew he would soon be one of the last.

Later that evening, as we finally stopped in front of the charity house, I asked Richard, "What kind of a charity is this?" and climbed out. I glanced at James next to him. He did look fucking delicious with his charcoal gray suit and a little bow tie—all dimples, big green eyes, and flushing cheeks.

"A Day for Hope. They sponsor cancer children, helping them reach their dreams," he responded and laced his fingers in James's when he saw me gawking at the boy.

"Fucking hell," I groaned.

"Dick!" Richard elbowed me in the ribs.

Laughing, I wheezed out, "Wasn't talking about the charity. Was referring to you two lovebirds just now, and earlier back in the limo, eating each other's faces off. You planning on giving us a show, tongue fucking at the dinner table, too?"

Richard glared at me, irritation, hell, fucking blazing in his blue-hazel eyes. Shit, he was really feeling James. And on a whole new level than I'd ever seen in Richard before. My chest drew tight at that moment for my boy, knowing, hoping he had found the one.

"Sorry, Richard." I gave him an earnest smile. "I approve."

"Approve?" James said, his green eyes squinting, and glared at me, "I swear you two are like teenage girls speaking telepathically in a language only you will ever understand."

Which was basically true, except we were no motherfucking pussies.

"I think your boy needs to be gagged," I cocked at Richard, "and pulled over the knee. I mean, if you're slipping as a Dom, there's plenty at The Bark that could teach him the proper discipline." That said, I stepped up to James, bringing my face close to his, and matching his glare. "I fucking like you, kid," I yapped, stabbing James in the chest.

Richard stepped in. "Okay, you two. Neither of you are going at each other's throats. I like my men alive, unscarred, and to stay pretty... and I'm fucking hungry. So, sweethearts, can we get the show rolling?"

Richard pulled James to him and walked up the stairs toward the man holding the door.

“Thank you for tonight, sir.” The soft, little voice spoke behind me.

Turning, I looked Gregg, Glenn—fuck, whatever his name was—over. Smiling, I watched his pupils dilating as he pulled his bottom lip between his teeth.

“You’re dessert, got it?”

The kid nodded, eyes on the ground. The yellow light coming off the house cast a creamy appearance against his skin. He was beautiful, I guess, to someone. To me, he was only the fuck ticket of the night, but I’ve played this game before.

He was still standing there nervous, gaze down. I cupped his cheek and pulled his eyes to me.

“You’re too soft, boy. Don’t let anyone walk all over you, me included. Especially me. I’d just rip out your heart in the end.” I smiled at the confused look on his face. “Now give me your mouth,” I growled, and took his lips in a hard kiss.

A real virgin kisser. His eyes were shut, lips trembling and begging for more, tracing and savoring my taste on them.

“Come on, boy!” I barked, moving up the steps to the front door.

By the time we finished the main course—consisting of a piece of sickening-looking fish and a couple of mushed up vegetables forced into some elongated shapes—our hostess had stood up and addressed the guests. Marche was seated at our table with a tall, blonde woman in desperate need of a nose job. Marche could barely keep his eyes open, red in the face and sweating, from all the wine he had consumed. I was ready to blow this joint and slip away when the lights dimmed. Some kid that had reached his dream through the charity was on stage, going to sing us a fucking song!

“Richard,” I whispered in his ear, “I’m about to ditch this place. You two joining us for something better than what a dog regurgitated?”

He had to cover his mouth with his hand, and I sent up a silent prayer of thanks we came in the limo. Richard wasn’t quite wasted yet, but he was not far from it either. James didn’t look happy about his drunken boyfriend, going by the scowl on his face. I didn’t drink, not much. One drink was my limit. I

wasn't my father and never wanted to be, so I stayed clear of the poisonous substances.

"Yeah, boy. For the first time, I have to say, I agree with ya," Richard slurred in my ear.

It was at that exact moment a single spotlight shown on the stage, highlighting a young, thin man seated on a barstool. His face was shadowed from the knitted black beanie on his head, and he was clutching a guitar in his hand. A real fucking hippie kid with black, ripped jeans and a black cardigan covering a dark shirt.

"Yo," he spoke into the mic with a gruff, smoker type of voice. The kind that could only come from singing for a long time, and someone that knew the hard knocks of life.

"Beo's gonna sing y'all a song." He strummed the guitar and looked up. My mind dead bolted at that *angel-like* face, glowing pale under the spotlight. Slowly he started pulling and manipulating the strings into a familiar tune, and a haunting, mesmerizing voice cast the room into silence. He was singing "What's Up", the cover from 4 Non Blondes.

I hadn't realized it till he was done. I'd been gaping at the kid, captivated. The world around me had drifted away, only to be pierced by the anchor of applause.

I watched him move off stage as the clapping died down. There was no arrogance in his stature, no sense of pride that he had a beautiful voice. He was just a hippie kid that came to sing a song and was now moving on.

I sat in my seat, staring at the empty stage, chatter rising up around me, while inside, deep down, some shit had begun to stir, and I knew I was royally fucked. My heart pounded in my chest, my hands felt damp, and my blood pressure dropped. The suit I was wearing started feeling too tight all of a sudden. Yeah, my fucking posterior pituitary gland was pumping oxytocin, raping my brain and heart.

"Let's go," I growled, standing. James had to hook in under Richard to help him up.

I really didn't give a fuck, 'cause I was getting out of there since motherfucking Cupid had decided to put a fucking bounty out on my head.

And a hit on my heart.

Reaching the lobby, I heard a hushed conversation about rent and money coming from a backroom.

Fucking shit!

I bit my lip. I knew no matter how much I fought against this, it would keep haunting my ass till I gave in. Might as well be now rather than later. Because, when it came to what I wanted, people standing in the way were in danger.

“Give me a second,” I uttered, and turned to follow the sound of his voice.

“Colt!” Richard hissed from behind me.

Even in his drunken state, Richard reached for my arm and pulled me back.

“Colt, don’t.” Richard stared with that look he gave me so often, pleading and begging me. Yet this time, those eyes struggled to focus. I had to hand it to him, even drunk, he was looking out for me, or for the hippie kid. Maybe for both of us.

“Fuck off, old man.” I shoved Richard, something I rarely did. He was the only one that knew where I had come from, what I had been through, what made me who I was, and knew all my fucked up shit. And he would take my secrets to his grave.

“Not him. He doesn’t deserve it. Go to The Bark, find Finn and go have a fuck, but not that boy. You will destroy him.”

Same song—different tune, Richard.

“As with all the others before him, Richard? You’re drunk, and your own sub is pissed off at you. I don’t think you have any right to stand here and tell me shit, while you’re blowing your own heart out.”

Pain flashed in Richard’s eyes. He had a drinking problem. Not an addiction, but he knew he took to the bottle too much. He glanced in his boy’s direction. James’s arms were closed across his chest, and he was staring up at the ceiling.

“Shit,” Richard hissed, and stumbled forward. I caught him on the shoulders.

“James, boy, come here.” I called and steered Richard towards him.

“Get him in the car,” I whispered in James’s ear, “and ask the driver to take what’s-his-name home—”

“Colt, please don’t—” I ignored Richard’s drunken blabbering.

“You get him out of here now, before he embarrasses himself, or worse, I knock him on his ass.”

Richard growled when James slid his arm around him.

“And James, take care of him, will you?” I said and winked. I turned away, wanting to hear no more of Richard’s drunken overprotective attitude. If he was sober, it would have been a great deal worse. We fought like brothers, and loved each other with the same passion.

I stepped up to what I would assume was a makeshift dressing room with the door standing wide open. In the far corner sat the hippie kid with his back to me; shoulders slumped, elbows on his knees, and face pressed into his hands. My heart broke for the damn boy, and for the first time in my life, I didn’t know what to fucking say. So I cleared my throat and walked into the room.

He looked up at that moment, and our eyes met. As beautiful as those brown eyes were, there was also a tiredness to them, with dark rings underneath, and a defensiveness in his expression and tone.

“Evening,” he said, and climbed off the chair.

I nodded and stepped closer. Hell, I was nervous.

“You were, your voice is... really nice.” *Dumb fuck!* What the hell is this? I’m thirty-eight. I give one look at a sub and they’re all dripping and kissing my boots, and the best I can come up with is this?

“Listen, dude,” he said, picking up his guitar. “Whatever you’re hawking, I ain’t interested. Whether it be a record deal, or time in studio for an Extended Play. Thanks, but no thanks. I like my life the way it is. Uncomplicated.”

I shook my head, feeling like a fool.

“I’m not from a record label, though, if you ever reconsider, I can hook you up with the right people.”

“Okay, thanks bro, but I’m really not interested. I need to get packing and move on.” He turned, bent over and placed his guitar in its case. His jeans weren’t baggy, but they weren’t a tight fit either. He just had a fucking nice ass.

“Let’s try this again.” I stepped closer, and he stood, turning to me.

“Hi.” I extended my hand only for him to stare at it and bring his big brown eyes to mine. I’m not even going to deny it, my heart skipped a fucking beat. Might have been several.

“Hi,” he said and smirked, then smiled. God, he smiled and burst out laughing. I couldn't believe the different person standing in front of me, the way his face glowed and his voice sounded. It sent a shudder through me to know I sparked that laugh.

He leaned against the countertop, shaking his head. “That is the most awkward come-on I've had in a long time.”

Normally, at this point, I would have lost my temper, but I was strangely calm. His whole presence seemed to soothe me, and it was fucking weird, freaky weird. No one had power over me, and I would never allow anyone to have power over me again. I mean, he wasn't even all that. Attractive, yes. But not what I usually fucked. So it wasn't a case where I kept calm to get the kid into bed. The hippie kid was thin, real motherfucking reed thin. Greasy hair sprouted from under the beanie, there were holes in his jeans and his cardigan, and I'm almost certain that black shirt was a couple of days ripe. For all I knew, he was a street whore.

Finally, his laughter died down.

“Listen big guy, you're hot. You really are, and by the looks of it, you're probably a rich son of a bitch too, but I'm tired. I want to go home, grab a beer and a smoke, and just forget the day ever happened.” His eyes reached mine, and he shrugged. “Besides, look at me. I'm a little punk. I'm sure with whatever you're packing in your bank account, you can do a whole lot better than me. Might not even have to pay for it with the way you look all buff and scary handsome. Go fuck some whore, or pick up some pussy in the club. Go get your rocks off, then get back to the wife. But me, I'm really not interested.”

I wasn't even considering doing the boy; I just wanted to talk and maybe ask him out. Yeah, definitely ask him out, which sat wrong with me. I never asked boys out. Hell, I almost never ate out for dinner unless it involved a very important client. Most of the time, I got Richard to do it.

“I'm not married,” I said, showing him my ring finger. This is so not how it should have gone down. I should be clasp him on the shirt, shoving him against a wall and forcing him to my will—taking whatever the hell I wanted and not bothering with this sweet, useless talking.

“How about I walk you to your car?”

He looked up and frowned.

“Come on, let a gentleman be a gentleman. It'd be my honor.” I gave him a rare sincere smile.

“Sorry, dude. Took the subway, so I’ll be walking home. It’s nice of you though.”

“You sure I can’t change your mind?” I stepped forward, picking up his guitar case and swinging the strap over my shoulder.

“Really, you don’t have to, Mr...?”

“Colt Maxus,” I stretched out my hand again, and this time he took it. Cold, thin fingers gently brushed against my bigger, warmer ones, and I clasped his hand with both of mine.

“Beo Moon,” he said, and pulled in a deep breath as I started rubbing his hand to fill it with warmth.

“Call me Colt, Beo, please. Let me call us a cab; it’s raining outside.” I pointed to the window with a nod.

“Aww, shit!” He shrugged, yet didn’t attempt to pull his hand free.

“No hidden agendas, okay. I promise. Just a rich motherfucker wanting to be a gentleman.”

“There’s no saying ‘no’ to you is there?” He grinned, and my heart nearly imploded.

God, if he only knew. “No, there’s not,” I said, a little breathless.

I reached for my phone and dialed a cab as he pulled on an old WWII coat. There was something mesmeric about Beo, but I couldn’t place my finger on it. I knew I had to have him, and not just for one night. I needed to have him welded to my side, and it scared me shitless. Actually terrified me. Even more so because I didn’t give a damn. I was escorting him home, feeling fucking goddamn euphoric, like a crack addict in a fucking coke storm. This was the start of something new, unfamiliar—*Follow your heart, no matter how irrational or foolish your impulses may seem.*

Yeah, I guess someone as fucked up as me did have a heart. Question was, could I keep this—whatever it was, whatever it was going to be—or would I fuck it up?

The address he gave the cab driver was in downtown Manhattan, while the charity event was in Tribeca. It took us thirty minutes to reach the dodgy part of Queens.

I glanced at him with his guitar resting on his lap. He was edgy, fidgety, with roaming fingers not finding a comfortable place to rest. I snatched his

hand and placed it on my thigh. "Sit still," I whispered, and the little shit gaped at me.

I gave him a brisk nod and gazed out of the window. My pants were beginning to pull tighter as the minutes ticked away. Even more so when those damn fucking fingers of his started making small strokes on my thigh.

The warning signs were all there: me being nervous, him being nervous, pulling his fucking hand onto my thigh like we were old lovers. Way too comfortable with each other despite the fact we had only met a couple of moments ago.

The driver stopped at our destination, and I peered through the rain-drenched window at the building, sneering at the sight of it.

Telling the driver to wait, I stepped out.

"It ain't much, but it's home for now," he said when he caught my glower at the place. I didn't like that statement one fucking bit.

The place was run down, had bad lighting, and just looked sickly and cold. Trash littered the front steps, along with beggars sleeping on top of cardboard boxes, covered in filthy blankets as they sought shelter from the downpour under the small roof over the entrance.

I could offer him a place to stay and a warm meal. Fuck, I'd buy him warmer fucking clothes if I could get another smile out of him. Beo didn't strike me as the kind of person to accept such things. Not because he seemed the arrogant or stubborn type. He just appeared to be one of those people that got by on what he had, not wanting to be a bother to someone else.

Hell, I might have been wrong. Maybe he was a drug addict. I didn't know shit. All the years spent being in the shipping line, container shipping and all the illegal jobs associated with it, you learn how to read people, and I am fucking good at it. Yet, I couldn't read this kid. He was definitely hiding something—everyone hid something about themselves. I wanted to help him, and yet, this time I didn't know how to approach it. I was scared it might push him away and cause me to lose whatever this was going to blossom into.

I fucking hated this feeling.

God alone knew where it came from. As I reached for my wallet, watching his soul-thieving eyes go wide ready to protest, I pulled out a business card and held it out to him.

"Beo, you need anything—" He started shaking his head.

“No, I’m fine. Really, I’m good. You did more than enough giving me a ride—”

“Boy!” I growled, my anger finally sparking forth, making me feel a little bit more like myself. “Take my fucking card!” I hissed.

With a shaking hand, he reached for it. I didn’t let go yet; I wasn’t done saying what I wanted to say.

“You need anything, anything at all, Beo, you call. Even if it’s just to talk.”

He gulped and bobbed his head.

“Good boy,” I said, releasing the card.

“Goodnight, beautiful Beo,” I smirked and turned, moving to the cab before I dug my own fucking grave.

There was a battle raging inside me, one side demanding I take him home, the other screaming, *What the fuck? Where is Colt fucking Maxus? He wouldn’t give two fucks what happens to this boy. He’s nothing but shit-trash with a nice ass.*

But that same Colt Maxus wanted that boy to be his. I reached for the cab door and froze.

“Colt,” he said behind me, and my breath actually took a fucking hitch at hearing him say my name.

I turned around, knowing I was damning myself. But I’d already done so by giving him my card.

Beo came up to me, so motherfucking close I could feel his breath on my neck. “Thank you,” he said, a single tear rolling down his face. He stood on his toes, placed his hands on my chest, leaned in closer, and whispered, “You just made this day worth the hell I’ve been through.” And he kissed my cheek.

God, fuck! Hold this shit up, right motherfucking now.

What was I doing, allowing this hippie to get this close? Why the hell did I give a fuck about him? Why the hell did I feel all giddy and shit in my gut because his lips kissed my cheek, and why was I grinning like I’d just had the best mind-blowing fuck of the century?

“Sleep tight, Colt.” He winked and turned around, walking up to the building and disappearing behind stained glass.

I stood there as a second wave of rain washed down on the city, my chest swelling, heaving for air. Those sweet fucking lips had kissed my cheek. It was

one of the rarest, most beautiful, fucked-up experiences I had ever had. I knew I should leave. Instinct stung like fucking wasps in my gut, letting me know that this boy would be my downfall. But Colt Maxus wants what he wants—and I wanted Beo Moon.

The cab driver honked for the fourth time. I spun around and got in.

Chapter Two

“It happened again. Another man seemed to have fallen in lust with me, but this one was different. He was, and will be, the only one I love.” — Beo Moon.

I was trying my God's honest best to piss the man off. Sarcasm and insults, accusing him of cheating on his “maybe wife,” and snapping back sharp comments. Nothing worked. He didn't want to budge, and the more he stood there, gazing at me with his dark-green eyes, the harder it became to say no.

He was older than most guys preying on me, but he was also different. His gaze wasn't raking over me trying to rip my clothes off. He made me feel uncomfortable in my own damn skin. With each step he took closer, my heart threatened to burst out of my chest and pound its way across the floor. He was a predator—a big, scary, hot-looking predator.

And I wanted to be his prey.

He looked almost inhumanly flawless. His thick, curling black hair sat perfectly above his collar. Even the scruff on his face, grazing his short rectangular jaw, looked like every hair had been planted perfectly. Seamless white teeth accompanied a perfect big mouth and a Roman nose that sat crooked from being broken, maybe a couple of times. Hell, that made him even more attractive, along with the black scruff. Yeah, *the Bitches* were definitely packing the big guns. Then he grinned, or smiled—not sure which. I was too busy shaking my inner tail like an overexcited puppy when his brows drew together. The room became too small at that moment, and the door looked like it had stretched miles away. He was tall and wide—Lord, was he wide. I could duplicate myself and still not be able to cover his chest and broad shoulders. His tailor-made suit did nothing to hide the fact that he was a man taking very good care of his body. All Clark Kent good looks, and a man of steel beneath.

“*Colt Maxus*,” he said, and offered his hand for the second time, and I just gave in, feeling my hand being smothered by both of his. His warmth seeped into my always cold skin, and I allowed him to hold me in his snare. Then he offered to take me home, because those two bitches, Mother Nature and Fate, had caused a little downpour on the world. It seemed that both of them had majorly stepped up their game.

"Beo, are you alright?" a voice said from beyond the reaches of my fogged-up mind.

I mean, sure, I let the man be a gentleman. But no, he had to go a step further and insist on accompanying me home—watching me in the cab and snatching my hand, which I never could keep still, and placing it on his hard thigh. Okay, not completely innocent in that regard. But I couldn't help myself, feeling the hard muscles under his trousers. Then the look he gave the apartment complex. At least with that, I hoped he would be put off. Na-ah. Mr. Big, Tall and Fatally Handsome had to climb out and demand I take his card, and of course, he had to be an aggressive type—Fate knew I liked them on the rough side—but he wasn't done. *"Goodnight, beautiful Beo,"* he had to say, and I fucking lost it from that point onward.

I kissed him on the cheek while my eyes spewed water. 'Cause if he only knew the day I had had. The news I had been fearing, yet knowing I would hear soon, had finally come.

The monster living inside me had shown its teeth again.

Those two Bitches, Mother Nature and Fate, knew it. They damn well fucking knew it. It wasn't enough for them to crash my world yesterday morning, they had to do it again last night by delivering the man of my dreams. They could as well have put a gun to my gut and pulled the trigger.

Listen, let's get one thing clear here. I ain't saying I don't like love, or don't believe in soul mates or whatever you want to call it. To me, it's just not fair. Why go fall in love with someone when you know in the end you'll just hurt them? Every man that threw himself at me; heart, body and soul, I ran in the other direction. I personally believe those two Bitches are out to break me. I swear, I'm like a freaking magnet for my dream man. Most people get that opportunity once, meeting a person that will worship the ground they walk on. Me, not a chance. Over and over again, till this time, I knew I was screwed. Evidence of that—I couldn't get Colt Maxus out of my head. Honestly, I'm not that attractive. I'm like Africa's hunger child for white people. I had abs because I was so sickly thin, and I could probably jab your eye out with my hip bones.

That didn't stop those two forces from screwing me over every step of the way. It's like this, if you know you're going to die soon, why bother having friends, a boyfriend or people that love you? Why would you want to hurt those people if you knew the outcome of your life beforehand? Why waste taking a

spot in a university when you get offered a scholarship, knowing it could be more beneficial for someone who was going to live a full life and make the best of it? That'd just be rude and selfish in my book. I was destined to die young, so every opportunity that got offered to me—whether it be a record deal of a lifetime, a job or a lover—I'd pat that shit on the head and say, "Thank you very much, but you go find someone else."

Don't feel sorry for me. I made good with Death a long time ago. Call him the old friend I'm just dying to meet. Literally.

But Mother Nature and Fate didn't get that memo. I had to have a personality such that whomever I met instantly had a fondness for me, 'cause shit, it ain't my looks they be liking.

It was a hell of a crappy gift to have. I often wondered why I couldn't just be a mean, rude dick, but I guess Murphy's Law is what it is. Whatever that really means.

"Beo!" Dr. Martin growled from across his desk, where I was sitting in his office, and slammed his palm, causing papers to scatter.

"Kid, where's your head today? Have you heard anything I've been telling you, at all?"

I lowered my gaze at his hooded eyes. Dr. Martin was a good man, the caring and nurturing type. Hence the reason he was a doctor I guess, but he was also one of my only friends. He understood what was going to happen, that death was a part of life, and some got it handed to them sooner than others.

"Sorry, Doc. Last night was just a little bit messed up."

A little? Are you shitting yourself? Don't know which version of the story you're living in, bucko, but that sure ain't the version I experienced. Oh, hi, conscience, my other friend. Shut up, would you!

"Beo," he said, and gave me a sad smile, "I can arrange for you to go see a psychologist. This disease isn't just physical. It's emotional, spiritual, and it's in your head, not just your blood, kiddo."

I immediately started shaking my head.

"Doc, I know it's been breeding inside me since I was what, probably born, but I can't afford a head shrink. I just got to get by. Hell, I don't know if it's worth it to do the therapy if it ain't gonna do shit, and just accumulate bills again. Who'd be left to pay those bills once I'm gone? Taxpayers, good honest

people working hard for their coin, needing to pay off my death when I'm rotting away, six feet below? That shit ain't fair, and isn't sitting right by me either."

He sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose, pushing his glasses back.

"Beo, there is another way, if you would just—"

"What?" I snapped, and clenched my fists. "Go look for my old man, then beg him to donate some stem cells? Where would I get the money for that anyway, not to say the cost of the procedure?"

"Doc..." I sighed and lowered my voice, avoiding his eyes 'cause them damn tears had already started pooling down my face. "I ain't gonna lie. I'm shit-scared, but I'm also tired. This sickness has been haunting and looming over me ever since I can remember. Now that it's back, I'm ready. I don't want to fight no more. I don't want to tell people to butt out of my life 'cause I'm scared, hurtin', disappointed and dying on them."

It was the same dance we'd waltzed to before, just a different jam with different words this time.

His shoulders shook and his own tears started dripping from his eyes, down his nose and landing on the brown envelope in front of him.

"Aww, shit, Doc, not the waterworks." I stood and stepped up next to the old man, wrapping my arms around him and giving him a big old Beo hug. My hugs are epic, just so you know.

Dr. Martin was the closest person I ever had to a dad, and I think the man was a bit in love with me, too. Okay, scrap that, deeply in love with me.

I met him when I was five years old, living in Mary's Orphanage. He was the one who discovered who my real mother was, and also that I had an eighty-three percent chance of getting the same illness that took her life. She died the same year I was born, at age twenty-three. Doc suspected that I would develop symptoms around the same age, but mine came at seventeen.

Dr. Martin was handsome. Hell, he still is, all buff, and gray haired with gray-blue eyes. Broke his big old heart too, when I told him I saw him as a father. The man has been a part of my entire life. I couldn't see him as anything else.

I pulled back and cupped his cheek, feeling his gray beard hairs prickle my palm. With my left hand, I took off his glasses and wiped the tears from under his eyes.

"I love you, Doc. You know that. I am grateful for you being a part of my life, and everything you have done for me, things you're gonna do for me... and don't deny it." I pressed the palms of my hands against his face, forcing him to look me in the eyes. "I know you and the others are scheming to pay for my treatment again. I ain't dumb. It's nice of you, but don't. Please. I'm begging ya. I don't want to be a burden no more."

"Beo," he said heavyhearted, and pulled me to him, pressing his face into my gut. "Kiddo, just let us do this for you, please."

That was my cue to get the hell out of there.

"Listen, Doc..." I pulled his arms from around me and placed his glasses back on, carefully taking a step back. "I got to fly." I moved around the desk and picked up my bag. "Got things I need be doing, so, I'll see you another. Okay." I turned, rushing to the door, only to find it locked.

"Beo, sit down, little man."

I sighed, pressing my forehead against the wood. Why didn't people understand? Why couldn't they just leave me the hell alone? Always butting into things that don't concern them. Don't they know how much it pains me to look at them, and know in the end I'm just hurting them even more? It's a fucking burden to carry all that guilt.

"I took the liberty, and you will hate me for it, but that's my cross to bear." He rested a hand on my shoulder and turned me around, holding out the brown envelope that had been on his desk.

His eyes pleaded with me as he bit his lip. "Please take it, Beo. Look through it, and then decide. A person can't make a decision without having all the information in front of them."

"I could never hate you, Doc." I looked up and smiled.

As I was taking the thick envelope from him, he reached into his pocket and pulled out his wallet, presenting me with several hundred-dollar bills.

I shook my head. I didn't want the money, even though I desperately needed it.

"Beo." His eyes darkened, and he pressed his forehead to mine, left arm bracing his massive frame against the door and pinning me to the spot.

"Take the fucking money!" he snarled, and yeah, Dr. Martin wasn't Doc no more, he was Master Martin.

“Do I need to take you over my knee and spank this shit into you, boy!” he breathed against my face, causing me to swallow hard, trying not to quiver.

Cupping my cheek, he brought his lips inches from mine. “I care, Beo. The other Doms care. We know you don’t want our help, and we can respect that, but, honestly, look at it like this. Aren’t you being selfish by denying a person’s support when all they want to do is help? It’s like a slap in the face. We want to do this, Beo. Remember what we are: a family, a leather family. And what does family do, boy?”

“They take care of each other, Sir.”

“Good boy,” he said and shoved the notes down my front pocket, where his fingers got stuck.

I roared with laughter as he cursed, trying to pull his thick fingers free from the tight denim. Doc had some big, thick, manly paws on him.

Heaving, I managed to taunt him. “Having your fingers stuck down my pants isn’t looking good for your reputation, Master Martin.”

“Hell, Beo, you don’t say.” He yanked his hand free, red in the face. I wasn’t sure if it was from embarrassment or from the tent spanning his trousers.

I watched him turn around, flop down in his chair and cover his face with his hand. I felt sorry for Doc. He was so love drunk on me, he was blinded to the other subs that really wanted to get to know him. One sub in particular, I knew, was as in love with him as Doc was with me.

He reached in his left drawer and threw me the set of keys for the door. Quickly, I unlocked it, stepping out and dangling the keys to draw his attention. He scowled up at me, nostrils flaring.

“You know, Master, if you just once stopped falling in love with me, you would see there’s someone looking at you with the same admiration you always aim at me.” Chucking the keys back at him, I watched his eyes narrow and irritation flare. I turned on my sneakers and got the hell out of there before he really did decide to have a go at my ass.

As the elevator doors opened to the dreary-looking hospital lobby, I glanced at the envelope in my hand. I could only suspect what information waited inside, and now was as good a time as any. Finding a desolate waiting chair away from the noise and prying eyes, I pulled the folder out.

I stared at the name on front. Luther Mark Jacaruso. I knew, going by my dark black hair, brown eyes, thin eyebrows, long lashes, long and protruding

flat nose and short chin, I had Italian blood inside me. The pale skin was totally from Mom's Irish side. Thank God I wasn't some soulless ginger.

Still staring at the folder, I traced a shaking finger down the side.

Was I really going to do this? Open up information I wasn't sure I wanted to know, questions I had that might be answered, or only end up with more? The probability giving rise to hope that maybe, after twenty-two years, this man, Luther, would just donate his bone marrow to his estranged and dying son. Did I want to put myself through that?

Closing my eyes, I thought of the people in my life; Doc, the boys at The Bark, the Doms that actually cared and didn't want to get in my pants, and Mary. That woman had been my rock, my pillar of strength, growing up in the orphanage. Let's not forget Jane and Baby Magpie. I owed it to them. I at least had to try. All of them were willing to reach out and help, and yes, I was selfish, not wishing to hurt them when actually denying their aid was hurting them.

It's not the destination that matters, or in fact, the journey to get there, but the people accompanying you on that ride.

For the people in my life, could I at least give them the comfort of knowing that I tried? That all their efforts—from putting a smile on my face to offering me a bed for the night, or anything else I needed—meant something? That I was willing to fight my illness again, despite the fact that inside I had already given up? That I was willing to fight for them 'cause that would make them happy? This time would be my final round.

Yeah, Beo, get your shit together here, man. It's just a folder, open it up.

But it wasn't that simple. For years, I've pondered why a parent would drop a child off at an orphanage, and yet at the same time, I know that answer all too well. Life. Unexpected events spiraling out of control force you to make a decision for the greater good of someone else. My mother couldn't. She was dying in a hospital bed. My father? Who knew? Maybe he wasn't ready to look after a kid at such a young age. Maybe he wanted to, but didn't have the financial resources to do so.

Stop.

Asking all these questions would only make me angry inside. What if I found out he could have looked after me, and just didn't want me? That was my biggest fear of all. Living my life desperately wanting to know my father, only

to find out he didn't give a rat's ass that I was eroding away in a hospital bed. Yet, it could be that he didn't want me at the time, but over the years, he might have regretted the decision.

I took a deep breath, letting it out even slower, and flipped the file open, causing a photo to slide out and flutter to the floor. Bending over, I froze at the sight of the face staring back at me from a black and white snapshot. There was no use even denying it, the face was mine. Bigger, older and sharper featured, even down to the way the hair lay on his head—he had the same thin lips and broad, flat nose and eye shape. Yup, that was my old man gawking up at me... and God, talk about fucking killer looks! As I picked the photo up, bringing it closer, it started to paint a different picture. Those eyes were angry, cold, almost cruel. His lips were pressed tightly together, causing a dimple in his chin, and going by the dark shadows on his jaw, he was definitely grinding his teeth when the photo was snapped.

He looked plain pissed off and downright ready to spill blood.

Scanning through the papers, I tried to find another photograph. I hoped the photo was snapped at the wrong time, but I didn't find another. However, a particular piece of documentation caught my eye.

Pulling it out from the bundle of papers, I immediately recognized the bold letterhead. My heart began to pound hard and wild. It couldn't be, and yet the evidence was staring me right in the face in black and white.

Mr. Luther Mark Jacaruso, co-owner of The Bark, in partnership with Mr. Max Donovan, and Mr. Clay Blackly.

Fucking shit! My father was the owner of a BDSM club, and most likely a Dom too?

I wanted to shout, scream, kick, do a giddy happy dance, and splatter my brain matter across the wall. I wasn't entirely sure what that might mean. If he'd be glad I'm in the same lifestyle, or if it would only backfire on me.

Raking my hand through my hair and shoving the beanie off to the floor, I leaned back in the chair and let that shit sink in for a moment. It was short lived, when, "Beo?" a stern voice startled me.

Balls!

"Hi, beautiful," he said, and I could hear the smile in his voice. I opened my eyes, and in front of me, larger than life, stood fucking *Handsome*, grinning like he had just gotten the entire pie.

“Hi, Colt.” I nodded and held my breath when he took the chair next to mine. I didn’t need this man around me right now.

“You okay, boy?” he asked, turning in his seat and pressing the back of his hand against my forehead. “You’re sweating, little man, and you’re ice cold.”

“I’m fine,” I huffed out ’cause my breath was gone, and the dude’s eyes were gawping, all concerned over me. I didn’t want to draw Colt into my messed-up life. I had already made the decision to have nothing to do with him. And yet, I couldn’t stop thinking about him.

“What’re you doing here anyway?” I glanced down, seeing the open folder and quickly tucking all that shit in the envelope. Luckily, Colt had bent over to pick up my beanie. I couldn’t help but stare at his blazer spanning snugly over his back and lats. The guy was packing some major muscle mass.

He held the beanie out over his fist, but pulled it away when I tried to grab it.

“Not so fast, little one.” God, did he have to use all these words causing my dick to go crazy in my jeans?

“Came to get my HIV test results,” he said, not looking at me, my beanie rotating on his finger. “You?”

“Same,” I lied.

Turning to me, he raised a thick eyebrow. “Bad news?” he asked.

I shook my head. I knew my stats. Just ’cause guys threw themselves at me didn’t mean I slept with each fiend, friend, and god. With the sex thing at least, Mother Nature had given me a bit of slack. I could be attracted to a guy, but sexual attraction was a different matter. Colt Maxus was on a whole new celestial, cosmic scale. One look from the man, and my blood was already flooding down south. That’s why I knew, last night, that those two Bitches were packing a hell of a punch my way.

Typically, meeting a guy I was sexually attracted to led to a date and a chat, then some kissing and fooling around and finally, maybe—usually never—sex. The last time it happened was well over eight months ago. But with this man seated next to me? I wanted to ride him dry and let him fuck me right through the floor, forgetting my name while we were at it. I needed to be in his arms, curled up into him, making love through the night and burning away in that passion, or lust. This. Was. Fucked. Up!

I stood, and turned, “Sorry, big guy, but I got to run,” holding my hand out for my beanie. He looked me up and down.

“How long are you going to make me wait, boy?”

I gaped at the dude, dumbfounded. What the hell was that supposed to mean?

“I can be a very patient man, Beo Moon,” he said and stood, glaring down at me from hooded brows. “But, when it comes to certain things, people shouldn’t test my endurance, or my temper. I’ve decided, when it comes to you, beautiful,” he stepped closer and placed the beanie over my head, “I don’t have any. You will be mine, Beo. I promise you. So don’t make me wait too fucking long!” he growled then cupped the back of my head with his left hand, hauled on it, and bam!

His mouth covered mine as he forced his tongue past my lips and kissed me with fucking, blazing hell-storm and passion. I moaned as his assault continued. The bastard even curled his right arm around my waist, crashing me against his hard body and deepening the kiss. It lasted fucking lifetimes. Grasping him by the lapels, I silently begged him not to stop—kissing him back, hard, and trying to bury myself in his mouth.

He tasted too good, too right, too damn perfect, and I wanted him too much.

Until some nurse snapped next to us, “Gentlemen, this isn’t an appropriate place to—”

“I didn’t ask anyone’s fucking opinion, so fuck off!” he growled against my lips, sending a fire through my blood and causing my poor marathon-running heartbeat to pick up its pace.

Colt finally released my lips and pulled back. With nostrils blazing, he drew in my scent and glowered at me with hot eyes.

“Shit, I shouldn’t have done that,” he mumbled and let go of me.

Pretending not to hear, I grinned and asked, “What was that?”

“Never mind,” he rumbled and started buttoning up his blazer. Blushing, I snorted at seeing his pants tenting as it was quickly hidden from view.

“What so funny?” He smiled, attempting a scowl, and tapped a finger to the tip of the bulge in my own jeans. I gasped and stepped back.

“I’m not the only one that’s got a woodie.” He licked his lips and placed his hands in his pockets.

“You and I, Babyboy, are going to make beautiful fucking puppies one day. Dinner. You will call me,” he said then turned and walked off.

I just stared after the man.

I wouldn't call, not after this. He didn't deserve to have his heart ripped out, no one did.

With shaky legs, I slumped back into the chair, pressed my palms against my eyes and sobbed.

It wasn't fair, none of it was. Fate had no right to play with a person's heart when they were busy dying. Why did he have to be so handsome and damn aggressively demanding? That shit was a major turn-on in my book. And why step into my life right at this moment, or ever at all?

Why did I still want to get to know him, even though I knew I would just be setting us both up for heartache? It wouldn't just be the dying part that would hurt. People would have to watch me thinning, fading away into skin and bones. They say the last part of this illness is the ugliest. Victims start living in their own world, becoming delusional, not recognizing their loved ones, and living in the past. It wouldn't just cause me physical pain but also emotional pain, for me and those closest to me. That's not even to speak of the treatment. That's sometimes worse than the disease.

It was what Doc had said, too. This disease was horrid to see grasping hold of someone. It ripped people apart, and it fucking hurt! I didn't want to be the cause of that pain, not again, not to anyone.

“Beo!” Little hands reached for my arms and clawed weakly at my skin. After sniffing down my tears and rubbing the excess from my eyes, I reached out and picked up the squirming bundle of joy and placed her in my lap.

“Hi, baby girl,” I said as Megan flung her arms around my neck, hugging me tight.

I saw Jane take a seat next to me, her thick blonde hair hanging over her left shoulder. She gave me a look over, then closed her green eyes. I watched as silent tears rolled down Jane's face, tracking a black mascara stripe across her cheeks.

Shit, I haven't even begun treatment, and I'm already hurting the people in my life. Why couldn't she use waterproof makeup? Now all that shit was just going to look messed up. *Women! I don't get you sometimes.*

Jane didn't say a word as she took my hand and knotted our fingers together. She didn't have to. She understood what I was feeling, the emotions I was going through, what my fears were and what my worries were. Because on my lap was her own reason for grieving.

"How you doing, little Magpie?" I said to Megan, who was getting comfortable in my lap. Her arms still around my neck, she laid her head against my chest.

"I'm sleepy," she sighed. Then, totally random like any seven-year-old would be, she said, "Wow your heart's really fast, Beo. You okay?"

No shit, baby girl. No shit.

"I'm fine," I lied and looked down at her pastel face. I went to push back a lock of hair, like I always did, then realized there was none. Instead I patted the pink butterfly-pattern bandanna on her head.

"That's nice, Magpie. I love it."

Green eyes sparkling with admiration looked up at me. "We got you one, too!" She released her hold on my neck and dug in her little purse, pulling out a hot-pink bandanna with skulls on it.

"I picked it out, you know, for when..." Her face fell. I knew the hair loss thing, especially for a little girl, was an epic deal.

I was no fluffy gay guy, but for this little lady, I'd wear a fucking tiara and tutu to a biker rally. Taking the bandanna from her, I fastened it around my neck and grinned as she gifted me with a smile.

A nurse stepped up to us, and I nudged Jane in the leg.

"Go with Sinha, baby girl. Mommy will be there, okay."

Megan scooted down from my lap and went to the nurse's side.

"Hey, Magpie," I said, and reached into my backpack. Pulling out a chocolate bar, I held it out to her. I knew she kept plenty of sweets in her little pink handbag to help with the nausea chemo brought with it. Happily, she smiled, came over and took it from me, but I held on. "Remember, baby girl, my chocolate is special. It's got some epic Beo love in it."

"I know, silly," she blushed pink, "but your hugs are better." She giggled, and I gave her one before she went off.

Jane and I watched Megan disappear into the children's oncology ward.

“Beo,” she whispered, and already I could feel the inevitable force of emotion burn in my face, “she’s going to be okay, you know.”

I turned to Jane, tears streaming from my eyes. Her statement wasn’t just words to encourage. They were the truth. Megan was one of the lucky few that survived her illness. Me, not so lucky.

“Course she is,” I said. “That girl’s gonna be a hot doll face one day, just like her mamma bear, making men’s jaws drop to the floor.”

Jane smiled, the first true, pure smile I had seen since before Megan got diagnosed. She leaned over and adjusted my bandanna so the knot sat on the left side of my neck.

“How are you holding up, kid?”

I looked at her, then avoided her gaze. I couldn’t hide stuff from this girl, no matter how hard I tried. Jane was one of the only people, aside from Doc, who knew how severe my form of cancer was this time around.

“I’m a mess inside. Outside, I’m just regular old Beo.”

“Have you told Mary yet?”

Both of us kept quiet when two doctors passed. Ever since Jane came to the orphanage, we had this habit of keeping our conversations private, not speaking when people were close enough to hear. I frankly don’t know why, since, most of the time, no one bothered to listen.

“No, I was actually planning on visiting her grave today when... *he* kissed me.” I was all honesty when it came to Jane. There was no point in bullshitting her. She’d figure it out sooner or later anyway.

“Beo.” She scowled, folding her arms under her breasts.

“No, Jane,” I warned, “it’s different. Bitches really got me by the balls with this one.”

She knew who the Bitches were. Jane knew every detail about me. She was five years my senior and had lived at the orphanage till she was ten, when her grandparents showed up and took her away. Even then, she was a demanding little princess and forced them to come pick me up over weekends so the two of us could get into trouble.

“What’s so funny?” She punched me on the arm.

“Just remembering when we stole Old Man Ferly’s choppers. He still mad?”

“Six feet under. Yes, I’m sure he’s still mad at us for burying his dentures in one of his potted plants.”

She sighed, turning her wedding band on her ring finger, and stood. “Listen, Beo, you know you have a place to stay, and don’t even try your head shaking with me. Granddad’s worried. Hell, I’m worried. You can’t do this on your own. We know you’re strong and tough, and you don’t want to burden any of us. But, here’s the thing, the more you fight against us, the more we are going to fight for you.” With her thumbs she swiped away the new set of tears, causing black smear marks under her eyes. “Shit, look what you did!” She smiled and leaned over, pulling me to her for a hug.

“Just please, Beo,” she whispered in my ear. “I know you don’t have a place to go after tonight. So promise me. It will break Megan’s heart if I have to tell her Uncle Beo’s not coming to live with us.”

Aww, damnit. Jane knew how to hit me straight in the balls.

“I’ve got a bottle of red wine with our names on it, and I want to hear all about Mr. Mysterious. Got it?” She let go and adjusted her blouse.

“Okay, Mamma Bear, but give me a couple, would ya?”

“I’ll give you two days, or I’m hunting your ass down. You got me?” She pointed with a manicured nail.

“Yes, ma’am. Now go get my girl and give her a kiss from Uncle Beo,” I said and got up, picking up my bag and sliding the envelope inside.

“Love you, kid,” she said from a couple of feet away.

Yeah, I loved her, too. Megan even more. I knew I was becoming the big brother figure in the kid’s life. Goddamned unfair. Her daddy was shot dead by a gang of drug dealers. Christo had been a good man, and a damn brilliant cop. They had Megan right after he and Jane got married. I was fifteen when she was born, then two years later, Fate had to take her daddy from us. Then, just ’cause Fate and Mother Nature were cruel twisted Bitches, they give the kid cancer on her fifth birthday.

I think you’re understanding why I hate those forces so much. But they weren’t done with little ol’ Beo. Things were gonna get bad—really fucking chaotic, messed up, and then some—before I saw the light shine through.

Chapter Three

“When life gives you lemons, Beo makes you pancakes.”
— Colt Maxus.

I shouldn't have kissed Beo, never even attempted it. But I did, and he did, and God, it was everything and so much more than I will ever be able to describe. I had to cling to every fiber of my self-worth not to take him right there on the hospital floor and pound his sweet hole. My fingers were clammy, standing with my tongue down his delicious mouth, and scenting him that close. I wanted to see every inch of his skin and mark it with my mouth, teeth and seed. I starved for Beo Moon like nothing else existed in my entire life before.

And that bitch nurse tried to tell me it wasn't an appropriate place to kiss the man that had my brain turned inside out and my heart pounding in my chest.

I tried to convince myself that I was holding back the angry storm violently rearing up to tear through me as disgusted and shocked stares from patients and staff glazed over me. *Keep calm, Colt. Keep motherfucking calm. These people are ignorant and stupid.* Matching their stares, I walked out of the hospital. I gloated. They saw. Every motherfucker saw me kissing Beo, and they knew he was mine. I was angry at myself. Once again, I was being a dick, demanding what I wanted. But this time, I gave a shit about my actions and the ripples they would cause.

I was also angry at Beo—for making me want him so much, for being such a goddamn brain tumor in my head. It had been only one day, not even a full day, and he was all I thought about. His soft lips against mine, mouth lingering with the tang of coffee, cigarettes and some mint sweet he had been sucking on. His body pressed up alongside mine, smaller, weaker. Goddamn clothing in the fucking way, but still feeling his bulge growing hard and pressing into my thigh. Hearing his beautiful moan and whimper when he pulled on my blazer and kissed back.

Yeah, my cock almost nuked itself. Now that I had tasted him, I wanted more. Much more.

Maybe it was my own wrongdoing, forcing myself on him, being arrogant and stating the things that I did. Telling him he would be mine, thinking intimidation would work this time to get what I wanted.

I was wrong.

I wanted him to call, wanted to hear that fucking honey angel voice so desperately, but for two fucking goddamn weeks, Beo didn't call. I went over to where he lived only to find he had moved out, and the shit-faced, fat, yellow-stained-T-shirt, dick of a landlord couldn't say where he'd moved to. If I thought that first night was hell, it was nothing compared to what followed; like Tartarus, torment and suffering followed me those two weeks. I'd choose the River Phlegethon blindly over the bane he put me through.

My resolve was running thinner than a fucking thread. Anger, concern, fear and a whole lot of other shit had built up inside me, and I was going to blow up like a volcano.

I was snapping at everyone in the office for just looking at me. Christine, my PA, had threatened to resign. I couldn't run my office without that woman. Well, I could, but she was too good at what she did, and keeping her mouth and nose out of private, illegal side jobs that crossed my desk. If she left, I'd have to put her under with all the shit she knew and turned a blind eye to. Yeah, I cared about the bitch. I would never admit it to her or even Richard, but Christine didn't deserve to die over the fact that *maybe* she could be a liability. I even managed to piss Richard off, snapping at him, telling him he was a two-faced worthless cunt for a small detail he missed on an insignificant job.

That guilt only added more fuel to my fire. So I took two days off, got boy Finn and his Asian friend to come and entertain my cock over a long four-day weekend. I worked those two subs hard and rough. Each motherfucking time I fucked one of them, Beo would pop up in my head, and then I'd fuck those boys even harder. Wasn't it enough that he had to haunt my thoughts every second of every day, but during sex too! This anger was new, different, consuming, fucking raw, and it was becoming dangerous for people to be around me.

It was the Sunday night of my fuck-fest weekend, and I was watching the two subs, high on weed, my dick too tender to fuck, and their holes not in any better shape. Finn was going at the Asian's throat, biting, kissing, licking and dry humping him on the leg. I had denied them both release until now, and the two were like starving animals. Finn lay out on his back with his muscular thighs spread wide, his long, fat cock pointed in the air. Asian boy growled and, in one swallow, engulfed Finn's dick down his throat.

Watching those boys going at each other, my thoughts wandered to Beo. What was he doing right now? It was raining again, and in a couple of weeks,

winter would be here in full force. Was he warm? *God, he was always so cold.* He'd felt like ice each time I'd met him, even when I kissed him. Did he have something to eat? Did he even have a place to stay? Would he accept me for who I am, what I am, for all the shit I've done?

I'd never even considered him becoming my submissive. If he wasn't into that, I'd stop. I'd fucking give up going to The Bark for a fucking hippie kid I barely knew. The warning signs had flared up and stopped, then flared again and again in my head. I couldn't pay heed to them because Beo fucking Moon was consuming me from the inside out and driving me out of my mind.

They say obsession is a dangerous thing, but Beo Moon wasn't just an obsession. He was becoming my fucking addiction. I'd seen the kid twice, kissed him once! It was fucked up. I even considered having him kidnapped, just to have him. Yeah, Beo Moon made some real messed-up shit spread through my mind. I even pondered if that old witch had placed a curse on me.

Sighing, I pinched the bridge of my nose, and heard Finn gasp as he came.

"My turn," Asian boy said, sneering and wiping the excess cum off his chin only to lick it from his hand. He lay back on the carpet and spread his legs for Finn to go at his cock. I'm sure if I hadn't drilled their holes tender, they'd be fucking each other into the next lifetime.

Finn was a fucking deity of male muscle and beauty. All toned and sculpted, like God had taken special care to carve him into existence. Beo had nothing on Finn. The two's beauty was as incomparable as heaven was from hell.

Finn was a vain and greedy little sub. A motherfucking whore, too. A Dom just had to say, "boy," and he was already spreading his ass in full glory to get some cock or fist down his hole. He was also in love with me. God, he wasn't the first sub that had begged me to collar him. I also knew a little shit when I saw it. Finn might have declared his undying feelings to me, but I knew he was more in love with the image of the power-hungry tyrant, and my fat-ass bank account, than the real me.

Beo knew I had money, and he was definitely attracted to me, yet he still pushed me away. It might have been that which had sparked my whole obsession with him. Fear had started swirling inside me that once I had him, had my fill of Beo's body, mouth and hole, I'd just cast him aside like I did with any other sub.

Why was I doing this to myself? Allowing him, a lowly hippie punk, to rule my head.

I looked at the boys again. The two subs were so entwined and content in each other that I felt neglected. I could have this every night. A different ass, or, perhaps, the same, if they were good and pleased me enough. Hell, I could have an orgy of boys at my beck and call for my amusement or servicing me. Commitment to one single soul and all this crap relationship shit that went with it, the emotional energy involved to maintain it, was fucking exhausting.

Fuck it.

Fuck him.

Fuck. Beautiful. Beo. Moon.

I don't need him. My life is the way it is because I chose it to be that way. I'm in control, and no one fucks with my head or my heart. So the next time—

No, there won't be any motherfucking next time.

I'm done being a slave to obsession and him.

“Boys!” I barked, and both looked up at me, Finn's eyes growing wary. He knew when I was boiling with rage.

“You think I'm paying for your weed and alcohol so you can fucking eat each other?” I reached for my boxers and pushed them down, exposing my semi-hard dick. “You thought I called your asses over here so you could have a motherfucking boy party?”

My gaze sliced from one to the other, and quickly both resumed their submissive positions. On their knees, chins against their chests, shoulders straight with hands clasped behind their backs.

“Sorry, Master Colt, we beg your pardon. We got carried away,” Finn said.

He knew how to play a Dom. Hell, most of the giddy dumb fucks at The Bark who gave a shit about subs were in love with him. I guess, in a sense, Finn and I are more suited for each other than any other pair. We both manipulate people using our resources to our advantage. But a Svengali couldn't bullshit another, more experienced, Svengali. Finn learned that the hard way, evidenced by the scar on his chin. One I had placed there. He'd never attempted to fuck me over again. I warned you I was a special kind of fucked up.

Stroking my cock, and grinding my teeth from the tender fucking friction, I called the boys over. Both crept on hands and knees to my feet. Apologetic eyes gazed up at me, one from under black hair and the other from blond curls. “It's yours, boys; make Master proud.” I grumbled and let my head rest against the

back of the couch, shutting my eyes. I knew whose mouth was whose. Finn knew I liked it soft after a couple of days of fucking, the Asian, not a fucking clue. “No fucking teeth!” I gripped him by his black hair, causing him to yelp. I shoved his head toward my dick. “Slowly, boy. Master wants it tender, with lots of tongue and lots of moist lips.” I released his hair and pinched his small ear between my thumb and index finger, twisting it slowly. “Unless you want a crop to warm up your already tender little fuck-hole, you better start obeying, you little shit.”

“Y-yes, Master Colt,” he hissed, while his ear turned redder than his cheeks. Slowly I felt his lips graze my tender meat, tongue every-so-often licking along one of the veins, and I let go of his ear, watching the two boys. There was just something about two hungry mouths worshiping my cock—it was primal, almost beautiful. But I wasn’t feeling it. Most likely due to my sac being spent from all the fucking.

My phone chirped, signaling a text. I had to reach for it, since I had a big meeting with a private client the following week. You didn’t keep him waiting. I was nervous to do business with the man, but the cut I would get out of shipping the large amount of cocaine to Russia wasn’t something you just turned your nose up at.

The screen showed an unknown number. As I tapped and read the text, my cock fucking jizzed itself.

We Should Fuck. Beo.

And my heart was happier than a fly sucking on shit.

“Get the fuck off me!” I growled at the two subs, abruptly irritated by them being here. I stood so fast, pushing the boys away, the Asian fell straight on his jaw, Finn on his back.

“Master, what the hell?” Finn dared to question and was up on his feet.

“Get the fuck out of here now!” I roared, ignoring him.

My blood was pulsing so fast in my ears that the world started to spin.

Text him back, dickhead!

I started texting, feeling like goddamn Richard button-fucking his phone in my office those weeks back.

Then I looked down at junior, all weeping translucent cum and swirling back like he had foreskin.

“Fuck!” I groaned.

How the hell was I even going to fuck that boy’s ass with the way I’d behaved the last couple of days. My dick was already protesting. There was no fucking way it was going to happen.

“Fuck!” I bellowed like a kid throwing a tantrum.

“Master Colt, are you—”

I gripped Finn by the neck and snarled in his face when he tried to reach for me.

“You know my rules. You want to add another scar to the collection?”

He knew I didn’t like subs touching me. I didn’t do the snuggling bullshit, or getting all comfy and mushy in one another’s arms. That shit wasn’t me. My bed was mine. My room was not submissive territory. No sub had stepped into my bedroom, and none ever would. Finn had tried it once. That’s how he got that scar, when I slammed his drunk face into the nightstand. Broke his pretty little nose, too.

I watched his eyes widen with panic, my fingers digging into his neck leaving red angry marks. “I said get out!” Spit came flying as I yelled into his pale face. I let go of my grip and closed my eyes, drawing in a deep breath. I was losing it. Mental hospital here I fucking come, all thanks to Beo Moon and his four-word text.

“Finn, just leave, please,” I said gently, shocking even myself. I waited, listening to the two boys silently getting their stuff and removing themselves from my apartment.

Silence lingered as I gave myself a couple of minutes to calm the fuck down. I stared at the phone’s display, the cursor blinking, waiting for me to type.

Beo, no sex. Not yet, Babyboy, but I would love to see you, tonight. Please. I’ll make dinner.

I fucking stared at my own text, nostrils flaring. Wanting to press erase, I pressed send by accident.

His reply came in seconds.

K. Send address. Will take cab.

I sent him the address, then got my ass moving, cleaning away the scattered condoms, beer bottles and joint nubs. God, it looked like a fucking frat party hit

the place. All that was missing was lost underwear. I popped in the shower, washing away the stench of sex and weed that clung to my skin, threw on some lounge pants and a tight black shirt, ran my fingers through my hair and cleaned my teeth.

Stepping into the living room, I was heading toward the kitchen when my phone rang.

“Colt Maxus,” I gritted out.

“Mr. Maxus, it’s security. There’s an,” the man must have covered his mouth since it sounded hushed, “escort down here, called Beo Moon, wanting to—”

“You motherfucker!” I rumbled into the receiver. “This is your lucky day, you cunt. Because I swear, if that boy wasn’t standing there in front of you, I’d come down and wring your neck!”

“Sorry, sir. My mistake.”

“And next time he comes in, you don’t call, you just let him up. Got it, asshole!”

“Yes, sir.”

I slammed the phone down. Everyone knew the grumpy dick asshole living on the top floor, and no one in the building liked me, but that was their fucking shit to deal with. I owned this motherfucking building, so they couldn’t say jack.

A few minutes later, there was a tap on my door. I stood glaring at it, then the second tap came and still I didn’t move. I was fucking scared. That door kept us apart, and once I opened it, I would let Beo not only into my apartment but into my life and my bed. Never could I have prepared myself for him settling into my soul and staking claim to my heart—though that realization would come a lot later.

Dashing to the front door, my bare feet resounding on the concrete floors, I reached for the lock.

Beo was standing in my fucking doorway. The world could have ended, I could have lost every damn penny to my name, and it couldn’t have wiped the stupid smirk off my face.

A vintage, faded Star Wars T-shirt hid under an old 80s biker jacket, a couple of lost drops of rain still clinging to the leather. A clean pair of dark-

black waxed jeans, with no holes this time, gloved his legs. They were accompanied by black, worn leather military-style boots and a duffel bag clutched in his right hand and his guitar case over his left shoulder. That fucking beanie was pushed further back, allowing some of his black hair to hang over his forehead. A single, blindingly pink bandanna was folded and tied into a neckerchief. My own little Rockabilly looked fucking edible. But his eyes, they were tired, with dark crescents under them.

I was nervous as shit. “Come in,” I said in a taut voice, and coughed to clear my throat. “Please, Beo.” My heart was pounding a crazy fucking mantra in my chest.

He didn't move, eyes raking over me, then back to mine before looking to the floor, rolling his pale, rosy bottom lip with his teeth. I watched his hands tighten on the straps of the duffel bag and guitar case.

My heart beat faster.

Was he regretting coming over? Scared? If he decided he didn't want to be here, I wasn't sure if I'd let him leave or fucking tie him up.

“Beo?” I croaked and broke the distance between us, towering over him. Slowly, sad brown eyes nervously looked up at me through dark lashes.

“Can I stay the night?” he said in a brittle whisper. So softly, I wanted to fucking cry.

Reaching for his face, I stroked two fingers along his jawline. Gooseflesh gun-fired up my arm, not just from how cold his skin felt, but from actually touching him.

“Yeah, beautiful, as long as you like,” I said, smiling to the point my fucking cheeks hurt.

“Thanks,” he sighed, closing his eyes. He dropped the duffel bag and literally crashed his head against my chest, wrapping his arms tightly around my waist, his fingers kneading into the muscles of my back. Then he sighed again.

I stood dead still for a moment, waiting for the anger to vent, for me to tear him off and shove him away. It never came. Instead, there was a serenity inside me. Something I rarely experienced in life, if ever. I finally placed my arms around his bony shoulders, pulling him tighter against me, and running my hands up his neck and under the beanie to stroke his hair.

“Everything okay, Babyboy?” I asked, a hell of a lot of concern running through my mind. Did Beo actually think he had to sleep with me to have a bed

for the night, and if so, how many other men did he have to offer his body up to for a warm bed? My stomach crunched, spine turning to fucking ice and teeth clenching from fury at the idea of another man's hands on him. What they would do to my boy.

Shit, I shouldn't talk of him as mine.

"Right now, everything's perfect." he said in a sleepy voice and scrubbed his cheek against my pecs and snuggled in closer. My anger died right down at his innocent gesture.

Yeah, yeah, fuck, I get it. Call me an obsessive-compulsive personality disorder, and a head case, but this was Beo in my arms, pressed up against me. I was fucking happy!

"What do you want for dinner?" I asked, wishing this fucking frog in my throat would just get.

Staring up at me, causing the beanie to slide off, and his hair to look just plain chaotic, he said, "Ain't hungry, just tired," and lowered his head against my chest again.

Wrapping my left arm firmly around his thighs and my right arm around his shoulders, I picked the hippie kid up and carried him, guitar and all, up the stairs straight to my bedroom and sat his ass down on my bed.

He blinked when I switched on the bed light, and finally focused on me with drowsy eyes.

Cupping his cheek, I said, "Just a second, going to go lock up." Then left the room when he nodded with a smile.

It took five minutes to lock the apartment door, switch off the lights—checking that everything that shouldn't be left on, or unattended, was off—and come back into my room.

Beo had fallen asleep. Jacket, boots and jeans neatly piled next to his guitar.

I should have been pissed. The whole idea of seeing him again was so we could get to know each other, and partly because my dick was out of action.

But I had to fucking smile at the pair of hairy, pale legs and white briefs below the Star Wars T-shirt as he lay on his stomach. Pleased that he was asleep and getting some much needed rest, I reached for the central heating and turned it up a notch. Grabbing a faux fur blanket from the hallway closet, I draped it over us, as I lay down next to him. He turned and buried his face

against the hollow of my neck, a pleased little sigh escaping from his lips. "Thanks," he mumbled, and that was the end of it.

Watching him lay there, I pushed a lock of hair from his forehead, and counted the five random freckles on his face. He was imperfectly beautiful. The shape of his jaw, the smooth complexity of his skin. His lips slightly parted, his chest rising and falling. In the light cast from the side lamp, Beo looked young, underage young, and it shocked me how little I knew about the kid.

I leaned in, gently brushing my lips over his, kissing him goodnight, and the little shit kissed back, his upper lip slightly curling as he grinned.

I growled deep, and his smile grew.

My cock stirred and my chest expanded, my mind running a mile a second wanting to know—*What the fuck? Who are you, and where is Colt Maxus?* I switched that voice the fuck off, because Beo was here in my bed, with my arms around him as he curled up to me, and my heart was content. I was so motherfucking, goddamn happy.

The next morning, that happiness shit itself.

I woke disoriented with the heavy dread that something was wrong and missing. Glancing at the bedside clock, I saw it was far past nine a.m.

Cursing, I sprang up.

"Beo, I'm late, Babyboy. I'll call—" I shut the hell up when I turned and my gaze fell on the empty spot where he should be.

I turned my stare to where he had placed his clothes; they, and the guitar, were gone.

Charging down the stairs, taking them two at a time to reach the hallway, I looked for his duffel bag at the front door, where we left it last night.

Nothing.

Beo was gone. Just slept in my motherfucking bed and left.

I had no idea what hit me in the gut from the realization ripping through my mind, causing me to fall back against the wall and slide to the concrete floor with my hands pressed to my face.

Rejection, sadness, hell, fucking disappointment? I had no idea. All I knew was that my heart hurt like it shouldn't. It was confusing. My brain ached thinking about it. One man couldn't feel all this shit so quickly for another

human being. It was just downright wrong, making me fucking miserable. Was I completely in lust with Beo, obsessed to the point of love? Or was it that feeling where the world came to a complete standstill when he walked into the room and a smile graced his face?

I pushed myself up and protractedly walked to the kitchen, completely ignoring the smell of pancakes and the out-of-place yellow square paper stuck to the fridge. Reaching for the bottle of pain tablets, I froze. Glaring, my nostrils widened at the note the little bitch had left me. Snatching it from the metal, causing the magnet to fly and bounce across the floor, I crumbled up the piece of paper.

Who did Beo think he was, leaving a little note and just fucking disappearing on me? I was ready to discard the note in the trash, and whatever this shit between me and Beo was with it. Honestly, I was getting sick of this little fucked-up game; still, I hesitated. Sighing, I unclenched my fist, and decided to read it.

Hey. Sorry. Had to leave. Thanks for last night. You don't know how much it meant to me.

Smiley fucking face.

Beo.

PS

Enjoy breakfast.

XOXO

I glanced at the island in the middle of my kitchen. Stacked, dripping with syrup and blueberries, stood a plate of heart-shaped fucking pancakes.

I was going to kill the little fucker.

Beo's pancakes were fucking hell on a muscle building diet and addictive, just like the little shit himself.

Monday night came, and no Beo. I tried to call the boy, but each time the phone went straight to "the customer you are trying to call is [fucking] unavailable at present. Please try [the fuck] later." It continued till Thursday evening at The Bark, where I got the shock of my life, giving me my first gray hairs.

Chapter Four

“There was one single man that could make me eat my own shit if he wanted to. As much as I love to stroke my own ego, he terrified even me. And the best part, he didn’t even have to try. His name was Hades.” — Colt Maxus.

The Bark was private and secluded. Seated on a hundred acres in Greenwich, Connecticut, away from prying eyes.

It was a two-story mansion in the shape of a square, with a center garden and pool area for special occasions and the regular munches. It was like the virtuoso of Domination. The perfect place where Doms and subs could act out their natural roles as if it were the way of regular life. In simple terms, The Bark was a rapture for the BDSM community where we didn’t have to safeguard the lifestyle from society.

The mansion held forty rooms. The twenty on the ground floor were open to more involved play between numerous members at one time, or if a Dom and a sub wished an audience to watch or cooperate in their play. The upper twenty rooms were for intimate, more private play. Different rooms for different kinks. From medical examination rooms to the puppy pound, you name it, it was there. Four Dungeon Masters monitored each floor, giving The Bark a maximum of eight at any given time.

Getting a membership to The Bark was not an easy task for a Dom or a sub. A Dominant had to submit under one of the House Lords for a period of one month. A full psych evaluation, blood work-up, criminal background check, and an intense three-hour interview involving all ten House Lords was also required. That’s aside from the hefty joining fee and monthly membership dues. A Dom could pass all those requirements, but if one of the House Lords felt you didn’t belong, you did not belong. Doms who couldn’t afford the joining fee could offer their payment in time and service as a Dungeon Master or bartender, allowing The Bark to have so many at any one time.

Subs didn’t have it any easier. In addition to all the checks, they had to offer two months of domestic service to The Bark under the guidance of a House Lord. This absolved them of the joining fee; however, they still had to pay the monthly dues. Their interviews were also considered harsher and longer—a whole week—than those for the Doms.

There were three imperative rules that would never be broken at The Bark—the others could be bent under certain circumstances—no drugs, no drinking and playing, and lastly, it didn't matter who you were in your life outside The Bark. Once you pass through the lobby, you become either a Dominant or a submissive, and you leave your crazy at home. Because if you are banned from The Bark, you are banned from the lifestyle. The House Lords will make sure of that.

Driving through the main gate and up the concourse, I passed the motherfucking huge fountain with its little cupids pissing in the pond. I stopped at the entrance and got out of my black 1967 Ferrari.

“Master Colt, such an honor you would grace us with your presence tonight.” The valet—a Dom in training—raised a questioning brow at my gear.

It was more formal than what I usually would wear: a pair of black leather dress breeches, long-sleeved police shirt with Sam Browne strap, short biker gloves, traditional leather daddy cap, and twelve-inch biker boots. My attire sat snug around my body from the fifteen pounds of muscle mass I had gained over the last four months.

“Did Sir Richard step in this evening?”

The valet had a blush to his cheeks when he addressed me, “Yes. He had someone with him, a—”

“Brown-haired, green-eyed, hot piece of ass with dimples and cute as a fucking daydream, I assume?”

“You are correct.” His smirk widened.

I held out my baby's keys to the man. As he took them in his hand, I could see his eyes on my car. I growled, not letting go of the keys, “You scratch her, I'll whip your ass raw. Understood?”

“Yes, always gentle with the black fox.”

I had to snort at his comment. She was a sexy little fox. Ah, boys and their toys.

After receiving an infinity mark on my left wrist, which allowed me to play but not to drink, I stepped through the lobby into The Black Room. This was an enormous space partitioned into sections. The Black Room took up most of the front, to the left of it stood the entrance to the VIP lounge, or The White Room, and to the right of it was the common room, better known as The Red Room.

The board room sat to the left of the lobby. At the far side of The Black Room were stairs leading down to The Pit. A single large open space with a stage where a Dom could put on a show, a demonstration, or prove a point to his sub, or a submissive in general. Collaring ceremonies were also held there—even had a fucking wedding there once!

Admin was done at the offices of Clay Blackly, one of the owners, back in Manhattan. There were two other owners. Holding the biggest share was Luther Mark Jacaruso. A man I had yet to meet. Rumor said he was a private partner and had never once stepped foot in the place, but those same rumors said he was the Dom responsible for making the House Rules of The Bark and coming up with the strict requirements for becoming a member.

The third owner was Max Donovan, who was walking up to me. I knew all this because I sold them the property, shipped the interior décor, lighting and furniture, toys, crops (those that needed to be imported)—well, fucking everything, and I still do.

“Maxus, you old bastard.” Max’s big, black hand slapped me on the back as he turned and stood by my side. “How are you doing? Haven’t seen you here in, well, it’s almost been a month.”

“Work, you know, keeping me busy,” I lied. That hippie kid kept me from coming here. I was going out of my mind about that boy. Tonight was the first time since our meeting that I felt a remnant of my old self, hence the reason I came.

“Bull-fucking-shit,” Max whispered in my ear, “if you are so busy, Richard would be too, and he’s been here almost every night, negotiating.”

“I’m assuming a guest pass for James?”

Max nodded. The Bark didn’t give out many guest passes. They were fucking rarer than snow in the desert, but once in a while, if you knew who to speak to, and did a hell of a lot of convincing, you might get one.

I understood Richard wanted to get James a guest pass so James could scope the place out and see if he liked it. The Bark wasn’t for everyone, that was for sure. It could be a bit intimidating with the strict protocol. Seeing all these alpha’s walking around, their massive egos rubbing against one another, and I’m not leaving the Dommies out of this equation either. There were some women here that could intimidate the best of Doms. It just simply wasn’t a place for a newbie sub or Dom to be. If Richard was going to allow James to be

his sub full time, he needed to know if the kid would like to come here. Hence giving Richard an indication of how deep to go with James's training.

"Please don't tell me we're losing you in conversion to vanilla... Who's the unlucky boy?"

I couldn't respond, as I folded my arms over my chest and leaned against the wall. Max's words were so close to the truth it was frightening. Thank God, Max knew me well enough not to push the matter.

"Let me buy you a drink. I have business to discuss with you," Max said when I kept my silence.

I wasn't here for business. I was here to get a fucking reality check and to find the Colt Maxus that somehow went missing when a certain someone was scrambling my brains around. Plain and simple. And I sure as hell would never say his name again, ever!

"Sorry." I showed him the stamp on my right wrist. "But please do set up an appointment with Christine for next week, Max. Excuse me." I stepped away, turning to my right and entering The Red Room. You thought I was a VIP. Nope, not even a chance.

The requirements to get a membership were high enough. What it took to become a VIP, I didn't want to know. Something told me it had nothing to do with money, and I really didn't care. The Red Room suited me just fine. The boys and company of the Doms here were more my kind of thing. They liked it rough, and the subs could stand more pain than the soft little shits and do-goody Doms that graced the VIP lounge. Not saying there weren't some in there that could step up to being the kind of Dom I am, but the whole VIP status shit wasn't me. They didn't like me. I was a Dom. I took control and made a boy fly, then watched him fall and crash, leaving the tattered mess for one of the VIPs to come clean up. Still, those boys would come back begging for more.

The Red Room was dark due to the black-painted, high walls and low, glowing, black chandeliers. A deep blood-red carpet covered the entire floor, and black-leather, U-shaped couches were set about the space, giving an intimate feel to whomever's company one would find oneself in. Against the far wall was a small bar with one bartender. The whole setup of The Bark was made so that one felt relaxed. Often I would just come here to do exactly that. It was so different from the BDSM clubs and leather bars in the city, with their overly loud blasting music, crowded spaces, and bumping bodies.

The music flowing in The Red Room was a mix of sexy lounge and jazz styles, just loud enough that it became a relaxing background sound. Extra lighting came from neon tubes placed in horizontal grooves along the wall, which created an almost foggy feel with its classic 1920s style. Even the bartenders were dressed accordingly, in black leather vests and pants, white shirts underneath, with a bow tie around their collars to signify they were on duty.

The place was damn well worth every penny paid, twice over.

Seeing Richard seated on one of the couches with his face and bald head illuminated by the red neon lights, I walked towards him, greeting others with a nod along the way.

“Richard,” I spoke, stepping up to them. “Boy.” I ran my hand over James’s brown hair, ruffling it up while he sat in Richard’s lap. God, it was beautiful seeing these two like this. I just stared, smiled, and felt hurt.

I wanted that, wanted that with *him*.

“Colt fucking Maxus!” Richard sneered. “Where have you been the last couple of days? You’ve looked better, sweetheart.”

Hell. Goddamn fucking hell is where I was. Still am, evidenced by the restless sleep. And going out of my mind thinking about a fucking hippie kid.

“So, James, you like The Bark?” I sat, trying to avert the conversation. Richard only gave a sigh.

“I do, Master Col—”

James froze in Richard’s lap, blinking.

The boy grinned, “I beg your pardon but, Master Colt, you look fucking hot in your gear.”

“That’s two, adding to the other four lashes you have already earned tonight,” Richard growled into James’s ear. “I think you need reminding who you belong to, little boy.”

I let out a loud whistle, causing both of them to look at me.

“You sure got him by the fucking balls, boy.”

Richard’s stare said it all. With his former affairs, he wouldn’t have been bothered by the compliment to me, or to any other Dom, but James definitely snagged Richard big time.

"I'm sorry, Sir." James pressed his lips to Richard's throat, causing the man to tremble in his seat.

I silently laughed and shook my head, feeling the tension in my shoulders and back beginning to ease. Placing my right boot on my left knee, I stretched out my arms along the couch's back and closed my eyes, allowing the atmosphere and the presence of The Bark to fill me.

"You sure you're okay, Colt?" Richard asked, concern in his voice.

"Relaxing, trying to find my center." Richard also knew never to push a matter when I didn't elaborate. Several minutes had passed when I felt the disturbance of someone kneeling by my boots.

Finn had a unique smell. His scent, his pheromones, could turn any gay man on. Pheromones dictate our attraction to another on a sexual level, and it all comes down to our animalistic instincts and desire to mate. Unfortunately, I was highly enticed by Finn's fucking pheromones. Without opening my eyes, I snapped my fingers to the straining bulge in my leathers. Instead of going at my hardening cock, the little shit crawled up on my lap, rubbing his ass right on my dick, pulling a groan from my throat.

"Please, Master Colt." Finn's breath lapped at my skin. I was about to push the little fucker off me when he said, "I'm worried about you." I could hear in his voice he was being sincere. "Make me fly like only you can. Show them, and me, you're still the Colt Maxus that no one can compete with."

He knew how to stroke my fucking ego. Raising my head up off the back of the couch and coming face to face with the little cunt, I growled against his lips. "Room seven. Saint Andrew's Cross," I raised my voice high above the music, "and bring the Serpent's Tongue!" The Red Room fell to hushed whispers. I watched his throat swallow, eyes going big, as he shivered in my lap. Gripping his wrist, I could feel his pulse going wild.

"Scared now, little boy?" I placed my lips against his, forcing him to take a shallow breath. I had never kissed Finn before. "You poked the beast. You asked to play with the Titan. So don't give me the scared fucking attitude."

"Y-Yes, Master," Finn gasped, and I smacked my mouth over his, sucking hard on his lips.

He was definitely disoriented when he climbed off and walked away. It wasn't from that kiss. Finn knew as well as everyone what the Serpent's Tongue was: plain, simple, a kangaroo-hide bullwhip with the exception of a

forked elk-hide tip. It was created by one of the Toy Masters in The Bark before he passed away, and it was said to be the legacy he left behind. Bill Randal was also the man that taught me how to be a Dom, resulting in me earning my title as Master Colt.

Manipulating a bullwhip all came down to power. Not only for its wielder, but for those who watched, and the sub participating. A whip was its own enemy; it could make love to a sub's skin with a kiss, or it could savagely scar. It could make them soar, or ground them in fear, which all depended on the Master wielding it. One slip up could also cost me my reputation and status as a Master.

It was also one of the only items, if used, where I would personally bring the sub back from subspace. Dr. Martin Alexander was the only other Dom at The Bark that could wield the Serpent's Tongue.

News had already spread. When I stood, Richard did the same, giving me nod. As we advanced towards the exit of The Red Room, we were stopped by a sub. A white-haired boy named Damon.

There was one exception to the old guard's rules and most likely to most BDSM communities. The Bark had what we called the Alpha sub, who was also one of the House Lords. Damon was, in simple terms, perfection in the form of a submissive—a sub to stand as an example to all other subs at The Bark—but he was not without fault. As perfect as he was, he was also cold towards Doms. The respect was there, the honor to serve and the desire, but no love. I recognized his eyes. I saw those same steel-cold eyes every morning I looked in the mirror.

“Damon, good evening, boy,” I said in an even tone.

“Master Colt, Sir Richard,” he said with his eyes down. “It is rumored you are to put on a show tonight, Master Colt. It is requested by the House Lords that you do a demonstration instead.”

I had to smirk. Could the night get any better? It was just what I needed to forget about the hippie and take back control.

“Agreed. Thank you, boy. I assume that everything will be down in The Pit?”

“Yes, Master. If you would be so kind as to give us some time, a half hour perhaps, to set up and gather those wishing to watch?”

“Granted, boy Damon,” I said, and patted him on the hair. I had admiration for Damon, maybe even a small bit of sympathy at knowing the same demons haunted his nightmares.

With a nod, he was off.

“Sir, sorry, but what’s going on?” James asked.

Richard cupped his cheek, lifting James’s eyes to his. “Master Colt is going to give a demonstration. Well,” Richard chuckled, “more like put on a show to make his ego and status sparkle if you ask me, but that is what it is, boy. It’s going to be intense and could be a bit too much. You don’t have to watch, but I would like to be there for moral support. Just, James, baby,” Richard leaned in closer, “I’m not Colt. I’m not the type of Dominant he is, okay? I would never take a bullwhip to you, boy. Paddle, crop or my hands, understand?”

“Are you two done mushy fucking each other?” I barked. “I’ve got a boy to whip and a hole to fuck, and I don’t have the time to watch *P.S. I Love You*, right now.”

Turning, embers practically blazing in his glare, James bit out, “I’ll watch the old man throw out his back, with glee.”

“No punishment for that, boy,” Richard snickered. “Sorry, Colt. But you fucking deserved that one.”

“Like I said before, James, I fucking like you.” Even though I sneered back at the little fuck, my words were true. A sub rarely had the guts to stand up to me, even if his came in the form of disrespect.

I checked my watch, thinking on giving them twenty more minutes to set up, and the extra time for the anticipation to sink into Finn.

“Going to get some water. You love bunnies want anything?” I threw over my shoulder.

“One day, Colt, you’re going to find someone that’s going to knock you off your high horse, and I’m gonna watch you burn.”

“And you’ll be the one to pick me up, dust me off and help me back on my throne. I love you too, Princess Richard,” I said, walking towards the bar in The Black Room.

I had just given my order to the barman when a familiar little voice came popping into my head, and I closed my eyes. I didn’t need this. Didn’t need to hear him, especially not now. Didn’t need my subconscious to call him up right fucking now!

“Hi, Sir Smith, can I get a water before I go?” Each word, even down to the very syllable, sounded like him in my head. It wasn't enough that I had tried to shut him out of my brain, now I was imagining the little shit, too. I needed a fucking shrink to seriously check out my head, or I was definitely going to end up in the mental house. At that point, the bartender responded back.

“Hi, Beo. How are you doing, little man?”

How the hell would my imaginary Beo know Smith?

“Doing okay, just tired.

“Sir,” he added.

It was ridiculous and way too surreal to be my imagination. Opening my eyes, I turned to where the imaginary voice was coming from. My stomach clenched tight, my knees actually felt like fucking jelly, and I began to shake.

First, this was a fucking hallucination. Second, I was hallucinating. Third, a protective hand was placed on Beo's neck, and I lost it, growling, till I saw who the hand belonged to and went back to hallucinating and staring.

I couldn't believe my eyes. I could not even wrap my mind around it. The little fuck was standing right there in the motherfucking Bark, and I was about to let loose in molten anger, tearing every motherfucker in this place a new asshole, and most likely blowing an artery in my brain if someone even dared look at him!

Fucking! Shit!

The realization took my breath and caused my head to throb. Beo is here—*yes, Colt Maxus, you are not imagining or hallucinating*—because I could feel my own fingers digging into the flesh of my palms as I clenched my fists. If he knows the bartender, he has been here before, meaning he is a member!

The little whore!

In a blind rage, ready to reach for him and wring his little neck, I stopped when Dr. Martin Alexander stepped out from behind him, gave me a nod and placed his motherfucking hand on my boy's shoulder, touching him again.

Someone was going to die tonight, and I wasn't sure if it would be Beo, Martin or me.

“You ready to go, kiddo?” Martin said with his back to me, shielding Beo's sight.

Fuck! He dares call Beo 'kiddo'! I ground my teeth and clenched my jaw so hard I swore some of my teeth were going to shatter.

“Yes, Sir. Just a bit of dry mouth.” Beo took a gulp of the water, still unaware that I was standing several feet away from him, killer blood pulsing in my veins.

“Sir, I think Danny likes you,” Beo said.

“He is something,” replied Martin.

“No, I mean really-really likes you.”

“He... wait, he...” Martin raked his hands over his gray hair, tension straining back, shoulders and neck, causing the harness he was wearing to push into his skin. It seemed that, in that moment, he was having his own shocked revelation. Till Beo signed his own death sentence.

“He is the one I was referring to, Doc. So stop falling in love with me, 'cause it ain't never happening.”

Martin let out a deep sigh, which sounded like something I was in desperate need of. But I was too furious to move, let alone make a noise or breathe.

“Beo, about that, kiddo. Yes, I admit, I had been, might even still be, in love with you, but I want you to know, I will never, never overstep that boundary with you.”

Fucking perverted motherfucker! I gave a step towards them, my anger turning to sweltering rage, when Beo's next words froze me cold.

“That's why I love you so much, and can say the shit I want to say to you, when I want to... sorry, I meant, Sir.”

“Beo, you've never cared about protocol, so why start now? I'll always be Doc to you, no matter what, right?”

“True.” And they fucking hugged. Then turned and walked away like I didn't fucking exist!

I was about to go after them so Beo could see what happened to little slutty boys that didn't obey and respect protocol, and what the consequences were of pissing me off.

“Colt, we are ready for you.” The tight voice of Aria spoke in my right ear.

I turned to her. The full-body catsuit, with its wet-latex look spanning tight over her huge breasts, would have any het or les sub begging. Some Doms, too.

But she was spoken for, as evidenced by her pup's leash in her right hand and the thing kneeling at her heels, all tight muscles, rubber vest and dog mask.

The House Lord narrowed her blue eyes as she gave me a look from head to toe, then swept her gaze in the direction Beo and Martin had walked off to, seeing them just as they disappeared into the lobby.

Tsking, she bayed, "Never mind. With the state you're in, you'd only bring that boy harm, and I don't think Finn is the one you want begging for your marks. I believe Master Colt has been heart fucked." She giggled.

Oh, that fucking psychologist bitch was going to get it, because she was right. The term "heart fucked" was a phrase used to describe a Dominant so baffled over their emotions they couldn't perform their role as a Dominant. It usually was the result of conflicting emotions of the heart. It could also mean a more serious conflict, when one Dom fell for another.

Her long blonde hair brushed my face when she turned and walked away, her little pup all too happy, shaking his dog-tail butt plug and crawling after her.

It wouldn't be fair to Finn. I would only be taking out my anger on him with the bullwhip. That wouldn't be pretty. Not to him, and not to my reputation.

For the first time, I couldn't get out of The Bark fast enough. Reaching the lobby, I snapped at the valet boy to bring my car. Impatiently, I waited. I didn't dare step outside, fearing Beo and Martin might still be waiting there. I know myself. I'd either cause a fucking scene, chewing the boy out, or worse, fuck him right fucking there.

The lobby's front door opened, bringing with it Beo's voice. "Just getting my beanie, Doc. Be back in a sec," he said, head turned to the side, eyes not paying any attention to what was happening right in front of him.

As he was turning his head forward, I stepped towards Beo. "Oh, I'm sorry, Sir." He didn't look up, and tried to step out of the way. I gripped him by the shoulders and thrust him against the door so hard that it rattled, causing the valet boy to stare at us.

I snarled in his face.

"You little bitch!" Beo's eyes strained in their sockets, from fear, terror or just plain surprise? I didn't care at that moment, my emotions were too raw, and all over the fucking place. "I warned you!"

His throat moved, eyes still dancing, pupils blown motherfucking button wide. "You are mine, little boy," I growled from my chest, and for some fucked up reason, my dick had to go hard.

"C-Colt?" he whispered, his eyes moving from the hat on my head to the leather dress shirt to my leather jeans, and then to the silver arm band on my left bicep.

"Sir?" *Oh, now the little shit gets it.*

"Master!" I corrected, and sneered when I saw the valet boy with Beo's beanie.

Pulling back from him, I placed my right palm over his chest, keeping him against the door and snapped my left fingers. "Give me that!"

Grabbing it from the valet boy, my eyes never leaving Beo, I rotated the beanie on my hand. "You want this back?"

Beo's eyes peeped at the beanie and returned quickly back to mine.

"When you come collect your discipline, I'll decide if you deserve to get it back."

I tightened my fist in his leather shirt and pulled him to me. Growling, I took his lips with my mouth, exploring and savoring his sweet tantalizing essence with my tongue. A soft little whimper escaped from him, and I growled louder, finally pulling away. Grasping the door handle, I gave him one last heated glare. I stepped outside, leaving The Bark and its maelstrom behind.

My fists shook while adrenaline pulsed through me, the voice inside me screaming at me to go back, pick him up and say "I'm sorry." Like fuck I would listen to that voice again. It's because of listening to that voice that I'm such a fucking mess.

"Martin," I said, stepping around his BMW and getting into my car.

I didn't know if he would come. It was just a fucking beanie after all.

Halfway through the city, two things struck me simultaneously: One, the news would spread throughout The Bark that Colt Maxus had turned away from doing a scene because he was a mental case and suffering from being heart fucked. Two, whatever happened between me and Beo would sooner or later reach the ears of the House Lords. Aria would put two and two together. One didn't handle a sub the way I just handled Beo; there were major repercussions for that.

I didn't care to think about why, in all the time he has been a member, we had never bumped into one another. I was still too raw inside: jealous, angry and hurt. Fighting against the urge to turn back and go find him. I was, plain and simple, a fucked-up mess.

Friday morning wasn't any better. I couldn't fall asleep the previous night, tossing and turning, pacing back and forth, or just sitting in bed, till I finally dozed off around two, only to be awakened by my phone ringing at three o'clock.

Upon finally picking it up, Richard informed me that one of our cargo vessels had been overtaken by Somali pirates, even though I specifically made it clear to the captains, no matter how many stops or how much fuel it cost, they would not sail the African East Coast line to get to India. Which only resulted in me wondering how many other vessels we had shipped to the East did exactly the opposite, pocketing the money for themselves. Internal investigation here I motherfucking come. To top things off, it meant I was going to have to get the authorities involved in my business. Luckily, Richard had informed me, there were no illegal substances being shipped on this particular vessel.

By ten a.m., I was hungry, I was tired, and I was fucking on edge, jacked up on caffeine. I seriously understood why people jumped off a building some days, because I had that exact thought during the course of the morning.

My door was flung open, slamming against the wall, and causing me to jump and spill the cup of coffee over my dress shirt.

"Fuck!" I exclaimed and spun around. And, I shut the motherfucking hell up.

He stood there filling my doorway, arms above his bald tattooed head grasping the top part of the doorframe, his biceps bulging, almost the size of his head, thickly covered in ink all the way from his neck down to his fingers. I was scared he would rip the doorframe out.

"You look like fucking shit, Samael!" Hades said, stretching, his white T-shirt pulling up above his navel and exposing part of his hard, muscled stomach. His leather pants were so low, I could see his black bush, and I think I heard the door frame crack.

"Hades, it's g-good to see you. Don't w-worry about the shirt. Got an extra," I stuttered nervously.

Don't say it. Do not motherfucking say it! I know what you're thinking, here I am, Colt Maxus, shaking in my own pants. Sweating a fucking river, feeling like my tie's squeezing the air out of me.

This man I'd be a bitch ass yappy boy for, because you did not fuck with Breno Hades el Oscuro.

Hades was the President of the Cerberus Motorcycle Club (better known as the Cerberuens), and Lord of the NYC underground crime circles.

Hades gave you one look and decided if you lived or died. He didn't ask if you wanted to fuck, he asked if you wanted his cock first then his knife, or just his fist and knife.

Motorcycle clubs, gangs and mafia alike kept low when the man and his boys rolled into their town. He was in league with The Dragon's Tongue, a Japanese world-dominant organized crime syndicate (and not to be confused with the aforementioned Serpent's Tongue). They were the crime gods of the motherfucking planet. Everything was done with their knowledge, and in all likelihood, they issued it. When dealing with those bearing the mark of The Dragon's Tongue—a symbol of a dragon swallowing its own tail, burned into their flesh—one knew to fear them. Hades' mark sat right under his throat; it was known the higher up the mark was on the body, the higher up your ranking among their hierarchy. Hades was fucking high up and respected, and I suspected probably part of their inner circle.

As he let go of the door frame, I watched the colossal giant walk into my office and sit in my chair. His hooded dark eyes glaring at me, he nodded to the right, signaling me to close the door. I obeyed.

His sweat smell was already leaving its mark in my office, along with the stench from lighting up a cigarette, using my coffee cup for an ashtray.

“So,” he said in his deep voice, his muscles flexing, and threatening to pop out of his skin as he flicked off the ash in the cup.

“You and I, bitch, got us a little deal. This is how it's going to happen.”

He ran his scarred, tattooed hands over his full, thick beard. Leaving the cigarette between his lips, he spoke, “Next Friday night, my boys will deliver the goods to your warehouse in the harbor. I'll call you with the time.” He reached in his pocket and retrieved a disposable mobile phone.

“You switch this bitch on at ten tonight. I'll phone, then you switch it off and burn the motherfucking thing. I want you to be at the warehouse personally making sure my goods get the royal treatment I'm fucking paying you for.”

“As for the payment,” he reached into his leather vest and pulled out a knife as long as my arm and started cleaning his nails with the damn thing. “Cash only. I will deliver it personally on confirmation from the Russians that they have received every gram of their shipment.”

“You’re safe, Hades. I’ve handpicked the men transporting the shipment,” I said, trying to reassure him.

“Sure, but I’d feel a lot happier if you took your big white-boy ass and personally kept my sugar warm. But I get it, you’re a businessman, and you need to run the show.” He took another drag off the cigarette and placed the end in the cup.

“Lastly, Sammy,” his eyes darkened and, baring his stained teeth, he licked his lips and brought his blade against the left side of his face. He tracked the tip along the scar that stretched from his temple down under his beard, to his chin. “You fuck this up, I fuck you up. I’m not talking about just killing you, *muchacho*. I’m talking about taking a hot knife and slowly skinning you alive, then hanging it up right in front of your motherfucking building, and—”

There was an uproar outside the office.

“You can’t go in there!” Christine shouted. “Someone call security.”

My gaze immediately turned to Hades. His face went hard, the kind of cold telling you there’s going to be payment in blood. My employees knew when he was here, no one came near the office, not even Richard, not even for a life or death emergency.

The commotion continued outside, and my heart pounded faster in my chest.

“You call the cops on me, Sammy boy?” He sneered, dragging his blade back and forth against his bearded chin.

“No, Hades.” I stood, my voice tight as a whistling kettle, sweat pearling down the sides of my face. “I’ll sort this o—”

My office door burst open, displaying a not so healthy looking, and not so happy Beo. My heartbeat skipped and stopped, and my blood pressure plummeted, all for different reasons. One, he was here. He was fucking here in my office. Two, as much as I wanted to cancel everything in my day and spend it fixing that scowl on Beo’s face, I couldn’t. Not until after I handled Hades. Beo looked like the dead, and shit, I was worried about him, but more so about what Hades would do to him for interrupting us.

My blood turned ice cold when Hades growled, "Motherfucker!" Hades stood.

"Beo! Get over here and give Daddy Hades a big old hug!"

My jaw dropped. Beo fucking grinned a huge shit-eating grin and, like a little puppy dog, rushed over and slammed his arms around Hades. "Daddy Hades!"

Kill. Me. Fucking kill me.

Hades' tree-trunk arms wrapped around Beo's smaller body. God, I thought he was going to snap Beo in half.

Hades picked Beo up by the waist and placed him down on my desk and stepped in between his legs. If I wasn't so fucking shocked, mouth hanging open, I'd be angry.

Beo looked up, arms still around Hades' waist, and the filthy bastard cupped my boy's cheeks!

"How you doing, little one?" Hades asked, and it was then that I paid attention to the man's face. His features were soft from the smile on his face. I'd seen Hades' smile. It's cold and cruel and sends ice down your spine. This smile... this shit was fucking warmth lighting up his face like there were fucking stars in the man's eyes.

"I'm holding up, Papi."

Hold this motherfucking shit up. Papi? Daddy Hades?

"How's things at The Bark, boy?"

That placed things more in perspective, but then right damn well knocked everything out of it. It couldn't be. Hades could never be a Daddy Dom. A Master, a Dom, maybe even a fucking sadist, but not a Daddy Dom.

"It's the same. How are you doing, Sir? Found a *little* yet?" Beo asked, his voice soft with real fucking respect in his tone for the monster towering over him.

Hades went silent for a second.

Running a large dirty hand over his scalp, Hades breathed out a sigh.

"No place in my life for that, boy. Can't protect a little with the life I'm leading. Gotta keep things at The Bark, where I know my dark shit won't place them in danger."

Beo reached for the man's big paws, taking both of them in his hands and fucking kissed Hades' knuckles.

"I wish it could be different for you, Sir. You'd make a little boy so happy."

"Aww, shit, Beo. You always knew how to make my heart bleed. You do that with all the men in your life?" Hades gave him a smile.

"No, just the special ones."

I was back to shaking at this point, not sure what to make of the fact that Hades and Beo knew each other, or that they shared a deep bond, clearly displayed in the way they interacted with each other, or that Hades kissed Beo on the lips right in front of me!

Gripping Beo by the hair in a tight fist, Hades pulled him against his chest. "You need money, Beo, you need food, a place to stay, you need me to fuck someone over for you—you call. You know you got that shit with me, so don't be scared, kid."

Beo went completely still in the man's embrace, and now the jealousy was cooking in me, only to be cut silent when ice-cold, dark eyes glared at me from my desk.

Hades pulled back, drawing his gaze to Beo. "What you doing here anyway?" Hades paused, looked up and narrowed his eyes at me again, then at Beo. "This cunt Maxus fucking you, boy? He your Dom? 'Cause you shit better say no, or I'm gonna fix someone's face with black, purple, blue and red, and that shit won't be makeup!"

"No," Beo chuckled. "Colt is..." Beo went silent.

I held my breath. What exactly was I to Beo?

"Just don't hurt him, Daddy Hades. I... I like him."

Hades let out a growl, "Sí, little one. It's your call." He pulled Beo against him then lifted him off the desk. "I'll just be a minute, Beo. Then you can have the man to yourself, sí?" Hades said, winking at Beo while walking him to the door.

Beo's hand had barely shut the door when Hades stepped right in front of me, gripped me by the dress shirt and slammed me against the wall. His face was so close I could see the dark, almost black, detail of his irises.

With his hot breath blowing on my face, he grunted with a warning in his voice, "One hair on that boy's head, one motherfucking hair, and I'll kill you

with my bare hands, starting with these fuckers right here!” He grasped my crotch, giving it a hard squeeze. “And it will be fucking slow, and you will be conscious as I rip off your sac and start scraping your insides out from there. We clear, dick?”

I couldn't move and would have pissed myself if it wasn't for him still squeezing my crotch.

He let go, and I pulled in a steady breath, looking up at him, he beamed, but not in a friendly manner.

“So, you tasted Beo's baby butter?” he asked, licking his lips.

“His what?” I asked, my voice hoarse.

Hades roared, shook and rumbled with a dark laugh.

“His fucking cum? Boy's got some sweet juice in his cock. All warm and buttery thick.”

Something inside me snapped. One moment Hades was on me, the next he was on the floor, me on top of him, breathing hard into his face.

“You listen to me, you oversized fucking piece of shit. Beo Moon is off limits to you and to every other motherfucker out there! He is mine, and I will be his heart and his soul. I will keep him safe. Are we fucking clear?” I stood, turned, adjusted my tie, and said softly, still holding my voice steady, but picking my words carefully, “I'll switch the phone on at ten tonight. Your shipment will be safe, Hades. But never again threaten me when it comes to Beo. I only want what's best for him.”

Before I knew what hit me, Hades had me pinned to my desk with a large hand wrapped around my throat. I could smell the stale cigarettes on his breathe, our faces so close together his forehead touched mine. “You are either a very brave man, Colt Maxus, or extremely stupid,” Hades said, an angry grimace on his face, but I caught something I had never seen with Hades, a hint of respect. I acknowledged Hades with a slight nod. Seeing this for what it was, an act of equality, Hades released me.

“Glad we see eye to eye on that, fucker. Here's a small hint: flowers, and that kid will go fucking crazy for you. Buy him flowers. Hell, it could be a weed sprout you picked from the sidewalk, he'd still think the sun shines out of your ass.”

I waited till I heard my door open. For a moment, I stood with my back to the door, sweating and staring out of the window but not registering the sight

before me. Heated anger still burned in my gut, chest tight and my fucking heart pounding away like it was the last beat it would ever take.

Cold fingers wrapped around my fists and Beo's voice came, nervous, slightly scared, but troubled when he asked, "You okay, Colt?"

I wasn't. Not even a fraction, but I was done biting my tongue, done with this pussy-whipped shit I'd been the last couple of weeks. It was time Beo came face to face with Colt fucking Maxus.

Chapter Five

“Colt was a master of seduction. You became his instrument, and he played you to his will, and he would play you dangerously beautiful.” — Beo Moon.

Colt was angry, I could almost taste the tension in the room, and I could sure feel it from his clenched fists.

I detested it when people were angry with me. It always bothered me to the point where I became physically sick. With Colt, that anxiety was amplified tenfold. For some stupid reason, it hurt to know I was the cause of his anger.

With my chest going tight and my heart pounding unnaturally fast, I bit my lip and wrapped my fingers tighter around his clenched fists. “Please, Colt. Say something.”

Silence. His hard breathing only became more ragged. His back was drenched, and his blue cotton shirt was sticking to it. He smelled. God, his smell was like a heated aphrodisiac making my blood go primal.

Seeing Colt this morning, looking tired, his hair a mess and his beard untamed, my scowl went straight out the window. Then Hades—Oh my God! I’m not gonna get started on that man; he was as sweet as he was deadly. I could never say no to him. At least he respected me enough not to take things further after what happened between us. Going on Colt’s jealous fit on witnessing my intimate interaction with Hades, I could only assume he was about to go all fuming mad caveman on me.

I stepped closer. Pressed my face against his back, only to be overwhelmed by his intoxicating smell... musky, strong and so very male.

I wasn’t sure who I’d be facing when, or if, he turned around—Colt Maxus or his Dom side? That in itself was something that needed serious consideration. He wasn’t just any Dom, but *the* Master Colt.

He had a dark reputation at The Bark. If you were a sub looking for the right Dom to dominate and fuck you within a breath of your life, he was the one. Normally the softer subs sought out the more caring Doms. The hardcore boys took to the dark side. If you looked up Darth Vader at The Bark, you’d find the man whose back my face was now pressed against.

The Bark was one of those places you saw a new face every time you went, only to find out they've been a member for years. It came as no surprise I didn't put two and two together, or that we hadn't encountered each other there before. The White Room's members had a separate entrance from the rest of The Bark's participants. But they were upgrading, so last night was the first time I had used the lobby. I'd also never stepped outside of The White Room, and I didn't go there nearly enough to know everyone.

I knew I shouldn't be here. Seeing Colt again Sunday night was an accident, a mistake. Huge dumbass mistake. So then why was I here?

Aside from being pissed at him—'cause he had no right to take my beanie, that little piece of braided wool was the most precious possession I owned—everything felt right about Colt Maxus. He had something I needed, something I wanted from him, a void only he could fill. The minute he wrapped his arms around me, pulled me to him, and held me during that one night we spent together, safe, warm and cherished, I knew. It was the chocolate sauce on the ice cream, one I totally didn't expect or had ever experienced before with a lover... Colt felt like home. No one, not Doc, not Jane, and certainly no other lover, had ever made me feel that way. An intense sense of belonging, and the way he kissed, touched and held me, like a man starving for something, needing something, as much as I did him.

Maybe his angered state was telling me something, warning me against my desire. My gut turned, considering what to do. I didn't want to pull him into the road lying ahead. This was my opportunity to walk away. But would I, could I?

Drawing in his scent with a deep breath, I closed my eyes and gave his hand a cuddle. "I shouldn't have come, I'm sorry. Look after yourself. Okay." With one last squeeze I let go. I started to turn, when he gripped my wrists and pulled me up against him.

"Where the fuck do you think you're going?" he growled, and his breath blew against my face, causing a frantic thud as my heart jumped against my ribs. "What's with you and that piece of shit?" Colt's eyes had gone like emerald ice, sending a shiver down my spine.

"M-me and Hades?" His pupils were like pools to the abyss. "We go back three years. He was my first. We're just friends."

Colt's growl was a bestial sound I could feel in my bones. His hands tightened painfully on my wrists, and his face went white. "The way you two were practically eye fucking each other tells a different story!"

Shit. The man was scary when he got angry, and he was freaking me out. “Are you jealous of him?” I tried to pull myself free from his steel grip, but he wasn’t having any. “Colt, please, we ain’t together so—”

Another growl, this one vicious, while he pressed his forehead to mine, glaring at me with his green eyes. I went still. His words only amplified his effect on me.

“You are mine. MINE. I will make sure you get what you need. I will take care of you. I will protect you. It will be my name you’re whispering in your sleep. My name you will moan when I fuck you through the goddamn mattress. It will be my hands roaming your body, touching you. My lips tasting you, kissing you, and it will be my bed where you sleep from today onward, I will lo—” He paused, pressing his lips into a taut line.

“You. Belong. To. Me. Do you understand that? Whatever you need, you come to me. Even if it’s a fucking hug! I will give it to you. No more running off to places that can put you in danger. Where you could get hurt, raped, or, God forbid, killed! I’d never forgive myself if something happened to you!” Colt was wheezing at the end of his words, and I knew it was wrong of me, but I felt like goo in his hands.

“But we don’t even know each other, and you, you’re Master Colt. You don’t call subs yours, you don’t care—” He cut me off with a snarl.

“You think I would keep chasing after a boy every time he pushed me away? Every time he vanished on me? Get it in your fucking head, little Beo. You’re different. You’re special, and you are most definitely only mine!”

“Is this your way of telling me you care about me?” I whispered breathlessly.

Fuck.

He growled again and crashed our lips together. Colt’s tongue thrust into my mouth while he grasped a fistful of my hair and pulled my head sideways to enter my mouth deeper, his right hand groping my left butt cheek, squeezing hard. I whimpered against his lips. My head felt dizzy, and my dick began to press achingly against my jeans. God, I wanted him inside me, taking me the same way his mouth and tongue ravished mine.

He pulled back, nipping my bottom lip between his teeth. “So sweet,” he groaned, and took my mouth again.

I was winded, fighting to pull air into my lungs, when he released my lips, gasping, staring into my eyes. The storm that was there before had stilled to a

hazy look. My heart skipped a beat at his eyes going soft, damn tender, like I had become his entire world. Gently he released his hold on my hair and ass, and then I realized we had moved, and he had me pressed up against a wall.

Colt licked his lips, slowly, savoring my taste on them. He kept staring at me. Not knowing what to do, I lowered my gaze to his chest. He cupped my chin, forcing me to look at him again. "Don't," he requested in a warm voice, and goddamnit, fucking balls! *Beo just had to go lose it!*

"Colt," my voice trembled. My throat too thick to manage proper words, my lips tender and swollen from his bruising kiss. I could still feel the prickle where his beard had rubbed against my jaw.

"I'm serious, Beo. I want you so fucking much it feels like I'm going out of my motherfucking mind without you."

I didn't know how to answer his words, 'cause they cut both ways. It seemed he was feeling at least the same desire I was. We both wanted each other, and were fighting hard against the magnetism, or at least I was, and I understood the reason for his reaction. Colt was a possessive man, and that shit turned me on.

"You still need to be disciplined." His voice was low, and I recognized it easily... Master Colt. He pressed his lips gently to the side of my neck, causing my skin to pull tight with an electrical buzz. "But the question is how?" He whirred and sucked hard on my skin.

"No... no... spank, please, bruise easily." Damnit, I couldn't talk properly when he was doing things to my skin with his hot, wet mouth.

He pulled back, a scowl cutting deep on his forehead.

"No hard stuff, please, Colt. Your hands only, but not too hard, like I said," I whispered again. "I—"

"Yeah, I get it, Babyboy. You're fragile." He said it without questioning me further, and I was thankful for that. I didn't want my disease to ruin this perfect moment. Not this—my life, my abandoned dreams, flashed in vivid color—and my annoying conscience just had to ask the question.

If this was your last day, your last hour, your last breath, who would you rather be spending it with? Those who loved you like family, who cared—it was like a lightning bolt streaking through my mind.

Colt.

I'd spend it with him, in his arms. Him. The answer should have made me want to run again, but instead it only intensified the feeling of belonging, of home.

"I intend to make love to you tonight." Those whispered words shook the ground from under me. Him. Big, bad-ass Dom, Master Colt, wanted me, wanted to make love to me, a snotty little nothing. "Do you know what I'm going to do to you?" He ran his index finger along my neck and across the spot his mouth had been tenderly stuck to. He circled my neck with his heavy hand as though inspecting the area where he would place his ownership. "Going to mark you as mine." He dragged his teeth along my jaw, nostrils taking in my scent in a deep inhale. Tightening his hand, he growled again, "So that you and every other motherfucker knows who you belong to."

"Colt... I don't think that's wise," I argued in a whisper.

"And why is that, my beautiful Beo?" Colt pressed his large, hard body against mine.

Shit. Shit. Shit. I shuddered from his words, or from feeling him pressing me up against the wall, or his straining bulge pressing into my thigh, or his scent? Hell, fuck it. It was everything about him!

I closed my eyes; *because I am desolation waiting to happen.*

"Look me in the eyes, Beo. Tell me this isn't what you want, and I will let you go."

"No!" I gasped, my eyes burning as I stared at him. I knew I was being selfish, taking this opportunity offered to me. This wasn't fair! I could stop this from happening between us, stop the misery and pain I might cause, yet, greedily, I took it, for both of us. I closed my eyes again, fighting back a sob that was threatening to break free from my chest. It was a hopeless attempt.

"Why are you crying, Babyboy?" His tongue touched my cheek, tracing the tear trail to the tear that had rolled down; his lips closed around it, kissing it away.

My heart pounded in my chest, faster than it had ever done so before, 'cause I could hear my blood roaring in my ears. Still I couldn't bring myself to utter a word.

"Talk to me, baby. I'm not a mind reader."

"You scare me, Colt. What I feel for you scares me."

“Beo. My sweet, beautiful, Beo,” he whispered against my face and the flood gates ruptured. I wept, sobbed and shook as he took me in his arms, smothering my face with wet, tear-stained kisses. With each sob, each cry into his chest, he held me tighter.

I was letting it all out. The anger at the Bitches. The pain of knowing what I'm doing. The fear of what lie before me. The hope that somehow something will go right. The disappointment of knowing that hope was useless. The feelings I'd been fighting. The desire to have him take and own me. The longing to be this man's every breath, 'cause he had become mine.

I was so caught up in my own mind that I hadn't realized someone had stepped into the room till I heard and felt the growl rumble from Colt.

“What is it, Richard?”

“They managed, Colt. We're out of the red. The ship's coming home, and the crew is unharmed.”

Something shifted in Colt. He tensed then relaxed, taking a deep breath and pulling me harder against him.

“Thank you, Richard. Now, if you will? My boy still needs his discipline.”

A long silence stretched before I heard the Richard man move, exiting the office and closing the door. I pulled away from Colt's chest immediately, uttering, “Sorry,” when I saw the wet stain against his shirt.

He placed his big hands on either side of my face and pulled my gaze to his.

“You're not going to enjoy this, boy, but you have to know, as much as it's going to hurt you, it will hurt me more. Your safe word is wolf.”

I blinked at him, my eyelids tacky from my tears.

A small smile graced his lips. “You want my cock?”

I was confused. I thought he was gonna discipline me. Usually the Dom stated the reason for discipline so the sub knew what he was being disciplined for. I didn't think sucking Colt off would be considered discipline, and I so wanted to taste the man. *And why the hell was I being disciplined in the first place!*

“Y-yes.” I blushed and looked down at his bulge.

“Well tough shit, Babyboy. This is your discipline. You think I don't want to feel your sweet fucking lips wrapped around my cock? Your warm tongue

worshipping my dick? We will both suffer because of you denying me what is mine. My pain will be your pain. Let this be a raw lesson to you, Beo Moon, that when I say you will be mine—you already are.”

I was a novice sub, thinking the discipline would only be for me to suck him off, and to be denied my own release. The first mistake I made was thinking Colt was just another Dom. He wasn't.

He was Master Colt for a reason. His title wasn't self-proclaimed, it was given to him by The Bark, which meant he earned it. That was my second mistake: he had more experience than most Doms.

“Touch it,” he commanded, his voice soft yet deep, but the authority in it rang clear.

Cautiously I stretched out my hand, seeing my thin, small fingers trembling. Softly I touched him, causing the big man to shudder and groan as I pressed my palm against his hard heat.

“Good boy,” he mused, his smile turning sharp, dark and twisted. “Now,” he licked his lips, “put your hand down my pants.”

My fingers jerked unzipping him and reached to free him from the white briefs bulging out of his fly.

“No, Beo. Listen to my words. Put your hand down my pants.”

I took a steady breath and undid his belt, seeing the dark stain growing on his briefs. The man was leaking precum, and I licked my dry lips, inwardly shuddering at the sight. I might have physically too, but I was trying to keep my cool. Once his belt was loose, I undid the button of his slacks, gently pulling his shirt up, and pressed my hand against his lower abs. Colt was hard and ripped. I wanted to tear open his shirt and see every inch of him, but his eyes caught mine, and as if he could read my thoughts, he uttered a simple command. “No.”

I suspected the man was going to allow me to touch him, feel him, but not see. The difference was, I wouldn't be blindfolded; the anticipation made my breath surge.

With my palm flat against his skin, I stroked the short hairs with my fingers. Slowly, I slithered my hand down under the waistband of his briefs, brushing thick pubic hair. My fingertips grazed heated skin, and for an instant I pulled back.

Colt clasped my arm and droned, “Touch it.” His chest expanded, pulling his shirt tightly across it, his heated eyes burning into mine.

Gently, I wrapped my fingers around him.

“Now feel it,” he said.

I did. He was fat, thick, warm and hard. Hell, was he hard. His veins bulged as I stroked my thumb over one. I shivered with a carnal need to have him deep inside me, but his cock also felt wrong. Small beads lined his penis, under the skin, and shifted slightly when I touched them.

He growled low in my ear. “I’m going to be inside you boy, hard and throbbing, going to make you moan. Each bead, bigger in size, sliding into and pressing on your canal wall, teasing your little boy cunt, making you whimper. Filling and stretching you. Going on your size, I bet you have small little nub, or has it been stretched like a whore’s?”

I swallowed hard. I knew about cock modifications. Hades wasn’t just the biggest man I’d had inside me, he had one hell of a Prince Albert, but these—I ran my finger over the beads again, drawing a convulsion from both of us—were different.

“No...” I said and shook my head at the same time, “haven’t had many Dominants before, only two.”

I was finding it hard to breathe while Colt had me pinned against the wall of his office, feeling his heat and pulse throb through his cock in my hand. Not knowing what to expect, I remained silent, not daring to move. Seconds passed, or it could have been minutes. I lost track of time as Colt stared at me not saying a word. Slowly he moved his lips closer to my ear, and I felt his tongue trace the outer shell.

“Can you feel how much I want you? Do you feel what you do to me?”

His words were a whispered rumble against my moist ear, causing my breath to catch in my throat.

I licked my lips, swallowed and tried to speak. No sounds passed them, only silent air escaped. I nodded.

Colt languidly pushed his hips back and forth, driving his engorged cock in my hand.

“Do you want to taste my cock? Feel me inside that hot little mouth of yours, filling it while I fuck your face, boy?”

A groan escaped my lips when he flicked my ear with his tongue. “I can’t hear you, Beo.”

“Yes, S-Sir,” I breathed, not even realizing how I had addressed him. “Please!”

“Well you can’t, little fuck,” Colt hissed, taking my earlobe between his teeth and biting down softly. Nerves short-circuited throughout my body. I gasped, trying to get air into my oxygen-deprived lungs.

Releasing my earlobe, Colt pulled back and wrapped his huge hands around my neck, pressing the balls of his thumbs softly against my carotid arteries.

“Your heart’s beating in your throat. Is it because my hands are around your neck, or because you’re holding my dick in your palm, or... because your little boy hole is clenching with nothing inside it?”

I wanted to growl, snarl and pound my fist against his chest. Every fiber of my body was buzzing with this man in my hand, feeling his length, imagining it filling me, stretching me, knowing I would be pleasing him. My hole clenched at the idea and my balls drew tight. How the hell was he even holding his shit together when I was about to drop to my knees and beg him to take me, but he would deny me even then. ‘Cause he knew I fucking wanted him.

He huffed, staring into my eyes. “A little fighter in you, boy, and yet you’re shaking.” Releasing my neck, he placed his hands on either side of my head along the wall. He leaned close and traced his tongue up my cheek. “This is but a fraction of the torment I’ve been through without you by my side. Seeing you last night...” Colt leaned in closer, his eyes darkened by the shadow of his hooded brows.

“Seeing the way you acted with Hades... My boy. My fucking boy in another’s arms, your lips on another man’s.” Colt took a deep breath, lowering his voice. “Beo, you should never tip the scale of that blade. I’m too scared of the consequences it might have.”

I tried to speak, but he gripped my jaw and thrust two fingers into my mouth and spoke three words.

“Stroke. Suck. Moan.”

My job was simple, obey. I gave his cock a firm squeeze, hearing his sharp intake of breath. His fingers trembled as he explored my mouth, tracing them over my teeth, tongue and between my lips and gums. I tugged on his cock with small, slow strokes, gliding my palm over his velvety mushroom head. Colt was wet and still leaking. I moaned at the feel of his juices on my palm, and smeared the silky wetness to cover his crown. Gracefully, I traced the corona of

his cock with my thumb. Colt's breathing blew heavy and fast against my skin, his legs wobbled as I continued to tease and move my hand to his base, and stroked back, brushing my palm over his broad head.

His thick fingers tasted salty, sweaty and somewhat like coffee. I moaned, but it was more of a whimper in my throat. My own dick was pressing hard against my cotton briefs, dripping in my pants.

With sudden force, Colt pushed his digits deeper, causing my head to fall back, and I felt his hot breath on the side of my neck. His lips grazed my skin, and he softly pressed them to my throat.

I shuddered, moaned, and gave him a hard stroke.

I felt the confinements of his briefs and pants being pushed down, allowing me more movement to make larger strokes. He pressed his tongue flat to my artery, holding it there, not only tasting me, but tasting the pulse of my heart. God, he already knew my heart was like a thundering herd in my chest, did he have to make it feel so intense by reminding me of it? Of course he did. He was proving a point.

It was then that the meaning behind my discipline hit home. He wanted to dominate my mind, infect my thoughts, force the already built up desires in me to tip over on a mammoth scale. I was his prey, and this chastisement was only to tenderize me, by amplifying my craving need for him.

I felt him snake his fingers in between the placket of my dress shirt, kissing my skin; I couldn't keep back the loud moan tearing through me.

He undid the buttons of my shirt, flayed the material back, exposed my right nipple, took it between his fingers and pulled. I gasped from the explosive heat, both pain and pleasure, jolting from my nip. A sob raked from me when he released my bud, and the crisp air in the room caused my tit to burn. A single finger traced the areola around my nipple, all while his lips still drank at my throat. His fingers fucked my mouth, and I stroked him slowly.

I couldn't hold back. I wanted to give this man anything in that moment, anything to please him.

Colt kissed his way from my throat, teeth scraping and nipping at my flesh, to my collar bone. Anticipation swirled in my gut, and my dick felt like it was gonna explode, 'cause I knew where his mouth was heading. Then his lips were gone, and my body gave an uncontrollable wobble. He was in control here, and I was giving him that control on a silver platter. I had allowed it to go too far.

No, fuck that! From the first night we met, when he looked at me, Colt would make me his. I would become his, and from that moment I belonged to him. But would it only be this? A heated affair, and once we were all burned out, could we hold onto what would be left in the ashes?

Tears burned in my eyes. My emotions were so heightened at that moment, I felt a sense of vulnerability I hadn't experienced in a long time. I wanted to be Colt's everything. Looking up at him, seeing the intense pleasure in his face, the possession in his eyes, my chin quivered trying to restrain my emotions. The elation I felt in my soul, knowing that I would be his, even if only for a short breath of my life, caused my heart to lunge in my chest.

"Fuck, Babyboy," his words snapped me back to the present, "I know your dick's screaming for release, but take your discipline like a man. Those tears in your eyes are not going to sway me for a moment."

He pulled his fingers from my lips, scooped up my tears, and sucked those fingers in his own mouth, coating them with his spit, then offered them to me again.

I took them willingly.

Lowering his head, his nose brushed my skin, his tongue tracing a moist trail around the dark part of my nipple, slowly flicking over the bud. The moment I felt his teeth tenderly biting down, I gripped his cock hard. Holding my nipple and rolling it between his fangs, he pulled.

I cried, hissed, and growled? Fuck if I knew what that sound was that escaped from my throat, but it wasn't anything close to human... it was hot.

I couldn't hold myself together any longer, my knees were weak, my stomach turned, and desire liquefied like magma in my gut. Colt growled as I stroked him faster. He pulled out his fingers and grasped a handful of my hair.

"Stick out your tongue, boy," he demanded in a hurried breath.

Colt's lips closed around my tongue, sucking on it, meeting my strokes with his thrusts.

I closed my eyes, his scent clogging my mind. His lips blowing my tongue, and his cock swelled and leaked more while his thrusts quickened, fucking my hand.

Releasing my tongue, he took my lips and thrust his tongue into my mouth. He kissed me savagely, with pure raw hunger, as he tried to dive down my throat. I felt him cover my hand with his, and together we stroked.

First stroke... he snarled into the kiss. *Second stroke...* he gulped a breath. *Third stroke...* Colt thundered into my mouth, "Beo!"

Wet heat burst from his swelling cock. He shook, and hand tightening in my hair, eyes wide, pupils blown out, he stopped kissing.

I pushed my tongue into his mouth and took control of the kiss.

He was panting, blowing air out of his nostrils, but not pulling back or stopping my hand moving on his slippery cock. Finally, he pulled back, gripping my wrist, and brought my hand, covered in his cum, into view.

His gaze burned dark with heated desire when it reached mine. He leaned in, tracing his tongue over my hand, scooping up his cum and taking it into his mouth.

Colt fucking cleaned my hand of his own spunk, even going so far as to take my fingers into his warm mouth and suck them spotless.

Letting go of my hand, he looked me in the eyes. "Good boy, Beo. Such a beautiful, good boy." Then he kissed me slowly, sharing the aftertaste of his cum with me, and I went downright giddy inside at his flavor.

I pulled away from him. "Colt, I need to tell you something."

I held my breath as he looked at me. This was the epic moment, the true test, not just for me, but of him and whatever this was. Monday morning they were going to do a bone marrow biopsy, the fourth one since I started feeling sick again. My counts had been dropping slowly the last three weeks, but last Sunday there was a rapid drop in my white blood cell count, and I knew Dr. Mahajan would want me to start on chemo again.

"I..." *Come on, Beo, you have to do this. It would only be fair.* "If you want me, then there are conditions."

His eyes flashed at me, his upper lip twitching slightly. Colt Maxus didn't seem like the kind of man that took things with conditions.

"Whatever it is can wait till later. Right now," he tucked himself away quickly and fastened his belt, making sure my eyes stayed fixed to his gaze, "I want you to listen to me. I've never desired someone as strongly as I do you." He took my hands in his, and, God, the man brought them to his lips. Kissing each knuckle gently, he said in a thick voice, "I've never had someone that was mine."

Well, balls! That slammed my whole speech out of me and turned my world inside out.

“You’re going to get your stuff,” he pulled out his car keys and worked a set off the ring. “You’re going to go back to my place, and get something to eat and relax.” Colt placed the set of keys in my hand and folded my fingers over it. “Then, when I get home, we will talk.” His thumb brushed over my fingers, making my heart race again.

“I will have a blank temporary contract pulled from The Bark’s database, and modified as we see fit. Then, Babyboy, I’m going to make love to you until you forget your fucking name.” He yanked me to him, his green eyes moist and pleading, and his next words shattered me.

“Don’t run away, Beo, not after this. I don’t think my heart can survive it this time.”

I couldn’t tell him. Not after he said that.

Colt released me and fished for his wallet, taking out two hundred-dollar bills and pressing them into my hand.

“I’m not a whore,” I whispered.

He softened his eyes, cupped my cheek and leaned closer. His breath blew over my ear as he spoke, and the hairs on my neck tingled.

“No, you’re not. You are my whore. My queer pussy. Mine.” He leaned closer, brushing his lips over mine, and growled, “Mine, Babyboy,” before shoving his tongue in my mouth.

Chapter Six

“Motherfucking fuck!” — Colt Maxus.

God, Beo. What the motherfucking shit did you do to me? It was supposed to be his discipline, but his submission, his gentle hand on my cock had me so hard I could fuck a hole through my motherfucking office wall. If it was another sub, they would have stroked me fast and hard, giving me a quick release. Not Beo. Slowly his fingers traced over my shaft, worshipping my meat, brushing my crown, feeling every fucking bead, touching every ridge, and smearing my precum over and then back to my base.

His eyes like a little puppy's, beautifully big and soft.

He wasn't just sweet, he was tender, and then it hit me. With Beo, bad-ass, aggressive Master Colt wasn't going to work.

What the fuck was I thinking, demanding to give discipline? I knew the rules. Things need to be stated, said and agreed upon beforehand. But no, Colt Maxus had to go and lose his fucking shit. Watching him leave my office, with that beautiful glow to his cheeks that I was responsible for, that shit made my chest swell. Me. I did that. Mine. *Shit.* I was so motherfucking heart fucked it wasn't funny!

I slammed down on the couch in my office, raked my hand through my hair and pulled.

Again I was a fucking mess, but this time... *Beo, oh God, please stay. Don't disappear on me. I'm not sure what I would do.*

A knock on my door made my heart fucking skip a beat, only to slam right back down at seeing Richard's head peek in.

“What?” I shouted.

Richard wasn't having any of it as he came in.

“Could ask you the same fucking thing, Colt. *My boy?* Don't make me laugh. You're just telling the kid what he wants to hear.”

I moved before Richard could blink, grabbing him by his lapels and picking him up off the floor.

“Don’t go there! Beo is different. You don’t get to say shit about him, and you better watch your motherfucking tongue or, I swear to God, Richard, I will slam your skull into a bloody pulp.”

I set him down. Richard knew the extent of my anger issues, the core of them. He had tried countless times to get me to seek help. This time, I needed to listen. If I was going to allow Beo to be a part of my life, I didn’t want him to be on the receiving end of that kind of storm. Nothing would be left standing in the end.

“What’s her number?” I snapped moving around my desk to the phone.

Richard stood, unmoving, where I left him.

“Richard!” I growled. “The psychologist you said I should go see, what’s the bitch’s number?”

Richard turned, gaping at me.

“You’re fucked up, Colt. Total motherfucking messed up in the head.”

Letting out a heavy breath, I slumped down in my chair and pressed the balls of my hands to my eyes.

“I know. I fucking know, Richard. God, you know what you said last night. You were so fucking right, you have no idea.”

Running his hand over his face, Richard paced back and forth. He was the one that stressed over my shit; the one that cleaned up when I fucked up.

“Colt, you know I love you. I care about you. Damn it!” He paused and anchored his arms on my desk, gazing at me. “But your shit... it’s not going to get solved by just one session. It could take years of therapy. You might never get over what happened... I still have nightmares of that day I found you. We were thirteen. Fucking teenage kids, Colt.”

“So what are you saying, Richard? That I’m broken, unfixable? Unable to give that boy what he needs? Unable to have what you have with James?”

Richard let out a slow breath, turning his back to me, clearly trying to find the right words.

“I’m confident you will be able to provide and care for him, what bothers me is—” another slow breath “—will you be able to love him? The kind of love he deserves?”

He turned to me. “I’m not going to tell you what to do. Just promise me this one thing... You will call when this shit goes nuclear between you two.”

Richard shook his head and left my office. For a moment, I sat thinking about what he said, what his words really meant. *The kind of love he deserves.* Beo deserved that. Feeling him cry against me because he was scared of what he was feeling, because he was scared of me? I couldn't deny it—it hurt like a motherfucking son of a bitch. Maybe I am incapable of loving Beo the way he needs, but I sure as hell am going to give it a try, *and fuck you, Richard!*

I knew it was wrong, I just did not give a fuck about forcing this on Beo. The idea that someone else would be providing for him, making love to him, holding him. Goddamn fuck it! My blood felt like it was sweltering, just thinking about it. He was mine, and I would take him down with me if I couldn't have him. Mine, or no one else's.

Feeling a lot calmer, I stood and picked up my phone, pressing zero, calling Christine.

“Boss, I'm sorry. That kid, he just—”

“Sugar-lips, listen to boss man and listen well. You get on your phone and you buy me every motherfucking rose in the vicinity of Central Park, and have them delivered to my apartment. I'll call security and let them know about the delivery.”

“Yes, Mr. Maxus...” She paused.

“Yes, Christine, your boss is feeling just fine,” I said, and placed the phone down.

Chapter Seven

“Midnight Blue, out of sight. Always so close, but never part of my right.” — Beo Moon.

The late afternoon air brought a chill to my bones.

I knew Colt had given me the perfect opening to walk away, but no matter how much I thought it was the right thing to do, I wasn't strong enough. God, this was so unfair. I sniffed, swiping the tears from my face.

I had to tell him. Would he hate me in the end, when things became unbearable and horrible? Would he hate me for not being honest upfront? There would be resentment, but whose: his, mine, or ours? My thoughts left me breathless, anguish and pain constricting my chest.

I couldn't do it. I'd only known him for a short time, yet I couldn't go back to a life without him. Being away from Colt felt like ulcers etching raw pain into my soul. *How do you tell someone you're falling for them and in the same breath say you're dying?*

I was sitting in Jane's house, a place I had called home for so many nights when I hadn't had one of my own. Even when I slept over at Doc's place, and he insisted on giving me a key, a bed of my own, and let me come and go as I pleased; those places didn't bring me the same feeling I had when I was in Colt's arms.

I opened my palm to find Colt's condo keys had made an imprint in my hand. It was just a key to Colt, but to me it was a promise. One I had accepted under false pretenses, but a promise that from now till whenever it would be, I had a place I could call home, and a man that, maybe, I could call my own.

“Beo, please tell me what's wrong!” Jane screamed hysterically, tears dripping from her face making her makeup look just plain shitty—again, all my fault. I was hurting inside. For the first time in my life, Jane was there on the outside looking in but not seeing me. I caught her words, felt her anguish. I just did not hear her.

“Fine! I'm calling Martin!” She stormed out of the drawing room to hunt for her phone.

I didn't have the emotional strength to stop her.

Growing up in an orphanage was different. You didn't have *your* stuff, it was *our* stuff. You watched your brothers and sisters come and go. You learned to love them, only for them to leave, and when you said good-bye you weren't sure if it was for now or forever. The orphanage hadn't been my home. It was a temporary place of living. A home ain't a house of four walls or the stuff inside. A home was a place you could return to. No matter how raw the bad under your skin, the darkness in your heart, or who you were or who you came to be. Home was the place you felt safest, most cherished, most valued, and once you lost that, it was hard to find again. Colt, in his single act of selfish overprotectiveness, had given me something I had lost and feared I would never have again before I left this life.

Jane, Magpie, Doc, Hades, even Colt. Not even my mother was ever mine. They would never truly be mine. Borrowed. Living on borrowed time. Sharing them just for these last breaths I had left to take. Sniffing my last tears away, I stood to pull on my hoodie and turned, only to come face to face with a massive chest covered in a tight green dress shirt, nipples protruding against the cotton from the cold air outside.

"Doc! Mother of all things, you'll poke my eyes out with your nips. Put them away already," I teased and wrapped my arms around him.

"Beo," he whispered, and ran his hand over my forehead, pushing back my hair.

"What's the matter? Jane called. Said you won't stop crying and won't say anything. Did Dr. Mahajan give you bad news? Does she want you to start chemo again? Did you go see your father?" Doc's tone became bitter, almost angry, with his next sentence. "Did Luther say no?"

I took a step back. "Luther? Doc, why would you call him Luther? Do you know...?"

I wasn't dumb; I knew there was no way Doc would have been able to get all that information on my father. From personal stuff like medical records and family tree, to his involvement in The Bark. Doc had to have known my father. I'd suspected when I discovered that Doc and my father grew up in the same town, went to the same private school, and attended the same university.

Still the anger bubbled up in me.

"You knew!" I roared. "All these years, you knew! Every time I told you my Christmas wish was to know my real father. Every birthday, the single wish

I had was to know who he was, and you knew. You fucking knew!" A new set of hot tears ran down my cheeks, fueled by my heavy, emotional heart and this knife piercing its vulnerable flesh over and over again. Doc closed his eyes, a painful expression on his face.

"Yes, I knew, Beo!" He clenched his fists.

"Your father didn't want you. I was the obstetrician who did the C-section on your mother and brought you into this world. I paid for that procedure and for your time in the NICU. I gave you the name Beo Moon!" He took a step towards me. "I took you to the orphanage. I protected you from him! From that monster! You know what he said?" I could see the angry tremor in Doc's face.

"That you were a disgrace to his name. A mistake that should have never happened. A drunk night with a stupid red-haired woman!" Doc started to shake before me. "He wanted your mother to have an abortion, but she didn't. She came to me, begging and pleading for help. By seven months, she couldn't keep you anymore, and it was either her or you, so I performed the C-section. By the time the treatment started, she was too weak. Her body didn't have the means to fight off the infection, and she died." Doc's neck and face were an angry red, and I had never seen such anger from him before. "I swore to her you would be taken care of. That I would keep an eye on you. I wanted to tell you, but each time I looked in your eyes, I saw him. How do you tell a child that his father never wanted him?"

"Your father was my best friend, Beo. My best friend!" Doc's livid eyes met mine. His lip trembled from clenching his jaw.

"I'm sorry, Doc." I sniffed, stepping up to him, and lowered my voice. "You know, you did good by me."

"I tried, Beo." A tear slid from his left eye. "I would have taken you in as my own, but back then I couldn't afford to. I was too young. When you reached the age of five, I came for you.

"I could have taken you out of the orphanage, but I would never have been able to give you what you had there." He placed a big paw over my heart. "That place, you belonged there. It wouldn't have been right of me to take you from where you were needed, or to take from you what you needed. You were, and always will be, a big brother to those kids, Beo."

I knew what Doc meant. The other kids at the orphanage looked up to me. Regardless that some were older than me, like Jane, they still called me big

brother Beo. Now even little Magpie did too. To them, their sanctuary of safety, hug of comfort, place they could return to, was me. I was their home.

“Now what’s all this crying about?” Doc asked, taking me by the arm and sitting next to me on the couch.

Shit, I didn’t know what to say. Doc was one of the Doms that didn’t like Master Colt. Oh shit, this was going to get ugly.

“Beo, stop biting your lip. Out with it, boy.”

Doc wasn’t the person I should be talking to about the men in my life. I was responsible for those beautiful gray streaks in his hair when I told him about Hades and me.

Jane came in, makeup gone, and placed a tray with three cups of cocoa down.

Then her gaze must have landed on my duffel bag and guitar next to the archway of the lobby. “You’re leaving?” She folded her arms across her chest. Doc’s head whipped between us. I gave Jane the shut-the-fuck-up-not-now glare.

“What’s going on? Would one of you please explain?” Doc said, slightly annoyed and totally worried. He turned to me. “Beo?”

Nope. Beo’s not gonna say jack.

“Beo’s met someone,” Jane said. Jane didn’t know Colt’s name, so that would be as far as this conversation went, or so I hoped. Jane continued, “I thought you said you weren’t going to get involved with this guy, Beo?”

“What guy? Who is this man?” Doc stood, fists balling at his sides.

At the same moment, my phone had to vibrate on the coffee table, flashing “number unknown.” My heart pounded as I reached for it, but Doc was quicker. Snatching it, he answered.

“This is Beo’s phone!”

I wanted to crawl away and disappear into the couch, ’cause there’d be just one man calling me, and that’d be Colt. *Fuck my life, thank you very much. Nice knowing ya too.*

A growl, similar to the one I had heard from Colt back in his office, came from the phone, and I dared to look up at Doc. His eyes were like daggers; whether they were towards Colt or me, I had no clue.

“Don’t call this number again, and stay away from Beo!” Doc snarled and killed my phone, snapping the small morsel of plastic in half. The poor secondhand, ten-dollar flip phone stood no fucking chance.

“What do you think you are doing?” Doc cracked at me, still clutching my shattered phone. “You know how I feel about that man. You should have never gotten a membership at The Bark to begin with, and now of all the times, Beo, you want to fall for a man—” *Blah blah blah.*

I stood. “Are you done?” I interrupted his tirade.

Doc froze, and his eyes went wide at my tone of voice. “Excuse me?”

“Doc, it’s been nice, but you ain’t gonna tell me who I can and can’t date, and the Colt Maxus you think you know ain’t the man I know. He makes me happy.”

I could as well have taken a knife and stabbed the man, twisting the blade while I was at it. Doc’s hand reached for his chest and covered his heart.

I was breaking his heart. Been there, got the T-shirt, twice it seemed now. But I was reaching for my home. The one that felt safe. The one that I didn’t deserve. Doc was never my home, but he deserved better than this. Better than me walking out on him.

“Beo,” he said, short of breath.

“This is what I need right now. Not you lot telling me this and that, what I can and can’t do. I’m a consenting adult of sane mind. I’m well aware of his reputation, and I’m well aware of what is happening inside my body, but I’m not going to stand here and allow anyone to take away my last shot at some happiness. That’d be on me and on my terms.”

’Cause this was my last round.

There would be no other. Before the end of winter I might be... I couldn’t finish the thought.

Doc’s face had gone pale. Jane let out a hurt sob. Hell, this was still my life, and I knew my words wounded and hurt, but they weren’t in that office. They hadn’t seen the way Colt looked at me, felt how he kissed me.

“You two are the only people in my life that I would have hoped could understand.”

“Beo, it’s not that. Colt—”

“No, Martin!” I said angrily. “You’re jealous, always have been. Even Hades, the guys after him. You always found a reason why I shouldn’t be with them... then who should I be with?”

Doc only stared at me.

I turned to Jane. “Jane, do you remember when we were kids, we would wish upon the Midnight Blue, on those shooting stars?” She knew, nodding, as another tear slipped down. I didn’t need to say more. “I have found my home again.”

Doc literally fell back onto the couch.

Jane wiped her tears from her cheeks and gave me a tight smile. Doc wouldn’t understand what my words meant. We were close, but not the way Jane and I were.

Turning to Doc and bending my knees, I knelt down before him. He averted his eyes from me, and as I reached for his hand, he barked in a taut voice, “Don’t.” It hurt to hear the disappointment in his tone.

“Doc,” I said, placing my hand on his knee. “You still have a place in my heart. Just ’cause I’m with another man ain’t meaning that he has taken your place. No one can take your place in my life. But you have to understand that I ain’t got the same feeling you have for me. If you love me, find it in your heart to at least try to understand. I want this. I need this.” I clenched my jaw waiting for his answer. Nothing came out of his mouth. He wouldn’t even look at me. I reached for my broken phone still in his hand. He didn’t even want to let that go.

He needed to let go.

I needed to let go.

Standing, I gave his knee a soft squeeze and then went for my bag and guitar.

Stopping at the front door, I turned, moving my gaze to Doc. He just sat there staring at the opposite wall. I looked at Jane. Her eyes showing sadness and happiness, she walked up to me, her hands trembling.

God, she was trying to hold her shit together. When she reached me, I knew that question in her eyes: *Why now did you have to go fall for someone?* Shrugging, I gave her a sad smile and pulled her into my arms. “I’ll see you Monday,” I whispered and turned.

As I reached for the front door, Doc's words were colder than the crisp air hitting me from outside.

"You sound so sure of yourself that Colt is whatever you think he is, Beo. Don't let the door hit your ass on the way out."

I've never heard Doc's voice hold anger like that. My response was typical Beo style. "Still love you, Doc, no matter what." I closed the door behind me.

I wasn't just closing the door. It felt like I was cutting out a part of my life.

It hurt.

Fresh tears stung my eyes. Clutching Colt's keys in my hand, I took a deep breath, taking in the crisp air and the smell of autumn. Stepping off the stairs and onto the sidewalk, I turned and looked at Jane's brownstone. I took in the sight as best I could through heavy, teary lashes. God, the colors, the smells, the feel. I knew this would be one of my last chances to experience this. See the golds, bronzes, and vivid greens. Smell the afternoon rain splashing onto the world, and Mother Earth breathing out the smell of wet ground.

Would I miss this? Would I remember it, or over eternity, would I forget?

Where would I end up after...? Hell, Purgatory... Heaven? Or would I become part of the Midnight Blue?

Averting my sight from the beauty surrounding me, I reached for my beanie only to graze my hair. I sighed and clutched Colt's condo keys tightly again.

Sister Mary once said, "The people that shape you rest like heavy stones in your heart. Unmoving, not changing, just there."

Sister Mary was the orphanage mother, but she was also, once upon a time, my home.

"*A house is not a home,*" she would say so often, and now I could appreciate it for what it meant.

By the time I was twenty, old age and Alzheimer's had taken its toll on her, and it was on her deathbed she knitted me that beanie. I had never cried so hard in my life once she was gone. Which reminded me, I still had something to do.

I had barely walked a block—'cause I needed to get some fresh air before I got on the subway—when I heard a familiar voice and cringed.

Wendigo was the vice president of Cerberus Motorcycle Club. Like Hades, their president, Wendigo was as deadly as he was erotic. I mean the kind that

made your nipples go hard and your cock or your pussy wet from just looking at the man.

“Beo!” he growled in his smoky, rich voice, clamping a strong grip on my shoulder and rotating me to him.

I looked up at his flawless face. His sharp, prominent, chiseled jaw was glazed with a short growth of dark scruff. I felt myself drawn into his liquid whiskey eyes. A person could get lost in Wendigo's eyes. His dark eyebrows, more perfect than a Calvin Kline model's could ever be, raised in question, looking me up and down.

“You know your lips are blue?”

I snapped out of it. “What?”

He reached for my face, gently pressing the back of his warm hand to my cheek.

“Jesus, kid,” he snatched his hand away, gripped me on the front of my hoodie and started zipping it up to my neck, “you're colder than a dead body on ice.”

I was too dazed to notice as he hauled me with him, 'cause Wendigo never touched anyone with his bare hands. He always wore leather gloves. It was just a thing of his, but he had actually touched me and—*oh balls*, he pushed me in the direction of the big bald man with the Cerberus dog emblem embroidered on the back of his leather jacket.

“Your stray's freezing himself to death.”

Hades turned so quick that my face slammed into his chest as Wendigo shoved me towards him. Immediately Hades looked down at me with cold, dark eyes. They always gave me a shiver and made my heart gallop in my throat. His lips pulled tight, holding my stare.

“You need a shave, Daddy H,” I squeaked. His hands cupped both my cheeks, and he ran his right thumb over my bottom lip with a bit more force than necessary.

“Me and you got some beef to settle about that fucker Colt Maxus.” Hades wasn't happy. I could read it from his body language, but unlike Doc—who was jealous at the same time—Hades was only concerned. “You know why I was there. You know what shit I'm into. You really want to get involved with someone like that?”

“Hades, I know. I get that, but...” I bit my lip. Hades didn’t know. Like I said, there were only a handful of people that did.

“And what’s up with you lately? Every time I’ve seen you this year, you’re motherfucking thinner than a club whore on Biker’s Coffee. You’re pale, Beo.”

In the blink of an eye, Hades’ face went carnal. “You motherfucking using!” he snarled, gripping me by my red hoodie, lifting me, guitar and all, off the sidewalk.

Hades was very critical when it came to drugs. Ironic since he was one of the major suppliers to the dealers.

“Beo, you know my rules! Don’t fuck with my heart! I’ll take you to a fucking rehab myself!” Hades was angry, but not just angry—something else too.

“What the motherfucking shit are you bitches pissing on about?” someone grunted from our right.

Hades glared at one of his boys, and he set me down. The man went white, nodded and walked off. The veins bulged on Hades reddened face. He turned to me again, eyes darker than I’ve ever seen them before. He growled, causing the air coming out of his flaring nostrils and mouth to make a faint fog as it met the cold.

“I’m not on meth, Daddy H. Not on any illegal drugs.” More of his boys stepped out of the building. One of them quickly placed something behind his back. I saw the red dot marks of wet blood on his white shirt.

“Take a walk, dicks!” he barked to his boys, and the seven men, except for Wendigo, stepped out of earshot.

“Beo, kid, tell me,” he whispered, his voice softer but still with that gravel roughness to it.

“I’m sick, I’m...” I swallowed, focusing my eyes on his chest. “I’m dying, Breno.”

His sharp intake of breath sounded like someone had just planted a fist in the man’s gut. The next thing I knew, I was being smothered against his chest, his arms almost breaking me in half. My feet were off the ground, and his face was pressed to my neck, wet, hot tears soaking against my skin.

This wasn’t the first time I’d seen this side of Hades.

“They got to fix you, baby, got to make you better. I’ll pay. Whatever it costs, I’ll pay,” he sniffled.

Goddamnit! If this was the reaction I was getting from Hades, what would Colt’s be?

“Can’t breathe.” I pushed out and his arms relaxed slightly, sliding me down his body till my feet met concrete.

“H, listen to me,” I whispered in his ear, wrapping my arms around his neck.

“What you got?” he droned.

“Cancer, big guy. Beo’s got cancer, and it’s not the type chemo’s just gonna fix this time around. My mom had it, died from it. I had it when I was seventeen—Hey!” Hades picked me up again, walked to the side of the building and planted his ass on the wet concrete steps with me on his lap. He looked me straight in the eyes, a wetness clinging to his.

Don’t let them watery eyes fool you. Like I said, this big daddy teddy bear wouldn’t think twice about gutting someone that screwed him over.

He took my hands and covered them with his, rubbing them warm, and brought them to his lips, blowing hot air into my palms.

“Shit motherfucking fuck, Beo.” Hades just stared back at me with pity in his eyes. He knew how death worked, “*When it’s your time, it’s your time,*” he always said. I reached into my jeans pocket pulling out the pink bandanna. Hades raised his eyebrows as I folded it.

“What the motherfuck you think you’re doing?” he growled when I wiped his face.

“Shut up, old man. You’re already turning granite in your leathers, and your brothers know you like boy pussy. So don’t tell me you ain’t enjoying the attention.”

His smile was as huge as it was wide.

“I’m glad I was your first,” he said, gazing at me.

“Hey!” I poked him in the chest. “I was drunk, and you took advantage of me.” It wasn’t true; I was the one that came on to him. “And besides, no one could take your leviathan inside them without some encouragement.”

“Oh, my tongue in your little boy hole wasn’t enough?” he growled; his voice went very soft and it scared me, ’cause Hades didn’t do soft. “I’m here

for you, kid. Whatever you need, you call. No matter what day or time. I'll make a plan to come see you, baby."

"H, we gotta fucking split. Cops are gonna be here any fucking minute," Wendigo said, not looking like he was ready to move at all. In fact, knowing the Cerberuens, they'd most likely stay for a fist fight with the boys in blue.

"Fine." Hades stood, helping me to my feet and took off his jacket. My eyes went wide when he held it out for me.

"What?" He flashed his teeth. "Don't fucking gape at me. Put the fucking thing on!" He shook his jacket, causing his massive biceps to bulge.

"Hades, I can't take this. It's yours. It belongs to you and the clu—" Hades grabbed me by the front of my hoodie, pulled me to him and slammed his lips over mine, forcing his fat tongue in my mouth, and I froze.

He pulled back, took hold of my wrist and helped me into his jacket. It was warm, smelling of leather, smoke, and him. "We good?" he asked with a scowl. I gave a nod.

The other members started their Harleys.

Hades shouted to Wendigo over the roar of the engines, "Take Beo wherever he needs to be and meet us at the safe house."

Hades' command was supreme. You objected to it, you got your face shattered in. Trust me, I had seen it with my own eyes. You'd think I would be scared of him? I was, but I also knew when not to push him. Ruffling up my hair he gave me a wink, climbed on his bike, blew me kiss, and off he went.

"Where to?" Wendigo said over his shoulder, taking slow strides to his motorcycle. I could hear the sirens screaming in the background.

"75th and 5th, Manhattan," I said. Guitar case on my back and duffel bag on my lap, I wrapped my hands around Wendigo's waist.

When we stopped outside Colt's apartment block, I climbed off the Harley, giving Wendigo a peck on the cheek.

"Motherfucker, kid. What the fuck!" His face went bright red, eyes bulging in their sockets as he looked around at who might have seen.

"Always wanted to do that," I smiled.

"I'm no queer, okay!" he growled.

“Ain’t mean I can’t give a handsome man a thank you kiss.”

Snarling like a godforsaken angry wolf, Wendigo gritted his teeth and glared at me.

“Ain’t you just adorable?” I winked and turned, moving into the front lobby of the building.

The security this time was a heavy-set, beautiful African American woman, her skin the color of milk chocolate. She was on her cell phone, but watched as I came in the door.

“Gurl!” Her eyes went wide when I walked closer. “I’m gonna have to colls yous back. Heaven just walked in through the door and that shit’s cuter than Bow Wow!” She placed down the phone, flicked her hair back and straightened her uniform. “Suga’, what’s yous doin’ hea?” she asked me, my cheeks glowing.

“I’m Beo.” I stepped up to her and extended my hand.

“Mmm mmm mmm.” She smacked and licked her lips, shaking my hand.

“Boy, yo mamma neva fed yous?” She fluttered her long eyelashes at me.

“Ain’t got no mamma, ma’am.”

“Ah hell, no! Yous can’t be that sweet and be callin’ me ‘ma’am.’ Janice.” She reached for a clipboard for me to sign my name. “So who’s yous visitin’?”

The last time I was here, all I got was an ugly look from the guard. Till Colt practically climbed through the phone and bit the man’s head off.

“I think I’m moving in.”

“Thinks? Baby, yous ain’t sua?”

“Well...” I paused, not certain what to say. “Mr. Maxus gave me his keys and told me to get my stuff... so I think that means I’m moving in.”

“Mr. Maxus! Suga’,” she shook her head, and spoke in a cautious tone, “I’m just gonna coll the old fart and make sua. I ain’t wantin’ ta be in that man’s bad juice.”

Nodding, I gave her a smile.

“Suga’,” she said after several seconds, and I turned to her, “The devil wants ta speak ta yous.”

She was holding the phone receiver out to me, her hand covering the microphone.

“He mad?”

She let out a long breath and whistled, “That man, he’s always maad.”

Taking the receiver from her, I answered.

“Colt.”

“Beo! My fucking heart!” he growled and let out a hard breath.

“Colt, I’m sorry. I went to get my stuff. I’m here now. I’ll see you later, okay.”

Exhaling into the phone, he said, “Don’t scare me like that again, Beo. Please, Babyboy. You mean too much to me.”

Well, that placed a huge smile on my face.

“I’m sorry, Master Colt,” I whispered.

“When you get into the apartment, go to my room. In the second closet from the door, at the bottom, there’s a large leather bag. Open it, choose one, and wear it for me, Babyboy.”

My heart started to race, ’cause he didn’t say what would be in the bag. I panicked a little, hoping it wasn’t women’s underwear. ’Cause I get some people are into that, but I ain’t.

“Beo!”

“Sorry, Master.”

“Be good. I’ll see you in a bit.”

I gave the phone back to Janice.

“I dunno what that glow ta yous is, Suga’, but that man don’t deserve no sweet white choc’late like yous.”

I only smirked at her.

“Off yous goes,” she said, nodding. I moved to the elevator, my mind too preoccupied with Colt’s request.

Reaching his front door, I stood for a second in the dark hallway. He was on the top floor, the penthouse to be exact.

Sliding the key into the lock, I slowly turned it, feeling a tingle run down my spine. Last time I was here all I cared about was feeling him hold me.

I had just opened the door and stepped into the massive cold space when a phone rang. Dropping the duffel bag and placing my guitar down, I rushed after the sound, crossing the concrete floors into the kitchen and picking it up on the fourth ring.

“I’m here, Colt,” I said.

“Suga’, ain’t Colt callin’ yous, it’s Janice. Boy, I dunno what yous did to that man, but yous sua got him by the sac. Someone’s comin’ up and damn, gurl, yous one lucky white boy.” She ended the call.

Hearing the approach of footsteps coming from the hallway outside, I moved to the front door and froze. I couldn’t see who was carrying the flowers, but—fuck, flowers. Roses and, fuck me, there were just so many of them.

Red and misty pink.

“Yo, anyone there?”

“Y-yes,” I said unmoving, my chest too tight to breathe, my fingers clammy and my heart—shit, I don’t think it could beat any faster.

“You Mr. Moon?”

My surname sounded odd on the man’s lips; people rarely said it to me. All my life it’s only been Beo.

“Mr. Moon, yes, is here. I mean, that be me,” I squeaked.

“Where can we put them down? I need your signature.”

We? As in there was more than one, more—*Mother of God!* Four more men stood behind the first guy, with equally large bouquets of roses covering their faces.

“In the kitchen,” I told him, still squeaking.

My hands shook signing the proof of delivery. The man handed me an envelope, nodded, and they left.

Closing the front door, still too dumbstruck to even say anything, I returned to the kitchen and just stared.

I think an hour had passed before my feet started protesting.

Opening the envelope, I pulled out a plain white, crisp card, nothing special about it, and flipped it open.

I'm sorry for being a dick this morning. I shouldn't have disciplined you, Babyboy.

Forgive me?

Colt.

I swallowed, feeling tears sting my eyes. I wasn't gonna cry no more, I swore to myself. But I never anticipated meeting him or having this strong desire of want towards him.

Or thinking he would do this.

I looked at the roses again, placing my hand to my chest and feeling my heart that still hadn't calmed down.

Did I feel overwhelmed? Yes.

Was I scared? No, I was terrified. Death was slowly, surely, creeping up on me. A throbbing in my head, ice in my fingers, pain exploding through my gut. A reminder of my illness. It hurt to move.

I wanted to run again. Despite the fear, my feelings were growing stronger towards Colt. This was it. My last chance at having something with someone, even if it wasn't love, and I wasn't expecting it to be. It was only a question of time till everything came crumbling down and shattered into millions of pieces.

Stepping out into the hallway, I found the iron stairs leading to the upper floor. Colt's penthouse was, I guess, the physical persona of him. The walls were gray, bare concrete. The same with the floors. Some of the support pillars were bare, rusted iron. The furniture was either gray fabric or dark repurposed wood. Typical modern industrial design. Raw, masculine and cold. The living room was just one enormous open space with high ceilings. A felted, raw-wool carpet dominated the room and covered some of the floor. Light filtered through a colossal window which had a view overlooking Central Park. The amount of light, along with the gray color scheme, gave an almost ambient fog to the place, and it was quiet. So quiet I could hardly hear the NYC traffic. The kitchen had black cupboards and repurposed wood countertops along with stainless steel finishes. Nothing stood out in the open; everything had its place. There were no knickknacks or ornaments standing around, or paintings on the walls.

Reaching Colt's bedroom, I paused, taking it in for the first time. All white with an enormous bed covered in crisp white sheets that hurt my eyes. Moving to the bedroom closet he instructed me to find, I stared at it frowning 'cause

there sure was no door handle to pull it open. It took me several minutes to figure out I had to press gently against the white wood. Emitting a *click* sound, the closet door swung open.

His smell engulfed my nostrils and little Beo liked it. Like, a lot.

Shaking my head at my hardening cock, I pulled out the heavy leather duffel bag. I set it down on the bed, unzipping it to see the contents. I swallowed. I should have known: dildos, butt plugs and cock rings. A fucking power bottom's Heaven.

"Pick one, wear it for me." His words ricocheted in my head.

Shit. So many choices. What more could a boy ask for? Digging through the bag, I had no other choice but to remember how he felt, his fat cock in my hand. I smiled. Not gonna be stretching my boy ass too much for him, 'cause I wanted to feel his cock do most of the stretching. To feel each inch of his hard rod slide into me. To feel him pulse inside me. And those damn beads still had my mind reeling.

Finding one that would give me the smallest stretch, I saw it was not just a butt plug, but a cock ring combo. A small stretch of latex that would run along my taint held the cock ring attached to the plug. The plug itself was not wide but long, a curving tip at the end, with three coiling ridges down the length. The thing was going to hit my love nub permanently, and with the cock ring attached to it... I shivered.

Sweet torture and pleasure.

Shoveling through the rest of the bag, making certain there were no others, I found a small bottle of lube. With the butt plug-cock ring and the lube in hand, I went in search of the bathroom.

I discovered three more bedrooms along the way. One had a spare bed, and there was no doubt in my mind that it was set up for the purpose of having a sub tied down to it.

Playroom?

With a secret smile and a spring in my step, I passed the second bedroom that was redesigned into an office. The last, a home gym. Images of Colt working out flashed in my head. His body all soaked, belly hair sticking to gleaming skin, his smell *maxified* from working out. I ran my hand over my jeans, moaning at the images of my tongue trailing down his stomach, swirling in his belly button. Shaking my head, I closed the door to the home gym.

I knew Colt had money, but going by the size of the place, the fine detail and the quality of the furniture, bedding and carpeting, he probably had a lot more cash than I imagined. Stepping onto the marble bathroom floor, I found that the towels hanging on the railing probably cost more than what I could make from singing a week's worth of venues.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not a gold digger or a sugar daddy chaser. Maybe, if I knew I would have a full natural life, I would have taken an opportunity to be something, made something of myself. Having money, to me, didn't mean much. Sure you could go out and buy something when it broke, didn't have to worry about making enough to pay all the bills this month. It sure as hell ain't money in a man that would make me fall for him. I was grateful to the Bitches for only one thing—knowing the most precious thing in life was something no one could buy. I might not have much, but there was a hell of a lot of love in my life.

The bathroom was huge, the tiled shower so wide that I couldn't resist stepping into it. As I stood in the center and stretched out my hands, I couldn't even reach the walls. The bathtub was set several feet beyond the shower. Custom built, going on its size. That shit was big enough for at least three people of Colt's bulk. *Now that baby had my name on it.*

Feeling all warmed up from the bath, my muscles a bit more relaxed, I glanced at the plug. Pep talking my way into the whole matter.

He wanted me to wear it, for him. It would make him happy. As a submissive, to serve my Dominant. But Colt wasn't mine yet.

Did I want him to be? Hell yes! Giving a man full power over you, knowing he holds that gift with honor, and would use it without hurting you. Giving that control to someone that meant what Colt meant to me. My body broke out in goose bumps just thinking about it.

And Little Beo was already fucking liking that idea.

Taking a deep breath, I squirted some lube into my hand, smearing the translucent liquid over my palm and fingers, and coated the plug.

With my one hand on the bathroom basin, I reached around and traced a finger down my crack, pulling in a deep breath, clenching my hole at the whispered touch. Images of Colt's hard dick, veiny and rigid, sprang to mind. That large mushroom crown pressing against my opening. Or would he place

his tongue there first? I moaned out loud at the thought, knowing how he kissed somewhere between hard and rough with gentle passion. Would he do the same, making out, with my hole?

“Jeepers, Beo! Get a hold of yourself, dude.” I scowled and snatched my finger away. It didn’t help to banish the images from my mind. The whole point of my discipline was for him to dominate my mind, and now that I had no distractions and needed to have a toy up my ass, it wasn’t easy.

I picked up the plug, ran it down between my ass cheeks, feeling it. Just feeling it there. Slowly I pressed the tip to my nub, quickly reaching for my already painfully hard dick and wrapping my fingers around my base to stop the tingle in my balls from erupting out my cock. A slow burn started as I pressed the tip in, my heart beating in my chest. I held my breath and tightened my grip on my dick as the first ridge went in. The tingle in my balls only increased.

By the second ridge, I was panting hard and dripping on the bathroom floor. Taking a deep breath, I pushed hard, feeling the last ridge slip past, holding the plug in place. I hissed and stood on the balls of my feet when the tip touched my prostate.

Just breathe, Beo, just breathe. You. Can. Do. This.

My legs buckled, and I had to grasp the bathroom basin with both hands as I tried to calm down. Cursing, I realized I should have put the cock ring on first. Now it was going to be a bitch of a problem.

Standing as motionless as I could, I averted my thoughts to the bone marrow tap waiting for me on Monday, and what I was going to have to spin to tell Colt when I started to throw up after the third session of my treatment. It worked, and Little Beo calmed down.

Bending to my knees, I took the cock ring, pulling it across my guiche and hissing. This was going to be hell, ’cause pulling on the thing just made the tip of the plug press harder against my happy spot.

Biting down on my teeth, trying not to tip over, I managed to get some more lube and slip the ring over my dick and sac.

Finally standing, huffing awkwardly, my eyes spotted something in the washing hamper. Snatching the shirt out, I pulled it to my nose, overcome by Colt’s ripe, musky scent. If I wanted him to be mine, then maybe wearing this when he arrived home would give him a bit of a surprise. One of my own making. I never said I wasn’t a dirty boy.

Gradually, excruciatingly slowly, I packed the lube away and put the bag back into his closet. Finding a jock strap in my duffel bag, I slipped it on and looked for the controls for the central heating. I found them in the living room and turned the heat up. Seating my ass on the sofa, which wasn't such a brilliant idea, I waited for Colt.

Chapter Eight

“The precious moment when you realize you’re calling him ‘your boy’ and not just ‘boy’ anymore.” — Colt Maxus.

“Richard, I don’t care!” I said. Unlocking the front door and stepping into a dark apartment, my chest pulled tight.

Feeling the heat wash over me and the smell of flowers drifting in the air, I relaxed.

“Yes, I’m still here!” I snapped into the phone. “Those fuckers can bitch and moan as much as they want! I told them not to take that route, especially because of the danger. So no, Richard, you can tell each of those dumb dicks they aren’t going anywhere until I have some fucking answers, and Richard...” I paused, licking my lips, “go fuck James. The boy’s been staring at you the whole time, making love to you with his big, green eyes.”

Richard grumbled something on the other end that I couldn’t hear. “Bye, boy,” I said and killed the call. Closing the front door, I walked into the living room.

Flipping on the lights, I almost dropped the Chinese food at the sight before me. My breath stuttered, my throat closed, and my heart pounded away like a racehorse upon seeing Beo curled up on the couch, asleep, a butt plug and... I had to step closer to get a better look, but fuck, that was my T-shirt! Pride struck and rumbled in my gut at the vision before me, causing my dick to harden instantly. Sexy, sweet and beautiful. I caught myself thinking how much more beautiful he’d look with my collar around his neck.

Quietly, I placed my briefcase and food down on the coffee table. For a moment I stood staring at the beauty that was Beo. So soft, so thin—well, I was going to do something about that. My boy needed to eat! If it meant giving him a little belly, I’d be happy. Slowly and silently, I sank down on the couch next to him. Looking at his ass—two pale, perfect globes, covered in curling, little, fluffy, black hairs—my cock throbbed.

“Beo?” I said softly. He didn’t respond except with the deep rise and fall of his chest. Smiling, I watched him sleep. I was fucking exhausted myself, but I’d made a promise to my boy.

My boy, my fucking boy!

Reaching for him, I traced my finger along his thigh, only brushing him slightly. Beo let out an adorable, sleepy-puppy growl and curled his legs under him. The position spread his butt cheeks, showing me the piece of latex attached to the butt plug that stretched towards his cock and balls. I smiled. My boy had guts. The plug was designed to tease a boy's prostate while keeping the blood trapped in his cock. My already-hard dick dripped for him. Bringing my lips to his glute, I gave it a lick, causing him to moan in his sleep.

Well, a man could only watch so much before his need got the better of him.

Gently but firmly, I flicked the end of the plug with my finger. Beo jerked up, eyes blinking like he had just been struck by lightning.

"My poor boy," I teased.

He rubbed his eyes several times before he turned to look at me.

"Master Colt."

Growling, I reached for him and pulled him onto my lap, taking his lips. Beo opened his mouth and placed his hand against my cheek, fingers gently grazing my skin. I shivered at his delicate touch.

God, he was so different from any I had had before. Repositioning him with his ass on my lap, legs spread and knees placed on either side of my thighs, I trailed my hand up his hips and under the shirt, working my way up to his nipples. Brushing them softly with my thumbs caused his beautiful, small pink nips to peak. His eyes were closed. Moving my lips over his, my tongue explored his sweet taste.

Releasing his mouth, I spoke hoarsely, "Tell me, how can I make you happy?"

Beo swallowed, licking his lips in a slow slide as if trying to taste what my kiss left behind. He looked up at me, his big brown eyes going puppy soft. *Fuck!*

His plea—because it wasn't a request—ripped the rug from under my world, causing everything to crumble down around me.

"Make me yours, Master Colt."

My fingers shook. Hell, I was shaking as I traced my hand over his cheek and laced my fingers in his hair.

I pressed my lips to his and spoke against them, "Kiss me, Beo."

It was slow, everything about him was slow. He placed small kisses, his tongue tracing between my lips and, cautiously, he entered my mouth. His fingers sketched down my neck, causing my skin to pull tight and, sneakily, I felt my tie being gently uncoiled. My fingers twitched in his hair, wanting to take him forcefully on the carpet, but I willed myself to relax. I wanted to be buried balls deep in his warm boy hole, but I also wanted this. The sweet, pure innocence as he sucked at my mouth, taking my breath with his sensual kiss. Pulling away, he again gazed into my eyes, his Adam's apple moving slowly as he swallowed.

The hunger in his beautiful eyes sent my pulse racing.

"I want to make love to you, Babyboy," I said in a thick voice. Beo trembled in my lap and swallowed, with cheeks glowing.

"I'd like that, please, Master Colt," he whispered.

How the hell I was keeping calm with the boy in my lap only God knew, but each time I'd been this close to him my anger had stilled. It was there, but not roaring, just quiet.

Pressing his face to my neck, I reached around and took his ass cheeks in each hand, slowly spreading them. "Breathe, baby," I said, running a digit over the plug and working my fingers to grip it. Slowly I pulled it out. Beo gasped when each ridge rubbed his ring, his moist breath blowing against my skin. Finally feeling the plug come out, he gave a sigh.

Running my fingers down his crack, I whispered in his ear. "There a specific reason you chose this plug, boy?"

He took a moment to respond. "Yes, Master Colt. Want to feel you stretch me, not some silly plug."

Growling, I picked him up and placed him on his feet. "Going to take the cock ring off now," I said, groping his jock strap. Beo was hard, his dick stretching the material of the jock with a big wet stain in front.

Narrowing my eyes, I grinned. I couldn't resist. Leaning forward and taking the tip of him into my mouth, I bit down gently on his crown.

Beo hissed, pushing up on the balls of his feet. Slowly I increased the pressure, pressing my tongue against the material, tasting his salty precum.

“Master, please,” he whimpered above me. Groaning, I gave his head a hard suck, working my fingers past the pouch of the Jock and gripping his silky balls in my fist.

Releasing his cock from my mouth, I stared up at him. His eyes were closed, bottom lip rolled between his teeth, forehead glistening with perspiration, his chest raising and falling in quick breaths. My boy was high on endorphins.

“Were you touching my cock?”

Beo frowned and looked down at me. “Yes, little boy?” I gave his nuts a tender squeeze. “This cock’s not yours anymore. It belongs to me.” Another squeeze caused him to rest his hands on my shoulders. “Only my hands get to touch it. So answer my question.” I added a growl.

“Well no, but if you wanted me too,” he grinned down at me, “you should have just said so.” His tease, fuck, it was hot and brewing my already burning desire to fuck him. It was going to get him into so much trouble.

Letting go of his balls, I worked the cock ring loose without exposing him. Tossing the thing next to me, I leaned back against the couch. My piercing eyes gazing over him.

“Strip for me, boy... slowly, shirt first.”

He hesitated, closed his eyes and slowly pulled the bottom of the shirt up, exposing a tight stomach and pale flesh. A trail of black hair grew from his groin leading further up.

Pressing my palm to my bulge, I bit back a groan, captivated by the naked torso before me. That river of hair sprouted straight up in the center of his abdomen, stopping just under his chest. His eyes caught mine, a deep rosy color flashing in his cheeks going down to his neck and chest. He bit his lip.

“Stop doing that!” I rumbled low. “Biting your lip is only going to land you in trouble, boy.” His blush only deepened.

“Jockstrap, boy,” I thundered.

Hooking his thumbs in the waist of the jock, and fucking grinding his hips to a silent tune, Beo slowly pushed down. His cock went motherfucking batshit crazy as he pulled the jock off. It didn’t just bob up and down. It sprang like a jack-in-the-box being set loose, going in all directions, dripping and flinging a fat pearl of precum against his thigh. I gulped, licked my lips and growled.

“Fucking come here now!”

Beo's head shot up, his eyes big.

With shaky legs he stepped closer. He had barely reached me when I wrapped my fingers around his dick and gave it a hard tug. Thick and flamed pink at the tip, his foreskin wrapped tightly around the sharp-pointed narrow head. Gripping his cock in my palm, I started rubbing deliberately over his little slit with my thumb. Over and over again.

He was trying to hold it together, that much was clear from his trembling chin, the conflict in his face, and the clenching of his ass as his legs wobbled with the strain of keeping himself standing.

“So the two Doms, Martin and Hades, I would assume.” I didn't care to hide the jealousy in my voice, but Martin and Hades, of all people, having this boy and not me? It set a roaring blaze of envy coursing through me.

Beo shook his head, gritting his jaw as I continued to rub his slit.

“No, Doc...” He swallowed, voice unsteady. “Martin is just a close friend, Master Colt. He...”

Beo took a deep breath, yet I didn't stop my torture on his cock.

“Martin's known me since I was five years old.”

That made me stop, glaring up at Beo.

“Explain.” My command was nothing short of a bark.

“I'm an orphan, Master Colt. He was the doctor doing the yearly rounds, and we became friends. I don't feel the same way he feels for me. He's been in love with me since I was sixteen.”

Letting go of Beo's cock as the storm inside me rose to the surface, I clenched my fists. “He ever force himself on you?”

I was too terrified of what Beo might say, scared of what I might do.

Looking down at me, he reached for my clenched fists, taking them in his hands and wrapping his fingers around them.

He spoke in a bare whisper. “He would never do something like that, Master Colt. I love him, but more as a father or older brother, and he respects me too much to take matters further. Doc would never hurt me.” Beo's eyes pleaded with me... Martin was an important figure in his life, and he needed me to accept that. I couldn't say that I would get comfortable with the idea, but

I wasn't going to demand Beo have no contact with his friends, no matter how much I wanted him all to myself.

Sighing, he let go of my hands and knelt before me, resting his cheek on my thigh.

"Hades is different. He... Well, we met before he and I became members of The Bark." Beo started to play with the material of my slacks.

"I've never seen him there. How long have you been a member, because I sure haven't seen you there before either?" Something stirred in me, an aching for calm. Stretching out my hand, I ran it through Beo's hair, immediately feeling the storm backing down.

"Been a member at The Bark for two years as a VIP. So has Hades. We have a separate entrance to The White Room, and I never left The White Room. Last night I had to use the front lobby 'cause they were upgrading. But Hades was never my Dom. I was at a bar, and he happened to be there. I had a bit too much to drink, and one thing led to another and he became my first. That was three years ago, Master Colt. Hades is another friend, more like a big brother to me. We haven't slept together since."

"And the two Doms?" My voice was less aggressive now that I was stroking my boy's hair.

Letting out a long breath, Beo spoke in a low tone, "Both are members of The Bark. The first was the House Lord I served under, GrandMaster Hans. He never fucked me, but the other, Sir Felix..." Beo trailed off, and I stilled my hand in his hair.

"He... was a bit too enthusiastic, moving too fast, demanding too much. He was so adamant that we belonged together that it scared me. I didn't feel the same about him, not... not the way I feel about you." He looked up at me, my chest pulling tight. The tears rolling down his cheeks nearly killed me.

Watching him, his eyes sucked me in. I dared not speak at that moment, not even to force a single word from my lips. Too afraid it would come out as a squeak. I fucking needed to be inside my Beo.

"On your knees, Beo, arms folded and head resting on them, ass in the air," I said and let go of his hair.

The sight of him presenting the position I asked for stole my breath, banishing all thoughts from my mind. Standing behind him, his little rosy-pink hole presented for my viewing, I sucked two fingers into my mouth and coated

them with my spit. Bending on my knees, I traced the two along the crack of his ass.

Beo let out a gasp, his little hole clenching at my touch.

“Your boy pussy hungry, baby?” I said in a dark voice, and blew over his hole.

Beo moaned, scrunching his ring again, and arched his back.

I chuckled low. “Definitely a hungry little boy hole, all pretty and pink.” I ran my thumb around his anus. “Babyboy, this little butt ring of yours...” I swiped my thumb over the folding skin, watching the pink flesh whiten where I was pressing against it. I heard him whimper when the tip of my thumb sank into his small opening. “Motherfuck, Beo!” I hissed as my thumb was swallowed by his hole, my slacks and briefs long wet from my own precum.

Kneeling, I pressed my digit deeper. I licked and kissed around my thumb while fucking his hole with it. Beo trembled, pushing back, causing my thumb to go as deep as it could. Pulling it out with a pop, I gripped him by the thighs and planted my mouth over his hole, plunging my tongue inside him. Beo let out my name in a yell, shaking as I started to shove my tongue in and out of his hole, teeth ever so gently scraping against his delicate and sensitive flesh. I reached for my belt, undoing it while I ate out his sweet boy cunt. Popping the top button, I pushed my pants down past my hips, and released my throbbing cock. I was fucking wetter than—God, I think if I’d had a pussy I’d be soaked.

“Master Colt, please,” he cried, fucking sobbing. “Take me, Master. Please!”

“Not yet,” I growled against his hole, and returned my lips, sucking hard on his sphincter.

The frustrated growl from Beo’s lips spurred my own. Still lip-sucking his hole, I reached for the buttons on my dress shirt, my fingers trembling and just plain not doing what I needed them to do.

Standing, and at the same time reaching for my shirt, I pulled at it. Buttons flew as I ripped it open, then tossed it to the floor. My eyes focused on Beo’s ass, his glossy little hole slightly clenching and opening—fucking begging me to fill him.

“Hang on, baby,” I said and went for my briefcase. Digging in the side pocket, I felt for a condom and a sachet of lube. “Going to make you feel good, boy,” I droned, kicking off my shoes and pants, not bothering with my socks. I

spat in my hand and stroked my cock, mixing the spit with my precum. With my other I tore the condom wrapper carefully with my teeth and slid the latex on.

“Master,” Beo hissed, “move your old man ass, or I’ll fucking finish on my own.”

The nerve of the little shit.

Tearing open the lube sachet and emptying it out in my hand, I lowered myself behind him again.

Taking my open palm, I gave him a quick slap right on his hole.

“Fuck!”

“Yeah, baby, fuck. You just earned yourself a spanking.”

“Was counting on it, old man,” he teased.

“You’re playing with fire, boy,” I warned but couldn’t keep the grin back.

Running my hand over his crack, I worked some lube around his hole and spread the rest over the condom.

“On your side, baby.”

Beo quickly turned, and I lay down beside him. As I gripped my cock at the base, Beo lifted his leg to his chest.

“You want it slow?” I gradually ran the tip of my cock between his cheeks, hearing him whimper. “Or you want it hard and fast?” I smacked his hole with my cock repeatedly.

“Slow, please, Master Colt,” he breathed.

“Your own death sentence, boy.” ...*and fucking mine*. After all this, all this built-up desire, want and anticipation, with both our cocks screaming for release, he still wanted it fucking slow. And I gave it to him. Gently pressing at his entrance, feeling his heat as the tip of my cock slipped in. His hole constricted, pulling a groan from both of us. I placed my hand behind his right knee and slid in deeper, feeling the first bead rub and pop past his hole.

“Fuck!” he hissed, and I growled, bringing my lips to his ear.

“Like that, boy?” I pulled out.

“Ye—” His words were cut short with a gasp as I pushed back inside him, slipping in to the fourth bead, then I pulled out all the way.

“Colt, please,” he cried, tears dropping from his eyes. I pulled him, repositioning him on his back. Beo’s eyes snapped open, looking at me as I towered over him.

“Not going to last long, baby,” I said, glaring back.

He swallowed, wrapped his arms around my neck, and crashed our mouths together. At the same time, I pushed into my boy, hearing him gulp into my mouth as I pushed the last bead past his ring, and felt his hole clamp on my cock.

“God, Beo! So warm, so hot,” I panted into his mouth. His tongue lapped at mine, his lips red and swollen from my beard, but he kept kissing. His fingers dug into my back as I snapped my hips back and forth, moving in and out of him. I could feel the carpet burns beginning to sting my knees, but I didn’t care. I was already too fucking close.

“Gonna take care of you, Beo,” I said between kisses and thrusting into him. “Wanna make you happy, Babyboy. Wanna love you.” I knew what I was saying, but I was blaming it on the height and ecstasy of the moment. Beo shut me up after those words, kissing me hard.

I could feel it burning in my balls, tingling along my dick as the beads did their job. Each time I pressed into him, hitting his love nut, the boy’s eyes went fucking huge.

Fast and unexpected, I started to spill before I felt my orgasm explode from my groin. Biting down on his bottom lip as the pleasure sparked across my body, dumb-fucking my mind, as my lips stopped moving. Beo eyes went soft and tender, causing my breath to disappear, and he pressed his lips over mine, entering my mouth with his tongue. I still moved in and out of him, feeling the friction on my sensitive cock, but unable to bring myself to stop until I shook and lowered myself gently to him. Sweat drenched my back as I lay there, hearing Beo take shallow breaths. I moved, pushed myself up on my hands and slipped out of him, watching his mouth form a silent O.

He hadn’t come. I was sort of expecting it; not everyone could instantly come from having their prostate stimulated half to death. Taking off the condom, I knelt and watched Beo. He still had his eyes closed, chest rising and falling, his body hair sticking to his damp skin.

“Spread your legs, Babyboy,” I whispered.

I took two fingers and gradually worked them into his hole. His slippery, stretched hole allowed them easy entrance. Gripping his cock with my free

hand, I glanced up at him. His eyes were still shut. Bending over, I took Beo's cock into my mouth and down my throat.

"Master Colt!" He tried to sit up, but I placed my hand on his chest, holding him down. "Master, no, you don't have to, I can—" I growled with him in my mouth, the vibration causing Beo to whimper and then go silent.

I sucked my boy, running my tongue along the bottom of his dick and sliding my fingers in and out of his hole, coming back in each time to press against his prostate.

Fuck he tasted good, yet slightly bitter.

Beo's hands curled in my hair as I sucked harder, faster, to get his nectar out of him. He groaned, balling a fist in my hair, and gasped in warning, "Gonna shoot." I didn't stop, or slow down. I wanted my boy to come down my throat.

Feeling his canal clench around my fingers, I pressed hard against his prostate, my eyes gazing at him. His head rolled back, hips snapped up, pressing his dick deeper and flooding his seed down my throat. I swallowed each and every drop he had to give, not holding off even after he was spent. With hands stretched out at his sides, and deep, slow breaths coming from his lips, I let his flaccid cock slip from my mouth and slid my body over his.

"Can't promise you I'm going to be this sweet next time, Babyboy." I kissed his neck, working my way up to his lips.

Beo just looked at me, a content little smile on his lips and a look of delight in his eyes.

"I meant what I said, Beo. I will take care of you." I cupped his cheek and took his lips again.

After a long moment, I reluctantly let go.

Standing, I held out my hand for him and pulled him up against me.

"I brought Chinese, go fetch us—" I couldn't finish the sentence because the little shit's fingers were walking up my abs and stroking the outline of my chest.

"You're beautiful," he whispered, meeting my eyes.

I swallowed. I'd received compliments before, but this one—not something any other man or sub had ever uttered to me—struck me right in the heart.

"Thank you," I said hoarsely and cleared my throat. "Now go get us some plates, boy, then I want you back here in my lap."

Oh fuck! Beo pushed up on his toes and gently pressed his lips to my cheek, and whispered, “You’re welcome, Master Colt, and thank you for my flowers. That was epic nice of you.”

I watched him walk off, naked, to the kitchen.

What I ever did to deserve him, I’d never know. I will never be able to answer that, but maybe someone knew I needed him more than he needed me.

Placing the chop sticks on the empty plate, I outlined my expectations to Beo and briefed him on how the penthouse was run. This included when he could expect me home in the evenings and when the house help came in. I stipulated a time when I expected him to call, and this was when I found out Martin had “murdered his cell phone.”

“We’ll get you a new one tomorrow morning, baby. Now there’s one rule of my own before we go further.” Beo looked up at me. His head was resting on my lap, body stretched out on the sofa.

“My bedroom is off-limits. You will sleep in the spare room.” I kept quiet, staring at him, waiting for the anticipated “Why?” Honestly, I wasn’t too keen on him asking because, with Beo, I feared if he asked I would tell him. He never asked. Only said, “Okay,” and gave me a small smile.

“Now,” I reached for my briefcase and pulled out the contract I had pulled from The Bark’s database and changed to suit our needs, “before we go into this, Babyboy, I need to know, do you really want to? Because when it comes to me as a Dom, things are whole lot stricter. Beo?”

He glanced up at me, my heart pounding so loud I wouldn’t be surprised if he heard it.

“I do, Master Colt.” He sat up and turned to face me. “But I also want a lover, not just a Dom. I want what we just shared. I want what we shared back in your office, and sometimes I want a bit of both at the same time.”

I gave a curt nod. It was a reasonable request; not all parties joining into a BDSM contract wanted 24/7 submissive and Dom roles.

“You mentioned no hard punishment because you bruise easy... have you always?”

Beo looked down at his fingers, a wary expression on his face.

“Okay, anything else I need to know?”

"I don't like restraints, but I can endure them for my Dom," he said, which was expected. Beo was a sensual lover, complete with touch, taste and feel. He needs to be held, to know his Dom's presence. He craved that with every breath. Domination through pain wasn't going to work, but deprivation of one of his senses would drive the boy to desperate begging. I could use that against him as discipline and punishment. His next words did shock me.

"I don't have a very high sex drive, Master Colt."

"Oh," was all I said, all I could say.

"I'm sorry." Beo turned, sitting with his back to me, knees pulled up to his chest and arms wrapped around them.

Reaching for him, I ran my hand down his spine, stroking back and forth with my fingers. "Do you think that's all I want from you, Beo?"

He shrugged, then turned his head. "No, but what if I don't—" I pulled him into my lap.

"What if nothing, Babyboy." I smiled, not giving a shit how glossy my eyes looked. "You stole something of mine. You have it now, and you need to keep it safe."

He frowned, looking confused. "Master?" Again, expected.

I placed a finger against his lips, looking him straight in the eyes. "You got the key, Babyboy. The key to my heart. You just need to learn how to unlock it."

I kissed him then, hard on the lips, not telling him that he had already done so. It might have been the moment our eyes met in that room back at the charity event, or hell, it might have been when Beo gave me an innocent kiss on the cheek that I had fallen for him. But, in that moment, I knew, I just knew, my heart beat and pulsed because of him.

"There's just one other thing, Master Colt," he said wearily. "Mondays, I usually spend with a friend. It's been a tradition of some sort."

"Okay, so you want Monday nights to yourself too?" I asked, snaking my fingers in between his cheeks.

"Sometimes, it would depend on how the day goes. And of course, when I have a gig..."

"That's how you make your coin?"

Beo nodded.

“Fine, but listen to me, baby.” For no other reason but that I could and because he was fucking mine, I held him tighter to me. “I can’t take care of you if you don’t let me, so when I give you money, use it.”

His forehead wrinkled as he took his bottom lip into his mouth again. That fucking image was burnt in my brain and would taunt me every time I thought of him.

He nodded slowly.

Handing him the contract, I said, “I’ve already signed, but you can read through it first. I just need to make a call,” I added, seeing it was five to ten.

Leaving him on the couch, I took the disposable phone Hades had given me and made my way to my home office. The sole purpose of the office was for me to work from home, but I never did reach that point. Now that I had Beo, it might come in handy.

Why Beo? Of all the boys and men I had had in the past, why him? What was so different about Beo that gave him this strong hold over me? I wanted him here, next to me. I wanted to hold him tight, smell him as I drifted off to sleep. The first night he was here, I wasn’t thinking straight when I brought him into my room and slept with him in my bed, breaking the rule I’d made for myself. I had never felt calmer than when he was present. My mind was clear, the anger dulled. Fuck, I swore a lot less with him close to me. I smiled at that thought.

But I wasn’t ready. Before he could come into my bed, Beo would have to know the ugliness of my past, and I didn’t know if it would push him away or draw us closer together.

Chapter Nine

“If evil had a face, it would be Finn’s.” — Beo Moon.

I was still reading the contract while he made his call. The basics were covered; spanking was marked as soft limits, “hands only” added in brackets. The others—crops, whips and floggers—were placed under hard limits. Bondage was added, but he was so precise with the wording that only items with soft restraints were included. Hoods were marked as hard limits, ball gags and chastity belts as soft. Everything made to suit my needs more than his, except for one part: I wanted Colt all to myself. For the first time, I wanted to be just outright selfish. I wanted to be the only one he pushed his cock inside, the only sub pleasing him.

“Everything okay, Babyboy?” he said, standing at the end of the couch.

I nodded, “Can I have a day to think it over, Master Colt?”

Colt tensed and his eyes darkened. I could hear his teeth grind, see the tick in his jaw. He looked plain scary and unhappy. But he nodded. “You ready for bed?”

I stood and walked to him, reached for his hand and looked into his eyes. “You’re upset, Master. Please tell me if I did something wrong.”

His emerald gaze held mine for a moment, and then he looked away. “I was hoping the contract would be up to what you expected, Beo,” he said in a low tone.

“It is, Master, except for this part.”

I brought the paper up to him, pointing to the closed relationship part that was not ticked.

“Beo!” he growled, causing my heart to thump against my chest.

“Master?” I bit my lip again, knowing he had told me not to. It was a bad habit. *Shoot me.*

The next thing I knew, the contract was snatched from my hand, thrown to the floor, and I was picked up in his arms with him glaring at me. “You are mine, Beo. No one gets to fuck you except me, and if you need me to prove that to you, I will. That said, the same goes for me.”

“You mean—” I was silenced by his warm lips and wet tongue taking possession of my mouth. I shook in his arms, my dick starting to go hard again.

“The only reason I left it open was if you—” He clenched his teeth, arms tightening around me.

Slowly I touched his face, stroking his jaw. “Only you, Master, no one else. Please.” The fire in his eyes was as petrifying as it was heartwarming.

“Get some rest, Babyboy,” he said, and took me to bed, tucking me in and closing the door.

Lying in bed curled up in a ball, I listened to the silence with a yearning for Colt in my heart. I needed to feel him against me, 'cause the separation hurt. Colt felt right when he was touching me, kissing me, and I felt like his, like I belonged. I thought I could handle this—being away from him, knowing he was just down the hall. He said if I needed anything I could just knock on his bedroom door, but I wasn't prepared for the emotions consuming me—the cold raking my skin, the emptiness eating at my soul. I found myself thinking when I did tell him—'cause the time would come—would I be able to live without him if he pushed me away? I bit my lip again, and closed my eyes.

An hour later I heard the door open, and I froze. Seconds later, the sheet moved, and I was pulled by strong arms right up against him, but he was wet, sweating cold and shaking. I wasn't sure if he was sleepwalking or conscious, and I was certain he'd been crying. It worried me. Did he cry in his sleep? Was there something in his past that still haunted him?

“Hold me, Babyboy. *Please*, I need you so bad,” he said in an anguished voice.

I turned, pulled him to me and clutched him tightly. I forgot everything I was thinking about and just focused on Colt. It was a protective feeling—the fact that he needed me—warming me from the inside, consuming the cold I had felt a short while ago. Sleep came easily then.

Saturday morning came. I woke in his arms, his face pressing into the hollow of my neck, his sweat smell filling the room. I tried to peel myself free but gave up when he growled and smacked me on the ass.

“Stay!” he commanded. I was slowly beginning to accept that Colt might be different from the Dom everyone thought he was, not knowing at the time that it was because of me. What we shared during those moments was not love. It was something else. Yes, it had the delusion of love on the surface, but its

origin was far darker than either of us could have thought. For us to break it, we both needed to break away from each other.

The day was spent running errands, getting me a new phone and—can you believe it?—a fucking suit. I hated to wear the damn things. They made me feel stuffy and proper, and Beo Moon was never made to be proper. I was a freakin' hipster!

Standing in front of the mirror while the tailor took my measurements, I saw Colt glower at the man whenever he touched me.

When the tailor had finally made the adjustments, Colt asked him, not so politely, to go with a simple, "Leave!" from his lips.

Turning, I scowled at him.

"What?" Colt barked, fists balling in anger that was also displayed in his red face. "He was touching you. Goddamnit!"

"Master, he has to. It's his job," I said, curling my arms, trying to make the material relax. "Are you going to be this jealous if I give Richard a happy birthday kiss?"

His eyes went wild as he marched up to me, nostrils flaring while he breathed into my face, and his lips pressed into a tight line. "You don't want to do that, Beo," he warned.

"Okay," I replied warily.

Leaving the tailor, things only got worse. Colt didn't want me speaking to anyone, or looking at anyone for that matter. I know I said his possessiveness was a turn on, but hell, only to a point, not freaking demanding it.

Sitting next to him in his car as he parked outside Richard's home in the Hamptons, he placed his hand on my thigh.

"I'm sorry about today, Beo," he said, not looking at me but gazing past the dashboard.

He turned and looked at me. I covered his hand with mine. "Colt, I get you want me. You want to own me, but there are times when other people will touch me, hug me or want me speaking to them. Hell, you ain't even met Jane, and I'm scared you'd want to rip her apart, 'cause she and I are very touchy with each other."

"She is a woman."

"Okay, but that's beside the point. People are gonna touch me—"

"I said I'm sorry! What more do you want?" he boomed.

My heartbeat flew to my throat at his tone.

Sighing, he pushed my hand away and brought his fingers to his forehead, rubbing his temple. "I'm sorry, okay. For the first time in my life, I'm happy—really, really happy—and that's thanks to you. I'm terrified of losing that, losing you."

I couldn't reply 'cause his words slammed me in my gut. This was a mistake, a huge fucking rip-your-heart-out mistake. Once disaster struck, once the inevitable happened, I was gonna hurt this man, and I was going to be responsible for what was left after I was gone. I started to sweat. I needed to run, needed to end it right now or—

"Baby, what's wrong?" His finger grazed my cheek, wiping away a tear I wasn't aware had seeped from my eye.

Always with the crying, Beo; you're so fuckin' weak!

"Nothing. Just you, and your damn perfect words." I forced a smile, leaned over and kissed him. "Just try to ease up on the jealousy, big guy. I'm yours. I want to be yours and only yours." I took his lips, more tears streaking down my face, because I didn't know who I was trying to fool the most, Colt or myself.

As Colt climbed out, I reached for my door only to find it locked. I was about to turn and ask, "What?" when he stepped up to the passenger door and opened it, holding out his hand.

I blushed, not able to help it, at taking his hand, and he helped me out, locking the door behind me. With the gift bag in my one hand, Colt turned and took the other. I raised an eyebrow at him. "You're gonna do the whole parade, ain't ya?" I beamed at him.

"Fuck yeah!" He smirked, fist pumping the air. I only gaped at him. "Too much?" he asked, his eyebrows joining in a grin. I shook my head, laughing. He escorted me up to the front porch, fingers still entwined in mine, and pressed the doorbell. Moments later, Richard stood in the doorway, all rosy cheeks.

"Fucker, get on in here—Well, well, well... Who is *this* beautiful creature?" I could clearly hear the man was drunk. His eyes raked over me, whiskey glass in his hand spilling some of the liquor.

Colt's hand tightened in mine. "Richard, this is Beo, *my* submissive."

It seemed Richard sobered up at Colt's words as his eyes bulged in their sockets.

“Happy birthday, Sir Richard,” I said with a nod of my head.

He swallowed, wiped his mouth with the napkin he held in his hand, and stepped aside so we could enter his home.

Richard's house was big, beautiful and homey, but despite the warm, soft glow of the lights, it felt cold. Colt asked for my coat as he took off his own and handed it to Richard.

I shook my head, “I'm a bit chilly, Master Colt.”

Cupping my cheeks, he gazed into my eyes, whispering to me, “You don't have to call me Master, Babyboy. Not all the time. I'll tell you when that's appropriate.”

Moving closer, feeling his warmth radiating from him, I pushed up on my toes touching my lips to his. “And if I want to?” I asked, brushing my lips to his in a whispered kiss. My eyes were immediately drawn to his, the green flames blazing in them.

His tone was low and serious. “You, Beo Moon, have me by my fucking balls, and it scares me, boy.” He took my lips hard and rough. I was barely aware of Richard closing the door behind us and leaving us alone.

Pulling back, he spun me around, hooking his arm around my waist and walking us to the living room. I placed the gift bag with the Brazilian cigars we got Richard on a table containing other gifts. There weren't a lot of people, but these folks with their fancy sparkling dresses and rich-ass suits made me feel uncomfortable.

“Want something to drink, Master?” I asked.

Colt nodded and let go of me. “Anything you can find without alcohol in it would be perfect. Thank you, boy.” That kind of threw me off. Never took Colt for someone who didn't drink.

Seeing the bar, I spotted a waitress standing behind it.

“Um, hi,” I said.

“Good evening, sir. May I get you something?”

“Beo's fine, please. You got anything non-alcoholic, maybe a Chai Blossom?”

“Yes, and thank God. These people are so stuck up.” She immediately covered her mouth. “I'm sorry. Please don't tell my boss I said that.” The girl couldn't be older than twenty-one.

I smiled. "Babe, I don't even know who your boss is, and yeah, pretty stiff prunes the whole lot of them if you ask me." We both knew how stuck up the upper class crowd could be, and man, could they bitch and moan about the smallest shit.

She finished off the drink with a star anise and lemon peel. I just hoped Colt liked it.

Handing me a napkin, she asked, "Anything else?"

"Water, in a cup, please." 'Cause I always broke the glasses.

She frowned but got a silver paper cup and filled it up with plain sparkling water.

"Don't let them get to you, babe," I said as I took the water and Colt's drink. "Most of these folks got more issues than you and I combined. Your life might not be as flashy and glamorous, but I ain't be tradin' theirs for all the love in my life."

She gave me a sincere smile. Turning, my eyes landed on a silhouette in the far corner of the room, the light causing deep shadows over his face. Handsome guy as much as I could see of him. His eyes were focused to the center of the room on a man laughing loudly and chattering away... Richard.

Colt had told me Richard Flinór was his business partner, but first, his best friend. I could only assume the man was James, his body language attuned to Richard, his gaze following his every move.

Colt stood speaking to a fat, bald-headed man and a woman so tall and stiff she just looked awkward. As I walked up to him, her eyes raked over me. I clearly saw the displeased expression in her face as she gawked at my paper cup.

"Beo!" Colt draped his heavy arm across my shoulder.

"Your drink, big guy." I knew from accompanying Doc and his Dom friends and their subs to social events when to use the proper etiquette. People in the lifestyle had that way about them, that look in their eyes labeling you a Dom or a submissive. The woman and man now staring at me only looked put off. Handing Colt his drink, I said, "Gonna go talk to James, babe." I gave him a kiss on the cheek only to have my mouth filled with warm tongue and be sent off with a pat on the ass.

Stepping up to James, I paused and stared. The dude was charismatic and mouthwateringly hot. The sprinkling of freckles under his eyes and across his

nose only complemented his appearance. His eyes were hooded under thick, prominent eyebrows, and his honey-brown hair was slicked back and cut short at the sides. Slightly shorter, he looked a little older than me.

“James,” I said, trying to sound passive.

He didn't move, arms still folded across his chest pulling the purple fabric of his dress shirt tight as a glove over his slender yet muscular frame.

“I'm Beo, Colt's sub.”

His dark green eyes snapped to me. Lips parting like he wanted to say something, when the sound of glass shattering as it hit the floor made him clench his jaw.

I turned to see Richard turning red, booming drunkenly above the sound of the music, “No one died, just my drink. I'll get another.”

James's voice cut like ice next to me. “And another, and another, and another. So you and Mr. Big Bad?” he asked, changing the topic before I could say anything.

“I guess.” I joined him and mimicked his attempt to pose as wallpaper, my eyes down.

“He is looking at you, you know,” James said with a bit less ice in his words. “Well, glaring is more like it—and eye fucking you to the wall,” he added.

“Are his eyes burning fire again?” I asked, feeling my cheeks getting warm.

“By the looks of it, yeah. And his dick's feeling the moment, too.”

I looked in Colt's direction. His predatory eyes met mine, his tongue swiping over his lips. Someone was talking to him, but he wasn't paying attention to them. Staring down his body, yep, the man was tenting and not even bothering to hide it. Tracking my gaze back up, he took a sip of his drink, still glaring over the glass. Lowering it, he gave me a toothy grin. Gooseflesh riddled my skin as he narrowed his eyes and *bit his fucking lip!* Heat engulfed me from my gut, making the bow tie around my neck feel like it was choking me.

“B-bathroom?” I asked in a small voice.

“No, bro. That man's gonna fuck you in half, the way he is looking at you.” James stepped in front of me, shielding me from Colt's gaze.

"I need some air." He grinned, reached for my hand, and walked me to the kitchen and out the back.

Maybe I needed the air more than he did, 'cause damn, it felt good to breathe again.

Taking a large sip of water, feeling the bubbles tickle my throat, I gazed at James sitting quietly next to me on the patio furniture. He stared out into the black night, heavy emotion dancing across his face. His eyes looked tired now that I could see them clearly, full of sadness and regret.

"You okay?" I asked, ready to change the subject when he sniffed.

"No..." he whispered. Bending forward, he ran his hand through his hair.

"It's getting worse each day. I watch the man I love change, and I don't know how to help him. I don't think I can do this any longer."

I assumed he was referring to Richard's drinking, but I couldn't say anything. I didn't know either of them.

"That's all I do these days... cry, and it's not doing anything to help him."

Stupid Beo had to go ask, "Have you talked to him about it?"

James looked up at me, pain cracking his face. "Sorry, never mind."

I dropped it and kept quiet. We sat for a long time outside, just gazing out over the lawn, until James asked, "So, the Big Bad Wolf. How's that working for you?" My chest drew tight, and I choked on the mouthful of water I tried to swallow.

"I'm not sure. We haven't really done anything but make love."

James snorted next to me so hard he had to grip his stomach. "Dude, I'm sorry, but that man... You saying love and him in the same sentence, it's hard to believe."

"And what would you know!" I snapped at him. "Why does everyone always have something bad to say about him?" I went silent as James stared at me.

My anger wasn't just unwarranted and unnecessary, it was also very un-Beo.

"Sorry," we both said at the same time, looking at each other and smiling.

"Colt's different, James. He makes me feel safe, cherished. For someone who's had that and lost it, and then to find it again... I'm willing to hold on to it."

“Not sure what you meant there, but if he makes you happy, who am I to judge?” He perked up an eyebrow.

“It’s not just that. I think we make each other happy when we are together.”

“James! Boy!”

“Oh God!” James rubbed his forehead. “Beo, it’s been nice, but I can’t guarantee I’ll see you again. A guy can only take so much.”

“Fucking James!” Richard’s shouting increased.

I nodded at James as he got up. He had barely stepped into the kitchen when I heard him snap, “What?” and an argument broke loose between them. I waited for the voices to drift off, and saw a light go on the second floor.

Stepping into the kitchen, I could see the place was cleared out. Only the three waitresses gathering glasses remained; the rest of the guests had gone. I silently wished James well, thankful that at least Richard had waited till the end of the party before starting the argument. Seeing a platter of sushi, I grabbed a California Roll and shoved it in my mouth. I swallowed it, not thinking much of it. As I washed it down with a sip of water, I instantly got a cramp in my gut and a burning in my throat. I shouldn’t have done that, shouldn’t have taken that food.

“How’s James?” Colt spoke in my ear. I had been too lost in my attempt to keep the piece of food down to even notice him coming up behind me. He spun me around. His pupils were unsteady. He took my lips, and I could definitely taste the strong tang of alcohol in his mouth. My stomach flipped, and I pressed a hand against his chest.

“Sorry, wasn’t prepared for that,” I lied quickly, feeling my stomach coil from the sushi and water.

Colt cupped my cheeks making eye contact. “My kisses not good enough? You need something better, boy?” I swallowed, not from his question but at the rise of bile in my throat.

“No, Master.” I took a gulp of the water and spat it back into the cup, coughing and wiping my mouth with the back of my hand. Colt gripped my wrist, causing the cup to fall to the floor. He pushed my back against the wall, rubbing his bulge against my dress slacks. It wasn’t his fault I was nauseated. He moved in to take my lips again, but I turned my head.

Growling, he clamped his grip painfully on my wrist, and spoke in my ear, “You’ve been sucking James? That why Richard blew off on him? He caught

you two, didn't he? That's why you won't kiss me!" He snarled in my face and increased the pressure around my wrists.

"Colt, *please*. You're hurting me. Stop!" I managed to get out.

"Answer my fucking question, Beo!" he roared, his alcohol breath hitting me straight in the face.

"No, Master," I whispered, and he let go, releasing his hold on my wrists.

Immediately I stepped away from him, dashed out the kitchen to the back porch, fell to my knees and puked. My blood rushed in my ears, my head spinning. Choking, I tried to let the rest of the nauseous feeling pass. Colt never stepped out after me, and that fucking hurt, but going on his alcohol breath he probably had one too many, and maybe it was the reason he didn't drink. My heart broke for James. I stood and glanced at the second floor window. The light was off.

Richard was a handsome man. His physique leaning more to that of a sports model; lean and long in comparison to Colt's bodybuilder form, but no man was good looking enough when he was drunk at the same time.

Walking back into the house, I found Colt waiting on a couch. He didn't look at me as I came closer, only stood and walked to the front door, his coat already in his hands. I followed him outside. Richard was nowhere to be seen. Nor James, so I couldn't say goodnight.

Stepping out to the car, Colt was leaning against the passenger door.

"Beo," he said in a defeated voice, "You didn't deserve that. I'm sorry for acting that way. You okay, baby?"

The nausea had passed, so I nodded, lying to him and myself again. Why, I don't know. How many more chances was I going to give him before I really paid heed to everyone who'd warned me against him?

That night, Colt appeared in my room again. I'd already fallen asleep when I was awakened by being pulled against him. His body quivered, breaking out in a sweat.

"Hold me, Beo. Please."

And I did.

I woke up alone on Sunday morning, put on some sweatpants and my hoodie, and made my way to the kitchen. I found Colt naked, seated on the couch, gazing out the window.

“Beo, come sit here please. I need to talk to you,” he said when I stepped closer.

I knelt before him with my hands clamped around my back, keeping my gaze lowered. I found myself focusing on his dick, hanging heavy over equally heavy and low-hanging balls. I swallowed. Even semi-hard it looked thick. I definitely knew now how it felt, but this was the first time I had actually laid proper eyes on his golden member. A fat droplet of precum stringed from his slit. Damn, even his dorsal vein was fat. The basilisk—’cause that *thing* had to have a name of its own—perked up, its flat, big head swelling and filling with blood. My heart raced faster.

“Stop looking at my cock, Beo,” he growled, and I brought my gaze to his. His eyes were red and tired, dark shadows lining his periorbitals. I had to bite my lip, however, at the pink blush on his cheeks as he grabbed a pillow, and, like an awkward teenager, placed it over his now hard cock.

Colt cleared his throat. “I fucked up big last night. It’s not like me. It’s the reason I don’t drink, baby, and I give you authority to stop me and remind me of last night if you see me with alcohol in my hand. In fact, I’ll add it to the contract. I don’t care who’s around, even Doms and Masters, you stop me. The last thing I want to do is hurt you.”

I wasn’t sure if this was just a trick to lull me, ’cause after each time he acted crazy, sweet words came from his lips.

“Now,” he stood, the basilisk full length and hard, “suck me, Babyboy. Master wants you to taste his juice.”

Slowly I leaned forward, giving his head a lick, causing him to take a deep breath. I closed my lips around his mushroom head, giving him a suck, and at the same time flicked my tongue against his slit.

The man went feral, pushing himself to the balls of his feet, hands turned to claws, coming for me, and his breath hissing past his lips.

He grabbed my earlobes, pinching them with his thumbs and index fingers, forcing me to stop working my lips over his head and be still. “Going to fuck that pretty face of yours real good, Babyboy.” Without warning, Colt thrust down my throat. I gagged, nostrils flaring as I tried to breathe with his dick filling my mouth. He pulled back and pushed back in. “Look at me, Beo,” he said with a shudder. My eyes teared from straining them upwards. I forgot to breathe when I saw the fire in his eyes—different, warm and zealous.

Colt's chest rose and fell rapidly, and his breaths and thrusts quickened, his left hand cradling my chin while the right fisted my hair. Snapping his hips, he exploded down my throat, releasing a loud roar of my name into the penthouse.

Still fucking my throat, I savored every morsel he had to give.

Colt pulled out of my mouth and fell back on the couch, holding his hands in open invitation for me. Eagerly I climbed onto his lap. Colt cupped my cheeks, with his thumbs rubbing the tears from under my eyes.

"Just look at you," he said, tracing a droplet that must have escaped from my lips, and taking it into his own mouth, "all teary-eyed with swollen lips, my beautiful Babyboy." He pulled me to him, taking my lips and kissing me, sliding his tongue around and exploring my mouth till his tummy gave a rumble.

Colt smiled against my lips. "Breakfast, Babyboy. Time to feed me," he said and led me, with his hand in mine, to the kitchen.

I was seated on Colt's lap with my legs spread over his thighs, and my bare feet resting next to them on the leather sofa. I could feel the censorious stares from across The Red Room, but it couldn't compete with the comfort I had having Colt's arms around me.

He'd left Sunday morning after brunch and returned with a chest harness and a new leather jockstrap for me. Then he'd commanded me to go sit in the corner for an hour for calling him an old man on Friday evening. Afterwards he'd spanked my ass; my butt cheeks still had a tender sting to them as I sat in his car on the way to The Bark.

Stepping into The Red Room was like stepping into the BDSM version of the *dark side*, all red and richly dark interior. I liked it. The atmosphere here was relaxed, unlike The White Room, which felt more stiff and cold. The Doms here were loud, laughing and barbarous with their mouths. The White Room was more for the elegant, sophisticated class, proper and shit. If you swore in that room, a hush befell the place. Here, every other word was a cuss word. Some I'd never heard before, others making my cheeks glow crimson.

"Behave, Babyboy," Colt admonished in my ear as I rubbed my bare butt cheeks against his growing dick. My jockstrap had a zipper running down the front, and it was causing major discomfort to my cock.

“Well, Master, your basilisk is licking my butt,” I said innocently and pressed my back against his warm chest. He groaned, causing his chest to vibrate, and tightened his arms around me.

“I think he likes it, Babyboy.” His left hand found my right nipple, rubbing it gently while he kissed his way from my ear, down my neck, to my shoulder. We both went fucking hard. My dick throbbed, 'cause Colt had me wearing a damn snap-on cock ring. He grasped my neck, and pulled me back, taking care not to choke me. I felt the tug of the leash attached to the metal ring on the front of my harness pulling me back. Once he had me snuggled tight against him, Colt's lips found mine. His left hand slid down my body, stroking my body hair, passing the hem of the jock, and gripped my dick. His own rested between my ass cheeks, drooling precum and causing a wetness, giving his cock an easy slide as I deliberately stroked him with my ass.

“I can come just like this, Babyboy,” he said into my mouth, running his tongue along my lips before pressing his tongue back in. The way his hand was working my cock, neither of us was going to last long.

I panted from Colt's hand moving faster on my dick, giving it a tight squeeze when he ran his palm over my cockhead. I couldn't help the whimper escaping my mouth when Colt nipped gently at my bottom lip, rolling it between his teeth, and let go. Fire sparked in my groin and my breathing increased as he ran his wet mouth all along my throat, resting to suck on my Adam's apple, causing a shudder to run through my overheated body.

“Please, Master. I need you,” I whispered.

“I know, Babyboy,” he replied, licking my chin and thrusting his tongue into my mouth again, all the while not letting go of his tight grip on my cock. I latched onto his tongue and sucked, desperate for some part of him.

“Excuse me, Master Colt,” a fearful voice sounded in the distance.

Wrenching his mouth from mine, Colt turned and glared at the offending sub who had disturbed him.

“What. The. Fuck? Are you suicidal, or are you just plain dumb as dirt?” he growled.

It was a House Rule that no Dom may be disturbed by any sub if they were in a scene with their submissive or conversing with other Doms. He could only be approached by another Dom.

“I'm s-so so... sorry, Master Colt,” the poor guy stammered. “I... I...”

“Spit it out for fuck’s sake, boy, before I gag you for the night!”

“I... Master Martin,” my eyes went wide at hearing Doc’s name, “wanted to know if you and your sub would care for a drink?” The sub said as fast as he could. I don’t think he even breathed until he got all his words out.

“Master Martin sent you?” Colt asked.

“Yes, Master Colt.”

It came as a complete surprise to me when Colt told the sub to thank Doc, and requested a bottled water for each of us. Even more surprising was that Colt had acknowledged Doc by accepting the offer and using it as an excuse to stop our make-out session, much to my disappointment.

“Stand, boy,” Colt demanded, his Dom voice telling me exactly who was addressing me.

I automatically obeyed him.

Wrapping the leash around his hand and tucking the basilisk away, Colt led me to The White Room. I could feel every eye burn into my flesh as we entered. My heart thumped hard against my ribs. The room went quiet as we walked up to the black Victorian couch where Doc and two other Doms were seated. The White Room was nothing more than a large parlor in gothic Victorian design with white walls and equally white, indulgent carpeting. The furniture was black on black, the couches covered in black satin, giving it an almost purple appearance. The Baroque architecture and patterns on the support pillars and moldings were painted a matte black. Heat came from four porcelain heaters and a large fireplace in the center of the far side of the room.

I was so focused on keeping my shit together that I didn’t notice Colt had come to a stop, and I nearly walked into him.

“Gentlemen,” Colt greeted in a deep, venomous tone I could feel down to my gut.

There was general greeting and nodding by the Doms, the tension spiking when Doc asked Colt to sit beside him.

This wasn’t a casual invitation—this was a challenge and declaration of power, property and egos. Fucking Doms!

“Don’t mind if I do,” Colt growled in response.

I had a suspicion Colt’s sudden urge to bring me here was for one reason. Colt was staking his claim, and Doc had just given him the perfect opportunity

to do it—right here in The White Room in front of the VIPs. The thought made butterflies flutter in my stomach and goose bumps form over my skin. This man, this powerful, sexy-as-fuck Dom wanted me so badly that he would go to these lengths to claim me, and do so publicly.

Colt sat down in the wingback chair next to Doc's and gave a slight tug on the leash. I silently went down and knelt next to him at his boots. Resting my hands on my thighs, I took a deep breath in and slowly released it. The conversation around the table faded into the background as I calmed myself and tried to sink into my headspace. I realized that kneeling at Colt's feet was allowing me to let go. This was where I belonged. Not even Doc's disapproving glare could take away the sense of beautiful, welcome peace that surrounded and filled me. I felt Colt's fingertips gently brush the nape of my neck, and I eagerly leaned into his touch. His thumb caressed me as his fingers traveled up and into my hair.

"May we join you?" a familiar, yet unwelcome, voice enquired, and I immediately tensed, as did Colt.

Sir Felix stood not far from me, and behind him none other than The Bark's biggest whore, Finn. My body stiffened as I witnessed Finn gracefully lower himself on the other side of Colt and discreetly run his finger along Colt's thigh. It made my hackles rise and my skin crawl. I clenched my teeth to stop the growl from escaping. I knew about Finn and his poison. He was a little *Sith* cunt compared to other subs. He didn't care if you were exclusive to your Dom. He would flaunt his tight ass, flex his perfect, muscled body, and easily get what he wanted—even fucking Martin couldn't resist the shit's charm. And now it seemed he had set his eyes on my Dom.

I knew he was going to go out of his way to bait me, and I was determined to stop him in his tracks. I didn't have to prove anything to the club whore, and I would not play his petty games.

"It's been a while since I've seen you here, Colt," Felix said as he sat, completely unaware of Finn's fucking fingers. "Your supposed sub keeping you too busy to grace us with your presence?" he asked cordially, but anyone could hear the sarcastic undertones in his voice.

"Not supposed, Felix. Unlike you," Colt flicked at Finn's fingers, causing him to pull back his hand, "I asked Beo to submit to me exclusively," Colt responded rather smugly. I think Finn actually threw up in his mouth at those words.

I suppressed a small smile and lightly rubbed my cheek against Colt's leg to show my pleasure at his words.

"Or could it be, Master Colt, that you needed to train such a little novice, before bringing him into The Bark? I've subbed for you long enough to know how high your standards are, and I doubt anyone of Beo's caliber would ever be good enough."

"Finn," Sir Felix said, but that was all the admonishment he received.

"Sorry, Sir," came the response from Finn, not sounding apologetic in the least. "I just feel that Master Colt can do so much better than a street urchin who can't even abide by simple Bark protocol, even if Master Martin let it slide."

"Enough!" bellowed Colt. "You were never mine, Finn. I never wanted you, and Beo is more capable than you give him credit for. Maybe you could learn from him."

"Do not address my boy without my permission," Sir Felix growled at Colt.

"Well, *sir*, if you cannot control what comes out of your submissive's mouth, then permit me to show you how," Colt responded harshly. "I will not tolerate your sub, or any member of this club, belittling or disrespecting my boy, and definitely not in my presence."

Colt's outburst went straight to my cock. This time his possessiveness over me turned me on, 'cause it was different, not fueled by jealousy or fear, but pride. Being edged just moments before without release was becoming an agony for me, and I tried to adjust my jockstrap, pressing the palm of my hand hard against my aching bulge.

"Take your hand off what's mine, Babyboy," Colt said as he glanced in my direction. The table fell silent.

It was rare for a Dom to utter pet names in the presence of others, and rarer for Colt to state it and to do it so boldly.

My sideways view of Colt took in the growing bulge of his crotch, and I knew he was getting as turned on as I was. My gaze lingered on the knee-high leather boots and leather pants hugging powerfully muscled thighs. Recalling the powerful thrust in his thighs as he fucked me Friday night, I groaned, burning with the desire to have him fill me up from behind. My hand strayed back to my dick, and I rubbed, not able to stop the little moan that escaped my lips.

“It would seem the sub has very little restraint,” Finn commented snidely.

“I have little need to know your sub’s opinion, Sir Felix, but it would seem my boy cannot control himself and might need to be reminded of who his body belongs to.”

“Hrumph.” Doc loudly cleared his throat in disbelief and mumbled something under his breath.

I smiled secretly to myself, because, yes, Doc knew me too well and knew that I, Beo Moon, could write a book on self-control.

Colt stood.

“On your feet. You seem to have no qualms about disregarding my authority in front of all these Tops. It seems only fitting that they witness you yield to the Master you belong to.”

I rose, standing shyly before Colt, and clasped my hands behind my back. Colt went down on his knees. I was shocked, my breath gone and my heart knocking against my chest, and I was pretty sure I wasn’t the only one that gave a gasp.

He leaned forward. Gripping me by the hips, he brought his lips to my skin, stuck out his tongue and traced a moist trail from my navel to my hip. He kissed my hipbone in a searing kiss that forced me to snuck at air.

“Master,” I moaned as he moved to my left hip and repeated the kiss. With his mouth, Colt worked his way up, teeth and scruff scraping against my tender flesh, nostrils flaring, blowing hot air on my flesh as he made his way to my left nipple. Covering my tit with his mouth, he sucked while his tongue flicked at the bud. I tightened my grip on my arms, clenched my jaw, digging my fingers into my muscles to hold onto myself ’cause, shit, I was slipping.

“Close your eyes,” he said in a warm breath against my throat as he gripped me by my harness and wrapped his free arm around my waist. His lips covered mine and gently lowered me to the coffee table seated in the center of where we sat. I was barely aware of the drinks being taken off the table when his tongue came into my mouth, and my mental hold crumbled.

My back kissed the cold surface of the wood, causing a shudder to rake my body. It was then that my heart lunged in my chest in anticipation, and my thighs quaked.

Master was going to fuck me right here, in front of them. Right in their faces.

“Give me your hands, boy,” Master growled. Unaware that I even did it I heard Master’s belt being worked loose, the leather warm as he held my wrists to each other and wrapped the belt around them, pulling it tight through the belt buckle.

I was pulled up by the belt against him, his warm bare chest touching mine, and I felt him lower my hands over his neck.

Master took my lips again, trailing his fingers down my spine, sending sparks to my skin. Master found my crack and slid a finger in-between my cheeks.

I panted into Master’s mouth from the first stroke of his finger, moaned at the second, and when he pressed inside me, my glutes contracted at the unprepared penetration, causing my hole to clench around his thick digit.

“Who do you belong to, Babyboy?” Master asked with his sweet words.

“To my Master,” I said in a whisper.

Chapter Ten

“I was losing my shit. I was fucking losing my shit with Beo.”
— Colt Maxus.

Beo was in my arms, where he belonged. Like walls settling on their foundations, my world was complete.

“Isn’t that so, Babyboy?” I asked, taking his mouth again. There was something primal about this. Having an audience, showing them he was mine. Pride simmered in my veins. Honored to be the one to claim him, for him to grant me that privilege, knowing he could have another, and yet he chose me. His hole clenched once more around my finger and then *magic*. My boy became like clay in my hands. His breathing eased, his heart slowed and his hole relaxed, allowing my finger to slide in and out of him as he pressed back on it, fucking himself.

I was aware of the differing gazes upon me—admiration, shock, envy, spite and anger—but I didn’t care. All that mattered was my precious boy in my arms and making him mine.

Gently I placed him down, lifted his bonded hands from around my neck and turned him to face the audience. Beo was unaware, slipping into that place some subs went, but I didn’t want him to go into subspace. I was a dick, selfish and arrogant, and I wanted to be his whole fucking world.

“Beo, baby, listen to me.” I whispered in his ear. He gave a pleasurable moan. “On your knees, on the table. Just like Friday night. Master wants your hole,” I said, keeping my voice soft as I spoke to him.

My fingers trembled, my heart stuttering to burst from my chest. I’ve had submission before, but not like this, not so completely, willingly offered in adoration to me. It stole my fucking heart.

With shaky legs, and in a trance, he climbed up and went to his knees, arched his back, lifting his ass in the air, and laid his hands above his head. He let out an agonized groan as I swept my finger over his exposed hole. That groan grew louder as I ran my tongue over his sweet entrance. I nipped at his tender flesh, licking each little sting and driving myself out of my fucking mind with need. Lapping at his anus, I slowly pressed my tongue into him and stilled when he pushed back and started fucking himself.

Palming his jock, I unzipped the front, hearing him gasp as his cock sprung free, slobbering precum over my palm. I was losing myself in this moment with him, and mentally I cursed for the predicament I'd placed us in. I was still a Dom and I had an audience. I needed to mark my territory so these fuckers knew to keep their hands off.

"Open your fucking legs, boy," I demanded, "and don't even think of coming until I give you permission, or you won't be allowed to come for a week!"

"Yes, Master Colt," Beo said in hushed tones, opening his trembling legs. Beo tried to dig his fingers into the wood. Finding nothing to hold him steady, he gripped the edge instead.

"I'm here, boy," I said standing, zipping down my leather jeans and exposing my cock.

Pulling a condom wrapper from my pocket, my eyes met Martin's. Such jealousy burned wild in those gray-blue eyes that any other man would have backed down. I only narrowed my gaze at him, meeting his stare.

Yes, fucker, I won. So eat it.

Rubbing my own precum over my cockhead, I rolled the latex over my dick.

Running the tip down Beo's valley, I heard him groan.

Slowly, with only my spit as lube, I pressed into my boy, feeling his hole swallow my cock. It was something else, seeing my dick disappear down his ass, watching it slide back out and back in. His hole clamped down hard when I was balls deep. Feeling him tremble with each slow thrust was nothing but heaven. I was beginning to realize that when I was with Beo, when I was inside him, nothing else mattered other than hearing my name on his lips, his next quavering breath, that sweet beautiful moan that fried every nerve receptor in my body.

Pulling on his harness, I crashed him against my chest. I climbed on the table, spreading my thighs on either side of his, causing him to sit on my cock and filling him as deeply as I could go. We both shuddered as my tip pressed against his prostate. Beo leaned his head on my shoulder, turned and pressed his nose against my neck, breathing deeply.

"Fuck me, Master... please?" he begged.

I roared, snapping my hips and slamming hard into him. Beo cried out so loud, Martin was up off his seat, fists clenching, white knuckles at his sides. My

eyes cut to his, and I growled, thrusting into Beo again, this time only a whimper bolted from my boy's lips.

Coiling the belt and his leash in my hand, I fucked my boy, hearing his cries going silent, his mouth pressed against my neck and nostrils snuffling at my skin as he breathed with each plunge. My eyes challenged Martin to dare step in and stop this. I was only met with a single wet tear rolling down his cheek. I sneered at him in victory, taking Beo's lips like a deranged animal, kissing my Babyboy hard.

Sweat gleamed and dripped down my scalp, and our bodies rubbed against each other. I felt the increased sensation in my sac.

Beo's dick was hard, straining backwards to his belly, smearing precum as I moved inside him.

His submission was breathtaking.

"Beo..." I whispered into his mouth when he stopped kissing. My boy was slipping into subspace again.

"Come back to me, boy." I slowed my thrusts, clenching my ass from the torture and the burn as I edged myself. "Don't go there. Master wants you here with him," I growled and bit his lip. When Beo's eyes snapped open, beholding me with soft tenderness, I couldn't help myself.

"I love you, Babyboy," I said, not caring who heard because it was only meant for Beo.

He responded by pushing his tongue into my mouth, moving his hips and fucking himself on my cock. Reaching for his dick, I wrapped him in my palm, allowing him to fuck my hand and fuck himself. Pleasure rippled along my spine and spiraled through into my cock as Beo worked his channel along my length, hissing as each bead rubbed his anus.

His cock swelled as he panted against my lips. Releasing his mouth, the belt and the leash at the same time, I wrapped my arm around his torso, plowing into him hard, fast and deep.

"Come for me!" I rumbled in his ear, unclicked the cock ring, and bit down hard on his shoulder. I felt his little ring clamp around my shaft, pulling a growl from me. Fire jolted in my balls, and I cried out, tears pooling in my eyes as I pumped into his boy pussy wantonly, hitting his prostate over and over again. "Now!" I snarled against his skin, digging my teeth into flesh and—fuck, Beo's cock burst, spewing white, creamy cum streams, like icing, over the black table.

I fucked him through his orgasm. My body shuddered, trembled, and my cock erupted, shooting cum in the condom as if it was the Fourth of fucking July!

“Master,” he whispered, sagging against me while my cock finished emptying. His head pressed to my chin, tears freely flowing down his face. “My Master.”

“Mine, all mine, Babyboy.” I pulled out and took his lips while our bodies began to piece themselves together.

A short while later I was standing in The Black Room, waiting on Beo to get back from the restroom, when a large hand squeezed my shoulder. Being six-foot-seven, I towered over everyone except motherfucking Hades. Turning, I had to look down at the shorter man, but instantaneously showed my respect by lowering my gaze.

“GrandMaster Hans,” I greeted him.

“Look at me, boy,” he said in a stern baritone voice that still made the hair on the back of my neck stand up. He was the only Dom that ever addressed other Dominants as boy or girl.

“Your title is well earned, Colt. But you didn’t own that boy out there tonight, so stop smiling and get a grip, old fool. I will say this: you did manage to make a couple of enemies tonight, not that that would bother you.”

I frowned at the man. He always spoke in riddles. “Master, with all due respect, I don’t quite understand what you mean.”

He laughed, that easy laugh of his with that glimmer in his eye.

“Little trick of the trade that’s a real bitch to accept. Our boys own us more than we will ever own them.”

“Master Yoda!” Beo said in a chirpy, slightly raspy voice. I had to raise an eyebrow at the scene playing out before me. GrandMaster Hans scooped Beo up and wrapped those grizzly, hairy forearms around my boy. Beo planted a big wet smacker on the man’s bald head. I think it shone even more when Hans went pink in the face.

“Still with the *Star Wars* references, boy?” Hans growled and placed my boy down.

Surprisingly, I felt no jealousy as I watched the play between them.

I felt a tug on my arm, and turning, I came face to face with Finn. “What the fuck you staring at?” I growled low, keeping my voice between us.

“You’re infatuated with him. It’s why you’re having this new mood swing.” The little shit actually bared his teeth at me. I was so ready to strike him until his next words stopped me dead in my tracks. “Till you have your fill of him, Master Colt. Then you’ll come back to me.” He swiped a tear running down his cheek and turned away. “You always come back to me.”

I watched him walk away to the back rooms, grinding my teeth because fear was a deadly thing so easily created. And I was scared, scared if the time came and I grew tired of Beo. What then?

Pain lanced through my chest thinking about it, knowing how I’d act—all cold hearted and cruel. I couldn’t bear the thought of the pain that I would see in Beo’s face. It left a bitter taste in my mouth. I prayed that day would never come. But it did sooner than I expected.

Monday arrived, and I was hesitant sending Beo off in the morning, dropping him in front of a brownstone. Sitting in the car, I watched him interact with a rather beautiful blonde woman and a little girl that jumped up and down when she saw Beo. My heart warmed at the sight, seeing the smile on Beo’s face. But I was also jealous, tightening my hands on the steering wheel. Fuck if I knew why—she was only a child—but I was.

And I seriously needed help. This jealousy was beginning to turn in my gut, and I didn’t want it or anything else to be the end of me and Beo. I set up an appointment with Aria for Thursday morning. To worsen matters, Beo didn’t call when he was supposed to, only texted saying he was running late and couldn’t call, and would see me at eight that evening. Luckily, I was too swamped at work, having a hearing with the crew, and private meetings with the men I assigned to handle Hades’ shipment.

Richard avoided me like I was the flu. I didn’t think much of his drunken parade Saturday evening. Hell, it was the man’s birthday, but the hurt in his eyes, the sorrow. Something was up between him and James. I had a feeling it was more than the fight they had and his declining of my invitation to join us at The Bark. My heart hurt for Richard.

That evening I had barely stepped into the penthouse and shut the door when the phone rang. My heart pounded as I rushed for it, hoping nothing had happened to Beo. It was security.

“Mr. Maxus, there’s a boy—”

“Send him up,” I said, sighing and placed the phone down. I was too tired to fight with the new security guard. I assumed he was referring to Beo. Five

minutes later there was knock on my door. Frowning, my shirt half-unbuttoned, I walked to the door thinking Beo must have forgotten his set of keys.

It wasn't Beo. Motherfucking Finn leaned against the wall, dark shadows under his eyes. His always perfect hair was shaggy and wild looking. He peered up at me with red eyes and lowered his gaze.

"What the fuck do you want?" I asked, too exhausted to growl.

"I'd like to talk, Master Colt, please..." he said in a haunted tone.

"Make it fucking quick," I snapped and turned, walking to the kitchen.

I stood with my back to him, shoved two pain tablets in my mouth and downed it with a gulp of water. Finn wrapped his arms around my waist and pressed his face against my back.

I slammed the glass down so hard that it shattered. Spinning, I gripped him on his sweater and shoved him backwards, causing him to stumble to the kitchen floor. He began to fucking sob.

"You wanna bitch?" I raised my voice. "Then you bitch, but you are not doing it in my penthouse, on my fucking kitchen floor." I stepped toward him.

"All I wanted was you. All I ever wanted was to be your boy. The first night I laid my eyes on you, I knew you were the man I wanted to be with. I thought you wanted the little whore, the dirty bad boy. But no! You had to pick him. Why? Him of all people! He's shit, scrawny, weak and pathetic, and you allow him to touch you?" Finn stood, tears running down his face.

I clenched my jaw and balled my fists, but anchored myself on the spot.

"What happened to the man I knew? The Colt Maxus that took what he wanted and didn't give two fucks about anything. The man that manipulated and blackmailed people. The man that had no problem taking someone out to get what he wanted. The man I love."

"Get out!" The voice threw both Finn and I off and silenced us. I looked up to see Beo standing there. The exact image that had flashed in my mind the previous night that I didn't want to see on his face was there, and I was unprepared for the twist the knife brought with it when it pierced my heart.

"Beo," I said, but I never heard his name leave my lips because motherfucking Finn challenged my boy.

"No!" Finn turned to me, anger radiating in his face. "Seriously, he calls the shots now?"

"I said get out!" Beo growled, a nasty sound from his lips. My eyes were drawn to him again and this time I took in his appearance. He looked weak, like he would drop any second, and I didn't think it was from hearing what Finn had said to me.

"I said, get the fuck out of this apartment!" Beo took a step closer, and Finn turned to him.

"Who the hell do you think you are, coming into my life and staking claim to what is mine? You are nothing but a little poz kid seeking cock. You should just roll over and di—"

I clasped Finn by the back of his neck so quick and with so much force he yelped. I didn't give a fuck as I hauled him down the hall and shoved him out the door.

"You never come near me or Beo ever again... You might not live to tell that tale, little boy!" I growled and slammed the door. Walking back to the kitchen, I could still hear Finn's crying coming from beyond the front door.

Stepping into the kitchen, my heart pounded like a fucking monster against my chest. Beo was huffing. The back of his T-shirt was drenched in sweat as he gripped his stomach and leaned on the island with his other hand.

"Baby?" I said, my voice shaking, and reached for him. The moment my trembling hand brushed his neck, he turned away.

"Don't touch me," he said. Slowly and in pain, he walked out of the kitchen and down the hall. I heard the click of the guest room door closing.

My heart stung with each painful thud it gave in my chest. I had to rest my hand against the wall as I made my way to the guest room.

Rubbing my palm over my face, I held my breath and listened. Silence grimly greeted me.

Cradling the door handle, I stopped. My breath became uneven, and I dropped my hand. I leaned against the wall next to the door and slid down to the floor, arms resting on my knees, head pressed back to the wall.

I sat there, seeing the image of Beo's face—the pain in his eyes—and the image of him walking away.

"Beo," I said, my voice sounding brittle. "Babyboy, I wanted to tell you, but not like this."

I took a deep breath, knowing that what I was about to tell him, only one other person knew. I was going to tell Beo everything, even the things Richard

never knew, and once those things were said, I couldn't take them back. Life is a gamble. The stakes are high, but once you put your heart out there, the line of caution blurs and you don't think straight. My throat felt dry. I licked my lips and spoke from the heart.

"I don't know if you're listening, Babyboy, but find it in your beautiful heart to hear me. Whatever you think of me thereafter is your choice, your decision, if you want to leave. But *please*, just listen. When Richard and I started our little empire back in the day, neither of us could comprehend where we would be today, or the price involved to reach the power and money we have now.

"Honestly, if I knew back then what it would cost, I'd have pursued a career as an entomologist. Can you imagine, me and insects?" I chuckled into the silence, knowing it was only because I was nervous. "You see, Beo, we live by a different sets of rules than normal people. You swim with the sharks, it's eat or be eaten. You think the government runs this show? Fat chance. It's the crime lords that run this world. Ancient orders that have existed for millennia. It goes deeper than drugs, weapons and money. It's dominance over who rules, who holds the most power over you. When someone holds power over you, Babyboy, you'd do anything to become more powerful than they are, and if that means you have to take them out..." I paused, took a deep breath and said, "Yeah, I had others killed. But it was either I kill them or they kill me. I'm not saying I'm some big bad mafia boss, but I'm no saint either.

"I was a hungry, tyrant newbie, riding the wave of endorphins along the way to my rise in power. By the time my wisdom came, Richard and I were so deeply involved we couldn't step out. You don't just step out from that world. The master whose strings you dance to is the one who holds power over you. When he uses that power to protect you because you are valuable to him, you respect him. Hence how I came to know Hades. He's much more than just a Motorcycle Club President, Beo.

"I know," he said stepping out of the room and standing before me. Gently he sat down opposite me, crossing his legs.

My gaze caught his. There was compassion, understanding and concern in his face when he gave a small smile. Beo reached for my hand, and as I allowed him to take mine, he entwined our fingers.

A strange feeling blossomed in my heart. It was different from what I was feeling for him—stronger. A little seed he planted there, and I realized how

close I was allowing Beo to get to me, not just physically but emotionally. We sat in silence as he held my hand. I had more to tell him, but I was frightened to open up this part of me. I wasn't sure if he would want the wreckage left behind afterwards. Even I wasn't sure what the extent of that wreckage would be.

"Why, Beo?" I asked. His head lifted up, a silly, adorable, little frown on his forehead.

Pulling my hand from his, I looked up at the ceiling. "There's something else I need to tell you, and again, I ask you to listen." I took a deep breath and let it out slowly, fighting to slow my heartbeat that was galloping like a motherfucking racehorse.

"Growing up, Babyboy, I had anything and everything I could wish for—money, toys, food, luxury—you name it. But I never had love."

Swallowing, already feeling the moisture burn, I closed my eyes, trying to force the tears back.

"My father was a monster, Beo, my mother a demon. The reason I don't drink is because I don't want to become who and what my father was. He would drink alcohol like it was water. He would always have a bottle of whiskey in his hand, from the moment he woke up to the moment he slept. My mother always said he should have married and fucked the bottle."

I shook my head and licked my lips.

"He'd get drunk, and then he'd get angry. When he got angry, he took it out on me." I forced myself to look at Beo, his brown eyes soft and wet. I pulled in a pained breath at seeing my boy shed not one but numerous tears for me. But I started this, I needed to finish it.

"Sometimes I'd get beaten so badly I couldn't see out of either of my eyes for days. He broke my nose so many times I lost count. I became angry at the other kids my age, wondering how they could laugh and smile so innocently. Didn't their fathers do that to them? Then how could they still smile? When you're beaten to the point that you black out and wake up in a pool of your own piss and shit, bruised and broken, you remember the words he'd shout as he hit you with his fists. *What a pathetic child you are, how weak you are, how worthless...* and you start believing it. I hated other kids. I was jealous of them and started to shut everyone out."

"But he was nothing compared to her." Beo's eyes went wide at my tone, but I forced myself to continue.

“I think I was around eleven when it started. She would come into my room, take a belt and wrap it around my neck, and then she would pull down my PJs and take off her gown. She would rub herself on me, and if I couldn't get hard, she would choke me. I tried to hit her, push her off, and begged her not to, but she always said, '*Good boys don't hit their mommies. Good boys do as they are told, and all boys do this with their mommies.*' Some nights, she would rub herself..." I swallowed, forcing the bile in my throat to go down. It only burned where it stayed in my gullet. "She forced me t-to lick h..." My fucking voice broke. *Empty*. I was numb.

"Master," Beo sniffed and wiped at his tears. His eyes didn't hold pity, they held heartache. *It broke me*. He fucking cried for me, a monster that didn't deserve a single tear.

Sighing, I forced myself to tell him the last part.

"When I was thirteen, they pushed me too far. Beo, I was a boy, a fucking kid. My father had already beaten me earlier that day, and I knew she would come for me that night. So I waited for her atop the stairs, and when she reached the top saying, '*Come to Mommy, my little boy,*' I ran at her and I pushed as hard as I could. My father heard her scream, but I was ready for him too. He thought I was a kid, that I was weak. That I knew nothing! That I was capable of nothing! When he reached the top of those stairs, saw my mother lying at the bottom with a broken neck..." I looked away from Beo, not able to face him as I said, "I pulled the fucking trigger, screaming at him, '*Who's weak now?*' Richard was our next door neighbor's son. He found me sobbing hysterically at the top of those stairs. The authorities wanted me evaluated, but Richard's father didn't want them to, and later he managed to adopt me. The night Richard found me, he held me in his arms. It was the first time I was held with compassion... as a child should be."

Beo grasped for my hand, pressing my bigger fingers against his thinner ones. Before I could pull away, he laced his fingers with mine and quickly crawled between my legs and laid his head on my chest.

"I get it," he said in a sob. "I ain't saying what you did was right, but I understand. You were a kid. You didn't know what to do. You were a teenager, just discovering things about yourself, discovering who you were, and you were terrorized by the people who were supposed to protect you, supposed to love you, and one night they pushed you too far." Beo's hands clawed at my shirt, pulling on it when a shudder rippled through his form. "They already had, and

you shattered. You did what you had to do to survive. I get that this wall you have up, this macho image you carry around, is your defense, big guy. It's what you cling to, to not relive that." He snuggled closer and pulled my arms around him, pressing his face to my neck.

"Beo, there's one last thing, Babyboy," I said with my lips pressed against this head.

It was late; the hallway had plummeted into darkness, and the cold had seeped into the penthouse, but with him close to me I felt warm.

"No submissive, hell, no man has slept with me in my bed or even been in my room because I still have nightmares when I sleep. Night terrors and night sweats." I squeezed his hand. "I still piss in the fucking bed at night." He squeezed my hand back. "But the first night you slept here... It was the first night, Babyboy, the first time in my life that I didn't have a nightmare, a night terror, that I didn't piss in my own bed. You standing at my door, holding me, was the first night I felt a calm in this storm always raging inside me."

Beo gazed up at me, wet tears reflecting the light they caught from down the hall.

"So why, Beo, do you reach out to the darkness and touch the single dim light that's left in this chaos inside me? Every time, you are gentle, soft and caring. When you look at me, you see the fucked-up shit I am—the cussing, the fucking swearing, my short fuse. Still when I look at you watching me, you still seem to think there's some decency inside me, some good. There's no fucking good there, boy. There's only this... monster—a self-righteous motherfucking son-of-a-bitch monster that doesn't know the first thing about giving love or receiving it. So why do you care?"

He dropped his gaze, a last tear making its way down his cheek, and it took all my strength not to taste it. *Let's add sick bastard to that list.*

"We can't help who we fall in love with, Master, but we can believe that, somehow, we can try and make it better. Because even a villain deserves a chance at love. And what if that is their redemption? What if I am your shot at saving you from damnation by loving you?"

"Beo," was all I said and covered his lips with mine.

We made love that night, a slow burning passion in my bed, in my bedroom, and he fell asleep in my arms. He had witnessed the ugly, heard the blackness, and still he clung to me. He didn't judge me. He didn't think I was weak. Despite all that, he still wanted to be mine.

Tuesday I didn't go to work. I wanted to spend it with my boy, but there was something slightly off with Beo. Whenever I'd catch a glimpse of him, there was a shadow on his face, some sort of deep internal struggle going on inside.

When I'd ask what was wrong, those shades would disappear and a smile would grace his face. "Nothing, Master. Just thinking." I didn't pay much heed to it, but I was worried about him. Hell, when wasn't I? He wasn't eating properly, and he was getting thinner. Thoughts started swirling in my mind, and I remembered Finn's comment. That one little word, "poz," kept rooting in my head. I didn't know Beo's status. If he was HIV positive, why wasn't he on antiretroviral drugs?

I left the conversation for Wednesday evening as I had planned a scene for us that night. Evening came only for big brown eyes to look up at me and say, "Master, I'm really tired. I'd like to go lie down."

I gave a cordial nod. Here I had planned out an entire scene, and he dismissed it, and I allowed it. Watching him walk to the bedroom, the feeling gnawed at me that he was hiding something.

"You're extremely jealous around Beo, especially when you are in the company of other people. You feel they're a threat to what you two have and that you will lose that. I want to say to the point of obsession and overprotectiveness," Aria said, peering over her glasses at me on Thursday morning.

I had told her what she needed to know—that I was abused and raped as a child, how me and Beo met, what it felt like those weeks before he came to my penthouse, how I disciplined him without real reason or right to do so, and that I told him about my past Monday night. It was one long session. I was scared at first, stepping into her consulting room, that I wasn't going to say anything, but there was a weight lifted from my shoulders after opening up to Beo, which made some parts easier to tell her than others.

"I'm speculating that your overprotectiveness is of the unhealthy variety. I understand, as a Dominant myself, that we tend to be protective about our submissives. It's a natural trait in some Doms, to a certain extent. However, this is something minor to the current issue, and I'm not talking about the trauma you experienced as a child. That is going to take time. To start, we will address the present and move further back."

Nodding as I agreed with her, I already felt exhausted from the three-hour-long session.

“Your relationship with Beo, and this has something to do with your childhood trauma, do you believe you are in love with him?”

I glared at the bitch. What kind of question is that? “I don’t believe. I knew I was in love with him from the moment we met,” I barked. I held my lips as she gave me a stern look.

“Is it this intense, strong and overpowering compulsive feeling that you have to possess him? That no matter what, you have to have him, no matter the consequences? That whatever follows, he has to be yours, but also accompanied by intrusive thoughts?”

She was so spot on it scared me. “Yes... isn’t that what love is?”

She took off her glasses, placed them down and stood. Walking around her desk and sitting next to me, she folded her hands over her thighs and said in a gentle voice, “No, Colt. It’s called limerence, an infatuation or obsession with another. It has the illusion of love on the outside, but in your case it is spurred on from your trauma. A longing to know love. To have someone love you and love them back. I believe Beo represents your younger self, maybe not physically, but the fact that he looks weaker than he is. Now, yes, I know you’ve had subs before that were smaller and weaker than you, and you would ask, why Beo? I think that deep down, when you first met, you did fall in love with him, but somewhere along the way that feeling got damaged and turned into limerence. This is the part you are not going to like, but if you care for Beo, then both of you, in order to break the effect of limerence, need to break away from each other for a period of time. I mean no contact. No speaking, not even phone calls or text messages, nothing. You need to go back as if both of you never met, never knew the other existed.”

She placed her hand on my forearm. “You are not the first Dominant that has fallen into the trap of limerence. You won’t be the last, but you two need to break apart before you hurt each other. That is my suggestion to you. Pick a date, meet up after a period of time and see if you two still feel the same for each other. But *this* is not love, Colt.”

I didn’t know if I should be angry or furious, crack the bitch’s skull against the wall or rip her spine from her body.

“By the look in your eyes, you really want to slaughter me, don’t you?”

Anger twitched in my face, but I slowly nodded.

“It’s expected. I’m stepping in, telling you to give up the one thing you have longed for your entire life, and I’m telling you to let it go. It’s natural that you want to fight it. But remember I’m trying to help you, and let me tell you,” she blushed, bearing a silly, smug smile on her face, “true love is more than what you’re feeling right now, and a hell of a lot stronger.” She let go of my forearm.

“I’ll give you a week before I schedule another appointment, but, right now, don’t run to Beo. Wait and think about what I said, because if you go to him now, what I just suggested will be banished from your mind.”

She stood and walked to the door, pulled it open, and held it for me.

As I made my way past, I was still too angry to say anything because if I did, I would only spew poison from my mouth, and I wasn’t trusting the twitchiness in my hands.

“You have my number, Colt. Call me if you need to talk,” Aria said and went back to her desk.

Sitting in Central Park, I gazed at the world around me, and I pondered on that saying: take time to stop and smell the roses. In the twenty years I’d been living in New York, I had never just sat and watched the world around me. Usually I was filled with jealousy at the easy life these people had, but this time I didn’t feel jealous. Because this time, when I looked closer, the young couple walking on the path holding hands were not walking close, not speaking to each other, or looking at one another. They were together, but at the same time they were worlds apart.

My gaze drifted to a little girl playing in the autumn leaves, her father sitting with her scarf in his hand on a bench. He pulled out a silver flask and took a sip and quickly hid it again, his face red and gleaming.

Another scene caught my eye, two young men around Beo’s age sat under a tree. I could see they were homeless, but I could also see that, despite that, nothing could rob the happiness from their eyes. The darker-haired one was slightly taller with his back against the tree. His arms were wrapped around his lover, who was looking up at the black-haired man. They had it—the one thing I could never buy, never force from someone, even though I had tried. They had so little, and yet they had everything because they had each other. Something dripped onto my cheek as I kept looking at them. My throat felt thick as I swallowed, and I remembered the gypsy’s words, “*you had so much, and yet, you still have nothing at all.*”

I didn't know how I was going to do this to Beo, but for him, for us, I had to. One day I hoped he would understand, and this time, when the second tear rolled down my cheek, I didn't fight it, nor the third and the fourth.

I had barely parked in my designated space later that evening when my phone rang.

“GrandMaster Hans?”

“Colt, we need you. It's Finn,” he rushed out the words, sounding winded. “The whole club is on lockdown because of him. The boy's hysterical, wanting no one to touch him, and keeps screaming for you. I think he's dropping, Colt.”

I panicked, ending the call. Finn had fallen into sub drop, which was never a good thing for a submissive. It mostly happened after an intensely heavy scene, hence the reason I would comfort a sub after I used the Serpent's Tongue. It could also be a mental thing when a sub was released from their service or away from their Dominant for an extended period of time. I knew Finn's was because of Beo and me. It was only logical that he would be screaming for me. We've been at our Dom and sub play for five years now. This was the first time I had rejected him and treated him poorly, and I had done it harshly.

I called Beo while driving to The Bark. Two rings and he answered.

“Master, I'm glad you called. I wanted to apologize for last—”

“Beo, not now. I'm on my way to The Bark. There's an emergency that needs my attention.”

He took a couple of seconds to respond. “Is everything okay, Master?”

“It's Finn. He's gone into sub drop and won't let anyone near him. I'll see you when I'm done there, okay?”

“Master, with all due respect Finn's playing you. He's making a very desperate attempt to place a wedge between us and—”

“Beo!” I growled. “Finn and I have history. You are not the only submissive in my life, and right now he needs me.”

Realizing what I had said, I opened my mouth to correct it when Beo spoke.

“Yes, Master. I'll get dinner ready for you. Please drive safe.” His words were short and clipped before ending the call.

I wanted to call him back, but I also needed to get to The Bark.

I hadn't stopped the car properly at the entrance when Clay came rushing out. "He's in room seven, and he's fucking uncontrollable. If you can't get him to calm down, I'm calling the authorities."

I only nodded and stepped through the lobby. The crowd that had gathered in The Black Room quickly moved and made a path for me to get to the back rooms.

Hurriedly, I made my way to room seven. I could hear Finn crying and thrashing against things.

Once I stepped into the room, hell froze over. The anger pulsing in my veins bolted, a sharp knife pierced my heart. "Finn, baby." I was shocked that the words passed my lips.

Finn turned and stared at me. His eyes were swollen and red from tears. Scratch marks and bloody bruises marred his forearms, and claw marks on his chest.

"Master," he sobbed, fell to his knees and curled into a ball, rocking himself back and forth, muttering incoherently.

Quietly I sat beside him, placed my hand on his back and stroked my fingers down his spine. He shivered at my touch.

"I'm here, boy. What's the matter? Tell Master what you need," I said, keeping my voice strong.

"Hold me, please, Master. I just want to be held," he cried, real, painful longing in his voice. This wasn't an act.

Pulling him to me, I wrapped Finn in my arms and pressed him to my chest, and he began to sob.

We sat like that for close to two hours, till my arms ached. Then he pressed his head into my neck and whispered against my skin, "So good to me. My Master. Thank you, Master."

"Finn, talk to me boy. What's all this about? Master can't help if you don't talk, so out with it, boy." I kept my voice low but firm, not wanting to send him back into hysterics.

"It's him, Master. Beo. I get you love him, but he isn't honest with you. He's sick, Master. He's only using you for a place to stay. He's manipulated Master Martin for so long. He plays on Doms' emotions to get what he wants. I'm just scared he will hurt you, Master Colt."

“Finn,” I raised my voice in warning.

He quivered in my arms. “Please, Master, don’t punish me. I just want to be honest. I saw him Monday with Daddy Hades. They were just too intimate. Holding each other, kissing, that’s why I came to you Monday night.”

Motherfucker!

What was said this morning came back to haunt me. If it was limerence as Aria had said, then I might have been blinded by my obsession with Beo, under the illusion that his words were all truth, and not able to see what was in front of me. When I took into account what happened between us Monday night, I had to ask myself: *Was it just an act and all lies? Was Hades just a fucking friend of Beo’s, a friend with motherfucking benefits? Was I only a fucking meal ticket for when Hades wasn’t around?*

“You’re growling, Master. It’s hot, but you’re hurting me.” I realized that I was squeezing tightly on Finn’s frame.

“Sorry.”

Draining the last of my drink—I needed one after hearing about Beo and Hades messing around. It was not something I wanted to hear, but coming from Finn, I was going to give my boy the benefit of the doubt. I couldn’t trust Finn. He was a very good actor—could sell fucking water to fish. I stood, ready to leave, when Mason came up to me. He was a younger Dom that I had only met once before and ignored after.

“How’s it going, Master Colt?” he asked with a smirk on his face.

I was not in the mood for small talk, with my brain going a mile a minute at that moment.

“No complaints here. See you around, Mason,” I said over my shoulder and turned around to leave.

“I hear you’ve hooked up with Beo,” Mason continued, not taking the hint. “I would’ve thought you’d have a tighter leash on him.”

“What the fuck you getting at, shitface? What do you mean a tighter leash?” I growled, feeling the veins bulge in my neck.

“Well, let me put it this way. If Beo were mine, I definitely wouldn’t tolerate him giving up his ass to anyone else. Especially not Daddy fucking

Hades. Who knows what that man has crawling inside his body?" Mason said arrogantly, leering at me.

I gripped him by his harness, picked the motherfucker up and shoved him against the bar counter.

"What the fuck are you trying to say, motherfucker?" I spat the words out into Mason's face.

"Take those words any way you want, cunt! Now let go of me, fucker!" Mason hissed back. "You obviously have no idea what your sub is up to when you're not around."

"Fuck. You!" I retaliated, releasing his harness and walking off.

Moving as if on autopilot—kamikaze autopilot I might add—I got out of the club as if my life depended on it. Sitting in the car, I slammed my fist against the passenger headrest, sending it flying into the back seat.

"Motherfucking cunt!" I screamed at the top of my voice, swerving the car through the parking lot at my own violent outburst.

It didn't take me long, speeding back home, and a few minutes later I was pouring myself three fingers of whiskey, downing them in one gulp. Not satisfied, I took the bottle and settled in one of the armchairs to wait for Beo. The motherfucker left a note saying he'd be back, went out to get God knows what.

Yeah, probably getting Hades' cock happy while I wasn't around.

Taking another long drag on the bottle, I heard the front door open and close.

My eyes went crazy as he walked in chewing a fucking bagel, but it was the leather jacket he wore that made me flip my shit. I knew that jacket with the studs, the badges and patches on the shoulder, the emblem of the Cerberus on the back and KING patched on the front right breast. That was Hades' fucking jacket.

"Master?" Beo smiled, bagel crumbs sticking to his lips and chin.

My grip on the bottle tightened. He looked into my eyes, and that smile disappeared.

"Sit the fuck down," I growled through clenched teeth.

Beo hesitated. I stood, grabbed him by the collar and yanked him onto the couch.

“I said sit, motherfucker!”

“Master?” Beo asked startled.

“All those times I couldn’t reach you. Your fucking phone is off, and you never gave me a direct answer as to where you were and what you were doing, right, Babyboy.” I spat his fucking pet name like a dirty word. “Coming home and pretending to not feel so good so we couldn’t fuck.”

Even though I was speaking softly, my voice was laced with venom, and I was fucking teetering on the edge, trying to hold my temper.

“I wa... wasn’t pretending, Master,” Beo answered.

“I wasn’t asking you anything, boy. I’m merely stating facts here. You see, it’s come to my attention that all those times I couldn’t get hold of you, you have been very generous with what is mine.”

“Colt, what are you talk—”

“Shut the fuck up, or I swear to God I will kill you right here, right now!” Spit hit Beo in the face as my words washed over him.

“Generous with what is mine! MINE!” I continued, fucking pacing back and forth. When the fucker tried to reach for the bottle, I spun around and sent that bottle of whiskey toward the wall. It exploded upon impact against the LED TV.

I grabbed for Beo, pressing him against the back of the couch, my hand firmly around his neck. I bent over him and snarled in his face.

“How many have you spread your ass for? How many have fucked that cunt of yours, bitch? You scream their name as they open you up? As they fuck what’s mine? You let them dump cum in you? How many loads have you taken up there? Answer me!”

“I... I—” Beo choked and struggled to breathe. I could feel his pulse racing against my hand. I loosened my grip and glowered back at him, and for the first time there was fear... and then fire. I let go of his neck taking a step back.

Beo was up on his feet meeting my glare. “What the fuck? Who the hell do you think you are to ask me that? Your own reputation considered, Oh Mighty King of All Glory!” I stared back, pulling my lips tight and clenching my fists before I really did hurt him. Some part of me was putting up one hell of a battle to prevent that, because some stupid fucked-up part of me wanted him to say they were lies, that it was just made up.

“Yeah, as I thought,” he continued. “You can dish it out but you can’t take it yourself.” He looked down and took a deep breath. “What happened in my past is the past. I didn’t know you then, and sure as hell have nothing to explain to you now.” He wasn’t screaming. Unlike me and my own anger, Beo’s was under control it seemed.

“I’m sorry, Colt, you didn’t deserve that. I—”

“Get out! Get the fuck out of my home, you motherfucking whore!” I growled into his face. Being angry one second then trying to be all sweet and innocent, wasn’t going to work on me any longer. I pulled Beo up off the couch by his collar. He stood trembling, emotion playing in his eyes.

“Did you hear me, cunt fucker?” I ranted, baring my teeth.

Still he didn’t move. He just looked at me.

My fists unclenched. My hands started to rise, ready to claw for him and shove him out.

“I said—”

“I heard you, Master. I didn’t ask for this, Colt. I told you it was a bad idea from the get go. I’ll go pack,” he said and turned, walking out of the living room.

I stood unmoving, hands finally dropping to my sides, the anger still roaring in my blood. Several minutes later, he emerged. I didn’t even look up at him, till the little fuck came to stand right in front of me.

“You have more to say, you little fuck?” I breathed into his face.

“Yes,” he said in small voice and looked me straight in the eye, a tear tracing its way down his cheek.

“You will always be my Master, Colt, no matter what. Please, look after yourself.” He stepped up to me, went up on his toes and placed his hands against my chest. The anger rippled inside me. I was ready to grab his throat and throw him across the fucking room when those lips touched my cheek. “Thank you, Master,” he said, turned and walked out of the door, out of my life, closing it quietly behind him.

Chapter Eleven

“When the heart starts bleeding—death follows.
— Beo Moon.

To see the anger and hurt of betrayal in his face. To feel the raw lash of his words. An icy grip clamped and squeezed my heart, closing the door... to my home.

The world was dead to me, sounds a dull buzzing and lights a haze of unfocused blurs. Every breath hurt. Each step further away from him cut deep. I fucking hurt. I wasn't sure where I was heading 'cause it didn't matter.

I loved Colt. Maybe I had for far longer than I even realized. The pain in my chest only coiled tighter accepting that truth.

Somehow Colt had been fed lies about me, and I knew it could only be Finn. I should have been angry at Colt for believing the lies, but I wasn't. I couldn't hold him responsible. He had enough anger in his life, some he had never worked through, and it still haunted him. He didn't need mine.

Sitting across from him Monday night, looking into his eyes, seeing that pain wrench, hearing the desperate cry for love in his voice... it broke me. Word by word, piece by piece, it shattered me. I knew I had to end this between us. I just didn't know how without hurting him. That thought warred inside me Tuesday, like a violent storm, 'cause I was going to tell him. I had made that decision Tuesday night when I lay in his arms listening to his breath play over my ear as he held me close.

I also wanted to give Finn the benefit of the doubt, that maybe he was falling into sub drop. But now that I knew it was just a ploy to get me and Colt away from each other, I used that against the man I love. It motherfucking hurt. Was it really better to have loved than never have loved at all?

Two kinds of heartache, each worse in their own way. Either I told him I was dying, or I broke up with him. What hurt the most was that Colt needed to be loved. He needed that one person that would stand against the tide, turn the other cheek when the blow came, and be there for him when each piece fell, when each wall shattered. The fucked-up thing was it had to be fucking me 'cause any other sane person would have already been running the other direction.

And I was that person. That person was walking out on him. Guilt wrecked me the same way it hurt to say good-bye to him. I felt like a monster, worse than the one eating away at me inside my body.

The air in my lungs hurt. The memory of what I was leaving behind hurt, and now it hurt to live.

I stepped out of the building. A crisp cold air slapped me in the face and burned my eyes, but I was too numb to feel and take in the world around me. Inside I was bleeding out, fearing for the day that Colt would find out about the lies, but by then I'd be long gone. Who, then, will be brave enough to face that storm of pain and guilt and start to heal him?

Maybe it was the raw pain of losing him and allowing him to push me away, or it was the memories of what Dr. Mahajan said discussing my bone marrow biopsy on Monday afternoon. The treatment this time was going to be more intense, more invasive, and without a donor... Yeah, there was no hope in her brown eyes, no resurging smile on her face when she gave me a hug.

"*Beo...*" The night whispered. A cold chill jolted down my spine, my neck hair standing up as I recognized the voice.

Mother Mary...

I had never considered it, not once, not ever, till now. Raw pain ripped in my soul, and for the first time, I wanted it to stop. Stop before it even truly began.

As a downpour started, I stood and gazed at the cars blurring past me on the street.

So simple, so easy. An accident they would call it. Just one instant of pain and it would be over.

I took a breath and took a step.

All I needed was to take another. No medical bills for Doc to pay, no sorrow for them to bear, no reason to put myself through the pain of watching the people I love hurt as I fade away.

Just a lifeless body they had to burn and mourn.

Midnight Blue, arms held so tight. Never just there, never just right.

Midnight Blue, my breath slight. Always numb, always cold.

Midnight Blue, sky of night. Death so easy, death so right.

I wanted to go there. I wanted to be part of that. Because without him, the world hurt too much to live in it any longer.

I closed my eyes, dropped my duffel bag, took a breath of the moist air and lifted my foot. I thought of him... the warmth of being in his arms, a feeling of safety. I smiled. Master might never know, but he had given me my last happiness.

One step and I'd have that again. I'd join Mother Mary and my mother in the cosmos of the Midnight Blue.

Blood rushed through my ears, I heard nothing, saw nothing but a sharp light. Then came the sound of a car horn, the squeal of rubber on wet road, and the scream of a woman.

But it was too late.

"Forgive me, Master," I said.

"You motherfucking lost it?" he yelled at me as he gripped me, yanking me back and pulling me against his chest, the strong grip of his muscular arms holding me delicately.

"What the fuck is wrong with you?" Wendigo yapped in my ear. He spun me around, gripped me by the front of my shirt and glared down at me.

"Why did you stop me?" I whispered. "It was not your decision to make, Wendigo. It was mine."

He pulled me close to him and snarled into my face. "A brave man dies but once, a coward many times." He pushed me back. "Get your shit. You're coming with me," he barked.

"Why?"

"Because when Hades gave you his fucking jacket you became a member of my fucking brotherhood. Now, you either get your motherfucking shit and park your queer ass on my bike, or I beat you and take you with me bloody and broken." He turned, walking to his motorcycle. "And stop fucking crying!"

Chapter Twelve

"I will love him till the day I die." — Martin Alexander.

Dr. Martin Alexander glared at the document before him; his hands shook and the page lines began to blur.

It had been five days since he'd witnessed the most painful image of his entire life. The boy, the man he was in love with, getting fucked in front of him. It ripped at his heart in ways he couldn't describe, but more so the contented happiness on Beo's face as Colt Maxus fucked him. Martin could do nothing to stop it. Who was he to deny the man he loved the last bit of joy in his life?

Even if it was in the arms of a monster.

Beo was dying, from what Martin could gather from the prognosis of the oncology report Dr. Mahajan had given him. Beo's life expectancy was estimated at less than a year without treatment and a bone marrow donor.

Martin needed to see Luther, but that was just the issue. Luther wanted nothing to do with him. He wouldn't even take his phone calls. The man had gone as far as getting a restraining order against Martin.

Unfortunately there was no law Martin could stand on to force Luther to donate bone marrow for Beo, or he would have done anything in his power to make that happen. All Beo did was bring happiness to people's lives, and now he was being taken from this world far too soon. If Beo didn't start treatment soon, he would deteriorate at a rapid pace. They'd been through it before, and Beo came out on top, beating his leukemia, but there was always the possibility that it would return. Martin didn't know if he could see Beo suffer through the treatment again. Why put him through it if it wasn't going to help him, only make him suffer more in the end? On the other hand, a mild dose of chemo and treatment of Beo's symptoms could slow down the cancer and prolong Beo's life for—*fuck it!* He balled his fist. *Why should Beo have to die when there was a chance Luther could save his life?* Slamming his fist against his desk, an angry silent tear rolled down his cheek. Martin let out a heavy, defeated sigh.

Beo wasn't on speaking terms with him. He guessed he could turn to Jane and ask her to convince the boy to come and start his treatment, but Colt Maxus was another matter.

Martin couldn't understand the sudden urge for the man to have Beo. Colt never looked twice at a sub, and when he did it was for the purpose of fucking the sub again. Beo wasn't even Colt's type. The whole thing didn't sit right with Martin. Then again, another man being with Beo never did.

Taking off his glasses and pinching the bridge of his nose, he closed his eyes and exhaled. He reached for the cup of coffee and took a swallow—grimacing at the cold brew but forcing it down—and placed his glasses back on his face.

“You're Doc, yeah?” A deep, smoky voice rocked through Martin's mind. He blinked and blinked again at the man standing in his doorway.

“Yes, I'm Doctor Martin Alexander,” he said, not mentioning that only Beo called him that.

The handsome man grinned, his midnight black hair hung to his shoulders, wet and dripping down onto his leather jacket. Martin's eyes went wide. “You one of Hades' boys?”

“Ah, so the old medicine man knows who we are?” The man's grin caused a deep line to form on his forehead. “Wendigo,” he said and gave a toothy smile this time.

Martin could only stare. He knew about Hades' life beyond The Bark, but never in his forty-five years had he seen a biker that fucking gorgeous. If he weren't so tired or emotionally drained, he was sure his dick would have responded by now.

“Anyways, old man,” Wendigo stepped out of the doorway, “got someone here for you.”

“Beo!” Martin breathed, his heart pounding as it always did when he saw those brown eyes, that black hair and that smile. But it wasn't the image looking back at him. Red and swollen, the bags under Beo's eyes were the darkest Martin had ever seen them, and his hair looked a mess.

Rushing out of his chair, Martin stumbled only to be caught by strong arms and helped up. “Easy, old fucker. Can't have you go breaking a leg.” Wendigo's breath was hot against Martin's ear, but he paid no heed; his focus was only on Beo.

“Let go of me this instant!” Martin snapped.

“Sure, fucker.” Martin felt the man's grip loosen, only for Wendigo to grasp him by the shirt and bring their faces close to one another. “Show some respect,

old man.” The man’s breath lapped at Martin’s face. “I looked after your boy these past couple of days. Fuck knows where Hades is, and I couldn’t get that kid to stop fucking crying. So show me some fuckin’ gratitude, you feel?”

Martin’s heart slammed against his chest. Those eyes were dead cold, glaring back at him, no matter how gold and warm they appeared. Slowly he bobbed his head and swallowed. Wendigo didn’t let go yet. First he straightened out Martin’s wrinkles, or tried to, reached for Martin’s glasses and set them straight on his face.

“Good. Now, go get the boy,” Wendigo sneered. Again Martin only nodded and swallowed.

It was just a moment, a slight moment, that Martin wanted to take the biker’s perfect pink lips between his and taste that mouth. He turned and stepped towards Beo.

“Come here, kiddo.” He held out his arms and pulled Beo against his frame, hugging him tight. Unwrapping his arms, he tried to get Beo to look at him, but Beo’s face was firmly pressed against Martin’s neck, his hands clinging to Martin’s shirt, scrunching the material.

“I’m sorry, Doc. I’m so sorry,” Beo said, his voice muffled as his chest vibrated against Martin’s.

“It’s okay, Beo. It’s okay. You’re here now. That’s all that matters. I’ll take care of you, I promise,” Martin murmured, holding Beo tighter.

“You look like you could do with some coffee, Doc,” Wendigo said as he walked past, turned and raised a lazy, questioning eyebrow.

“Yes, thank you. Some hot chocolate for Beo, if you don’t mind. Tell ’em it’s for Doctor Martin. They won’t charge you.”

Wendigo nodded, turned and walked out of the office. Several seconds passed before Martin heard a tired voice poke at him. “Stop staring at his ass, Doc. He ain’t a cock sucker.”

Martin gave a quick grin. Despite everything, Beo still seemed to have a small flame of his fighting spirit left in him.

Chapter Thirteen

"I ain't fucking queer!" — Wendigo.

Seated in a chair with the doctor's lab coat around him, the kid sipped the hot chocolate, retelling what had transpired between him and Colt.

"Always told Big H that one's a rotten piece of shit. I knows you, Beo. You ain't no fucking whore, and you and H goes back a long road. So he can fuckin' stuff it," Wendigo said. "Should go cut the motherfucker," he added, sneering and looking away.

His fucking eyes landed on the old man seated on the other side of the desk. Wendigo didn't understand what the motherfuck was happening to him, but there was something about the doctor that made him want to shove the man against the wall and drive his tongue down the man's throat—*Wait, what the fuck! Pussy-bitch-motherfucker!*—he mentally cursed.

Placing the Styrofoam cup down, he stood and said, "I'm out of here, motherfuckers!" He heard the kid mutter his name, but Wendigo didn't care. Why'd he think that fucked-up shit? The man was... well, a man. An old, attractive man, but still a man. He didn't fuck queers or men. He fucked bitches with their pussy going all wet and crazy while he teased them with his cock. He didn't do fucking queers!

He stopped as he rounded the corner and, with his hand, supported himself against the wall. He was about to motherfucking paint the walls right there on the fucking hospital floor. He wasn't even bi, not one percent gay, not fucking close. So what the fuck was up with his motherfucking shit? He didn't have a problem with gay men. Who people fucked was their shit, and here he was thinking about shoving his tongue down a man's throat. A fucking man, with a cock, as big and bulked as himself. "The fuck."

He coughed, took a step and got out his phone, about to call his girl Melissa. Yeah, he needed to fuck a bitch and forget this motherfucking shit right now. He was about to dial when that deep voice penetrated his ears.

"Thank you, Wendigo." That voice shot straight to his motherfucking nuts.

He turned, jaws clenched, and hissed, "Whatever, old timer. Was a favor for the big boss. Got it? You don't need to thank me, just..." Wendigo's gaze

swept over the man. Yeah, the motherfucker was big, thick and bulked. Definitely had more muscle meat and size than himself. He swallowed hard.

“Yeah, go take care of that kid,” he nodded repeatedly and froze when the doctor smiled, displaying a healthy set of white teeth. *Yeah fuck, fine!* He wanted to suck on those teeth, Wendigo thought *and you're motherfucking broken, that's what you are*, but his anaconda...

“Aww for fuck sake!” he growled, looked up at the ceiling, feeling his cock hardening. *Think pussy, man. Pussy juice, warm, wet pussy, coming all over your mouth.*

“You alright?” the doctor asked, reaching out and touching him on the forearm.

Wendigo just reacted. He dropped his phone and gripped the man by the throat, shoving him against the wall. “Don't motherfucking touch me!” he snarled into the doctor's face. That touch sent a sensation he shouldn't be feeling straight to his dick.

“Motherfucking queers,” he barked and let go of the doctor. “Always touching me. What the fuck!”

Clearing his throat, those gray-blue eyes gazed at Wendigo. The doctor's deep voice caused crazy-ass shit to happen to his stomach, and his chest contracted tightly. “Was only trying to say thank you. Beo means a lot to me, and you finding him before he—”

Aww fuck, the man was fucking crying now too! *Why don't we bring piñatas and tequila and have ourselves a fucking pity party?*

“I didn't mean to offend you. I apologize,” the doctor said, straightening himself.

“You know what? Fuck you,” Wendigo said. Sneering at the doctor, he looked down at his hard dick bulging in his leathers. “And fuck you!” He turned and got the hell out of there.

Muttering to himself as he walked away, his fists still balled at his sides and blood boiling in his veins, he was stopped again.

“Wait, Wendigo, your phone.”

Turning, seeing the man holding it out for him, Wendigo snatched it and yelled, “Fuck!” 'Cause he had to look into those gray-blue eyes and at those fucking hot lips again, causing his cock to drip.

Shaking his head, he spun and marched to the elevator.

He was so drowning himself in club pussy tonight, and the motherfucking rest of the goddamn weekend!

Chapter Fourteen

“It started and ended with a hippie kid. Marriage just wedged itself in there like a bullet.” — Colt Maxus.

I understood why I said what I had said, reacted how I did upon hearing one man's opinion of Beo. When it came to my boy, my brain malfunctioned, my heart short-circuited and I didn't work right. Hearing those *words* being said about him was a knife in my heart, and it massacred the image of the Beo I had grown to love.

That first week was unbearably hard with him gone. I'd reach for him in my sleep only to grasp emptiness. Other times I'd wake up in the spare room, not remembering how I got there, curled around his pillow, his scent still lingering in the sheets. When I'd snap awake, the anger would rear its ugly head, and my mind would spin—*how many men had he offered himself up to? Their dirty hands raking over his body. He was fucking mine! They had no right to even desire him.*

The deal with Hades never happened. All I got was a message delivered from one of his club boys, stating that it had gone south. When I asked where Hades was, the guy gave me a cold, stern look and I knew not to question his silence. I assumed something had happened to the bad ass wolf, and I was all too glad, because I wanted to rip him apart myself.

Beo's scent eventually disappeared from the sheets, the anger started to subside, and I began to fucking hurt. One I'd never experienced before. It hurt coming home to an empty house and not feeling his presence there. Not being able to smell him, touch him and taste him. I fucking worried.

I drifted that second week in an empty, cold and dark existence, the signs of depression lurking around the corner. I had to fix things with my boy. I had to win him back somehow, and the first step would be to speak to him. A phone call wasn't enough. I had to see him face to face. I'd get down on my fucking knees for him. And there it was. With that thought, I realized what Beo had come to mean to me. My hands shook, a tightness paralyzed my chest, and the first sob rocked through me as my world tore open.

One boy, with his innocence, his beautiful, unconditional gift of love and submission, brought me to tears and shone a light on my worst fears. Fear I'd

find him happy in the arms of another man. Guilt, if the words Finn and Mason had said to me were lies. I chose not to attempt to reach him or make contact because of my fears. I couldn't trust myself with coming face to face if either predicament held true.

By the third week, things became more bearable, and I was back to my old rude motherfucking self. The fourth week came and the demands of my body took over—I needed to fuck. I needed to dominate. I needed to pick myself up and move the fuck on. Accept that Beo, what we shared, whether it was truth laced with lies or the illusion limerence brought, was gone. And I had to accept and place it behind me. Life went on, and God, I tried. Got a boy to fuck, but when he went down on my dick, the basilisk wasn't having any. I couldn't get that shit up. Beo didn't only break my heart but my motherfucking cock, too! The only times I got hard were when I was alone in bed thinking about Beo, whispering his name into the night, spraying white jizz all over my chest. Beo had become a ghost in my life. One I didn't want to banish.

It was a Friday afternoon, and I sat at The Bark for the first time since our split. I was seated on a couch in The Red Room, barely paying attention to the conversations around me when I heard his name again for the first time. A group of Doms and boy Damon were having a discussion about submissives and somehow Beo became the topic of conversation.

“I feel sorry for that boy, for what he is going through,” one of them said.

“Yes, Master Martin isn't taking it any better than any of us,” another said.

“Beo never deserved this, Sirs,” Damon said. “For as long as I have known Beo, he's been honest and truthful. He might be lacking in protocol and etiquette, but if there was one submissive I'd pass on my Alpha sub title to, it would be him.”

“I'm just glad he has the support structure of people caring for him. I'm not sure he would last long without that,” a third Dom said.

“Yes, but we want to do something for him, Sirs. That is why I came to speak to you all,” Damon said.

I ground my teeth and clenched my jaw. Lifting my whiskey to my lips, I said, “Glad to hear the little whore is handling himself well. I wonder how many of you dropped a load in the cunt's ass,” and downed half of my whiskey. I wasn't drunk, only warming up. Hearing others speaking of him and that they knew what was happening in his life while I had no clue, it hurt. The only way I

could deal with that hurt was to bite back at the fucking bitch and remind myself of how he betrayed me. I could feel the whole group turn and look at me, falling silent.

“Got nothing to say?” I challenged and turned to them. My eyes locking with boy Damon’s fiery gaze.

“If there’s one thing I know, Master Colt, it is that Beo was never, and will never be, a whore.” Damon paused, a haunted look to his eyes. “You know, he asks about you?”

My breath hitched, my throat got thick and the fucking knife in my chest slid deeper.

I wanted to ask Damon, what he said, but nah. *I had to be the dick.* “Who the fuck cares what Beo Moon asks or thinks. He is a little manipulative shit, telling Doms they are his everything, only to stab them in the back.”

“I don’t understand. Why would you say that, Master Colt? Aren’t you worried about him? Don’t you care that he’s dying?” he said, coming over and kneeling beside me.

The last sip of whiskey went down the wrong hole as I choked on it.

“What?”

The shock on Damon’s face could have equaled my own. Still, I cleared my throat, shook my head and sneered, “His fuck related HIV finally crept up on him? Serves him right, not being honest with people.”

“HIV? You don’t know anything do you?” Damon’s tone wasn’t challenging mine. On the contrary, his words left a painful frown on his face.

I kept staring at Damon. I could see by the way he bit his lip and the deep frown, his mind was working overtime, and a light switched, flashing behind his eyes as he looked up at me.

“That night! What did Finn say to you, Master Colt?”

“The truth, boy. That Beo had been spreading his fucking hole for Hades behind my back. Mason confirmed it too, boy,” I growled and stood. Anger coursed through my body, but I wasn’t sure at whom to direct it when Damon started to shake his head something fierce.

“No, Master,” he gazed at me, and for the first time since I had known Damon his eyes showed emotion.

“There is no doubt in my heart that the scene you and Beo shared in The White Room was done with nothing other than love. That connection between a Dominant and his sub is not easily reached. It was as beautiful as it was breathtaking.” Taking a deep breath he continued. “It hurts me to tell you that you have been lied to and manipulated by the wrong people. Beo doesn’t have HIV. He has cancer, Master Colt. I believe he didn’t tell you because he knew that it would hurt you. He begged me to keep an eye on you, because you are the only Dominant he has ever loved.”

I glared at Damon, my eyes burning fire and chaos warring inside me. This couldn’t fucking be happening. Beo lied. Finn—*nah shit, who the fuck you kidding, Maxus? You know what Damon is saying is the truth.*

I was out of The Bark like lightning. Everything blurring around me, my heart pounding heavily in my chest as I drew in lungfuls of air. When I reached my car, I had to lean against it to steady myself as I struggled to get air into my tight chest and prevent me from falling over. My stomach knotted, and the world started to spin.

Realization slammed a carnal force of hell into my gut, cruel and vengeful. My world shattered and my heart crashed. I was motherfucking stupid, selfish and obsessed, wanting only what I wanted, caring only to have *him* when I should have been putting the pieces together. I was a sick, evil, twisted fuck, and *I* should be placed six feet under for my selfishness.

Beo was sick. That was *why* he was singing at *that* charity event, why he looked pale and tired all the time, why he was so motherfucking thin and not eating. I, in my obsessed lust for power and dominance, was too fucking blind to see that the man I loved more than anything in my life, who meant more to me than my next breath of air, was dying right before my eyes. Guilt ate at my soul, teeth and claws fucking ripping my heart to shreds.

Every time I got irritable with him, every time he tried to push me away, was because of this. He didn’t want to hurt me. I, the man who broke hearts, the one who didn’t give a fucking shit what happened, was being cared for by Beo.

He didn’t want to hurt me. Over and over I could hear those words in my head. Spinning tighter and tighter to the point I wanted to puke out my intestines.

He cared about a tyrant, a monster like me. Someone who didn’t deserve an iota of his heart, of his passion or love, and I allowed my anger to get in the

way, allowed my selfish obsession and hunger for him to cloud my judgment. I was a motherfucking fool to even have listened to Finn in the first place.

Then I remembered the moment I walked into The Bark earlier and saw who the fuck were eating out each other's mouths... motherfucking Mason and Finn. Anger coursed through me. I dented my car's roof with the first slam of my fist, smashed the driver's side window with the second. I collapsed to the ground, blood oozing from my right hand as I shook and shivered. Forcing myself into a fetal position, the gravel dug into my leathers and skin as I pulled my knees against my chest and wrapped my arms around myself.

My Beo, my beautiful boy, wanted to protect me because he loved me. He cared enough to look beyond the anger and the black carnage and see something worthy to love.

My hand still shook, bleeding, as I pulled out my phone. I dialed Richard, knowing I couldn't drive in the state I was in... *Fuck!* I couldn't even fucking walk.

I finally managed to bring my trembling hand to my ear only to reach Richard's fucking voice mail.

Damon's voice, a distant sound, reached out for me. "Master Colt," he said softly and touched my shoulder. I didn't care who saw, I reached for the boy, pulled him against my chest, and I fell apart while he wrapped his arms around me and held me tight.

I paced in front of the hospital. Up and down. Back and forth. My breath coming out a vapor against the cold New York winter air. My heart thrashed in my rib cage, and my right hand pulsed with pain.

Every time I would walk to the entrance I'd find myself turning around, twitching and panicked, not finding the fucking courage to step through the doors.

"Maxus?" His deep voice came from behind me. I spun to face him, gripped him by his coat and snarled into Martin's face.

"Where the fuck is my boy?!?"

His gray-blue eyes went wide as he stared back at me, his gaze shifting from my face to my hand covered in dried blood.

"I'll take you to him, but let me take care of your hand first."

“Fuck that... Beo now!” I growled.

“Colt, you’re angry, you’re scared and you *are* in shock. I will take you to Beo, but you...” He swallowed. “We need to talk first, please.” Closing my eyes and letting out a heated breath, I released Martin’s coat and clenched my fists at my sides.

“Make it motherfucking quick before I start ripping this place the fuck apart,” I said through clenched teeth.

Seated in Martin’s office, my leg jumped up and down. He had tried to address my cut hand, but I wouldn’t have any of it.

“I need to explain Beo’s situation to you.”

I glared at him, but it was like water running off a duck’s back.

“I’ve known Beo since—”

“Cut it, fucker,” I interrupted. “Get to the point!” I hissed.

Martin flashed back at me. “Not so simple, Colt. You need to listen,” His tone was serious.

“Beo’s mother came to me when she was seven months pregnant with him, but by the time she came to me, her cancer had spread beyond leukemia and she was in danger of dying. I had to perform a C-section to save Beo. She knew she would never make it, but she made me swear I would look after him and I did, I tried. There was always a possibility that Beo might develop the same form of cancer she had, and at the age of seventeen—” Martin let out a deep breath. “You should have seen him. He was ready to fight it. His spirit and his courage, it was something to be admired. So we started him on...” and I started to nod absently at Martin. I hadn’t a clue what he was talking about, my anger was starting to rise again at the delay in seeing my boy when his words caught up with me.

“Beo beat his cancer, but he knew there was a risk of it recurring, and this is the hardest part to say...”

“Don’t motherfucking tell me, there’s nothing you can do for him? I don’t care what it takes, or who you need to get from what part of the world. I got the fucking cash. I’d give my last penny for my boy, so don’t even say it!”

Martin shook his head. “I would do the same for him, Colt, and I think you realize that I was the one that paid for his treatment the first time around. I’ve paid for his medical bills, hell, since he was born and placed in a NICU. I’d do

it again in a heartbeat, but this time, Colt, money and chemo can't save him. No doctor can save him."

I couldn't believe it. "You want to motherfucking tell me that after all these centuries the medical world can't fix him? You want to tell me there is no other option in this whole goddamn world to save him?" Yeah my reasoning was even more ridiculous, but I was high on adrenaline, and this wasn't the shit I wanted to hear.

I stood. "You know what, fuck it. I'll make my own calls on this."

"Be my guest, Colt, but you won't find anything. There's only one man in whose hands Beo's life lies now."

"God?" I wanted to laugh. I wanted to lash out at Martin's ridiculously stupid argument, but I didn't have the will or strength. I wanted to see Beo. I wanted to hold him. I wanted to say I'm sorry. I wanted to make everything right.

"No, but Beo's father can. It's a long shot, but the only one we've got." I spun so quick I think Martin was dazed.

"How much money? What does he want? What's his price?" I didn't care to ask why Beo's father never did it before. I only assumed he didn't want to help because he had some ridiculous price that needed to be met. Hell, if it meant I'd lose everything and Beo lived, I'd do it in a heartbeat. I was angry at myself and the rest of the motherfucking world and its greed for power and money. It always had to come to that, didn't it?

Martin's answer was a slap in my face.

"Luther Jacaruso doesn't need money. He simply doesn't want anything to do with his son. I tried to convince him, Colt. Looked my best friend in the eyes, told him his son was dying, and he sneered at me—*'Let him fucking rot.'*"

I couldn't breathe, I couldn't fucking move. The world around me was squeezing down on me. In one breath Martin had told me that I was weak, incapable of helping the man that I loved. That I, one of the most powerful men of the era, couldn't do jack shit to save my boy's life. That the man in whose hands his life now lay didn't give a shit if Beo lived or died. Like fucking hell!

"I'll get him to do it, Martin. I'll find a fucking way. I swear to you. Now, I would like to see Beo, please." My fists shook as I met Martin's eyes.

"Not yet, I need to tell you about his cancer and—"

“I don’t care! I want to see my BOY!”

Following Martin towards the oncology ward, my mind raced through my connections. Who would know of anything that could help dig up dirt on Luther? Snatching my phone from the inside of my coat, I stopped. Here, again, it was just me, me, me! I took a deep breath, because this time it was about what Beo wanted. This would be his decision. That’s when the fear grabbed hold of me. *What if he hates me when he sees me? What if he doesn’t want his father to—*

“Colt.” We had stopped outside a room, the name plate next to the door read B. Moon.

The world around me slowed. This was real, this was motherfucking real, and if I didn’t do something, my Beo was going to die.

“I don’t know if I can go in there, Martin.” The words had barely left my lips when my chest pulled tight and I clenched my gut, bending over and wheezing to pull in air.

Martin, ever the Doctor, quickly reacted, helping me to sit on a waiting chair next to the door. He placed a hand on my shoulder. “Listen to me, Colt. Listen,” he murmured. I heard his voice, but it sounded light years away.

“You’re having a panic attack. I need you to breathe for me. Slowly, counting back from ten. I’m gonna count with you.”

Images rushed before my eyes. I was a child again, my bedroom wallpaper with black and blue airplanes vivid in my mind. *She* climbed on top of me, pulling the belt around my neck tighter.

“*Seven, six, five...*”

My father’s face flashed before me, the stench of alcohol daunting and burning my eyes, hands clawing at my face as he shouted at me.

“*Four, three, two—*”

“I need to see Beo. Please, Martin. Let me hold my boy,” I rushed out, winded. I knew what spurred the panic attack. I wasn’t in control. When control was wrenched from my life, I felt weak. I felt alone. I felt like little Sammy, scared and helpless being pulled between two monsters; their claws different, but equally frightening.

On shaky legs, I stood and turned to the closed sea-green door. Martin's hand rested on my shoulder again. "Colt, I want to prepare you. Beo has lost a lot of weight." His words forced me to meet his gaze. I stared back at those glossy eyes, feeling the vice grip on my heart clamp tighter. "His antibodies will keep dropping, and soon we will be forced to eliminate physical contact. For now, whatever time you spend with him..." Martin wasn't staring at me anymore, but past me, into the distance, "...make it count."

Nodding, he pulled something from his pocket and swiped at his cheek.

The click of the door opening was a sharp piercing noise dulled by the tornado of sound from the heavy beat of my heart and my blood rushing in my ears. The room was dark as I followed Martin in.

"He received treatment late this afternoon," Martin said in hushed words. My eyes traveled to the tray of untouched food with the cover still over it, the utensils sealed in an unopened vacuum bag. The bedside lamp cast a low gloom of orange light over the room when Martin switched it on.

My eyes trailed further, jaw trembling on seeing his form covered in white sheets. He was curled up on his side, his face hidden under the blanket. Only black hair poked out at the top. His right arm stretched out to his side, his hand open, sticking out from under the sheets, begging for touch.

"Stay with him for as long as you like. I'll arrange with the nurses to give you access to the room whenever you come to visit." Martin walked towards the door.

I had to know. "You're paying for this?" Martin didn't turn to me. He reached for his glasses and took them off, slowly nodding.

I turned back to Beo, hearing the door close behind Martin. Silently I picked up a chair and placed it down beside his bed and sat.

I stared at his pale hand, the fingers every so often giving a twitch.

Reaching out for him, my hand trembled. I knew he was asleep, but I wanted him to know I was here, that he wasn't alone that—my finger had only brushed his palm when Beo gripped it tightly. I was holding strong, fighting with each second that ticked away against the emotions so close to the surface. Until one word, one single fucking word shattered me. Then I broke down in silence, tears tracking along my cheeks. He'd whispered, "Master," in his sleep.

It was four in the morning. Beo had been restless all night, tossing and turning, muttering in his sleep about Midnight Blue. I had only slipped out to grab a cup of coffee, something to eat and go to the restroom.

Stepping out of the restroom, I looked up and for a slight moment I took a deep painful breath at seeing a guy walking towards me. His head was bowed, hands in his pockets, a leather, sleeveless punk jacket snugged tight to a small, yet muscular, frame. His arms were bare except for leather bands with metal studs on each wrist, and I couldn't deny how much that image resembled Beo. Till the kid looked up, and I relaxed.

Running my hand over my face, I started to move. The guy was walking straight towards me, and if I didn't step aside he was going to slam right into me. We brushed shoulders passing each other, and I gave him a sideways glance. My skin tingled with an uneasy sensation, but I kept walking.

"You dropped something, master," he said from behind me.

Fuck! I felt for my wallet, check, phone, check, and turned balling my fists.

"What!" I growled.

He casually came closer, the muscles on his arms flexing. He looked up, handsome despite the scar over his mouth and the itchy-looking scruff on his face. I didn't see his eyes because his hands were busy in front of me, playing with a card between his fingers much like a magician would play with a coin. "The Wheel of Fortune is an interesting card, master." I blinked and looked up. The shit was smirking from under thick brows.

Those eyes made my blood turn to ice; one green, one milky white, both smeared with thick eyeliner. My fucking heart thrashed in my chest.

"They say Karma's a whore with one nasty bitch slap when she comes to collect her due, but it can also mean change, hope or failure. That, however, is in your hands to spin, master." He offered me the card between two fingers. I crushed it in a violent grip, as I snatched it from him. He winked. Then the motherfucker grinned, turned and cooed over his shoulder, "You have a good day. May luck be on your side, you're going to need it." Fucker even wiggled his tight ass at me. I looked down at the card, narrowing my eyes as I brought it closer. It was from the same tattered, worn out deck the old bitch in the Vardo had, and his eyes were like hers. I looked up only to find the halfway empty. *Motherfucking gypsies and their bullshit.*

Opening Beo's door, I found him propped up on the bed, knees curled in front of him. The lights were on but turned down low. A loud rumbling came from the air conditioner above him. His head was bowed, and a sour, foul stench drifted in the air.

I opened my mouth to speak, and at the same moment Beo looked up, his gaze daggers against my heart. Widening his eyes, his lips parted. "Col—"

A painful sound came from him as he leaned forward, his shoulders shaking, and he gagged. I didn't know what to do. *I didn't know how to help my boy.* I could more than hear it hurt with each reflex as he spewed into a disposable pulp kidney dish.

My mind told me it was a side effect from the chemo, but it could never have prepared me for seeing it. The veins bulged on his forehead, the ones in his neck looking plain angry. His face was red and tears dripped from his eyes as he gagged for the fourth time then coughed and gagged again only for nothing to come out.

Moving swiftly to his side, I brushed my hand to the nape of his neck, forcing myself not to pull away at the cold feel of his skin.

"What are you—" He gagged again, or tried, but nothing came out, only a stream of saliva dripped from his lips. Winded, he fell back on the bed, taking deep breaths, tears glistening against his cheek. His hands shook while holding the kidney dish. The smell was nauseating and the sight—

No, none of this, you stupid fucker! You proclaim you're strong, that you're untouchable and you want to throw up from this? It's only going to get worse from here on out, so man up, you pussy.

Taking the dish from him, I placed it on the tray of the hospital bed and covered it with a paper towel. I took another one and reached for my boy's arm.

With trembling hands, I wiped at his mouth. Beo didn't open his eyes as his breathing slowed down. Disposing of the paper towel in the bin, I took his hands and covered them with mine.

"You shouldn't be here," he said in a hoarse voice.

I didn't say anything. I couldn't yet. My throat felt too thick with tar moving down, and I was too scared of what incoherent sob would come from my mouth. I gave his hand a gentle squeeze and sat on the chair next to his bed. A sigh came from his lips.

Several minutes later I trusted myself to speak, but even then my voice shook when I called to him. "Babyboy?"

He swallowed and pulled his hands from mine, propping himself up on his elbows and lowering his chin against his chest.

"I didn't want you to know. I didn't want to burden you with this, and I'm sorry for not telling you," he said in a dark tone, a heart-wrenching sob following his words.

Cupping his cheek, I pulled his gaze to me. My breath wedged in my throat as his eyes locked into mine. "Don't ever be sorry for that, Beo. I know why you did it. That you wanted to protect me, and, baby, no one has ever done that for me. Thank you." I leaned off the chair moving in to capture his lips, but he turned his head.

"Don't," I growled in a hard command. "I'm going to fucking kiss you, and I don't care if you taste like fucking vomit. I don't care if I have to wipe shit from your ass. I don't care if I have to bathe you myself, and I don't care if I have to spend every fucking minute by your side through this. I want to, and you will fucking let me because you are mine, Beo Moon. You will always be mine. I promised that I would take care of you, and you promised me that you would allow me to."

"Why?" He blinked and swallowed. "Why, after everything? How can you even look at me?"

Those words fucking hurt.

"Because you are my entire world, Beo. I've explained this to you. No one has loved me the way you do. No one has come this close to my heart. No one is brave enough to stand through my shit, accept the bad and the good, want to stay and help me. I know you would. You would do it because you believe that there is some part left inside worth loving. If I could take your place I'd do it in a heartbeat, Babyboy, and... Fuck, Beo! I fucking love you!" I kissed him so hard that I pressed him back against the mattress, my hands on either side of his face. Yeah, he tasted horrible, but I still drove my tongue in his mouth and kissed him with love.

Pulling back, I grinned. "That was horrible, boy, but so worth it." I pressed my forehead to his.

"Colt," he said, a warm tear slipping from his eye. "I'm scared," he whispered, fingers shaking as he clasped my coat and he pulled me to him.

I couldn't keep them back. "I know, baby." I sobbed, tears running down my face and dripping from my chin. I was seeing him at his worst, and I was showing him mine.

"I don't want to lose you, Beo. I don't. I can't. So forgive me if I take things into my own hands, but it's time your fucking daddy gets a wake-up call."

"Don't hurt him, Colt," Beo whispered a plea.

God, he would defend the man even if it meant he would die. It struck me then. Fucking. Love. Beo was love, pure, beautiful, unconditional love. No matter who you were, what you were or what your shit was, he only had love to give. The most powerful and valuable gift that no one could buy. Beo had motherfucking loads of the shit.

I could walk away, bury this and place Beo in my past. I didn't have to sit here and put myself through this heartache, feeling weak and shit-worried, crying over him. I realized then I'd been running. Running from love and affection. I didn't receive it from my parents or from other people, so I didn't understand what it was, how it worked. In fact I was scared of it. I wasn't taught how to love. My whole life I was weak, hiding behind this rude, barbarous attitude thinking everyone owed me an apology. That my money and power made me powerful. In the eyes of the world, yes, it seemed like I was someone who was powerful.

In the eyes of love, I was weak, and to truly be strong one had to bow, to beg, to be bent and to be brought to the lowest part of your life. It is then that you realize who you are, what you are, and where your courage lies—what your true strengths are. Mine was in the form of this precious boy, lying in this bed, fighting death and holding on to me. I would fight for him no matter what. No matter how hard or how many times it would shatter me, I would fucking fight for him, and if it killed me, I'd claw my way out from death and fight some more.

"Beo, I can't promise you I won't because I don't like it when people fuck with what is mine, and if he can save my boy's life I will do any-fucking-thing I have to."

He sniffed, wrapped his arms around me and held on to me.

I remained there with him on the small hospital bed, my hips painning and my arm numb from the position I was in. When he had fallen asleep, his face looked more rested, different—released, almost peaceful, and I wanted to be so bold as to say a smile was on his lips. I quietly and gently untangled myself and placed a kiss on his forehead.

“I’ll be back soon, Babyboy. Master needs to go fix this,” I said and went in search of Martin.

I found him dozing off in his chair. “Martin!” I growled and his eyes snapped open as he jumped off the chair. “This what they pay you for, to sleep? You don’t have a motherfucking bed to do that shit in?”

He glared at me, and I gave him a small smile.

“I’m going to see Luther, and if I have to, I’m dragging all the guns out on this. I just wanted to thank you for the role you’ve played in Beo’s life. I didn’t understand it till now, but you were there for him when no one else was, and... I... Thank you, Martin.” Slowly he nodded, his face still stunned, but there was strong emotion in the old man’s eyes. I assumed that no one had ever thanked him for that.

Straightening my coat, I held out my hand. He took it and I sneered at him. “I’m going to save our boy. I promise you.”

I had just sat down in the back of a cab when my phone went off. Pulling it from my coat, I answered, knowing only one person would be phoning me this early in the morning.

“Richard, I’m not coming into the office. I’ll fill you in—”

“Master Colt,” James said, his voice sounding broken.

“What happened?” I snapped into the phone. I didn’t need this now. These last four weeks Richard had been showing up at work red-eyed and reeking of alcohol. I hoped the bastard didn’t drive drunk and have an accident. I couldn’t take another heartache, not now.

“I can’t, not any more. I love him too much and I can’t watch him drink himself to death. I don’t know what to do, Master Colt.”

I had been so caught up in my own fucking bubble, I hadn’t ever taking into consideration that James might be hurting due to Richard’s drinking.

“James, where are you?”

He fell silent.

“James!” I deepened my voice.

“I’m at your penthouse waiting in the lobby, Master Colt. They said you hadn’t come home yet and you... you’re the only other person I know, Master. I have nowhere else to go.”

“Okay, listen to me, boy. Stay there. I’ll be home shortly.”

I ended the call. I was itching to tell the driver to turn the cab around and go to Richard’s house, but there were other more important matters to attend to right now.

Chapter Fifteen

"It takes a male to procreate, but it takes a man to be a father."
— Jeremy.

"Sometimes it takes a hand around your throat to see the man you're supposed to be!" — Luther Jacaruso.

Luther Jacaruso sat behind his huge dark-mahogany desk tapping a rapid staccato beat on the armrest of his chair with his left hand. This *tell* wasn't something he allowed himself often, but when it came to thoughts of his son, he uncharacteristically lost the plot.

Fuck! My son. My son that should never have been. The boy that should never have seen the light of day.

Luther did not do kids. He didn't like them, couldn't tolerate them and never wanted any of his own. When that bitc—his mother's voice filled his head reminding him never to speak ill of the dead—when that woman had come to him and informed him she was pregnant, he had come dangerously close to doing something he knew he would regret to this day, hit a woman in anger. He had hit plenty of women since then, but it was always consensual and in a scene. Both men and women, he didn't have a preference. His bisexuality was common knowledge.

Fuck this shit, I have better things to do with my time than dwell on the past and illegitimate bastards walking around carrying my DNA.

"Jocelyn!" he barked at his PA through his office intercom.

"Yes, Mr. Jacaruso," was the calm response.

"Bring me the Global Steele file and get Jeremy to my office in the next half hour."

"Sure, I'll bring the file shortly. Jeremy normally takes lunch this time of day, but I'll see if I can reach him on his cell."

"Lunch on company time?" He balled his fist and bellowed too no one in particular, "What the fuck do I pay my employees for if I cannot reach them when I need to?"

“Well, an hour lunch is included in his contract with the company. He is within his rights to actually take time off for a meal like most human beings I know,” Jocelyn replied sweetly.

“Don’t be a fucking wiseass with me! Do I need to remind you who pays your fucking mortgage?”

“My husband does, Mr. Jacaruso. Now, would you like a cup of coffee when I bring the Global Steele file?” Jocelyn deadpanned as if Luther had not said anything out of the ordinary.

“God, I should fire your fat ass for insubordination.” He grinned. “Yes, a mug, but no milk. My stomach feels like shit.”

Jocelyn knew out of experience never to take what Luther said to her or how he said it seriously. She had been his secretary when he had formed the company fifteen years ago and had advanced to his personal assistant as the company grew. She’d watched him grow from a cold, detached, thirty-year-old to the even colder forty-five year old he was today. Luther bought and sold companies. He didn’t just sell them... He stripped them, diced them up and sold them piece by piece to other companies. He did this with the precision of a surgeon and left many victims in his wake. The first company he had bought and sold was the one his parents had retired from. Both his parents, more so his father, had worked sixteen-hour days, six days a week in order for the family to barely scrape by. Having five children didn’t help matters. Luther hardly ever saw his old man, and when he did, Pop was always too bone weary to do much of anything with him. He was always in a foul mood, and Luther learned at an early age to steer clear of his father’s wicked temper.

“Your coffee, Mr. Jacaruso. And the file, as requested,” Jocelyn said, placing the mug of strong, bitter brew on Luther’s desk.

Luther grunted his thanks and absent-mindedly took a sip of the hot beverage, scanning the file in front of him. Burning his tongue, he slammed the mug down on his desk, spilling the hot liquid over his hands.

“Fuck-fuck-fuck!” He stood, shook his hand and stared at her. “Why the fuck would you make it so hot, for fuck’s sake, woman? Are you just plain fucking stupid today?”

“Enough, Luther!” Jocelyn stated firmly and wiped the spilled coffee with the handy wipes Luther kept in his stationery supplies.

“Sit down and talk,” she requested, making direct eye contact with him.

“There is nothing to talk about, and the only person I wish to talk to right now is Jeremy. Where the fuck is he by the way?”

“He’s on his way, but did say he was about forty minutes out. I’m sure he is going to get caught in traffic. There will be a bit of a wait for him.”

“Goddamnit, can this day get any worse,” Luther sighed, running his hands over his eyes.

“The only person I know who can get you this rattled is your so—” She jumped when the mug of coffee went flying across the office and smashed against the pristine white wall, splashing in a huge brown stain and seeping into the plush carpet.

“Don’t fucking say that name in my presence again. That scrawny bastard is nothing of mine!” Luther yelled.

“He is your son,” Jocelyn raised her voice.

Luther glared, fire surging in his veins. “I don’t have a fucking son!” He slammed his fist on his desk. “He should never have been allowed to take his first fucking breath. If that bitch had only realized that her stupid fucking medication would interfere with her birth control pills, he wouldn’t even exist! Goddamn whore refused to have an abortion too, no matter how I threatened her.”

Jocelyn covered her mouth. “God Luther, I knew you didn’t want kids, but this attitude of yours is cold, downright inhuman, even for you.”

“You, Jocelyn,” nearly spitting her name, “should know me well enough to never look at me through rose-colored glasses. I don’t give a fuck about this boy who calls himself my son. I couldn’t care less whether he lives or dies, and from what I’m hearing, he is close to death’s door anyway.”

“Luther!” Jocelyn exclaimed. “Please don’t tell me the cancer has—”

“What the fuck do you know about his cancer?” Luther sneered at her.

“I get the reports Jeremy sends to you. Even though you never read them, I do.”

“Why the fuck are you reading personal reports addressed to me?” Luther shouted. “That, Jocelyn Stampstede, is cause for an instant fucking dismissal.” Luther’s neck veins were bulging, his face had turned a deep shade of red from trying to control his temper. Jocelyn realized how angry Luther was and knew she needed to explain, and fast.

"I knew you weren't reading the reports, and I wanted to make sure there was nothing in them that would be detrimental to you personally or professionally," she stated.

"That is what Jeremy is there for, for fuck's sake. If he thought there was anything that needed my immediate attention, he would have told me."

"I didn't trust Jeremy to make that distinction. I'm sorry if you feel that I have violated your privacy, Luther. That was never my intention," Jocelyn responded.

"This is what I have tried to avoid all my fucking life." He stood and folded his arms over his chest, looking out of his office window. "The life-robbing burden of children. I watched my father work himself to death to feed five children and take care of a handicapped kid. For what? He had no fucking life! He did it to raise us, but he couldn't stand being anywhere near his children. So what the fuck for then?" Luther swore he would never put himself in that position when his mother died shortly after his old man, leaving Luther to raise brothers and sisters who didn't appreciate a damn thing! Now this.

He turned to Jocelyn. "I don't fucking want to know about this! I do not want to know Beo Moon or anything about him. He needs to curl up and die somewhere quietly, preferably far away from me."

"Oh God, Luther, you can't say things like that," Jocelyn protested. A painful expression came upon her face, but for whom Luther wasn't sure. Maybe it was for both father and son.

"I just did, and I meant every fucking word." Sighing, he undid his tie and discarded the silk snake on his desk. "Look, Jocelyn, I know your warm sensibilities can't comprehend my aversion to children or my need to distance myself from this situation, but this is how it's going to be. I don't have to fucking justify myself to you or anyone. Nor do I need to give an explanation... end of discussion. Now leave and get some real work done for a change. I have a company to investigate before I can make them an offer. I need Jeremy in here. Where the fuck is he?" Luther demanded.

"I'm sure he's on his way." Jocelyn made her way out of his office. "Please don't leave things until it's too late. Regret isn't good company to keep." Raising her hand to silence his response, she continued, "No, Luther, I can't side with you on this one. Not when your son's life hangs in the balance. I know, I know," she responded at his growl, "you don't have a son. But your denial of the truth does not change the facts."

“Females!” Luther roared in his Dom voice, standing with his fists clenched and his chest heaving. His skin felt itchy, and the tightness of his diaphragm became a vise grip. Struggling for control, he clenched his teeth, preventing himself from saying more to the woman who had practically run his life for the past fifteen years.

His glare shifted from Jocelyn to the bulk of Jeremy's huge physique filling the office doorway. Only an inch or two taller than his own six-foot-four, Jeremy outweighed him by a good fifty pounds of pure hard muscle. His bald head shone with sweat, running in rivulets down his scraggy cheeks and past his cherry blond goatee. Jeremy was often annoyed that he looked like Stone Cold Steve Austin, but Luther knew if anyone was stone cold, it would be him, not Jer. He had never seen Jeremy be anything but a gentleman around Jocelyn.

“I got this,” Jeremy said in his deep voice and gestured for Jocelyn to pass him.

“You wanna seat your ass, Luther, and calm the fuck down?” Jeremy advanced casually and took the chair Jocelyn had vacated.

“I'll warn you again about the way you fucking speak to me, you son of a bitch. You're the employee here, remember?” Luther barked, but proceeded to sit as instructed.

“Yeah?” Jer raised a blond eyebrow. “And I'll remind you about cussing at that woman out there. I don't give a shit how you speak to your submissives, but Jocelyn is not one of them. One day she will boot you in the ass. And then what? This place will fucking crumble quicker than the walls of Jericho.”

“Jocelyn is my employee, and I'll speak to her as I fucking please,” Luther gritted out, but Jer was fuckin' spot on. Luther would be lost without Jocelyn.

Giving Luther a raised eyebrow, Jer bared his own teeth. “Then act like her boss and not some punk off the streets without any etiquette.”

Looking up at Jeremy, Luther's chest relaxed enough for him to take deep breaths, and his skin didn't feel tight anymore. Jeremy, an ex-marine, had run Luther's security details and private investigations for the past thirteen years. He was very successful at digging up information on a company Luther was interested in buying. He was also in charge of all security at The Bark, even though Jer wasn't into the lifestyle.

Luther knew Jeremy could have his pick of submissives, and was often informed of who the flavor of the week was by the twinks who seemed to thrive

on house gossip. The twinks, to their utter disappointment, never seemed to interest Jeremy as he tended to lean more towards men with a hell of a lot more meat on their bones. Luther knew if Jeremy ever showed an interest in the BDSM lifestyle, he would make one helluva Dom because of his patience coupled with his calm persona, even in volatile circumstances. Jeremy took charge of a situation whenever it was needed. This calm exterior belied a deadly strength and sharp military-honed skills to take down any threat if the situation warranted it.

Those traits turned Luther on, even though he didn't want to think of Jeremy in that way. Something pinged in his chest and his breath hitched at the thought of never having Jeremy in that way, but Luther dismissed it as the result of his already over-emotional status.

"Why the fuck didn't you tell me he was dying?" Luther asked more calmly.

"It wouldn't have made a difference." Jeremy made direct eye contact with Luther. "I knew that tidbit of news would make its way through the club and eventually reach your ears, leading you to actually read one of my reports instead of simply dismissing it and chucking it into a filing cabinet."

This is exactly what had happened, and it pissed him off that Jeremy knew him so well and predicted his behavior.

"Well, that's what I fucking pay you for, keeping me informed of important changes. The fact that he has deteriorated to the stage that his fucking lover now wants an appointment with me makes it important enough for you to at least tell me, motherfucker!" Luther seethed.

Jer leaned over in his chair and said, "If I'd sat you down, told you how bad things had become for your son, you would have dismissed me out of hand. There's no use denying it."

"I have no intention of denying it because this does not change my decision. I want nothing to do with the boy."

"Right," Jeremy stood, "just needed you to confirm that for me. I'll get on it and let Maxus know he's not welcome for an appointment or anything else," Jeremy answered in a clear voice.

"That's it? You're not gonna try to convince me that it's my duty to intervene and help as much as I can?" Luther asked skeptically.

"Now that would be a waste of energy, Luther, and I've already had an annoying day as it is."

“Huh?” Luther was dumbstruck at Jeremy’s easy concurrence.

“You’re an intelligent man, Luther. You have always looked at any given situation from all angles, especially when deciding if you were interested in a company. I presumed, considering the magnitude of this situation, you would have given it as much thought and consideration as you would one of your multi-million dollar investment. If this is your decision, then I will respect that and do what needs to be done.”

“I haven’t thought... I didn’t give it... I...” Luther’s olive-toned cheeks heated up.

“Are you’re saying you haven’t given it much thought or consideration and simply made your decision based on your irrational fear of being a father, or whatever fucked up idea you have going on in that pea brain of yours?” Jeremy asked calmly.

“What the fuck, Jer? Fear? There’s nothing that I fucking fear!” Luther absent-mindedly used his pet name for Jeremy.

“You’re sure about that, big man? Let me tell you what I think, so there’s no confusion about where I stand. You...” Jeremy said leaning over Luther’s desk and poking his finger against Luther’s chest, “...are afraid of a scrubby little slip of a boy whom you haven’t even met. He holds so much power over you, and you cannot understand it. Therefore, you don’t tolerate it. Dismissing him like yesterday’s garbage. If this was my son or Jocelyn’s, you would have been at that hospital, already demanding why you were being kept waiting. You fear that this boy will make you feel things that will take over your life and you will lose control. Control to you, big man, is the be-all and end-all of your life. Without it, you feel as if you’re floundering. One day, Luther, I swear to God, you’re going to hand over that control to me and you’ll realize nothing has changed. Except what’s in your head.”

A shudder went through Luther’s body. “What the fuck are you talking about, Jeremy? Are you out of your fucking mind? Me, handing control over to you? What are you getting at?”

“Nothing, it’s a topic for another day. It’s clear you haven’t given this situation much thought. I suggest you actually think about it.” Raising his eyebrows at Luther, Jeremy said firmly, “Fucking think about it. Meet with Colt Maxus. He’s a fellow Dom at your club and you’ve got nothing to lose by agreeing to meet him.”

Luther bit his tongue. Jer knew Colt Maxus as a Dominant, but he wondered if he knew who Colt Maxus was—an envied tyrant in the power-hungry world of business. He had more money than he had life span left to spend it. What he saw in Luther's bastard son was beyond him. He needed to play his cards right. Maxus was an asset to The Bark, and you didn't cross a Titan and get away with it. Luther knew there was more to the man than his gruff personality. Maxus had power elsewhere. He held influence with the kingpins of the "true world order." It was plain and simple—Maxus wasn't a man to be crossed.

"Fine, I'll meet Maxus tonight at eight at the house. Make it happen," Luther rasped.

"Yes, boss," Jeremy said, with a smirk on his face, and left the office.

That evening, Luther stood in his home office before the huge, tinted bay windows overlooking his property, recalling his earlier negotiations in his attempt to take control of Global Steele. He knew their board of directors would eventually succumb to his low offer as they slowly ran out of options. Nothing was going to spoil his good mood, not even this meeting. But—he took a sip of the rare bourbon—he was fucking nervous. He had already made up his mind about staying as far away from this situation as was humanly possible and meeting with Maxus was just to satisfy the man and get him off his back. To be honest, it was also to get Jeremy to shut up. He was going to listen to what Maxus had to say, as he so often did during negotiations, and firmly, but with respect, deny the request.

He glanced at his watch and took another nip of the liquor. Jeremy said he'd be there for the meeting. He wondered what was keeping him.

Seating himself on the dark-blue leather couch, Luther tried to relax. Restlessly, he stood and wandered over to the window again, looking out at the black night enshrouding the garden. Discreet lights were scattered amongst the foliage. From that high up, he couldn't see much in the dark. Beginning to feel impatient, he turned as a knock sounded on the door. It opened, and Jeremy walked in accompanied by Colt Maxus. Luther recognized the man by his stride, the air of superiority about him. His breath caught in his throat as another man followed behind Maxus.

Martin.

What the fuck was he doing here? Why had Jeremy not warned him? Why had Jeremy not stopped Martin? Jer fucking knew about the restraining order.

Did Jeremy set him up? Was this an ambush to get him to change his mind? What the fuck was happening here?

“What the fuck, Jeremy?” Luther growled through clenched teeth. He met Martin’s eyes and the two glared in greeting. Jeremy shrugged, flopped down on the couch and picked up a magazine, ignoring Luther.

“Luther.” A voice so deep, so imperious, it shook him to his core. Whether his name was meant to be uttered as a growl or not, the way it was said made him want to drop to his knees and start saying, “Yes, Sir.”

Ripping his gaze from Martin, he turned to the man with the offered hand and Luther had to swallow. He was big, and fuck, he was tall.

“Maxus.” Luther cleared his throat and gave a nod. He wasn’t going to shake that massive grizzly paw. “I’m a busy man, and would like to get this meeting over and done with, so please state your business. What do you want?”

Maxus moved to one of the chairs and indicated to Luther to take the one next to him. “Take a seat, Luther, so we can discuss this properly.”

“Nothing to discuss. You simply need to tell me what you want. I’m hoping it’s different from what Martin wants, otherwise this will simply be a waste of time. My answer hasn’t changed.” Luther moved to stand next to Jer and turned his back to them.

Those grizzly paws spun him around, latched onto his shirt and pulled him close, knocking their heads together.

“Listen to me, fucker, and listen to me good,” Maxus breathed into his face. Letting go, he dropped to his knees. “You want me to beg? I’ll fucking beg. You want me to crawl at your feet and grovel, I’ll fuckin’ do it!” Luther held still, his anger almost forgotten when Maxus fucking bowed before him. Luther’s heart was pounding so fast against his ribcage he thought the organ was going to break bone.

Maxus looked up, his eyes wet, meeting Luther’s gaze. “That boy means everything to me. He is the one person in this entire world who loves me for who I am—who cares enough to look past my faults and accept me. I have never held such a precious gift in my hands. I never knew love till I met your son. I’m begging you, please, for the love of God, please. He doesn’t deserve to die.”

“I don’t get it. Did you think that asking me face-to-face would influence my decision? The answer is still no. A resounding hell no!” Luther roared. Turning his back on the desperate man kneeling before him.

He heard Maxus stand, and then something he never would have thought was offered.

“My company! I’ll give you my empire and every fucking penny I have to save that boy. I’d give my life.”

“Get them out of my office, Jeremy,” he said and walked back to the window.

Maxus’ enterprise was mammoth. It was a deal of lifetime, but this wasn’t about money.

“I promised him I wouldn’t hurt you and I will keep to that, but I would like you to know what an honor it was to be a part of your son’s life, and I pity you for never having that with him.”

“Jer!” Luther growled.

Jeremy’s furious stare bore into Luther’s back, but he turned and escorted Colt and Martin out of the room.

Returning to Luther’s home office a short while later, Jeremy found him sitting on the couch with another drink in his hand. He stood there and simply stared at Luther without saying a word.

“What? Another lecture coming my way? Save it. I’m not in the least bit interested,” Luther said bitterly.

“A lecture? No, no lecture, big guy, just my opinion. You are a coward, Luther Jacaruso. A weak, fearful coward.”

Luther vaulted off the couch and flung his drink across the room. “You motherfucker! Who the fuck are you to call me a coward?” he erupted, advancing on Jeremy. He didn’t get far. Jeremy was much quicker than him, and shoved Luther back onto the couch. Luther clasped Jeremy’s forearm and the two men grappled. Jeremy threw Luther to the floor and sat on his chest, pinning Luther down with a hand wrapped around his throat.

Jeremy snarled, “Stay the fuck down, you prick.” Luther grabbed at Jeremy’s arm trying to dislodge the hand from his throat. Jeremy wouldn’t budge. He gripped Luther’s wrists and held them to the floor above Luther’s head. Coming down close to Luther’s face, Jeremy could smell the whiskey on the man’s breath. He said menacingly, “You’ve got no control now, Luther. How does it feel?”

Feeling a full body shudder travel through him, Luther squeezed his eyes tight. At Luther’s obvious distress, something must have snapped in Jeremy.

Jer's hold slowly lessened on Luther's wrists, his thumbs gently brushing against the Luther's skin.

At Jeremy's mercy, Luther forced his eyes open. The fiery eyes gazing down at him got his blood flowing and he was fucking hard! The pure desire in Jeremy's face caused him to pant like a bitch in heat. Jeremy slowly lowered his mouth towards Luther's.

"What... Jer, what are you doing?" Luther whispered.

Ghosting his lips over Luther's mouth, he felt the growl vibrating from Jer's chest. His heart leaped when a warm, wet tongue licked at his lips.

Fuck it! When the next lick came, Luther lifted his head, his blood rushing in his ears and pressed his lips to Jeremy's. The man went rigid atop him, eyes wide, and Luther grinned. His lips still pressed to Jer's, thrusting his tongue into Jer's mouth. Slowly Jeremy relaxed and hesitantly returned the kiss. In small, slow movements of his lips, Jer's tongue brushed against his, building confidence.

With a sexy purr from his lips, Jeremy invaded Luther's mouth, lapping the inside. Luther could feel the man trying to own him in the kiss, and handed over control to the man. Feeling encouraged as Jer responded, Luther opened his mouth wider, letting their tongues duel. If he hadn't made the first move, Luther wasn't sure anything would have happened. God, he wanted this, wanted Jer for so long and now...

Jeremy growled and moved down Luther's jaw, nipping at the stubble, licking his way to Luther's throat. Luther offered his neck, and was rewarded when Jeremy latched onto his Adam's apple and sucked hard. A loud groan slipped from Luther as he bucked, rubbing his hard cock into Jeremy. Still holding Luther's arms above his head, Jeremy spread Luther's legs with his knees and aligned their hard cocks. Rubbing hard into each other, both men let out simultaneous moans as their dicks welcomed the friction.

"Want you," Jeremy hissed against Luther's ear, moving his tongue into the shell and biting his lobe. Luther panted in response, not getting anything out other than low incoherent mumbles.

Jeremy scooped him up from the floor and planted Luther on his knees facing the couch, pushing his torso onto the cushions.

"Stay there," Jeremy ordered when Luther tried to lift up. Luther trembled, closed his eyes and nodded. Jeremy reached over to the drawers of the coffee

table and removed a condom and some sachets of lube, throwing them onto the couch next to Luther's head. He looked over his shoulder at Jer. The two men stared at each other without saying a word. Taking a deep breath, Luther lowered his head to the cushions again. Luther's submission did strange things inside him and so seemingly to Jeremy too. He wanted to be naked and have Jer discover and explore each fold of his skin with his tongue. But ultimately he wanted to submit to Jer; he just wasn't certain his Dom was so willing to go along with it. Giving up control wasn't something Luther did.

"I need you, Jer," Luther said so softly he was afraid Jeremy almost didn't hear him.

"You have me. I'm right here."

Luther's shirt was pushed up almost onto his shoulders, when Jeremy reached around to undo his belt and removed it. Button and zipper followed in quick succession, and Luther's pants was shoved down to mid-thigh revealing his round, firm, muscular ass covered in black hair. Luther hissed loud into the room, hearing the muscles and bones pop as they protested the sudden jolt arching his back as Jeremy ran his tongue down Luther's crack. Jeremy groped Luther's butt cheeks, spreading them, and lapped at Luther's hole. Groaning into the cushions, Luther tried to spread his legs further but was restricted by his pants still around his thighs.

"More, Jer," he begged.

Not taking his mouth from Luther's hole, Jeremy pushed Luther's pants down until they were under his knees. Standing, Jeremy freed his own cock from its confines and started rubbing his swollen dick along Luther's crack. Tearing open a sachet of lube, Jeremy coated his fingers and circled them around Luther's hole. Slowly he sank in his fingertip and gently wiggled. Luther hissed and tensed from the intrusion.

"Been a while for you?" Jeremy asked and gently pressed his finger deeper.

"Try never, Jer," came Luther's breathless response.

"What?" Jeremy froze.

"I've never bottomed before, Jer," Luther replied.

"Fuck, Luther! You sure about this?"

"Yes! Don't you fucking stop now or you're fucking fired, so help me God, Jeremy!"

Jeremy slowly added a second finger to Luther's channel. Luther tensed again and held his breath.

"Relax and push against my fingers. It'll make it easier. Breathe," Jeremy coaxed.

Slowly the burning sensation morphed into something more bearable, and pleasure exploded all at once. Gasping, Luther bucked against Jeremy's fingers.

"Oh God Jer... harder, faster, something Jer..." Luther panted and begged, trying to fuck himself on Jeremy's fingers.

Jeremy added a third finger, and Luther held still, waiting for the burn to subside, but was soon moaning and bucking against the man's fingers.

"Harder. Harder please," Luther begged frantically.

"Give me a second," Jeremy said, tearing the condom wrapper with his teeth before sheathing his cock. He slowly withdrew his fingers, pulling a whimper from Luther.

Jeremy lined his cockhead with Luther's hole and gently pushed in. Inch by inch he slowly slid in, Luther clench his tight hole around Jer's shaft.

"Just relax, Luther. I'll take it as slowly as you want me to," Jeremy reassured him.

Luther felt Jeremy's balls against him. "Move," he said when Jeremy remained still. *Fuck, I'm a greedy bossy bottom.*

"God, give me a second or I'm going to lose it," Jeremy panted.

Jeremy slowly started to move his cock in small little thrusts.

"God, Jer, fuck me!"

"I don't wanna hurt you. Be patient damnit," Jeremy barked and planted his hand hard on Luther's right ass cheek. The sound snapping as flesh met flesh cracked through them both. A tingle jolted down Luther's spine—*God, this is what it feels like?*—an itch starting in his gut and a smirk on his face. He wanted it again, over and over, till he was begging Jer to stop.

"Fuck patient. I'll fuck myself," Luther growled and slammed himself back onto Jeremy's cock.

"Argh!" both men groaned, Luther fucking himself hard on Jeremy's thick dick, pushing it in deeper.

Jeremy grabbed a fistful of Luther's hair and pressed the man's face down against the cushions, seizing Luther's hip with the other and plowing into Luther's ass, causing Luther's dick to rub against the couch.

"God, I've waited for this too long. I don't think I can hold off any longer," Jeremy thundered. Releasing Luther's hair, he wrapped his arms around that thick, hard hairy stomach and pulled Luther's body up against his. Jeremy panted hard in Luther's ear, snapping his hips faster and faster, feeling the older man's hole clamp around his cock.

A few hard pumps and Jeremy groaned Luther's name and filled the condom. Collapsing on Luther's back, Jeremy got his breathing under control and slowly pulled out. Luther hissed at the sensitivity the action caused. Jer turned him around and helped him up onto the couch. Spreading his legs, Jeremy swallowed Luther's cock in one go. Luther groaned and bucked his hips off the couch, pushing himself deeper into Jeremy's mouth and down his throat. Jeremy simply swallowed Luther's cock causing him to scream his name and come hard. Lapping the last of the semen off Luther's softening cock, Jeremy laid his head on Luther's thigh and released a satisfied breath.

"Fuck... fuck," Luther gasped. "That was fuckin' good."

Chuckling, Jeremy asked, "So now I'm a fuck?"

"You know what I mean," Luther responded running his hand over Jeremy's bald head. "We're still half-dressed." Both men laughed, neither of them wanting to move.

"I need to get rid of this condom, but I don't think I have the energy to move."

Finishing what was needed in the en suite attached to Luther's office, they both sat naked, side by side, on the couch in front of the fire. Jeremy's finger running down Luther's hairy thighs, "How you feeling?" he asked.

"Like my ass has been plowed," Luther responded with a grimace.

"Besides your ass, shithead," Jeremy laughed.

"I don't know, Jer. I never thought I'd be able to do that. Give up control enough for someone to fuck me. It was easier with you. I trust you with my life," he said, looking at Jeremy and noting the satisfied look on his face.

"So giving up control wasn't the worst thing that could happen?"

"Giving up control to you wasn't. In other situations, I have my doubts if I could handle too much of that."

“You are not your father. You need to give yourself a chance. You need to give your son a chance. The man I know is not the one who so callously disregarded those two men earlier. Go see him. For heaven’s sake, go meet him. I’d say get to know your son, but you don’t have the luxury of time to do that, Luther. You have control here; his life is in your hands. I really don’t understand what you are afraid of. You need to make that choice now, bottom line. I think it’s a really easy one to make knowing that if it was anyone else we wouldn’t even be having this conversation. The deed would have been done already. He has lived and survived all these years without your help. He’s not going to be a clingy burden now. Besides he has Maxus, and you witnessed the lengths that man is prepared to go to, to help his sub. You saw the love he has for his boy, for your son. It would be good for you to play a small part in his life.”

“I guess you’re right. Let me think about how I’m going to go about doing this.”

Jeremy nodded. “Sure, whatever you need.” He fell silent looking at Luther for a couple of minutes. Luther’s skin began to heat the longer Jer stared at him—*God, what was this, high school?*

Jeremy traced a finger along Luther’s cheek, leaving a heat trail where it touched. “I love you, Luther. Have for a long time,” Jer whispered and placed a thick finger against Luther’s lips. “No, wait, don’t say anything,” he said when Luther wanted to respond. “I wanted you to know how I feel without any pressure. I’m not into the lifestyle that you find so much pleasure in, but I don’t think I’m completely opposed to experimenting with you if it’s what you need.”

Sighing, Luther regarded Jeremy with dark brown eyes. “There’s too much happening right now for me to respond to that, Jer. I don’t want to lose whatever this is between us. I don’t have a clue what this is, but I know I need you with me, beside me, when I take on this thing with my son.”

“That is a given, Boss. I’ll be whatever you need me to be; whenever you need me there.” Jeremy leaned in and kissed Luther gently on the lips.

“What hospital is he in?” Luther asked when Jer released his lips.

Jer raised an eyebrow. “You wanna do this now?”

“I’m feeling... adventurous.”

“God, save us all!” Jer’s laugh sparkled in his eyes.

Arms circled Luther around the waist and Jeremy whispered in his ear, “Got time for another, old man?”

This should have felt awkward considering how long he and Jeremy had worked together, and he was Jeremy's boss, but nothing felt more comfortable and natural than being in his arms, feeling his lips against his skin. *Damn, the man had popped his cherry. God, he sounded like a love-struck teenage girl. Soon he would have to hand in his "stone cold" card.*

Chapter Sixteen

“All that shit in my past, was nothing—a small grain of dust compared to this—to seeing him go through this. To sit there and know I could do nothing to help him. And yeah, it fucking destroyed me.” — Colt Maxus.

Luther came to the hospital. They did a biopsy of his bone marrow; it was a match.

Beo was skeptical about meeting his father at first, but the two got along surprisingly well. I'd say almost too well, because when father and son sat side by side and looked at you with soul-sucking, deep brown eyes, you knew you were done for.

Two days later, Hades showed up at the hospital. Motherfucker looked like the dead—smelled like it too. He spoke alone with Beo. Gave me a two finger salute, gripped me on my shirt and said, “You better motherfuckin’ take care of my boy or I’ll come back from the dead and gut your ass.” The bastard then pulled me into a hug, and whispered low in my ear, “Take good care of him, motherfucker.” He abruptly turned and left.

Jane came to visit. I met *Baby Magpie*. The kid was on me something fierce, calling me Uncle M. The little madam stole my fucking heart. I was going to spoil that princess rotten.

Martin and Luther were still not speaking to each other, only staring.

James had moved in with me. He mostly kept quiet when he visited Beo, often bringing flowers, but everyone could see the situation with Richard was slowly eating him up inside. Richard said he wanted nothing to do with James, and that the boy was the worst mistake he ever made.

Beo started more treatment, a week’s worth of intense chemo. Luther had to take filgrastim shots to boost his white blood cell count before the procedure. Beo’s vomiting got worse, and his blood cell count kept dropping, but Dr. Mahajan said that was expected.

Martin and Luther had advanced to growling, but still glared at each other in greeting.

My sessions with Aria were going well. We were working through a lot of shit. She said that what happened between Beo and me was a good thing, even if we saw it as bad. She was fully confident that the limerence had been broken, and we were falling in love as a natural couple. I laughed at her and said, “Bitch, that boy owns me.”

She stretched out her hand to mine and replied, “Welcome to the club, motherfucker.”

Things went nuclear at work. Christine was pregnant with Xavier's baby. James moved back to Portland. Luther and his pea-brained, knuckle-head bodyguard that follows him around like a bitch-puppy were caught making out in a hospital closet.

The big day of the transplant of Luther's bone marrow arrived. It was a four hour procedure. Luther's *puppy dog* sat with him the whole time. Beo got a new birthday—apparently once you received bone marrow you get a new birthday. “Another celebration date to add to our calendar,” he said.

Beo wasn't doing so well in the days following the procedure. His count was still too low, and he was still in pain. The medications were making him lethargic, and his hair was falling out at a rapid pace. He also wasn't allowed a lot of visitors anymore, all of which caused bouts of depression.

Martin and Luther started greeting each other, but still mostly ignored each other.

I made a collar.

GrandMaster Hans, aka Master Yoda (and how did it come to be that I was Darth-fucking-Vader?!) and several of the Doms shaved their heads for charity. Hans shaved his body hair. I shaved my scalp. Beo bawled his eyes out at that. He made us all sign up for the National Marrow Donor Program. My boy was as fierce as any fucking Dom.

Beo introduced me to *True Blood*. I never knew a fairy could ride so much cock. Beo was in love with Eric Northman.

Finn got expelled from The Bark. We never saw or heard from him again.

Richard and I decided to sell the company. I was offered a partnership at The Bark. Martin became heart fucked, and Richard started attending AA meetings.

My boy was doing great, and they finally gave him the okay to go home. He still had to go in for check-ups, and there was always the possibility the cancer

could return, but I made a vow that I would spend every second of my life with my boy. Beo was healthy, he was gaining weight. Luther even threw him one hell of a party.

Richard went to go see James.

I still had the tarot card.

I bought a ring.

Chapter Seventeen

“A story has more than one beginning, more than one final word.” — Beo Moon.

February had arrived, and The Bark was hosting a party. We were celebrating Colt's birthday and his acceptance in becoming one of the Bark's co-owners.

I would never have dreamed that my story would end this way, or begin. I guess, when you fall in love with a man like Colt, miracles are possible. Still, I had never openly stated to him that I loved him. I could tell he was nervous that night. He was fussing over me incessantly—“Are you warm enough? Do you want to go, because we don't have to, baby? Maybe you should put on another jacket. We really don't have to go, Beo”—I pressed my lips to his to shut him the hell up. The stewing over me was epic, but some days I wanted my Master back!

Stepping through the lobby, I could immediately tell that something was up. The House Lords all stood in a long line in front of The Black Room's bar. All of them in suits or formal cocktail dresses, and there were no other members in sight. Colt had dressed me in a pair of jeans, my sweater, a hoodie and a pair of sneakers. He, however, was wearing a long trench coat that was buttoned up to his neck. Colt had been walking in front, but stopped inside The Black Room and turned around to face me. A finger pressed under my chin bringing my gaze to his. His eyes, hard emeralds, blazed at mine. Yeah, those bright greens were fiery and raked a shudder from me. He spoke in that deep voice that had my cock heavy with blood.

“Was that a shiver from being fucking cold, boy?” he asked, tracing his finger from my chin down along my jaw.

“Sorry, Master,” I whispered. “You do things to me with only your eyes. I can't help it.” I felt my cheeks burning. Colt's lips twitched upwards at my admission.

“Strip for your Master. Now,” he growled.

My heart began to thud, my palms were clammy and my fingers kept twitching. Something was up, something fucking huge... Maybe he was

required to do a scene as part of his joining The Bark as an owner. Maybe it was some form of initiation... which didn't make sense. Colt was a Master. He didn't have to prove he could dominate a sub. His title spoke for itself.

Unzipping the hoodie, I heard him remove his trench coat, but I kept my gaze lowered as a sub's actions reflected on their Dominant. Peeling the garment off my shoulders, Damon stepped up to me, a shy grin on his face, and held out his hands for my hoodie. Folding each piece of clothing, I lay them on Damon's outstretched hands until I stood naked.

My gaze was glued on the floor, hands covering my junk, taking slow breaths to calm my intense heartbeat. My skin pulled tight when Colt's finger traced one of my globes, and whispered darkly in my ear, "I'm sorry for all the secrecy, boy, but you will understand in a few minutes."

When he stepped in front of me, my gaze was filled with his boots. My eyes trailed up, but there were no leather pants tucked into the boots where they ended around his calves. There were bare, beautiful, muscular legs, lightly covered in black hair. I couldn't help it as my gaze swept upward landing on his ass. Colt was fucking naked, except for his boots, leather gloves, daddy hat and chest harness.

Damon came up to my left side and Alex, a female submissive, came up to my right.

She whispered in my ear, "You want to clasp your hands behind your back now, Beo." There was a slight excitement in her voice as I did exactly that. Both of them cradled a bicep on either side.

Damon leaned close, breathing in my ear, "Just relax, Beo, and trust your Master." I swallowed hard at his words. I still had no clue what the fuck was going on.

I heard GrandMaster Hans address Colt. "You ready, boy?"

"I am, GrandMaster Hans," Colt replied.

The House Lords turned and walked in a single file down the stairs towards The Pit. My own steps were shaky as I followed Colt, seeing his ass flex and his butt cheeks dimple as he moved, and I was thankful for the two beside me, holding me steady.

The Pit was a dark and eerily medieval-style dungeon. Large floor pillar candles in red and black stood in the far corners against the walls. They

provided the only light in the room, adding to my anticipation. There were more people here, all silent, spread out along each wall. As I entered with Damon and Alex, they led me to the center of the room, my gaze falling on Colt's frame.

One leg perched on the stage, he was leaning with his right hand on his thigh, the other leg still on the floor. There was a dark scowl on his face. Master's junk hung semi-hard between his legs adorned with a fucking silver cock ring. The basilisk was hungry and spewing. Junior rose to the occasion too, but nothing could have prepared me for what happened next as both Alex and Damon leaned in and placed a kiss on each of my cheeks.

Colt's gaze went violently jealous, as both submissives walked away behind me.

I dared a glance to my right. *Mother of God, why?* My gaze had to land on a group of men dressed in fucking suits. It was fine seeing Doc; it was fine seeing Jer. But fuck me, Dad? Really?

He was wearing a black suit except for the bright red tie, and he looked fucking smashing. In fact, everyone was wearing black with the exception of their ties in different colors, both Jer and Doc's were a silvery-white.

"Boy!" Colt growled and stepped up on the stage, "bring your sweet boy pussy up here to your Master."

I was sure my ass cheeks managed to blush as I made my way over to him. He held out his hand, and I gave him mine. The bastard was still a gentleman, helping me up on the platform. I went to my knees before him—shoulders straight, hands behind my back, and chin to my chest. He didn't touch me as he circled me, but at seeing the basilisk drooling, veiny and hard, I bit my lip. Colt growled clasping my chin, leaning down, he rasped in my ear, "I so want to fuck you right now, Babyboy, but this isn't about me." He released his hold and stepped aside. "Turn and display for the crowd."

Still on my knees, I slowly turned, my heart pounding violently against my ribcage. *This wasn't about him?* I was confused. It was his birthday. He said we were going to The Bark... *So how the hell was this about me?*

"GrandMaster Hans once said to me, I will never own Beo. For a man of my stature and title it was something hard to hear and more difficult to accept. But standing here before my fellow associates, friends, Doms and submissives, it is never the Dom that owns his submissive. It truly is the other way around."

“Those of you who thought they were going to see my dominance on display, I’m sorry to disappoint. But it is only fitting, in my eyes, that the Master of my Heart stake his claim. As I will stake mine.”

“Damon,” Colt said calling him over. My eyes caught the reflection of light off a silk pillow when Damon stood before him and held it out. Grasping an object from the pillow, Colt turned to me cupping my cheek with his fingers and pulling my gaze up to his. The object was hidden behind his back.

“Stand for me, Beo, please, Babyboy.”

Taking a deep breath I got to my feet, as gracefully as I could and looked at my Master.

There was a shine in his eyes; emotion flashed behind them when he stepped closer. His words were spoken with difficulty through a thick throat, and his eyes never left mine.

“Will you, Beo Moon, accept my collar, as the Master of my Heart? Accept that I will always watch over you—” he stopped. He bit his lip, took a shaky breath and cleared his throat, “accept that I will provide for you. I will protect you. I will comfort you, and be there for you always and for as long as you stand by my side.”

That first tear hit hard and it hit home. That first fucking tear, damnit! *Fuck, shit, and balls!*

“That I will do anything in my power to be the Master you need. Will you, Beo Moon, accept my love for you? Will you do me the honor of being my one and only submissive for as long as fate wills it?”

The tears were tracking down my face as I held my breath, bit my lips and grinned. “You had me at, ‘Your voice is really nice,’” I said through blurry vision, remembering the first night we met. He closed his eyes and shook his head. “God, I love you, you little shit. Come the fuck here!”

Cheers and hollers erupted when Colt placed the collar around my neck with shaky hands. Upon hearing the click of the lock snapping in place, he gripped it, pulled on it, and shoved our lips together.

Pulling away, he flashed a smile. “Party ain’t over, Babyboy.” He winked at me, letting go of the lock, and gave a grope to my ass cheek.

He turned to the crowd like he wasn’t aware his fucking basilisk was in full view. I didn’t really mind. My Master had a cock that should be looked at, but it was mine, *all mine*.

“I never said tonight would be without a show, and Colt Maxus doesn’t fail to impress,” he said loudly. “Boys?”

I wasn’t sure exactly what was happening. I was still a bit dazed, feeling the snug hug of my Master’s collar and its weight on my neck. It was thickly padded on the inside, made of soft leather, and I knew the short blunt studded spikes were made of platinum.

His big hand brushed the nape of my neck, pulling my attention back to him. “Turn around, boy, and go lay down on your back on the bench for me.” I turned around and got a slap on my ass when I froze. Where there wasn’t before, a spanking bench now sat on the stage. At least I thought it was a spanking bench. It was a wide table covered in padded leather, and... *on my back? How was he going to—*

A second slap came harder and more forceful. I bit my lip, holding back the hiss, ’cause it not only seared into my tender ass, but the noise cracked loudly across the room.

Slowly, aware that my cheeks were blushing, my ears turning red, I made my way over feeling the eyes of both subs and Doms on me, but the only gaze that mattered was my Master’s. Hissing when my rear kissed the soft leather, I laid down as I was commanded.

“Arms stretched above your head, boy,” he droned above me. Raising my hands and laying them down against the soft leather, I felt Colt grab my right wrist. “Relax, I’m not going to hurt you, Beo.” His voice was confident and reassuring as he fastened a restraint around my right wrist.

“Tight enough?” he asked and traced a finger along the sensitive skin on my arm. I slowly bobbed my head as he moved to fasten my left wrist, giving that arm the same sensual attention with his finger. He moved the digit down my body as he walked around the table, trailing it down my arm, over my armpit, circling my nipple, and giving it a quick flick before tracking along my ribs. My breath flared at the sensation and my skin pulled tight as my gut ignited with a hungry fire.

He grasped my cock, giving it a hard pump causing me to push up my hips, as I bit my lip to try to keep silent as I sought more friction. “If I wanted you to be silent, boy, I would have gagged you.”

A warm, silky wetness surrounded my cock when he leaned over and gently sucked at my head. I was still biting my lips, moaning softly when he gently

nipped my frenulum and it became a growl. Releasing my cock with a pop, he growled back, "Love that sound, boy."

Gripping my base he took me down his throat in one swallow. I pulled on the restraints, trying to keep myself from thrusting into his mouth and moaned loudly into the room.

Releasing me a second time, a cool, wet hand gripped my cock coating it with lube and my mind exploded with his earlier words, "...*the Master of my Heart stake his claim. As I will stake mine.*"

No, he wouldn't... but Colt Maxus was so totally going to.

The table shifted from his weight as he climbed on to it. I held my breath when Master's eyes stared into mine, and my body responded to him. The leather against my back became slippery as I began to sweat. My heart was pounding in my chest, attempting once again to burst forth, but the moment his lips brushed mine... time slowed down. The rest of the world drifted away as his tongue traced the corners of my mouth. My world became only my Master and me. His tongue snaked past my lips and filled my mouth.

He rumbled low in his throat as he slowly lowered himself onto me. My eyes went wide, rolling back in their sockets, feeling my cockhead being clasped by his fucking virgin-tight ring. Master bit my lips as he, in one single movement, impaled himself completely on my cock. The heat of Master wrapped around me, the feel of his heavy frame sitting on my cock, the cling of his ass—God, I coulda popped just from that!

Master began to moving on top of me, slowly raising his hips, hands on either side of my head. His lips, teeth and tongue tasting and devouring every inch of my mouth. Each time he would fill himself balls deep, I'd feel his body shudder and that sound would slip from his lips. Not a whimper, or a growl, or a moan. It was beautifully erotic. "You like this, baby? Your pretty little boy cock up Master's hole?" he said, sliding my cock halfway out of him.

"You're giving me your load, Beo? Gonna shoot your boy juice up Master's ass?"

I growled at Master. Gasping as he ground himself on my dick, lifting his hands behind his head and snapping his hips back and forth.

But fucking himself on my cock wasn't enough. "Fill Master up as you blow your hot load, boy." He took hold of my nipples, giving each one a roll and a pinch, making fuckin' stars spark before my eyes. I started huffing and puffing trying to hold back.

Pressing his forehead to mine and lifting himself off my dick just past my crown, Master scraped his teeth along my jaw, groaning, "God, you feel good, Babyboy."

He slammed himself down pulling a loud grunt from me. "So hard, so fucking thick." He took my lips again. "Want it so fucking bad, Babyboy," and with that Master started frantically fucking himself on my dick. Sweat clung to his forehead dripping down his temples and tracking its way along his jaw before falling to my chest. His cock slapping my stomach each time he slammed down on me.

"I love you so fucking much, Beo," he said wrapping his hands round my neck, pumping my cock with his ass and gazing into my eyes. My toes curled, "Master..." I rasped into his mouth, my balls drawing tight, "I..." my cock swelled, "love you!" and *Boom!* The stars burst in front of my eyes; my world spiraled into oblivion as I shot my first load in two weeks up Master's ass.

He rode my orgasm, milking my cock and stroking himself. He kissed me again and froze. I knew what was coming. I felt the warm spits erupting over my chest, hitting me on the chin and stringing in yarns over my stomach, I kissed him hard. God, I loved it when he came, panting hard, with me still inside him, my cum leaking out of his ass and dripping down my balls. He said in a hoarse voice, "Say it, boy. Just one more time. Please?"

"I love you, Master," I said, and he thrust his tongue into my mouth with more heat and passion than I had ever felt.

Pulling back from the kiss, aware that people were looking at us, he whispered, "One more question, Babyboy." I opened my eyes as he reached for something on his right, his eyes never leaving mine. Everything beyond Master was nothing more than a blur.

"Marry me, Babyboy."

I couldn't speak, and my eyes welled up. As my arms were still cuffed to the bench, all I could do was nod over and over again as I pressed my head to his neck and sobbed. As I felt the cold metal slipping over my ring finger, Master whispered to me, "Never gonna stop loving you. You're my entire world, Babyboy. Without you," he shuddered, "there's no point in taking another breath."

Epilogue

Beo was never mine; I am his. He's my precious gift, one I cherish with my heart and soul. Every opportunity I get, I will show him that.

Peeling myself from his embrace, I stare into his soft brown eyes. He smiles at me, grins and licks his lips. My husband, *my boy*. My world. Even if I had to go back, there's nothing I would change about how we fell in love.

I clasp his hand and pull it to my chest, placing it over my heart.

"You know I love you," I say, grinning.

"Yes, Master. You wanna know something?" He turns his head sideways and places his bottom lip between his teeth, ogling me with an amused eyebrow.

"What?" I raise mine.

"I love you too... maybe, a bit too much, old man!"

"Rascal!" I growl and snatch his wrists before he can get away. "None of that! You got your cum, boy. We've got to get ready, or your father will have a bitch-fit if we're late for his dinner party, and you know how possessive that man has gotten over his son."

"You mean sons?"

I growl again, watching him walk his hot little ass to the shower. Now, Beo's all muscle—God, I think his biceps might be bigger than mine one day—definitely of the more ripped and defined, healthy sexy kind. I practically need to walk around with a fucking bat to keep the fuckers away from my boy.

And that dimpled ass... Yeah, someone's so getting fucked in the shower.

For those of you wondering what happened to the others: Richard and James haven't spoken since Richard's trip to Portland. Martin, the stupid bastard, went and fell in love with a straight man—it's complicated. Luther and Jer? Fuck knows how those two make it work, but they're happy. And as for Finn? Last I heard he moved back to his hometown in New Orleans. Aria and I? We still have our weekly sessions, but my anger and issues are far more under control.

And for those of you caring enough to want to know what happened to Hades and that deal we had? I'm still not sure on the details, but the man

vanished. Went nomad, off the fucking radar. The thing is, when those kinds of men go missing, they usually don't want to be found. Whatever happened to cause that is not my story to tell. You will need to take that up with Hades himself. That is, if you can find him.

Now, excuse me, I have a boy to fuck and an ass I wanna fill up with my cream.

See you around, motherfuckers!

The End

Author's Note

All of us have been touched by cancer: either ourselves, someone we know, or someone we know who knows someone. It's part of our lives whether we accept it or not. It can rip people apart, but it can also bring families together. Cancer affects every person differently, but it also affects those around them differently. If you ever consider doing something nice wear a ribbon and wear it proudly, because you care. The official ribbon color for cancer is lavender. There are the subcategories, but cancer, no matter what form, is devastating.

Walking down the street, going out for a jog, or just running to get milk; you never know if the person you just passed might be suffering from cancer. They might be facing it alone or they might have an army of loved ones behind them, but when they see that ribbon they will know you care. A little light will shine in telling them there is still hope left in this world. There are still people who give a damn about others.

For the purpose of this story I chose Beo's father to be the one to donate bone marrow. Leukemia (AML), however is not easy to fight. The treatment is devastating and the majority of leukemia patients lose their battle. There is a program where you can get tested to see if you are eligible to be a donor. You never know, your bone marrow might just give someone that extra time to make things right and to spend those few extra moments with those they love.

Author Bio

Wulf Francu Godgluck

They come to me in the night, creeping into my head. Their voices are all different, their stories all dissimilar, but they keep saying the same thing...

“Show us, tell us, bring us into your world, and make us known.”

Then I sit and they take over. They tell their tales of love, loss and sinister misfortune. Not all of them get a happy ending, but they are pleased when their part is written.

I sometimes find myself lost in my own mind; a world very similar to our own yet so different. Things don't go bump in the night—they squeal and crawl under your skin, making you grind your teeth, and making your stomach turn over and putting your nerves on edge. Then there's the drama. Oh, the drama!

I write because I must! There is so much inside of me that needs to get out. So many stories to tell, characters that want to be heard, and hearts lost and won. Words and art are my way of bringing my world to others. I enjoy telling tales of the human condition but working in elements of the supernatural. Werewolves, Vampires, Zombies, Witches and the unexplainable all set against the human world or worlds of their own.

I was born and raised in Cape Town, South Africa. I grew up in a working class family and enjoy writing, cooking and spending my husband's money! Yeah I'm a cocky little brat too (and proud of it, spankings included)!

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