



INSATIABLE

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR
LOKI RENARD

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Insatiable

By

Loki Renard

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Published by Stormy Night Publications and Design, LLC.
www.StormyNightPublications.com

Renard, Loki
Insatiable

Cover Design by Korey Mae Johnson
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This book is intended for *adults only*. Spanking and other sexual activities represented in this book are fantasies only, intended for adults.

Chapter One

Briarlee

“Have you ever seen a guy so hot, you’d, like, do anything he said?”

The question is shouted over music that has way too much bass, some young guy in tight pants crooning his dubious attitudes to women and relationships over a pounding drum beat.

“Oh, my god,” Crystal laughs. “Have you seen Jackson Mower of *Game of Loans*? That reality real estate program? I’d let him do anything to me!”

She chortles into her drink and we all laugh along with her. This is a girls’ night, and if you can’t confess your crushes on unattainable male celebrities, what can you do?

“Jackson Mower? More like Jackson Mom-mower,” Stephanie pipes up. “He could lay me like turf!” We all groan at the dirty pun that doesn’t quite work. Typical Stephanie.

I’m not really feeling the conversation. It’s not that the guys we’re talking about aren’t hot, it’s that I have a snowball’s chance in hell of meeting a guy like that. We all want some five percent body fat raging muscular bull to come rut us into incoherence, but we’re more likely to get pawed by a tipsy investment banker in this bar here in the financial district. This is where people who used to go to seedy bars come to pretend they’re still twenty. At almost thirty, I can’t even remember twenty, except I’m pretty sure my jeans were smaller then.

“We should go to a strip club!” Maria suggests. One drink and she always wants to go to a strip club. We never go to one. It’s a constant source of disappointment for the poor girl. If she ever gets married, we’ll get her a stripper for the bachelorette party. That’s the deal.

“Let’s dance!”

The squeal is taken up around my little group of friends.

“You guys go. I’ll watch the bags.”

They think it’s a generous offer. It’s not. I’m not in the mood to dance.

“We can dance if we want to!” Crystal shouts.

“We can leave your friends behind...” Maria croons back.

“Because if they don’t dance, and if they won’t dance, then they’re no friends of mine!” they all chorus together.

Just knowing the lyrics to that song means we’re all too old for this. That doesn’t stop them from clattering onto the dance floor, all smiles and flailing limbs. Soon the music takes them, and I am left like a fawn inside a small protective barrier of handbags.

The atmosphere is thick with lust, the desperate rutting and grinding of would-be couples. Women cluster in little cliques just like mine, giggling and pretending not to look at the men who lurk around the edges of the room, the bolder and drunker ones making moves, some of which are accepted, many of which aren’t.

I’ve been nursing the same cocktail since I got here, a California Screwdriver. It’s decent. It tastes like overpriced orange juice with a slight kick. I’m not drunk. I’m barely even buzzed. Truthfully, I don’t even know why I came tonight.

No. That’s a lie. I know exactly why I came. Peer pressure, and the ache between my thighs. The need that can’t ever really be itched by toys and fingers. I’ve been driven out here by the same animal impulse that brought everyone else out here. I need to fuck. But not just anyone. It’s probably not fair of me to dismiss every guy I see within 0.2 seconds of laying eyes on him. Too soft. Too gangly. Wearing sneakers. Scruffy beard. I have as many reasons to reject a man as there are men in the club.

Until he walks in.

He's handsome. Very. Very handsome. His jaw is hard and square. His cheeks are two slabs of muscle framed by bone. His brow is strong and sits above dark eyes that peer out at the world with a predatory kind of stare. His hair is dark, a mane of shining thick black hair that falls back from a natural widow's peak. It has body I couldn't achieve with all the extensions in the world.

He's here for me.

Delusional. Narcissistic. Prophetic. Whatever you call it, the thought lodges in my mind. It's irrational, but I can feel the truth of it coursing through me, pumping with every beat of my heart. The world has just changed, undergone a shift in state, and I am caught in that change whether I like it or not.

He moves through the crowd as if it isn't there. He walks between tables, splits friends who are talking, ignores a small sea of gyrating femininity just to get to me. It's not very bright in the club, and the flashing lights make it more difficult to take him in as well as I'd like. This is the sort of man who needs to be inspected in daylight, just to make sure he really exists.

As he gets closer, I see that his clothing looks a little outdated. It doesn't matter. A man like him could be wearing a sack and still look hot. It's also a size too small. The shirt strains across his chest in a way that is indecently perfect.

The closer he gets, the more I see that he is beyond handsome. It's not just his appearance. It's his vibe. Pure confidence. Kids these days would call it swagger. Not that he'd be listening, because he doesn't seem to see or hear anything besides me. There are a hundred other scantily clad young women in this room. A lot of them are younger than me. Some of them are prettier. But his gaze doesn't so much as flicker toward them. It is locked on me, and it remains that way as he prowls across the floor.

I turn around and look behind myself just to make sure there's not some supermodel behind me. Nope. Just the wall. It is me he's looking at. Me he's made a beeline for.

I'm suddenly too nervous to know what to do with myself. All my poise evaporates as he comes around the table, reaches for my chin with one hand, grips it lightly with a touch that exudes confidence and control. There's no escaping him, or the gaze that blazes into my uncertain eyes.

"Come with me," he says in a husky male growl. "I'm going to fuck you."

Chapter Two

Twelve hours earlier...

Daniel

“You forgot this, Daniel.”

Briarlee holds the length of ornately carved oak out toward me, her slim fingers wrapped around my greatest source of shame.

I love her.

She’ll never know that. I’ll never tell her. Partially because of the way she looks at me. She pities me. As I take the cane, the illusion of easy equality we built up while sitting down dissipates. Her eyes soften at the corners, her mouth turns down. She’s the most beautiful woman in the world, but when she looks at me she starts melting with sadness.

She is stunning. She has golden blonde hair tinged naturally with red around her scalp. It tends to ringlets, even though she fights to keep it straight. Her eyes are blue. The kind of blue you see on a summer’s day, when the sky is utterly clear. She has an adorably rounded face, lips that never pout but are deliciously full, and her figure is perfectly curvy, though she tries to fight that too. She ordered the salad again today. And then ate all my fries.

I’ve known her a very long time. We dated briefly back in high school. Now we’re friends. Great friends. Best friends. Friends with a past that makes that sadness cloud her pretty gaze every time she is reminded of my condition.

Fifteen years rush back every time I see that expression. We were together in my car the night we crashed. She came out of the collision almost unscathed. Even drunk out of her skull, she was smart enough to wear her seatbelt, and stupid me was just a fraction too slow to turn all the way out of danger’s path as a drunk driver crossed the center line and turned my father’s car to a crumpled wreck.

It was a long way back from the edge of oblivion. A lot of surgery. A lot of pain. But I made it. Briarlee isn’t my girlfriend, but she’ll always be my friend—which might actually be worse than having lost touch with her altogether in some ways.

I get to see her once a week for lunch. I make noises about how my research is going. She listens with that sweet smile and then inevitably tells me about whatever asshole she’s dating at the moment. She always picks the bad boys. The ones who treat her like dirt.

I’d judge her more for that, if I hadn’t been in her house when she was a teenager, and if I didn’t know precisely why she craves male protection. If I was stronger, I’d protect her. But she thinks of me as the little brother she needs to look after. Because the only thing that bonds us more than experience is her guilt.

She says I saved her that night in the car. But I can’t save her from the string of assholes who see a delicate, beautiful thing and want to claim it, then destroy it.

Friend-zoned, they call it. But I’m not the sort of man who thinks of things that way. I’m lucky to have her in my life, and one of these days, I hope she meets someone who treats her the way she deserves to be treated.

“You want help to the car?”

It’s been years since I’ve needed help but she still sees me as that broken teenage boy struggling to recover from something I shouldn’t have survived.

“Thanks, Briar. I’m good.”

I smile because I appreciate her kindness, and try to hold back any expression that would

show the contempt I have for this cane—and for the weakness that forces me to use it.

“Okay, well, good luck with the review board!” She flashes me one of her dazzling smiles and waves. I watch her leave with the same smile I always have on my face when she is near. There’s just something about the way she moves, a gazelle-like sway. Whenever we have lunch, I make sure I’m here early and I make sure I leave last. I don’t want her to see my pained gait. It brings shame and guilt to us both, even after all this time.

In seconds she melts into the city crowd and the spell is broken. I’m back in the present moment, and I have work to do. A lot of it. Today is a very big day. It could be, should be, the day all my work pays off. For fifteen years, I have been searching for a way to fix myself. I will not stay broken. No matter what.

Every day since that accident, I’ve been working on fixing myself. They said I wouldn’t walk. I walked. First with a walker. Then with a cane. I still have the cane. But not for much longer.

That crash sent me on a path that I have never deviated from. Science track courses, undergrad at seventeen, and into a research position by twenty-two. It has taken eight years to develop my unique formula, Regenermax, which is already showing incredible promise. In the course of my work, I’ve seen rats with broken backs regain full use of their legs. I know what’s possible, and I’m excited to share it with the world. Up until now, there’s been only so much science can do for damaged and dead nerves. I’m about to advance the field a very long way.

Accident and injury are realities of life, but I refuse to accept their effects as permanent. I have the means and the intelligence to not only fix my own injuries, but help others recover from theirs as well.

“Stay strong.” It’s the ironic thing people love to say to you when you’re crippled. But I’m not strong. And what kills you doesn’t make you stronger. It leaves you limping through life.

I have been weak too long. Not for much longer.

I pay the bill for lunch, just like I always do, and I take my cane and I limp slowly out of the restaurant. The regulars don’t look at me, but there’s always someone new to cross paths with in the city, someone who can’t quite help but stare at the man with the cane.

My rideshare is waiting outside. I take it back to my lab. On the way I delve into my smartphone, am absorbed by the data, and get some relief from the unrequited desire that makes me so restless whenever Briarlee is near. That woman is a drug like no other. Repeated exposure leads to increased heart rate, vascular dilation, and occasionally, priapism.

* * *

“How are the boys today?” I ask my research assistant as I hobble into the lab.

“We had to separate Titus and Archimedes,” he says. “They got past the cage divider and were fighting again.”

“Bad boys,” I quip. We know our rats better than most researchers. Part of the longer term study on the ongoing effects of the treatment. Both Titus and Archimedes were runts with spinal defects. They would have been euthanized as pups in most labs, but we made sure they stuck around long enough to get the benefit of my work.

“Did you give them females?”

“Had to pull the females out. They were getting fucked to death.”

“Is that the scientific name for it?”

“Look at them.”

He shows me a cage with six female rats all passed out fast asleep. They have some

scarring around the back of the neck and ears, where overeager males have been trying to get a grip on them.

“Poor girls,” I sympathize.

“They’re all in pup,” he says. “Seems to be a significant effect on virility.”

I’m excited. This drug doesn’t just make the paralyzed walk. It transforms every facet of an organism’s functioning. It’s like a chemical rebuild, getting into every physiological pathway and enhancing it.

Titus and Archimedes are twice the size they used to be. Someone has put a ‘swole’ sticker on Titus’s cage. I’m guessing that’s some reference to his strength. We’ve had to reinforce both their enclosures because they kept getting out. Usually when rats do that, you lose them, but we found both of them in the female cages, banging their little brains out in between bouts of battle with each other.

We’re not supposed to keep them alone because rats are social creatures, but the treatment seems to have some negative effects on them in terms of behavior. They will fuck each other to death if they’re not separated. Something to work on down the track. Something that probably won’t be as much of an issue in human subjects, as humans tend to have a lot more in the way of impulse control than rats.

“Good luck, boss!” My assistant waves me off to the meeting I’ve been waiting to take for years.

It’s up on the ninth floor. Room 42 A. I hardly ever come up here. The laboratories are on the lower floors. Mine’s technically in the basement. The research we do down there props up the tower above, produces obscene profits for people who wear suits, not lab coats. I don’t care about that. I just want to hear that Regenermax is going to help people.

I knock on the door. A voice summons me in.

I’m expecting smiles and jubilation. I’m expecting a panel of excited directors, another round of funding, and a hefty promotion. Instead there’s one guy in the room. He shakes my hand and then his head.

“I’ll cut to the chase, Doctor,” he says, easing himself down into a chair, which creaks under his weight. “We’re not going to bring Regenermax to human trials.”

I swallow my anger and my confusion as this fucking pencil pusher steps on my dream. “May I ask why?”

“Your preliminary data on nerve regeneration is promising,” he says. “But the side effects are too many and too intense, and the LD50 is too low for human trials.”

LD50 is the dose where half the rats given the drug die. It’s determined in mgs per kg. Acetaminophen has an LD50 of 2402 mg per kg. That’s considered safe. But rats can survive a lot more of it than humans, so it’s not actually a great measuring tool, even though they insist on using it regardless. Caffeine is much more dangerous in rats. They can only tolerate 92 mg per kg before half of them die. The point is, LD50 is almost meaningless if you don’t take species into account.

“Rats are sensitive to Regenermax in a variety of ways,” I try to explain. “Humans have more complex pathways. We can start with very low doses to determine toxicity, but I am certain the LD50 will improve in humans.”

“It’s not just the lethality of the drug. It’s the other effects. The psychosocial effects. The report indicates seriously increased aggression and hyper-sexuality. These are not effects we can impose on human subjects.”

“So you’d rather have a guy never walk again than be horny?”

I'm losing my professional cool, but that's because this shitty little paper shuffler who never knew a day's hardship in his life is destroying the chance thousands upon thousands of people have to get their lives back.

He senses my agitation and pulls back into officious speech. "We're not positioned to accept Regenermax for human trials at this time. It's considered too unstable and too likely to cause problems."

"Rats are only human allegories to a certain extent," I explain, even though we both already understand what I'm saying. "Without a human trial, we'll never be able to fine tune the drug. This could make a difference to so many people. Serious, long-term injuries. Potential paralysis cures."

"You have a great deal invested in this, and we understand why..." He gives me one of those pitying looks I am so sick of receiving. "But this drug has not met the standards to be put forward for human trials. Another round of animal testing and perhaps we will consider it."

Another round. That's years of work. I don't have funding for years, and I'm not guaranteed to get it either. This company, Edison Enterprises, has taken me on, but my work is a long way down their list of priorities. They have four different products available for getting an erection past eighty, but this potentially life-changing treatment is barely of interest to them.

This news is crushing. Anger rises in me, but I push it back down. Can't be the cripple who cries in business meetings. That would be another level of pathetic.

I thank him for his time and I leave the office. My hope, my dignity are both utterly shredded. Bad news travels fast. By the time I get to the cafeteria to get a cup of coffee, which technically has a more dangerous LD50 than the drug I'm trying to get onto the market, people are already expressing their sympathy with back slaps and those muted half-smiles I have come to hate so much.

By the time I get back to my lab, the death has spread. The research techs who have been on this project can smell failure, so the laboratory is empty apart from me. They're off polishing their resumes. Soon I'll be getting requests for referrals. I'm betting there's already at least one of those emails waiting for me. I'm the only one who really cares about this treatment. Regenermax doesn't mean anything to these people. It means everything to me.

Alone in my lab, I pull the samples we had already started to synthesize for a small-scale human trial. According to the paperwork I received upstairs, they're to be destroyed. I have several dozen doses of what could be—should be—life-changing, lifesaving treatment. And I can't give them to anyone who needs them because bureaucrats worry more about grumpy rats than they do about saving human lives.

I pick up a vial. Hold it up to the light. It has a silver iridescence to it. It's beautiful. It represents a leap forward in medicine that the board can't understand. Everything is called revolutionary now. When I can't sleep at night because of my leg, I watch infomercials where orange peelers are described as revolutionary. The word has lost its meaning in the wider world. But this actually is a revolution. This is the real thing. The future. And there's no way I'm destroying it because a man who doesn't know a carbon bond from a couch tells me it's too risky.

My leg is throbbing. It's always worse after a day of walking around, and when I'm alone with nothing to distract from the pain.

I look at the vial again. And I start to think.

Scientists throughout history have tested their inventions on themselves. We wouldn't have a polio vaccine if Salk hadn't dosed himself and his family. Hoffman tested LSD on

himself. And I guess the Curies technically discovered the effects of radiation on themselves too, albeit far too late. So, will taking this make me a Salk or a Curie? There's no way to know.

What I do know, is that I'm in pain.

Pain that will never go away. Pain I'll never adjust to. Because it is the pain of death, creeping slowly through my body one little bit at a time.

Nobody is here to stop me from putting the vials into my bag. And nobody blames me when I head home early. Nobody ever thinks to suspect the man they pity. I'm too pathetic to worry about as I leave the lab with thousands of dollars' worth of illicit, unapproved, highly toxic drug.

Regenermax is stable at room temperature, so it won't need any special handling. I have enough to treat a single person for months. At this stage, I'm not necessarily intending on taking it myself. Right now, I just want it to survive. This is all I have worked for, and I know they'll destroy it if I leave it behind. That's not going to happen.

I retreat home, to the apartment that is too small and too dark to ever be nice. Small spaces save money. They're also easier to get around in when you're caught in the throbbing throes of your nerves sending panicked signals, the same way they have for many years, never really learning the nuances of this broken frame. My body rejects my injuries. It wants to be strong again.

I microwave dinner. I avoid my cell phone and the text messages I am sure will already be piling up. I don't want to be part of the world anymore. I want to escape from the events of the day, the bitterness of defeat not because I couldn't formulate a treatment, but because a bureaucrat wouldn't sign off on it.

I get angrier and angrier with every passing hour. This is bullshit. This doesn't make sense. I want to take my cane and beat the hell out of them for stopping the next phase of trials.

The vials are still in my bag. I start to wonder what's stopped me all this time. I could have started taking this weeks ago, but I was waiting for official trials. Official results. I was playing by the rules. I was trusting others to do the right thing. In the end, it was pointless. In the end, I have only myself to blame and myself to cure.

Earlier, in the laboratory, I wanted to drink one of the vials. But it was daytime then, too bright to entertain that behavior. Light suppresses illicit impulses. The dark of night is freeing.

Nobody will ever know that I took a dose. And if I can prove that the formulation works in humans, who have far more advanced capacity for emotional regulation than rats, then perhaps trials can be put back on the table.

Or at least, I'll be able to walk without pain.

I began this journey in the attempt to help many millions of people. In the end, I might only be able to help myself.

The decision is already made. It feels like it was made a very long time ago. Almost as if it was inevitable. Maybe some part of me knew how this would end even before I began. I feel a sense of fate sinking through me. Not the airy-fairy type of fate people swing crystals to, but the rock-solid connections of cause and effect that inextricably lead from one thing to another. The moment I started working on this medicine, I was going to end up taking it.

It's just a matter of following through.

I uncap a vial. Think about whether it would be better to mix it with something or do it straight, like a shot. I choose shot.

It hits the back of my throat. I swallow immediately. There's a metallic sensation around the back of my teeth that spreads unpleasantly across my tongue in the aftermath, but it's not too

bad.

I settle back down into my chair and I wait.

Five minutes in, it feels as though absolutely nothing has happened. The dose I took should have been more than enough, and in rats the effects seemed to be somewhat immediate even if they took a few hours to days to fully manifest.

I wait, watching the clock. Waiting to feel better. Waiting to feel worse. Waiting to feel... anything at all.

It turns out that there's something worse than having my life's work shot down by a paper pusher. It's finding out that it never worked at all.

Disappointed beyond compare, I hobble to bed and go to sleep.

Chapter Three

Briarlee

“Come with me,” he growls. His voice rolls through my body, makes me quiver. I feel almost as though I am under a spell. I wonder if I have been drugged, but I didn’t feel this way until he walked into the club and spoke those words to me, and my drink hasn’t left my hand since it was mixed by the bartender.

He is pure masculine. He is magnificent. I am aroused. More than that, I am awed. This is a fantasy I didn’t know I had. I’m not alien to the concept of a one-night stand. I’ve just never had one before. Is this how they happen? A handsome stranger decides to fuck you and you let him because you’ve never seen anybody so hot before, let alone been to bed with one?

It’s been a hard day. A hard week. A hard year. I lost my job three months ago, and I can’t seem to find another one. I’m single, and I have no kids. If things don’t turn around soon, I don’t know what I’m going to do. People keep telling me that things will get better. If I just hang in there, maybe I’ll magically become more employable. I’m lucky I still have friends with husbands and families willing to find sitters and drag me out to the bar to enjoy myself.

I’m ready to be swept off my feet. I’m old enough to know that no man can ever really rescue you, but looking into this guy’s eyes, I’m willing to suspend disbelief. He’s not offering to save me. He just wants to fuck me. But maybe, right now, that’s enough. Something about the way he makes this easy is almost enough to seduce me on its own.

No good girl fucks a guy she just met. No smart woman lets a man put his cock inside her without even knowing his name, because good girls and smart women understand things like consequences. I understand them too, but... fuck them.

He releases my chin, turns and walks away from me. It’s my choice to follow. I can sense that what’s about to happen is going to leave a mark on me forever. He made his intentions very clear up front. He’s going to fuck me.

I’m not the sort of girl who does things like this. But I want him to fuck me. I want to be wild. I want to forget everything. I want to abandon myself to stupid blind passion. And in spite of how powerful and dangerous he could potentially be, I feel safe.

I have no reason to feel safe. This is how girls get hurt, going off with strange men. It’s also how girls get what they want. What they need. And there’s something familiar about him. I almost feel as though I know him, though I am absolutely sure I’ve never met this guy before. I would know if I had. He’s utterly unforgettable in every way.

My eyes keep running over him as he leads me away from the rest of the crowd. His shoulders. His back. His arms. All so muscled beneath that tight shirt I could use him as an anatomy teaching tool. But I think it’s me who is going to be taught a lesson.

I would never usually do this. I would never have sex with a man I don’t even know. I would never. But I am.

He leads me to the back of the club, through a door marked *No Entry*. He pushes through it and I follow after him, knowing we’re doing something very, very wrong.

There’s another door at the back that also gives to his hand. It leads to a storeroom. Buckets and bottles of cleaning liquid and a couple of mops, a sink. None of it matters. His hands are on my body, large and powerful and moving over my ass with a hungry motion. I open my mouth to say something, but the words are cut off in his kiss.

His hand finds the back of my head, his long, thick fingers wrapping through my hair.

His lips press against mine and part them, making entrance for his tongue. He kisses thoroughly, hungrily. He kisses me as though he wants to devour me.

My curves are soft and generous. His body is thick and hard, the perfect foil for me. The ridge of his cock is tenting his pants and pressing against my belly. I am too short for him, but he takes care of that by hiking my ass up onto the sink behind me.

My legs part, thighs wrap around his powerful waist.

That kiss is broken, and those eyes glower down at me. I feel a spark of fear that immediately becomes arousal.

“You ready to be fucked, girl?” His hand runs up the back of my neck and settles around it in a firm grip. He’s holding me in place with that one hand, pushing the zip of his fly down with the other.

Yes, I’m ready to be fucked. I’m ready for him to take me. I’m ready to slip over the line from grown woman who knows better to lust-drunk girl who just needs a hot man inside her.

I feel the thick head of his cock. Bare. Hard. Running up and down the slit of my lower lips. I’m going to do this. I’m going to let him fuck me.

His eyes are locked on mine as he urges his hips forward. The head of his dick spreads my lips, making his way into the wet, vulnerable interior of my pussy. Oh, my god. The heat of his hard cock as it finds the soft, willing lips and pushes past them to get inside me makes my pussy cream all the more.

His kiss covers my mouth. His cock plunges deep inside my pussy. He has me. All of me. And he’s big. Bigger than I thought. Bigger than I’ve ever had. My cunt struggles to take him, but he makes it stretch for him. My clit is rubbing against his pubic bone as he pushes all the way to the depths of me, his tongue working against mine.

I moan as my body relaxes in soft surrender. My inner walls submit and allow him to make me the vessel he needs me to be. My pussy is his now, conforming to the shape of his cock. It has been a while since I had sex, but my body knows how to give to a man like this. It knows how to become wet and willing, how to grip as well as give way. He is making me feel more feminine and more desirable than I have in a very long time as he holds himself inside me and gazes into the depths of my soul without so much as saying a word.

Then he starts to fuck me. Properly. One hand goes to my hip. The other stays at the back of my neck. He plunges inside me, in and out, my lips gripping his dick with every single stroke.

I’m making feral fuck noises. I’m writhing against him. I’m bumping my hips up to meet his again and again as his hands leave the places where they gripped me to hold me still for his dick and start to roam, finding my breasts. He squeezes my nipples and I let out a squealing moan. He keeps my tits in his big hands, massaging them as he fucks my pussy long and hard. I lean back against the wall, twisting to avoid the taps, my legs spread lewdly wide. When I look down I can see his cock gliding in and out of me. I can see how wet I’ve made his dick. It gleams with my juices with every stroke in and out of my bare sex. Flesh on flesh. No protection.

This is madness, but it’s the hottest madness I’ve ever engaged in. His hands leave my breasts, find my ass. He picks me up off the sink and holds me up, sliding my pussy up and down his hard rod over and over again. I’ve never been held like this. He makes me feel small, delicate, feminine as my hard nipples rub the muscular plane of his chest.

There’s no romance here. There’s just lust. Two strangers satiating the same need, giving into the same dangerous urges. He pulls me hard against his body, and I feel that thick meat throbbing inside me.

Our eyes meet. I see nothing but desire in him. He’s not a man. He’s a demon. He wants

one thing from me, and he is taking that thing, leaving me weak with desire.

He pulls me up and off his dick, turns me around, dips to the floor to push me face down against the cool linoleum. His hand is on the side of my face, keeping it to the floor. His other hand yanks at my hips, keeps them high. And then he is inside me again. That hard cock spears into me, those hips spank my ass with slap after slap as he fucks me from behind with more ruthless energy than ever.

I moan and drool at both ends, my cries echoing around the small room. My pussy grips him ever tighter as his plunging, stretching, demanding cock makes thorough use of me. All thought is driven from my mind. Thoughts are useless to a woman who has become nothing more than a piece of willing fuck meat being taken by a stranger who commands her very core.

He reaches a hand around beneath me, finds my clit, and rubs it between two fingers. His touch is demanding. I am going to come. He wants me to. He is forcing me to.

I scream my climax out against the floor, his fingers dipping into my mouth to give me something to suckle on as I shake and grind my hips back against his cock. He comes inside me, his cock throbbing and pressing deep against the neck of my womb. The feeling triggers secondary climaxes, makes me writhe back against him, my body eager for his seed. This is wrong, and reckless, and dangerous, but I can't be compelled to care. I am trembling all over, feeling weak in the aftermath of the sudden sexual rampage, but filled with a certainty that what I just did was somehow right.

From beginning to end, our encounter has lasted maybe ten minutes. But it is ten minutes in which I have been branded, changed, taken in a way I have never allowed myself to be taken before. Not just because he's hot, but because when he looked into my eyes, I felt a sense of connection that I know to be rare in this world.

He came here for me. I don't know him, but I get the feeling he knows me. These thoughts are near mystical in nature, but that doesn't stop them from being true. Nor does it stop my pussy from being covered in and filled with a complete stranger's seed.

My lover releases his grip, his cock sliding out of my ravaged pussy.

"Wear my cum," he growls. "Keep it against your cunt tomorrow. Don't change until I see you again."

"I'm going to see you again?"

"I'll find you."

"But you don't know..."

"I'll find you," he repeats flatly. And he leaves. He leaves me there, smeared in his cum, dripping with his seed. He leaves me with my legs spread, my panties down. He leaves me like the dirty well used woman I am.

I pick myself up, pull my skirt down, and go back to my friends.

Chapter Four

Daniel

I am stronger.

I am better.

These aren't thoughts. These are truths. There's no pain in my leg, because there's no pain anywhere. I spring out of bed in one easy motion, feeling an easy athleticism that I haven't felt in my body since the morning of that accident.

It's like I'm fifteen again, but with the power of a thirty-year-old. I extend my arms and see muscularity that wasn't there yesterday.

My cock is hard as hell. Morning wood like never before. I'm horny, and alone. I find myself prowling my apartment, just looking for something to fuck. I almost don't notice how easily I'm walking. All I ever wanted was to be able to move like a man. Now I can, I don't care. I just want to have sex.

There's nobody to take, of course. What was I thinking? That the treatment would not only repair my damaged tissue but also manifest a willing woman lying spread-eagle pussy up on my couch? In the end, I find myself with my cock in my hand, pumping the cum out with rough strokes. There's a magazine on the table with a woman smiling at me on the cover.

The thoughts that cloud my brain are hot and brutal. I don't see the woman on the cover. It's *her* face that swims before my eyes. Briarlee. I used to feel guilty masturbating and thinking about her, but now all I feel is a deep primal desire to own her.

I come all over the magazine, shoot thick loads over the smiling woman until her face and tits are obscured. It's a quick, dirty act, but it clears my mind enough for me to realize that the way I'm feeling is probably due to the treatment.

Which works.

It fucking works! I can't wait to find that asshole who turned my trial down yesterday, prove that I know what I'm doing. Can't do it today though. They'll call me irresponsible. They'll cut what remains of my funding. Report me. Etc. I'm going to have to keep pretending to be injured until I have enough data to prove that this works long term.

My phone buzzes. I pick it up and see it's another text from Briarlee. She wants to have lunch again. Well, okay. I'll have to keep playing the cripple, but I can't wait to see her.

* * *

Same place. Same time as usual.

She's actually there before me. I have to make a show of limping along. I've already almost forgotten how. The moment I see her, lust rises in me. I used to be able to push it away and contain it. Now it's so much more urgent, so much more demanding. I sit down before my erection tents my pants to an unforgivable degree.

Briarlee looks good. Her hair is loose and she's wearing a summer dress that floats about her hips.

"There's something different about you today," she says as I sit down.

I could say the same about her. There's something very different about her. An aura of satisfaction. Her eyes have a look about them like a cat that has just woken up from a nice nap in a sunbeam.

“Nothing different.”

I don't like lying to her. I'd love to show her what's happened to me. I'm on the verge of doing so when she opens her mouth again.

“I got laid last night.”

My heart sinks like a stone. What? She went out and fucked someone? She'd usually be more discreet about the way she described it, and I'd usually push down my feelings before I could feel the anger that rises at the idea of any man besides me having his way with her.

I'm not broken anymore.

“Hm?” That's all the noise I can make, a stifled grunt.

“I met a guy last night.” She lowers her voice and gives me a conspiratorial look. “I slept with him, Daniel. In the club.”

I try to keep my features composed, even though I'm utterly burning with jealousy. She fucked some guy in the club? That's not her usual style. It's usually weeks of angst and anticipation over a new guy before she goes to bed with him and inevitably finds it disappointing.

It doesn't occur to her that telling me this might hurt my feelings, and that's on me. I swallow them down. I agreed to be her friend, and this is what friends do. They listen. As their friend tells them how they banged some total stranger... fuck.

“You're judging me,” she says, shrinking down in her chair.

“I'm not judging you. I'm just worried about you.”

I am judging her. I am judging her a nubile, fertile, perfectly feminine creature in my domain. One I want to conquer and claim for my own. The thought of another man even looking at her, let alone touching her makes me feel a dangerous rage. I work to keep it contained. This is how the rats felt, probably, but I am not a rat, and I don't have to give into the anger.

I clear my throat. “Briarlee.”

“Yeah?” She's in a daydream about that guy.

“Do you want to get dinner sometime?”

“Oh, sure,” she says casually. She doesn't understand what I'm asking. Not a meal like these safe daytime lunches. I mean dinner. A date dinner.

“I mean, do you want to go out with me?”

The look on her face is a horror show.

* * *

Briarlee

Oh, god. I wish he hadn't asked me that. I mean, he knows I'm not interested in him that way. And I just told him I was with another guy last night. So the timing isn't good. I really don't want to hurt his feelings. But I also don't want to lead him on. Some of my friends say I shouldn't even go to lunch with him anymore. They accuse me of leading him on. But he is my oldest friend in the world, even if he has an unrequited crush.

“Daniel, you know I...”

“Don't worry,” he says, his jaw tightening. “I shouldn't have asked. I'm glad you had a... nice time last night. I have to get into the lab. There's a lot of work going on today. Have a good one.”

He stands up.

“Daniel...”

“I’ll see you around.” He gives me a stiff smile that doesn’t reach his nose, let alone his eyes.

“Dan...”

He’s already gone. I didn’t realize he could move that fast. He doesn’t even really seem to need the cane today. The limp isn’t as bad as it used to be. Maybe he’s getting better? How did I not notice that before? Maybe because whenever we’re in the same room, I’m thinking about myself, not him.

I hope he finds someone who loves him the way I know he loves me.

More guilt creeps in. I’ve known he loves me for fifteen years. And we’ve never kissed, let alone slept together. He was a gentleman even as a teenager. And now... I push the guilt away. I don’t owe him sex just because he’s a friend. I even get a little angry. He made it weird. He knew it would be weird. And now I feel weird for telling him what I did last night.

Dammit.

I wish I had the guy I slept with’s number. I wish I knew his name. But all I have is his cum still soaking my panties because I didn’t change them, just like he told me not to.

* * *

Daniel

I am shaking with anger that I know I am not entitled to. She’s a grown woman and she’s allowed to have a one-night stand if she wants to. She’s also allowed to turn me down for a date. It was stupid to ask. After all this time, if she wanted me, I’d know.

It’s time for another dose. It’s best to concentrate on work. Test the effects of the drug. The first dose was very promising. Even Briarlee noticed the difference before she shot me down... dammit. I try to get her out of my head, but it’s harder than ever. Her rejection feels more unfair than ever, though I know it isn’t.

I got home, take another shot of the formula, and lie down. Drowsiness immediately after the first dose was a symptom in some of the rats, and it seems to be a symptom for me too. I’ll have to remember to make a note about that. Maybe try adding a stimulant to the mix to ward off the soporific effects. For now, I’m happy to sleep and forget about Briarlee and the lucky guy who got to have her.

Chapter Five

Briarlee

He said he'd find me.

And he did.

I'm not sitting at home waiting for his call, because he never took my number. I'm sitting at home waiting for... what, for him to come to the door? That seems so stupid.

Until a heavy knock makes it not stupid.

I know it's him even before I open the door. I can sense him. Almost smell him, though it's not really a scent thing. It's an animal knowing that her mate is near.

I open the door. It is him. He fills the entire doorway. He's taller than it is. He'll have to stoop when he comes through. And he'll have to twist sideways slightly to allow his shoulders to pass through. This is a beast of a man. He makes me small.

"Hello," I smile, instantly nervous. He looks at me with those smoldering eyes and I'm really not sure of myself anymore. He changes the rules of living. He makes me want things no sensible woman wants.

He wraps his arms around me and hauls me close, pushes his handsome face into the crook of my neck and inhales deeply.

"Mine," he growls under his breath. "Only mine."

He starts stripping me without a word. The clothes are in his way and they have to be gone. I offer no resistance. Everything he wants to take from me, I want to give. He handles me like a doll, lifting me easily up in the air so my head is near the ceiling, my legs wrapping around his neck as he buries his mouth in my cunt, tasting my desire and his seed from the night before.

I cry out, held securely in those great big hands that palm my ass and hips. He laps along my slit, pushes his tongue inside me, makes me take every bit of it before pulling it out. I am being tongue fucked up against the ceiling of my little apartment and it is perfect.

Before I can come, he starts lowering me down. He draws his nose up from my pussy over my stomach, his lips tasting me every inch of the way.

"Mine," he repeats.

My mind is whirling. My body is crying out for him. This is possession as I have never known it. This is a desire that has us both captive. He needs me and I need him.

Again he puts me into the position he wants me in. Face down, over the back of the couch. I feel more like a toy than a woman as he parts my thighs and pushes his cock between them, up deep inside me. He starts to fuck me with hard, powerful strokes that jolt me against the couch over and over again. My hands are in his hair, pulling at him as he slams inside me. I want this. Oh, god, I fucking want this.

He fucks me like he's been starving for me. He consumes my body, devours it in rough strokes, gripping my hips with his powerful hands, holding me in place for the taking.

This is what I've been waiting for. This is like the ravaging I was given last night, but even more intense for being the second round. My body wore his marks and ached in the aftermath of his lust. Now it is being stretched again, pounded again.

He comes, fills me up while I writhe and moan. Again it is quick. His hunger for me doesn't allow soft, languid lovemaking. It requires swift, rough satiation. My orgasm matches his. My pussy produces its own liquid desire that mingles with his cum as he pulls free and lets our juices run down my inner thighs.

“You’re a mess,” he rumbles. “We should take a shower.”

He takes me by the hand and leads me to the bathroom. This is a single bedroom place, so it’s not hard to find. I follow him in a well fucked trance, doing as he says, just because it feels somehow right.

I have gone through so much of my life feeling wrong. I have let myself believe that I’m not worthy of goodness. I have let men treat me badly, and maybe this one is treating me badly too... but if this is bad, why does it make me feel so happy?

He drives the thoughts from my head with another searing kiss, delivered now under the hot pelting drum of water on high pressure.

I don’t know who he is.

I don’t know if he’s married.

It didn’t even occur to me until this moment to wonder that. He doesn’t seem like the marrying kind. He barely seems like the marrying species. There’s something about him closer to animal than man.

The water flows over his body and mine. Our hands move over one another with more gentleness now. Every time I try to speak, he cuts me off with a kiss, and finally, when I keep trying to make words happen, he gently, but firmly pushes me down to my knees.

I find myself crouched at the base of the shower, my mouth stretched by his thick cock as he pulls my head gently back and forth along the rampant shaft.

He massages shampoo through my hair as I suck him. There is no end to his desire. Usually a man loses interest after he comes. But this one seems to only be slightly calmed by orgasm.

Warm water flows over my back as he leans against the shower wall and urges me back and forth over the shaft of his dick. This is the hottest scalp massage I’ve ever been given. Those same hands that held me down to take the rough thrusts of his cock now rub me with a tenderness that touches me in my core.

He makes soft growling sounds of pleasure, then pulls the showerhead from the holder and runs the water over my hair, cupping his hand at the front of my scalp so the soap doesn’t run into my eyes. My mouth stays on his cock as he tends to me, rinsing every bit of shampoo away from my hair before replacing it with conditioner.

I want to talk to him. I want to know who he is. Why he chose me.

But he doesn’t speak, and he makes sure to keep my mouth busy so I cannot.

There is more than plain lust in his gaze. There is a kindness. A caring. I couldn’t see it before because it was masked with the pure intensity of his desire, but now that has abated I can see more of him.

And he starts to feel more familiar. I almost think I recognize him, but it’s not possible. The man he reminds me of does not look like him. Does not act like him. Isn’t him.

I try to mumble around his cock. He shakes his head and rubs my scalp a little harder, scratching in a way that sends pleasant little chills down my back. It feels so good to be here with him, to let him take me, to have him use me.

“Who are you?”

My jaw aches as I speak, but I have to. I have to know who he is. I want him to stay with me.

“You know who I am,” he rumbles.

“We only met last night. How could I know you?”

“You knew me the moment we met. Just like I knew you,” he growls softly.

These answers are evasions.

“I mean, who are you? Where did you grow up? What do your parents do?”

He gives me a hard look, as if I’ve offended him. “I have to leave.”

“No!” I reach out to grab him, but I can’t stop him from leaving any more than I can stop him coming. “Please, don’t go!”

“I have to go,” he says. “I will come back and see you.”

“When?”

“I don’t know.”

I frown. I don’t understand him. “So you’re just going to come here and fuck me? And leave? And that’s it?”

“Didn’t you like it?”

I did like it. I fucking loved every single moment of it. And I’m going to miss him when he’s gone. I don’t want him to leave. I don’t want to be left with just the happy little aches and throbs to remind me of our time together.

“Do you want me to not come back?”

He asks another question that makes me reveal the depths of my own depravity. Yes, I want him to come back. Even if he only comes back to pin me down and fuck me, I want him back.

He takes my chin in his big hand. “Tell me.”

“I want you…” I stammer into his face. “I want you to come back.”

“Then I will,” he says. “Wait for me.”

He presses one of those burning kisses to my lips, turns and leaves.

I am satisfied. I am sleepy. I curl up on the same couch he fucked me on and I let myself slip into a light doze. This is the craziest thing I have ever done, and I feel better about it than I do about almost anything I’ve ever done.

* * *

Daniel

I wake up to darkness and chaos. The alarm clock by my bed says it’s two a.m. The moment I turn the light on, I see that my apartment has been utterly ripped apart. My coffee table has been smashed into shards. Cups and plates have been hurled against walls. My books are strewn about all over the place, pages ripped out as if they somehow offended someone.

“What the hell!” My exclamation of surprise feels utterly underwhelming. I keep my place tidy. Right now it’s a disaster zone. And something warm is dripping on my foot. Something red and…

I look down at my hand. I must have cut it when I got up from my bed, which is also dusted with broken glass and ceramic. There’s a fairly nasty gash running right across the center of my palm. It’s going to need suturing. I put shoes on so I don’t cut myself on the broken glass on the floor and shuffle around to try to work out what is happening. Is someone still here? It feels empty.

The front door is still shut. When I test it, it’s also locked. Weird. I must have been out completely cold with that drug. That’s definitely going to be a problem later on, if users pass out so completely that all hell can break loose around them without them being able to respond to the danger.

This day has been the best and shittiest day of my life. I’m no longer crippled, but the

love of my life still doesn't want me, and someone has it in for me. I can't imagine who. I'm not the sort of man who makes enemies. I'm inoffensive. I'm quiet. I'm kind. This... this isn't fair and it doesn't make sense.

I notice that I'm clenching my hand, squeezing the blood between my knuckles. I have a lot of cleaning up to do.

I do my best to clear a path through the destruction, get cleaned up myself, and go and report the problem to the superintendent. He's a good guy. He wants to call the cops when he sees the state I'm in, but something tells me I shouldn't do that. Not yet.

"The cameras must have the guy," I say. "Can we check them?"

He agrees to pull up the footage. What we see is not what I want to see. It's so weird that I'm not sure I understand what I'm looking at.

Someone left my apartment hours ago. I don't recognize him, but I do notice that his clothing looks familiar. He's wearing my favorite shirt. I tend to dress on the loose side, but it's tight on him. He also has my shoes and my... oh, shit.

"Okay," I sigh. "That's my jerk cousin. Sorry to bother you."

"No problem, man," the super says. "Take it easy."

I go back to my apartment and start cleaning up. I wasn't asleep. It occurs to me that I might not actually have slept at all since I took the first dose of Regenermax.

The hairs on the back of my neck start to rise as a potential possibility lays itself out in my mind. What if it isn't that the drug knocks the user out completely? What if the drug acts as a powerful dissociative? It's almost impossible to tell effects like that with rats. They can't tell you when they've forgotten who they are. A rat is a rat whether he knows it or not. And so is a man, but...

I have to go to the bathroom.

When I touch my penis, I notice something. It's sticky. I lift my hand to my nose. What the hell. My cock smells like sex. And not the smell of cum spilled in self-satisfaction. There's female scent on it too. Pussy.

I've been fucking someone.

I finish up, wash my hands, and go back to cleaning. My mind is whirring with possibilities. If I've been going out and having sex with people, if I've been changing enough in my physical form to be almost unrecognizable... then I could have been doing almost anything.

It's frightening and exciting. Exciting to know that the Regenermax works. Frightening because I have no memory. As I clean, I formulate a plan. I'll take another dose, and I'll mix it with enough Adderall to make sure I can't possibly fall asleep. Hopefully that will stop the dissociative fugue I seem to have slipped into the last two times.

With the kitchen clean enough to prepare my materials, I powder a tablet and add it to the vial. This is an experiment at the very fringes of science. I hope this plan to keep my conscious mind in control works, otherwise I've given the beast who takes over when I dose myself even more energy to wreak havoc with.

I tip my head back, toss the Regenermax down my throat. The dose rushes through my blood. It's pure strength. Feels like it's being yanked straight from the core of the earth and mainlined through my veins.

Everything is so clear.

It is as if a veil lifts in my mind. I remember things in a way that is almost as if I never forgot them at all. I have known all this from the beginning. It's just, without the dose coursing through my veins, my pathetic day-to-day mind was too frightened to acknowledge them. My

miserable former self couldn't bring himself to enjoy the memory of what I can now do—and that is fuck Briarlee. Fuck her long. Fuck her hard. Fuck her the way I always wanted to fuck her, but would never have admitted. If this monster memory is correct, she loves every moment of it. She has creamed my cock just as much as I have filled her pussy. And just as I didn't recognize myself, she doesn't recognize me either. I know her, but she doesn't know me at all. Because she thinks of Daniel as the pathetic boy who has to be content with being her friend. Not the man who fucks her like the primal simple slut she likes to be.

I go look at myself in the mirror. I am me, but I am a version of me I could never have attained on my own. Greater muscular mass. What seems to be more bone density. Am I laying this down every time, only to absorb it? Or will I eventually keep these gains and become this hulking creature all the time? These are all questions only time can answer, and right now, my mind is not on the science. It's on the sex.

I'm going to see Briarlee.

Her place is about a half hour walk from mine. I head out onto the streets, stride through crowds of people with more confidence than I ever did before. The world is different from the vantage of a brute.

Women in little skirts smile and giggle as I go past. Not in the pitying way they used to. There's whore light in their eyes. They want me. I feel attraction, not as some kind of weak chemical signal, but as a force. I could take them. I could fuck them. They would bend over and let me have their stinking wet pussies. But I don't want them. There's only one woman I want. Only one woman I have ever wanted.

I find myself at her house. I'm not entirely sure how I got there. The amphetamines are keeping me more fully conscious of my actions than I was before, but they're not perfect. I'm blinking in and out of awareness.

The door opens. She smiles at me.

The next thing I know, I'm inside. We're in her kitchen. I've sat at the breakfast bar and watched her make bad instant coffee a hundred times before. This time there's no coffee. She's naked from the waist down. Shreds of silk hang around her thighs. I am plunging inside her pussy, my cock so hard it feels like a bar of titanium.

I have dreamed of what it would be like to make love to her a thousand times. Slow. Gentle. Reverent.

This is nothing like that.

My cock is sluicing in and out of her pussy in rapid strokes that make her shriek with what might be pleasure, might be pain. I don't care. I just want her. Her hair is falling into the sink, getting wet in the remnants of soapy dishwater. My hands are on her tits, those big, soft, milky globes rolling in my palms as she wriggles beneath me.

She is a mess. And this is a travesty. But I can't help myself. I have to have her. It's not a want. It's not a desire. It's a vicious command, pounding through my veins.

"You want this?" I growl the words because I'm not sure. My voice doesn't sound like the voice I'm used to hearing come out of my mouth. It's much deeper, much rougher. Much more masculine. I like it. I used to always speak with such pathetic submission. Now every word is an assertion of brute maleness.

"Oh, fuck, yesss!" She screams the words.

I grab her hair, pull back out of her, and make her work her greedy pussy back on me.

She wanted this. She consented. I am assuming she consents every time. Even though I must leave her sore and sloppy, alone and wondering who I am.

She must know.

How does she not know?

She doesn't know.

I'm going to come. From the way her pussy feels, she's come several times already. She's soft and she's creamy and her inner walls grip and milk me, demanding my cum. I don't even try to fight it, even though the sensible, civilized part of me knows that there is no condom between us. There's nothing to stop my cum sparking life inside her unprotected womb. That makes it hotter still as I slam my hips forward and give her everything I have. It feels like a geyser of cum erupting from my balls, filling her up. I want every bit of it to get inside her. I want to fill her. I want her fuck hole to be deluged in my semen.

These thoughts are new, but I like them. They're vital and primal and raw. This is how a man fucks a woman. This is how a woman should be fucked by a man. It's rough, but perfect.

Climax brings relief from the pressure that has been building inside me since I took the dose. It's like having the cork removed from a bottle, a genie freed. I have my mind back. I have my soul back.

She's still bent over in front of me, her pussy soaking in my seed. Goddamn, she's beautiful. Even from behind. I feel a rush of affection that makes me scoop her up and hold her so damn tight.

She turns in my arms, cuddles into my chest, her head nuzzled beneath my chin.

"You're going to go again, aren't you."

I look down at her. She's beautiful. More beautiful than she's ever been.

Her curves are flushed. Her pussy is coated with my cum. It's dripping out of her.

Before the treatment, I would have cared about that. I don't now. She's made for my cum. It slicks her pussy perfectly, thick white cum coating her lips and the curling fur of her sex.

I am going to leave. Not because I want to, but because even in this animalistic form I know that I can't stay with her and keep the truth from her. I need to get away and think, because I can't think with her lying there like that. She is exhausted from sex and I already want to push my cock back inside her, find another hole, force another orgasm from her body. Her flesh wraps around mine so sweetly and so perfectly I can barely keep from making her mine all over again.

I pull her into an embrace. I hold her. Breathe her scent, mingled with mine.

"You're different this time," she mumbles against my chest.

"What?"

"You never hugged me before. And you never talk unless you have to."

I wish I could remember what I did in those fucking fugue states of primal desire. Apparently I fucked her and left her. And in doing so, I made her mine in a way I never did in over a decade of being her close confidante.

I don't blame her for that. Why should she desire who I was? I was weak. I begged and groveled for her attention. I gave her everything she wanted and never asked for anything in return. I was pathetic, and she could never have loved me that way. I didn't love myself that way. I put all my effort and all my time into becoming what I am now: something she could love.

I clasp her face in my hands, press a deep kiss to her nose, and her cheeks, and her lips.

* * *

Briarlee

There's something in his eyes. Like he's really here for the first time, or like he's letting

me see him for the first time. I feel the familiarity rush back, still with no real recognition. Who is he? Why do I know him and yet not know him at all?

“At least tell me your name.”

He hesitates and retreats back inside himself. It’s like whoever he really is slips beneath the waves and leaves me with this arrogant hyper-masculine monster who wants me for my body and nothing else.

“You don’t need to know my name. You just need to know to be here when I want to spread your legs.”

He’s so fucking arrogant. It’s like he’s never even heard of the concept of a relationship. Doesn’t he want to know me better? Doesn’t he want me to know him? The men I know can hardly ever shut up about themselves. Dates are usually monologues. This guy only talks when he’s telling me how he wants me.

His refusal upsets me though. I just want his name. Not his social security number. His dick has been inside me. He owes me a name.

“You’re just going to come and fuck me and not even tell me who you are? Your cum is inside me. I could be pregnant.”

“You want me to fuck you,” he rumbles. “You’d let me fuck you again now. You’ll fuck me tomorrow, and the day after that and you won’t ever care who I am, because that doesn’t matter. Your cunt knows who I am.”

He pushes his hand between my thighs. Squeezes my pussy possessively, and just looks at me with that smirking smile.

He’s an arrogant motherfucker. And he’s right.

“Get the fuck out of here.”

“What?”

“Get the fuck out of here,” I say again, upset because he’s made me feel outright slutty. “Don’t come back.”

I don’t mean a single one of the words leaving my mouth. I just want to assert a little power. Make him apologize. Men always apologize when you make them feel bad. I’m used to being in control. I’m used to making a guy work to be close to me. My pussy doesn’t come easy. Not usually.

“Turn over. Spread your ass cheeks. I’m going to fuck your other hole.”

I feel the heat hit my face. A blush like no other.

Am I going to do what he tells me to do?

He doesn’t seem to have any doubt. He gives the order as if it’s going to be followed. When I don’t obey him right away, he leans in, grabs me by the hair at the back of my head, and growls the orders again.

“Turn over, say you’re sorry, and give me that little ass.”

Chemistry burns through my body. In his hands, I am nothing but flesh to fuck.

He presses a kiss to my lips, consumes the rest of my sense with his mouth. I am gone. Consciousness flies in the face of this forceful desire. I find myself turning, presenting my ass to him, my hands making his prize accessible with the lewd spreading of my cheeks.

His cock presses against that dark little hole. I’ve never let a man fuck me there before, now I am saying the words he said as if I am his little fuck puppet. “Please... I’m sorry. Please, fuck my ass.”

He grunts and does as I ask. There are ways to do anal sex. Slowly. With lots of lube. Fingers first. All I get is the slick mess of our mixed cum to ease his passage inside the last

bastion of my rebellion.

“Bad girl,” he grows as he slowly spears inside me. My sphincter is no match for him, and I try to relax it, let him in. I am a bad girl. He doesn’t know me, so he can’t really know just how bad I am, but I deserve to be treated like this. And worse. I am not just bad. Sometimes I think I might be evil. I have taken so much more than I’ve ever given. Does he sense that instinctively? Or have I made myself prey for this predator because deep down, I need for it to hurt?

A thick cock in my ass makes it hard to conduct a therapy session in my head. He’s still not all the way in. The head of his massive dick is still pressing past that tight ring of muscle. I want to let him in, but I’ve never really let any man in. Not into my heart, or my ass.

I feel him clasp me in place. There is no escaping this, and I wouldn’t if I could. He does the things to me I know I need. He gives me what I deserve. He isn’t nice to me. He isn’t sweet. He doesn’t tell me he fell in love with me the moment he saw me, or that I’m the most beautiful woman in the world. He doesn’t romance me with the easy lies so many men tell. He fucks me because he wants to fuck me. He punishes me because I break the rules that are unspoken but entirely understood by the both of us. When it comes to him, I obey. Because I want him inside me. Because I have always needed this, sought it out in so many different ways. I have fucked so many men who never cared about me at all.

There’s something about him that tells me he does. The others would never have given me a sexual consequence. They would have called me a bitch, or just stopped calling. This man makes me take what I need.

My anus burns as it stretches around him, as he pushes forward and takes me deeper than I think I can take him.

“Don’t move your hands,” he says. “Pull your cheeks open more. Show me your asshole. Beg me to fuck it.”

“You’re already inside me!”

“Beg me,” he rumbles. “Tell me you’re a naughty little girl who needs her asshole fucked and you’re sorry for being so rude.”

When I don’t answer right away, he pulls out and pushes back in, a short, punishing stroke that makes me squeal. My pussy is clenching with desire, even though this treatment is utterly humiliating.

“I’m sorry!”

“For what?” Another stroke in and out of my stretched asshole.

“I’m sorry for... owwwwie...”

“Tell me, girl.”

“I’m sorry I was rude!”

“You were rude, weren’t you. Telling me to leave.”

“Yesss!”

His cock pops past the ring of my ass, slides in what feels like a mile. I screech my agreement with his punishment and take every bit of it, my hands spreading my cheeks wide. Goddamn, he has broken me to his will. I still don’t know his name. I don’t know anything about him apart from the fact that he owns me.

He ravages my ass with deeper strokes, pushing me over the couch with thrust after thrust. I scream. I wail. I kick my toes against the floor, drumming my feet as he ravages my tight little hole.

The monster of a man I have taken as my lover sinks his cock deep inside me, leans over

my body, and presses his lips to the back of my head in a brutal-sweet kiss. “Bad girl,” he murmurs against my hair.

Something in those two little words triggers my orgasm. I am a bad girl. He doesn't know how bad I am, but I do, and suddenly that hot, thick cock inside my ass just feels right. My pussy is creaming as I start to shudder with climax, my clit grinding the back of the couch while he holds himself steady, letting me buck and impale my ass on him with the throes of orgasm until finally I am sated, panting and sweating, slumped over the back of the couch with his cock still thick and hard inside me.

Then he starts to fuck me again.

I let out a soft moan as he pumps inside me, grinding his hips in and out of my now well stretched, well trained ass. This is what I am for. I am his to fuck. His to use. My orgasm is irrelevant in the grand scheme. He let me come, and that was a mercy. Now he will fuck me until he fills my insides with his seed, and I will have it dripping out of my used hole for hours after he is gone.

Chapter Six

Daniel

I go home stinking of sex and guilt. I've been taking what I've always wanted. She's been giving it to me so fucking willingly. But do I get to keep taking it when she doesn't know whose mind rests in this massive masculine frame?

I could fuck her for the rest of our lives and she'd never know. But if I want a future with her, I have to tell her.

Or do I?

Does she truly not know? I always thought it was unbelievable that Lois never recognized Clark Kent when he became Superman. A leotard and some glasses don't change a man that much. I have been transformed far more thoroughly.

When I look at myself in the mirror, my jaw is broader and more powerful, so is my brow. My eyes are no longer wide and large looking. They are proportionate to the masculine muscle of my face. The bones themselves are changing structure every time I take a dose.

We saw that in the rat tests. Neutered males started taking on the characteristics of entire males. I have been neutered up until this point. I have been a pathetic waste of a man, good only for complaining to.

My bearing has changed. My scent has changed. There is more musk to it. I have become a prouder, stronger, more dominant specimen. My treatment doesn't just work. It works beyond my wildest dreams. It hasn't merely healed the physical wounds I sustained all those years ago when I stood at the precipice of manhood and laid my body down for Briarlee. It has mended the psychic scars that were inflicted at the same time.

She'd been out fucking that night. I'd smelled it on her then, along with the alcohol. She reeked of cum. One of the football team had been ramming her. Possibly more than one. She was starting to get a reputation, though I didn't believe it until that night, when I picked her up with her smeared lipstick and her skirt barely covering her ass.

It wasn't her fault. She was just a girl. Boys and men alike take advantage of the innocent. She's not innocent anymore. I've made sure of that. I've made her take my cock over and over. I've made her admit her sins. But I'm not done revealing little Briarlee to herself. I will have her again. And again. And again. And she will know who she is with, not because I'm afraid she'll stop, but because I want her to know beyond a shadow of a doubt whose cock makes her come like the world is ending.

Chapter Seven

Briarlee

He's back. My heart skips a beat as I go to the door. I am showered and dressed up as if I intend to go out, but I have no intention of going anywhere. This dress that clings to my curves isn't for anyone's eyes but his.

He's wearing new clothes. A black leather jacket that makes him look broader than ever. Dark slacks. Heavy black boots. It's the uniform of a man whose purpose is to slay my pussy.

This is how I think now, in filthy phrases. I wake up wet. I touch myself when he is not here, and I think of all the things he has done to me, and all the things I hope he will do. He has made me every bit as depraved as him, if not more.

"Hi," I smile invitingly.

He walks in as if he owns the place. "Close the door."

I close it, because I was going to anyway. Can't have a neighbor coming by and seeing me in the state he puts me in. They'd call the cops for sure.

He walks in, turns around, and fixes me with that gaze that makes me freeze. Sheer silent command.

"I have something to tell you."

"Oh?"

Usually by now my dress would be halfway off. My tits would be hanging down beneath me as he bends me over, holds my hands behind my back, and shoves himself into me by way of a hello.

"My name is Daniel Knight."

"Fuck off."

The words escape my mouth before I can stop them. They're a reaction I can't help, the same way my lower leg would kick out if you tapped the lower part of my knee with one of those little rubber reflex hammers.

He doesn't chastise me for swearing. He stands there, letting it sink in. Looking at me, taking in my every reaction.

"You're not Daniel."

"Of course I am. You know who I am. You've known all along. You knew the minute you saw me in that club."

"I didn't!" I gasp. "Daniel, you don't look like Daniel. You don't act like Daniel. You're not Daniel."

"But I am," he says calmly. "And you can see it, if you look close enough with your eyes, instead of acting with your cunt."

He says the crude words without any real derision. There's no judgement in the way he knows I am around him. Our lust is an intoxicant I am fast becoming addicted to.

"Daniel... how?"

"I told you I'd been working on a treatment. Well. I found one. It has a few side effects. As in, it makes me need to wear your pussy and ass out."

His words make me flush hot. These aren't the sort of things Daniel says. Daniel is a gentleman. Daniel would never hold me down and fuck me. Daniel would never talk to me so crudely. Daniel is a nice boy...

Except, it occurs to me, Daniel isn't a boy anymore. He's a man with an advanced degree

in biochemistry and more determination in his little finger than anyone I've ever met.

"Tell me something."

"What?"

"Tell me something only Daniel would know."

"You like *The Bachelor* more than *The Bachelorette*."

I cock my head and shake it. "Good guess, but not exactly convincing. Tell me something you're sure only you could know."

He looks deep into my eyes. Takes a breath.

"You held my hand after we crashed. We were both trapped in the car, but I was hurt worse than you. You cried. You told me that you were so sorry. I told you I thought I was dying." He reaches out, takes me by the hand, and those eyes lock with mine. "You squeezed my hand so tight. You told me I wasn't allowed to die. That you wouldn't let me. You made me promise I wouldn't. And I didn't."

Tears start to fill my eyes, as his words take me back to a moment buried in history and trauma and pain. Two teenagers, covered in blood, at the very door of death, demanding life.

It's him. It's really him.

And now I don't know whether to hug him, or punch him so damn hard he feels it forever.

"You should have told me," I say, my voice cracking as I try to reconcile all the emotions running through me.

"I didn't know until last night. There was a side effect I had to address, a disassociation. I didn't know what I was doing when the dose was at its height."

"Oh, so then you realized you'd been fucking my brains out every night this week?"

We both realize at the same time that my tone has changed. Before I knew who he was, I stammered and I was shy and I let him do things to me without question. But right now, I'm talking to him like I would have talked to Daniel. There's a sneer on my face. There's a sneer in my tone. Both freeze as he glowers at me.

"That's right." He crosses the room, takes me by the arms and draws me up, first to my tiptoes, and then off my feet entirely. "You've been spreading your legs for me all week—and your ass. You've been giving me that sweet little cunt, and you've loved every minute of it. And if you take that tone with me again, I'm going to take this belt off and whip you with it before I fuck you."

"Daniel, you can't..."

"I can," he growls. "I have. And I will again."

Something inside me melts with relief. When he told me his name, when I saw the truth in his eyes, my heart sank. I felt betrayed, but worse than that, I thought it was over. I can let a stranger fuck me like a whore, but can I let Daniel?

He captures my mouth in a kiss, drives the question from my head. Whoever Daniel was, it's not who he is anymore. He is an entirely different man. One who makes my legs spread out of desire. Even now they are winding around his waist as he holds me aloft without effort, kisses me with all that passion and desire and now, intimacy that was absent before. There is a knowing we now share, and that makes this all the more intense.

"I'm going to fuck you," he growls, cupping my ass, pulling my pussy against his crotch. That thick cock of his seems to be perpetually erect. I feel it throbbing through the layers of our clothing, wanting me.

No man has ever wanted me like Daniel. I resisted him for so long for so many reasons,

but he has taken every single one of those reasons and shredded them.

Now I see it, I don't know how I didn't see it in the first place. Of course this is Daniel. Daniel's eyes burn in this behemoth's face.

"Give me your pussy."

I do.

I give him my pussy. I give him everything.

He pulls my panties to the side, pushes his fly down, and his cock finds my cunt in a single rough stroke. Daniel holds me in his arms and takes me the way he's always wanted to take me. I saw desire all those years. I knew what hid behind those wistful looks and nervous requests for dates. But I couldn't be with him. I was afraid of what I'd see. I was afraid of how broken I'd left him. Those first few days after the accident, seeing him in the hospital—he wasn't himself. I could hardly stand to look at him. And I've been avoiding looking at him ever since. Truly looking at him. I've looked past him. I've looked around him. I've looked at an illusion of him, a pretend make believe where he sits across a table from me and we act as though everything is fine and normal, knowing that nothing has been fine or normal for years.

Until now.

If this is his revenge, I deserve every bit of it.

* * *

Daniel

She is stunning in the throes of orgasm. She arches and cries out, her pussy clenching my cock with desperate contractions, milking my cum inside her. I give her every bit of it, holding nothing back. Is this how she looked the first times I claimed her? I curse the drug that gave me the experience, but wiped it from my mind.

In the end we are panting with sated lust, our bodies covered in mutual sweat. This is what I dreamed of for such a long time. Perhaps not as wild, but this connection. This togetherness. I kiss her and kiss her again, feel her soft against me as orgasm leaves her limp with satiety.

This is romance as I have craved. This is the physical manifestation of what we've always shared. No matter what, she and I have never truly been apart.

"That was incredible," I say, cupping her face as my cock slides slowly from her sex, leaving my cum to slide from that tight little slit.

Her face crumples, and she bursts into tears.

I don't know what to do. No part of my transformation has enabled me to deal with an upset woman.

"Why are you crying?"

She's never cried before. Does she regret it, now she knows who I am? Is she ashamed that I have seen this desperate wanton side of her? Or have I gone too far? Hurt her in a way she did not enjoy?

She curls up and sobs, great wailing sounds that make me feel confused pity.

"What is it, Briarlee? What is it? Tell me," I cajole her gently. "Did I hurt you?"

"No," she cries. "Nooooooooo." It's drawn out in a long, pained wail and I'm not sure I believe her, or understand what's going on. I start to check her over, make sure I didn't inadvertently harm her in my passionate lust. Her pussy is puffy and swollen, covered in a sheen of my cum and her juices, but there's nothing that should be causing her to cry like this. No

bruising, no tears.

She keeps crying as I look her over, sobbing to herself in the most heart-wrenching way. Her breasts are fine. Her bottom is fine. Her legs, her knees, I even check her toes, which makes her giggle in her tears and then return to crying even harder.

“What is it, Briar? Tell me...”

It is impossible to get sense out of an incoherent woman. It takes her what feels like a horribly long time for her to calm down enough to scream in my face.

“It’s my fault!”

I’m confused. “What’s your fault?”

“I did this to you. I got you hurt!”

“What do you mean?”

“You were picking me up! Because I was drunk! If I’d called my dad to come and get me like I was supposed to, you never would have been on that road with me. And we’d never have had that accident. So it’s my fault.”

She’s going a long way back into our shared history, reliving what happened all those years ago. I wonder how much she’s thought about it since it happened. I used to think about it almost every day. Since I started treating myself, I’ve hardly thought about it at all. I’ve been too busy lusty for her, having her, using her, enjoying her. Maybe I should have talked to her before now, but we’ve hardly had a chance to talk amid all the fucking.

“You were the one not driving drunk,” I remind her. “That was the other asshole. And I’m fine now, sweetheart. Look at me. I’m better than fine.”

“You’re a sexual maniac. You’re a beast. You’re a monster!”

“So you don’t like what we’ve been doing.”

“I do!” she cries. “That’s what’s so wrong about it. I don’t deserve this! I don’t deserve you! I don’t deserve anything,” she sobs. “I knew... all these years I knew you wanted me and I... I just used you. I never did anything for you. I never...”

Her speech is halting and comes between gasps and it’s only just barely coherent. I have to catch the threads of her thoughts, weave them together.

“It’s my fault,” she gasps. “My. Fault.”

* * *

Briarlee

I know I’m not making any sense. This is fifteen years of guilt pouring out all at once, catharsis by orgasm.

He doesn’t understand it. Sometimes I think he forgets everything he lost that day. Until that accident, he was a track star. He was on the honor roll. He could have been anything. Done anything. And then I had to go out and get drunk with Brandon Storesby and I called Daniel instead of my dad and he came to save me, just like he’d done every time I needed him since we were kids. But that time, he got hurt. Bad. And I’ve never forgiven myself for it. Never will forgive myself for it either. Now, I don’t know if I can forgive him for this.

His rough, lustful lovemaking has knocked the scab off my guilt and my shame and my fear and my remorse. He fucked me so hard I felt almost as though I left my body. He made every part of me sing with pleasure. I am soft and sore and wet and aching and I am so lost. I don’t know what to do.

I take a deep breath and try to compose myself. He looks so worried. The fact that he

keeps looking for something physically wrong with me just makes me cry even harder. After everything, turning into this big sexy fuck monster, he still wants to look after me.

“If you don’t want this to happen again, you need to leave town,” he rumbles.

“What?”

“I don’t have control of myself once it takes over. I want you. I want you more than I want oxygen. I will hunt you down and I will find you and I will not be able to stop myself from ravaging you again.”

He speaks the words roughly, as if he wishes they weren’t true.

I reach for him, my hands curling in his hair. It’s thicker than it used to be, longer too. This treatment is making every part of him ultra-masculine. I look into his eyes, blinking my tears away. I can’t let him think I want to leave. He’s branded me. He’s made every previous lover seem weak and flaccid and uninteresting. I can’t begin to imagine being with anyone else. Ever.

“I don’t want you to leave. I don’t want you to leave.”

We look at each other.

“Briarlee...” He draws in a deep breath. “I want to say I can keep you safe, but I’ve started this treatment and I’m going to keep going with it. Our studies suggested it takes thirty days to have full effect. It’s been less than a week. I could become much worse. I could present a real danger to you.”

“You won’t hurt me.”

“You can’t know that.”

“Yes, I can,” I say. “Because you’ve never hurt me, Daniel. Not once. Even when you should have. Even when...” I hold back tears. I don’t want to cry. That would be self-pity, and I don’t deserve pity. “You’ve never hurt me.”

His arms wrap around me. He draws me into the bulk of his body. I feel his strength. His size. I feel him. The Daniel I have always known. He’s in there, behind the cocky swagger and the sexy smirk.

“I don’t want to hurt you,” he says. “But I have to be realistic. The effects were cumulative in the rats. They peaked around the two-week mark. I could become aggressive. Sexually, and otherwise.”

“We’ll deal with it if it happens.”

“I’m not going to be that casual with you. I’m going to make sure you don’t get hurt.”

“I deserve to be hurt.”

“No, you don’t.”

He’s wrong. I deserve everything he’s done to me and worse. I deserve to be beaten. I deserve to be lectured. Shamed. I deserve punishment. But somehow, it’s always evaded me. They say karma catches up with everyone eventually. I don’t think it ever will with me. I don’t think karma has noticed me. I may as well not exist.

“I’m just glad you’ve stopped crying,” he says with a sexy smirk.

“Yeah, well,” I shrug and wipe my eyes on the back of my arm. “Will you stay tonight? Please, don’t leave.”

He kisses me. “I don’t ever want to leave you again.”

Chapter Eight

Daniel

I wake up to find Briarlee nestled under my arm. She's fast asleep. So trusting. So pure, so...

My cock is rock hard. I have to fuck her. The urge is almost irresistible. I need to be inside her. I need to feel her cunt stretching around me, gripping me. I need to feel those inner muscles holding me tight as I plunge inside her over and over again, driving her to a screaming climax...

"Morning," she mumbles sleepily.

"Morning, sweetheart." I drop a kiss on her neck and wrap my arms around her.

She curls into me, smelling so sweet, so perfect... I need to fuck her. I want this room to smell like sweat and semen, not sweet remnants of perfume and femininity.

Every moment I draw breath is a moment I have to battle with my animal desire for her. I am a brutal monster. I am...

"Mmmm," she says, squirming her round ass not so innocently back against my erection.

I let out a growl that rumbles through the both of us.

It makes her giggle and squirm more.

"Stop it," I say, putting one big hand on her hip.

"Or what?"

"Or I'm going to fuck you."

She looks over her shoulder at me and gives me a slow, very deliberate roll of her hips. The beast is unleashed. I pull her panties down, push my cock up toward her cunt. I find her hot and wet, slick with the effects of some wet dream, perhaps. It's fortunate for her, because I thrust my dick deep inside her, roll her onto her stomach, and start pounding into her as she writhes and wails beneath me.

She loves every moment of it. She was made for a man, no, a beast like me. She was made to be held down and fucked long and hard, used for my pleasure. The cum is roiling in my balls, urgent with the need to be inside her. Must fuck. Must come. Nothing matters besides filling her tight, bare pussy with my semen.

Her pussy is puffy and red, slathered in my seed.

"Wow," she pants. "I don't think I'm ever going to get used to that."

I breathe. I'm calm. For the next few hours at least, I can be rational.

* * *

Briarlee

When he first told me who he was and what he'd done, I was furious, and then I was guilty and now, well, now I'm just satisfied. Deeply satisfied in a way I've never been before. He doesn't make love to me, or fuck me. He utterly consumes me. He makes my body obey his will. He makes my heart beat to his rhythm.

I've always loved Daniel in one way or another. Now I'm infatuated with him. We get up together, grab showers, get breakfast. This is starting to feel sweet and domestic. Until he opens his mouth again.

"I need to deal with you."

“Me? Why? What have I done?”

“That guilt you carry around. It’s not healthy. I’m going to help you let it go.”

“Oh, yeah? How? You gonna sit me down and talk therapy me?”

He snorts. “I’m going to tie you up and whip your ass until you cry.”

He must see the look of shock on my face. “With your permission, of course.”

“You want me to tell you it’s okay to whip me?”

“I want you to tell me you want to feel fully forgiven. All the way to those toes that curl so fucking sexily every time I’m inside you. You need to be punished, Briarlee. And not for me. For you.”

Maybe he’s right. Maybe the reason I’ve been bumbling my way through life, never really achieving anything of any merit is because I didn’t think I deserved it. A shrink floated that idea past me once. I changed the subject.

This new, improved Daniel probably won’t let that trick work.

I feel my face flushing with embarrassed heat. In all the time we’ve known each other since the accident, he’s never so much as mentioned that I deserve punishment—but I’ve always known I do. How long has he known what I craved?

He comes over to me, stands me up with him, and tips my chin up so I meet his eyes. “It’s what you want, isn’t it, Briarlee. More than that, it’s what you need.”

I give the smallest of nods, barely perceptible. But he sees it. Daniel knows me better than any other person on this planet. He knows what I want, what I need. He knows what I think. He knows what I dream, and somehow, all that knowing makes it worse. If he knows what I need, and he plans to give it to me... even thinking about it makes me shiver where I stand. I’ve been a very bad girl.

I avoid his gaze, and in doing so, find myself distracted by his shirtless torso. His muscles ripple powerfully beneath his skin in a way I’ve only seen on men in movies, and I’m pretty sure they were CGI. But he’s real. Every day, it seems like he gets a little taller, a little broader, a little more muscled. He’s transforming before my eyes.

He says he’s got a whole lot more to take before he’s done with the treatment, so this isn’t even his final form. What will he be like when he’s done? And what will he do to me along the way? Even trying to think about it makes me quiver.

“Briarlee...” He growls my name and brings my attention back to him and what he’s saying. Wait. What was he saying?

“Hm?”

“You need to be punished like a bad girl, so you can feel like a good girl. Don’t you.”

I squirm. He makes me feel so small. He makes me feel as though he can see right through me. Maybe he can. He’s smart enough to take me apart mentally, and he’s known me for long enough to have an instinctive understanding. Like I thought I had of him, except I didn’t, because I never really paid half as much attention to him as I did to myself.

“Tell me, Briarlee.”

“I mean, I don’t know.”

“You were crying last night,” he reminds me. “You said I was too good for you. You said you didn’t deserve this. Or me.”

“Well, uhm...”

I don’t know what to expect from him. He’s different after he comes. Much less aggressive, but still utterly ultra-masculine.

“You want me to let you get away with everything?” His voice is low and gravelly. It

makes my heart skip a beat.

“No,” I whisper.

“You want me to teach you a lesson like the naughty girl you are?”

“Yes,” I say, even more quietly.

“I need to hear you, Briar...”

He’s going to make me ask for punishment. I can’t believe I’ve gotten to this point in my life. This is humiliating. But it’s also an opportunity to get what I need so badly. Maybe it’s okay to ask for it.

“Please,” I say. “Uhm, punish me.”

“Good girl,” he purrs.

He takes me by the hand and draws me over to the couch. Again I find myself over the back of it. This time he’s not going to fuck me. This time he’s going to punish me. Even the thought makes me blush as I squirm in place, naked and vulnerable.

“Let’s start with the getting fired from job after job because you don’t want to follow anyone’s rules,” he says, letting the belt drape over my bottom.

“Rules suck,” I pout.

Crack!

The belt meets my ass in a wicked snap. Heat and pain bloom on my skin. I gasp and reach back, but he pushes my hands up and holds them at the small of my back.

“You’ve just never been made to follow any,” he says. “You’re spoiled, and it’s not doing you any good. I’m as much to blame as anyone else. I let you get away with things over the years. I never pointed out when you were being a brat.”

“Because you were my friend!”

Crack!

“I’m not your friend anymore, Briarlee,” he growls down at me as I gasp for air. The way the belt lands against my tender skin hurts like hell. This isn’t hot. I am actually in trouble. I can hear it in his voice. This man who has known me all my life. This man who has fucked me in the back room of a club, and across this very couch. Daniel knows me. He knows me to my core. And that also means he knows what a bad girl I am.

“You’re not my friend?”

“I’m a lot more than that,” he rumbles. “You’re mine now. You’ve always been mine, but I was too nervous to claim you. I let you run around. I let you give this cunt to men who didn’t deserve it...” He runs the belt down between my legs. I feel the leather against my pussy, which is wet as hell. Do I like this? Maybe I shouldn’t be surprised. I seem to like everything he does, no matter how sinful, humiliating, or painful it is supposed to be.

What he’s saying touches me somewhere deep. Somewhere I’ve never been touched before. It finds the little closed-off part of me that makes me think I have to do everything alone, and it opens that door.

The belt lands again, three swift cracks across the middle of my ass. He’s giving it to me hard. This isn’t a pretend punishment. He’s not playing. He is dominating me. He is showing me what he knows about me. He is making me understand in a physical way that things are different now.

“Owww! Danny! That hurts!”

Another three strokes land. They hurt. My ass is blazing. My legs are kicking. I want to buck up from the couch, but he keeps one hand on the small of my back and he makes me lie there and feel the pain he is inflicting.

“Breathe, Briarlee,” he says, his voice calm and resonant. “Deep breaths. Good girl.”

I gasp a breath.

“Why? This hurts!”

“You need it to hurt,” he says. “You need to know I mean this. You’ve been throwing your life away out of guilt. That stops today. You don’t have to feel bad for what you did as a drunk fifteen-year-old girl. You don’t have to feel sorry for me anymore.”

The belt lands again, a hot stroke that sets my ass on fire. I shriek, but he keeps holding me there.

“You needed a good spanking back then,” he says. “And you’re getting it now. So you can put that whole event behind you. Alright? You’ve been punished, and more important...”

He eases his grip and helps me stand up, turning me to face him. There are tears in my eyes as I look into his handsome, strong, kind face.

“Most important of all... you’ve been forgiven. For everything.”

I burst into tears against his chest. He drops the belt and holds me close, letting me wet his skin with the misery I have been holding onto all these years. I have never understood why it was him who got hurt, and not me. I have never comprehended why I always seemed to skate through, while Daniel took the brunt of the consequences.

My ass hurts, but my conscience does feel more clear. I feel physically lighter than I have in a long time. As silly as it might seem, having him whip my butt actually makes me feel better.

“Thank you,” I whisper. “For everything.”

“I’m going to look after you, Briarlee,” he murmurs in my ear. “I’m going to make sure you’re okay.”

“I know you will.”

Chapter Nine

Daniel

I leave Briar's place feeling the best I've ever felt. I have my health. I have my woman. What else is there? Oh, right. The final piece of the puzzle. Letting the people who said I couldn't do this see how wrong they were. Once the company realizes I've developed a medication with truly life-saving effects, they'll have to put Regenermax into production. Sure, the sexual side effects are something to consider. Maybe it will need to be given under medical supervision for the thirty-day treatment period. We can do that. We can probably even find ways to relieve the tension. Maybe robot prostitutes.

I laugh to myself. Did I really just think of robot prostitutes as a medical aid? I wonder if we can get insurance to cover them. Hmm. Maybe we can. Increased libido is no joke. The energy has to go somewhere. I've probably got about four, maybe five hours before I have to come again.

The drive for sex has become more like the drive for food. Start getting rumblings three or four hours after the last meal. It's possible to ignore it and skip, but as time goes on, the hunger only grows.

I go back to Edison Enterprises. Not to the lab. To room 42 A. To find the man who tried to crush my dreams. I find him in his office, being mediocre. He looks up, surprised to see me and mumbles something about not having any appointments.

"Remember me?"

"Can I help you, sir?"

He doesn't remember me. Being healthy is as good a disguise as any superhero costume.

"I'm Doctor Daniel Knight. I developed Regenermax. You were telling me my treatment wouldn't work on humans. Well, it does. And I'm the proof."

I expect him to stammer some kind of stunned apology and promise to put the drug into trials. That turns out to be a seriously naive expectation.

"Shut the door."

I do as he says, not entirely sure why I'm taking orders from this guy. He takes off his glasses and gives me a sharp, pitying look. God, I hate pity.

"I'm afraid you've made a mistake, Doctor."

"What do you mean?"

"We said we weren't prepared to deal with the side effects. That no human trials could take place. You had no legal right to take that preparation, Doctor. You're going to need to be quarantined."

"Absolutely not."

"You're under the influence of a powerful sexogenic compound."

"Sexogenic? You just made that up."

He sighs.

"You think you're the first researcher to come up with a compound like the one you made? You're not. There are a dozen patents on drugs that enhance growth across all human systems. Regenermax isn't even unique. What you've stumbled on is a compound first synthesized in the sixties."

"Then why isn't it on the market? Why aren't people being treated?"

"The military own the patent. Because you've taken the drug, I'm required to inform

them. And you'll be required to go into quarantine in one of their facilities."

"What the hell are you talking about?"

"The drug is their property. You took it. Therefore, you become their property."

"That is not how the law works."

"Tell that to the men with guns."

My mind races. Can they do this?

I can't actually think of a reason why not. The truth is, law only applies when the people responsible for enforcing it want it to apply. When your military decides you're their property, there is no due process.

"It might not be so bad," he says. "If they determine what you have is something they already have, they probably won't keep you any longer than a year or so. Of course, they might want you to progress your work through them too. Who knows. Maybe this will turn out to be a net positive for you, Doctor Knight."

"A year?"

"We've already forwarded them your research information," he says. "We did it around the time we were considering the clinical trial. They would have been interested in meeting you anyway. Now they more or less have to. Can't have a man running around in general civilization under that kind of influence. You'll be a danger to yourself and others."

This is my fault. I didn't have to come here and tell him this. I didn't have to rub it in his face. I guess somewhere in the back of my mind I considered that there could be some kind of legal consequences, but I figured they might try to sue me, which wouldn't get them very far because they don't pay us enough for it to be worth suing us over. I did not expect this.

"I'm not interested in working for the military."

"You might get interested," he says. "The confinement could become quite tiresome if you don't."

"I'm leaving."

"Good luck, Doctor Knight," he says, picking up the phone to betray me.

I leave Edison Enterprises in a rush, trying not to panic. I do not want to be involved with the military. Their historical treatment of scientists and test subjects suggests I will regret it. I have two choices left to me.

I can stay, and wait for the military to come find me. Bad choice. Or I can get the hell out of here while I still can.

It's not even a difficult decision to make.

I rush home, pack what I need. The rest of the Regenermax, and not much else. I go to the ATM, cash out my savings. It's enough to get by if I stay in cheap motels. Then I remember Briarlee. Fuck. What am I going to do about Briarlee?

I decide to tell her the truth.

I was going to call her, but it's safer to just throw the phone away. They can track that. Fuck. I don't want them getting into it, so I take a hammer and I pound it until it's just plastic dust on the bench.

My laptop, I'm taking. Turn the wireless off and they can't find me. I need the data on it. I'd need a laboratory to synthesize Regenermax again, but I could never do it without my research notes.

I walk out of my apartment. I don't bother to lock the door. That will save them breaking it down later.

I head straight to Briarlee's place.

“Hey,” she smiles as she greets me at the door. “Ready for dessert?”

God, she looks good. I fist her hair and pull her in for a deep kiss. She sighs into my mouth, a perfect little fuck angel.

Before I know what’s happening, I have her on the floor, legs spread, pussy wrapped around my cock. The front door isn’t even all the way closed. I don’t care. With her legs wrapped around me, I’m in heaven, plunging in and out of that perfect pussy that is mine, all goddamn mine.

“Wow,” she pants when she’s once more filled with my cum. “It gets hotter every time. I think I have rug burn though.”

“Sorry,” I rumble, turning her over onto her stomach. She does have a little red rash on the crowns of her cheeks. It’s kind of cute. “Nothing to worry about,” I tell her with a little slap that makes her yelp. I deal with that by kissing her thoroughly until all complaints turn to soft little breathy moans.

“I didn’t expect you back so soon,” she smiles up at me. “Used to be a day or more before you’d come to ravage me.”

“I had to come,” I say. “I…”

Oh, god. I had almost completely forgotten why I came here.

“This is serious,” I say, sitting her up in my lap as I sit cross-legged on the floor. “The company is sending the military after me. They say my treatment is owned by them.”

“That doesn’t make sense.”

“They wanted me to wait and be picked up. Told me I was property of the government now, because of the treatment and, shit, I don’t know, Briarlee. But I’m heading out of town. I’m not going to tell you where I’m going because they’re probably going to work out that you know me and they might ask you some questions. I don’t want you to get caught in the middle of this. You should go and stay with your mom and dad.”

“What?” She scowls. “I’m not going to my mom and dad’s house. I’m coming with you.”

* * *

Briarlee

What he said sounds like bullshit. I don’t know if I even believe him, except for the fact that Daniel, in any form, has never lied to me. Not even when we were kids. He looks serious too. Not scared, just determined.

“The military aren’t going to know what hit them if they take you,” I smirk.

“I’m stronger than I was,” he says. “But I’m not bulletproof. I don’t know what they’d do with me once they took me, but I don’t really want to find out. It doesn’t feel good to be referred to as property.”

“Well, sometimes it does.” I smile up at him.

“You’re different,” he smirks, kissing me again.

“I’m yours, so take me with you.”

“This could be dangerous, Briar. Really dangerous. It’s not just the military. It’s me. The treatment still isn’t at its peak. I could be your worst nightmare. And they could arrest you for criminal conspiracy, or something, I don’t know.”

I don’t care.

“I’ve spent the last fifteen years wishing you hadn’t sacrificed so much for me,” I say. “That drunk driver would have hit my side if you hadn’t turned the car. You took the impact for

me.”

“I was fifteen, I panicked. I wasn’t brave or…”

“Yes, you were,” I say. “You knew exactly what you were doing. You looked at me and you pulled the wheel.” I remember everything that happened that night. I remember how brave he was. I remember how I teased him when he picked me up because he’d had to sneak out and was still in his superhero-themed pajama pants. He was a real hero that night, and he’s been heroic every day since. It’s my turn to be brave.

“Briarlee, I am not going to let you put yourself in danger. I’ll be in touch.”

“How?”

“I’ll call you.”

“And give yourself away? If the military is really after you, they will tap my phone. They’ll read my emails. They’ll see you interacting with me.”

His expression darkens. He knows I’m right.

“If you want to go on the run, let me go with you. Let me be the Clyde to your Bonnie.”

“Bonnie was a woman.”

“You know what I mean,” I snort.

He doesn’t like the idea, but I can already feel that he’s going to say yes.

“You’re going to need to fuck someone,” I add. “And it better be me.”

Daniel breaks into a smile, his handsome face lighting up. “Oh, is that right? Am I not the only possessive one here?”

“Nope,” I say, grabbing his shirt and getting up nose to nose with him. “You can be a big mean fuck monster, but you better be *my* big mean fuck monster.”

He lets out a laugh and the tension is broken. “Alright,” he agrees. “You can come. But we need to go now. And you have to pack light. We can’t carry suitcases around. If you have a backpack, it’s only what can fit in it.”

Just like that, he’s barking orders.

“You sure you don’t want to go with the military? You sound like a drill sergeant.”

“I do not,” he smirks, pushing up to his feet and taking me with him. “Get packed. Now.” He swats my ass hard enough to make it sting, and sends me heading for my wardrobe.

“Can I at least grab a shower first?”

“Two minutes. Get wet. Get out.”

“So shower like you fuck me? Got it.”

I giggle as he growls.

“You need to take this seriously.”

I know I should, but it doesn’t really feel real. It feels more like we’re going away for a spontaneous road trip. I can’t wait to be alone with him somewhere remote. I’m picturing a log cabin in the woods, maybe near a lake. I’m thinking of making love by an outdoor fire. I’m imagining the whole world feeling like it’s just the two of us in it.

I get into the shower and wash the sex off me. The sheer volume of his cum is impressive and seems to be increasing by the day. My inner thighs are smeared in it, my pussy is coated with it. I’m going to have to start shaving myself bare down there just to make clean up a little easier.

A banging at the door startles me. “Hurry up, Briar!”

Frowning, I turn off the water. He’s getting very bossy in his old age. Uber dominant. I can still feel the remnants from when he used his belt on my ass. He’s the same Daniel I’ve always known, but there’s more to him.

“Briar!” He opens the door. “It’s been five minutes. Get your little ass out of there now.”

I emerge from the shower to find him waiting.

“I packed for you,” he says, shoving a bag at me. “We have to go.”

I look in the bag. There’s a few of my bras and underwear, but not the comfortable ones I’d wear on the run. He’s picked the sexiest ones, the laciest ones, the ones I don’t ever actually wear except if I think I’m getting laid. Maybe they’re appropriate. I mean, I’m definitely getting laid on this trip.

“Let me grab some things.”

I grab the stuff a man wouldn’t think to grab. Tampons, comfy undies, a tube of concealer, my favorite mascara, a couple extra pairs of shoes...

“Briar!”

He’s yelling again. Goddammit.

“Calm down. I’m coming.”

“You do realize this isn’t a weekend away,” he growls. “You do realize I’m running for what might be my life, and yours.”

I take a long look at him, the serious expression transforming his face as he tries to impart the gravity of this situation.

“You’re right,” I say. “I’m going to need different shoes.”

* * *

Daniel

I want to whip her ass. I will. Later. Right now, I need to get her out of here. Now that I’ve had time to think about it, taking her with me might be the smart move. If she’s gone, they can’t go to her and get information about me. They can’t make her life unpleasant. And, unlike me, she has a car.

“Come on, girl,” I say. I have my pack in one hand. I bend down and hoist her up over my shoulder. She makes some squeaky noise about needing this, that, or the other thing. We’ve wasted enough time. I hand her bag to her as she dangles over my shoulder, and I grab a set of keys that have been hanging over her kitchen bench for as long as I’ve known her.

Briarlee squirms and gasps as I haul her out of her apartment, lock the door, and carry her cute little ass down the stairs. I am spooked by the prospect of becoming the property of the military. I am angry that I am being forced to run, after not being told that my research was approximating an already held patent. But having her with me is already calming me. She’s a distraction. A naughty, bratty, fuckable distraction. She’ll soothe me when I need to be soothed.

We get down to the basement car park. The car used to be her father’s. A canary yellow 1987 Acura Integra. I used to admire that car so much when we were teenagers, though it was already getting old then. Now it sits in the parking spot that came with Briarlee’s apartment looking dated.

She used to have about 110 horsepower. Who knows how many of those horses have bolted over the decades. It doesn’t really matter. We just need to get on the road.

“Get in the car,” I say, swinging her down to her feet. She pouts, but does as she’s told. I pop the hood. Check the oil. Check the water. To my surprise it actually has both. The battery is probably dead though. I hope not.

I get into the car, turn the key. It starts. I can hardly believe it. That battery has to be ten years old at least, but it has enough to get the starter motor going and as the gauges all start

registering their various levels, I see we have gas too.

“You looked after this,” I say.

“Yeah,” Briarlee says. She’s sitting in the passenger seat. The bags are in the back. So far, so good. I put the car into reverse and swing out of the parking spot. It’s been a while since I’ve driven a car. After the accident, I didn’t like driving much. My hands would get sweaty and shake. My throat would get dry. I’d be so damn nervous I could barely concentrate on the road, let alone the traffic. In the end, I gave up and just used public transport. More environmentally friendly.

I don’t feel any of the fear now. The wheel beneath my hands connects me to the power of the engine. It’s mine to use as I see fit. I almost don’t feel as though I’m on the run. I feel like I’m driving toward a new future. There’s not much left in the city for me. I’ve done what I needed to do here. I fixed my ills. I got the girl. Maybe it’s not such a bad thing to get out now, take to the wilds.

“Where are we going?”

“This is a big country,” I say. “We can go anywhere.”

* * *

Briarlee

He flashes me a reckless, devil-may-care smile and I feel a rush of happiness and freedom. We hit the highway and we drive. He has one hand on the steering wheel, the other on my thigh and the world is opening up before us, expanding from the ribbon of tarmac like an endless plain.

His concern seems to be fading. The purr of the four-cylinder engine isn’t what I’d call powerful, but it’s lively. For these sweet, precious moments, it almost feels like we’re teenagers again. There’s possibility, rebellion, desire, all mixed up together.

“Do you remember when we ran away together because I was mad at my dad?”

“Uh huh,” Daniel grins. “I put you on the handlebars of my bike and we went to the woods for an afternoon.”

“I thought we were going to live there. Until I got hungry,” I laugh. “I was such an idiot.”

“No, you weren’t,” he says, his tone suddenly serious. “You’ve never been an idiot, Briar.”

“That night I drank I was.”

Everything seems to come back to that night. I don’t know if we will ever escape it. That one mistake has sent ripples through my existence, and even though sometimes it feels like things are getting peaceful, another wave comes to tell me that I was wrong.

“Plenty of teenage girls and guys make that same mistake,” he says. “Most of them don’t define themselves by it forever.”

“Yeah. Most of them don’t almost kill their best friend in the whole world.”

“You didn’t do that.”

No matter how many times he tells me I didn’t, and no matter how much I intellectually know it was the man coming the other way who hurt us and wounded Daniel so terribly, I can’t stop believing that it’s my fault. The guilt has been a burden for so long it’s just a part of me. I don’t even know what I’d be like without it.

We fall into silence as the road flashes by. It’s strange to think just how much road there is in this country. It feels like we could drive forever, almost never encountering the same stretch

twice.

“Do you really think the military are going to come for you?”

“I think my old boss told me they would, and I think I don’t want to be beholden to the military.”

“Beholden,” I repeat. “That’s a funny word.”

“Is it?” He flashes me a smile and pats my knee.

“Beeehoolldeen,” I say, letting it swirl around my mouth.

“You’re silly,” he smiles.

“And that’s why you love me.”

“Mhm. That, among a lot of things.”

I fall silent. He loves me. I know he does. I’ve always known that he always has. It’s time he heard the words he deserved to hear a very long time ago.

“Daniel?”

“Yes?”

“I love you too.”

His smile is so broad it makes my heart flutter. I can only see the side of his face, because he’s keeping his eyes on the road, but I can sense his joy as I make that admission.

“I’m sorry I’ve never said it before. I’ve been a selfish, spoiled... I’ve just been awful.”

“You’ve done your best,” he says.

“If this is my best, wow. I’d hate to see my worst.”

“You’re sacrificing your time and your job search to help me out,” he says diplomatically. “You’re doing great.”

“I’m on the run with a drugged-up ex,” I smirk at him. “We’re going to probably stay at dodgy motels where the doors open right out onto the parking lot and where you have to check the pillows for needles.”

His lip curls. He doesn’t like that idea.

We swing into the next town and head for the outdoor store. I don’t ask what we’re doing. To some extent I don’t care. The rules have been broken. The world has been transformed by this exciting new development. All I had planned was spending the rest of the day looking for a job online, coming up with reasons not to apply, and then drafting an email to ask my dad for more money.

I’m Daddy’s little girl. I’ll never have to want for anything. I’ll never have to amount to anything either. He used to be so proud of me. I don’t think he is anymore. Graduating college was the peak. It’s all been downhill since then. I was supposed to be married by now. I was supposed to have a family. He might have tolerated me becoming a career woman, but I haven’t done that either. I’m a comfy socks and sweatpants woman. Or at least, I was, before Daniel transformed into this creature who ravishes me and possesses me and gives me hope that things can be different. If he can change this much, maybe I can change too.

“We’ll go camping,” he says as we walk through the store. “Maybe we make that living in the woods thing come true. No need to worry about needles in the bed.”

“No, just bears,” I say. “Do they have any bear-proof tents here?”

“I’ll get some bear spray.”

“I always thought bear spray sounded incredibly silly,” I comment. “I mean, fly spray sure. You can spray away a little fly easy. But *bear* spray? How big would the can have to be?”

He shoots me a look. I giggle and he breaks into a smile.

“You’re still goofy as hell sometimes, Briar,” he smirks as he picks his way through

what's on offer.

We make our purchases, head out of town, and get on the road toward the mountains. This country is so big, and once you head into the wilds, they feel endless. We pick a spot that seems to be fairly remote on the map and make our way to it.

There's a spot to park and to camp. Daniel sets up the tent. I cook noodles over a little gas cooker. This is fun.

After we eat, he wraps me up in his arms and we sit beneath the stars and it is almost as though I can feel the world turning. It's so perfectly calm and quiet. The stars gleam in their full glory. You can see some stars in the city, but not thousands upon thousands of them. Not like this great hazy trail across the center of the sky.

"I need you."

He rumbles the words in my ear, and I know they're true. He doesn't just want to fuck me. He has to. Without sex, he is wilder than anything lurking out there in the bushes.

"Then have me..." I whisper back.

He pulls my leggings down and bares my ass. Easy access.

If we were in a seedy motel, we'd fuck on the bed. Instead he takes me on the ground. Face down. Ass up. Pussy displayed.

He pushes inside me and I let out a yowl. His cock is definitely getting bigger. Every time he takes a dose it gets a little thicker and a little longer. It was big to begin with. Now it demands I give him more, stretch wider for him. Now it makes the juices of my pussy slick the head of his cock and I am already at what feels like my capacity as the flare of the head begins to slide inside me, slow and strong, making me accommodate him.

"It's so big," I gasp.

His response is nothing but a growl. He's possessed by lust. He has to be inside me, and so my body stretches wider, lets him in, my pussy gets wetter because it has to. He needs to fuck me, and I need to be fucked.

I am sprawled on the ground, my bare ass raised high into the air as he plunges inside me, fucking me with loving, rough strokes. It feels incredible to be taken this way, by a man who I have always loved, and whose need for me never went away, even when I was so shallow and so stupid as to think I could do better.

There was never any better. There was only a string of grunting, humping men who used me and threw me away, maybe because they sensed I could never love them. Maybe I even chose men who couldn't love me. I don't know, but right now, with my nipples rubbing against the rocky ground through the thin fabric of my top, my pussy stretched wide around his ever growing cock, I am complete.

Chapter Ten

Briarlee

We wake to the dawn breaking over the treetops. There's food to eat and very little else to do but enjoy each other. A perfect morning.

"I never saw any of this coming," I muse over my granola bar.

He takes his dose. It's a weird liquid. It shines in a strange way. He takes it like a shot and chases it with some orange juice.

"How much of that stuff have you got?"

"Enough," he says. "We'd synthesized a few courses, hoping to be able to start some human trials."

"So you kinda, I mean, stole them from the company?"

"I guess I did."

"And that's... criminal, right?"

"I suppose."

"So we really are criminals on the lam."

"You really like that idea, don't you," he smirks at me. "Appeals to your issues with authority."

"I don't have issues with authority."

"Yes, you do. You never used to listen to your dad. And you never listen to your bosses either..."

"I listen to you."

"That's because you know I'll tear that little ass up if you don't."

He did punish me once. But that was cathartic, and I needed it. What he's talking about now is something different. I think. I don't really know.

"I don't think that's it..."

"If you knew your ass and pussy were on the line at work, you'd behave yourself."

I snort and laugh. "That drug makes you a raving misogynist."

"No, just telling the truth. It doesn't matter, because you're mine. Nobody else is ever going to lay a hand on you."

"Is that right?"

He looks over at me and I see the animal in his eyes. That drug unleashes something in him, something primal and sexy and even a little frightening. When he takes a dose, he doesn't care about how he should behave. He does whatever he wants to.

"Come over here and get that cunt on my cock."

A crude, lewd command, and one I prove him right by obeying.

Before I know it, I'm being bounced on his dick like a toy. He's lying back, his hands on my hips, working my pussy up and down the long, hard shaft. I whimper between moans, because he's been ravaging me for what feels like days. My poor pussy is starting to truly ache, and I'm not sure I can take it anymore.

"My pussy needs a break."

He doesn't skip a beat. He pulls me off his cock, and drags me up his body until I am sitting on his face. His tongue plunges between my cheeks, finds the tight little bud of my asshole and starts flicking and licking and working his way inside me there. I am held upright, vulnerable and exposed, my pussy aching and empty as he prepares my other hole.

It takes a long time to get the head of his cock inside me. He has to hold me in place and push slowly until the tight ring of muscle gives way. I wriggle and whimper, making it harder for him, but I want his cock in my ass. I want him to prove to me that he will take me as he pleases, and that I am here for his pleasure. Maybe that's twisted, but the thought fills me with arousal and a sense of deep contentment that wraps around me even as he patiently guides my misbehaving bottom down on his cock.

Before he comes, he lifts me off. I am in an erotic haze where I simply accept what he is doing to me, so when he lays me next to the fire, I simply stay there, waiting for the return of his hard, pillaging rod in whichever of my holes he chooses to take.

* * *

Daniel

A vehicle is coming up the trail. Looks like a SUV of some kind. Maybe it's someone looking for some peace and quiet. I picked this place because it was well off the beaten track. The car barely made it up here. An SUV will have an easier go of it, but still. We're going to have to move on.

"Let's get packed up," I say. "We've got company."

She's lying in a fucked-out stupor. We're alternating between adrenaline and eroticism right now and it's exhausting her. I'll have to make sure she gets enough rest, as soon as we get to a place that's actually safe.

When she doesn't respond, I scoop her up and put her on her feet. "Briarlee, come on."

She makes a grunting sound. "Really, we have to leave already?"

My hand meets her ass hard enough to shock her into full consciousness. "Yes. Now."

"Ow, dammit, Daniel," she pouts, rubbing.

I reckon we've got about two minutes to clear out of here before that SUV comes over the ridge. In my mind, I'm thinking that some kind of APB probably went out when I left the company. I could be paranoid, but better to be safe than sorry. Right now we're running from shadows, but I'd rather run from them than bullets or whatever else might be coming my way.

I start packing the tent down as she sits on a stump, watching me with a pout. I'm going to have to deal with her lack of discipline. If she wants to be out here with me, she needs to do as she's told and follow orders. It could mean the difference between life and death.

It's strange how all these thoughts come to me instinctively. Before Regenermax, I would have never done this. I would never have left the city, sought high ground, made sure that I knew precisely who was in my vicinity. I would have gone back to my apartment and waited for my fate. I would have followed authority blindly, let myself be overrun by the company, the military, whoever. Now, my senses tell me where danger lurks. I am vigilant, prepared to defend myself and the woman I love.

* * *

Briarlee

"Hurry up, Briar!" He shouts the words at me in a rough growl. Goddammit. I haven't even had my coffee today. I need coffee. This sex is wearing me out. I don't know that any mere mortal woman could keep up with his monstrous libido. I can't even muster the energy to be scared anymore.

I'm tired. I need a nap, and I'm pretty sure that whoever is coming up that trail, it's not the military. They'd come by helicopter or something. Or they'd dart out wearing camouflage with bits of tree sticking out of them. They wouldn't drive up in a single late model SUV.

I try to tell him that, but he's not listening. That drug makes him more animal than any man should be. He's paranoid. I've come out into the wilderness with a crazy man.

He's throwing things into the back of the car, but it's not fast enough. Cursing, he slams the door shut and grabs me, pulling me over his shoulder, and then he races into the forest just as the SUV pulls up.

"Daniel..."

My words are cut off as he clamps his hand over my mouth. We hide behind a tree and watch as the rear door of the SUV opens. I feel his heart beating against my back, powerful and quick. There's adrenaline coursing through the pair of us now as he lets out a low, feral growl. Whoever gets out of that car is going to be in trouble.

But it's not heavy boots that hit the ground, it's a pair of small pink trainers, and a blue pair behind them. They belong to a couple of kids of indeterminate age, a boy and a girl.

"Mom! Kayden put gum in my hair!" the girl shrieks, holding out a curly blonde lock of hair clogged with pink gum.

"Alright, Nevaeh, calm down," a woman says blithely as she gets out of the passenger side. A man I'm assuming is Dad remains in the car, his hands somewhat white-knuckled around the steering wheel. It's not the look of a mercenary. It's the look of a man who just drove eight hours with squabbling kids and a nagging wife and is thinking about driving off and leaving them all there.

The female child has started hitting the male child with a branch while her mother lights a cigarette and makes a comment to nobody at all about how nice it is out here in the peace and quiet. If the military has decided to annoy us to death, then this could be related, but I don't think so.

Daniel lets me go. I turn around and give him a look. "You're out of control," I say, trying to remain calm. "I mean, honestly. Daniel, you said this medication might have some side effects. Are you sure you're being followed by the military? I mean... it's not very likely, is it?"

My skepticism is not met with joy. I didn't expect it to be, but I can't help it. All of a sudden, I'm realizing that there's not actually any evidence that the military is after him. There's just his word. And he doesn't seem to have the best perceptions right now. Maybe the treatment is messing with his mind. It's certainly messing with his body. He's bigger and meaner and madder every day, and he fucks longer and harder too.

"I'm not paranoid," he says. "I was told the patent was held by the military and that my taking it made me their property."

"Okay, but does that make sense?"

"Kayden, stop it!"

A high-pitched squeal adds audio background to our hushed argument.

"It doesn't matter if it makes sense. It's what's happening."

"Okay, but you told me the drug could have effects on you... is this one of them?"

"It might make me hyper-sexual and hyper-aggressive. It won't make me think the military is looking for me."

"Are you sure?"

"The rats didn't become paranoid."

"And how would you have known if they had?"

He stops at that, because it's a good question.

"Those rats could have been convinced the walls were talking to them for all you know. That drug could easily be turning you insane. Maybe you should stop taking it and see if the military stops chasing you."

His jaw clenches. "I don't like your tone, Briarlee."

"Well, there's nobody else here to tell you these things. Bratty kids aren't a SEAL team, are they?"

"Just because it wasn't anyone from the military this time, doesn't mean they won't be coming. If you don't believe me, that's fine. You take the car and go back home."

"And what, leave you in the woods with no way out? I'm not doing that."

"You're not my caretaker. I'm yours."

I don't know if that's true or not. He's massive, but maybe he needs me to take care of him, even if he doesn't want it. If these are paranoid delusions, someone needs to get him the care he needs. And that someone might have to be me.

* * *

Daniel

I see the doubt in her eyes. Briarlee has always been an open book to me. She came with me because she got caught up in the drama of it all, but she doesn't really believe it. I suppose I can't blame her. There's an old adage: if you hear hoof beats, think horses, not zebras. I suppose it does seem more likely to her that I've gone mad on my medication than the military is actively stalking us. I know the truth, but I also know that's what people with mental illness issues always say, so telling her that isn't going to help.

The worst part of this is that if I do a good enough job of keeping away from the military, she'll never see them. There will never be any real evidence. So I'm making a claim I can't prove, and I'm expecting her to believe it without evidence. Not exactly scientific.

"We're going to wait until they leave," I say. "And then we're going to park the car deeper in the forest, take our things out and carry them deeper. I want to go fully wild."

"Do you think that's a good idea? I mean, I already need a shower."

"I'll lick you clean if I have to," I rumble.

She smiles, but only a little. The woods aren't really her scene. Briarlee is used to being comfortable. She's used to things coming easy to her without really having to try. One night in the woods was romantic. But hiding from every sound isn't. And having to wait while this family rampages around the parking lot isn't either. I curse the fact that I left the car out in the open like I did. The only saving grace is that I'm pretty sure not one of the people performing in the family circus out there have noticed it, or anything else for that matter.

We sit about two hundred feet from the parking lot, listening to screams and laughs, usually followed by a parental shriek. They're having a picnic. This could go on for hours.

"Get some rest," I say, pulling Briarlee into the space between my legs as I sit with my back against a tree. She cuddles up with me, but I feel the stiffness in her body. She's not happy. Not even when the sounds of the forest start to overtake the sounds of the family beyond. There are thousands of birds here, most of whom seem to be interested in competing for some kind of bird talent show with their calls and trills.

It takes some time, but Briar starts to relax and then even doze, curled up against my body as I stroke the hair back from her head. She hasn't showered. Her hair is getting messy.

She's going to complain about that I'm sure, but I think she looks as beautiful now as she ever has. Maybe it's because she's fully mine to protect. As mad as she might be with this situation, she feels safe enough to sleep. There's a trust that has always been there between us, and I hope it always will be. We're going to need it over the coming days, maybe weeks.

After about an hour, the family decide they've had enough of nature. I hear squeals about flies and how it's boring and they can hardly get reception, though apparently the boy can. Eventually their car rumbles into life, that perfectly pristine SUV that just justified its existence with this one trip into the wild, though it remains as pristine as ever.

"Wake up, sweetheart." I nudge Briarlee awake.

She blinks and frowns, curling up with a grumpy expression, then extending her legs and sitting up to look at me.

"Are they gone?"

"Yeah."

"I gotta pee," she announces. "Where am I going to do that?"

I cast my arm at the wilderness around us. "Pick a spot."

The look she gives me is one of pure disappointment. "This is so gross."

"Don't go too far. Don't want anything wild to find you."

"Something wild already did find me," she pouts. She's referring to me, of course. Except I'm not wild. I'm controlled. I know exactly what I'm doing and why. Even if it doesn't make sense to her. Even if it looks like paranoia—though if I am, being paranoid doesn't mean they're not out to get you, as the old adage goes.

"Go pee."

She stamps into the bush. I listen, getting a sense of how far she's going by the way her petulant footsteps crashing through the undergrowth and litter recede.

"That's far enough!" I call out to her.

The footsteps stop. There's silence.

She's going to pitch a fit if I get too close when she's toileting, but Briarlee doesn't have the best instincts for danger and I wouldn't put it past her to let an animal creep up on her while she wasn't watching.

I walk quietly through the bush, my larger frame making much less noise because I make sure not to step on twigs, to land my feet softly instead of stamping my way through the undergrowth.

The soft flow of her urine is what I expect to hear. Instead, I hear muffled cursing.

"Hello? Can you hear me? Hello?"

I look around a tree and see her with a phone she is absolutely not supposed to have pressed to her ear. Did I tell her not to bring it? Maybe I forgot. But the fact she sneaked off to use it makes me pretty certain she knows I wouldn't approve.

"Police, please..."

She's calling the cops on me! I flare into action before I can think this through. I don't know if she has a line open. I don't know if they have enough to track her call. All I know is that phone has to die, and now.

Coming from behind, I snatch the phone from her hand, drop it onto a rock, and stamp on it with my heel and crush it to plastic dust and circuits.

"No phones," I growl.

She looks at me with fear in her eyes. I never wanted this for us, but now she's in this with me, she can't decide to opt out. We are being tracked, of that I have no doubt. And that

phone she's carried around has probably been like a big flashing red light for people with the resources to track that sort of thing.

"That was fucked up, Daniel," she complains. Not so afraid she can't still give me attitude, I see.

"Who were you calling?"

"The cops!" She doesn't even try to deny it. "We can't live in the woods forever because you took some drugs that make you think the military is looking for you. I saw enough of that in college."

"Regenermax isn't LSD or pot," I growl. "I'm not making this up. This is serious."

"No, it's not! You're fucking crazy! Nobody is after you! Nobody cares!" She throws the words at me wildly.

* * *

Briarlee

I see the exact moment that he loses all trust in me. I feel the moment I stop being his ally, and start being another person he has to worry about.

I made a mistake. I never should have said that I didn't believe him. The look he gives me isn't one of anger—it's of pure, utter betrayal. I hate seeing that look in his eyes. It breaks my heart. But he had to hear it, because he's going too far. He's getting too extreme. We haven't seen so much as a toy soldier, let alone the actual military.

He grabs me by the hand and marches me out of the forest, back toward the car. Thank god. Maybe he's going to send me back. I refused to go before, but now I'm thinking I won't be of any use to him out here, feeding these delusions.

"Put your hands behind your back."

"What?"

He repeats the order in a deep, rumbling gravel. I don't comply, because I don't understand what he's saying, or why he's saying it. He sounds like the cops he didn't want me to call.

When I don't do what he wants, he takes me in those big hands and pulls my arms behind my back, then begins lashing them together with the tape I thought we had purchased for constructing shelters.

"Daniel!" I panic. "What are you doing?"

It's a stupid question. It's obvious what he's doing. He's taking me prisoner.

"I'm sorry," he grunts as I struggle. "I have to do this."

"No, you don't!" I kick and twist and squirm, but it's useless. He has me and he's not letting go. I have no idea what he plans to do with me. I do know that he won't hurt me—at least, I hope I know that. This man is not the one I used to know, though he must still be in there somewhere, lurking behind this bestial creature.

"Daniel, please," I beg. "Don't do this to me. Don't hurt me. I'm not going to do anything bad. I'm not going to hurt you. Daniel... Daniel!"

I screech his name as he finishes binding my ankles with the tape and throws me up and over his shoulder. It's so horribly easy for him to handle me, especially now I can't really do anything more than caterpillar kick. I'm no longer his willing partner in evading the law. I'm his captive.

"Daniel! Let me go! Daniel!"

He doesn't listen to me. He doesn't even respond to me. He acts like he can't hear me at all.

He sits me down next to the car and I watch as he pulls out the pack he brought and fills it with the tent, our food, water, other stuff. He's getting ready to go deep into these woods, and that terrifies me because these are the kind of forests you can absolutely get lost in and never come back from. I try to talk to him, beg for forgiveness, plead for mercy, ask ever so nicely for him to let me go. I half expect him to gag me with the tape too, but he doesn't. It's like he's turned off a switch and he no longer cares what I say.

He shoulders the pack on one side of his body, then pulls me up from the ground with his other arm and tosses me over his shoulder. He is so much more powerful than any man should be. He doesn't grunt or bow under the weight.

He carries me into the woods, each one of his great strides taking me further and further from civilization. I start to panic, but that doesn't matter. There's nothing I can do against his strength.

It's a very long time before he stops walking. We head down into the forest, then up a gully, across a ridge, and down the other side. It's as if he knows where he is going, though there's no way he possibly could.

By the time we stop, I have no idea where we started from. The world has been upside down and mostly green since we started. He hasn't put me down for what feels like hours, though it's impossible to tell time out here. There's no TV shows to measure the passing of the day. There's no neighbors coming and going to indicate it's 8.30 a.m. or 5.30 p.m. All the rhythms of modernity are gone. Even the light is different, dappled and golden through leaves. It's as though we are somewhere outside of time, and out of place. There are no references to go by. No street signs, no shop windows, no square blocks. Everything is a blooming confusion of green and brown and blue and I could be anywhere in it.

He sets me down at what feels like random, but probably isn't. We've found a clearing near a brook, a place Daniel seems to think will be good for setting up the tent. He puts me down and sets to work. It's been so long since I heard his voice I'm almost starting to think he will never speak to me again.

This is the world I find myself in, where everything feels endless and eternal, where escape doesn't even make sense. Where would I be escaping to? Into the embrace of yet more wild places? I'd heard you can navigate by the sun and the stars, but I've never understood that. They're just generally up. How does that even work?

I sit there as Daniel pitches the tent, builds the fire, and starts boiling some water from the stream. Watching him is frighteningly fascinating. He's so utterly confident in everything. Before the drugs, he used to be unsure of so many things. It was an aura that used to hang around him, a repellent to women. He's been transformed by the drug. I wonder if it's permanent. I wonder if he will always be a beast of a man, willing to do whatever is necessary to get what he wants. He seems to think so. He said after thirty days, the treatment is finished.

Don't you dare fucking find this hot, I lecture myself.

"This is fucked up. Even for you."

I break the silence that had fallen between us after I realized he wasn't going to respond. I'm surprised when he looks right at me and replies.

"We're in danger. Even if you don't understand, or believe, we are. And I'm going to protect you, even if you don't know you need protecting."

It's a relief just to hear his voice again. Then he picks up a knife, and some of that relief

drains away.

“I’m going to take that tape off,” he says. “You’re a smart girl, so you know that if you go running off, you’re in a place where you likely won’t make it out. There are mountain lions, coyotes, and bears out here. Don’t leave the fire without me.”

“Asshole,” I growl as he frees me.

“I know you don’t believe me,” he says, still so damn calm. “And I know you are going to hate me after this. I just want to make sure that there is an after this. We’re going to wait three days. If that call doesn’t bring the military down on our heads, I’ll take you back to the car and this time you better make sure you leave.”

“Don’t worry,” I bite out. “I’ll get as far away from you as I can. This is fucked up. You’re fucking...” I don’t even know what to say, and in spite of my anger, I don’t actually want to be swearing at him like this. There’s just something about him, the way he looks at me, something that lets me see to the core of him. He believes this. With everything he has.

“Daniel, please.” I change tack. “We have to go back together. They’re not looking for you. Just because someone at your work made some noise about a patent doesn’t mean there are tanks scouring the countryside for you. If the military had the patent, they’d be using it on their own people.”

“They have the patent for the previous version. Which doesn’t work. Mine does.”

* * *

Daniel

I can’t give into the frustration at knowing she doesn’t believe me. She doesn’t know enough about Regenermax to understand, though really it should be obvious. A treatment that can regenerate damaged nerve, bone, and muscle is essentially a panacea for all humankind. It has applications across the spectrum of illnesses, and of course the military are going to be interested in it. More than interested. This is a weapon in its own right. A battalion of soldiers on Regenermax would be far stronger, go far harder, be able to sustain many more injuries than even the most elite soldiers today. They would be nearly unstoppable. In a world where most warfare is conducted at a distance, it’s not as useful as it once was, but they’ll have dozens of applications for it.

It was a mistake to bring Briarlee on this. She’s never been dedicated to anything. She’s never sacrificed anything. Her comfortable, sheltered world has left her incapable of understanding that very bad things really do happen. Even the crash we were in together left her mostly unscathed. She has sailed through life, never really feeling the possibility of true failure or real pain.

The truth is, I am the worst thing to ever happen to her. Maybe I should have left her behind, but now that I’ve taken her, she has to stay, at least for a while. Some consequences can’t be avoided. Even for Briarlee.

She sits there, pouting and pretty as I prepare food. It doesn’t occur to her to offer to do any of the work. She’s a passenger in this now, not an ally, not a companion, not even a lover. A woman who has scorned me over and over again in every form and who now, in my hour of need, has decided I am a madman.

My next dose is due soon. I’m almost reluctant to take it, because I know what will happen when I do. The lust fog will rise and I won’t be able to contain my desire for her. The Regenermax doesn’t put me into a fugue state anymore, but it sure as heck messes with my

consciousness.

After thinking about it for a few minutes, I realize there's only one thing to do. I pick up the dose and a handful of rope, sit with my back against a small but sturdy tree, and begin wrapping the rope around my body.

"What are you doing?"

She gives me a skeptical look as I wrap the rope around myself.

"I thought I was the one you were keeping captive."

"I don't want to fuck you in the mood I'm in," I say. I don't know how she'll take those words, but it's not for lack of desire for her. It's out of concern for how badly I might ravage and punish her if I lose myself. She was a very, very bad girl. She had her reasons, but I know those reasons will matter a lot less after the next dose. "I'm pretty sure you don't want me to fuck you either. So I'll take this dose and you can let me out after a few hours, when the lust passes."

"I could just leave you here in the woods," she points out. She could, but I know she won't, and I say as much as I form a knot and then slide it around so it's at the back of the tree.

"You won't. You'd never find your way out of here without me, and you wouldn't leave me tied up at the mercy of the wild things."

She narrows her eyes. "It would serve you right if I did. You've kidnapped me."

"You're too sweet for vengeance," I say. "Now go back and tighten that knot."

* * *

Briarlee

Tie him up? Sure. Why not. He's turned into a fucking asshole, and being tied up is probably the best thing for him.

The fact that he trusts me to do this isn't heartwarming anymore. It just pisses me off. He doesn't respect me. My thoughts, my feelings, my opinions, they don't matter to him. He thinks of me like an ambulatory fuck doll, a robot he can carry around and give orders to.

I walk around the tree, make sure the ropes are tight and yank the knot into a secure position. He's not getting out of there any time soon.

"Okay," I say. "Done."

"Good," he grunts, before chucking the rest of that poisonous brew down his face.

He closes his eyes and rests his head back against the tree. Can I still admit to myself that he's a very handsome man? I can't really avoid the truth. He was always good looking, but this treatment is enhancing all his natural features, making him hyper-masculine, beefing him up. I can see the ropes straining even tighter as his musculature swells.

I'm too angry at him to admit that I find this hot, but I do. I can't help it. My body reacts to his like a moth does to a flame.

When he opens his eyes, he looks at me directly. There's hunger in his gaze. Something raw, and powerful, and so fucking primal. Almost like I'm looking back through thousands of years of evolution, to a creature who wants only to dominate and fuck and ravage me.

"Briar," he growls. "Come here."

I stay right where I am. This is the Regenermax talking. He didn't tie himself to a tree for no reason.

"Briarlee..." His voice is a low rumble of pure command. "I want you."

"Well, you can't have me," I tell him. "You tied yourself up, remember? You didn't want me either."

“I always want you. I hunger for you. You’re the one thing in this world I will always protect.” His voice is pure gravel and lust.

“You’re not protecting me. You kidnapped me. I was trying to get help. You stopped me.”

He gives a deep sigh. “Naive little girl. They are coming for me, Briar.”

“There’s no evidence for that.”

“Come here.”

He commands me again, and I know why. The front of his pants is tented with a brutal erection. I know how that would feel inside me. I know what he will do to me if he gets loose. It was written all over his face when he had me tie that knot. When he has control of himself, even he knows that what he becomes under the influence of the drug is something that needs to be contained.

I stay where I am, saying nothing.

“I can smell you,” he grunts a moment or two later. “You’re aroused.”

“I am not,” I lie, defying his animal senses.

“You are. Undo these ropes and let me have you. Let me show you what you are, Briarlee. Let me make you remember why you came with me in the first place.”

“You said you didn’t want me seconds before you took that drug.”

“I wanted you,” he growls. “I was being pathetically weak and civilized. That doesn’t work with you. I should have fucked you senseless and whipped your ass red when I found you with that phone. I should have made you scream my name until you forgot your own.”

I sit there, knowing he can’t reach me, feeling his frustration building. He did this to himself, but now I have control. It’s an interesting feeling, seeing him so vulnerable, and so fierce at the same time. Like having a lion leashed in front of me. He is seething with sex. If I were to cut the rope holding him, he would be on me in an instant.

“Is this the real you? Or is this the drug talking?” It’s what I’ve been wondering since he revealed the truth. This dominant, fiercely sexual man—is he a figment of a drug? Does he disappear as soon as it wears off? Or is the drug like a window to the soul of the real Daniel? The Daniel who has been in there all along, pretending to be mild-mannered and gentle all the while harboring rough dreams of claiming me in every way he can.

“Untie me and find out,” he smirks handsomely.

“I’m not untying you,” I tell him. “I might not ever untie you.”

“Oh?” He cocks his head to the side. It’s not the reaction I expected. I anticipated rage and fury. Truth be told, I’m disappointed. This felt like my chance to get back at him, but he doesn’t seem to care when I tell him I’m thinking about leaving him tied to that tree forever.

“Yeah,” I say. It doesn’t sound as bold as I want it to.

He lets out a short chuckle. “We had an agreement, Briarlee.”

“No, you told me what to do. Maybe I’m sick of you telling me what to do. Maybe it’s time you did what I say.”

“You think so?”

“Yes,” I say, getting bolder. Yeah. I’m going to see this through. He’s going to see things my way. I walk up to him and crouch down in front of him, so close our noses are almost touching. I look deep into his eyes, see the beast within the man. “You’re mine. You’re going to do as I say. You’re going to stay tied to that tree until you promise.”

A muscle in his cheek twitches. “Until I promise what?”

“Until you promise to take me back home and then do as I say. No more dominating me.”

No more Mr. Boss Man. I'm in charge now, Danny."

His eyes flash with irritation. He always hated being called Danny, even when we were kids.

"You won't be in charge after these ropes come off."

"Then they're not coming off," I say, giving him a sweet peck on the nose.

I stand up, feeling very smug and satisfied, and I go to the rations. There's some chocolate in there, I'm sure of it. What better to eat while Daniel gets used to the idea that the tables have been turned.

"You're going to untie me," he says casually. "Because you're a good girl. And good girls keep their end of the bargain."

"Eh, I don't think I care about being a good girl anymore," I shrug.

"Good girls also don't have their asses switched and fucked."

"Who are you going to switch my ass with? There's no one else out here."

He gives me a dark look, no trace of amusement on his brilliantly handsome features. "I mean I'm going to cut a nice long branch from one of these trees and use it on you until you cry."

"Oh," I say, taking a bite of chocolate. "Well, you can go fuck yourself then. I hope you're comfortable. Hope you don't have to pee."

"Come over here and untie me," he growls. "Now."

"Ehhhhh, no, I don't think so."

It feels so incredibly good to take my power back this way. It makes me feel excited, and giddy, and only a little nervous. Daniel's expression has become stormy. His eyes are locked on me with an intensity that makes my stomach do little flips. This is so worth it.

"I'm going to count down from five. If you haven't untied me by then, you're going to be in a world of hurt."

"You can count down from five, or you can count up to five hundred," I say, stuffing the last delicious part of the chocolate bar into my mouth. So damn good. I'd usually worry about having another one out of concern for my waistline, but now I don't think I care. I'm filled with reckless energy and I've abandoned all consideration of consequences. Right now, right here, nothing can touch me. Not the calories in this candy, not the angry man tied to a tree.

"Five..."

I let out a giggle as he begins.

"Four..."

"Forty-two," I sass.

"Three..."

"Six hundred and ninety-two point nine recurring..." None of these numbers mean anything, so why be so linear about it?

"Two... Briarlee, if you don't start moving, you're going to regret it..."

I smirk and peel another bar.

"One."

I snap a block off and smirk at him as the countdown ends. "Oh, well," I say. "Maybe give it another try. Maybe start from ten this time. That might work."

He lets out one of his near feral growls, the sound rolling right through me as I chew my chocolate. This is so funny. And so perfect.

He shifts in his bindings, shuffling maybe an inch or so.

"You shouldn't have tied them so tight if you wanted to be able to get out of them," I

snort. “You weren’t really thinking right, were you, Danny? You should really be more careful, you silly boy...”

Daniel flexes. The muscles in his shoulders, chest, biceps, and back all bulge at the same time. The rope holding him snaps like a piece of cotton before my stunned eyes.

“Oh, shit.”

He’s standing up. I have about 0.002 seconds before he grabs me.

I drop the candy and I run.

I make it 0.004 seconds before his huge hands grab me around my waist and pluck me, screaming, up off the ground.

“Okay, Daniel, that wasn’t fair! This isn’t fair!”

He doesn’t say a word. He sweeps me around and holds me under one of his armpits, his left arm wrapped around my waist to press me up against the powerful side of his torso. His right hand goes to tear a small branch from a tree. Just like he said he would. Oh, fuck. Oh, god. I’m stammering, begging, lying. I’m telling him that it was just a joke, that of course I was going to untie him. That he knows that, surely he has to know that.

Daniel doesn’t listen to a word out of my mouth. He sits down, traps my thighs between his legs and pushes me over his left thigh so that my ass is on display over his leg. This is bad. There are bits of leaf and twig falling around me as he strips the branch bare, and then follows up by doing the same to my rear.

“Daniel!” I scream his name as the first lash lands against naked skin. He hasn’t said a word, and he doesn’t have to.

Over and over again, the branch whips across my ass, biting into my skin, leaving little patches of intense heat and lines of fire. I am being punished deliberately, painfully, and completely as I deserve to be.

It doesn’t take long for my tears to start to fall. I’ve never had much in the way of pain tolerance, and that hasn’t changed. It feels as though the switch has landed dozens of times, though maybe it’s closer to ten. I can’t count with that searing sting igniting every nerve in my body.

“Daniel! Stop!”

He stops. I know well enough it’s not because I told him to. It’s because he must be seeing what I am feeling. Any more of the switch and my bottom is going to become seriously marked and perhaps even bloody. And he won’t do that to me, even though I was just telling him I planned to leave him tied to a tree.

This is mercy. Not the kind of mercy I would expect outside this forest, but still mercy. All things are relative, and when you’re gasping for breath in between cuts of a wickedly supple switch, you’ll beg for respite—and worship anyone who gives it.

“You’re a brat,” he growls, his hand on the back of my head. He’s not gripping my hair, he’s palming my skull. I can feel his strength like a promise, my own physical vulnerabilities more pronounced than ever.

“I’m not!”

“Yes, you are. Sitting there, raiding the candy stores like a naughty little girl. You didn’t even try to get away. You didn’t even really look for anything to bargain with. You just sat there and smirked and taunted and riled me until I came for you, because you wanted your pussy fucked. Isn’t that right? You think this drug has made me mad, but you’re the one who has become addicted to what it does. You need this cock.”

I don’t know anymore. Daniel turns my world upside down. He makes it hard to even

start thinking about what I was doing. I thought I was telling him to get fucked, but maybe he's right. Maybe I was just trying to get fucked myself.

"What did you think was going to happen when I got free?"

"I don't know," I sniff. "I was going to figure that out later."

"That's your problem, Briar. You're so smart, but you don't think, and you don't plan. You dismiss what you're told if you don't want it to be true, and you don't realize what the consequences of ignoring things are."

Now he sounds like my father—or, like my father would sound if he didn't just sigh and ask me how much money I need this month. Held over his lap, my ass burning like hell, I feel like the naughty girl he says I am.

"We're in danger. I put that rope on to try to protect you from the worst of my lust, but you decided to take advantage of it, so now I'm going to take your ass, just like I promised I would."

"Daniel," I whimper. "We don't have lube."

"Yes, we do," he says. "Your cunt is soaking. You're making enough to start a small lubrication factory."

He proves it by pushing two fingers into my slit then bringing them out to show me. I see the clear fluid of my desire clinging to his digits right before he pushes them into my mouth, makes me taste myself. Gives me a reminder of what I really am, at my core. There are words to describe women like me. Words that Daniel, even in his most lusty state, would never use. I use them though, in the chamber of my mind, imagining how I must look trapped over his thighs, my ass bright red and crisscrossed with lines from the switch. I'm a dirty little slut for him. I'm everything every girl is told she should never be, and everything she craves to let herself degenerate into.

"I'm going to let you up," he says. "And you're going to get ready for me."

"Wha? How?"

"You're going to bend over, reach under, and start lubing your ass," he says. "If you run out of pussy juice, we have oil."

This is a greater punishment than the whipping was. This is him asking me, without any physical force at play at all, to forfeit the fucking I crave in my pussy, and give him my ass—make it ready for him.

I'm about to ask him what happens if I don't, but I know that would just defeat the purpose. He wants me to prove I've learned something, and I think I have. Daniel is never weak, even when he looks it. And I owe him more than taking advantage of him whenever I think I can get away with it.

He lets me out of the grip he's had on me, and watches me carefully as I slowly, shamefully, bend over the same log he is sitting on. My fingers go back to my pussy to gather the wetness I've been making throughout this, from well before he started whipping me. The truth is, the moment he told me he was going to take another dose, my body began to prepare for the inevitable onslaught.

I am so wet. My fingers curl inside my sex, drawing out the lubrication I then push up toward my bottom hole.

I hear him rumble with arousal, then get up. I stay where I am, preparing myself for the fucking that is to come.

He comes back and I feel a drizzle of oil running down my crack. He is pouring it over my ass in a slow cascade.

“Get your fingers in there,” he orders. “Make sure it’s nice and stretched for me. Good girl.”

His orders are filthy, but I follow them. I push a finger into my bottom, feel the tight ring of my ass squeezing it. I understand now why so many men like anal. There’s no comparison to my pussy. My pussy can grip, but my ass has a strength and a resistance like no other hole in my body.

Lying there, exposed to Daniel, preparing myself according to his orders, I feel flush after flush of hot shame running through me. If the drug exposes his raw side, it does the same for me, and I didn’t even take it. Just being at his mercy turns me into the primal female displaying herself.

“Enough,” he growls, pulling my fingers free. There’s a gravel and tension in his voice that tells me how long he’s been holding back from just fucking taking me. I pull my fingers away, and he puts the thick, punishing head of his cock to that tight ring of muscle.

“Ask me for it.”

I whimper as he makes me thoroughly complicit in the taking of my ass.

“Please,” I moan softly. I don’t know if I’m saying please take me or please show me mercy or please... something else. My mind is addled with discipline and desire and now his cock is stretching me open, his thick rod sliding inside that tight ring of muscle.

I feel him clasp my hips between big hands, and then he is inside me, pushing deeper, harder, taking more and more until I am filled and stretched, my cheeks spread wide, my legs wider still.

He has punished me with anal sex before. That time he was relatively gentle. This time, he is not. This time he pounds me, fucking me roughly against the tree, demanding every bit of my ass.

My cries make the birds take flight as he yanks me up against his body and pulls me back and forth along his cock in powerful strokes that make me gasp, and whimper, and moan.

I betrayed him. I deserve to be punished. I teased and I taunted him because I wanted him to feel as helpless as I do. But that’s never going to happen, because Daniel doesn’t know what weakness is. Even when he couldn’t walk after the car accident, he was stronger than most people ever are in perfect health.

“I’m sorry!” I shriek the words, but they don’t stop his cock from thundering in and out of me.

“What are you sorry for?”

“I’m sorry I messed with you. I’m sorry I came out here with you. I’m sorry for everything I’ve ever done, every stupid mistake...” I trail off into a sob as he fucks me to his climax, not mine.

My tight anus feels every throb of his cock as he pumps his cum deep inside me, filling me up. This is how I make my apologies and my amends. I am a vessel for his lust, I provide him the relief he can’t get anywhere else. He needs me, and I need him.

My bottom is stinging inside and out. He has shown me, yet again, that crossing him leads to deserved pain. I taunted him and tormented him. In turn, he punished me and made me his little fuck toy all over again.

I whimper as he pulls his cock out of me, knowing better than to ask where my climax is, but wanting one all the same. I reach my hand down between my thighs, but he slaps it away.

“No,” he says firmly. “Good girls get to come. Bad girls have sore, fucked bottoms.”

His words bring a hot blush to my cheeks. “You’re a brute,” I complain.

“Damn straight, girl,” he says without any hint of shame, wrapping me up in his arms. I get hugs. Not orgasms. I suppose I shouldn’t complain—and I don’t. I settle in with him, accepting my fate, whatever it might be. I still doubt the military are after him. He knows that I can’t be fully trusted out here. But still, we cling to each other. We are all the other has ever had. Even if he is rampaging on some cocktail of his own making, and even if I am a faithless brat, we’re in this together. For better or worse. Like a married couple would be, but there’s no divorcing our way out of this bond. He’s stuck with me. And I am stuck with him.

Chapter Eleven

Briarlee

It's very, very early morning when the sound of plane engines throbs me out of sleep. The sun is rising, and flying in its golden wake is a big plane, flying lower than seems reasonable. Maybe a sightseeing tourist plane? No. Can't be. It's too big for that.

I'm half asleep as little black things start tumbling out the back of it. What are they? I squint my eyes and then realize that they're men. For a sleep-addled moment, I wonder why you'd sky dive into the middle of the forest—then the parachutes begin to flower and it hits me what they are.

“Daniel! Wake up!”

He sits bolt upright. I point.

“Stay here,” he says. “I mean right here. Don't move. I'll be back.”

Just like that, he grabs the bag of medication and dives into the forest. I hear the trees rustling as his big body moves through them, and then there is nothing but silence.

“Daniel!” I cry out for him. “Daniel!”

Silence answers. I watch the parachutes descend, dozens of them, with a feeling of dread. Suddenly, I believe everything he said. But it's too late now. I don't know what to do. He told me to stay, and what choice do I have? If I move, I'll be lost in the forest forever. But if I sit here, near our tent, they'll find me.

For a long time, nothing happens. The parachutes descended into the forest what feels like almost an hour ago. I'm starting to think that this has nothing to do with us. Like, it's a training exercise. We just happened to pick a part of the woods popular with families and armed forces, maybe?

I start to get bored, and hungry. Our rations are right there, so I dig into them. A protein bar finds its way into my hand. I'd prefer a croissant and some fresh brewed coffee, but I guess this will do. Daniel is probably going to want us to move again, so I'll need my strength—assuming he doesn't carry me to the next spot, like he did this one. Maybe if I act up, I'll hike through all these woods without ever taking more than a few dozen steps of my own. The thought makes me smirk to myself as I chew on the alleged bar of protein. It tastes like dates and coconut. Ick.

“Don't. Fucking. Move.”

I don't recognize the voice that comes from behind me in an aggressive shout.

“I wasn't moving,” I mumble through a mouthful of protein.

“Face down on the ground!”

Whoever this is, he's loud and he's rude. I don't care for either. I have one brute ordering me around, but even Daniel would never speak to me this way. If this is the military, they can frankly fuck right off. I'm not doing anything wrong. I'm not breaking any laws. I'm camping in the forest. That's allowed.

I turn my head and look into the camouflage-painted face of a very serious-looking man dressed like a tree.

“Can I help you?”

“Lie face down on the ground! Now!”

I take another bite of the bar. It doesn't taste good. I don't want it. But I do want to prove to this screaming psychopath that just showing up wearing green and khaki and holding a gun

isn't enough to intimidate me. This is still the United States. There are still laws.

"I'd rather not."

He grabs me by the shoulder and throws me into the dirt.

"What the hell? I thought this was America! What the fuck?"

"Don't move, ma'am!"

I try to get up, but a heavy boot pushes me back down on the ground. I really don't like this guy one bit. He calls for backup and in minutes the campsite is absolutely crawling with soldiers going through everything. They don't talk to me. They just work around me like I'm nothing. I'm so pissed off I could cry. How fucking dare they treat me this way?

"Okay, get her up." Someone else is speaking now. Someone with a ring of authority, and the ability to use an indoor voice.

I'm pulled up from the ground as roughly as I was put there and sat on the ground. There's dirt all over my face and clothes thanks to these assholes. I look like a fucking mess.

The guy in charge is an older man, maybe in his late forties. He has salt and pepper hair, the sort of square face that makes me think he was stamped out of a mold, and what they call military bearing, meaning he's so straight-backed and square-shouldered he looks perpetually at attention. He also has an old boy Texas-style twang. Maybe it would be charming, if he wasn't letting his men treat me like a piece of meat.

"You're Briarlee Smith, right?"

I don't answer that.

"I want my lawyer."

"You're not under arrest."

"Okay, then I want you to fuck off."

His eyes narrow at me. He doesn't like this at all. Good. I don't like it either. Daniel might take these assholes seriously, but I don't. We still have rights. I still have rights, and they include not being harassed by goons.

"Where is Daniel Knight?"

"How the hell should I know?"

"Camera footage at the store you bought this tent from showed you in his presence. Your phone sent a signal a few hundred miles from here. We extrapolated your position to this sector of the forest. I'm telling you this because I want you to know that I know more than you think I do, little lady."

Little lady? My lip curls.

"Then you tell me where he is, because I don't know."

I'm telling the truth. I don't know where Daniel went, and as strong and fast as he now is, for all I know he's left the forest completely, maybe even abandoned me to these assholes. I don't think he'd do that to me, but I hope he's nowhere close. They have me, but I don't want them to have him.

"There's a trail this way, sir."

One of the tree-clad men has worked out where Daniel headed out. Dammit.

"Follow it."

Some of the men head that way. I'm left sitting between two guys, faced by my interrogator.

"Start talking," he says. "Tell me how you ended up out here."

"Well, I mean, that's a long story."

"We've got time."

“I guess it started when I was born. August twenty-third. Back of a tractor.”

“Not that far back,” he growls. “Tell me how you came to accompany Mr. Knight to these woods.”

“He came to my apartment a few days ago,” I say. “He seemed, I don’t know, excited, or maybe upset? It was hard to tell. He said he wanted me to come on a trip with him.”

The guy nods. “Did he say why?”

“He said we needed to go down to the woods. And he said we needed disguises.”

“Disguises? What kind of disguises? Why?”

“Let me think,” I say, biting my lower lip, as if in thought. “Okay, so. He came to my apartment, and I was cleaning up. My dishwasher isn’t working. I mean, it is, but it’s leaving sediment on the glasses, and frankly, I don’t think those tablets actually work. I mean they say that they’ll leave your glasses spotless, but mine usually look like they’ve been at the beach. Where does the sand even come from?”

“Quit stalling, Miss Smith,” he says, utterly unamused.

“Okay, so Daniel came over. We’ve been friends for years, you know. We went to our first dance together when we were kids. It was a flower festival, but it turned out he was allergic to the pollen in my daisy chain, and a bee flew out of Melissa Spencer’s roses and stung him, so we ended up in the nurse’s office the whole time...”

“What did he say to you?”

“Mostly *ow*, *my nose*. It stung his nose.”

The guy grits his teeth. He is not happy with me. Not at all. I guess this isn’t how their interrogations usually go.

“What did Daniel say to you when he visited you at your apartment?”

“Oh, right. Well, he said we needed to go down to the woods. Today. Had to be today. I mean that day. You know. He said there would be a surprise.”

“What kind of surprise?”

“A big one!”

He leans in a little, thinking I’m on the verge of revealing something important.

“He said... what was it.” I furrow my brow. “Okay, yes, I remember. He said we had to go to the woods, I mean, down to the woods. And we had to wear a disguise, and also be ready for a surprise. Because if we went down to the woods, we would see...” I pause and frown again. “What was it?”

I have his attention fully now. His eyes are locked on my face, taking in every word.

“Right, no, okay, I know what it was now. He said if we went down to the woods, wearing a disguise, ready for a surprise, and if we went down to the woods that day...”

I can see it’s already dawning on him what I’m going to say next, but I have to get the punch line in before he starts shouting.

“That’s the day that the teddy bears have their picnic!”

I laugh uproariously to dead silence.

“Well, we tried doing this the easy way, Miss Smith,” he says, unshouldering his weapon. He hands it to one of the soldiers next to me and advances on me. I don’t know what he’s going to do, but there’s violence in his eyes.

“Last chance. Tell me where Daniel is.”

“I don’t know,” I shrug. I mean really, I don’t. He’s somewhere in the forest. They can probably work that out for themselves. “Maybe a teddy bear got him. Maybe the bears aren’t teddies at all...”

He lifts his hand high, the back of it sweeping down toward my head. I'm not fast enough to move out of the way, but I don't have to. Two hundred and fifty pounds of pure male fury bursts out of the undergrowth and crashes into the soldier, sending him flying into a tree on the other side of the camp clearing.

There's chaos. The other soldiers run forward, try to grab Daniel, but there's no chance of that happening. He is too fast, he is absolutely furious, and his brute strength far exceeds their powers. Seeing him among the soldiers is like watching a gorilla do battle with a troupe of chimps. He's bigger. He's faster. He's more brutal. There are knives drawn. Pistols unholstered. Backup is coming. This is about to get truly bloody.

In the midst of arms and legs flailing and shouting, I feel him pick me up under his arm and make a break through the forest. Loud explosions ring out behind us. Gunfire, slamming into trees and sending bits of bark puffing out around us. He's never moved this quickly before. He's sprinting at what feels like an impossible pace. He must have taken more of the drugs. He must have taken a whole lot more than usual.

He doesn't say a word. He makes a ferocious, feral, grunting sound. Right now, he's more like an animal than he is a man. I cling to him as the bullets sing out around us, squirming around to the front of him to avoid the fire.

I feel weak with fear. I am shaking and my fingers are somehow too cold and too weak to hold onto him properly. His strong arms hold me close against his chest as we run and run, fleeing for what feels like forever.

And then we stop. He peels me gently away from his massive form. There's something wet between us. I see a bright smear of red on his abdomen.

"Oh, my god! You've been hit!"

He shakes his head and points to me. Deep red blood is seeping across my shirt. It's not him that was hit. It's me.

* * *

Daniel

She sees her blood and her eyes roll back. She falls into a dead faint, a major mercy considering how painful that wound will soon be. She's been gut shot.

I can barely think. The fury and the anger and the rage are shouting in my mind, animals wanting revenge. But I have to look after her. Have to fix her. Pressure on the wound. Yes. Okay. Examine her. Think. Think. Think. I have to force myself to focus, past the roar of the beasts in my mind.

There are two holes. The bullet went through her side just below her ribs. Exited through her stomach. Her intestines must be perforated in several places. If we were near a hospital, she might survive. But we are not. We are so far from everything there is no hope for her.

I am holding her innards together, near weeping for the death I know must be coming for her.

There is one thing I can do. Regenermax. A big dose. Administered orally and into the wounds themselves. It is the longest of the longshots. I don't know if she will be able to absorb it. I don't know if damage like this can be repaired.

But I know she's dead either way if I don't at least try.

I break open three vials. One I slip into her side, the other I pour into the exit wound. The third I drip carefully down her throat, massaging her neck to stimulate the swallowing reflex.

Regret. All is regret. I should never have taken her with me. I should never have left her alone. I thought I would lead the soldiers away from her, but predators always find the nest.

I pull her into my lap and I hold her. Her breathing is shallow. Her pulse is weak. She may last a matter of hours. She may last a few days. If she's going to die, I hope for the former. I have no means of assuaging her pain.

For now, she is silent and still in my arms. I curl up with her in the hollow of a tree and I sit there, knowing that the hunters are still out there. Knowing that they won't care what they did to her.

She was so brave. She didn't know what they were capable of. And now I don't know what I will be capable of. I took almost a dozen doses as I ran. The surge made my mind vicious and simple, like an animal. It also made me too stupid to realize that they weren't following the second path I was making, but the first path I'd made. It occurs to my slow brain that they'll follow this one too. They'll be here soon. They'll see the blood. They'll track us here like wounded animals.

I hear footsteps already.

They see me. Start shouting. I don't move, so they come around the tree, a dozen guns pointed right at me. And then they see what they've done.

They look down at her broken, female, innocent form with horror on their faces. They're idiots. They meant to bring me down, but they didn't care what they did to her. Now they see her lying here, dying, they regret it.

I only have two words for them. Two words that matter.

"Help her."

The leader takes out his radio. "Get the chopper in here now. We have one down. Repeat. We have one down."

Chapter Twelve

Briarlee

I am so fucking horny.

That's the first thought I have on waking. My pussy is wet and swollen. I can feel it between my thighs, begging for a dick. I try to push my hand down there, but I can't. Something is stopping me. Something cold and metal and... I look and discover that not one, but both my wrists are chained to the sides of a metal-framed bed.

It takes a moment to realize that I am not in the woods with Daniel. I'm in a... hospital?

"Hello. I'm Doctor Stains. You were shot."

Yes. Hospital. And worse introduction ever.

"You're a soldier military person," I note.

"Mhm, now, okay, you seem to be healing up nicely. Something to do with the medication given to you by Doctor Knight."

"Who the hell is Doctor Knight?"

"Your companion."

"Oh, you mean Danny. Where is he? And why am I tied up?"

"Well, ma'am. You've been in quite a state."

"I was aggressive?"

"Not quite," he says with a slight smirk breaking through his professional demeanor.

"Then why am I chained down?"

A faint blush passes over his features. His mouth opens and closes for a moment, as he tries to find the right words for what must be a delicate thing to say. "You were trying to, er, mate with passing men. And one woman. Then, when we contained you to the bed, you tried to, er... sate the urge yourself. We were worried you'd do damage."

I'm not hearing a word he says. My eyes leave his face and go to his crotch. This craving is insatiable. Every part of me needs one thing: sex. I feel that as keenly as I have ever felt hunger. This is an appetite that must be fed.

"Where is Daniel?"

"He's in another facility."

"Take me to him."

"I'm afraid I can't do that."

Now I'm horny and angry. It's not a good combination.

"Calm down. You're wounded. You were shot. We've sutured several holes in various parts of your stomach."

I don't care. "Take me to Daniel. Now."

The doctor turns away from me to speak to the woman standing nearby. "Nurse, we're going to need more sedative."

So that's what they've been doing. Knocking me out with drugs and keeping me prisoner here while somewhere Daniel is being held. Probably being tortured. Definitely being hurt. They've already showed they don't really care about either one of us. They were happy to let me die if it meant getting to Daniel.

The nurse comes to the doctor's aid with a syringe of something I'm sure will render me unconscious while they do god knows what to me. I will not lie here, a passive victim. I'm going to fight back. I'm going to make them regret the day they ever decided to come for us.

As the doctor approaches with the needle ready to stick me, I sit up and yank my arms toward my chest, away from the bars. The chain links of the cuffs snap like they're made of crappy toy plastic. And then I am gone. Naked aside from the medical gown that flaps in the breeze as I run through the ward, shouting Daniel's name.

"Tranquilizer! Tranquilizer!"

They're shouting for something they don't have. People try to tackle me on the way past, but they can't hold onto me. They end up tearing the robe from my body, but I run on, entirely naked, looking for Daniel. Looking for my mate.

* * *

Daniel

It's dark.

Twinkle twinkle little star...

Pitch black.

How I wonder what you are...

Really. Fucking. Dark.

Up above the world so high... like a diamond in the sky!

Can't see my hand in front of my face.

Twinkle Twinkle Twinkle Twinkle Twinkle Twinkle

The track loops and the words blare as the lights come on, fluorescents searing my retinas. 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' is ramping up to the same level as a 747 taking off, loud enough to damage hearing if it's left on for sustained periods.

Since being taken in I've learned that when the military try to break you, they get weird. They can't risk messing with my sanity too much though. If I go mad from the music I'm never going to tell them how I made Regenermax actually work. I've pointed that out, but I think they like their methods of torment. They tell me it could be worse. I believe them.

They've been holding me for three days. In those three days, in between creative attempts to break my spirit, I've been assured that Briarlee is alive. I can't see her, not until I give them what they want—the Regenermax formula. They've asked nicely. They've asked not so nicely. They've bargained with me. They've threatened me. They've offered me money. But they haven't offered me the one thing I want: freedom.

The music stops suddenly. The silence is weird. Almost eerie. Footsteps at the door sound far away for some reason, even when it opens.

"We're letting you out. Need you to catch someone." I don't know who the speaker is. None of them tell me their names. All of them hide the patch on their uniforms where the name would be.

It was only a matter of time before they tried to use me as some kind of brute on a leash. I'm surprised it happened so quickly.

"Who?"

"Miss Smith has evidently gotten out, is not responding to tranquilizer, and is causing a significant disturbance."

"You want me to catch Briarlee for you? Not going to happen."

"If we don't get her under control soon, we're going to have to shoot her."

It takes everything I have not to grab his head and twist it off his body. "You shoot her, you harm one hair on her head, and you'll never get anything from me. Ever. I will go on a

rampage the likes of which you've never seen. I will destroy you and yours, and you will regret the moment you ever drew breath."

"Enough with the threats, Doctor Knight. Come and get her."

They lead me out of the room of breaking and into the light of day. It doesn't take long to see where their problem is.

Briarlee is running around the center of the compound, stark naked. The effects of the Regenermax are clear even at a distance. She's more toned than she was last time I saw her, and her curves are more pronounced. In my body, Regenermax produced hyper-masculine changes. In hers, it has brought out the feminine. I can barely see the scars where the bullets entered, and her current state suggests she's still fully under the influence, three days on.

Whenever anyone gets close to her, she turns and advances on them. She's looking for something. She's looking for me.

The relief I feel at seeing her alive is immeasurable. This is the woman I knew would die if I didn't allow myself to be captured. This is the creature I love more than anything in the world. I would die for her a hundred times. And not only is she alive, but she's healthy. The Regenermax worked. But it's had some strong side effects too.

As I look on, Briarlee approaches a vehicle and begins to grind against it. The motions of her hips and ass are desperate, the rutting gyrations of an animal who is in high heat.

I know what she's feeling. I know the terrible desire that makes you feel as though your blood is on fire. I know the need that will not let you go. Briarlee is deep in lust's fever grip.

Her thighs are slicked with lust all the way down to her knees. I thought a commanding, demanding erection that would not go away was bad enough, but I can see the suffering her needy sex is giving her.

I approach her slowly from behind. Mustn't startle her. I don't know how conscious she is of what she's doing. I don't know what state she's in mentally, aside from the lust.

"Briarlee..." I say her name gently.

She whirls around, stares at me with those pretty eyes that have always wrapped me around her little finger—and she leaps on me.

I catch her as she dives, knocking me to the ground, her pelvis threatening to grind me to dust. She doesn't speak. The sounds she's making are grunts and moans, not quite human.

I have to take control. I have to give her what she needs. There's half a base watching, but this is no time for modesty. That lust won't clear until she orgasms. Hard.

Grabbing her by the wrists, I twist my hips and toss her onto the ground next to me, rolling over on top of her. Her cries are quickly cut off with a passionate kiss that promises every bit of what she needs.

There's no time for me to undress. I reach down, unzip, and push my cock to that writhing wet spot between her thighs. The moment she feels my dick, she calms down a whole lot. It's a pacifier for her, one that is more effective the deeper it sinks inside her. She is soaked, but the Regenermax has made her sex tighter. Her inner walls grip me with a desperate desire as I start to fuck her right there on the grass.

* * *

Briarlee

I don't know what happened. One moment I was swearing at a doctor, the next I was under Daniel. The relief at finding myself in his arms makes tears come to my eyes, and finally I

am being given what I need, that long, hard cock that stretches me wide over and over, plunging inside me with rapid strokes.

It's not possible for him to fuck me too hard, or too long. I was dying of desire before he found me, and now I scream my arousal to the world at large. Like an animal, he takes me, pounding me against soft green turf.

My cunt grips him for all it is worth. I can feel him grunting with every contraction of those inner muscles. I have to have his cum. It's the only antidote for this madness.

Daniel pulls me up from the ground, wraps his arms around me, and puts me on wanton display. I am grinding against his thigh, my now empty pussy demanding more from him as he tries to maneuver me around.

One big hand slides around my waist and finds my pussy. He pulls me back against him and pushes into me from behind, but his hand remains over my clit. The other arm is wrapped around my neck, not tight enough to choke, but firm enough to control.

He starts spanking my pussy, his fingers swatting my desperate clit as his cock pounds inside my wet lips. There are wolf-whistles and approving shouts from the crowd of soldiers who have given up chasing me and are now watching me be fucked into submission.

When I come, it is like no orgasm I have ever experienced before. Climax used to feel amazing, but it was never like this. I can feel it in every cell in my body. It is as if trillions of little entities all cried out in ecstasy at once. In that peak of pleasure, I am taken apart and put back together. The cock plunging deep inside me gives me more than release, it gives me life. It gives me clarity. It gives me everything I need to survive.

* * *

In the aftermath, they find me a blanket. And some clothes. Daniel keeps me close, but there's something wrong. I can see it in his eyes. I can hear it in every hollow, comforting word he says. And eventually, he tells me exactly what I don't want to hear.

"I agreed to work for them in order to save you," he says. "So I'm going to give them what they want. You're free to go. The effects of the Regenermax won't last long. You'll be back to normal in no time."

I can't believe what I'm hearing. I'm free to go. But not him. I have to leave without him?

"What? No! I want to stay with you!"

"No civilians," the officer says. "This is a restricted facility."

"I'm sorry, sweetheart," he says, brushing the hair out of my eyes. "This is going to be better for you. You're going to be safe. You're going to have a life."

This can't be how it ends. He has broken his body for me, and now he's sold his soul for me too. He doesn't want to work for the military. He doesn't want to give them this technology. He doesn't want it used for war. He wants it to help people. He's been broken morally and spiritually, and it was because of me. I was the final straw. I was the one thing he couldn't stand to see die.

"I have to see you, Daniel. I have to be with you. I can't live without you."

I can see the tears in his eyes. Tears he won't cry.

"I've put you in danger, Briarlee. I almost got you killed. That's not going to happen. You need to go and live your life, safe and happy."

"I've never been safe. And I've never been happy without you!"

They don't listen to me. The deal is done.

I cling to Daniel. I hold on so tight I might never let go.

“Please don’t do this,” I murmur in his ear. “Please don’t. Don’t let them win. Not like this.”

“Doctor Knight, it’s time we left. Say goodbye to the lady.”

I feel him bristle in my arms. He hates them. He hates this. This is Daniel, sacrificing himself again, no matter how much it hurts, because he thinks it’s good for me.

“I won’t leave. I’ll kick and I’ll scream and I’ll...”

“Briar, please...” he says. “I’ll get leave at some point. I’ll come and see you.”

“When?”

“I don’t know.”

That’s not good enough. And this can’t be how this ends. But it is how it’s ending. They’re taking him from me, and there’s nothing I can do.

“It’s time to go, Doctor Knight.”

“Briar,” he says, his voice husky with emotion. “Please...”

He’s asking me not to make this harder. Maybe that’s the only thing I can do for him now. Maybe I can try to make this sacrifice a little easier for him. I let go, with the most reluctance I’ve ever felt in my life, and I watch as he is escorted away, his massive form moving between two lesser men. He could crush them both, but he won’t, because it’s my freedom that hangs in the balance. Not his. His is gone.

“Don’t you fucking touch me!” I snap the words as the soldier next to me tries to lead me away.

“Don’t make a scene, ma’am.”

Oh, I’m going to make a scene. I’m going to make the kind of scene that they won’t be able to ignore.

Chapter Thirteen

One month later...

“Free Doctor Knight!” I wave my placard high and I scream at the top of my lungs into a megaphone that makes my thin, hoarse tones go a little further.

I’m standing outside the barbed wire fence that surrounds the base where I last saw Daniel. Megaphone in one hand, placard in the other, I am a one-woman protest movement. This is ineffectual, but it’s all I can really do for him. I betrayed Daniel’s trust. I didn’t listen to him. I didn’t trust him. And now they have him. I don’t know if he’s still in this camp, or if they’ve moved him. I do know that I’m never going to stop looking for him, trying to get to him.

“Ma’am, you need to vacate this area.” A man in a helmet with the letters MP is approaching me. He’s saying what he always says.

“I’m not leaving until you release Daniel. He’s done nothing wrong.” I’m saying what I always say.

“Ma’am, you’re trespassing. You will be arrested if necessary.”

“Take me in if you have to. I don’t care.”

We’ve played this game before. We both know how it ends.

He grabs me and spins me around. The cuffs go on. Cold and hard. Then he marches me to the holding cell they use for arresting civilians. There used to be anti-war protesters in here. I can see the peace signs scratched into the concrete here and there. They’re long gone, and war is still here, so I don’t know what that says about anything.

“Hold her until the PD gets here,” the officer says to the soldier manning the desk. “Recommend a mental health hold.”

“Fuck you, I’m not crazy!”

They shut the door and leave me sitting there, helplessly. I’ve never had to fight for anything in my life. I’ve never had to work for anything either. Now I have to work and fight and I don’t know how. Everything I think to do seems so ineffective. One woman can’t win against an entire military. I’ve lost Daniel. Probably forever. For a second time, I’ve hurt him so badly he might never recover. All he wanted was my help, and I utterly fucked him over. I’ve been writing every commander in this place. In the end, they outright told me that the way they tracked us down was through that call I made when I decided I knew better than Daniel, that he was just paranoid.

I start to sob, crying tears of regret that don’t make me seem any more sane.

“You have to stop this, ma’am. Doctor Knight isn’t based here. Hasn’t been from the beginning.”

A kind, but gruff voice interrupts my tears. I look up to see that they’ve gone and gotten the boss again.

The commanding officer of this place is actually a decent guy. Silver-haired and more calm than most soldiers, he’s dealt with these meltdowns every day since they took Daniel. We’re starting to have a relationship of sorts.

“He’s serving his country, ma’am. Maybe you can let him do that.”

“Against his will!”

“I reckon he made his choices best way he could. Just like we all do. Just like you need to do. You’re too pretty to waste your life yelling at a fence.”

It’s all so simple for him. I should just give up and go home. I should just stop fighting.

“If someone took your wife away from you, would you just accept it? Or would you yell at every fence you had to until you got her back?”

“Well,” he admits. “I don’t know about that, but you and the doctor weren’t married.”

“We’re closer than most married couples are.”

“That’s what women who aren’t married tell themselves.”

I take it back. He’s an asshole.

“And what do fuckwits who steal people tell themselves?”

He smirks. Nothing I say bothers him, because he doesn’t take me seriously. “Ma’am, Doctor Knight is doing good and valuable work here. Maybe he wasn’t keen to volunteer, but we need him. He’s a good man.”

“I know he is! And he’s my man! Not yours!”

It’s hopeless. Militaries have been capturing scientists since the dawn of time. I know they’re never going to let him go. He’s too brilliant not to be on their team. Maybe he can find some way to negotiate some better conditions. Or maybe... I feel my throat close up at the very thought... maybe he’s just done with me. I made his escape impossible. I caused a huge scene at the base. Every misfortune in his life has been due to me. So maybe I should let him go. Maybe he wasn’t telling me to go and have a good life. Maybe he was telling me to fuck off so he could have a life of his own.

“I’m going to let you go,” he says, that horrible look of pity on his face. “But on one condition.”

“What’s that?”

“You take a day off from this. You go home and you think about things. And then you come up with a more constructive use of your time.”

“Yeah. Okay.”

That’s enough for him. He lets me out of the cell. I go back to the little yellow car all this trouble really started in, and I pull out. Go home, huh? Think about more constructive ways to be a total victim to these assholes? Fuck that. I swing the wheel around. Plant my foot flat and head the vehicle toward the gates of the base.

They’ll call me crazy, I think as the front of the car hits the center of the gates and sends one crashing entirely off its mounts, the panel clinging to the front of my car as I proceed across the neat green turf beyond. They’ll call me a terrorist, I consider as steam cascades from the smashed-up radiator. Maybe they’ll even kill me. Is it weird that I don’t care?

Chapter Fourteen

Daniel

“You’ve been a bad girl.”

I murmur the words softly as Briarlee opens her eyes.

“Are you mad at me?” The first words out of her mouth are soft and small. I’m not mad at her. I’m glad she’s alive. I’m glad she’s with me. It’s no thanks to the people who told me she’d be safe. They were supposed to look after her. They didn’t.

They turned her loose. They left her to her own devices. Her downward spiral was a swift and chaotic one. The massive dose of Regenermax followed by total abandonment caused her to break down. I’ve seen the footage of her final act of rebellion several times. I don’t know how she survived it, but I know she’s never, ever going to do a thing like that again. I won’t allow it.

I thought she might do better without me. I thought she might find the freedom she’d wanted. I thought so many things. All of them wrong, all of them informed by the fear that I ruined her. In the end, it wasn’t what I did that ruined her. It’s what I didn’t do and couldn’t do.

“No, sweetheart,” I say softly. “I’m not mad.”

“I think I did something stupid.”

She did, but she was out of her mind. It wasn’t her fault. It was mine. From the beginning, Briarlee has been mine to look after.

“It’s okay now.”

“It hurts.”

“It won’t for long,” I say, pushing the button on her medical drip to send another dose of painkillers into her system.

One month. That’s all it took for her to be seriously hurt again. She wasn’t functional without me, and I think I know why. None of this was her fault. She might be broken in a way even I can’t fix. If that’s the case, I will never forgive myself.

“Doctor.”

It’s Spencer. That’s how I know him anyway. God knows what his real name is. He’s been my handler since I agreed to work with them. He’s actually a reasonable guy, a sharp contrast to the men who took me and tried to beat me into submission. I’ve been able to continue my regime of Regenermax.

“We can’t keep her here. You know we can’t. Not long term.”

Here is a facility in the mountains. It’s biologically remote, and a repository of the most dangerous substances known to man. Viruses that are supposed to be extinct are kept here, mutated and tested. Chemical compounds banned by every right-thinking government in the world are routinely synthesized and though it’s never spoken of, they must be administered. Everything from Black Plague to Novichok is housed in several feet of concrete and steel.

Having Briarlee brought here wasn’t easy. They told me she’d be better off on the outside. They told me that her protests would die down, that she’d lose interest. Instead she lost her mind.

“You want me to work for you. Fine. I accept that I can do my work here. But I don’t accept that I can’t have Briarlee with me. She needs me.”

“She’s a liability.”

“She’s a woman your people wounded. She wasn’t like this before I dosed her. She was the calmest, sweetest girl in the world.” Not strictly entirely true, but it’s not as if they know any

better.

Spencer's expression shows his disbelief at my claim.

"She's recovering from the last time you shot her, she was left on her own without monitoring, which was not in the agreement, and she was allowed to become so destructive she could have killed herself or somebody else. You can't keep her safe. I can. She stays with me."

"One condition..."

"No conditions."

I've been learning how to deal with the military. They're not really interested in imprisoning anyone. They're a bureaucracy, same as everything else. They have rules for the sake of having rules, rules that are followed only because following rules is what they do.

That's why they need people like me. People who look past the rules to see what is possible. It was possible to make Regenermax work. And it's possible to have Briarlee here too.

"She doesn't have clearance. This is a top secret facility. No families. If we allow you, we have to make an exception for..."

"I'm sorry, has anyone else's family been the second human test subject of Regenermax? Is anyone else potentially useful as an object of study?"

I have a point, and he knows it. It took time for me to accept that I wasn't going to get away from the military without destroying myself and everything I loved. I have bowed to one great tyranny so I can be of use. But I won't give up Briarlee ever again.

"Alright," he sighs. "But I expect notes. Studies."

"I could have done that a lot more effectively if she hadn't been separated from me in the first place."

"We don't take civilians..." He trails off. "Yes, I know you're civilian, but you know the difference. You're an accomplished scientist. She isn't. If you want her here, it has to be under strictly monitored conditions. She stays in the lab. She doesn't leave it. Ever."

We'll see about that. For the moment, just having Briarlee here is enough. She's too sick to leave a medical bed anyway. That crash caused a mass of contusions, on top of the trauma she sustained earlier. She needs a lot of care, and I'm going to give it to her.

* * *

Briarlee

When I open my eyes again, he's there again. I thought I was dreaming until he touched me and I felt the warmth of his hand gently brushing my forehead.

"Did I die? Am I dead?"

"You didn't die, sweetheart," he says gently. "You're with me. In... a hospital."

The little hesitation tells me he's lying. This isn't a hospital. This is a prison. Maybe they don't call it that. Maybe they call it a base or a lab, but it's a place he can't leave, and I wasn't supposed to get into. A prison by any other name. I don't mind. I'd go to hell to be with him.

"You're pretty badly hurt," he says. "Don't move too much or too quick. These IVs are doing important things."

"You don't need to talk to me like a child," I say. "I know you're mad."

"I'm not mad. Why would I be mad?"

We both know why he should be angry. I can't work out why he isn't.

"Regenermax has two well-known side effects: enhanced lust response and aggression. They both hit you much harder than I expected. Could be smaller body mass. Could be it's not

suitable for women at the moment.”

“Because a horny aggressive man is fine, but a woman is a problem.”

“You’re a problem,” he says fondly. “My problem. And I don’t mind you horny, but I do mind you declaring war on the US Military.”

“They started it,” I say sulkily.

“And they finished it. They’ve classified you with the same status I am. You’re no longer free to go. You’re stuck here. With me.”

“Good,” I smile. “That’s all I’ve ever wanted.”

“It’s not all you’ve ever wanted,” he smiles. “You wanted a pony once.”

“I was fourteen. And I still want a pony, but I don’t think it would fit in this hospital bed.”

He chuckles, and I feel so much better. His absence was pure pain. I felt more alone than I have ever felt. It was as if the sun went out, and my heart went out with it.

“I want you to know,” he says. “Some of your reactions could have been down to the Regenermax. We’re going to run some noninvasive tests as you recover to see where you’re at.”

“It’s not the Regenerwhatever. I feel in love with you, you idiot.”

“If it’s not the Regenermax, then you’re being rude for the sake of it—and you know how I feel about that.”

A little thrill of excitement runs through me. His gentle, but stern warning makes me feel more normal, and more cared for than anything could.

“You’re in the army now, brat,” he winks. “Better start getting some discipline.”

“Am I? In the army?”

“Well, technically no, but you know what I mean. Behave yourself, Briarlee. I’ll be dealing with you soon.”

“Dealing with me, huh?”

He smiles and I feel that flutter in my tummy again. I’m sore. I’m contained in what I’m sure is a much more secure room than the one I broke out of the first time I woke up in one of these military bases, but none of that matters right now. I’m safe. I’m with him. What else could I possibly need?

Chapter Fifteen

It turns out, I need quite a lot else.

My recovery is slow. I wasn't seriously hurt in the crash, but a crash is a crash. The high Regenermax dose I'd been given the month before helped, Daniel says. Maybe it did. I don't know. I'm just glad to be back with him, to be able to see his face every day.

But there is a big, black cloud attached to this silver lining. And that is the fact that we are both prisoners now. As much as Daniel works to look after me, there is only so much he can do for me, and only so much time he can spend with me. I am not allowed to leave the room. Ever. It contains a bed, a television that only plays old VHS tapes, a treadmill to simulate walking, and fluorescent lighting. The floor is heavy gray linoleum. The walls are white tile. This is not a room to live in. This is a room where things are butchered.

At first, that doesn't matter. My relief at having him makes up for the Spartan decor. Within a week, I'm on my feet. In another week, I've thoroughly explored the boundaries of this room, which is nine feet by ten, and I'm bored. Those tiles seem to be shuffling ever inward, closing in on me. I start to feel claustrophobic, as if I might die here.

"Please, Daniel, just one little walk."

"You can't leave the room," he explains for the umpteenth time. "But I can get you a VR headset on and you can walk on the treadmill. It simulates outside conditions quite well."

"I don't want a VR headset. I want to go outside. I need sunlight."

"Have you been using your Vitamin D lamp?"

"Ugh! That's Soviet technology. What is this, a gulag?"

His expression is a mixture of sympathy and grim discipline.

"You can't always get what you want," he replies. "You had all the freedom you could use out there, and you used it to breach a military facility. So now you're locked down. Consequences, Briarlee."

I don't like the way he's talking to me. I don't like the way he has become as much my captor as anyone else. My entire world has shrunk to being him and him alone. Maybe that should be enough. It's what I was willing to die for.

I synthesize all these complex thoughts into a simple phrase.

"You're being a dick."

"Briarlee..." he growls a warning.

"No. I mean it! What happened to you? You fled into the woods to avoid being taken by the military. I got shot in the process! And now all you care about is following their rules and making them happy? I guess the Regenermax can't stop you from being a pussy."

The last words make him go absolutely still. I've lashed out and I've hurt him in a way I never could physically. But he needed to hear it. We shouldn't be here, in this horrible facility where they do god knows what. He hasn't told me, but every room in this place seems to be soundproof, and I can only imagine that's because the building would echo with the screams of the damned if it wasn't.

"You got hurt when I ran," he growls. "You would be hurt again if I ran again. They know what and who I love in this world, and they will use it to get my compliance. I won't risk that. No matter what you think. Your safety is worth more to me than your opinion of me."

And now I feel like shit. Maybe I should.

"I'm sorry."

"It is what it is, Briarlee. I'm going to do what keeps you safe. That's what a man does. I

should never have run. I should have surrendered myself in the beginning. You'd have missed me, but it wouldn't have destroyed you. The shooting and the Regenermax did that."

"So you think I'm ruined."

"I think you were hurt by my choices. I think I'm too late to save everything you once were."

It's my turn to be hurt.

"Fuck you," I blaze. "We should run. We should let them come for us if they want. We should load up on as much Regenermax as won't kill us and we should go live in the wild."

"You want to live in the woods?"

"I was thinking Canada."

He snorts. "Briarlee..."

I get close to him, lower my voice to a conspiratorial whisper. "You could do it. You could develop a dose for both of us that would make us almost invincible."

"We'd risk losing our minds. We'd be nothing more than animals."

"Is that risk worse than the risk of living here forever, me in this cell? You in a slightly bigger one?"

* * *

Daniel

She looks at me with her beautiful eyes and I feel the siren's call to rebellion.

Her idea is sinking into my mind. It's wrong on so many levels. But it's also right in many other ways. We need to be free. We will lose our minds in here. Our spirits will be broken. Maybe one day, a long time from now, our handlers will let us go. Or maybe they won't. Maybe we'll die in here if we don't take our fate into our own hands.

Since arriving at the facility, I've weaned myself off Regenermax. The healing is done. My injuries have not returned. The physical gains I made during treatment have eased considerably. I can't think on the Regenermax. Not as well as I need to in order to develop and refine it. I've been clean for three weeks.

What she doesn't know—what nobody knows—is that I've been developing a super version of the drug. A potential one hit that would have cataclysmic effects on the body. It's dangerous. Very dangerous. Either the subject withstands the onslaught of regenerative growth, or they die. It could likely lead to tumors. There's no way to test that, but anything that speeds up cell replication has that possible effect.

I could dose us both with it. It would turn us into the human equivalent of monsters. But then what? This place isn't one that you can simply leave by brute force.

"We're going to do this, aren't we?"

"What do you mean?"

She smiles at me a little too broadly. "That's your thinking face. You're thinking about how to do this."

She's right. I have an idea.

"What would you give up for freedom?" Her answer to this question matters more than she can imagine, because my idea is nearly unthinkable. I suppose, on some level, I have been planning this all along, but it is as it was the first time I took Regenermax. I have to be pushed to my limits to take this out. Seeing Briarlee so angry and miserable in her confinement makes me consider an almost unspeakable option.

“Everything.”

“Everything is a lot,” I say solemnly.

“As long as we’re alive, and together. I don’t care.”

That’s a bold answer. We’ll see if she really means it.

Chapter Sixteen

“Ready?”

She looks at me. Total trust, even as we stand on the brink of a last-ditch attempt at escape. If this goes wrong, I’m certain we will be shown no mercy. One or both of us may be killed or imprisoned. Forever. We are about to cash in every chip, burn every bridge. This is the proverbial point of no return.

“Ready.”

“I need you to understand, this isn’t like the previous formulation. It’s much stronger. It could have intense, even poisonous side effects. My research indicates that it is safe for consumption, but the processes it will unleash in the body are much quicker and much more intense than what Regenermax does. That acts on the cellular level to increase healing and in some cases, growth. This goes one step further. If it works, it will step into the genome itself. It will unlock genetic potential we all carry, but isn’t activated in modern humans. We will not be ourselves after this. But it should make us almost impossible to capture.”

I can tell she’s not really listening. Her eyes are locked on the vial. She wants the treatment. She wants the freedom. With that first dose in the woods, I began a process with her that I’m not sure could ever have ended any other way. She’s not the same Briarlee I used to know.

She used to be sweet, but harmless. She used to drift through the world, taking what came easy and rejecting the rest. That’s not who is standing in front of me now. This woman doesn’t want what is easy. She wants her freedom. She wants me. She has fought for both, and I’m not sure there’s a warning I could give her that would stop her from taking this preparation. It’s taken me months to produce this. Every day she’s spent in here, she’s become that much more desperate. The old Briarlee would have been quite content in captivity. This one isn’t.

I hand her the vial. “You don’t have to drink this. We can stay here. It’s not good, but it’s safe. If we do this, we accept that whatever happens afterward is beyond our control. It could make us sick. It could...”

She uncaps the vial and tosses it down her throat.

Decision made.

I watch Briarlee carefully, worried that it could be too much for her to take. Her dose needed to be almost as strong as mine, and I can’t be sure of the effect it will have. She coughs and splutters, but she takes it down. I slide my hand under her wrist to detect her pulse, making sure it stays within the range of human potential.

After sixty seconds or so, she seems stable. Good. Time to take my dose. Like her, I don’t hesitate. There’s no point now. Now we’ve begun, we can only go in one direction.

The drug hits me like a freight train. The moment it finds my stomach, it begins to be absorbed. I have thirty seconds of full coherency to do what needs to be done, before full conscious control becomes a thing of the past, and I defer to pure animal instinct.

* * *

The fire starts in a room adjacent to my laboratory. Sulphur powder is ignited to create a dangerously potent blue flame that laps at the sets of cardboard storage boxes.

This place is wired with plenty of sensors, so evacuation is almost immediate.

“Let’s go, Doctor Knight! We have a situation!” Soldiers come immediately to usher us

to safety, totally unaware that we are the danger.

Right now, Briarlee and I are doing one thing: working to contain animal impulse. Trying not to give away the fact that we are undergoing massive internal changes to physiology and psychology. My cock is already rock hard, my desire to take her is burning as hot as the fire that ensures we are rushed from the lab and whisked outdoors, past every single security checkpoint that would otherwise have kept us closely contained.

The small compound is in chaos as things start to explode, bright puffs of brilliant orange smoke leaping from the lower windows. Later on, they'll discover that there's relatively little damage, that charges were planted to simulate a near total meltdown, but not incur the costs or consequences—except in one particular laboratory.

I'm sure that the fire is consuming the remnants of my research. They won't have Regenermax. They won't get anything from me. Besides, the suits were right in the beginning. This is far too dangerous to unleash on unsuspecting citizens.

There's a lot of shouting and a lot of chaos. Some of the scientists are very attached to their work. They're fully prepared to rush into the burning building to save it. This is working even more perfectly than I had imagined.

We were prepared to fight our way through line after line of soldiers. We were ready to sell our lives dearly. In the end, we back our way through the panicked, speculating crowd, and into the tree line. All eyes are on the building. Nobody so much as looks at us.

I look at Briarlee. "Run."

She doesn't need any more encouragement. She takes to her heels, and her body becomes a bullet shooting through the mountain flora. I match her pace and together we flit between trees and over rocky outcroppings, heading ever deeper into the wild.

The enhanced dose has caused us both to gain more mass. It stresses clothing, and within a minute we have both ripped the cloth from our bodies and tossed it aside.

She gleams with sweat, her naked body both soft with curves and powerful with muscle. She has gained a full inch in height since treatment began. And she's aroused. The slick insides of her thighs gleam as she pumps her legs, sprinting almost faster than I can. She's smaller than I am. More nimble.

She's fucking beautiful. I need to be inside her. I have to have her. The lust is rising and the beast unleashed.

* * *

Briarlee

We're free. Even if they come for us. Even if they try to capture us, it doesn't matter, because in this moment, we are absolutely, utterly free. My heart sings, my senses so keen it feels as though the world has burst into some new kind of color. Everything is brighter, more detailed than it was before. As I run, I see the way the petals of leaves curl and unfurl in the sun. I spot birds sitting in trees, their feathers iridescent and shining in the light. We are running from the military, but I don't feel like I'm fleeing. I feel like I'm flying through a world that is finally mine to enjoy with Daniel by my side. Every single second is precious.

The bullets will soon sing out around us. Maybe they will find our flesh. Maybe they will find something more vital. I hope they do. I hope this is the last thing I ever experience, this glorious flight for freedom, where nothing matters but the man by my side, this great powerful beast who has always been by my side, who has never abandoned me.

We are more than lovers. We are soulmates in every sense of the word. The thing at the very core of us, our true essence, is bonded completely. And the future we are fleeing toward, whether it culminates in spending the rest of our days in the wild, or ends minutes from now bleeding into the dirt, is good. It's good because it's ours.

There are those who would control us. There are those who have plans to use us. There are those who would crush every bit of life and spirit from us for their own ends. Our entire existence has been spent inside a construct we never truly understood until we stepped outside it.

The Regenermax has made me more animal. I feel the great tragedy of what was my life, so modern and so twisted I didn't know what I needed from it. I thought I needed nice clothes, a good job. I thought I needed a guy who made a lot of money. I thought I needed to live in a house that was nicer than any of my friends' houses. I thought all those things would come to me if I kept pushing Daniel away and kept going for what I had been told to want.

In the end, all that matters are these breaths I take, drawing the oxygen deep into my lungs. Daniel's great body beside mine shelters and guides me. We are both beasts now. We have given way to whatever is at the very base of a human. The Regenermax has given us more power, but it has stripped us of civilization. All that careful conditioning we've been under since birth to make us perfect little citizens is gone.

I am naked, and I don't care. There is no shame left in me. There can be no shame in this state where only the animal roams.

Time has ceased to be of concern. It is only the light that matters. It is waning, the sky turning bright golden orange in the horizon. We head toward that great sunset, running until we find the mouth of a cave. There is no hesitation in dipping into it. These mountains are full of natural cave systems, some of which run for miles, many of which have never been charted.

We feel the safety as the walls close in and the tunnels branch and twist. Finally we are in total silent darkness. We are as man and woman were at the beginning of time, sheltering in deep caves away from predators, finding solace in one another.

They'll never find us. Because we're not Daniel Knight or Briarlee Smith anymore. The soft fine hair that has always covered my arms and legs in down is growing thicker. Daniel's face has changed too. The first round of Regenermax made him unrecognizable to me all those months ago. His brow, his jaw, all growing more prominent.

This second dose has amplified that effect. His head is huge, his jaw is even more thick and powerful, his chin is stronger and squarer. His hair has already started to look thicker, and it seems longer. Mine does too. It is almost at my shoulders. When I reach to look at it, I see that the back of my arm no longer has fine hair on it. That too has thickened. We look more animal than human.

This realization should bring fear, maybe disgust. But it doesn't. The pale, weak aesthetics of the human form don't interest me anymore. I don't need pretty. I need passion.

With a masculine growl, Daniel grabs me, swings me off my feet. In his brutish arms, I am delicate and ever female. He impales me on his cock in one swift stroke. There is no hesitation. There is no foreplay. No words of compliment or the little lies humans speak to each other in moments of lust. There is only him inside me, my cunt wrapped around his cock, our passion taking precedence over all things.

We fuck on the cave floor, our bodies writhing in primal passion. He pins me in place, one hand in my hair, holding my head down as he pushes between my legs and slams inside me, my knees raising high and spreading so he can get deeper and deeper, fill my wet fuck hole with the thick rod of his cock. I am stretched. I am dominated. I am taken. I am free.

Epilogue

Is Bigfoot having a baby?

There are reports of a small family of Bigfoot living in the Canadian Rockies! Several witnesses on a hunting trip say they have seen a male and a female creature matching Bigfoot descriptions in the foothills. They're described as large, upright hominids, covered in thick pelts of fur, extremely shy of human contact. Ms. Flanagan of Wishing Springs claims to have spent several minutes observing the pair bathing in a hot spring, and says the female appeared to be heavily pregnant—congratulations, Mr. Bigfoot, you're going to be a daddy!

"This is never going to stop cracking me up," I snort, poking at the already yellowing piece of newsprint cut out and stuck to the cooler that acts as our refrigerator the few months out of the year it's not cold enough to just toss food out into the snow.

Daniel looks up from the table he's hewing. Is hewing the word? I don't know. We've been out here for almost a year now, and there are still so many things I have to learn. Remote Alaska is a far cry from my little city apartment; out here we have plains and forests and mountains and rivers, what feels like an entire little world to ourselves.

The massive dose we took to escape took almost three months to wear off. In that time, we shambled around the place, grunting and fucking like rabbits. Good times were had by all. We've done a lot for the Bigfoot myth, so much that we had to keep heading ever deeper into the wilds to avoid the camera people who came to snap our pictures whenever someone spotted our furry selves. Whenever we make the long thirty-hour journey into the nearest town, I insist on snapping up all the related articles and pictures, much to Daniel's despair.

Slowly, we regained our civilized nature, our humanity. Though some people would probably argue that, if they found us. We built the little cabin we now live in with our own two hands. It's a log cabin front that sits over the mouth of a small cave, which holds heat in winter and keeps us cool in summer. I call it our Hobbit hole. Daniel calls it something scientific with 'icarum' at the end.

"Shouldn't you be bottling those preserves?" he says dryly.

The man has become a real taskmaster. The one thing the Regenermax did leave in its wake was the dominant, possessive, sexy as hell streak.

"None of us like pickled carrots anyway," I point out.

"We need vegetables to get us through winter."

"I know, Daniel. I understand the concept of eating food to live. I may not be a big science genius, but I know what hole food goes in."

His brows draw together as he stands up to lecture me. The man needs to be at full height to really get the full effect of his scolding. Unfortunately, the cabin isn't quite tall enough to allow that. The Regenermax has left him at 7'2 in height. Basically a giant.

"Do you know what hole I'm going to go in if you keep talking like that?"

I smirk at him. It's not the right thing to do, but that's why I do it.

"You think this is funny, brat? You want me to bend you over and show you?"

"Well, if it's the table you're going to bend me over, you have to finish it first," I point out. "It only has two legs."

He growls and reaches for me. I let out a giggle of glee as he pulls me close and kisses me roughly, the thick pelt of his beard rough against my cheek and chin.

"I should fuck your little ass until you scream how sorry you are," he rumbles. "I should

whip your rear until you can't sit down. I should..."

"Mama!"

Our little man calls from his cot in the cave. He's nine months old, bright-eyed like me, smart just like his daddy—and he has an impeccable sense of timing.

Daniel lets me go with a stinging warning slap. I skip back in the cave to pick the baby up. His little face lights up as he sees me, and I feel my heart swell with love. Our little boy, who would never have existed if not for the trials we underwent, has made every hardship, every fight, every bullet worthwhile. We called him Max. It seemed fitting.

He snuggles into me, super content to be held until I carry him out to the cabin and he sees the other person he loves most in the world.

"Dada!" he screams at Daniel, reaching chubby little hands out for the big man who softens immediately. I hand the baby over and watch them together. It's the most precious sight in the world as Daniel holds Max in one massive arm and starts showing him the table he's making.

"Now, what you want is a good right angle between the table leg and the table top. What's a right angle?"

"Gah!" Max declares.

"Ninety degrees, that's right," Daniel beams.

They get down to work, and so do I. Survival out here means pulling together, getting jobs done, and only occasionally teasing Daniel to the point he makes good on all those dirty, filthy threats he so loves to throw my way.

As I work, I glance back over at the article about the Bigfoot baby. If only they knew.

The End

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Broken by Him

Grabbed off the street, locked in a cell, and falsely accused of a terrible crime, Tara thought they had taken everything they could from her. But she was wrong. Terribly wrong.

They plan to take her modesty, her dignity, and her free will itself. They intend to break her.

Breaking women is Doctor Mark Kilroy's job and he does it well. Tara will be stripped bare, thoroughly humiliated, and punished harshly for the slightest hint of disobedience. Her body will be pushed to its limits with pleasure so shameful and intense it will shatter her ability to resist his demands. When Mark is finished, he will not need to force himself on her. She will beg for it.

But Tara is not like any other woman Mark has broken. Even as her body surrenders to his mastery, her mind refuses to yield. Worse still, he finds himself yearning to cast aside protocol, abandon his duty, and claim her for himself. When the time comes for him to complete his task and put Tara's conditioning to the test, will her defiance end in catastrophe for them both?

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Shamefully Broken

Since the arrogant, infuriatingly sexy brute spanked her like a little girl on her eighteenth birthday seven years ago, Ellie has done her best to avoid Mason Malone, and he is the absolute last person she wants to come crawling to asking for a favor. But with her brother deep in debt to the wrong people and her life in danger, Ellie knows Mason is the only one who can help her.

Mason agrees to intervene, but the rough, battle-hardened former Marine turned millionaire owner of a private security agency is no knight in shining armor, and his assistance will come at a high price. In return for his protection, Ellie will be made to surrender her body to him utterly and completely, to be used anywhere, anytime, and in any way he pleases.

He will not be patient. He will not be gentle. He is going to make her pay for all the years she spent looking down her nose, pretending she was too good for a guy like him. She will moan, plead, and cry out with pain, humiliation, and helpless, desperate need as he strips her bare, punishes her harshly, and then takes her over and over, each time harder than the last.

He is going to break her in the most shameful way imaginable, and she is going to beg him for it.

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Broken by the Alien

I've been a slave since Earth was conquered, but today a powerful Rathkari commander has singled me out. He's brought me aboard his ship and made sure I'm bathed and pampered. Now this huge, fearsomely sexy alien warrior plans to do absolutely anything he wants with me.

I hate him and his entire race, and I fight him with everything I have... at first. But before long, I'm moaning, writhing, and blushing with utter shame as he forces one savage, shattering climax after another from my naked, helpless, tightly bound body.

Soon I'll surrender completely. Then he'll claim me, use me, and breed me hard and often, and I'll take everything he gives me and beg for more. He'll have broken me, and I'll know it.

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Shamefully Shared

The last time I was in this much trouble, five elite soldiers risked everything to save me. Then I made a selfish choice that cost them their careers. Now I'm going to have to pay the price.

I didn't have a choice, so I accepted the deal they offered. In return for their protection, these rough, battle-hardened men now own me. I'm theirs to share, not just for a night, but forever.

They'll strip me, punish me, and use me again and again until I'm sore, shamed, and utterly spent. I'm going to get exactly what I deserve, and I'll hate every moment of it... or at least that's what I try to tell myself.

[Buy on Amazon](#)

Savages

I was warned. I was told what the savages in the wild lands outside the city would do to a girl like me, how they would ravish me, share me, and shame me. I should have listened...

Once I left home, I didn't even last a day on my own. With a bear set on making me his next meal, it took four fearsome beasts of men to save my life. But the rugged, battle-hardened brutes who rescued me have no intention of letting me go. I belong to them now, and they are more than ready to strip me bare and punish me as sternly as needed to teach me my place.

They have claimed me, but they will not merely use my virgin body for their pleasure. They are going to breed me. They'll take me hard and often, sometimes one at a time and sometimes several at once, until they've mastered me so completely that I can't help begging for more.

[Buy on Amazon](#)

Captive

I was there the moment he awakened. I saw the pain and rage in his eyes as they experimented on him. Now he is free, and he has come to claim me, to use me, and to breed me.

He has no concept of boundaries or limits. He will not be gentle. He will take me hard and savagely, over and over, and if I resist he will punish me as shamefully as he sees fit.

He is going to make me beg for mercy... and then he is going to make me beg for more.

[Buy on Amazon](#)

Bought

I thought knowledge was power... until Ethan Keller showed me what real power looks like.

I knew the truth about his company and I was ready to tell the world, but he had other ideas. He didn't bribe me. He didn't blackmail me. He just decided I belonged to him, and it was

done.

If I try to run, I'm caught and brought back. If I disobey, I'm punished so sternly I beg for mercy and so shamefully it makes me blush crimson just to think about it. But when he strips me bare and uses me as roughly and as thoroughly as he pleases, my body cannot hide the truth from him.

He knows I need to be owned.

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Brute

I thought my scheme was foolproof, but the alien brute caught me. Now I'm going to pay.

I will not just be punished. I will be owned. He is going to use me roughly, savagely, taking me in ways I didn't think it would be possible for such an enormous beast to take a little human.

As one painfully intense climax after another is ripped from my naked, quivering body, I'm certain he is not even close to being done with me... and I'm not sure I want him to be.

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