

The RA

Chapter Three: The Men's Bathroom

I already had one foot in the hallway when I heard a giggly, "Girl, you need yourself a bigger towel!" If I'd heard it before I opened the door, I would have waited. The voice was right, whoever it was. It was coming from inside one of the rooms, and I was miles from learning voices. I barely knew names, and could only match a handful to faces. It hadn't seemed like I'd need to, considering the foulup. Anyway, the baby blue towel was normal size. Probably bigger than mine, even. It was only that the girl wearing it had many inches on me, and between the amount of it needed to cover the slope of her bust and the sheer scale of her torso, the thing barely covered her ass. I wasn't sure it did, honestly. I looked away fast. By the time my maleness kicked in for a double-take, she was rounding the corner, where I saw how barely it was doing its job on her boobs.

Fucking Higgins 3.

There were two bathrooms on the floor, one for men and one for women. I felt like a king, at first, striding into the men's room. Six bathroom stalls, five sinks, four showers, and even a bathtub tucked away in a little closet in the back. I was the only one on the floor with a key to it, I'd been told. The thing looked like it hadn't been used in years, but it was all mine nevertheless. All this, all mine. Until Ramona checked in to let me know I needed to move over to my new assignment, anyway. I'd already packed a bunch of my stuff this morning, to be ready.

It gave me an excuse to hide out after what I'd done with Quinn, too.

My kingly sense faded before too long when I realized almost forty girls were trying to share the same capacity in the other bathroom. I showered quickly, dressed, then hurried around the loop to the other, where sure enough, there was a line of robe and towel-clad girls out the door, awaiting their turn. Damn, but there were a lot of cute girls on Higgins 3. A man could snap a picture of this lineup and sell posters; they'd adorn half the male dorm rooms on campus.

"Hey, since there's only one of me, and I'm well past done, you guys... Girls, sorry. You—"

"Women," muttered a gorgeous black girl just loud enough to be sure I heard her. Torielle, but goes by Tori, I thought? I remembered her mostly because she was Dana's roommate. There was a name I wouldn't forget any time soon. A mom I wouldn't forget, either.

"Right, sorry. Ladies – if that's all right?" Tori nodded, smiling graciously. "You ladies can feel free to use the men's bathroom."

The smart ones scattered immediately. Some evidently preferred the girls' – women's – room. And one, a tiny little freckly redhead I was quite sure had been wearing glasses when we met yesterday. "Is it... *clean*?"

I laughed. "They closed Higgins down for all last year for the renovations, and before that it was a women's floor. So I've been the only guy using it, and before that any damage is on your team. I think you'll be OK."

She brightened, shyly. I'd seen that look before. These freshmen, leaving behind friends and families, being on their own for the first time... It was that smile, when something inside them clicked. A connection made, some small thing tethering them to their new world. I loved that smile.

"Remind me of your name."

"Petra."

"Petra. Right. I'll remember that. Why don't you head on down, see if I wrecked the place for you, OK?"

She grinned ear to ear. "OK. Spencer."

I raised my voice as I called after her, so it would reach more ears. "And remember, we're meeting at 11 for lunch, and then we're doing campus tours. Tell your friends!"

Petra giggled, and merrily complied. "Lunch and tour at 11, everybody!"

This place had grown on me overnight. I was going to miss Higgins 3. Miss it like hell.

Quinn's surprise visit had evidently taught me nothing. Right around 10:30, the door swung open not a half second after someone knocked. This time, though, it wasn't some swaggering teenage girl coming to stick a finger in my ass. Thankfully? Yeah, let's go with thankfully.

"Hey, Ramona!" I hopped up from my desk, more from surprise than anything.

"As you were," my boss said with a bemused roll of the eyes. She'd been in here during training, once, while passing through the floor to make sure mini-fridge deliveries had gone well. I hadn't been unpacked at the time. It looked almost the same now.

"So, here to escort me out? You'll never take me alive!"

She smiled, but it faded quickly. I wasn't sure what to make of it. "Mind if I have a seat?"

I was already sitting back down in the room's only chair, but I gestured her to the bed. "Sorry, I haven't made it yet."

"Good lord, Spencer, I'm a married suburban woman pushing thirty and I don't even make my bed most days. I can handle it." Her eyes went back to one of my posters, depicting a car on a dirt road with an enormous tornado bearing down on it. The caption read, *Perseverance*, and in smaller font beneath, *the courage to ignore the obvious wisdom of turning back*.

"My dad got it for me junior year, when I was thinking of taking a job at my buddy's mom's company. Or I guess he got it for me after I decided to stick with it, get my degree. He thought it was pretty funny. I'm glad he talked me down, though."

"So am I."

All right, so I had sort of a mini-crush on my boss. It's not my fault. It wasn't the physical so much, though she was more than pretty. Sitting in my bed with her legs crossed in a fetching little burgundy sweater dress with her butter blonde hair tucked as if incidentally into this sloppy little pony tail out the right side of her head. Neither was it the accent, something vaguely eastern European that my untraveled American sensibilities deemed almost musical.

No, it was Ramona herself. She wore her spirit on her face like makeup. In it I saw her compassion, her intelligence, her commitment to her ideals, her kindness. She was one of those rare genuinely *good* people. I'd crossed paths with her time and again over the past couple years as an RA over at Rowland when we did campus-wide staff training and events. I'd noticed her then as the hot manager, but not much more than that. Getting to know her better these past few weeks, I have to say, I was a big fan. Her husband was one hell of a lucky man.

Which made what I knew she was about to tell me all the tougher to hear.

"So. Where are they sending me off to?"

Ramona smiled at my cutting right to it. She was a fan of mine, too; she'd told me as much, grateful to have an experienced staffer on board, plus the diversity I added to Higgins staff by virtue of having a dick. (Not how she put it.) I knew she'd be sad to lose me, which was some small comfort.

"Let's not get ahead of ourselves. So first off, Bob did some digging around, and we figured out what happened. One of his people up in the home office, the one who was doing housing assignments for Higgins, fouled up. He didn't say if it was foul play or an innocent mistake, though I'd assume the latter. Procedurally, they do housing unit by unit – for Higgins, that's floor by floor. For the new coed floors, they split them in half, so in the system, there's one listing for Higgins 3 men, and one for Higgins 3 women. With me so far?"

I nodded. "Straightforward enough."

"My sense of things, honestly? A stupid coincidence. It looks like you have enough girls on your floor with names that could go either way gender-wise. My guess is that they skimmed and saw some girls assigned to it named Terry and Billie and Quinn and so forth, assumed it was the guys' roster, so then they treated the other as the women's roster, thus in effect making both the guy's and girl's lists all women."

I shook my head. "But... doesn't the system attach a gender role to the applicant? If confusion over names is all it takes to stick people on the wrong floor, why didn't this happen all over campus?"

"The system does. The thing is, Higgins 3 is a coed floor, so it didn't try to filter out this gender or that. Turns out the only thing gendering the assignments here was the title of the rosters, which if you confuse those..."

"Wow. That's... That's something. Man, evicted from my room over a reading comprehension fail."

Ramona looked to that same poster. "Well, I was thinking. Maybe... maybe we consider trying a little of that 'perseverance' you're advertising there."

My eyes narrowed. "Wait, am I being fired?"

"Oh my god, no!" Ramona rushed over and crouched in front of me, putting her hands consolingly on my knees. "No no no, Spencer. You have a job, OK? You're going to be fine. There was... talk... of something along those lines. I squelched that hard, though."

Ramona was a big one for touching. I figured it must be more the norm in her culture. Honoring that, I put my hands over hers, if nothing else to show my gratitude for her going to bat for me. "So then... I'm sorry, what's happening then?"

"It's actually up to you. Now as you can imagine, we can't very well displace your residents, or even half of them. Not even if we wanted to. So, we either need to swap you with another RA, a woman, from another coed floor, so she'll have your women's

community and you'll have the mixed gender rooms you were expecting. Just not here in Higgins."

Her sincere desire not to lose me came through in her tone. "All right. Or...?"

"Or... You stay. Here. Under me."

"But..."

"I know. It's unconventional. It might even cause a little friction. Still, this is 2022, not 1965. If not for that 'reading comprehension fail,' as you called it, these women all would have had a male RA anyway. They simply would have also had male floormates. Insofar as the occupant of this room is concerned, I see no conflict. Moreover, without you, I lose my most senior staff member. We lose our only man on the Higgins staff. I'm left with someone I didn't train for a community I don't manage."

"Wait. Are you saying... I'm staying here?"

"I'm saying you have a choice, Spencer. I realize this might be uncomfortable for you, and likely you'll – we'll – take some pushback over it. If this is outside your comfort zone, I understand. I'll respect whatever you decide. But, if it's something that matters to your decision, just know that I want you here. I did before, and I still do now. But if you decide otherwise, say the word and I'll get the transfer process started."

There was really nothing to consider. I gave those delicate hands of hers a squeeze. She squeezed back.

"You know you're going to have to give up the men's bathroom, Spencer."

"That dam already burst."

I broke the news at lunch to the girls who were tagging along, which was most of them. Even some of the upperclassmen tagged along to socialize, even though they didn't mean to join us for the tour. Reactions were tough to gauge; they had bigger things on their minds than my employment situation, after all, so the announcement came and went in between introduction to the Penderdast food court and a Q&A session that only tangentially involved me. Jordyn, a junior criminal justice major, became the focal point for the freshmen's voracious interrogation about what to see and do around Lakeview. I made a note to reach out to her later; it never hurt to have an in with the influencers in one's community.

Then it was off to the tour, just me and my freshmen, plus Janis and hers. I had by far the bigger crowd. Of the thirty-four women on Higgins 3, thirty-one were freshmen. I didn't know the breakdown of Higgins 4, but Janis arrived with six. I had been paired up to balance each other's groups out, and to give her isolated newbs a few more friendly freshman faces to put names to.

We were very different people, Janis and I. I don't think she liked me any better than I liked her. For purposes of the campus tour, though, our rapport played well. Her by the book style made sure we covered the essentials and major details. She pointed out the main academic buildings, the rec center, the IM field, athletic venues, the student union, cultural centers, the chapel, Greek row, and so on. Meanwhile I was there with my off-the-cuff extemporaneous style to keep up engagement and provide anecdotes or conversation-starters while we sweated our way across campus on a lovely, but toasty, August day.

Groups like ours were out in force as RAs from all over campus were showing their freshmen around. I recognized a lot of them, and exchanged greetings as a pretext to let our folks meet theirs, however briefly. By the time we were passing the controversial Captain Jennings statue, depicting one of the campus's founders and a Confederate officer, one thing was becoming hard to ignore.

"Is it me, or are your girls... cute?" Janis murmured as we wended through a raucous crowd of protesters. There were usually some here during the warmer months, and a day like today with lots of new folks to rally to the cause meant they had gathered in force.

"I... hadn't noticed," I answered.

"I'm being serious! All afternoon, I can feel the other tour groups turning to stare. It's like we're on the tour bus for the Swedish bikini team, only without the bus."

"Or the bikinis," I pointed out sourly.

It earned me an elbow. Deserving it, I didn't bother dodging. "You can be such a guy. I cannot believe Ramona is letting this fly. If my parents had found out my floor was all women except for a single central male authority figure, they'd be pounding Bob's door down."

“They may well, at that. I feel a little weird about it myself, but who knows, maybe we’ll all learn something from each other.”

“I don’t think it’s the ‘learning’ that would cause the pounding,” Janis murmured, directing a baleful look at two of my girls walking a short ways in front of us. Again. Janis was a Mormon, and for all she insisted she wasn’t the strictest adherent of her faith, she came with all the judgmentality of the most irritating sort of religious zealots.

I suppose it would be more accurate to say she was directing that slut-shamey look at one of the two in particular. As it so happened, the same one I’d seen that morning with the insufficient towel. She and the girl with her – her roommate, I thought – had been walking out in front of the group, staying ahead and waiting at corners to see which way we were headed next. The roommate was, like most of my girls, dressed nice, maybe a little extra, so they could make good impressions on all the new folks they were meeting. Towel girl, however, had gone the extra mile.

It was a good time to be in college, with pushbacks against notions of propriety taking a solid drubbing nationwide. The difference even in the relatively short window since my own freshman year was noticeable. I still remember the transition from high school, where shorts had to come down past the fingertips and cleavage was strictly verboten. Suddenly I was in a world where girls had boobs, and legs, and sometimes let me see parts of them.

This young woman had gone rather a bit further.

Badump-badump. That was what I’d been calling her fall fashion game in my head for the past hour. It was the sound of her barely covered ass cheeks semi-rhythmically wobbling up and down, clapping side to side. Peach. That would no doubt be the name of that fabric color on the packaging. Peach spandex, painted across ample hips. The shorts looked like a compromise between volleyball in the gym and on the sand, skimpy to the point of being wholly inadequate. Her butt cleavage didn’t merely appear at both the top and bottom of the shorts (though it did do that), but they were so tight, her entire ass crack had swallowed them whole. Or loose? I honestly didn’t know which fit would suck your shorts up your butt. I’d never tried.

Maybe I should ask her. Or better yet, maybe I should stop staring before Janis realizes I’ve once more failed to hear a word she’s said on account of those things.

“...these people here like this often?” one of Janis’s residents was asking. Good. I hadn’t missed anything.

Janis made sure the protesters our crowd was filtering past could hear her answer. “Not this many, but there’s some almost every day. It’s a lightning rod for liberal rage, unfortunately. So many people who want to whitewash history to appeal to...”

As for the rest of her, she’d picked out a top as loose as the shorts were tight, flowy and breezy. It had no back aside from a few strings holding the sides together. It was hot out, and with almost no breeze, but twice now the rare puff of wind had

coincided with her turning to look at something to the side, providing a mouth-watering cock-calcifying side boob. No bra. I'd noticed that way back at lunch. I'd been trying so hard not to fixate on her, I'd not even managed to try to pick out her name again.

"...a good thing, isn't it?" one of mine was saying. Tori. Uh, oh. Janis was engaging an opinionated black student about the nuances of glorifying slavers. I should probably get involved here. "Monuments depicting Confederate leaders are anachronistic at best, an affront to..."

Badump-badump turned to look at the statue, a ghost of a breeze coinciding. Holy fuck, you could see like half her tit. Her face was smiling guilelessly, just another smoking hot college girl embracing – nay, flaunting – her sexuality at its peak of radiance.

"Don't you think, Spencer?"

I turned. Janis and Tori were both looking at me. Several of the protesters, too, both those defending Jennings' presence and calling for his removal. Shit.

"Honestly? Fuck this statue," I said. Tori was part of my tribe, after all. If the banner hanging in our floor lounge was to be believed, I'd made her part of my family. My own feelings on the thing didn't matter. If I was going to make this work, I could use some allies.

Cheers met jeers. On we went. Captain Jennings went nowhere. *Badump. Badump.*

Residence hall living has its challenges. Not the least of them is making yourself mindful not to call them “dorms” in earshot of Ramona or the other professional staff. Seriously, though. Tiny studio apartments with shared bathrooms, impersonal features, mass-produced furnishings, a home that came with a list of rules as long as my arm.

Still, there was something to be said for not having a water bill. I’d showered the night before after the incident with Quinn, since I couldn’t sleep anyway. Again when I woke up, per my habit, and once again after the sunny weather started getting rough on our three-hour tour. An ex-girlfriend had taught me the allure of a cooler shower, and for now, it was hitting the spot. I’d only narrowly avoided a sunburn. Every few minutes, I turned the temperature down a scooch. Incrementalism was the key.

I’d been in there for over half an hour when I heard someone in one of the other shower stalls. Well, no, I’d heard people – female people – turning the other showers on and off several times since my arrival. The notion that there were wet naked female people coming and going separated from my wet naked male personage by an inch of flimsy barricade was part of why I was taking a long, increasingly cold shower.

This sound, however, was not the spray of water, not shampoo and conditioner opening and closing, not that evocative shift in timbre as yielding flesh undulated farther and closer to the water, sheets of wetness cascading off of hot, warm bodies. No. This sound was a voice.

“Any RAs in here?” it asked. Immediately I knew the difference between a voice calling for my presence in need of aid, and one checking if they could get away with something. I kept silent. The stall walls went up well over my height, and down to within a few inches of the floor. Unless whoever this was stood on the stool for their shower caddy and peered over, or on her hands and knees to peek under, I was incognito.

“Are you seriously?” asked a different voice. My ears judged it to be one stall farther away, with the first adjacent to mine. I wondered at the phrasing until I realized I’d misinterpreted. Leigh. Lee, on my initial screwed-up roster, but really Leigh. (Realleigh.) I still didn’t fully comprehend how someone could have gotten these housing assignments this wrong, down to the misspelling of names. Always something around here, I swear.

“You think it’s more awkward to stop a conversation for a shower and then resume after, than to just talk between the stalls? I just wanted to make sure he’s not, like, right there, is all. Hi, mysterious shy chick,” said Leigh. A wet arm emerged over the barrier between us to wave.

On impulse, I struck a hasty high five. Evidently I was quick enough she didn’t detect the size of my hands, because her response was a laugh and a cheery whoop. “You’re all right, mystery chick.”

“*Anyway*,” said the other girl, “Are you seriously going to flirt with the RA? He’s, like, way older than us.”

“Oh my god, Angel, don’t be so provincial. My dad is fifteen years older than my mom. Age is such a nothing bullshit social construct. And he’s probably only like twenty-five or something, which is way closer. I mean, like, what, are you gonna date some *blech* sophomore who needs a fake ID to buy alcohol?”

Angel. That was one I remembered. It was the tongue ring, mostly, and the silver stud in her nose that I’d found cute before I’d seen her open her mouth. She was a dynamo in miniature, a caramel-complected pint size pinup girl, blonde streaks muddled throughout her curly black hair. All the curves, but packed onto a 4’10” frame. Pretty adorable, all right.

The two were roommates, I was pretty sure, from when I’d done their door tags the other day. (Not the Lee and Angel I’d imagined then, for sure.) I didn’t yet have a face attached to Leigh, though. Not until she said, “The way you were shaking that booty at him the whole tour, if he was gonna take the bait, he’d be in that shower with you right now, pretty sure!”

The girls laughed as I realized who Leigh was. By reflex, my eyes shot to the sliver of a crack near the changing area of the stall, shielded from the water. Her hook must be opposite mine, because I could see a fuzzy baby blue something hanging there.

“Oh my gawd, if only! Half the girls in Higgins already met a guy since we got here. I feel like such an ogre. You think he was turned off because I’m taller than him? Guys are always like that,” pouted Leigh.

“You are not seriously going to stand there and complain about being a leggy goddess, are you? Not to me.”

I caught the tip of an elbow over the wall. She must be washing her hair. I could smell the shampoo in the scant water splashing in from her stall. “Oh my gosh, no! Angel, you are such a smoking hottie! I would kill for your boobs, hand to god!”

The conciliatory, if patronizing, compliment was met in kind. “I’d kill for your ass. Though I don’t think I’d have the ovaries to put it in those shorts, though.”

As the water turned on in the fourth stall, Leigh laughed exultantly at her own shamelessness. “I’ve had those since middle school. They used to fit normal, you know? When I was packing for Lakeview I almost threw them out, but then I was like... nah...”

“You’re so bad!”

“I know, right?”

The cold water was powerless against the onslaught of this cliché hot girl banter, with myself somehow at the root of it. I dunked my head in the stream, but there was nothing to be done about it.

“Are you seriously trying to get with him? Or is it just, you know, a game or whatever?” asked Angel. Micro-shifts in her voice conjured images of her scrubbing vigorously at her tiny busty body.

“I mean, if he came at me, I might come at him,” Leigh replied, slyly.

“But he’s the RA! Isn’t that, I dunno, against the rules or whatever?”

“You know who enforces the rules around here, though, right? I bet he’d let me off.”

“Yeah, if you *get* him off!”

“You’re so bad!”

“Says you, bad girl!”

Droplets of water cascaded up and over the barricades as the two splashed at one another over their separating wall. A wall that in my imagination of the encounter did not exist at all.

“Besides,” Leigh went on after a moment, “I heard? He already hooked up with a girl on our floor. Last night!”

Oh *FUCK*. I froze, and not only because the water was down to minimum temp. As the gossip proceeded, heedless of who else might be within earshot to overhear it, I at last relented, cranking the temp up so I didn’t turn into solid ice.

“What? No way!”

“Way! Yeah, I saw the Quinn girl slipping out of his room last night, and like – this is so TMI, but if I had to see it you have to hear it. She *sniffed* her *finger!*” Leigh too such a deep sniff that we could all hear her even over the water.

“What? Gross! What does that even mean?” Angel exclaimed.

“Right? So I asked her, ‘have a good time?’ and she gives me this huge, trampy wink and no joke, the slut held it out for *me* to smell!”

“No way! What? No freaking way! You are not serious right now!”

“Yup! I didn’t, obvi, but you could tell she was super proud of herself. Ugh, what a fucking skank, right?”

“Such a skank,” agreed Angel.

“So yeah, I figure if our resident hottie is willing to settle for a little flatty like that with her trampy tramp stamp – I saw it when she was walk-of-shamelessing away; it’s an angel, but you’d hate it, Angel – anyway, I definitely have a good shot, you know? Good warm-up for the next four years, I figure, and–”

SLAM!

I literally jumped at the sound of something heavy slamming into something metal mere feet away, the noise enhanced by its reverberation off of our tile surroundings. As Leigh shrieked in alarm, it came again. By this time, I’d realized what it was. Something pounding open the door to her shower stall.

“Think you can talk shit about me, air my personal fucking business to the world, you cheap bottle blonde whore?!” cried a voice that could only be Quinn’s.

Oh fuck. Oh, FUCK. Oh fuck oh fuck oh fuck oh fuck oh

“Get out! What the hell are you doing? Are you insane! Don’t– That’s *my*– Don’t you dare *touch* me, you– Ow! Hey! OW!”

fuck oh fuck oh fuck oh fuck!!!

Grunts and shrieks and slaps and growls echoed around the stalls. I dove for my towel. What the hell was happening? No, it was obvious what was happening, but *here*?! How was a guy supposed to...? In *here*...?!

Ironically, Angel was shouting for someone to get the RA when I emerged from my stall. She was clasping her towel in front of her, though in the heat of the moment hadn’t wrapped it around her body as yet. She pointed, but I was already on my way.

There, on the floor of the shower stall next to mine, was Badump-badump, her wet, naked body enmeshed with the wet, naked body of the girl who’d stuck a finger up my ass and jacked me off so good I almost cum-blasted Janis in the ass through the ceiling.

It was a true melee, the two of the rolling, shrieking, grasping, wrestling. They weren’t trying to punch one another, so much; I’d broken up a couple fights during my RA tenure, and spontaneous fracasas like this usually got so close so fast that it wasn’t really practical. Luckily, they were both wet and slippery, so their attempts to grab at and maneuver one another weren’t getting much traction. Still, Leigh looked positively terrified to be assaulted like this, while Quinn’s face was pure wrath.

I turned to Angel, speaking fast but keeping calm. Cool in a crisis was part of what experience at this gig bought you. “You need to call or go to the center desk, right now, OK? Get help up here, as fast as you can, Angel.” She was still staring in shock. “Angel! You need to–”

She nodded frantically. “Yeah. Yeah!” Angel dashed away, heedless of the show of bare ass she was providing. Not that I had time to look. (Glance, maybe. For a second.) Meanwhile there were two other girls in here, staring, though they couldn’t see what I could. I’m sure if Leigh and Quinn could have picked a witness for their naked spectacle, they’d have reversed that.

“Quinn!” I barked. Sometimes an authoritative bark could kill one of these things in its infancy. “QUINN! Get off of her, *right now*!”

“Talkin’ about *my* shit, cunt?!” shrieked Quinn, her rage dulled not at all. “Sniff *this*, you gossippy fucking slag!”

I think she meant to shove her ass, or maybe her pussy, in Leigh’s face, but Leigh was struggling like crazy to get out from under her. In the end, it was like one of those cartoon fights with a cloud of dust showing the occasional arm or boot sticking out.

Except here, the cloud was water. Nice, transparent water. And the arms and boots were soft, wet T&A.

“Quinn, I need you to calm down. Understand? You’re going to hurt each other. Calm down. Just back off, talk this out.” The bark had failed, so I went for a gentler approach, trying to bring them – *her*, really – back to reality. If they got to their feet, I might be able to separate them, but with them rolling around on the floor, especially as soapy wet as they both were, I wasn’t going to improve this situation one iota by trying to get physically involved. It wasn’t even a case of the consequences of laying hands on two hot naked teenage girls splashing around in the shower; it was simply not wanting to escalate this further with another target.

Quinn finally got the puss-to-face contact she was going for, though it cost her. Leigh finally stopped trying to wriggle out and extricate herself; the affront was serious enough now she started smacking the hell out of Quinn’s round white ass. This only initiated further retaliation, of course, and soon Quinn’s thighs succeeded in wrestling Leigh on top of her, held in place with a leg lock, and slapping *Badump-badump’s* eponymous butt right back.

Someone must have send out the alert, because the crowd in that crowded space was growing. Split-second decision-making kicked in; I turned to Tori, whom my subconscious decided was the most reliable potential ally in the bathroom. “Can you try to keep people back for me, Tori? Please?”

She was as freaked out as the rest, but I must have picked well, because on my command she quickly put out her arms to block further access to the shower area, ordering those who’d already gotten past the line to fall back. The latter wasn’t really working, but it kept me from needing to try, so I could keep trying to calm the nude, thrashing Quinn down before things got any worse.

Then things got worse.

Chick fights, always with the hair grabbing. Funnily, I’d said that very thing during this year’s fight response training; Carmen, the RA on Higgins 1, had rolled her eyes and pointed out that if guys had half a brain in their heads, they’d be doing the same. Pulling out hair fucking hurt, and it was a way better handhold than a shirt. A good point, but here in this unclothed brawl, it meant things had gone from scary to dangerous. Quinn had seized a thick handful of Leigh’s blonde hair, darkened from the water and still full of suds from her shampoo, and having maneuvered herself back on top, was grinning down malevolently as Leigh wailed and whimpered at having it jerked about.

“Quinn, last warning,” I said, splitting the difference between bark and beg. It didn’t work any better than the other two. Fuck fuck *fuck*. There was no choice left but to get involved.

Operating on pure instinct, I reached down over Quinn's shoulder to offer Leigh a hand. She took it, and in the next moment I wrapped my other arm as snug as I could around her attacker's waist and hauled the slender girl to her feet. Using our handhold as leverage, it meant Leigh came up with us, keeping Quinn from ripping her hair right out of her head.

That really set things into action, though. By reflex, Quinn whirled around at her new opponent and shoved me back with two hands, knocking me back against the wall. I nearly took one of the lookie loos who'd ignored Tori's crowd control down in the process. The upside was that it meant Leigh's hair, and thus Leigh, was free. The downside was that rather than take the opportunity to run, she gallantly came to her rescuer's rescue.

"Don't you fucking touch him, you crazy bitch!" she howled, shoving Quinn past me.

"Why, because you'll tell the whole world if I do?!" snarled Quinn.

The girls launched themselves at each other, with me now in the middle. I was standing bent at the knees for stability on the slick tile floor, as well as to make myself wider and keep the girls further apart. It was mostly working; they could reach past me, but kept them from kicking or biting each other. We were all of us still quite slippery, but it didn't stop them from grasping at whatever they thought they could get.

Somewhere in the middle of things, my towel came off. My bold instinct had known this would be a consequence of its activation, but it was give up on modesty or stand there while Leigh had her hair ripped out. Regrettably, even in the midst of trying to keep them apart, I hadn't lost sight of the fact that there were two smoking hot naked girls rubbing their smoking hot naked bodies all over me.

Which was to say, I'd entered this fight rock hard at being the object of hot girl fantasies, and had only gotten harder as I live out what was assuredly someone else's fantasy.

They were still at it when Ramona and Savannah arrived on the scene, lead by Angel, now a bit less indecent in her towel. Unlike her roommate's, it covered the tiny girl's not-so-tiny curves adequately. At my direction, the two of them double-teamed Quinn and held her against the wall until she was able to convince them she would stand down. Leigh, who had been losing the fight so obviously that it had devolved into her basically hiding behind me from the berserk beauty, now threw herself against me, bent down to bury her face in my shoulder, heedless of our mutual nudity. She was trembling, the poor thing.

The other fights I'd had to handle hadn't been anywhere near so involved. My first, I'd stood there like an idiot while my rounds partner, Hunter, used his own linebackeresque physique to break things up himself. The next one I'd ended with words alone, or at least the guys decided to back down on their own before it got too bad. The

last, I'd had to use one of those techniques campus security had taught us, jerking one of the fighters back onto their butt and getting between them; those few seconds of separation as he struggled back to his feet had been enough for him to decide to stop.

This time, I'd gotten *involved*. Somehow I felt icily calm, even though I sort of knew I shouldn't. Angel draped her roommate's baby blue towel around her, even more useless than before at preserving her dignity now that half the floor had seen her naked. As Savannah took over for Tori in dispelling the crowd, Ramona saw that Quinn put her bathrobe on and led her out of the bathroom. She gave me a long look over her shoulder; completely failing to read her, I promised I'd write up the report as soon as I was dressed. I started helping Savannah and Tori, only to be reminded I was still naked. My coworker tastefully abstained from fully stating, naked *and hard as an angry red diamond*. I retrieved my towel, and with a look of concern, Savannah guided me back to my room with her soft hand on my back.

"I'm OK, Savannah," I told her back in my room. "You don't need to stay."

"I'm staying," she insisted softly but firmly.

"Uh, mind turning around then, so I can...?"

It was stupid, in a way; she'd just seen me in all my naked "glory." But she turned, and I jumped into a pair of shorts and one of my old RA t-shirts from my Rowland Days. *Welcome to the Jungle*, it read. The lyrical allusion had been antiquated when my old manager had gone to college, but plenty of my guys had understood the reference.

"Why don't you sit down, Spencer," she urged. Not content to let me decide for myself, she ushered me to my bed and sat down along with me.

"I'm fine, really," I insisted. Was I? I didn't know. That was the thing you said, though.

"Spencer, I don't want to worry you, but you're trembling like a leaf." Her voice was so soothing. Girls that pretty shouldn't be allowed to have voices that pretty, too. It left nowhere to hide.

"Really?" I studied my hand. It didn't look like it was trembling, but maybe my eyes were, too.

"That was really brave, what you did. That girl looked like she meant to kill that other one. Someone could have gotten hurt." She gave me another once over; I complied, turning my arms, twisting my legs, letting her pat my back, my beck. "I'm not sure nobody did. These scratches don't look to be bleeding. Just breathe deep for me, all right?"

I nodded, and complied. Savannah's sweet smile on perfect lips was calming me. By the time Ramona returned, I was beginning to notice the trembling. In the back of my mind, the litany that had been running unheard since even before the fight started began anew.

Oh fuck. Oh fuck! Oh, *fuck*. *FUCK*. Oh fuck oh fuck oh fuck oh

Ramona pulled my desk chair to sit in front me. She asked Savannah, not me, if I was all right. “He’s in shock, I think, but he’s getting some of his color back.”

“Good. Good. Thanks, Savannah. I don’t know what I would have done if I hadn’t bumped into you on the way up here. Seriously, thank you. That was above and beyond. Brick work.”

The brick was a staff appreciation initiative Ramona had announced. For solid performance. Get it? It hadn’t been awarded to anyone yet, but there had been plenty of nominations. Carmen for taking a risk sharing during some of our sensitivity training. Vanessa, for putting her art skills to work on individually, hand-crafted door tags. Me, for running a training session on dealing with difficult people from a book Ramona had given me to read over the summer, before I knew her as anything more than the cute manager.

Naked girls fighting in the shower had not been covered in my presentation. It merited this new nomination.

“Can I stay?” Savannah could see the request to let Ramona and I talk privately coming. “I don’t want to leave him when he’s like this.”

“I’m fine,” I said again. Neither acknowledged me. Was I not fine? Maybe they were onto something.

Ramona nodded, but Savannah did at least back off into the corner. My vision tunneled so that I only saw my manager sitting across from me, and nothing else. She looked really nice in that sweater dress. Had I noticed that this morning? I must have. She did, though. Nice lady.

“Spencer, you were in a fight. I know you think you feel fine, but fights are traumatic, even if you aren’t initially part of them. Are you hurt anywhere?”

I shook my head. Savannah answered, “Some scratches, but I don’t think he’s bleeding that I could tell.”

“I was in the stall on the end when it started,” I said. “That’s why I was naked. I’m sorry.”

“You don’t have to apologize, Spencer. I’ll be putting in a transfer order to another hall for Quinn as soon as I get back to my office. Assuming she’s not dismissed from the university altogether. If you hadn’t gotten involved... that might have been much worse for the other young woman. I know you’re embarrassed...” Ramona glanced up at Savannah. I followed, only just catching the tail end of her head shake. Right. I’d been seen naked by half my residents, all of them female. And my insanely beautiful coworker. And my boss, also female. I should be embarrassed. “But you don’t have to be. One of your residents used her towel to block off eyesight, at least a little. I don’t think most of them saw much.”

Savannah murmured something that drew a sharp look from our manager, but I didn’t catch it.

“I need you to do a few things for me. All right, Spencer?”

I nodded. “Sure. Anything. I’m sorry.”

She disregarded my latest unnecessary apology. “I need you to let Savannah sit with you until she clears you. All right?”

“Sure. I really like Savannah. She’s nice” I smiled at her, and she was smiling back, though with a little something else in her eyes. Right, that was super awkward of me to say. Crap. How long did shock last?

“That’s good. If she says so, I need you to go to the health center with her and get yourself checked out. You don’t look hurt, but we’re not taking chances.”

“Right, will do.”

“While the incident is fresh, yes, I do need you to write up a report for me.”

“No problem. Should I mention, you know, the thing about me and Quinn...?”
Man, was I going to get fired? That sucked. Savannah was so nice. Ramona, too. Darn.

“You don’t need to dignify her lies, Spencer. She said something about you, and her...” She let a pause do the suggesting for her. “I won’t let some violent thug smear your good name on her way out the door. Don’t worry.”

“Oh. All right.”

Ramona stood. She took my hands for the second time that day. It really was a reassuring gesture. I knew it wasn’t practical for every manager to boost morale with hand-holding, but I was sure glad mine had that tool in her belt. “And lastly, I’d appreciate it if you let this nice young lady in here to express her gratitude.”

She pulled me after her, leading me to the door to my room. Ramona pulled it open; there on the other side was a still-damp but fully dressed Leigh. “He’s all yours,” she announced. “Give me a little while to deal with Quinn, but then I’d like to talk with you, too. Spencer can show you where my office is. All right?”

“All right,” we said at the same time. Ramona gave her a pat on the shoulder, then excused herself.

Leigh launched herself at me lips first.

Her arms twined around the back of my head, holding our mouths together as her tongue assailed mine every bit as vigorously as Quinn had assailed her, and with no more friction. Her chest pressed against mine. It was oddly familiar, after what we’d been through. My badump-badump grabbed my hand, still warm from Ramona’s touch, and clamped it down on her ass.

There was a reason I shouldn’t be letting this happen. I was sure of it. Had Ramona intended this? She couldn’t have. She’d wanted me to do... something, though. Savannah would know. I’d ask her when Leigh let me come up for air.

I don’t know how long my coworker stood there watching us make out before she cleared her throat. Leigh squeaked, whirling. “Oh my god, I didn’t know anyone else was in here!” she stammered.

“I think he appreciates your, ahem, gratitude. Maybe it’s time to show it by not getting him fired, though?” Savannah’s tone brooked no room for argument, though it wasn’t entirely cold.

Leigh nodded, and practically ran from the room. I stood there, not sure what to do, until Savannah gently steered me out of the path of the door, closed it, and sat me back down.

“Was that weird? Is this going to be weird, when I feel, you know, normal again?”

Savannah clapped me on the shoulder affectionately. “Nah, I made sure my residents all see me naked in the first week. Standard stuff for women’s communities. I haven’t gotten around to the makeouts, yet, though.”

Finally, I felt like I could smile again. “I’m a third-year. By the time you get here, you’ll have it down.”

Savannah folded her legs criss-cross on my bed. “I’m all ears if you have pointers, O Learned One.”

fuck oh fuck oh fuck oh fuck oh fuck oh