

A Pack Of His Own

a commissioned work

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Chapter One

Everyone had told Will Bowland that the University of Colorado at Boulder would be a great place to get an education, and while he'd felt that they were right from the very moment of his arrival on campus years ago, nobody had told him that it would also be the place where the wheels came off on what he thought he knew about life, and where everything seemed to go in an entirely different direction.

When he'd gone off to college, his first thought was that it would be a chance for him to have a completely new start away from all of the baggage that had hounded him for most of his high school year, but it seemed like for all that was new, some things hadn't changed all that much.

In high school, he'd been a bit of a loner, but he'd gotten along with people well enough. All of his friends, however, had big plans that were on the other side of the country, and so he'd shown up at UC Boulder with the intent on starting over and finding a new place to fit in.

He'd gotten it half right.

What he hadn't anticipated was that there would be large swaths of students coming en masse who already *knew* each other, and that meant they had brought all their cliques with them, none of which Will fit into from the start.

Much like he'd been in high school, he was *adjacent* to a bunch of the groups without really being invited into any of them. He was smart, but not smart enough to hang with the nerds. He was athletic, but not athletic enough to hang with the jocks. He could play guitar, but not well enough to be in a band, not that anyone seemed like they were looking for guitarists anyway.

He wasn't tall enough to stand out, but not short enough for it to be unusual. His mom, before she'd passed away anyway, hadn't really talked much about his dad other than to say he hadn't wanted to stay around after he was bored and that he'd been from Eastern Europe, although she was reliably vague about that any time she was pressed on the issue. Based on the sort of features he'd inherited from the man, he would've guessed his dad was Polish or Ukrainian.

Will's hair was short and deep black, his skin also having a bit of natural tan to it, although he certainly could suntan. His face was long and lean, with a bit of a sharp nose, and eyes that were some odd combination of brown and green, although the coloration never seemed consistent enough for them to be faithfully called hazel. He was a little too doughy to be an athlete, as if that last layer of baby fat had just never grown off him, and yet he also didn't seem like he was especially overweight. He just sort of looked 'thick,' according to classmates. He also tended to grow facial hair a bit faster than he cared for. While other senior boys in high school had been trying to let their facial hair grow in, Will had practically needed to start shaving nearly daily before winter had turned to spring. It had also sprung up thick on his arms and chest in the two years since high school, with even some starting to sprout on his back, much to his annoyance.

He also wasn't what anybody described as good looking, although he wasn't really considered *ugly* either. One of his few friends in high school liked to joke that Will had won "Person Most Likely To Be Forgotten About" for the Yearbook, but that nobody had remembered to include the category. In fact, there had been a number of times when Will had been hanging

out with a handful of people, and they'd decided to change locations and everyone had forgotten to let Will know where they were going, not out of any sense of malice, but because genuinely everyone had forgotten that he was *there*.

His mom had been third- or fourth-generation Italian-American, but she had sort of been the end of her family line, without any real relatives to speak of. But she'd been proud of him, proud that even though he hadn't really had that many good friends, he'd been a hard worker, and was determined to go to college, to get an education and to do something with his life.

While he'd never felt comfortable with the idea of becoming a doctor, the idea of helping and supporting doctors seemed like a good use of his time, so he'd gone to college with the intention of learning what it took to get into health administration, so that he could help coordinate and manage a hospital once he got out of school. It wasn't something a lot of people felt drawn to, but Will felt like he'd be a good matchup for the job. Administrators needed to be able to see the big, big, *big* picture, and to be able to look past the individual pain and troubles with patients to the underlying systems that would help them tend to as many people's needs as possible.

His mom had been so happy that he was dedicating his life to helping people. He still had the last voicemail she'd left him – almost two years ago now – telling them that she couldn't wait to tell all her friends about her son's first big job at a hospital as soon as he graduated.

She'd been killed by a drunk driver about a week after she'd left the message.

It had shattered Will in half. His mom had left everything to him, but with the express intent that he put everything into building his own life, going in his own direction. It was clear from her will that she had expected it to be decades before it was needed, but that she'd wanted to be prepared for everything. She'd always been smart that way.

So after he'd laid his mom to rest in a local cemetery in Denver, he'd followed his mom's wishes. He'd sold the house, liquidated all of her possessions, and put everything she'd saved up towards his education and his continuing survival. The one thing he *had* bought was a condo on the outskirts of UC Boulder. Once he graduated, he'd sell it back and turn a profit on it, but he knew his mom didn't want him living in campus housing forever, and having a place to call his own let him have somewhere to get away from it all.

Whether he wanted to admit it or not, for the first year or so after his mom's death, Will was hiding, trying to bury the loss of his mother by just being head down and focusing on his schoolwork, oblivious to social interactions, which meant his crucial freshman year of showing up to mixers and interacting with fellow freshman was completely lost, and Will was without a support network.

His freshman year disappeared in a blitz of feedback, noise and struggle, keeping his nose to the grindstone so much that he couldn't see the forest for the trees, and so he was never entirely sure if he was going a thousand miles an hour or simply just one. He was doing well in his classes, and he took comfort in that, and told himself that he just needed to get through college, that he just needed to graduate and that once he was out of school, he'd be in the real world, and that was when he could get his *real* fresh start, because the death of his mother had prevented him from getting one in college.

He didn't leave for summer, because where would he go? This was all there was for Will now, and so he'd picked up a job as a fry cook at a local diner. He didn't *need* the money but it gave him something to focus on and didn't let his mind stay at rest long enough for the trauma of losing his mother so suddenly come bubbling back up at any given moment.

In many ways, his sophomore year was very much a case of 'second verse, same as the

first,' with him being so laser focused on his classwork and his studies that he didn't even register with the social groups around him. He didn't make friends and he didn't really talk to people that much outside of classes. Having his own place off campus had been especially enabling in that regard, letting him keep himself segregated from other students, just in terms of social gatherings. He didn't have to hear about the mixers or the parties or know about any of the general hangouts where he might have gotten to know some of the other students. It wasn't like he was *actively* trying to avoid everyone; it had just sort of become second nature so that they didn't see the emotional burden he was carrying with him.

By the time the second summer happened, he was so set in his habits that he hadn't even really thought about it in months. School, work, rest. School, work, rest. It was a nice, predictable pattern, one that was keeping his finances above water, his grades in good (although not exceptional) standings, and his mind away from the solitude he'd enveloped himself with, but somewhere deep inside, he knew that he wasn't living a fulfilling life. It was simply wasting time and doing the work needed to get him past this particular phase and up towards the next phase of his life. The loss of his mother still stung, but it was no longer the all-consuming void it had been for the previous few years. People had told him that eventually he would wake up and feel like it was time for his life to keep going again, but for years, it had been impossible to believe them, but now it felt like maybe that might have been true, and maybe, just maybe, he was nearly ready to start the next phase of his life.

What he didn't know was that the next phase of his life wasn't what he thought it was, and it was done waiting for him to arrive. It had decided to start up without his knowledge, consent or even understanding. That meant he was going to be off guard for quite some time as he caught up to the status of his life, which was starting to change and morph in ways he couldn't possibly imagine.

For a few months, it was lots of little incidents, none of which would've been much on their own, which was how he was looking at them, rather than the slowly escalating pattern that they were. In hindsight, Will would be able to build the correlation out of them, but when they happened, they all just seemed like one-offs.

The first came within the first week of his junior year's fall semester. He was starting to get into some of the more specific classes he would need to eventually run a hospital, but he also had to take a number of classes that everyone else had to, including that one class that typically sent nearly every sane student running – Intro to Statistics.

Stats was the class that broke spirits and lined tutors pockets for the rest of the year. It was the class that many students took twice, or even three or four times to get through. The professor didn't help. The running joke was that Dr. Bruskin didn't speak great English, had a lisp and had terrible handwriting and awful typing skills. Communicating with him on *any* level took at least three or four times longer than it felt like it should have.

Will knew all that going into it, and that meant he was planning to work twice as hard, with a digital audio recorder brought along to record the lectures and make sure he could replay them later if he couldn't quite understand what the professor was talking about. He figured several students would do that sort of thing, but there weren't any other digital recorders up at the front when the class finally wrapped up its first session.

As he went up to pick up his recorder, he saw there was a big hulking mass blocking his path, dressed in a letterman jacket from some high school, blonde hair and rippling muscles obstructing his ability to get his property. He was sure he'd probably had classes with this prick before, but Will liked to stay focused on his classes, so he hadn't really bothered to learn much

about his fellow classmates for the previous years.

“You're a fucking suckup, aren't you nerd?” the jock said to him, stepping to one side at the same time Will did, making sure to keep himself between Will and the recorder. “You're the kind of asshole who's always going out of his way to make life harder for all the rest of us who are just trying to survive this shit.”

“I'm just trying to do my best,” Will said, trying not to look up and into the wall of flesh's eyes. He'd learned early on that engaging in confrontation was often just asking for more trouble. “My education is important to me. That's all.”

“That's all?” the jock said, pushing a hand out to shove into Will's shoulder. “That's all? You're gonna be a fucking pain in my ass, aren't you, shithead?”

“I'll stay in my lane and you can stay in yours,” Will replied. “Just move out of my way and let me get my recorder.”

“No way, bitch,” the jock laughed, shoving a hand back into Will's chest once more. “Maybe I'll just take this recorder for myself and then I'll be the one the teacher thinks is hot shit. Last year, I had to deal with other students fucking up my ability to look good, and I'm done letting someone else fuck up the grading curve.”

“Maybe you should try doing the actual work then,” Will said, finally looking up, “instead of trying to bully other students into doing worse so you don't look like shit.”

“The fuck did you say to me, fuckstain?”

“I said get the hell out of my way, shit for brains!” Will said, his voice rising, feeling like there was a hint of a growl in it.

The next minute was something he would find himself thinking about a lot in the coming months. It was only sixty seconds, and everything was over before he could really give much consideration to any of it. In fact, while it was all happening, he wasn't entirely sure he was actually doing much in the way of *thinking*. It all felt like it was just instinct, like everything was happening purely on reflexes.

The jock started to take a swing at Will, but it almost felt like the punch was coming in slow motion, and Will felt his body moving easily out of the path of it, his arms both lifting up to grab the jock's arm and shove it off to one side before his right arm dropped down and then windmilled in a solid punch to the jock's solar plexus, punching him hard in the guts. While the jock's swing didn't connect, Will's made the guy at least half a foot taller than him collapse to the ground, clutching at his stomach as he coughed, clearly not having expected to be the one taking the punch instead of the one dishing it out.

It all happened in the blink of an eye, so Will wasn't entirely certain *what* had just happened. His body had moved entirely on its own, and he almost felt like he blacked out in the center of it, except that he'd been awake and aware of what was happening – he simply felt like he hadn't been the one to initiate his actions. He'd heard stories of people's reflexes taking over, but generally that was after years of training and practice, not just on a whim some random day in some random classroom.

Once the jock, whose name was Tanner, started coughing loudly, though, it snapped Will back to the here and now. He hadn't gotten up yet, and was still groaning at Will's feet, as a bunch of other students in the class were sort of pointing and laughing at Tanner now, a few of them moving to pat Will on the back, something he *did not* want, but it felt wrong to push the other students away, as they cheered him and scoffed at the jock.

Will, for his part, just grabbed his tape recorder and headed out of the room, wondering what the hell to make of any of it. When the class reconvened a few days later for the next

lecture, Tanner was doing his absolute best to stay as far away as he could from Will, like he was afraid Will was going to come over and punch him again at any moment without warning.

And God help him, Will *liked* the feeling of the jock being afraid of him.

It made him feel like he'd somehow exerted dominance over the classroom, like Tanner had been a rival somehow trying to push forth the idea that *he* was in charge, but the minute it had turned to blows, the jock had taken one punch and backed down, and now he was having to content himself with being in Will's shadow, no longer the star of the room.

There had also been a certain shift in the way the *rest* of the class had treated him, one that Will was *less* sure of. It was as if the rest of the room had felt like Will needed paying attention to. People made it a point to say hello to him, and telling him to have a good weekend. A number of other students had suggested to him that if he needed a group to study with, they'd be happy to have him join theirs. It was unnerving, the sudden rush of popularity he felt, even if it was a bit fleeting. Within a few weeks, people had mostly gone back to ignoring him, although Tanner was still keeping his distance, and one time, Will had actually started moving toward Tanner, just to see the reaction. The jock had gone skittering, almost like a cockroach running when the light had been turned on. Will had only moved a few feet in the boy's direction before he'd made a break for the door, just a few steps shy of a full run.

That seemed to be reflected in some of his other classes across campus, although he never heard anyone specifically reference the incident with Tanner, and in some cases, it was clear they hadn't even heard about it. He'd been able to stay out of the way of people and as such, people hadn't paid him much mind, but now it seemed like he was starting to draw some attention for whatever reason. He wasn't trying to get it, but the attention just seemed to be flowing his way.

It was October when things started to get even stranger.

As a shy and somewhat pudgy guy, Will had grown accustomed to not being the focus of female attention. It was something he'd made peace with long, long ago, and when his mom had passed away, it had been easier to just lock himself down mentally and not spend any time thinking about it. That had been pretty consistent up until recently. Since his junior year started, he'd begun to feel like he was getting notice more by the fairer sex, and in some ways, the attention was a little distracting.

It wasn't regular and it wasn't predictable, but at least once a week it felt like some girl would come up and just start randomly talking to him. He thought it felt like they were flirting with him, but he was never quite sure about it, so he never tried to push anything. He tried to engage in conversation, but he never pushed them to continue the conversations at other times, and even a few times he'd sort of politely turned down a girl asking him out for drinks, because he felt like the sensations couldn't be trusted, like maybe it was all some sort of prank where they were going to try and get him to do something he'd regret.

One girl in particular, however, managed to keep pushing the matter again and again, much to his complete surprise and confusion. Her name was Lacey McGuinness, and she was something of a controversial figure around campus.

Lacey stood only 5'4" or so, but the minute she walked in a room, all heads turned her way, both men and women. She dressed to provoke and to draw attention to herself, tightly stretched clothes ripped in strategic places to offer glimpses of slightly paler flesh, like a trailer for a coming movie that everyone has to stop and stare at. She was busty without it being too much, and certainly she enjoyed wearing low cut tops designed to give people a focal point for their eyes. She typically wore her long scarlet red hair in a high ponytail, always in the center, never off to the sides, and she liked to wear short skirts with long, thigh high leather boots

(generally with a couple of inches in the heels), so that only a thin strip of flesh beneath pantyhose was visible. The whole look sort of gave off a weird combination of local pep squad girl and leader of the 1st go-go stripper battalion regiment.

One of Lacey's favorite past times was reeling men in only to throw them back. She'd made it known quite publicly that she enjoyed getting men to fawn all over her, but once she had their attention, she usually bored of them quickly, tossing them away to go looking for someone newer, shinier, sparklier. She also generally had a type – she liked them rich, she liked them good looking and she generally liked them to be in nearly insane physical condition.

All of which threw Will for a complete loop the first time she tried hitting on him.

Students couldn't graduate without four semesters of foreign language, and so Will had chosen to take Spanish, simply because it was, next to English, one of the most commonly spoken languages in the world. It hadn't gone especially well for him, but he was doing his best to try and pick up the language, working on it as much as he could, but he found that retaining the vocabulary, in addition to all the other words he needed to learn for his business classes and his medical classes, was challenging. Which meant he generally spent all his time in class trying to focus on the teacher.

This, it turned out, was very much counter to what Lacey wanted from Will, because somewhere since the class had started a few months ago, she'd decided that she wanted to get his attention, and that had just been bouncing off Will repeatedly.

The first time she'd apparently thought she'd start subtle, and that Will would be drawn in like all of the other guys she'd simply had to bat her eyelashes at to get the attention of. That had been a tremendous failure on her part. Sitting next to him in class had completely failed to get him to notice her, so she'd started amping her tactics up. She'd chosen not to wearing pantyhose, so the expanse of flesh was bare and exposed, although Will completely missed it entirely, much to Lacey's annoyance.

When going small didn't work, she tried turning up the heat, showing up to class in a dangerously low cut top that made it look like her tits were just barely contained, and that they could burst free at any moment, and from the moment she entered the room, she tried to keep them pointed in Will's direction, so that if he ever glanced over at her, they would almost certainly be directly in his line of sight. He'd noticed, but he'd also heard stories about Lacey and her tendency to chew men up and spit them out, and had no desire to just be another notch in the man-eater's bedpost, so his gaze didn't linger and he moved his eyes past almost immediately. If he'd been *trying* to get her annoyed, he couldn't have been doing that much better of a job than he was by simply *not* trying. She was practically *thrusting* her tits at him, and yet, he continued to keep his eyes polite and civil and not engage with the smorgasbord of flesh being presented just to him.

Over the next couple of weeks, more and more students were getting caught up in the little drama that was unfolding before and after class, everyone fascinated to see what sort of escalation Lacey was going to get up to.

When the low cut top hadn't worked like she'd wanted, her next attempt wasn't that much of an escalation, at least openly. The main difference was that she'd come to class not wearing a bra, and the outlines of her nipples were immediately visible through the top. Will didn't give her the satisfaction of letting his gaze linger on her, even when she was doing everything she could to keep herself in his line of sight.

The next time she'd come back to class, it looked far less like she was showing up for a Spanish class than she was showing up for a yoga class. She'd completely decided she was going

to keep turning things up until she got *some* kind of reaction out of him. She wasn't wearing a shirt – she had a sports bra instead. She wasn't wearing her normal skirt – she was just wearing Lululemon yoga pants, and they were tight on her ass, which she made a point of practically shoving into him, bumping it against him as she bent over to look into her bag, supposedly trying to find something, but it was pretty clear she was just doing it to keep bumping her butt against him.

And yet, he continued to do his best to pay her no mind.

Which seemed like it royally pissed Lacey *off*.

Near the end of October, Lacey boiled over and finally lost her ability to keep her chill.

Will was gathering his stuff up to leave from class when Lacey grabbed him by the shoulder, pulling a little on him. “Will, can I talk to you for a minute?”

He sighed, rolling his eyes before turning to look at her. “What do you need, Lacey?”

“Not *here*,” she said. “I just need a couple of minutes. Can I walk you to your next class or something? Please?”

That was the final thing that made him decide to let her crack the door open just a little. She'd said 'please' to him. He'd never heard Lacey say please to *anyone ever*. “I'm going to get lunch before my next class, but you can walk with me over to the taqueria.”

“Thank you *so* much,” she said, smiling at him as widely as she could. She'd chosen track pants today and a zip up track up, although Will could tell that she had on a tanktop underneath it. Once they were half a block from the building their classroom was in, she finally spoke again. “Why aren't you paying any attention to me?”

He clicked his tongue, shrugging a little bit. “Because I know you're just going to pitch me to the side once you have it, and I don't like being a pawn in someone's little game.”

“I mean, we could have some fun first,” she said, almost like she was caving a little in the hopes that it might make him cave a little himself.

“Yeah, pass,” he laughed. “You may not realize it, but this school isn't as big as you think it is, and the fact that you've blown off a bunch of guys after they've tried to get physical has gotten around. If you weren't sort of egging them and getting them all worked up, everyone would be respectful about it, but a bunch of your ex-boyfriends all have the exact same story to tell – you like to get them all wound up and eager to fuck and then seem to take great joy in leaving them high and dry, turned on and blue balled practically to the point of hurting.”

“I mean, yeah,” she said with a giggle. “Sometimes. But they all just wanted to be the first one to say they got some from the most popular girl in school.”

“You're *not* the most popular girl at UCB, Lacey.”

“Whatever. Anyway, they're just pissed they couldn't tell their friends we fucked. But what if I tell you that you wouldn't have that problem?”

“I'd tell you that I *already* don't have that problem,” he chuckled. “Because I'm not trying to fuck you.”

“But you *could* is what I'm saying.” He glanced over and she was biting her bottom lip, and he could swear he could actually smell her fear in the air. “You could fuck me. If you wanted.”

“If I wanted?”

“I want you to, okay?”

“Bullshit,” he told her. “If that was true, you wouldn't be so shy about it.”

“Yeah, well, you're kinda the first guy I thought might ever fucking say *no* to me, alright? And that's pretty fucking scary,” she sighed, her fingers curling into nervous little balls at her

side. "I'm used to being the hot shit girl on campus that all the guys look over at and drool, and it's been nice, knowing that when I finally decided I wanted to fuck somebody, all I'd have to do is wave in their direction, and then shit would be on. But now that I've decided, I can't even get him to fucking look at me while I'm talking to him..."

"Because I don't *believe* you, Lacey," he said, stopping to turn and look at her. "It's another game or another prank or something and I don't have fucking time for it, okay? I'm not some pimply little nerd who's gonna cream his jeans just because you're pretending to be—"

He was in the middle of a harangue, laying into her when she finally just threw her arms around him and mashed her lips against his as hard as she could, both of her hands on his body, one on his back, the other on the back of his neck, keeping him from drawing back as she invested as much possible desire as she could into that kiss, her tongue storming past the gates of his lips into his mouth, her body giving tiny little whimpers and moans, as the kiss held for a good long minute before she finally pulled back, keeping her searing light blue eyes focused directly on his. "I'm not fucking *pretending*, okay?" she whimpered. "I want you to *fuck* me, and you can do whatever you want with me, as long as you just fuck me, and fuck me *good*. I can't fucking describe it, but there's just something about you that I fucking have to have, that I fucking need, that I can't fucking stand being without, and if that means I have to practically be a total slut and just fucking throw myself at you, then that's what I'm gonna do, okay, Will?"

It was in that moment, looking into her eyes, seeing that intense longing there, that he started to wonder if she might just be being honest with him. So he decided to put it to the test. "Let me see your phone," he said, holding his hand out.

She nearly fumbled her phone to the floor, she was fishing it out so fast to unlock it and hand it to him.

He took the phone from her and put his phone number and his address into her contact information. "I'm going to go and get lunch, then I have classes until 5, and I should be back at the house by 6 pm. If you really, truly mean it, you can be on my front doorstep at 6 pm, and I'm probably gonna test and see if you're full of shit before anything gets started, so if this *is* a prank or some fucking thing like that, you should just not come by, got it?"

She took the phone back from him and then jumped up, wrapping her legs around his waist, and her arms around his neck as she leaned in to kiss him again, making sure he could feel the heat of her crotch pressing hard against his, practically writhing her body against his before she uncoiled her legs and broke the kiss. "Whatever it takes," she said. "No fucking hesitation. I'll be there."

It was about that point that Will started to consider she might be on the up and up.

For the rest of the day's classes, he found himself wondering if she was really going to come by his house once he was done for the day, exactly how far she was going to take this prank, or even if it might actually not *be* a prank.

The last class of his day, when he was walking out, he saw Tanner, the jock desperately scurrying to get out of his way, which made Will smile a little bit. He'd sort of been expecting Tanner to try and nut up and take another cheap shot at him some time, but apparently Will had broken some sense of resistance inside of Tanner and put the athlete back onto his heels, always nervous about Will's attention turning his way again.

The walk off campus back to his house was mostly quiet and Will kept preparing to be disappointed, but when he finally could see the front door of his condo, sure enough, there was Lacey, her fiery red mane not pulled into a tail for the moment, her hands rubbing together, as she was clearly dealing with the cool, crisp autumn air.

“Huh,” Will said, amusement clearly in his voice. “You actually came.”

“No, I showed up,” she giggled, trying to give him a winning smile. “Hopefully you can make me cum soon enough.”

“You could've gotten nailed by pretty much any boy on campus,” Will said, unlocking his front door. “Why me?”

“You're what I want,” she replied with a shrug, about ready to walk into the condo, when Will moved to block her passage in the doorway.

“Not good enough,” he said. “Try again.”

She pouted, stamping one foot a little. “I don't know, okay? You're... there's just something about you. Something raw. Something primal. I just... I just can't help myself around you... I feel myself getting horny all the fucking time... it's hard to think...”

“And you'll do anything I say?”

She grinned a little bit, nodding, licking her lips. “That was the deal.”

“Then show me your tits. Right here.” The position of his condo's front door meant it would be highly unlikely that anyone else would get an eyeful, but she wouldn't entirely know that. He expected *this* was going to be the challenge that made her balk and back down, but instead she unzipped the track top and then reached down and pulled up the tank top to expose a pair of perfectly swelled tits, dusted with a smattering of light brown freckles, the nipples hard from cold or excitement or both, they and the areola a deep, smokey shade of pink. “Well, damn. You didn't hesitate at all,” he said, stepping aside as she headed into his condo. He stepped into his place and closed the door behind them.

“I told you,” she purred, moving into his living room before heading to the windows, closing the blinds, so that passersby wouldn't just be able to look in and get an eyeful, as she shed the track top and the tanktop, leaving her topless in his living room. “Whatever it takes. As long as you fuck me.”

He reached into his pocket and pulled out his cellphone. “And what if I say I want a video of you saying that all, so I've got proof of it?”

She reached her hands behind her, folding her arms behind her back to make her tits pop out even more as she wiggled them in his direction. “As long as you're not showing the video all around campus, I'll do it.”

“Maybe I won't, maybe I will,” he said. “You'll just have to trust me with it.” He started recording video on his phone, it pointing at the floor, as he slowly started to turn it up to face towards her, giving her plenty of time to cover up or turn away, but she didn't, keeping her blue eyes focused on him the whole time.

“My name's Lacey McGuinness,” she started as she began walking slowly closer towards him. “And I know I have a reputation on campus as a horrible cocktease. And I own that. I've earned it. I *do* like teasing boys and their cocks, but there's something about Will Bowland that I can't help myself around. I want him to fuck me. I want him to fuck me hard and rough and to cum inside of my little cunt until I can feel his jism dribbling down the inside of my thighs, my belly feeling swollen from how much spunk he's shot up inside of me.” She dropped down to her knees and started unbuttoning his jeans. “I want him to raw dog me and claim me like the alpha he is... God, I want that so fucking bad...” she moaned, fishing out his cock before shoving her head down onto it like being away from his prick was actually causing her pain.

It had been years since Will had gotten a blowjob, junior year of high school when Shelly Otis had gone for it after a party, sucking him off in the back of Will's car after the two had found themselves making out for the better part of an hour. Shelly hadn't been all that good at it, but

she'd been determined, and she'd gotten a load out of him pretty quickly, because, well, Will hadn't really had any sexual experiences before that. He hadn't had any since, that much was certain. And the next day Shelly had just started avoiding him. He'd never gotten a definitive answer about why Shelly had either blown him or why she'd gone dark on him afterwards, but it had left a bitter taste in his mouth.

Lacey, on the other hand, showed absolutely no signs of reservation or holding back, as she thrust her face down as far as she could onto his cock, her tongue doing its best to slather his shaft with spit, turning her eyes up to look at him, as if daring him to keep the camera focused on her while she worked, and he hadn't pulled it away, but as she kept shoving the tight ring of her lips down to the base of his dick, he finally stopped the recording and tossed his phone aside, which made Lacey pop her mouth off his shaft and giggle. "I don't wanna swallow your load this time, though, because I wanna feel it all up in my guts," she said, stroking his shaft. "I wanna feel you nut in my cunt."

Will was more than a little nervous he was going to disappoint her, since he was a virgin, but he refused to let that hold him back. So he decided fake it 'til you make it.

He yanked her up to her feet before spinning her around, pushing her forward so that her knees fell on top of his couch, her arms resting on the top of the back of it as she squealed in delight. He then reached down and yanked her track pants and the thong he found beneath them down to her knees, exposing her slippery and eager snatch to his eyes, a small patch of coppery curls peeking out from the top of it, as she did her best to spread her knees apart as much as she could, reaching one hand beneath her to take two fingers and part the lips of her pussy for him, looking back over her shoulder at him, nodding eagerly at him.

Within seconds, he was standing behind her, getting the head of his dick lined up before just immediately shoving it as deep as he could into her twat, feeling that velvety warm glove envelope him, squeezing him in molten sweetness.

"Fuck yeah, daddy," she groaned back at him. "You feel so fucking good."

He didn't want to let on that it was his first time, so he made sure to keep in motion, sliding back before thrusting forward again, both of his hands holding onto her hips, even while her fingertips rubbed at her clit and occasionally tickled his balls.

Whatever tempo he'd picked, it was one she must've been enjoying, because her moans and caterwauls kept coming quickly and enthusiastically, her hips trying to thrust her ass back into him some, but his position mostly let him set the pace.

On a lark, he decided to grab a fistful of her bright red hair and give a yank, wondering if she would ask him to stop. Instead he was rewarded with one of the most whorishly sexual moans he'd ever heard in his life. "Fuck *yes*," she pleaded. "Toss me around. Claim me. Take me as your bitch. Fucking mark me. Use me and stopper me up with all your fucking cum..."

He felt like his body was almost moving of its own accord now, and he could feel that release steaming up inside of his balls, so he was *damn* sure he was going to make sure she came with him. He started truly plowing her, each slam of his hips into her ass making his balls swat against her clit and fingers, and he could feel her starting to clench and spasm around his dick, as she began to howl at him.

"Oh fuck, you fucker, you marvelous fucker, I'm fucking cumming, holy fuck I'm cumming so fucking hard, cum in me cum in me, cum cum cum CUM!"

Just as he felt his balls draw in, he suddenly felt a sharp compulsion, which he indulged in, leaning forward to place his teeth against the base of her neck, biting down hard at the exact moment his cock began to pump what had to be an insanely giant backlog of spunk inside of her

cunt, his teeth breaking the skin enough to draw a bit of blood, and instead of her shrieking at him to stop, he instead felt her clamp down even harder, her legs shaking quickly, a filthy moan filling his ears like his cum was filling up her pussy.

“Jesus Christ,” Lacey whimpered. “You've totally ruined my fucking hole. I feel like I'm going to fucking slosh if I move...”

“Sorry about the bite,” Will said, only to see her shake her head wildly, her tongue licking her lips at him.

“Don't be... It marks me as yours. I fucking love it, although I should probably put a bandage on it, just to be safe...”

“So now that you got your go with me, you going to turn and run?” he asked her.

She turned to grab his head, pulling him into a firm kiss. “You own me, Will, and you gotta keep destroying me like this every chance you fucking get... god I feel so fucking warm...”

Something was changing inside of Will, that much he knew, but *what* was happening to him remained a mystery...

Chapter Two

The next week or so, he was constantly waiting for the other shoe to drop, but it never really did. He figured since Lacey had gotten off with him, she'd fall back into her familiar patterns and distance herself from him as far as possible as quickly as possible. That was what she'd done whenever she'd gotten what she wanted from other boys in the past. Instead, she'd doubled down, and went out of her way to make sure everyone on campus knew they were hooking up on the reg, and exactly how happy she was with her choice.

It felt incredibly strange for Lacey to be showing him off, like she'd won the lottery, but she was also doing everything she could to keep him happy, from waking him up with blowjobs to sneaking in quickies during his lunch break while on shift at the diner. She even made it a point to hang around the diner during her downtime so she could chat with him whenever it was slow, which was more often than Will liked for October, but it gave him and Lacey a chance to get to know one another.

Despite all the first impressions she'd given off, Lacey was trying *very* hard to be a good girlfriend. She wanted to learn as much about him as she could, but was also completely transparent about who she was, where she'd come from and what she wanted. She was regretful, at least a little bit, about all the guys she'd led on over the past year, but in the end, it had brought her and Will together, so that meant she couldn't be too angry about it.

Once he'd gotten past the veneer of campus sextpot, Lacey had turned out to be a relatively sweet girl. She wanted to be a veterinarian once she graduated, and had a strong love for animals, even though she really hadn't been allowed to have any growing up. One thing she was incredibly excited about that profession was that it gave her freedom to really go anywhere, live anywhere, because wherever Will went, she told him, that was where she wanted to go too.

It all felt incredibly *rushed* considering how she'd been treating him only a few short weeks ago, but while his paranoia was up that this was too good to be true, Lacey was doing everything she possibly could to ease those fears. Tanner had made some comment that maybe Lacey would be good for something now that she was apparently putting out for anyone, and before Will could even snap back a response, Lacey had beaten him to the punch.

"I only put out for Will, you moron, because he's my boyfriend. Not that your tiny little dick could satisfy anyone *anyway*," she sassed at him. Tanner had started to get up, like he was going to do something, then Will turned his gaze over and Tanner immediately sat back down again, still fuming with impotent rage, unwilling to take another swing at Will, at least yet. It hadn't surprised him that Lacey had seen Tanner's dick, but it still stung a little bit, knowing he'd probably seen her semi-naked.

All of that quickly passed and was replaced by something else entirely, though. It was the first time she'd referred to him as her boyfriend in public, and it wasn't something they'd talked about, like, at all. But he hadn't corrected her at the time, and he supposed that must've made it official. She enjoyed walking around campus with his arm around her, her body pressed up against his side. The more time he gave her, the more she was slowly peeling away layer after layer to find the things that turned him on and turned him off, even without him explicitly saying so.

She'd also encouraged him to act the wild man with her in bed, to be rough and coarse, not to the point where he would break or damage anything, but she would constantly beg him to slap and spank her ass, to tug on her hair, to make her legs stretch right up to the point where they ached. Not all the time, naturally, because one night Will had asked if they could just cuddle up on the couch and watch a movie, which she'd agreed to. It had turned into a gentle make out

session and they'd fucked each other on his couch beneath a blanket like they were back in high school and trying to not get caught by their parents, or whoever was hosting the party. It was tender and affectionate and completely at odds with how they'd normally been fucking, but at the end of it, Lacey had purred and snuggled up against him, falling asleep contently in his arms.

They'd been going out for nearly a month before things started getting weird again, though this time in a totally different way than before.

It was the second week in November, and the snow had started coming down in volumes, meaning that people ventured off campus a lot less during the week, afraid they'd get stuck trying to get to or from somewhere, and remaining closer to the university, where they could get around on foot if worse came to worst. Nobody wanted to be stuck in Denver and unable to get back to classes. It was only 30 miles away, but during the heavy snowstorms, it might as well have been a lifetime's distance.

That meant the demand for the diner was picking up a lot, the place full to the brim with kids all getting meals in between classes, studying over ever refilling pots of coffee and just generally taking shelter from the cold weather and the bitter winds. It also meant that he was getting less time during his work shifts chatting with Lacey, although she was still doing her best to hang around whenever she had a chance.

The fact that attendance to the diner had picked up wasn't all that surprising, because it typically happened during every winter. What made this one marked different was the *composition* of the people hanging around in the diner.

The past few years, it had consistently been a 3-to-1 ratio of dudes to chicks hanging around the diner, but this year, those numbers were flipped, and it was starting to do Will's head in a little. The manager of the diner had even started ordering supplies differently, based on the last few weeks in October, which was when the trend had started picking up steam.

Now, Will wasn't entirely unfamiliar with the myth of how women would flock to newly unavailable men, but he'd never seen it in such a large scale before. Many of the girls who would come into the diner would try and get seats closest to the counter so they could peek in on Will in the back, or, even more daringly, to try and preen and display themselves for his eyes should he happen to glance out onto the diner itself.

It had gotten so obvious that old Billy, a guy in his early 50s, had specifically asked to work every shift that Will was working, because he said the girls were showing up dressed like they were trying to audition for a strip club. They'd have on these monstrous overcoats when they came in, but as soon as they were settled at a booth or table, they'd peel them off and it would look like a rave inside of the diner, with sheer mesh shirts, exposed bras, tiny little tank tops and nipples threatening to gouge through fabric at any moment.

Billy had repeatedly asked Will what his new secret was, and if he minded that he was trying to hit on a girl every now and then. Will had told the guy to go for it, but that if he ever succeeded, he was going to be tagged a dirty old man. Billy had shot back that it was better to be a dirty old man who was getting collegiate pussy than a dirty old man who was pulling his own pud every other night.

During his lunch break, Will would often come out and stand behind the counter while Lacey sat at a stool opposite from him, since they'd gotten caught and politely scolded (in the most hilariously approving way possible) the last time they'd had a quickie in one of the diner's lockable bathrooms. He'd generally eat a sandwich of his own making while Lacey would typically just have a salad and a milkshake. After a couple of nights of this, someone had asked about his sandwich of choice, considering that it seemed like Will was always eating the same

thing. Will, in classic snark, had referred to it as his 'Unkosher Reuben' as it was a pastrami with sauerkraut on rye, but also had swiss cheese, bacon and a spicy brown mustard.

As soon as he'd gotten back from that particular lunch break, he'd gotten requests to make the sandwich for patrons. Not just one or two, but several. A few days later, the diner's owner had asked Will to come up with a handful of new items, and put them all on the menu.

'Will's Sandwich.' 'Will's Breakfast.' 'Will's Late Night Snack.'

When Will had jokingly said he felt like he should get a cut of all the new items and the increased business, the owner had agreed that Will was being underpaid, and had raised his salary by \$4/hr, which was far more than Will thought was necessary, but he also wasn't about to say no.

That certainly wasn't the only change he had coming down the pipeline.

It was the middle of the month when Lacey asked Will if she could just move in with him, and he found it hard to come up with reasons to say no to her. She'd been spending most nights at his place anyway, and the few times they'd been over to her place, he'd been more aware of what a disaster area it was, something Lacey blamed a lot on her roommate, a girl named Mel, who she'd been friends with at some point, but had lost her connection with long before Will had entered the picture. He'd only met Mel the once, and while she seemed okay, she seemed like she had an entirely different vibe going on than Lacey, more of a hippie dippie flower love and peace attitude. There were several Phish posters on the walls, a black light in one corner and a bong on the coffee table next to a bag of ragweed.

Will spent a good day thinking about Lacey moving in with him, and the changes she'd gone through since they'd first hooked up. Since then he'd found that Lacey had become remarkably patient and understanding, especially considering the speed at which he felt like their relationship was moving forward. Whether he was the cause for the change or not, they got along extremely well. Whoever the self-absorbed, self-centered girl was that she'd been before they hooked up, he'd seen neither hide nor hair of that girl at any point in the six weeks or so they'd been dating.

So the weekend before Thanksgiving, she and Will had taken a day, driven a Uhaul over to her old place, loaded up everything she owned and dragged it all over to Will's house, unloading it and finding places for just about everything, although Will had drawn a line over a couple of posters that Lacey had jokingly said she wanted to have prominent placement. They'd featured hunky men in little to no clothes, walls of muscle flexed and exposed on display. Will had, kidding back at her, told her either the posters went or she did, and she'd been giggling wildly as she tossed them into the dumpster out back of the condo complex, saying her goodbyes to the men featured in the pictures as Will had gone to take the Uhaul back to the lot and pick up his car late into the evening.

Dropping off the truck had been easy – there was a designated parking spot and a drop box for him to slide the keys into since it was after hours. It was when he got back to his car that things took a turn for the strange.

The Uhaul building was sort of on the outskirts of Boulder, surrounded by lots of heavy trees, and as Will got to his car he was fairly certain he could see the outline of a figure standing at the treeline, the light making it only a shadow, a giant coat flapping in the wind off to one side. He was convinced the figure was watching him even as he crawled into his car and closed the door behind him. He tried to get the engine to turn over, the cold air forcing him to take four or five attempts before the engine sputtered to life, and when it finally did, Will glanced up to where the shadow had been and found it gone, an empty space in the void of the night.

Will so wanted to go over and look, just to prove to himself that there were footprints there and that he wasn't imagining the whole thing, but he feared if he turned his car off, it might not start up again, so instead he simply left without validating his fears.

He'd driven carefully on his way home, but couldn't shake the feeling that somehow he was still being watched, still being followed, still under someone's gaze, no matter how many unusual twists and turns he took on his path home, no matter how many times he looked behind him, never once seeing anyone in pursuit.

Some part of him wondered if he'd just been not getting enough sleep lately, between his time in both classes and at work, and now with the added expectations of keeping Lacey sexually sated. The girl was a fucking dynamo. Five or six times a week was the girl's average, and it had started to creep into his sleep time.

When he got back from dropping off the Uhaul, Lacey had wanted to go a few rounds to christen their new living arrangements, but after the first round, Will had begged off, telling her that he truly needed to get some more sleep in, something Lacey had reluctantly relented on. Instead, she'd snuggled up against him, pulling the blankets over them tight and clung her cool body to his for the rest of the night without doing anything to disturb him, letting him get a good nine hours of sleep in before the morning came creeping in. That had been nice, just to not feel so alone in the world.

A few days before Thanksgiving, they'd sort of had their first fight, although the bluster from it had been gone nearly as quickly as it had arrived. Lacey had been trying to convince Will to come with her to her family's house for Thanksgiving dinner, but Will had insisted that he needed to stay on campus because the diner was paying him an extraordinary amount of money for him to work the Thanksgiving Day shift, a tradition as a place for all the kids who couldn't go home for the holiday who spent it there instead. Lacey had then grown cross with him, arguing that she should stay with him so that he wasn't alone for the holiday. Will had laughed, telling her that he was going to be working from mid-day until midnight when the diner closed for the day, and that as soon as he was done, he would come home, crawl into bed and sleep for an eternity.

He'd expected the fight to linger longer than it did because only a few minutes later, Lacey was apologizing to him for losing her temper, telling him that she'd just wanted to show him off to her parents and her sisters. She hadn't taken into account *his* feelings or the sort of weirdness that must creep into his head during any 'family gathering' holiday, especially since he had no family of his own to gather with, what with both of his parents gone, his mother dead and his father, well, who the hell knew *who* his father even was much less *where* he was. The last thing she'd wanted to do was to make Will feel worse about it, and she'd started to cry, fearing that she'd hurt him by leaving him alone when she thought he might have needed her most.

Will had sort of laughed about that, told her that he'd long ago acclimated to being alone during the holidays, and that while it had been toughest the first year, now he barely even felt like he was missing much of anything. It wasn't entirely true, as the memory of his mother was always just a blink away, but it didn't *hurt* like it used to. She should go and spend time with her family for Thanksgiving, and she could show off pictures of them together. If her mother or father asked why he hadn't come with her, she could simply tell them the truth, he said, which was that he was so tight on resources that he needed to work every possible shift that he could, and that he hoped her parents would respect the hustle and the drive to make sure he was always paying his bills on time, and not racking up new ones that he couldn't afford to cover.

The argument was over as quickly as it had started, and despite Lacey offering repeatedly to stay with Will, she'd eventually gone to her folks place for Thanksgiving dinner, sending Will

loads of pictures from the night, including some rather racy pictures she'd clearly taken in her bathroom and her old bedroom. He sincerely hoped for Lacey's sake that neither her parents or her sisters had caught her taking any of them.

By contrast, Will had spent almost the entire night of Thanksgiving simply working the grill as the diner had turned out to be packed wall-to-wall, every available seat in the place filled and several dozen orders placed for carry out on top of that. And a bunch of the orders had included names and phone numbers, just in case Will was interested.

Billy, who'd drawn counter duty for the night, had even gotten a few email orders with some rather risqué pictures for Will, girls in lingerie inviting him to come over and give them a creampie dessert. Billy had laughed himself silly at all of them, taking time to show Will each time an order like that came in via email, as Will would only roll his eyes and laugh with him, asking Billy if he was going to keep them for later. Billy pleaded the 5th, but Will could see a note on the email message heading that said 'forwarded' so Will knew that he had.

Lacey had gotten back the next day, and Will had immediately told her all about his crazy night at the diner with girls blind emailing in pictures of their tits or ass, just in some desperate attempt to get his attention, and how old Billy had certainly added more than a fair share of them to his spank bank. Will assured Lacey that he'd given no thought to it other than how crazy it was that since he and Lacey had started dating that suddenly so many women had crawled out of the woodwork to try and get him to notice them. He asked Lacey if maybe she had changed his shampoo or something, laughing about the ludicrousness of the whole thing, writing it off before giving it much thought.

The next day Lacey came home with a surprise for him, a pair of tickets for them to see Rival Sons, a band that Will had very much gotten into over the last few years, who would be playing in Denver in January. He was ecstatic about it, especially since he hadn't even heard the band was going to be on tour, but it turned out word of their new album had just dropped and Lacey had heard about the tickets going on sale on the campus radio station on her way home.

"I feel bad," Will said with a laugh, over a bowl of the chili he'd made for the two of them for dinner. He'd learned that Lacey, despite her Irish heritage, *loved* spicy good, and so no matter how hot he'd made the chili, she'd always say he could still turn it up a notch. "I didn't get you anything."

"Would you like to?" she said with a mysterious smile. "I know I've tried not to ask you for much, but I've recently thought about something I'd really like to get as a gift from you."

"Name it, and you know if it's within my power, I'll make it happen."

"Oh, it's within your power," she said, licking her lips a little. Will wasn't sure what to make of the look on her face. Was it mischief? Was it amusement? Was it apprehension? "I'm just afraid you're gonna tell me no."

"Why would I tell you no?"

"You're gonna think I'm kidding or that I'm not being genuine when I assure you that I really am and that it's what I really want."

That made Will tilt his head a little in confusion. "If you've been playing the long con, Lacey, setting me up for a couple months now only to pull an epic prank on me, I hate to say it, but at that point, I think I'd have to respect the game so much that I couldn't be mad about it," he laughed. "Why don't you tell me what you want, and I'll tell you if I can make that happen or not."

Lacey grinned, looking down at her bowl of chili for a moment, as if trying to figure out how she wanted to phrase what she said next, before turning her gaze up once more, a wicked

twinkle in her eyes. "I want to watch you fuck the shit out of my former BFF."

Will was *incredibly* grateful he'd decided to hold off taking a swig from his beer when he saw her tilt her head back up, because he most certainly would've done a spit take if she hadn't. "Excuse me? I don't think I quite caught that."

"Oh you heard me," she chuckled. "I used to be best friends with this girl, April, back when we were in high school. Total besties. Nothing could come between us. Except, well, I guess *we* came between us. Freshman year, we were actually roommates, shared a dorm room together. But when I was starting to realize I was cute enough to get guys' attention now, she was busy finding Jesus. I wasn't even aware we'd lost him. Anyway, I was baiting boys and she wasn't even masturbating, deciding to save herself for marriage. She even started slut shaming me, calling me a harlot and a Jezebel. I had to go and look that one up," she said, rolling her eyes some. "By the time the semester ended and we split up, we were at each others throats all the fucking time, her bitching and moaning that I didn't love myself, that I wasn't being respectful of her relationship with God, that I was going to go to Hell for what I was doing to boys."

"You were teasing the guys pretty bad before you met me, Lace," he said as a counterpoint.

"That's just *it*, Will," she laughed. "If I'd been fucking every guy I'd toyed with, sure, *then* maybe I'd have been being a *bit* of a slut, but I just wanted attention and was using my body the only way it seemed fair to. But, uh, you're only the second guy I've ever fucked. I screwed one other guy, like, within a few months of starting classes here, but he turned out to be a total asshat, so I kicked his ass to the curb. Other than that, it's just been handies and beejs, and nothing further. Not until you."

"It seems to me like I'm not the problem here, Lacey," Will shrugged. "I mean, I'm a *dude*. You dangle the idea of a threesome in front of me, and I'm gonna like a kitten with a laser pointer, scurrying this way and that to try and catch it. But just like the laser pointer, this kitten will never catch that, because it's an illusion. It's not real."

Her face took on a confused expression, not quite following what Will was telling her. "How is it not real?"

"Well, you're telling me you'd love to watch me fuck this other girl. What was her name again?"

"April."

"Right. April. So you want to watch me fuck this April, but she's saving herself for marriage. That's what you said to me earlier. Why would I want to disrespect that?"

"That's just it, Will," Lacey whined. "I think she's *full of shit*. I think she's been using Jesus like a shield, so that she didn't have to think about sex, because if she did, it'd start filling up her head the way it did mine, so much so that she couldn't think about anything else. And I think if she got her head out of her ass about that, she and I could go back to being friends again, instead of this stupid bullshit rivalry fucking thing we've totally got going on now where she shoots me dirty looks any time she sees you and I walking across campus."

"So you want me to convince April that she needs to get in bed with me," Will laughed. "Shit, Lacey, you might as well be asking me to build you a rocket ship to go to the moon out of red Solo cups and some bubblegum. I don't even know how I convinced *you* to fall for me other than by telling you 'no' a whole bunch of times."

"That's just it, Will," she giggled. "I don't think you need to really *do* anything other than be around her a bit. I don't want you to seem at all interested in her, and I think it's going to bug her the way it bugged me. I just need you to be okay with the idea that *when* she starts throwing

herself at you, that you be willing to bring to bed with us. And then maybe keeping her around afterward.”

“Keeping her around?” Will asked incredulously. “What, you mean, like here? *With us* with us? Like, a couple but with three people?”

“They call it a throuple, Will,” Lacey giggled. “They're all the rage these days, and frankly, I can't keep up with your libido all by my lonesome. I know we're both pretty new to having fan-fucking-tastic sex on the reg and on demand, but at some point, a girl's gotta take some time off and rest up a bit. And I love the way you fuck me, but honestly, I think I just need a helping hand to keep you in check, because you're a fucking monster when you get going, and a girl's gotta let her pussy rest up now and then.”

Will's brow furrowed a little bit as he wondered whose memory was giving them bad data, because while he *thought* it had always been Lacey instigating their sexual encounters, now he was wondering if maybe he had somehow got it mixed up in his head.

“So how you expect we do that? Be around her? If she's as Jesus freaky as you seem to think she is, I can't imagine she gets out much.”

“Oh, she still comes out to a bunch of the parties our mutual friends hold – she's just never sneaking drinks or gossiping much. She tends to do a lot of listening and then give the occasional pitch for Bible study group, which everyone just dismisses out of hand.”

“You have a picture of her?”

Lacey's grin widened like she was sure she had him on the hook now. She nodded, pulling out her phone before showing him a picture of her and April from a while back, clearly at the very start of their college tenure, their arms wrapped around each other in a giant hug, in what he had to imagine was that first dorm room.

April was an attractive young woman with hair that started almost black and faded the further down it got to eventually settling on the color of oak wood near the ends. Her skin was slightly olive in complexion, maybe some Asian or Italian in her bloodline, with high cheek bones demarcated by clean laugh lines that ran from her nose in a sort of inverse V shape that almost made her look a bit more angelic. She had large, thick expressive eyebrows, almost jet black, like maybe that was her natural hair color, although he couldn't be sure. Around her neck hung a large golden cross, maybe the starting point of her fascination with religion. She was definitely a good-looking girl, with soft pink lips formed into an almost knowing smile.

“I guess it couldn't hurt just to go to a party,” Will admitted.

“That's my man,” Lacey giggled. “We'll have her putting down the Bible and lifting up her skirt before you know it.”

“And you're *sure* you're going to be okay if she falls for me like you did?”

“Okay?” Lacey leaned in and kissed his cheek. “I'm fucking *counting on it*.”

Chapter Three

Despite the fact that it was just like any other party he'd gone to in his college career, there was something like the weight of expectations hanging over the head of this one. It was being held at Billy Sexton's house and that always meant it was going to be a raucous time, generally with a live band playing in the basement. It was the first weekend in December, and the month was already threatening to be a wild one, with the winter snows coming in hard, forcing everyone to bundle up thoroughly any time they went outside.

But Will knew, that was just the sort of excuse Billy Sexton needed to hold a party at his place, so it was almost guaranteed that April would turn up, Lacey assured him. Billy's parties were full of the exploits that nobody on campus wanted to miss.

The house was a massive three-story monster that housed at least half a dozen students in various stages of their college career, including Billy himself who referred to himself as a "twelfth-year senior," and nobody thought he was kidding any more. Billy was an institution around campus, with nobody entirely certain how he was funding his college adventures.

The bottom floor was almost entirely the "party area" with a bar set up as well as a stage where Billy liked to host local bands trying to get practice in with audiences to counteract them. Tonight's group was called Embrace The Lightning, and despite the emo-esque band name, it seemed like they were going to be sticking to playing a heavy rotation of Foo Fighters, Jimmy Eat World and Van Halen cover songs. Despite the fact that it was sweltering hot down there and most people were sweating their lungs out, almost all of them were still wearing their parkas because in the one completely unbreakable rule of Billy's house was that smoking (*and* vaping) wasn't allowed within the structure itself. "Take that shit outside," Billy had said more than a couple of times. "And if you can't do that, then just get the fuck outta my house."

Will and Lacey had come into the mid floor, though, which was where people were partying when they wanted to be able to have a conversation and not be completely dwarfed by the sound of the band. The floors were surprisingly well insulated in terms of sound, so while it was clear that the band was making a ruckus downstairs with the audience all cheering and chanting out "PAN-A-MA!" during the chorus, it wasn't too loud to overwhelm even casual conversation.

Lacey had made sure she had played up as much as she could into what she thought April would expect to see her in, which meant the skirt was ungodly short, the top was ridiculously low cut, and as much of her flesh as she could put on display, she had. She'd bitched the entire time she was out of the car, wishing that she'd worn leggings or something under the skirt, but it would've killed the image she was trying to put forth. And because they'd had to walk through the cold from the car to the house, once she'd shed her coat, everyone who even glanced her way at the party could tell she wasn't wearing a bra, because her nipples were hard as rocks and threatening to poke through her top. Will had spotted a handful of guys look over at her and lick their lips before noticing how firmly her arm was wrapped around Will's waist. They generally noticed that Will had seen them checking her out and then slunk away, like they were afraid Will was going to walk over and beat the shit out of them. He still wasn't sure why that was.

"Damn man," one of his classmates, a guy named Dale, said to him as he walked up to them. "Never thought I'd see the day that Lacey McGuinness would be settled down and hooked up with somebody. You two look cute together, though." Dale was a burnout who was going to graduate with an art degree, even if it killed him, but lord knows how long he'd been on campus. He and Billy were great friends, so Will wasn't surprised to see him here. Dale was a tall gaunt figure of a man, dressed entirely from head to toe in denim, his stringy blonde hair hanging

straight down to his waist, with a giant Megadeath logo on the back of his jacket, and tiny metal spikes poking from various portions of the outfit. “How’d you do it, man? How’d you tame the Skipper Queen?”

He'd heard the nickname before, since Lacey had been known to skip from man to man without ever settling on one for too long. “Ask her, not me, man,” Will told him.

“He’s got the biggest *dick* I’ve ever seen,” Lacey giggled at Dale as she reached over and grabbed an empty red Solo cup, pouring some beer into it. “I mean, I fucking *felt* it when it went in, like I was touching the face of God.”

“God’s nothing like that,” a voice said from somewhere within the swells of people before stepping out, as April practically sauntered up to them as somewhere in the back of Will’s mind, he could hear an old arcade announcer saying ‘A new challenger has entered!’ Her dark hair was mostly hanging loose, but she had two braids of it running down on either side of her face, framing it. April was dressed in a cashmere white fuzzy sweater and a neat grey skirt that hung down past her knees, with long black socks extending up under it, giving not an inch of exposed flesh other than her hands, her neck and face. Around her neck hung a very large golden cross with a miniature version of Jesus affixed to it, something Will could never quite wrap his head around.

There was a comedian named Bill Hicks who’d often said “If Jesus comes back, do you think he’s ever going to want to see a fucking cross again? It’s like going to up to Jackie Onassis with a rifle pendant and saying, ‘Just thinking of John, Jackie. Just thinking of John.’” Will had sort of always felt that way about depictions of Jesus on the cross.

“God is good and pure and noble,” April said to them, flicking her dark hair back over one shoulder. “He’s not considered with the physical realm in any way.”

“Is that why God supposedly said, ‘be fruitful and multiply’ when he created humanity?” Will countered. “I mean, isn’t that a direct quote from your good book?”

“It is,” April said with a frown, “but that’s Genesis, back when God had just created man.”

“So God’s opinion’s changed since then?”

April looked a little relieved, as if Will had thrown her a lifeline instead of another trap. “Yes, exactly.”

“And you know this... how?”

“It’s in other books. ‘Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body,’” she quoted at them. “That’s First Corinthians 6:18.”

Will smirked a bit. “Sure, but a bit later in that same book, doesn’t it say that God will not let you be tempted beyond your ability?”

And suddenly, April’s face was wavering a little bit once more. “Yes, but...”

“And you’re coming in here with all this hate and no love. ‘Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love,’” Will quoted back at her.

“That’s true, but...”

“In fact, there’s a *lot* of talk about love in that book of yours. ‘As I have loved you, you also are to love one another.’ ‘Owe no one anything, except to love each other.’ ‘Love your enemies, and do good.’ ‘If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.’ And yet, here you are, ready to commit all your fellow students to damnation because they aren’t following some rules you’ve invented in your head that aren’t even *in* that book,” Will countered.

“But, but, but... ‘women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control,’” April started to stutter at them. “Timothy 2:9.”

Will smirked, raising a hand to waggle a finger at April, as people were starting to gather around to watch the argument. “Finish the quote.”

“W-w-w-what?”

“That’s not the end of that verse and you know it.”

April blanched and her olive skin was started to deepen with shades of red. “Is it? I, uh, I don’t remember.”

“Oh, then let me help you,” Will said helpfully. “It goes ‘with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire.’” He paused with a knowing smirk. “So with your braided hair and heavy *gold* cross, perhaps throwing stones isn’t the wisest of things.”

“It’s a symbol of my devotion to God...” April murmured weakly.

“And yet, doesn’t your book say, ‘You shall not make gods of silver to be with me, nor shall you make for yourselves gods of gold,’ or are you just skipping that portion?”

“That’s not... you’re twisting the words of the Bible,” April said, her face scrunched up in frustration, her hands clenching fistfuls of the bottom of her sweater. “Thou shalt not commit adultery. It’s quite clear.”

“But whose definition of adultery are we to follow?” Will lectured. “Merriam-Webster dictates that adultery is sexual intercourse between a married person and someone other than that person’s current spouse or partner.” He paused, seeing April trying to shrink even smaller into herself. “No one here is married. Therefore, nobody here is guilty of adultery, and you’re bearing false witness in accusing anyone of that.”

“But that’s...”

“And isn’t that one of your Commandments? ‘Do not bear false witness against your neighbor?’ How do you justify that?”

“It’s... it’s still immorality?”

“But immorality is a sliding scale, and never defined all that well in the Bible. Plus many of the concepts there are outdated. I mean, don’t even get me fucking *started* on how messed up Leviticus is.”

“But, but, but... Sodom and Gomorrah,” April tried to interject.

“Are a tale about adultery, pridefulness and uncharitableness,” Will said, knowing he had her on the ropes. “If you read the text straight, it’s mostly about the people of Sodom being inhospitable to Lot, his daughters and the angels who God sent to destroy the city because the city had a reputation of wickedness. But those punishments were the purview of God, and not left to the hands of man.”

“But...”

“Your book is full of so many contradictions that I don’t understand how anyone can draw faith or meaning from it, because it has dozens of authors, many of whom are writing in direct opposition to each other.” April had clearly never been stood up to when she’d been proselytizing before, and the fact that Will could quote entire passages back at her had put the girl on her heels, clearly not prepared for this level of argument. “If you want to go around lecturing people about what’s moral and what’s right, maybe you should consider turning that judgmental gaze upon yourself first, because you aren’t approaching them with an open hand but a closed fist, not with love but in anger. And love is mentioned more than almost anything else in that book of yours. ‘Let all that you do be done in love.’ ‘Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.’ ‘Faith, hope and love abide, these three; but the

greatest of these is love.’ ‘Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.’ ‘Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of law.’ And my personal favorite, Mark 12:31, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.’ So, if you’re not going to bring love to others, April, what the hell are you even *doing* with your life?”

Will felt a little cruel turning all that knowledge on the girl, who was clearly not ready for a prepared opponent, but over the time he’d been working at the diner, he’d had to deal with a number of religious zealots who would storm in and want to pick a fight about how Will and whoever was working at the diner were going to hell. It had inspired Will to take a religious studies class last year, and he’d built what he called ‘the Bible defense guide.’ It meant he didn’t have to memorize the entire fucking book, but that he had five or six pages of selected passages that he could use to make just about any point that he wanted, and he’d eventually gotten to the point where he’d run rings around those who had carried in their picket signs condemning homosexuality. Will particularly loved the scene in the from the West Wing when the president pointed out that if they were going to follow the literal definitions within the Bible, then he should consider selling his daughter into slavery, as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7.

After a moment, April started to cry and then burst through the crowd, running towards the bathroom, slamming the door shut as a number of people in the crowd jeered and laughed at her. Lacey turned to look at Will, a little bit of a frown on her face.

“I wanted her worked up, Will,” Lacey scowled, “not broken down and suicidal.”

“Like Picasso said, Lacey, ‘every act of creation is first an act of destruction.’ I need her to be open to considering that the indoctrination she’s been enduring for the last several years might not be in her best interests,” Will sighed. “It’s a rough break no matter how she gets it. But you should go see if you can talk to her a bit.”

Lacey headed off through the crowd to follow April, as a couple of the guys sort of crowded around Will to ask him more questions about how he’d hooked up with Lacey, questions that he really couldn’t answer. After a little bit, Will pushed away from them and started to move over towards the direction he’d seen the two women head off to.

As he came around the corner, suddenly Will felt a large splash of water, as someone threw a glass of water directly at him. Will was in shock, finding himself staring a man who looked maybe just a hair too old to be a college student. The man also looked shocked, but Will could tell it was for some sort of other reason. “Dude!” Will shouted, spreading his arms wide.

“Oh, uh, I, uh... sorry man,” the guy said, turning his face away suddenly before disappearing into the crowd.

Will glanced down at his shirt, seeing it was still soaking wet. He scrunched up his face in confusion. It wasn’t as though the guy had spilled it; it had felt a whole hell of a lot more like the guy had *thrown* it directly onto him. Will’s nostrils flared a little as an unusual scent filled them. He reached down and grabbed his shirt, pulling it up to his nose. Was that... was that garlic he detected? *In* the water? What the hell had the guy thrown on him? Who the hell *was* he? And where did he *go*?

He was still reeling with confusion as he made his way over towards the bathroom, finding the door shut, but at least Lacey was on the other side of it, and not standing outside. He knocked quietly on the door. “Girls? It’s me. Can I come in?”

“Oh God, he probably hates me!” April’s voice said from inside, somewhere from inside of a sob. “Don’t come in please!”

“He *doesn’t* hate you, April,” Lacey’s voice replied. “I’m going to let him in.”

“Are... are you sure?” April sniffled.

“No, but fuck it, I’m going to do it anyway,” Lacey answered as he heard the click on the door unlocking.

A moment or two later, he reached down and jiggled the door handle, finding that it opened, so he pushed in the door and stepped in before closing it behind him so that nobody else would come in, at least for a few moments. April was sitting on the toilet and Lacey was sitting on the edge of the tub next to her, holding her hands. “You okay?”

“I was so mean to her, to you, to both of you,” April said. “And why? Because I thought some, some, some *book* told me so! And I thought I knew it so well, but you tore me to pieces in like five minutes! What have I been doing with my life?”

“It’s never too late to change,” Lacey said to her former friend. “You want to go somewhere less crowded and talk about it?”

“No. Yes? Yes. Maybe. I guess.”

Will chuckled. “Which is it?”

April looked down at her feet again then looked back up and nodded. “But I don’t think I can face all those people out there.”

“Don’t worry,” Will said as he helped her to her feet, putting one of his arms around her shoulders. “Nobody’ll say shit while I’m around.”

“Thanks,” April said as they started to move towards the doorway before she looked up at him. “Why do you smell like garlic?”

“You know, I’m not entirely sure of that myself,” he chuckled.

They moved out of the bathroom, and sure enough, there was a small crowd, all of whom looked like they were about ready to say something until they saw Will’s glare, which cowed everyone into quick submission, and nobody dared voice a sound as Will moved down the hall, April under one arm, Lacey under the other.

As they stepped out of the party, Will was fairly certain that he could see the guy who’d thrown the glass of water on him standing down at the end of the block looking on, but he didn’t have time to think about the dude much right now. Because his shirt was soaking wet, he was instantly chilled to the bone on the way from the house to their car, cranking the heat on high even as they started to drive the short distance across town back to Will and Lacey’s place, nobody saying anything during the tiny trip.

He pulled his car into the garage and closed the door behind them before hopping out of the car. “Let me take a quick shower,” he told them as they entered the house, “so I don’t stink like garlic anymore. I’ll be back in like five minutes.”

Lacey smiled at him, kissing his cheek. “Okay babe. Me and April will just catch up a little bit while you’re getting hosed down.” She reached down and pulled his shirt up and over his head, exposing his chest for April’s view, and he could hear her breath catch, and swore he could even hear her heartbeat start to race a little. Lacey bunched up the shirt, giggling. “And toss *this* into the washing machine before you do, otherwise it’ll stink forever.”

He nodded, walking down the hallway, stopping to toss the shirt into the washing machine but not yet turning it on, otherwise it would only be fighting the shower for hot water. He stepped into the master bedroom and then into the bathroom, shucking his shoes, socks, pants and boxers before hopping into the shower.

One of the things he loved about his house was that the warm water was on almost from the very start. He didn’t want to be away from the two of them for too long, but it was clear they were doing a little bit of catching up, now that April wasn’t completely under the sway of

whatever church had gotten their fingertips into her.

Five minutes later, he smelled much more like Irish Spring than he did garlic water. He toweled himself down and then grabbed a pair of boxers and a fresh pair of jeans, pulling them on. He grabbed a t-shirt, but didn't put it on yet intentionally, walking down the hallway to them, just starting to put it on as he came around the corner for them to see him again. "Okay, much better now," he said to them.

"How the hell did you end up smelling so badly like garlic, babe?" Lacey asked him with a giggle. "Someone spill one of those pizza dipping sauce cups on you?"

"No, some dude threw an entire glass of water at me."

"Wait, *at* you? Who? Why?"

"No fucking clue. Never seen the guy before."

"Super fucking weird," she said before patting the space on the couch between the two girls, motioning for him to come over and join them. "April was just telling me how she thinks you're cute."

"Oh my *gawd*, Lacey, how could you?" April said, covering her face with her hand in embarrassment. "I just meant you've got a cute boyfriend, that's all."

Will moved to slump down in the center of the couch with Lacey on one side of him and April on the other. He'd sort of expected Lacey to move closer to him and April to move further away, but instead, both women had sort of leaned in a little bit. "Well, thank you."

"He's a fucking handful, though," Lacey said with a giggle. "I mean, he's a fucking animal in the sack. It's a beast keeping up with him."

"Lacey!" April hissed, the awkwardness in her growing in strides. "You shouldn't tell me stuff like that!"

"It's perfectly normal for girlfriends to talk about the dude they're fucking, April."

"Not when he's *around* it isn't!"

"Will doesn't mind. He knows I love how he fucks me, but that I'm on the search for a tag team partner to help me keep up with him, aren't you, babe?"

Will smirked. "I don't think I'm really as bad as she makes me out to be, but there have been a couple of mornings where she's gotten up and walked a little funny."

April started giggling frantically, hiding much of her face in her hands. "You're incorrigible."

"You two kissed and made up now?" he asked them. "I didn't mean to come down on you so hard, April, but you sort of broke Lacey's heart when you started calling her a slut."

"Well, I *am* a slut," Lacey grinned, "but only *your* slut. And she was saying it like it was a *bad* thing, which it, like, totally isn't."

"You're kidding about looking for a tag team partner, though, right?" April asked, a tiny bit of vibrato in her voice.

"Well—" Will started.

"I'm absolutely fucking *not* kidding," Lacey interrupted. "He's a beast of a man and I need to get somebody else to help me fuck him on the reg before my fucking legs give out."

"Oh my *gawd*, Lacey," April said, looking down at her hands. "Why are you telling *me* this?"

"Because I thought maybe you could make up to me by helping keep my boyfriend's lusts in check," Lacey said, licking her lips a little bit.

The room was quiet for what felt like an epoch before April spoke again. "Really? I mean, he's *your* boyfriend. Why would you want to share him?"

“Because I can use a *break*, April. And I feel guilty sort of hogging him all to myself. He’s too much man for me to handle on my own,” Lacey said, reaching out to rub a fingertip along Will’s chest. “Besides, I’ve seen you looking at him whenever he and I have been walking across campus for the last month. When was the last time you got some action anyway?”

April’s eyes kept focused on her hands. “Not since before I joined The Church Of Our Lady Of Salvation,” she whispered. “And they constantly told me that touching myself was shameful.”

“Oh honey,” Lacey said, almost sounding pained herself at the thought of it. “What a bunch of assholes. There’s nothing shameful about touching yourself. And nothing shameful at all in indulging in a bit of physical gratification with a good-looking boy.” Lacey reached across and brushed her fingertip across April’s cheek. “And if you’re really that nervous, I can stay around and help you...”

April suddenly swallowed a big gulp of air. “H-h-h-*help* me?” As nervous as she was, April didn’t lean away from Lacey’s touch, instead leaning into it. “Is Will going to be okay with that?”

“Oh, he won’t mind, honey. Now let’s get you out of those clothes...” April started to grab the cross and lift it up before Lacey’s hand stopped her. “No no, leave that on.”

“Are you sure?”

“It’ll be hotter.”

“O-o-okay,” April said, grabbing the bottom of her thick creamy sweater, pulling it up and over her head. Beneath it she wore a surprisingly tight white t-shirt, which was the next thing to go, exposing a very ornate white lace bra. April folded her arms over her chest, which made Lacey get up from the couch and move to stand in front of her friend.

“Now that just won’t do, April,” Lacey said, grabbing April’s shoulders, pulling her to her feet. “You’ve got great tits. You gotta show ’em off.” She spun her friend around so that she was facing Will, then unfastened April’s bra for her. April was still clinging to it a bit, but Lacey finally just reached up and grabbed April’s hands, pulling them down to her sides so the bra just slid off her shoulders and fell down, exposing a lovely pair of small tits capped with tan nipples that twitched a little as Will gazed upon them. They were perfect for her frame, and any larger might have seemed out of place or unwieldy, but it was clear April was embarrassed by their size.

“They’re not very big,” April whined, her arms still pulling a little against Lacey’s hands. “Not like yours. I always got jealous of your tits.”

“Hey. Hey hey hey. None of that,” Lacey said, leaning her head forward over April’s shoulder, pulling her head to turn it as Lacey leaned in to press her lips against those of her friend. April sort of popped a little in surprise, but then sort of leaned into it, something that surprised Will a little bit. Within the span of just a few moments, April went from very nervous first lesbian kiss to full-on going for it, tongues slithering over one another, trying to explore each other’s mouth. When they finally broke, Lacey giggled into her friend’s face. “You were thinking about that *long* before we got here, weren’t you?”

“I... I thought it was a sin to think about you that way, but you... you were always so pretty... and I always got so jealous...”

“Awww... that’s so sweet! Well, I can make it up to you, but we gotta keep getting you naked.”

“R-r-r-right now?”

“He’s right there, and *I* certainly can’t take it right now, but you can, and you *should*.”

You're going to have so much *fun* with this, and you're gonna *feel* it in the morning," Lacey said as she reached behind April and unhooked her skirt. Before April could react, she shoved the fabric down to her ankles, and April couldn't help but put one of her hands in front of her waist, covering up a pair of white lacy panties that she had on beneath the skirt, in stark contrast to the long black stockings that came up to her mid-thigh.

"This... this is so *fast*," April said, although Will could see her hand moving away from her crotch and over to her panties, slowly pushing them down herself, stepping out of them. She had a patch of dark hair above her pussy, nothing wild but not shaped in any particular fashion. "But it's... it's kind of exciting."

"Why don't you kiss her, baby?" Lacey said to him. "I think she needs to get that rush like I did. Go on, go sit in his lap."

April nervously moved over to slide onto Will's lap, completely naked, shivering just a little bit as she leaned her face down towards hers.

That was when Will decided to take over, his hand smoothing against the back of her neck as he pulled her in faster than she'd expected, his lips claiming hers, pressing her body against his as he could feel her moan into his mouth, all shyness melting away in the heat of the moment. His hand moved to massage one of her breasts, his thumb rubbing back and forth across her nipple, flicking it up and down like a light switch, each snap of it making her tremble in his lap.

He could feel her legs, which had been clamped tightly together when she'd first sat down, open wide, and his hand explored downward, moving to push between them as his fingertips rubbed along her slit, making her gasp and whimper into their unflinching kiss. Her hips, however, were pushing towards his hand and not away.

When he finally slipped two fingers up and inside of her pussy, the wanton groan that erupted from her throat was loud enough to almost overflow his mouth, her fingers clenched hard onto his shoulder, even as her hips were writhing against his touch. It certainly had been some time since anyone had touched in such a fashion, and he suspected she might have even had an orgasm when she felt his fingers penetrate inside of her.

He stroked those fingers back and forth for a few moments before he slipped them out of her, a needy whine escaping her mouth. But he pulled back from the kiss, and her eyes were looking imploringly at him, like she was worried she'd done something wrong, only for him to lift his fingertips up to his mouth, licking them clean before her eyes, another heavy shudder travelling through her body.

"I think she's ready, Will," Lacey said, pulling April from his lap. "Let me get her in position for you, so she *really* feels it."

"But, but, but..."

"C'mon honey, I know best." Lacey helped April to her feet then pushed the shivering girl knees forward onto the couch, April's hands bracing against the back of the couch, not quite fully bent over, but positioned enough so that her ass jutted out and her legs were spread wide. Will moved to his feet and unbuttoned his jeans, unzipping them so he could fish out his cock, April's face turned away so she couldn't get a look at it. April tried to look back, but Lacey's hand caught the girl's chin, stopping her from looking back. "Nuh uh. You just wanna *feel* it first."

"Is... will it fit?" April asked her friend nervously.

"Oh yeah. It's gonna feel fucking *amazing*," Lacey said as she pulled back and moved over to whisper into Will's ear. "I want you to *fuck* her like you're trying to *break her*, baby. I

want you to jam that fat fucking *dick* of yours so hard into her that cunt whistles from the wind when you take it out. I want you to rail her so good, she knows she's got a *new* God in her life... you hear me, baby?"

Will looked at Lacey, almost as if he wasn't sure she was serious, but there was an almost intoxicated expression on his girlfriend's face as she reached down and pulled one of April's legs a little further apart.

He moved in, and rubbed the head of his cock across April's slit, and could feel the formerly religious girl whimpering, almost trying to lean back just the tiniest amount, like she was eager but also somehow still nervous. Once he got the alignment right, though, his two hands locked onto her hips, held her in place, and then just stormed forward, a deep howl escaping April's lips, a strangled carnal shriek as her nerves were overwhelmed in a way she hadn't even imagined possible before then.

Once he bottomed out, his hips against her ass, he was almost certain he could feel the tip of his shaft lodged against her cervix. But Lacey had been quite adamant about how he was supposed to go at April, so he pulled back, sliding almost all the way out of her before slamming forward again, his body clapping against hers.

The tempo he set was primal and animalistic, his body clapping against hers in a ruthless, rough pace, even as he felt her vaginal walls clenching and squeezing onto his shaft. There was a thumping sound that he could hear that he couldn't identify at first, but then realized it was the heavy cross she was still wearing bouncing between her tits each time he railed into her.

"Jesus Jesus oh God oh God oh God," April groaned as Lacey moved around to stand behind the couch so she could see April's face as he continued to drill. "I'm so I'm so I'm so full, Lacey!" she whimpered. "I feel so stretched..."

"And how does that make you *feel*, April?"

"Like... like a slut..." April whimpered.

"And...?"

"And..." April hissed. "And and and and I fucking *looooooove* it... fuck my bitch *brains* out you fucking brute! Harder! Fuck me harder! Harder!"

It was as if something had finally snapped inside of the girl and she was embracing her new nature, so Will tried to reach one of his legs back a little to give him just that little extra bit of force, allowing him to push into her a bit coarser, although to be fair, the way she was now shoving her ass back into him had added far more power.

"Fill her up, baby," Lacey said to him over April's shoulder. "I wanna see you nut in her so fucking hard she fucking *swells* like a balloon. I wanna see her eyes widen when she feels that cum paint her fucking brain. You want that, don't you, April?"

"God fuck yes fuck God I fucking want it Jesus I want to feel him cumming in my stuck up pussy so fucking badly!"

"Do it, Will. Nut her. Pump her fucking belly *full*."

Between Lacey and April, there wasn't much chance of him doing anything, and he suddenly felt April's cunt clamp down *hard* onto his shaft and start to give tight rhythmic clenches, the girl clearly heels over head in the midst of the hardest orgasm she'd ever had. That, in turn, set off one of his strongest, and he felt like he was pouring gallons of his fuck cream inside of her, a bestial triumphant roar escaping his lips as his orgasm blossomed like daybreak and engulfed him in light of ecstasy. Right before his mind erupted into the white noise of orgasm, he leaned down and clamped his teeth against the crook of April's neck, biting into the flesh, just hard enough.

When he came to sometime later, he found that he was tucked safely into bed, Lacey pressed firmly against one of his sides, April snuggled tightly against the other, the blankets wrapped around the three of them to keep them in a bundled cocoon. Both girls were asleep and drooling on his shoulders, so he chuckled, and drifted back into slumber with them as well, only one thought running through his head.

“This is fucking *wild...*”

Chapter Four

Will wasn't entirely sure what to make of his life when he woke up in the morning, but both April and Lacey were both still there. At some point during the night, the two girls must have gotten up and bandaged April's neck. He wasn't entirely sure why he'd done that on both of the girls' first time, but he figured there was definitely a chance he might keep on doing it, so he was glad they'd tended to it and didn't let it get infected. He peeked beneath the bandage, and while it was definitely a wound, it almost seemed like the bite was healing up much quicker than he'd expected it to.

He suspected they were going to need to talk about this new arrangement they found themselves in soon, but he discovered on the first day, nobody really wanted to broach the subject. They were all sort of skirting around one another, none of them starting any real conversation, just sort of going through their daily life.

That night, though, when they sat down to have dinner, April decided she was ready to broach the subject. Will had picked up some fried chicken from a local joint, and when he set it down on the table, April pounced to start off the conversation in the direction she'd clearly been thinking about all day long.

"So, uh, you're, uh, cool with both of us just hanging around here?" April said, clearly unsure where to start talking, so she'd just picked somewhere.

"What do you mean by 'hanging out?'" Will asked them.

"Well, what do you *want* us to mean by hanging out?" Lacey said with a smile. "I was kinda thinking April was just asking to check and make sure that we were both your girlfriend. I know I am, and I know we *talked* about her also taking on that title as well, but, y'know, we sort of caught up in the heat of the moment and didn't put anything down in paper. She's just making sure you haven't changed your mind. Which you haven't. Because of course you haven't. Why would you? Just look at her. She's a completely dead sexy bitch."

Will tilted his head briefly, as if they were having different conversations. "I think I was more of making sure *you* two hadn't changed your mind," he said. "This isn't exactly what most people think of when they say they're in a relationship."

"Sure," Lacey replied, "but most people are fucking stupid. And I don't give a shit what they think. I like dick. I like chicks. I want both. Regularly. And you've got an appetite that I don't think either of us could keep up with on our own."

"You make me sound like I'm some kind of sex machine," Will said with a soft laugh, opening the box of fried chicken, taking out a few pieces. "I'm really not that bad. Am I?"

"I think you don't realize how *intense* you can get, Will," Lacey answered with a smile. She reached into the box to pull out a couple of pieces of chicken for herself. "Don't get me wrong; I love that about you. I promise you, I truly do. But when you get into it, fuck, man, you *really* get into it. And I bet April's a little bit sore this morning 'cause of the railing you gave her."

April blushed and giggled a little bit. "Sitting's a little bit uncomfortable but it's also kind of nice. But yeah, I definitely can't handle that being an everyday kind of thing."

"We don't have—" Will started before Lacey put her fingertip up.

"Nobody has to do *anything*, baby, but we want to do it regularly, and we're here voluntarily, so let your girls be *your* girls, okay?"

And that was sort of the end of the discussion. Will tried to bring it up a couple of times over the next few weeks, but the conversation was almost always immediately brushed aside in favor of other topics. Will also asked a couple of times if April regretted giving up her ties to the

local church she'd been a part of, but each time, she'd sort of brushed it off as "a fad," and didn't linger on the subject much longer.

And, of course, he had to go and rent the U-Haul again, as April decided she wanted to move into their place as well. Will hadn't been entirely convinced it was a smart move, but April had pleaded with him, saying that unless she just up and left her old place without warning, the people at her former church might come and harass them once they found out where she'd gone, and she'd rather just avoid all the confrontation for as long as she could.

The first Monday after they'd hooked up, someone from the church had tried to talk to her, but she'd done her best to avoid talking to them, saying she just didn't feel at home in the church anymore. The guy pestering April had eyed Will like he wanted to pick a fight, and Will was ready for it to spill out into a shouting match. It hadn't. The man had started to say something about how Will had no right to corrupt a member of their congregation, but the sentence died in the man's throat unspoken. Will had turned to glare at him, almost feeling like he wanted to snarl, and the man had started to wilt, almost shivering in fear, just from a dirty look.

Nobody from the church came to bother them again for a while after that.

As Christmas approached, both Lacey and April wanted Will to come home with them for the holidays, but Will insisted that he didn't want to leave the area, and that he *certainly* wasn't ready for the sort of grilling any parents were going to give him if he went back with them. April and Lacey were both from Kansas City, which was almost ten hours by car but only an hour and a half flight, assuming they did the drive from Boulder to Denver Airport, which Will had agreed to do as long as the girls shared flights there and back.

He was very pleased to see that whatever animosity had grown between the two girls while they were apart, their shared experiences had quashed that beef immediately, so much so that they'd fallen back into normal rhythms and patterns that he imagined they'd developed over their time as high school friends, before they'd come to college and April had had her dalliance with Jesus. For anyone who didn't know better, it seemed like they were two old friends who'd never had anything come between them.

Once April had moved into the house with him and Lacey, the three of them were always sharing the same bed. Oh, each of the girls had their own bedroom with their own bed in it, but as Lacey had told him, that was mainly for show, in case their parents ever swung by the campus. As proud as Lacey was that she was having Will balls deep at every chance she could, she didn't *quite* feel comfortable with being open about that to her parents, not yet anyway.

He drove the girls out to Denver airport on Dec. 19th with the understanding that he'd come back and pick them up again on the 26th. The weather was cold and sharp, but at least there wasn't any precipitation when he drove them out. They'd had themselves a wild night the evening before, something Lacey and April told him would need to tide him over for a week, something he found rather laughable. The girls seemed convinced he was some ravenous creature, when he felt like they were usually the ones instigating sex with him.

When he got back to the house after dropping them off, he noticed something odd about his place. In a line across the driveway, and in a line laid out in front of his front door, there were two heavy rows of purple flowers laid on the snow-covered ground. He didn't want to drive over them because he wondered if they were thorny and might puncture his tires, so he parked his car along the side of the street, hopping out to go deal with it.

Will kept thick gloves in his car, so he pulled them on and then moved over to the long row of purple plants along the driveway. He didn't recognize them but he wondered if they might

be poisonous, so he grabbed handfuls of them and carted them over to his green waste trash bin, flipping open the top before chucking the flowers into it. Whoever had come by had certainly had a *lot* of the damn things, as it took Will four trips to get all of them from the driveway, and another two to get all of the ones resting in front of his front door. Before he closed up the bin, though, he took his iPhone out of his pocket and snapped a picture of the flowers, then ran the image through Google image search. Turned out they were called aconitum, and they were definitely poisonous, although it was only minorly so on skin contact.

With all the flowers cleaned up, he got back into his car and pulled it into his garage before heading into the house, enjoying the fact that he had the whole place to himself, at least for a little while, although he knew he wouldn't have long to enjoy it.

As he did on every break, he knew he was going to be locked into wall-to-wall work at the diner, doing everything he could to keep his coffers full enough for whatever next disaster lay just around the corner. It was something Will had learned all too well, that there was always another crisis he would need to solve just around the corner.

The first night at the diner with the girls gone, however, something strange happened at the diner, something Will still wasn't quite sure what to make of. Someone had tried to rob the place. At least, that was what Will *thought* had happened. The entirety of it hadn't made a whole lot of sense.

It had been just past 1 a.m. and the diner wasn't all that busy, something Will was thankful for. He'd been a little bit dreading the possibility that the place could be crawling with women, like it had been the previous vacation, but instead, it was just a handful of students who also hadn't gone home and a bunch of the diner's regulars, the sort of grizzled locals who were happy to come into the place any time, completely unphased by college students. There'd been Steve and Gary in their usual booth in the corner, arguing about who'd been the hottest woman on *True Blood*; Mike and his new girlfriend Linda had been in the booth closest to the door, Lizzie and Rita were the only coeds there to peep on him so they were both sitting at the bar, and Billy was manning counter duty, although more often than not he was watching *Baywatch* reruns on the television screen that hung on one wall.

Then two guys had busted in through the front doors with shotguns.

"Everybody be cool, this is a robbery!" the taller guy shouted.

"Yeah, don't you dare fucking move," the shorter guy hissed. "Or we'll put a fucking slug through you! Wallets, cell phones – get 'em out and put 'em on the table!"

Will heard the commotion from the back, but they hadn't moved to see him yet, and he wasn't entirely sure what to do. Some part of him wanted to call 911, but he also knew that the advice from the police was that if you were being robbed, it was best just to go along with it and not to make too much of a scene about it.

He couldn't see the two guys too well, but from what he *could* see, they were sort of Abbot and Costello in trenchcoats and ski masks – one tall, lanky guy and one short, fat guy. At least these clowns had realized there were security cameras in the diner and had chosen to wear balaclavas. Both of them were shaking a little bit – adrenaline or drug withdrawal, it was hard to be sure which to chalk it up to.

"You, counter jockey!" the first one, the tall guy, yelled. "Open up the register and get out all the fucking cash! Go get the fucking cook out here before he calls the cops."

The short guy lifted the partition and moved behind the counter and over to the window, pointing the shotgun through it at Will, although he didn't look too steady with it. Hell, Will was a little worried the damn thing would just go off accidentally. "You! Fryboy! Get the fuck out

here!”

Calling the cops was clearly off the table. Will turned down the heat on the grill, made sure there wasn't any food on it, then headed over to the swinging door so he could step out into the area of the diner behind the counter. Maybe he should've had his hands up, but for some reason, Will hadn't thought of that. It just didn't occur to him.

“Wallet and cell phone, cook,” the fat guy sneered at him.

“No.” The single word hung in the air like he'd just slapped the short man.

“The *fuck* did you just say to me?”

“You can have my wallet if you want,” Will said. “I think there's like fifty bucks or whatever in it, but you aren't gonna get my phone. I gotta pick up my girlfriends when they get back after Christmas, and all their flight information's on it. Plus, if they're running late or early, they're gonna call me on it, and if you have it, how's that gonna fucking help anyone? It's like four or five generations old anyway, so I doubt you'd even get like twenty bucks for it from a pawn shop, assuming they're even gonna take it, which I doubt they would anyway. It's nothing to you, but it's everything to me, so I'm not letting it go.”

The short guy seemed so taken aback, he didn't even speak for a second, so tall guy decided to chime in and try and help his buddy out. “Moron, you see we've got shotguns here, don't you?”

“I surely do,” Will said, his hands well out at his sides, away from anything. “And if you want to be facing a Murder One charge over twenty bucks, there's not a whole lot I can do to stop you. But I'm not going to give up my phone.” He slowly reached into his back pocket and pulled out his wallet, tossing it onto the counter. “Still, I'm a man of my word. There's my wallet. Why don't you take it and high tail it out of here before things get even worse than they already are?”

Both the short guy and the tall guy started to get very nervous, not by the fact that Will was just straight up telling them no, but that he seemed so ridiculously calm about it. The amount of stillness and tranquility Will was exuding, it seemed to intimidate the two men, and they were the ones with weapons. Neither of them seemed at all certain what to do, and Will would later swear that he could smell the nervous sweat lingering on both men.

(He also might've admitted, when pressed hard enough, that he *liked* smelling the men's fear.)

“I don't like this,” the shorter guy said, his eyes starting to frantically dart around the diner. “We oughta just fucking go.”

“But what about the *money*?”

“*Fuck* the money,” the smaller man hissed. “Something ain't right! Go go go!”

And just like that, the two men armed with shotguns left the diner, taking nothing with them but their wounded pride. Not a dollar stolen, not a phone lifted, not so much as a plate knocked over. The staves thought it was the damndest thing, and they must've watched the security tapes half a dozen times, trying to make sense of it all.

“What did you *say* to them?” one of the two state troopers asked Will while his partner interviewed some of the other people who'd been in the diner at the time.

“I just refused to give up my phone,” Will said calmly, sipping from a mug of hot chocolate he'd made for himself. He didn't have the shakes like he was coming down off adrenaline. If anything, he almost felt like some part of him regretted that the two men *hadn't* pushed their luck. Not once during the entire encounter had Will felt like he was in danger. “I think they were expecting everyone to just go along with it, but if I didn't have my phone, I was

going to have a hard time picking up my girlfriends from the airport in a few days, and it's not like my phone's worth shit anyway, so I told them they could have my wallet, but they weren't going to get my phone. That, I dunno, it seemed like it scared them or something."

"Scared them."

"Seemed like it, anyway," Will confirmed.

"The two guys with the shotguns?"

"I think they were terrified one of them was going to have to pull the trigger," Will shrugged. "Shit, might've even been empty weapons. I never really felt all that threatened by them, truth be told. Maybe that's why I didn't feel like giving them my phone. Figured they were just a couple of tweakers spazzing out."

"It was a damn stupid thing to do, kid," the officer told him, but Will only shrugged once more. "You trying to get yourself killed?"

"Man, my phone has everything in it, okay? My whole *life* is in this shitty little thing. I lose it, and everything's gonna get messy in my life for weeks until I can get a new one. You think I've got money lying around to just scoop up new phones whenever I want? Based on me working at place like this during Christmas week instead of taking a holiday?"

"Won't be a good holiday for anyone involved if you end up getting yourself shot, kid."

Will just shrugged yet again. "You've got the security recordings; you've got statements from everyone here. Nothing was taken. Can I get back to work? You don't know the owner of this place, but he'll lose his shit if we hold up business for a few hours when nothing actually happened."

"Someone robbing you doesn't count as anything actually happening?"

"Someone *thinking* about robbing us but not actually *taking anything* doesn't," Will countered. "Consider what a hard time *you're* having believing all of this. My boss is gonna think we staged it or something to try and avoid doing work."

"Sounds like a dickhead."

"Off the record, you wouldn't fucking believe..."

The two state troopers took another ten minutes or so, interviewing other people about what they'd seen, but all the customers basically told the same story, without any more real detail than Will's version had contained. Both the cops and the state troopers had no more understanding of what had happened than after they'd watched the tape. Will had clearly been telling the truth, for as little sense as the whole thing made.

Billy had seemed pretty shaken by the whole thing, but after talking with Will for a few minutes about how unlikely it was that the two robbers were going to come back (not to mention how *stupid* of them it would be to do so, considering there was a cop car still basically hanging around in their parking lot) and that Billy had no reason to worry.

The next few days were mostly quiet, but Will tried not to get complacent about anything. The last thing he wanted was some other wackadoodle lunatic stumbling into his life, especially while he was trying to keep his head down while the girls were away. That was proving much harder than he'd anticipated for some strange reason.

Each of the girls had called on the 23rd, Lacey first and then April a few hours later. Will was pleased to hear that the two had rebonded during their flight home, and that they were getting along incredibly well once more. Whatever animosity had been between them had been entirely settled and Lacey thanked him at least half a dozen times for helping her get her friend back. His phone call with April had been filled with similar thanks, but also had been a little bit more affectionate on April's part, insisting that while she knew it was just for a short while, she

really did miss him, missed having his warm body to press against as she fell asleep. He reminded her that she'd be back in just a few more days, and that she should enjoy her time with her family.

It was that little admonishment at the end that had sparked a brief bit of tension between the two, as April was reminded that Will had no family to be spending time with. She immediately started to sniffle and cry before Will talked her down from her panic attack, reminding her that he'd made peace with his loss, and that she didn't need to feel sorrow on his behalf, but should instead treasure the time she had with her own family. She said she would do everything she could to enjoy her time with her parents and siblings, but that she was still very much looking forward to being back home with him.

The fact that she described him as *home* still felt sudden, but also somehow natural and almost inevitable.

Christmas Eve, he came out of the diner, headed over to his car and let out a deep sigh. Drawn onto the driver's side door of his car in what looked like blood was some sort of weird symbol, all intricate curves and lines and crosshatches. But it was late at night, and because of how goddamn cold it was, the blood had frozen onto the side of his vehicle. So, he simply hopped into his car and drove it home. The next morning, he would heat up some water to wash the crap off and have it clean once more, the blood still smelling funny even as it dripped from his car. He even had to scrape a bit to get the last flecks off.

The diner was closed Christmas Day, which let Will have a glorious moment at home alone, although the house felt strange now, what with both Lacey and April's stuff taking up parts of the place. Before the home had retained a sort of Spartan feel to it, thin on decoration, as if it was just someplace for Will to lay his head down at night. But Lacey and April were both doing everything they could to try and make the place feel more like a home of *three*.

The day after he'd made sure he wasn't scheduled to work as he drove over to Denver airport to pick the two of them up. Along the way to the airport, he started to wonder if he was being followed. There was blue Ford Bronco that had been hanging out behind him, so much so that Will decided to stop and get gas along the way, despite the fact that he was over half a tank, and sure enough, the blue Ford Bronco had pulled off as well, and when he got back on the highway, the vehicle was once more behind him.

So, Will decided to see who the hell was tailing him.

Not far from the airport, Will pulled his car off into a little roadstop, parking right in front of the public toilets before heading inside. Or at least he made it *look* like he went inside, opening the door and then letting it close without going in, the door facing away from the parking lot, so nobody in any of the cars could see it.

He waited until the blue Ford Bronco pulled into the parking lot, and then he made his move. Sprinting from his concealed spot, he rushed towards the Bronco, which immediately began backing up as quickly as it could. Inside the vehicle, Will could see a man in his thirties, white, with a giant bushy brown beard, giant aviator style sunglasses, and long hair pulled back beneath a baseball cap which read "Wildmane Society" on it. The man looked shocked and terrified, reaching onto the seat next to him to pick up a handgun of some kind, at which point Will dived aside and the man in his truck drove off without a shot fired.

Will hadn't doubted *this* man would've *used* his weapon.

The truck's plates were covered in mud, although Will wondered if that wasn't some kind of deliberate obfuscation of the plates, something designed to keep him from getting plate numbers. The vehicle zoomed off at high speed, and Will frowned in annoyance. Whoever it was

who'd been stalking him for months now seemed to have upped their game a little bit. They'd moved up from leaving flowers in his driveway to full time tailing detail.

The rest of the way to the airport, nobody was following him.

When he got to the airport, he was rather shocked to see that not only were the girls on time, they were ready and waiting for him, already having picked up their baggage from claim, telling him not to park, but just to grab them and go, which he did, although Lacey insisted on driving, and April pulled him into the back seat with her.

On the drive back, April fished out his cock and immediately started blowing him as soon as they got on the highway, not slow and delicate, but ravenous and thirsty, bobbing her head up and down on his shaft like she was starved for the cream contained within, unable to think straight until she got what she wanted. He wanted to try and resist for the entire car ride, but in the end, barely lasted ten minutes before April got her reward, and it felt like his release was more intense than he'd even expected, his hand holding her face wedged down onto it, even though he felt her coughing as he creamed into her throat, his body refused to yield even an inch.

When the shakes finally eased off, his hands moved from her head as he started to stammer out an apology. "S-s-sorry for--"

"That. Was. So. Fucking. *HOT*," April panted, licking her lips with a wild and delirious smile, running her fingers around her mouth, making sure she didn't miss any of his cum, or let too much of her own spit leak from her lips. "God, I didn't realize how fucking *thirsty* for you I was until I saw you pull up, and I told Lacey, I gotta have you now, and I meant right fucking now."

"I also told her that as soon as we got back to the house," Lacey said from the front seat, "that you were going to fuck the living shit out of me right there in the living room, because fuck getting to the bedroom."

That happened too, with Will yanking Lacey's hair so hard he was worried about twisting her neck, although she seemed to love the raw force of it.

At the end of it, both of the girls were sweaty, naked, exhausted and piled up around Will's nude body in the living room, and they both whimpered a little when one of them brushed against his cock, and Will's shaft began to rise again, growing turgid once more.

"No more!" Lacey giggled. "We yield! We surrender! We have nothing left in our spent bodies to give in sacrifice to The All-Mighty Meat Master!"

"We're gonna need more girls to keep this beast in check, Lacey," April moaned.

"Well, I brought you in, so it's your turn to figure out who else we get," Lacey burred, trying to snuggle up against Will, who tried to say something before Lacey just slapped her hand over his mouth, stopping him from getting a word out. "Who'd you have in mind?"

April actually blushed a little bit before she finally spoke. "I was... I was thinking about maybe seeing if we could get Dr. Getschmann to fuck him..."

Will's cock throbbed unabashedly at that idea. He'd had Dr. Dina Getschmann as a teacher the year before, teaching Fundamental Ethics. She was a tiny little Jewish woman, barely five feet tall, slender like a ballerina, with almost a touch of schoolmarm mixed in, but somehow with the sexuality dialed up to fifteen. She wasn't that much older than her students, in her early 30s. There wasn't a single class where she didn't come dressed in high conservative fashion that still somehow exuded sex appeal in spades. Long skirts with dark stockings that still somehow managed to cling to her ass like she'd melted them on. White silk blouses left done open just enough at the top to catch an inch or so of some expensive looking lingerie. Her dark brown hair often done up in a bun, but often with just one loose strand hanging down across her face. It was

like she was showing off just enough to let everyone's imagination carry them the rest of the way. She'd been known to occasionally dally with a student here and there, but never one currently enrolled in her classes. He'd stroked off a couple of times thinking about her when he was in her class, although he'd always figured she'd have just been way out of his league.

"There's no way that—" Will started before April immediately interrupted him.

"I'm her TA," April said. "She just got dumped about a month ago by her boyfriend, because he said he wanted 'a younger model.' And the last few days before vacation, she was very persistent in asking about my new boyfriend, because she said she could 'smell his sex funk' all over me. I... I think she's jealous... I bet you could fuck her if you wanted." April licked her lips. "I bet she'd fucking love it, and I'd love to see you plowing her..."

"Then it's settled," Lacey said. "Starting tomorrow, you start hunting the good doctor and convincing her to be one of your willing little fucktoys."

At this point, Will had decided it was easier to simply agree with Lacey than to argue with her.

Chapter Five

Will still wasn't entirely sure how they'd talked him into this, but both Lacey and April had convinced themselves that Dr. Dina Getschmann would be throwing herself at him within a matter of weeks. He wanted to argue that the entire idea was absurd, but the last several months had taught him that whatever he'd thought he'd known about the world in general, the world clearly had the right to override his opinion at the drop of a hat.

And at this point, someone had upturned an entire goddamn hat rack.

The first time that he got to see Dr. Getschmann after Lacey and April had decided for him that he was going to seduce her was at a New Year's Eve party that was being thrown by some of the faculty, but the guest list included all the TA's, which meant that April was on the invite list, and she'd brought Will as her "plus one."

Before the party, Lacey had put him through the ringer, the two of them having the sort of intense, sweaty, banging against the wall sex that left him musky in an unmistakable way. Lacey herself had passed out around her fifth orgasm and was unconscious in the bed when he and April got dressed. The plan had been to make sure Will still reeked of sex when they showed up at the party, and to hope that no one was blunt enough to ask him to go home or take a shower.

While they were in the car on the way over, the smell of it was overpowering enough that he caught April rubbing her thighs together multiple times. "If you keep doing that," he finally said to her, "you're gonna want to pull over and fuck before we even get to the party."

"Oh I definitely *want* that, but that would defeat the point, wouldn't it?" April licked her lips, sliding one hand to reach over and rub her hand along Will's leg. "You have no idea how hard it is to keep my hands off you, do you? You're, you're like a fucking drug, and it can be very difficult to think when you're around. I need to get you to the party before I pull over and gorge myself stupid on your body and don't have the energy to make it to get you to the doctor."

"You honestly believe this crazy plan of yours is going to have any impact?"

"I know that *you* can't smell you, Will, but believe me when I tell you that the very scent of you is, like, fucking intoxicating. It makes thinking really fucking hard."

Her hand was starting to crawl even higher, so Will moved to take her hand and fold her fingers intertwined with hers. She squeezed down hard, and the red needle on the speedometer danced a little higher, as Will tried putting on his most calming voice. "Slow down, April, or we're going to spin out on the ice or something."

April's foot eased off the accelerator as she let out a deep breath, nodding in quick agreement. "Right. *Right*. No speeding, no racing, no thinking about getting fucked, no matter how good you smell right now."

The rest of the drive took a bit longer than expected, but April was keeping the pace of the car a little below what she normally would, and the music in the car a bit louder than she normally might, just to keep herself from focusing on Will's presence so much.

When they arrived at the house, Will noticed there were plenty of cars parked in front, as well as lining the streets all the way down the block, forcing them to park around the corner, and walk up through the freshly plowed snow. The weather, thankfully, seemed to have calmed at least a little, so while the ground was covered with freshly fallen snow and ice, the winds weren't whipping around to stir it up.

They stepped up to the door and rang the bell as Doctor Michael Buchanan answered the door in sweater vest and slacks, a little bit of a surprised look on his face as he glanced at Will then looked down to April, who was waving at him. "Hello, Dr. Buchanan. I'm April Reynolds, Dr. Getschmann's TA. She sent me the invitation to your party?"

The professor's face immediately softened. "Of course my dear, come in, come in. I can't be expected to recognize all of the teaching assistants on sight, but your name is on the list, so come in, come in, before the weather picks back up again."

"It's supposed to be calm and quiet until tomorrow, Mike," another professor, Doctor Alice Bridges, said from deeper inside of the party. "Just close the door after them." The teacher's house was tastefully decorated, mostly Christmas decorations, but there were nods to other faiths as well scattered around the place. It was one of the nicer houses in the area that Will had been inside of, much older than most of the newer McHouses that had sprung up over the past few decades.

They were brought into the main room, and despite the fact that Christmas had passed nearly a week ago, Christmas music was still in heavy rotation. Will also wondered if maybe the invitation had included mention of an ugly sweater competition, because there were some truly *horrific* pieces of cardigan on display throughout the living room, many on professors, but also on students that had to be teachers' assistants.

Will wasn't sure how many people were packed in the house, but it certainly had an entirely different vibe from the house party where he'd picked up April. People were engaged in small clusters of conversation, but nobody seemed to really be enjoying themselves all that much. It was mostly like people were stumbling their way through conversations, lots of people who seemed to feel obliged to be there rather than having any real desire to actually be there.

These kinds of parties weren't uncommon around campus, but the majority of them were held either just before a semester started (or had started) or right before the class year was ending. The holiday parties tended to be dull affairs, and the fact that whoever was hosting the party had chosen to put on the lightest, whitest Christmas jazz Will had ever heard wasn't helping any.

"Professor Leenaerts!" Will said, recognizing one of his professors across the room. Professor Donny Leenaerts had taught Will's film studies class last year and had introduced him to Jean-Luc Goddard and French New Wave cinema, something Will had quickly taken a shine to. "How's it going professor?"

"Very good, dear boy, very good indeed." Professor Leenaerts was an odd mix of a man, having sprung from an Italian mother and a Dutch father, so he tended to be brutal in his critiques and overbearing with his praises. "I've been disappointed not to find your name amongst my students for any of the classes I've taught this past year and would love to see you amongst my students again, perhaps for the post-modern cinema class I'll be teaching both this spring and again next fall."

"I'm not signed up for the spring class, but I'll make a point to get myself into it in the fall."

"There's still time, my lad, to get in the spring class instead!" the professor chuckled. He was small almost hobbit-like man, a few inches under five foot tall, bald on top but with hair springing out from nearly every other place. "You've never had your eyes opened until you've truly gotten down and dirty with Terry Gilliam's *Brazil*. Ever seen it?"

"Can't say that I have, sir."

"Gilliam wanted to release the film as *1984½* but a filmed version of Orwell's *1984* was released around the same time, so he had to settle for a different name instead. Brilliant movie. Absolutely batshit crazy, but most of Gilliam's best stuff is like that."

"Professor, let me introduce you to April Reynolds, my girlfriend," Will said. "April, Professor Leenaerts is one of my absolute favorite professors. He never once taught a boring

class, and he's always willing to let two students argue it out if they've got competing interpretations."

The professor tipped his head to one side, giving April a soft smile. "Pleasure to meet you, miss Reynolds. Far be it from me to be telling tales but..." He leaned forward, whispering into Will's ear. "Didn't I *just* see you with a redhead the other day?"

Will grinned from ear to ear, offering a little shrug. "That's Lacey. She's my *other* girlfriend."

"And you're okay with this, Miss Reynolds?"

"I'm *thankful* for it," she said to the professor with a soft and warm laugh. "He's got so much endurance that I don't think I could keep up with him if I was the only woman in his life. In fact, we're probably going to need to add a handful more, just to keep up with his animalistic appetites."

"Well young man, if you find it in your heart to let an old man in to confidence about your secrets, I certainly wouldn't mind knowing how you've managed to convince two beautiful women not only to co-exist, but to do so eagerly."

"If I knew Professor, I promise you, I would happily tell you, but I think I just lucked into it, if I'm completely straight with you."

"Excuse me, Professor," April said, grabbing Will by the wrist. "But I want to go over and introduce Will to Doctor Getschmann, who I'm TA'ing for. Pardon us."

"Not at all, my dear."

April leaned in and whispered into Will's ear. "You stand as fucking close to her as you can, you hear me? Right fucking on top of her." Will isn't sure how to respond, so he simply nods. "Dr. Getschmann, let me introduce you to my boyfriend, Will Bowland. Will, this is Doctor Getschmann, the professor I'm TA'ing for."

The woman was smaller in person than he'd remembered, a tiny slip of a woman, obviously Jewish, with brown hair cut into a bob these days, down to her chin line, dressed in a leather skirt that stops just above her knees, dark stockings, a white blouse that makes it clear she's wearing an expensive red lace bra on beneath it, not so sheer as to be transparent, but thin enough so that the red bleeds through.

Will can't help himself and leans in to press a kiss to each of Doctor Getschmann's cheeks, like he was some French dilettante, and he can hear the woman gasp sharply as she inhales two nostrils full of the heavy sex funk still lingering all over Will's skin. It certainly began to affect her right away. She whimpered "Oh!" in surprise.

When he pulled back, it was his turn to smell – excitement. The doctor's body had immediately begun to respond to his scent and his presence, her cunt slickening immediately and while he knew that he *shouldn't* have been able to pick up that smell, he could tell it was her, unmistakably. It wasn't just the smell of her either. Her breathing had gone shallow, maybe even stopped for half a moment or two, before she forced herself to breathe again.

"H-h-h-h-hello, Mister Bowland," Dr. Getschmann said, her voice shaky and unsteady. "It's g-g-g-g-g-good to see you again. Y-y-y-y-you've certainly done some growing up since you were in my class last year."

Will had decided that if he was going to do this, he had to act like he had literally nothing to lose, and the last several months had only reinforced his self-confidence. He'd stared down two robbers with guns, so what was one beautiful woman at this point? "Yeah, well, a bit of a growth spurt, maybe. Put on a little bit of muscle here or there, but not so much that I thought anyone would notice. Does it look good on me?" he asked her, tossing her his most relaxed,

easy-going grin.

“Oh! Well, you look, mmm, older, more *mature*, less boy and more, um, *man*, if you will. I don’t mean to offend you, Mister Bowland, but you seemed a lot more skittish a year ago.”

He offered her a wink and a shrug. “People change as they grow up, Doc. And please, call me Will. I’m not one of your students anymore, so there’s no need for formality.”

“A-a-a-alright, Will, as long as you call me Dina,” she said with a smile that completely lacked any confidence or assuredness. He wasn’t sure where the confident, strident teacher he’d seen only a year ago had gone, but right now, she was coming across as if she’d never talked to a man before, or maybe never talked to a man who captured her interest so sharply. She had her hands folded together behind her back, and she was swaying a little nervously, one of her feet on point so she could grind the tip of her shoe down into the ground. “How long have you and Miss Reynolds been dating?”

“We’re not totally *exclusive*, Professor,” April said, injecting herself back into the conversation, almost as if the good doctor had forgotten she was there. “In fact, Will and I also *share* a girlfriend. I don’t think Lacey’s been in any of your classes, so I don’t know that you’d recognize her, but she’s a firecracker, let me tell you, and I am thankful for the help.”

“H-h-h-h-help?” the doctor managed to get out.

“*Fuck* yes,” April moaned. “Will’s an animal, and I mean that in the best possible way, baby.” She rubbed her hand down Will’s chest before looking back to the Professor. “We can fuck for *hours* and he’s still hungry for more, so when I finally feel like my legs are completely turned to Jell-O, I can just tag in Lacey, and vice versa... But I’m starting to think it’s still not even close to enough to keep our man satiated. Not that he complains! God, no. He’d never say we weren’t doing enough, but it’s just... it’s like I can still *see* the hunger in his eyes when I’m ready to pass out. We’re thinking about looking for even more outside help.”

“S-s-surely you must be joking, Miss Reynolds,” the doctor managed to spit out.

“Oh *no*, Dr. Getschmann,” April purred, dodging the ‘Airplane’ joke admirably, Will thought. “Honestly, I think it might take five or six women to keep Will completely satisfied. Maybe even one for every day of the week.” She brightened up suddenly, clapping her hands together. “And don’t you think this is his idea! We’re *begging* him to let us get additional help, just so Lacey and I can get a bit more sleep.”

“I s-s-s-see,” the doctor stammered. “How have you gone about looking for someone like that?”

“I would imagine most women would see just how *satisfied* we are and would be practically *crawling* to get a piece of our man,” April said. “I swear to God, I only *thought* I knew what orgasms were before I met Will. The first time he fucked me, I couldn’t stand for the better part of the evening, I was having the shakes so much for so long.”

“That sounds... quite intense,” the older woman said, shifting her weight nervously back and forth from one foot to the other, almost like she was intent on getting away from them as soon as possible, her tongue wetting her lips whether she knew it or not.

“Oh, it *was*,” April cooed in delight. “When I woke up in the morning, I was still all tingly and warm inside, although that may have just been the immense amount—” Will cleared his throat to interrupt April, who giggled, bringing her hand up to her lips. “Sorry! Sorry. Probably oversharing. I’ve been known to do that, considering how much fun I’ve been having with him.”

“No no!” the professor said. “It’s refreshing to see students with such a... sex-positive attitude, especially in, uh, regards to sharing one’s partner if one is unable, um, to keep up with

said partner's needs or desires. How regularly would you say that you were active, Will?"

"I'm sure April's exaggerating a bit," he said, trying to downplay it, subtly leaning in, cuing April for her interruption, which she came in with right on time.

"Once or twice a day," April rushed in. "In fact, Lacey was supposed to be coming with us tonight, but Will saw her all tarted up—"

"Now April, let's not overshare."

"No no!" the doctor said. "As I said, sex-positive! Carry on."

"Well," April said, leaning in and whispering to the doctor. "She came downstairs looking all 'Miss Hot Young Thing,' and Will just bent her over the arm of the couch, hiked up her skirt and went to *town* on her. She couldn't even stand up properly afterwards, so at her request, he just left her as a puddle on the couch, and we came straight to the party. Didn't even have time for him to hop through a quick shower."

Will could hear the good doctor's heartrate had risen to a frantic gallop, her breathing quick and almost on the border of hyperventilating, which was only taking in more and more of the scent of Lacey's dried sexual juices that still wafted off him.

"Good on you then, Will," the doctor said, as she glanced around the room. "Excuse me, I need to find the ladies' room."

She pulled away from them, and Will made sure to let his hand brush against the small of her back as she turned, seeing the visible shiver that ran up her spine. Her body almost slowed in its movement away from them as his fingers had teased her skin through the semi-sheer white blouse, but she kept moving, heading into the crowd and disappearing, making her way down the hallway before opening a door, stepping into a bathroom and closing the door with a hard slam.

"Too much?" April giggled at him.

"Nah, I think it was *juuuuust* the right amount," Will said.

"Should we just head out?"

"No no," Will chuckled. "We're going to hang around a bit longer. Besides, I think we're not out of action yet."

April grinned up at him, tugging on his shirt. "What do you know that I don't?"

"What do I *know*? Nothing. What do I *suspect*? Well, just wait a bit and you'll see."

Will and April mingled for a little bit longer, and about three minutes later, Will got just what he expected. There was a constant hum of conversation, that sort of burbling tickle of audio that blended so that all the various voices formed one stream of white noise. Then, cutting through even more clearly than a murder scream, a single moan of intense ecstasy erupted from inside of the bathroom. He suspected it wasn't as loud as it *felt* to him, but he could see the look on April's face that confirmed she'd heard it, and a few other people were looking around the party, desperately trying to convince themselves that they'd imagined the woman's overwhelming sound of orgasm they *thought* that they *might* have heard.

"There we go," Will said, a smug look of satisfaction on his face. "We can head out now."

"You don't want to see her face when she comes out of the bathroom?"

He shook his head. "No, I want her to come out and still be thinking about that orgasm, and what drove her to it. If I'm around, she'll try and break herself out of it. Let's g—" A student waiter carrying a tray of silver goblets turned suddenly and ran straight into Will, the goblets spilling warm mulled wine all over him, as he snarled. "The fuck is the matter with you?!"

"Sorry, sir!" the young man said, bending down to scoop up the goblets quickly, trying to get as far away from Will as he can. "Sorry sorry sorry!"

Will picked up the last of the goblets and handed it to the young man, bearded and

muscular, who stared at Will's hand holding the goblet for the man to take from him before backing out and heading towards the kitchen.

"You okay, Will?" April asked.

"I'm soaking fucking wet, but I'm fine," Will said, annoyance plain in his voice. "Let's get out of here. I want to get home and take a goddamn shower."

They headed out to the car and Will scowled as he saw something gleaming on the windshield of his car. Resting atop one of the windshield wipers, there was a glint of metal, and he leaned into take a better look at it. It was a bullet, made of pure silver. He picked it up off the windshield and stared at it, holding it between his fingers. It felt light and he wondered if it was ornamental, lacking powder. Maybe someone thought they were being funny. He tucked the bullet into his pocket and hoped April hadn't seen him tuck it away.

When they got home, Lacey was eager to know all about how their first encounter with the doctor had gone over from April as Will headed straight into the bathroom to hop into a shower to wash the smell of spiced wine off his body. Sometime in the middle of his shower, one of the girls must've snuck in and grabbed his clothes, leaving behind a change for him.

After the shower, he dried himself off and put on the clothes they'd left for him. When he headed out into the living room, he found the two women sitting on the couch, talking about how Dina had seemed, how tense and worked up she'd seemed. April was so excited recollecting the events to Lacey that she could barely sit still.

"So I take it we think it's working?" Lacey said with a smile.

"It's working alright," Will said, moving to sit down in his reclining chair, not wanting to sit down between the two of them, knowing one or both of them would be all over him if he did, even without the smell of sex on them, even with Lacey having been satiated only hours earlier and April the night before. They'd constantly accused him of being sexually hungry, but the truth was they were just as sexually rabid, if not *more so* than he ever was. They'd blamed that on the smell of him, but he was starting to think he was nose blind to his own scent, because he certainly hadn't noticed any change in the way he'd smelled.

"Why didn't you stick around and go after her now, Will?" Lacey asked.

"In front of all the other teachers? I don't need to be flaunting what we're doing, even if there's nothing improper about any of it," he chuckled. "Besides, you wanted her to be worked up and crazy, so we're going to let her stew for a while. Just let it rattle around in her brain a bit. She teaches ethics, and the fact that we're talking about her hooking up with the same guy who's hooking up with one of her teaching assistants. That's a bit bigger of a jump than she's used to. She'll get there, though. It's just going to take a little bit longer than you'd anticipated."

"You think she's still going to go for it, though?" April asked.

"You saw her getting all worked up," Will laughed. "Yeah, she's going to go for it. She's just got to work herself up to it. I clocked her number early on when I was taking her class – she's a thrill seeker, the kind of person who gets off on the risk from doing something borderline unethical. Shit, she's probably got an exhibitionist streak a mile wide. She strikes me as *exactly* that type of woman – wants to fuck in the park, in the back seat of a car, up on a ski lift. I guarantee you that she wasn't embarrassed when she came out of the bathroom at that party; she was gleeful. They all knew what she'd been doing, but none of them were probably bold enough to confront her about it."

"How long do we wait?"

"Oh, give it a bit," Will said. "I imagine after a week or two of seeing you coming in, helping her grade papers and plan lectures, she'll be primed and ready and unable to resist all

that much longer.”

“Until then, we’re really just going to wait?” Lacey asked.

“Patience, Red,” Will joked. “Our time will come.”

They had a few days before classes were starting up, and, barring one argument, things were mostly pretty quiet. The argument had sprung up when Lacey had put Will’s clothes into the drier and they started making a loud rattling noise until she’d taken them out and found the silver bullet that was in his pocket. It had resulted in Lacey chewing him out, claiming that if he was being threatened they needed to know about it, to which Will had argued that it was just some kids playing a prank, like they had with the flowers. It turned out the bullet didn’t even have gunpowder in it.

Lacey and April had spent a while dressing him down, telling him to take his health seriously, and then Will had figured it was time to put all the cards on the table, so he’d told them about the attempted robbery that had happened while they’d been home for Christmas break. That made them go from angry to nervous, which hadn’t been Will’s intention, and he rapidly talked them down. They were disappointed that he hadn’t brought it up to them, but he pointed out that the men had been far too skittish for him to feel any real sense of fear about it.

“Is there anything else weird going on we should know about, Will?” Lacey had said. Somewhere in the middle of the argument, they’d pulled him up from his chair and sat him down between the two of them on the couch, so they could sort of pin him from getting away, each of them resting their calves on top of his thighs.

“It’s a little hard to differentiate between what’s ‘weird’ and what’s ‘the new normal,’ Lacey,” Will said with a defeated laugh. “I went from not banging anyone to banging two of the hottest women I’ve ever seen, who, by the way, are trying to get me to also bang one of my ex-teachers.”

“Yes yes,” Lacey said, rolling her eyes, waving her hand at him. “That’s all ‘new normal’ shit. I’m talking about being threatened by stick-up men who have a change of heart or leaving a silver bullet on your windshield sort of weird.”

“I mean, I’ve sort of felt like I was being watched or followed here or there, but it doesn’t seem like I see the same people very often. Not any more often than you normally would in a small college town, you know?”

“Okay, so now we’re going to start seeing if we can find anyone tailing you, Will,” Lacey said. “We can make a game of it, but I don’t want anyone fucking with my main source of good dick, you hear me?”

By the end of the week, Lacey and April had started to use a sudden obsession with taking endless selfies to start cataloging the people who seemed to be following Will around, noting there were three men and one woman who kept popping up with surprising regularity in the background.

On the following Monday, April had gone in to help Dina prepare her lesson plan for the next month reeking of Will. They’d made sure to fuck literally right before she’d thrown on her clothes and headed into the professor’s office, so that the odor of raw sexuality would fill the room. April had come home a few hours later laughing about how badly Dina had been squirming and wriggling the entire time they’d been prepping for the classwork.

The evening news kicked off with a story about a grisly murder that had occurred just twenty some miles north of Boulder in the small town of Lyons, not even two thousand people strong. The crime scene was described as incredibly gruesome, saying that the murder victim had been decapitated, and at that time, police did not have any suspects.

Just around the time the weather report was beginning, predicting even more snow to be coming within the next twenty-four hours, there was a knock at the door, hurried and insistent, as Will moved and answered the door, finding Doctor Dina Getschmann standing on his stoop, parka and snow pants on, her eyes looking at him like a junkie in need of a fix.

“I want in.”

Chapter Six

“What do you mean, ‘you want in?’”

“What the *fuck* do you think I mean, Will?” Dina said to him, amusement in her voice. “April’s made it clear that she and Lacey need help keeping your sexual impulses in check, because you’re a fucking animal in all the best ways. I can help manage those impulses, exhaust and contain them. I want to be a part of this little poly unit you’ve got going on here. I’m tired of seeing my teaching assistant hobbling into my classroom, like she’s too sore to close her legs properly. You obviously need a more mature and experienced woman in your rotation, someone who’s capable of managing your more extreme appetites. Can I come in, or are you going to make me stand on the fucking stoop in the fucking snow all night?”

Will sighed, although on the inside he was smiling wide. “Yeah, okay, c’mon on. I’m letting all the heat out anyway.” He stepped aside to let her move into his place, the small woman almost barging into his entryway. He glanced out at the weather – the snow was threatening to get pretty rock’n’roll and depending on how long Dina was at his house, she might not be able to get out for a while – but it didn’t seem like Dina much cared, as she was already pulling off the parka, revealing a giant oversized Lilith Faire t-shirt that was tucked into her snow pants. She also had a massive purse, more like a satchel bag than the small clutches April and Lacey normally carried with them, and she set that on the table that Will and the girls kept their keys on in the entryway. “What’s your plan here? You think you can just walk over here, waggle your ass in front of me and I’m suddenly going to, what, get all worked up and just manhandle you? Fuck you senseless until you’re basking in the glow of it?”

She pulled off one snow boot, then the other. “That’s the plan, yessir,” she replied, stretching her toes out before tugging off the snow pants, revealing a tightly fitting pair of gray yoga pants. “Both of your girlfriends have apparently been complaining about you having the sexual appetite of a jackrabbit on speed, and you need to keep that libido in check. So, I’m here to offer to join in on the cadre of women needed to quell such thirsty lusts.”

Will laughed, rolling his eyes a little, as he walked into his living room, where April and Lacey were watching a British television show called ‘Love Island’ on Hulu, and they looked up, pushing pause on the remote. Will had watched it with them from time to time, and while it was fun ogling hot British girls now and then, he also found some of the drama overly ridiculous and some of the fights between people obviously forced for the sake of entertainment. “Ladies, Dina here’s asking if she can join this weird little family unit, but before I even consider it, she’s got to convince you two that she’s got what it takes to earn a place in our bed. Once she’s past the gatekeepers, maybe I’ll consider letting her into the bed.”

“I’m not buying it,” Lacey said, rolling her eyes from her throne seat on the couch. “I think she wants all the benefits without any of the work.”

“The work?” Dina asked, placing her hand on her hip.

“Washing the sheets, like, every damn night, for starters,” April laughed. “Laundry is a massive task around here, because of all the sweat and sex funk. Shit, you can probably smell it right now. No matter what we try, it basically always smells like we’ve just fucked ten minutes ago.”

Will had strolled over to his armchair, sitting down in it, seeing that Dina was clearly struggling to manage with the heavy scent of their sex in the air, the aroma of it filling her nostrils once more, as the woman shifted her weight nervously in front of them. He could see that even through the heavy, baggy shirt the woman was wearing, her nipples were already stiff as all hell, the indentations of them visible through the thick cloth.

“Right,” Lacey said, “when in reality it was more like an hour ago. I still feel full, warm in the belly, almost a little drunk.”

“He *did* fill you up pretty good,” April giggled. “I can almost smell *that* more than the sweat. The primal scent of our man’s *seed*.”

Both Lacey and April were dressed sort of like Dina, in big, baggy t-shirts (both of which were Will’s) and yoga pants, red for Lacey and black for April, the two sitting with their legs decently spread wide. “You can smell it too, can’t you, Dina?”

“W-w-w-what?”

“Yeah, look at her face,” Lacey said, licking her lips, her hand sliding along her own stomach. “She can’t even look over at him right now because she’s so worked up. But that’s good. She shouldn’t be looking at him. She should be looking at us, or more specifically, *me*. Because I’m Will’s leading lady. *I’m* the Head Bitch In Charge. I got here first, and I staked my fucking claim. That means if she wants a spot on the rotation, she’s got to convince *me*.”

“Convince y-y-y-you?” Dina stammered, looking towards Will for a second before turning her eyes back to Lacey, realizing he wasn’t going to help her here. “How would I do that?”

“You have to prove you’re willing to do anything and everything for the whole clan,” Lacey said. “Start by stripping.”

“W-w-w-what?” All the confidence and bluster Dina had initially brought with her had been extinguished in seconds, but the woman did her best to stand her ground and recover her poise. “Here?”

“It’s just us right now,” Lacey said, “but who the hell knows how many bitches we’re going to need to get in here to keep Will satisfied? So, if you can’t strip in front of us, how the hell are you going to do it when there’s even more of us? Either start taking clothes off or put ’em back on and get the fuck out of our house.”

Dina looked down at her feet, nervous for a moment before she reached down and pulled her shirt upwards, tugging it off, exposing small, perky breasts with tiny brown nipples on top of them. She was built like a ballet dancer – slender and muscular without the muscle definition being the dominant feature. And Dina didn’t stop there, pushing her yoga pants and the panties beneath down to her ankles, stepping out of them, leaving her in just her socks. A moment later, she shed those as well, folded her wrists behind her back and then looked up at Lacey with her confidence returned, determined to do whatever it took to earn her place, the lure of Will’s sexual potential too sweet to walk away from. “Good enough?” She had a small rectangle of black hair above her pussy and had clearly shaved her legs right before coming over to Will’s. She was excited as all hell, as well. Will could see a bit of clear slickness on the inside of her thighs.

“It’s a start.” Lacey seemed to be reveling in her new position. “But before we even consider letting you have a turn with our man, maybe we should make sure you can tend to us first. The family takes care of and tends to each other.”

Will’s eyes threatened to bulge a little, but he did his very best to retain his composure and not look at all surprised by this, although inside his mind, he was wondering just how far Lacey intended to take this. He knew Lacey liked to play at being the firm hand, but where she drew the line was still unknown to him. However far he *thought* she was going to take it, though, her next stop blew past that by miles and miles and miles.

Lacey pulled the shirt up and over her head to expose her chest, her breasts a little bigger than Dina’s, but she didn’t stop there, reaching down to push off her own yoga pants, tossing them aside before slowly opening her legs, revealing her freshly fucked pussy, still lightly

drooling a little of Will's spunk. "I've got a cuntful of Will's cum right now," Lacey said, slowly swaying one of her thighs, her hand sliding over her belly. "If I'm kind enough to share it with you, will you savor it?"

'Holy fucking *shit*,' Will thought, his brain starting to panic. 'This is too much, this is too *fast*, this is where she bails, this is—'

Dina dropped down to her knees and moved to press her lips against the inside of Lacey's thigh, as April giggled slightly, watching her teacher's tongue snake out to flick along Lacey's flesh. All three of them were a little taken aback at how fast Dina started making her way up to let her tongue explore higher and higher. And before anyone had even really seen it coming, Dina's lips were pressed up against Lacey's pussy, her tongue working up inside of Lacey's snatch as the redhead reached a hand down to hold Dina's head from pulling back, although it looked more like Dina was simply going to continue feasting.

"I think she really wants you, baby," Lacey moaned, "because she is giving this 120%, and she doesn't even want to back off. I mean, fucking hell, me and April have had a bit of fun like this before, but she's trying to lick up *every* bit of your cum like it's the tastiest thing she's ever had. My *God*, that tongue is fucking *eeeeeeeeeverywhere*."

Dina must've hit a particular spot as Lacey's hips suddenly shoved up towards Dina's face, and instead of being thrown by it, Dina just redoubled her efforts, and the sloppy sounds grew noisier, which only made April giggle even harder.

"Fuck baby, this prof's going to fucking *town* and putting down her goddamn flag!"

That was when Will noticed it wasn't just that – Dina was tick-tocking her *ass* back and forth like a pendulum, slow, lingering sways, trying to draw Will's eye to it, inviting him to look, promising him that he could do more, *far* more, and that all Dina would do would be to say thank you and ask him not to stop.

He wanted to be patient.

He *really* did.

Patience was underappreciated.

He normally valued patience.

But right now...?

Fuck that.

He slipped up from his seat quietly, seeing April rubbing her hands together in anticipation as Will moved to get in behind Dina. He wasn't sure how he wanted to do this, because to get a good angle, he would need to get down on his knees and lose some of his leverage but if he moved her at all, it would give up the element of surprise.

"I know we all joked around she had a silver tongue, Will," Lacey groaned, her red hair a tangle of errant curls, "but her tongue isn't going to *quit* until it gets every last *speck* of your jizz..."

Will looked and pulled over a footstool with his ankle, dragging it over before lifting up Dina's hips, raising her knees high enough for him to slip the footstool underneath her legs, bring her up higher. His hand reached down and slapped her toned and slender ass, which made her shift her posture and spread her legs a little wider, as much as she could without sliding off the small footstool.

She wanted him to know that he had access and an open invitation.

Before he knew it, he'd unzipped his jeans and just tucked them down enough to pull out his cock, leaving them still somewhat around his hips, as he moved to rub the length of cock along Dina's drenched slit, feeling her slather him up in juices before he aligned properly, his

hands square on her hips, as he rammed towards her, shoving his dick down as far as her depths would take him, a loud squeal of delight muffled by the fact that Dina had her face buried against Lacey's cunt.

Dina's pussy was tight, almost uncomfortably so, but there was also something exquisite about her velvety clenched walls around his shaft. She was trying to throb around him, and he suspected her throbbing spasms were either her attempt to manage the overwhelming sensations that were blasting through her nervous system, to encourage him to continue fucking her, or, most likely, both.

Not that Will needed much in the way of encouragement.

His hips slammed against hers hard enough to make even the highly toned flesh of her ass jiggle a little, rippling with the force of his body colliding with hers, and each smack resulting in a feral moan from Dina directly against Lacey. But Will noticed one little thing he suspected neither Lacey or April had picked up on – Dina's ankles were pressing against the outside of Will's calves, not to get him to ease up, but to draw him further in.

He couldn't quite get his entire cock inside of Dina's hungry pussy, to his own surprise, feeling the head of his cock thumping against the back of her snatch, her body wanting to yield but unable to accommodate that last inch or so of his shaft. Not for her lack of trying, though, because even though he suspected it might be a little painful, she was trying to push back against him with enough force to get the last bit inside of her, although she couldn't quite get it.

Even though Will could feel his more primal side coming out, Dina was matching him beat for beat, one of her hands reached up to rub down against April's pussy through her yoga pants before April pulled them down to her knees so Dina's fingers could get inside of her.

The four of them were a single linked sexual organism, each of them feeding into each other's orgasms until finally Will brought it to a crescendo, grabbing Dina by the neck, pulling her up to slam her back against his chest as he leaned in and bit down at the top of her shoulder, which somehow seemed to set her off on an ear-splitting orgasm, her cunt locking down on his cock even while he pulsed and spat loads of his sticky white up inside of her, the two of them sharing a vibration on the same frequency.

It was a tangle of bodies, the four of them sprawled on top of one another on the couch, mostly just sort of piled up, Will beneath the three women, all of whom had snuggled against him in heated exhaustion, the whole house reeking of sweat and cum and sex.

They all passed out that way.

It was early morning before any of them woke up, and Will was the first to do so, all three women still plastered against him, the foursome of them asleep on the couch, not having ever migrated to the bedroom. Lacey's face was pressed in against his right shoulder, Dina's head resting on his chest, April's face against his left. He desperately wanted to get up and pee, but he didn't have a chance before he felt the stirring of Dina, who slid down and off Will as Lacey and April rolled a little further away from him on the couch, giving him room to slip out from between them as he stepped into his kitchen, completely naked, as was Dina, although at some point in the night, she had apparently gotten up and bandaged his bite wound to her neck.

"Regretting your decision?" he asked her.

"Not at all," Dina said with a laugh. "Although I will tell you I feel like my legs have permanently been bowed open a little bit. Walking isn't supposed to be a challenge, you know. How the hell do you even get into pants with that monster?"

"You're flattering, but it's not that big," Will said.

"It really *is*, Will," Dina said, glancing down at it. "And if you don't *think* it is, you may

need to have your head examined.”

He glanced down and wondered if maybe it *was* bigger than it had been a few months ago. It seemed completely impossible, but at that point, he was starting to wonder if he should even use that word anymore.

Dina stretched her thin arms up and over her head, her body tensing up before relaxing. “Is it always quite that intense, or were you just giving a girl a first time where you were showing off a little?” She had a quiet smile on her face, almost mysterious and coy, a flirtatious nature to her, even though they’d just fucked themselves unconscious a few hours back.

“I’m just a guy trying to get through day-to-day life, Dina,” he said, opening the fridge to grab his Brita water filter from it. He opened one of his cupboards and grabbed a glass, setting it on the counter before filling it to the brim. He lifted the glass to his lips and drank it empty as Dina followed his lead and grabbed herself a glass, setting it down next to his so Will could fill them both. “Lemme tell you, though, I’m drinking *so* much more water than I used to.”

“Heavy exercise’ll do that to you. How did all this happen anyway?” Dina said, lifting her glass up but not yet drinking from it. “Despite your... sexual appetite, you almost seem a little disinterested in flirting with women, and yet, you’ve got *three*. And, speaking truth to power here, I think we’re still going to need another two or three more around this place before we’re finally able to keep up with your hungers. Have you always been like this?”

He shook his head. Despite how cold it was outside, the house felt almost a little like a sauna, and he wondered if one of the girls had cranked up the heat to something obscene again. “Started up a little after the beginning of the fall semester. Lacey, who’d never so much as given me a second look, suddenly decided she needed to fuck me like her life depended on it. I didn’t believe her, and so I basically shrugged off all her attempts to draw me in.”

“Shrugged them off?”

“Oh, she was wearing low cut tops, short skirts, bending over in my direction, practically doing everything she could think of to get my attention, but it all felt so... I dunno,” he sighed, watching her take a sip from her water glass. “It felt like she was just doing it because she wasn’t used to anyone, and I do mean anyone *ever*; not doing exactly what she wanted them to do. She was one of the most notorious cockteases on campus, enjoying getting men worked up before telling them she’d changed her mind and leaving them with blue balls. I didn’t have any interest in being another notch on her belt, so I figured if I didn’t give her any attention, her fixation would flitter onto the next shiny guy she came across. I had to just be a momentary distraction, made all the more alluring by my refusal to engage with her, and she’d be bored soon enough, I guessed.”

“Didn’t work out that way, huh?”

“It was almost like the refusal *hurt* her, like she had to take a good look at what she’d been doing in how she treated men on the whole, because she *desperately* wanted me to like her, and I wouldn’t, not when she was just going to use me and discard me. That’s when this *new* Lacey sort of showed up.”

“New how?”

“It went from ‘I want you to want *me*’ as Cheap Trick would say to ‘what can *I* do to make *you* happy?’ I mean, there’s still hints of the old Lacey around the fringes, but when she catches herself acting that way, it’s almost like she gets angry at herself, and she readjusts, setting me and my wants back on top of the food pyramid. And she doesn’t let me dodge questions on the subject. She wants to make sure I’m happy, provided, taken care of, and in exchange, I’ll...” Will laughed. “I guess I’ll keep her well-fucked and well-protected.”

“So when you said you wanted a second woman—”

“Whoa!” Will said. “None of that, of *this*, of *any of this*, was *my* idea. Lacey brought in April, and April suggested we bring in *you*. I told Lacey that when it was just me and her that I was happy, but she said she knew she couldn’t do enough to keep me satisfied. And she told me I’d be doing her a *favor* by getting someone to help divvy up my sexual energy. So we looked into April, and April was more than happy to join in, once she’d sort of shed the false pretense she was putting on.”

“False pretense?”

“She’d joined some local church who’d convinced her that joy, sex, happiness – that all that stuff wasn’t the sort of thing that people deserved,” Will scoffed. “They believed in suffering like Jesus did, that all their members had to be suffering, and that they had to make everyone else miserable by pointing out how they were going against God’s wishes. I mean, that’s how it seemed to *me*, but I’m sure she had to get something out of it.”

“Faith’s a complicated thing, Will,” Dina sighed. “And most people go through a lot of journeys trying to figure out what it means to them. It can last a lifetime, even more.”

“You’re Jewish, I’m guessing, what with a last name like Getschmann,” Will said, a soft smile on his face.

“Israeli born and bred,” she confirmed. “But as devout as I am, I believe that loving everyone is the most important thing any of us can do. You a religious man, Will?”

Will shrugged. “I’m not of any particular faith. Not against any one either, even if April might think I’m a little touchy when it comes to spirituality. I just don’t like hypocrites, and people trying to tell others what they can and can’t do with their lives. But you wanna go to Temple on Saturdays, have at it. That’s between you and your God, and I respect and honor that.”

“All of this within just a handful of months sounds like it’s been a bit of a whirlwind,” she said. “Anything else I should know about?”

Will paused and for the first time, he felt like maybe he could talk about all the weird coincidences he’d had for the last few months. “There’s... been all these... odd things happening,” Will said. “Sometimes I think there’s people following me, but it doesn’t feel like it’s the same person. I told Lacey and April about that, and we’ve sort of found four people who seem to be around us an unusually large amount of the time. Three men and one woman. A couple of them I think are students, but I don’t think all of them are. Weirdly, once we realized who they were, though, I realized a pair of them were klutzes who’d been continually bumping into me.”

“Bumping into you?”

“Spilling drinks on me, that kind of thing,” he said. “But that’s only the beginning of the weirdness. Someone scattered a bunch of plants around my house, which I had to clean up. There were the two robbers who I stood up to in the dinner, who took one look at me, unarmed and calm, and just ran away. And... and there was the bullet.”

That stopped Dina in her tracks. “Excuse me?”

Will moved over to the laundry room for a second and came back with the thing in his hand, holding it out to her. “Here you go. Found it on my windshield.”

“Well, first off, this isn’t a bullet, it’s a cartridge,” Dina said. “It’s got the bullet on it, but the rest of this bit’s a cartridge. Odd there’s no powder in it. You don’t normally put a bullet into a cartridge without powder because it won’t fucking do anything. Without powder, it won’t fire. And it feels funny for a normal shell.”

He cocked his head to one side. “What do you mean?”

Dina smirked at him. "I'm a single woman nearly in my thirties. If you think I haven't been at the gun range a few times, you're out of your mind. But... is this silver?" She laughed for a second. "What are you, a werewolf or something?"

"Clearly not," he said, taking the cartridge from her once more. "Because I can handle silver just fine."

"Oh, that's a common misconception about werewolf lore," Dina said. "Silver can *harm* them, but it's not *toxic* to the touch. At least, it's not in the old Germanic stories."

"Did a lot of reading about werewolves, have we?" Will teased.

"Werewolves *and* vampires," she said, sticking her tongue out at him. "I got caught up in the *Twilight* craze like most women my age, except I made a point out of doing all the actual research, because even as a fangirl I was a geek. And yeah, a lot of the stories about mythological creatures are either full of contradictions, or all center on some shit someone made up like a hundred years ago. The bit about werewolves being vulnerable to silver actually goes back to the 15th century, though, which means it isn't just some shit a single writer made up."

"You think someone thinks I'm a werewolf?" Will said. "Don't people have to be bitten by a werewolf to turn into a werewolf?"

"That's vampires, Will, and even that's just speculation. Werewolf bites don't do anything. They're not fucking zombies, Will. They aren't out hunting for brains and turning anyone they bite. But you said these two guys were spilling things on you?"

"I definitely smelled of garlic at one point."

Dina frowned. "That's historically for vampires. I don't think it does shit against werewolves in any story."

"They might have also tried holy water."

"Again," Dina laughed, "vampires."

"I think I also got smacked around a bit by some iron chains at some point."

"And *that's* supposed to be ghosts," Dina said, laughing even harder now. "What the hell? Are you being followed by the Four Stooges who are convinced you're some kind of paranormal monster but don't know which kind? The Keystone Cops Creature Hunters?"

Will put his hands up in the air, laughing with her. "I'm not *any* kind of monster! At least I don't think so, but then again, I guess that's what any monster would say, wouldn't he?"

"Well," she giggled, moving in to wrap her arms around his waist, cuddling against him. "I certainly don't think you're a monster, unless maybe it's a *sex* monster, but even then, I don't know what kind of monster that would be. Or if it would even be a bad thing."

He looked outside and sure enough, the snow had come down *hard* over the night, and the streets hadn't yet been plowed. He sighed a bit, shaking his head. "Looks like we're basically snowed in, or at least the cars are."

"I'll put the coffee pot on," Dina said as he opened another cupboard to show where the grounds and filters were. "Although do you think it's walking weather?"

"You have a hankering?"

"You've got a Burger King like two blocks away," she said. "I'd kill for one of their breakfast croissants, you know the ones, with ham, egg and sausage."

He smirked a little bit. "Isn't ham and cheese, like, the complete *opposite* of kosher?"

"I love my religion, William," Dina chuckled, "but God knows me well enough to tell me what I can and can't eat. Some rules are *made* to be broken. And I am as my creator made me."

"Yeah, okay. I can put on some clothes and walk there and back, although the food may have cooled a little bit by the time I get back."

“That’s why microwaves were invented,” she shot back. “Just bring, like, a whole bunch of them, in case April or Lacey wants one, because I think I want like two or three. I’m fucking *starving*. You’ve awoken quite the appetite inside of me. Oh, what was the neck bite thing about? You marking your territory or something?”

“It’s something... I dunno, I feel compelled to do it the first time I’m with a new partner, but just the first time,” Will said. “I’m not even sure *why* I did it. I just find myself doing it and then thinking about it afterwards. Did it to Lacey and April both as well, and they seemed to heal up fine.”

“Well, it wasn’t too deep, so I suppose it’s fine, as long as it’s not going to happen every time.”

Will got dressed and bundled up hard, grabbing a thermal bag to try and help keep the food warm on the way back, knowing it was going to be blistering cold outside, and the minute he stepped foot out his front door, he wasn’t disappointed. The wind was strong enough that Will tried to keep close the fences, because even as strong as he was, he wasn’t entirely certain he could keep his feet on the ground, a little worried that he might get lifted up and off his feet by a particularly strong gust. But he planted his feet down hard and barreled forward, each step taking sizable effort.

He was already more than a little annoyed that he’d agreed to go and get breakfast, but the further he walked, the hungrier he got, so he supposed he could get his and eat it there, then get a second order with the girls’ food.

The Burger King was open, although he was almost certain the only cars he saw in the parking lot were for whichever poor souls had been forced to come into work this morning. And as soon as he set foot inside of the restaurant, he could see his suspicions confirmed – not a customer in sight.

He placed an order just for a breakfast sandwich, some hashbrowns and some orange juice. The people behind the counter actually looked thankful to have someone to focus on for a minute, and went to work at getting his food ready.

Will had a couple of minutes to wait and he turned to look out into the blizzard when the door opened up again and a large hulking man, dark hair hanging down past his shoulders, a big black beard down to his collarbone, a heavy parka on as well as thick snow pants, as he moved into the Burger King, having to forcibly pull the door closed behind him.

“It’s cold out there, isn’t it?” Will asked the man.

“Mmm,” the man said. “Coffee. Black. Biscuit with bacon.”

The two of them stood there quietly waiting for their food, but eventually both orders arrived at the same time. Will grabbed his tray and moved over to sit down at one of the booths, as the big bulky man followed him, looking down at Will for a second.

“You mind if I join you?”

Will frowned for a second, glancing around at the completely empty restaurant. “It’s not like there isn’t an open chair everywhere you look.”

“Sure, but I thought we could just have a chance to few minutes to talk, Will, away from everyone and everything.”

Will’s eyes narrowed a little bit. “How do you know my name?”

“I’ve been keeping tabs on you, making sure you didn’t get in too far over your head. I’m your uncle, Pavel,” he said, offering a soft smile. “Your father’s brother. Can I sit?”

Blankly, Will could only gesture for the man to join him.

Chapter Seven

“You knew my father?” Will asked as the massive wall of a man sat down across from him in the Burger King booth. He was just a solid rectangle of flesh beneath the heavy cloth, and it made Will just a little bit nervous.

“Not *knew*, but *know*, young William,” Pavel said. The man’s voice had an eastern European or Russian accent, Will wasn’t entirely certain. “Simply because your father is not around does not mean he has left this earth. You should know that he’s still alive.”

“Should? I certainly didn’t know that he was alive before you told me. I don’t know a fucking *thing* about him. Not who he is, not where is he, not how he is, not what he looks like. My mother wouldn’t even tell me his *name*, she was that mad about him abandoning us.”

“Well then, I suppose I should start there,” Pavel laughed. “Your father’s name is Ivan Kozlov, the youngest of three brothers. Your last name on your father’s side, my last name, is Kozlov. You can use that if you wish, or let it lie. Your other uncle, Fyodor, died when you were just a baby, and is part of the reason your father abandoned you.”

“Part of the reason? Was the rest that he was a selfish asshole who didn’t give a fuck about anyone but himself?”

“As easy as it would be to paint your father in a poor light, you should realize he was distancing himself from you to ensure your safety, the safety of you and your mother,” Pavel said quietly. “I was very sorry to hear of her passing. She was a fine woman, a strong and brave woman.”

“How the hell would you know?”

“I saw your mother a few times every year,” Pavel said so confidently that Will knew it had to be true. “And I’ve been keeping tabs on you in your father’s stead.”

“Why the hell can’t he do it?”

“He doesn’t feel as though it would be safe for him to be around, something I’m sure you will eventually be able to understand.” Despite how massive and large Pavel was, Will was impressed with how calm and measured the man’s deep bass voice could be. “Your father is a rather complicated individual, and has led a rather problematic life, which means he’s constantly on the go, trying to stay one step ahead of all the complications of his life, both self-inflicted and external. I think he prefers to spend much of his time back in the old country these days, simply to avoid the encroaching powerful reach of technology and casual surveillance. He used to love London, but it’s getting harder and harder to dodge all the cameras there.”

“You make it sound like he’s some sort of spy.”

“It’s... far more complicated than that.”

“So why don’t you uncomplicate it for me? There’s got to be someplace easy to start, some way to get into it, to explain to me who my father is.”

Pavel sighed, looking down at his hands before turning his gaze back up at Will. “You’re going to laugh when I tell you. Laugh, cry, scream... I’m not really entirely certain what your reaction will be. This is... an unusual process for us. For us... as a people... either you are in or you are out, right from the start. We... we do not do this... this *mid-stream* bullshit. Not most of the time. But the idea of killing you as a child... your father would not tolerate such a thing, and I am not to anger your father, even if he is my younger brother.”

Will got up and picked up his breakfast, setting it down on the table between them. “Sounds like everything’s gone tits up by me being around, though, if you’re talking about killing me as a child and my dad’s against it.” He couldn’t tell if the giant man was being serious or just talking shit, but there was a certain level of implied threat behind it.

“We’ve been debating how you would take this for years, even since your father agreed to walk away from your family for your own good, so as to not argue with your mother. I told your father we should tell you much earlier, but he told me we should wait until it was starting to impact your life, and he is your father, so I had to respect his wishes, regardless of however you might react.”

“Whatever I’m going to do,” Will said, leaning back against the booth seating, unwrapping his breakfast sandwich, taking a big bite from it, swallowing it before speaking again. “I’d like to actually *do* it instead of just talking about it happening the whole time. C’mon, Uncle Pavel. What the *fuck* is going on?”

Pavel lifted his head up to look at Will, as if sizing him up, trying to pick his next words very carefully. “You’re a werewolf.”

Will tilted his head, waiting for Pavel to let him in on the joke, but when Pavel didn’t laugh, Will felt like he had to, so he laughed and he laughed hard. It just might’ve been the funniest thing anyone had ever said to him. There couldn’t be any possible way that it wasn’t a joke.

And yet, Uncle Pavel still wasn’t laughing.

“No, why don’t you *really* tell me what’s happening?”

“I’m being entirely truthful with you, little William,” Pavel said. “I know it might be hard to believe...”

“Hard? Let’s try insane,” Will said, his voice quick and choppy, coming in over the top. “Me. A werewolf. You know the necklace I’m literally *wearing* right now is a silver rope chain, yeah?” He tugged on the silver necklace for effect, pleased to feel it wasn’t burning his fingers.

Pavel chuckled, shaking his head. “It is not a weapon. It is not inside of your body. It is fine. Is common misconception about werewolves. There are... many such misnomers. Letting such disinformation run rampant is an excellent defense.”

“I have never once howled at a full moon,” Will said before taking another bite from his breakfast, following it up with one of the hashbrowns.

“Another misconception, as is the one implying we cannot control our transformations, although I can understand where the origins of that one spring from at least,” Pavel said. “During moments of intense anger or fear, we can occasionally lose control of our cohesiveness. When our kind is threatened or wounded, then our more primal nature can come to the surface. That’s where that particular myth comes from.”

“Yeah, I’m not buyi—”

Pavel’s right hand uncurled on the table, suddenly growing larger, claws extending from his fingers and a sudden rush of hair all over that massive hand. The claws looked deadly, sharp and eager to draw blood. Then, almost as quickly as it arrived, the transformation backed away once more and his hand turned back into what it was before.

“If you require more proof, we will need to step somewhere less crowded.” Pavel chuckled. “I can’t decide if I *want* you to ask for more proof or—”

“Let’s... let’s put a pin in that for a minute,” Will said, looking back up from his uncle’s hand to his face, crumpling up the wrapper his now consumed sandwich had been in. His heart was racing, but his brain was already stitching pieces of information together that previously hadn’t made sense, which, perhaps, was why he didn’t feel total shock over this. “We’re going to skip past all that normal doubt and chaos and bullshit that people always go through when they find out they’re a long-lost superhero or ultra powerful weapon or whatever the fuck people go through when they’re supposedly on the hero’s journey and move straight to the part when I ask

for you details and say that I believe you. What does that *mean*? Mean for *me*?”

“Both everything and not a whole lot,” Pavel said to him. “Let’s start with the obvious things – you’ve probably noticed that all your appetites have increased. Not only physical but sexual?”

“I can eat for five and fuck for just about as many,” Will said, finishing off his orange juice. “Yeah, I definitely noticed that. It’s not like it would’ve been easy to overlook, the fact that I go through like three to four thousand calories a meal, and I’m often still hungry.”

“Just so,” Pavel said. “And your s—”

“I’ve got three partners and they complain all the time that I’m insatiable, so to answer your question, yes, most definitely, it’s overclocked.”

“It’s part of the reason our kind is usually one male and several females, something your mother didn’t agree with. You’ll need to keep a check on your temper, and know that if you’re cornered, the wolf could come out. You haven’t transformed yet?”

“No,” Will laughed. “I think if that had happened, I wouldn’t have laughed when you suggested that I’m a werewolf.”

“If you remembered it.”

That stopped Will dead in his tracks.

The silence held for a long moment, but then Will had to speak again.

“What the hell does *that* mean?”

“Sometimes, if the rage or the fear gets... especially intense, our kind can have blackouts of sorts, where we’re acting, but the animal in us is in control, and we don’t remember what we’ve done. It’s never intentional – it’s a self-defense mechanism, and sometimes the things we do as wolves are... too intense for our human minds to be able to cope with. Have you had any black outs?”

Will’s mind went racing through his life as fast as he could, trying to place any moments where he’d lost time. “Since when?”

“Usually sometime between the ages of eighteen and twenty is when the wolf side first begins to come to light, so you shouldn’t need to think back too far,” Pavel said.

“When I started classes this fall, I definitely noticed that women were looking at me differently,” Will said. “My appetite started dialing up then too. Is the thing with girls related?”

“Absolutely,” his uncle replied. “You became much more attractive to women because they could smell your new pheromones burrowing their way into their consciousness. You will find it’s rather a wonderful gift, being one of most attractive men any woman has ever seen when she looks on your form, whether or not her mind would normally think that true or not.”

“I’m brainwashing women?”

“Of course not,” Pavel snorted. “If you are no good as a person, they will still leave you in the end. But you will find they will be much more open to getting to know you, much more forgiving and kinder and willing to work through things with you. And, naturally, they will want to *breed*. Women, nephew, they will not cause you much grief in life, except perhaps by having too many of them. A pack should never outgrow its ability to care for itself, but that can happen from time to time. You strike me as a smart boy, though. One who will know better than to spread himself too thin, too fast. Packs often run between five and eight females, although in some cases they can run a few more or a few less.”

“Alright. What else?”

“What else?”

“What else do I need to be worried about?”

Pavel scowled, looking down at the Formica countertop. “Hunters, although it seems you’ve gotten rather lucky on that front. For the time being, it seems as though you have the Keystone Cops attempting to hunt you down, or perhaps the Three Stooges. They do not even know *what* you are, much less how to hunt you. It has caused me no endless amount of amusement these past few months. I almost feel sorry for them because of their ineptitude. I’m sure you’ve encountered them?”

“Let me guess, three people, all between the age of twenty and forty? Two men, one woman, all blonde?”

“You’ve seen them?”

“The younger man keeps *spilling* shit on me,” Will said, almost amused by the entire thing, although there was an undercurrent of annoyance to his voice. “I think he’s tried garlic water, holy water and maybe even shrimp cocktails. What kind of monster is threatened by a shrimp cocktail?”

“It might annoy some dragon with a crustacean allergy, but there are not many of those out there to worry about.”

“I can’t imagine there being *any* out there.”

“One or two, but nothing to concern yourself with,” Pavel said in a tone that was perfectly paced so that Will couldn’t tell if he was kidding again. “Tell me about what you know about them, these hunters who are in your orbit.”

“The young man is nervous, eager, panicked or spooked easily. I suspect he hasn’t been at this long, and he’s eager to make a mark by any means necessary. It’s pissing off the older one, who’s patient, who’s more careful, who’s always cautious not to get too close. I get the feeling that they’re related. Father and son, maybe? Older brother, younger brother, possibly. Could even be like us, uncle and nephew. I’m not sure if the girl’s also related, but I’m guessing that she probably has to be. She looks enough like them that it seems probable. She’s about my age, maybe a year or so younger, and tends to keep her distance, like she’s afraid of getting too close to me, unlike the younger male, who always seems to be rushing into me. They don’t strike me as Colorado locals – they don’t know the area; they’re never prepared for the weather and the girl likes wearing clothes that are only going to catch her pneumonia if she’s not careful. The older one’s unhappy with the lack of progress they’ve been able to make with me. I saw the three of them arguing once, outside of a party, although they didn’t see me. I assume I was what they were arguing about.”

“I’m certain that it was,” Pavel replied. “I do not know these hunters specifically, but I know their kind. They are tenacious, they are ruthless and they do not like to lose.” The giant man sighed. “They also do not seem to care much about whether or not we *deserve* to be hunted. They see us inhuman and thus not to be permitted to live. That’s obviously a problem for our kind.”

“So, what, they’re hunting us just for being... us?”

“They are,” Pavel said. “They don’t think anything of us beyond us being monsters because they do not know us, nor will they risk getting to know us. The stories and lives told by those who came before us have shifted from tall tales into reliable intel, as ridiculous as that seems. They think we can control minds or erase thoughts or some other preposterous nonsense along those lines. For a while, they thought werewolves were a militaristic arm of some sort of organized witch collective.”

“Why the hell would they think that?”

Pavel chuckled, lifting his eyebrows for a moment. “My father, your grandfather, made a

joke at one of the attempts to reconcile peace between the two sides, and the hunter organization seemed to think he was not jesting. And despite our constant protestations over the matter, they seem to have let that notion fester and rot. Now, a few generations later, it's all out war, their people against ours. Well, their people against anyone even remotely *like* us."

"What do you mean 'like us,' Uncle Pavel?"

"It's not just werewolves they hunt. They'll hunt anything supernatural. They hunt vampires. They hunt witches. They hunt faefolk. They hunt trolls. They even try and hunt sorcerers, although that's rarely worked out well for them. They tend to go after mages as a last resort, simply because mages are usually the best trained to defend themselves. It is one of the only things on this side of the veil that requires actual skill and training to become, as opposed to birth or circumstance. If it were up to me, I would give no fucks that they are hunting young vampires, but I suppose it is monster unity, you know. All of us against all of them. After all, one does not simply stop being what they call a monster. It's also possible for a hunter to retire and leave that life, though."

"Oh yeah?" Will joked. "Anyone I'd know?"

"Your mother, for one," Pavel said. "Thought I cannot imagine she told you at all about that life while you were growing up."

"Bullshit," Will snorted. "There's no way my mother would've been a hunter."

"Oh, she wasn't for very long. Your father was her third assignment, and in an effort to try and learn about him, she ended up falling for him. It's a danger for hunters, which is why most werewolf hunters tend to be male, just as most succubus hunters tend to be female. You know, if you wanted to, you might be able to convert that female hunter that's after you now to be part of your pack if you tried. You'd probably need to show mercy to her fellow hunters, though, which is rarely a good idea. Still, it is an option, one you should not disavow lightly. It's how you're here. Your father agreed to spare the rest of your mother's hunting party, even though they weren't her blood kin."

"Seriously? *My mom? A hunter?* She couldn't hurt a fly."

"You may find you do not know some people as well as you think you do, young nephew. I should go," Pavel said to him. "You should get food to take home to your women, discuss this with them perhaps and give all of this some thought. I will return again within a few months' time, when I have dealt with my own particular hunter problem. As it turns out, it is feast or famine in terms of the hunters' abilities in this region. While your hunters seem incapable of defeating a rabbit, mine are remarkably deadly. I would not want them to get on your trail, otherwise I would stay longer and answer more of your questions."

"Two quick ones then?" Will said, standing up to move towards the counter so he could order food for the girls. "I promise, they'll be short."

"Alright," Pavel said, standing up from the booth, and Will got to see exactly how overwhelmingly large the man was again, practically a linebacker in massive black clothes. "If they are short and to the point."

"Do I need to worry about the girls turning into werewolves now that they've been with me?"

The hulk chuckled, shaking his head. "Either you're born with the trait, or you are not. There is no 'turning' or 'becoming,' nephew. Either you are lycan or you are not, and they are not, although they could bear lycan children. Thus, how your human mother bore you. And your second question?"

"When I... what's going to cause me to transform into a wolf?"

Pavel shrugged. “Most likely, you will be threatened, cornered, trapped. It’s almost always under threat. But even in our darkest hour, my nephew, we do not harm those we care about. The beast within is a wild and savage thing, but it respects the bonds that we have made and will not cross those lines, so you can consider your partners safe from its wrath.”

“Is that when I’ll gain the ability to control my transformation?”

“The first time is always involuntary,” Pavel said to him, patting him on the shoulder. “If you haven’t had it hit you within a few months, I’ll force a transformation upon you to kick start it, like we would if you’d grown up in a wolf enclave.”

“That how it normally is?”

Pavel smiled, offering a tiny shrug. “Do not go comparing your life to others, little nephew. It never ends well for anyone.”

“Am I ever going to meet my father?”

“Give it time, little wolf. He’ll find you, when he’s ready, and when you’re ready.”

Will watched the hulking man step out of the front door and within a handful of steps, he had disappeared into the whiteout void of snowstorm that whipped and blew outside. It was remarkable how little distance his uncle had travelled before he was totally obscured from sight, consumed by the weather, vanished into storm.

Walking home was going to *suuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuck*, he thought to himself.

Will turned back to the counter and ordered five breakfast sandwiches, one of each kind except for the ham, egg, and cheese croissant, which he ordered two of, because he was pretty sure if they didn’t eat them both, he’d have one. His engine was running hot already, despite it being ridiculously early, a byproduct, he suspected, of all the snow. He also told them to throw in four orders of hashbrowns, although he didn’t bother with orange juice – it would’ve been a popsicle by the time he got it home, he knew that for certain.

While he waited for the order to be made, he had time to think about what his Uncle Pavel had told him, somehow knowing that it all rang entirely true. When the impossible had been eliminated, only the improbable remained, no matter how farfetched it might be. And even when he’d been growing up, he’d always felt like his mother had been hiding things from him. He’d always assumed it was details about his father, but the idea of his father being something supernatural? While it was news to him, it also seemed to make things fall into place – the sudden attraction from women, his immensely increased appetites (both physical and sexual), his unexpected ability to intimidate people with only a glance.

The whole thing about being a werewolf might have been a step too far if he hadn’t seen Pavel’s hand transform into a massive, feral claw, covered in a dark black fur, immediately two or three times the size the man’s hand had been before. It had happened so quickly, almost within the blink of an eye, but maybe just fraction of a second longer, so Will had seen the final bit of growth for both pelt and claws, and the man’s claws had looked sharp and deadly and nothing to be lightly trifled with.

He looked at his own hand, curled his fingers inward and tried flexing, but nothing happened. He squinted at his own hand, trying to will it into a paw, into talons, into claws, but it seemed futile, nothing happening except feeling like he was squinting too long. That and the pimpled teenager beyond the counter staring at him like he was attempting to contact extra-terrestrials. Will decided to laugh and play it off like he was stoned. “You ever *really* look at your *hands*, man? I mean, really *looked* at them? They’re such, like, little marvels of biological *power*. Like, the thumb, man. I just can’t say enough about the *thumb*.”

After a few seconds of that, the guy behind the counter stopped paying Will any attention

and went back to see what was keeping his order from being done and them getting him out of their Burger King. Will suspected that the minute he was out that door, they might not see any more customers until lunch, especially if the weather didn't clear up any.

A couple of minutes later, the pox-faced employee returned once more, a large plastic bag in his hand, holding it out towards Will. He smiled, moved over towards the counter, grabbed the bag, did his best to tie it closed, dropped it inside of the thermal bag he'd brought with him, and then headed out the door into the blizzard weather.

On some level, Will was especially grateful that he'd done this walk hundreds of times, because the minute he set foot out the front door of the Burger King, it was like stepping onto the plain of Antarctica, nearly total whiteout conditions in every direction. He couldn't see across the parking lot, much less to the street just beyond it, but he knew that he needed to walk forward until he found the street itself, so some twelve paces or so and he could see a slight dip in the snowbank signaling where the sidewalk ended, and the street began. He turned left at a ninety-degree angle and began walking, feeling the inside gust of wind blasting in his face as he pulled his scarf up over his nose then tightened the hood of his jumper as close as he could around his head, trying to limit exposure to the blistering winds that were already threatening him with frostbite.

The walk home, he knew, was only a few blocks, but he was starting to feel like Robert Peary on his search for the North Pole, or one of those dolts who was climbing Mount Everest. Each step was a struggle, having to work hard to lift one leg then place it down again only inches further ahead. As glad as he was to have all the information about his father, his bloodline and his werewolf nature, he was starting to get a little worried he wasn't going to make it *home* to enjoy all of that.

Whatever blizzard warnings the television news had given last night, it wasn't nearly enough by *half* because Will was nearly a block away from the Burger King when he realized he wasn't entirely certain where he was. He felt like he was approaching the end of the first block and the next block would have apartment buildings on the left so he would know that he was right. With a few extra steps in towards where the buildings were, he could make them out with a bit of a challenge, even though they were only a handful of feet away. With a landmark identified, he stepped back those steps, realigned himself and started walking back down about where he thought the sidewalk was, although he wasn't certain by any stretch of the imagination.

The next block was as bad as the first, but at least it couldn't get any worse. That was what he thought anyway until he heard a horn from a snowplow just over his right shoulder, and he hopped to his left, making way for the truck to appear behind him, emerging from the snow, plowing the street enough to allow the salt and sand to take hold before disappearing once more, carrying onward and forward.

With the snowplow having come through, at least the streets themselves were more obvious, so he knew when to turn left, heading in towards his home. He was thankful for the guidance, as between the large amount of snow and the devastating winds that threatened to knock him off his feet each time he took a single step.

The final block felt as challenging as the first two put together, and Will was practically swearing off ever leaving the house again when he could finally see his front door and allowed himself a brief sigh of relief.

He regretted that moments later when he felt a syringe being jabbed into his neck, a sudden spike of adrenaline running down his spine only to immediately feel it being swallowed up by a flood of fog, his eyes rolling back into his head as he felt down towards the snow, his

breath catching as he swore beneath his breath.
“*Now* they fucking get it right...”

Chapter Eight

When Will woke up, the first thing he felt were cold iron shackles around his wrists and ankles, but those weren't the only bindings that he had. There were bands around his forearms, his biceps, his calves and his thighs. They were pulled tight, affixing him to a giant steel X. He'd been stripped down to his boxers, but they'd left him with that much, so there was that, at least. He'd expected the temperature to be freezing cold, but it seemed like his captors had gone the other way, because there was a raging fire in a fireplace in the corner that was pumping out warm air like they were trying to turn the room into a sauna. He almost wondered if that was simply their own personal reaction to how cold the blizzard had been.

"We're going to gut you for what you did those kids, you know?" a voice across the room said to him. His eyes moved to try and focus on it, and found it was the young woman of the trio, and she'd mostly been on the outs during whatever it was they'd been doing in following and harassing him. She looked tall, like volleyball player tall, probably 6'2" or so, with fine golden hair pulled back into a tightly wound-up bun against the upper back portion of her head. She had her arms crossed over her chest, perhaps an attempt to distract from how busty she was, but it didn't help, as the woman's prominent cleavage was strained against the grey t-shirt with the university's mascot emblazoned on it, settled right in between the two large mounds. If the shirt had read "Swedish Bikini Volleyball Team," he might've actually believed its authenticity. The bluejeans she was wearing did nothing to hide her figure. She was very much in shape and had the most striking pair of piercing blue eyes he'd ever seen in person.

"What kids?" Will asked, genuinely having no idea what she was talking about.

"The three kids you tore to shreds up in Fort Collins over 4th of July weekend," she snarled. "Did you think we wouldn't connect them with you?"

"Lady, I was working at the diner almost the entirety of that weekend, and I haven't been up to Fort Collins since freshman year," Will told her. "I don't know where you're getting your information, but it's entirely wrong." He sighed. "Not that I'm exactly surprised, considering you've treated me like, in no particular order, a vampire, a werewolf, a shapeshifter, a ghost, a faerie and I think maybe a zombie, but at this point, I think you're all basically just throwing shit at the wall and seeing if anything sticks, hoping you can figure out what I am so you can pin whatever shit you want to on me. Shit, you probably did whatever it is you're accusing me of. That wouldn't surprise me one bit."

The young woman's face scowled at him, her eyes narrowing like she was trying to catch him in a lie, but he didn't flinch in the slightest. "You're lying."

"Why would I lie? About any of it?" he said. "Shit, you can go check my timecards from the diner, or ask the owner about how basically all of my time off requests have been unceremoniously rejected unilaterally. I assume you're going to torture me or whatever, but I'm only going to say the same thing over and over again, that I didn't do it, that I have no idea what you're talking about, and that I've never hurt anybody."

"What about Tanner?"

"That punk? He took a swing *at me*, and I was defending myself," Will chuckled, rolling his eyes in her direction. "I'm some kind of monster because I won't let someone beat the shit out of me? I guess you got me there. But I barely even hit the guy. He took one swing at me, missed, so I punched him in the gut and he dropped to the floor like I'd ruptured his kidney. Somehow that makes me a bad person? I'm sorry if somebody somewhere taught you it's okay to let people walk all over you, but I just decided I'd had enough of that shithead talking trash to everyone, so when he decided to take a swing at me, it seemed only fair that I get to take one

back.”

She moved a little closer, and Will could take in the scent of her, a strange mix of sandalwood, lavender and orange, and her expression softened a little, maybe as if she was trying to recontextualize what she'd seen with her own eyes with what she'd been told by the rest of the group. “You’re telling me you’ve never wolfed out on anyone, ever?”

“As far as I know, I’ve never transformed,” Will told her, not needing to hold back even a little. “I haven’t really ever had blackouts or time loss, so I can’t imagine that happening to me either. But I think I would know, and the fact that I can look you in the eye and not flinch should tell you something, shouldn’t it?”

“It tells me we’ve got you trapped here and you’re not going to get away,” she said, although he could hear the confidence in her voice wavering just a little bit.

“Lady, you didn’t even know what kind of creature I *was* until today, as far as I can tell,” he grumbled. “And the only reason I even know I’m a werewolf is that I had a relative come and tell me that I am, so I’ve only got his hearsay on the matter.”

“Who is this relative?”

“My uncle Pavel, if he’s to be believed, but at this point in my life, you’ll have to forgive me if I don’t trust anyone anywhere about anything,” Will said. “Any chance I could get you to get me a glass of water? You people have cranked the heat up in here so much you’d think you were trying to sweat me to death.”

“Werewolves do not like the heat,” she said proudly.

“*Nobody* likes *this* much heat except fucking lizards,” Will shot back. “I’m amazed you aren’t sweating to death in those jeans. I know it’s a fucking blizzard on outside, but you’ve got this place cranked up like it’s fucking Death Valley. Even you’ve gotta be uncomfortable in here. I can smell you sweating from across the room.”

“You’re trying to trick me,” she offered cautiously.

“Into what, bringing water near me so I can pretend to bark and growl at you? If I promise not to do it, can I get a glass of water? You can even put a straw in it, so you can stay extra far away from me instead,” Will said.

“I’ll... I’ll see what I can do.”

She stared at him for another minute or so and then eventually moved out of the room, leaving Will to study the place for any real details. It felt like he was in a basement, or maybe just an underground chamber of some kind, as the floor was unadorned, unfinished concrete, that sort of steel grey that shows either they didn’t give a shit about the room or they knew they were going to be cleaning off the floor with such industrial strength solvents that it didn’t make any sense to give a layer of polish to it. The way the room was structured, low ceiling, visible support beams, that just reinforced his idea that he was in some basement somewhere, one with a fireplace that they had stoked to utter madness in terms of heat output. He wondered exactly what kind of accelerant they had dumped onto it to keep it running at such a blistering heat, and he wondered if maybe they were some rednecks that had just slapped gasoline on top of it. He wouldn’t have been half surprised. There was a wall with a door in it that she had come through, but he suspected there was a stairwell just around the corner beyond that wall leading upstairs into some kind of house or cabin.

A few minutes later, the door opened and the older man of the two stomped in, wearing an UnderArmor workout shirt and workout shorts, clearly prepared for the heat, as he had a bottle of water with him. He looked like he was in his late fifties or maybe early sixties, with a giant bald patch atop his head, and a big almost Viking-like beard. Because of the short-sleeved

workout shirt, Will could also see that the man's arms were covered in tattoos all the way down to the wrists, stopping just an inch or so before reaching them, so that if he was wearing a long-sleeved shirt they would've been completely obscured from sight. He tossed the end of a long metal rod into the fire, the handle of it resting on the floor

"I hear you're trying to convince my niece that you've done nothing wrong, you bastard of a monster," the man spat at him.

"Look, whatever you *think* I've done, I haven't. She seems to think I'm responsible for some mess up in Fort Collins on the 4th of July but I was working basically nonstop that entire week at the diner. You're more than welcome to check."

The brutish man thrust a ham hock of a hand in Will's direction, pointing a finger as he shouted, "Then how did you *know* something happened in Fort Collins on the 4th of July? Answer me that, monster!"

"She *told* me something happened!" Will yelled back. "Fucking Christ, how dense are you people? I don't even know what the hell it is that you're claiming happened."

The man had eyebrows like massive blonde caterpillars, and a bulbous nose that made Will think he certainly liked to drink more than his fair share. His hands were heavily calloused, and it made Will wonder if he was the one who did the lion's share of the work for the trio of hunters. He certainly had the air of someone who'd been doing this a long time, perhaps *too* long, considering the man also had an aura of derangement around him, like somewhere along the way he'd lost sight of what the mission was supposed to be and had grown to like the violence of it more than the stated end goal. "You've been preying on the weak and innocent children of this fair state," the man said to him. "Killing them, eating their hearts. Your naïve ploy might fool my niece, who is very new to the hunt, but an experienced hunter like me, I can see through what nonsense you are pushing towards us and find the true monster behind those innocent eyes."

"I think you've lost your mind, old man," Will sneered. "Look at me. I haven't done anything to anyone, and yet, here you are, ready to play judge, jury and executioner, without a scrap of proof, without a single witness, without anything pointing you in my direction other than the fact that I'm not entirely human. That's insane, thinking you've the right to play God."

"I am one of the Keepers of Humanity, abomination!" the man cackled. "I am the thin line between sanity and madness! I am watcher on the wall, one of the chosen to cull the filth from the favored, to remove the infection that from the strain of humanity meant to live on. I am the final say about whether you live or die."

Will shook his head, as much as he was able to from his shackled and bound position anyway. "Then you may as well go ahead and kill me now, because it seems like you've already made up your mind without so much as giving facts or logic a try, and I'd rather not waste any more of my time sitting around in this sweltering room. If I'm going to die, let's hurry it along."

"I have not decided if you will die immediately, or if there is information to be gleaned from your mind before you will die," the man said. "You could tell us much about your kind, where they nest, where to find them, who they are and what plans they have in motion."

"I've never transformed in my entire life, I have no idea where any of them call home or where they nest, if that's even a thing. Isn't that vampires? Anyway, I've only met one other of my kind, he said his name was Uncle Pavel, but he didn't tell me how to get in touch with him or where he's staying. Right now, I've only his word, and yours, that I'm even really a werewolf, like you claim that I am, because none of those things I thought about werewolves aren't apparently true. He claims my father's a werewolf, but I've never *met* my father, so how the hell

would I know if that's true or not?"

"He will feel your cry of pain, your father, and he will come running to save you," the man said, moving over towards the fire. He crouched down and grabbed the handle of the long rod he had dropped the end of into the flames, pulling it to show the end of it, glowing an angry and visceral red, smoking just a little bit. "We will brand you, marking you as our captive, so that even if you should somehow escape our custody, or should we decide to release you, you shall never forget that your fate was held in the hands of the Halvorsen family."

"The who now?"

"The Halvorsens!" he shouted and suddenly thrust out with the glowing hot tip, a stylized H made up of two swords and a dagger crossing along the center to form the mid bar, until that flat H pressed hard against the top of his thigh, and Will began to scream, the smell of burning flesh and hair filling his nostrils while the pain receptors in his body went into overdrive.

The pain finally proved so much that Will's body decided to try and do something about it.

For Will, the sensation was like jumping into arctic cold water, knowing that whatever was happening to him was both a shock to his system and probably insanely bad, but the sudden snap of alertness allowed him to push back past the pain, shoving it to the back of his mind, as the change began to ripple through him. His arms bulked out against the bands, trying his damndest to rip through them, but the bands of steel had been given just enough leeway that that expanded enough to constrict his new powerful limbs. The same was true for his legs, despite the blooming pain in his left thigh, where the man was jamming the burning piece of blistering metal against his skin.

He could feel the fur erupting from his skin, his fingernails turning into thick, powerful claws, ready to rend flesh from bone, vicious fangs dropping from his gumline, turning previously docile canine teeth into the sort of weapon that could rip a victim's throat open with one hard bite. His eyesight had changed, and everything had a slight reddish tinge to it, making it a little more difficult to see details for anything.

His entire body had felt trapped before, but now it felt like it was almost being strangled within an inch of his existence. He thrashed and pulled at the bindings, feeling the metal start to give just the tiniest amount, but in the end it felt like it was for naught, as however they had strung him up, despite the fact that he'd changed into what he assumed was his werewolf form, although it was difficult to turn his head with how much the restraints on his chest bound him to the iron X behind him.

Will wanted to rage, to howl, to break free and to rip that brand from the man's hand and shove it into his eye socket. He wanted to let the primal core that had emerged from within him rip the man asunder, to shred him into pockets of flesh no larger than the palm of his hand, even the man's bones ground to a fine powder within the might of his fury.

Instead, he was trapped against the beams of steel, unable to get loose as the pain ripped through his nervous system. It wasn't just more vivid, he could *smell* the damage being done to him, both fur and flesh being scalded and scarred, and he hated this man with more intensity than he'd ever hated anything in his entire life.

Eventually, however, Will could make the rational decision that straining against the bindings was only likely to do himself harm, and he slumped back against the warmed metal, his eyes turning to focus on the man, who had just pulled back the brand, holding it up towards Will's face, so he could still see the rivulets of his own blood boiling on the surface of it.

"You're angry," the man laughed. "Good. Good good. Now, you will tell me where the

rest of your kind is holed up.”

“GO FUCK YOURSELF OLD MAN,” Will heard an unearthly howl say from his own throat, the sound of his voice unfamiliar to him, bestial and primal, unlike any sound his body had ever made before, and the timbre of it clearly frightened the man a bit, as he jumped back, dropping the brand onto the floor.

Then the old man laughed.

“You’ve still got spirit, even all bound up. It’s almost admirable, seeing how much resistance you’re putting up, despite the fact that you have no chance of ever walking out of this room alive,” he chuckled, shaking his head. “Ah, the folly of youth. To believe that nothing can or will stop you from your goals. We’ll break that from your body soon enough. Perhaps you just need a bit of time to sweat it out. Let that wound fester for a bit, until it’s good and infected. I’ll come back in tomorrow and see if you’re in a more talkative mood then.”

And then the man moved to the door, opened it, stepped out and closed it once more, leaving the brand to just fizzle out in the air, the room warm enough that it didn’t cool down any time soon.

Somewhere in the next hour or two, Will felt his body shift back to its normal form, the pain still aching and brutal in his lower leg, although the fact that his body lost so much muscle mass made the bindings around his arms, legs and chest feel much looser than they had previously. He started to wonder if maybe he’d done enough good to pull them apart and work them open enough for him to slip out, but the cuffs at the ankles and wrists were still secure enough to keep him held in place.

A few hours later, the third of the trio made his way into the room, as if he just couldn’t help himself and needed to take a look at Will, now that he was securely captive and unable to cause problems for the younger man. “You don’t seem so tough all tied up like this,” the younger man said to him.

It was Will’s first chance to get a decent look at the young man, who looked like he might barely be in his twenties if Will was giving him the benefit of the doubt. There was something slight and scrawny about him, and Will realized why he had found it so difficult to give a description of the guy to his uncle – he was probably one of the most forgettable looking people Will had ever seen. It was almost like the guy was *designed* to blend into backgrounds and just disappear amidst a crowd. Average height, average weight, completely non-descript face. It took several seconds for it to even register that the guy had blonde hair and blue eyes, and was probably related to the other two, because Will’s mind had already basically disregarded the guy as quickly as he’d seen him.

“You could always let me out of these bindings,” Will countered, “and then you can see exactly how tough I am.”

“Yeah, don’t think so, friend,” the young man said. “It took us long enough, but we finally got your number. Lycanthrope. Werewolf. Still not sure why the wolfsbane didn’t bother you, though.”

“Because that’s a myth, you idiot,” Will sighed. “All that shit about werewolves is completely made up and doesn’t *do* anything.”

“Course it does something,” he shot back. “Maybe it was just because you hadn’t had your first transformation yet. Still, we could see the aura about you with Kelvin’s Spyglass, so we knew you were going to be blossoming into something – we just couldn’t tell what.”

“Is that why you tried throwing holy water and garlic on me?”

“Had to figure out what kind of beastie you were going to become to figure out how to

deal with you.”

“How about dealing with me by leaving me alone?” Will said. “I haven’t done anything to anyone and you’re treating me like I’m some kind of war criminal.”

“But you *are* a war criminal, William. A criminal in the war of monsters against humanity. It’s you against us, and we’re not going to lose. We’re not going to let your kind wipe us off *our* planet. We were here first, so you lot can all go somewhere else.”

“Up until recently, I was just as human as you are, kid,” Will said. “And there’s nowhere else for us to *go*.”

“You can go back to Russia or Africa or whatever place it is your kind comes from and leave us civilized people alone.”

“You know that in this room, one of us has kidnapped and tortured an innocent person, and one of us hasn’t,” Will sneered. “You’re on the wrong side of history here, kid. I haven’t hurt anybody and you’re here branding me for shits and giggles.”

“You’re branded so people know you’re a danger, that you can’t be trusted, that you’re a monster who’s going to eventually kill again.”

“I haven’t killed *before*, although I’m not so sure I can say the same about you people.”

“We’re defending humanity.”

“You’re hunting innocent people who haven’t done a damn thing apparently as much as you might be fighting dangerous monsters,” Will said.

The young man reached out and slapped Will, who only sighed and shook his head. “You shut your mouth!”

“You hit like a child,” Will taunted. “And your old man needed to use a brand on me, since he was afraid of getting his hands dirty. Why don’t you let me out of these shackles, and we can go a few rounds?”

“Do I look stupid?”

“Since you’re asking—”

“Shut up!” the young man said, trying to punch Will in the stomach, but his hands were soft and didn’t have the kind of impact that Will imagined the boy wanted it to have.

“I’m sorry I said you hit me like a child. That’s probably offensive to kids. They *have* to hit harder than that.”

Will wondered if he had pushed too hard, but the young man just sneered, turned around and walked out of the room.

For hours more, he was left to his own devices, stuck in the heat, hungry and thirsty, sweating out what little precious water he had left in his body. The furnace of the fire was insane, but thankfully it started to eventually burn itself out, as nobody came back in to put more logs onto the fire. With that, the room began to slowly cool down, and Will began to worry about a new problem – hypothermia. The room wasn’t all that well insulated, and with the flue open, all the hot air was draining out of the space at a decent clip, being replaced by that high blizzard chill.

A few hours later, he was starting to wonder if they were going to let him freeze to death, and he started getting sleepy, doing his best to try and keep himself awake and alert, but it was growing more difficult, the bitter temperature starting to sink into the cold metal he was attached to.

For a few minutes, Will was starting to wonder if this was where he died.

His vision had started to blur when he heard a loud crash somewhere above him, followed by a crack, then another loud crash. Normally, he felt like he would’ve had a better idea

of what was happening, but at that moment, the sounds were basically impossible to discern beyond their volume and their chaotic nature.

Someone came rushing down the stairs and the door got kicked open, but he couldn't clearly see who it was, at least until she got closer to him.

"Jesus, Will, you look like dogshit," Lacey said to him, as she reached behind to unfasten the latches on the bands one at a time, until finally he could pull loose from the bindings, nearly collapsing onto the floor as he did, Lacey moving to slide beneath him, wrapping his exhausted arm around his shoulder, as he glanced to the door, seeing April standing there, holding a baseball bat that looked like it might have a little bit of blood on it.

"What the fuck did they do to him?" April asked, as she dropped the bat to the floor.

"I don't know, but it's not good," Lacey said. "Help me carry him to the car."

"Are we sure this is a good idea?"

"I'm sure we don't have a better one!"

"Hi Lacey, April..." Will said woozily, as April slid beneath his other shoulder, the two women moving to help keep him from collapsing, practically hauling him out of the room and up the stairs. At the top of the stairs was a kitchen, where the young man's unconscious body was sprawled out, having knocked over the kitchen table. "Looks like you interrupted dinner..."

"He's still making jokes," Lacey said. "He can't be *that* bad off."

"Get him out front and into the fucking car!" April said.

The two women dragged him through the living room, where Will saw the older man also unconscious on the floor, although he thought he might have seen a bit of blood leaking from the man's ear onto the cheap rug. It *did* look more like a kind of log cabin when he was upstairs, but he didn't get much of a chance to look at it as he was pulled through the living room and out the front door into the sheer cold, whiteout conditions almost blinding him immediately.

He got loaded into the back of a car, wrapped in a blanket and stuffed closely between Lacey and April, both of whom slammed their doors, as he heard Dina's voice in the front passenger seat say, "Freya, go!"

'Freya?' Will thought to himself, as he turned to glance at the driver's seat, and saw the athletic blonde who'd been interrogating him some twelve hours ago behind the wheel of the car, as she slammed her foot on the gas and the vehicle began to take off into the storm.

'Huh,' he thought. 'Didn't see that coming either.'

Chapter Nine

He wasn't at all sure how much time had passed from when he passed out in the back seat of the car and when he woke up in the bed in his home, but it certainly had to be more than 'a little' because the pain on his thigh was almost negligible, and he felt comfortably warm. Most importantly, the bed was *his* as were the women on either side of him.

Lacey was curled up hard on his right side, her arms wrapped around him like she was afraid he might try and roll away in the middle of the night, and Dina was on the other side of him, coiled in a similar fashion, their two arms propping the pillow beneath his head up even higher. Each of them was completely naked, as, Will realized, was he, although there was a large bandage wrapped around his thigh over where the brand mark was.

His memory of *how* he'd gotten home was worryingly full of holes. He remembered Lacey and April escorting him out of the house. He remembered getting loaded into the car. He remembered Dina in the front passenger seat of the car. And he...

Oh.

Sat in a chair near the foot of his bed was the Valkyrie named Freya, who'd started as his captor and had apparently become his rescuer? It was quite a turnabout in *quite* a short period of time, but the fact that she had a shotgun resting across her lap made him question whether he was entirely in the clear or not. She was dressed in a white tanktop that clung to her generous breasts tightly enough that the impressions of her nipples could be clearly seen through, and a pair of black sweatpants that were only a few shades looser than yoga pants.

"Can I get some water?" he hoarsely whispered to her, as she smiled and nodded.

"Glad to see you're awake," she whispered back to him as she stood up, laid the shotgun down on the floor next to the chair then headed out of the room.

"You awake, Will?" Lacey asked him from his side, nuzzling her face against his ear. "You've been asleep for days."

"Days?" Will asked. That did explain a number of things, like why he felt so incredibly thirsty, why his stomach was rumbling and...

Oh.

Without much warning, Will pushed Lacey and Dina away from him and sprung out of bed, darting into the attached master bathroom, lifting the toilet seat with just barely enough time before he began pissing like a racehorse, a heavy, almost inhuman stream gushing from him like his cock was a firehose, one of his hands against the bathroom wall on the other side of the toilet. He felt like his leak went on much longer than it should've, but his bladder felt fuller than it had ever been.

"You okay there, baby?" Lacey asked, her naked form standing in the doorway, arms folded beneath her generous tits. "It's been two days since we pulled you out of that cabin, and we were starting to get worried about how long you'd been sleeping, but Freya said it might just be part of your werewolf nature."

Will finished pissing and then turned to look at the first of his partners. "So... you know?"

Lacey smirked a little bit. "Baby, we *all* knew there was something different about you since before any of us hooked up with you, but gotta say, nobody had 'supernatural creature' on our guess list."

"You're... not freaking out?"

"Why? It's *hot*," Lacey giggled. "We all think that. We've all got *shitloads* of questions, but based on what Freya's told us, you don't really have more answers than we do."

Freya moved in to stand next to Lacey and her eyes widened a little bit as she got an eyeful of Will's cock as he flushed the toilet, then turned to start walking towards them. It looked like she'd forgotten to bring the water. "You're, uh, probably wondering why I'm here..."

"Last time I saw you, you were sort of interrogating me, so, yeah, I think that's a fair question for me to—" The tall blonde wrapped her arms around Will's neck and clung to him with a fierce hug that was so intense, he was a little worried his ribs might crack as she began to sob openly.

"I'm *so fucking sorry*, Will," he thought she wailed into his neck. The words were flowing freely, but his ability to make sense of them wasn't at an all time high. "I thought my uncle Odin had been acting strange ever since me and Lief joined him in his hunts, but when he was torturing you, I realized he'd fucking lost it." Her voice had a Nordic accent of some kind, but he didn't know the region well enough to place it. Swedish, Norwegian maybe? "I went out into the blizzard and found that not only did your alibi hold up, but it also wasn't that hard to identify and hunt down the shade that had killed those kids, once we stopped looking at you." She was crying

hard, almost to the point of making him feel uncomfortable, her arms clinging to him like he was a lifeline in her moment of horror. “How many other hunts did we get wrong because my uncle refused to look at the evidence? How many other innocent individuals did we punish, torture or kill because I didn’t see what was happening to my uncle?”

“What... what did you do to them?”

“I only knocked them out, although maybe I should’ve killed them,” she whispered into his ear, the crying starting to fade. “I left them a letter, telling them I was done hunting, and that they were to leave you alone otherwise I *would* kill them next time, family or no.” She started sliding her hands further down his bare back. “And I’m going to spend the rest of my life making it up to you.” Then both of her hands grabbed onto his ass. “Doing *whatever* it takes to make things right.”

“Oh. *Oh!* I, uh...”

She mashed her lips hard against his, her tongue practically invading his mouth like it was France and she was the German army in World War II, as he felt her hips pressed against his. Her hand clenched onto his butt as she pulled back from the kiss to look into his eyes with a sort of fire that Will was starting to recognize now, although half a year ago, he wouldn’t have had the slightest idea what it meant. “You hear me, Will? I want to be one of your bitches. I want to be in your pack. I want you to fuck me so hard, my guts hurt and my knees feel weak. I want you to shove this massive cock of yours inside every inch of me until I’m swollen and sore,” she said as her hand moved around to wrap around the base of his shaft, beginning to stroke it, and Will, despite the oddness of the whole situation, felt himself responding and hardening almost immediately. “That’s okay, isn’t it, Will? Me being one of your bitches? Joining your pack? Please tell me it’s okay, because if you say it’s not, I think I’m going to start crying again...”

“It’s okay, Freya,” Will said suddenly, at which point Freya’s touches moved from tentative to confident.

“Good,” she purred. “Good good. Because I think I might’ve just pushed you to fuck me anyway, even if you were going to let shit like morals get in the way.” Her fingers were pumping his prick firmly now. “I told Lacey and the others I’d help them free you, but that I wanted in, that I wanted to be a part of it all. Because once I found out you were innocent, holy shit, it was like I was a fucking schoolgirl with her first crush. I fingerbanged my cunt so hard and I came like I’d been doing it wrong my whole fucking life and just figured out why. I’ve been fooling around with the wrong guys. I’d tell them to do it harder, and they’d worry about breaking me.” She nibbled on his bottom lip. “But you’d *like* to try breaking me, wouldn’t you? I want that. I want that right fucking now.”

Dina stepped in almost like he was a boxer, with a bottle of water in her hand, squirting it into his mouth. “You left this on the counter when you heard him get out of bed, Freya. He needs to drink some water otherwise he’s gonna pass out on you.”

Will took a swig of that water and swallowed it, as he felt Freya’s hand on his prick continue to shuffle back and forth. “This monster has a different opinion,” Freya said. “It wants to take out all the frustration on me, all that anger of me shouting at it. And I deserve that. I’ve been a bad girl, and you know how you make bad girls into good bitches, don’t you, sir? You fuck that wicked out of them. Or at least you fuck away the wicked parts you don’t like, and mold the wicked parts you *do* into the perfect member of your pack, just how you want them. You burn them away like cleansing fucking fire until all that’s left is like steel, hammered and forged into a proper weapon. I’ve been playing for the wrong team, Will. Fix me. Fuck me right.”

Will could feel the beast within him being goaded, but he was still clear enough of mind to be able to goad right back. “You want in? Then you’re in for good. You can’t dip in and dip out again later. I’m giving you your chance to back out now, because if you stay, then you fight for the pack. You *die* for the pack, if that’s what it comes to. These women are either part of your family for life, or you should turn around and walk out that door right now.”

“Are you all talk, or you going to get down to brass tacks? I said I’m fucking in. Don’t make me say it a third time.”

Well, Will decided, she couldn’t say he hadn’t warned her.

His hand reached up and grabbed the center of her tank top and pulled, surprising both of them as the fabric just ripped away in his hand, pulling free from her flesh in tatters, his fist full of it before he dropped it to the floor, her large breasts fully exposed to everyone’s eyes. They were certainly one of the largest pairs Will had ever seen in person, with extremely large areolae and thick, stiffened pink nipples nearly as thick as the tip of his pinky. Her breath caught, but when Will looked to her face, the grin she wore was spreading.

People had pushed him before, and he could see what Freya was trying to do, but, honestly, if she was only doing it to get what she wanted, and this was what she was into, there wasn’t any harm in giving it to her.

He wheeled her around and shoved her back into the bedroom, forcing her onto the bed, as she scrambled to get up onto her knees. Will lifted one hand into the air and brought it down onto Freya’s ass with the hardest crack that he could, and instead of her shrieking in pain, she let out one of the most erotic moans he had ever heard, her back actually arching *into* the strike instead of away from it.

“Don’t fucking tease me, Will, and if you’re gonna do me, you’d better fucking do me right. I don’t want to get disappointed like I was on prom night,” she growled, trying to wriggle her butt in Will’s direction, trying to lure him into further action.

Not that he took much incitement.

Will rushed over to the bed and then pulled down Freya’s pants, finding she had a blue satiny thong underneath, which he also yanked downward, exposing her already slippery cunt, a thin line of stretched moisture connecting the fabric to flesh before it finally broke as Will moved in to stand at the edge of the bed.

It was just a short move from there to lining up his cock with her slit and jamming forward into her with a hard clap of his hips against her ass, causing her to groan whorishly once more, her fingers clenching into the top sheet of the bed, her arms extended to try and brace herself to resist the force of his thrust, trying to wantonly throw herself back upon his cock.

“Fuck you’ve got a *big dick*,” she howled. “That’s a fucking beast cock if ever I’ve fucking felt one. Now rail me, motherfucker!”

As soon as he started thrusting, Will’s hands were already yanking her back, pulling her to make her ass smack hard and make her tits swing beneath her, clapping together each time he pummeled his shaft into her, crunching forward with a savage intensity that made the bedframe slip a little across the floor.

His body started establishing a rhythm against hers, demolishing her pussy with repeated, forceful thrusts, letting his body get into it with more force than he’d allowed himself to try on earlier partners, and instead of her asking him to slow down, to ease off, all she demanded was “more” and “harder.”

Will could feel his body flaring with heat, almost like the primal aspect of him was taking root and cutting its way into his soul, but the woman beneath him was embracing that, not

running from it, trying to almost get more of his fury and passion into her own body.

He'd had rough sex before, but this was pure rutting, just absolutely carnal at the core, his cock throbbing and swelling inside of her each time his body collided with hers so hard his balls swung like the clapper of a bell, feeling her drip and ooze all over his nuts. He almost felt like he couldn't draw his cock back too far, and wondered if maybe it had knotted the way a dog's did, some link to his werewolf nature, but then he slid back, almost entirely out, and realized she'd just been gripping him that tightly with her vaginal walls.

A couple of minutes later, he could feel his blood starting to boil and the bursting feeling in his testicles, and as he had with all the others, he leaned forward and bit down hard at the base of her neck, but as he started to cum inside of her, she clamped down even more onto the base of his cock before she slumped forward onto her face on the bed, the tightness of her grip pulling him with her, forcing him to lay prone atop of her.

When he was trying to catch his breath, Lacey hopped onto the bed, reached over, grabbed Freya's wrist, lifted it up and let it drop down to the mattress with a sudden flop. "Yep, I think you finally did it, Will. I think you fucked a girl to death," she giggled.

He could finally feel a combination of his cock softening enough and her walls loosening around him and that gave him enough leeway to slide back and out from inside of her, although he could almost hear the massive load he'd dumped into her start to trickle out when he did, something he attributed to his heightened senses. "She's still breathing," he gasped.

"You can hear that?" Dina asked him.

"I can. Just like I could hear yourself fingering your pussy while I was railing her," he said with a soft laugh. "That much fun to watch was it?"

"I've cooked turkeys less hot than that," Dina purred in his direction. "You're fucking right I was fingering myself while we watched. So was Lacey."

"Where's April?" Will asked them.

"It's her turn to be on watch," Lacey said, dragging her fingernails along his back. "Freya insisted we have at least one of us on guard duty until you were awake enough to protect us."

"It's really been two days?"

"You were sleeping and recovering, so nobody wanted to disturb you."

"Has there been any sign of the hunters?"

"Not so much as a peep," Dina said. "I think whatever note Freya left them must have scared the shit out of them."

"She left them a note?"

"Well, clubbing them in the back of the head seemed a little bad form without them knowing *why* it all happened," Lacey giggled.

"What the hell did I miss?"

"Lemme tell you what happened..." Lacey said.

* * * * *

We were wondering where the hell you were when we got up, but Dina told us you'd gone to Burger King to get us breakfast, so we just figured you were out fighting the weather. The blizzard was a mean motherfucker, but we knew you're tough, so we tried not to get worried.

But then lunch rolled around and you weren't back, and so we freaked out a bit.

We loaded up into the car and drove around looking for you, but even though the weather

had cleared up a little, we couldn't find you anywhere between here and the Burger King, and, y'know, that's not a lot of space to cover, so we got more and more worried.

We stopped in the Burger King and they told us you'd been in earlier, and you'd been talking with some big, burly guy who left before you did, and we started worrying that maybe he'd kidnapped you, but the kid at the counter insisted to us that he left like five or ten minutes before you did, so we figured that was something we didn't need to worry about it.

But it still left us at square one, which is to say, where the *fuck* were you?

We drove around in circles, in ever expanding circles, around the area, trying to figure out where you might have fallen, where your body was, but we couldn't find anything, and even the areas we thought could've been places where you blacked out or might've gotten blown off course to had mostly been plowed clean enough that if you were dead, we'd have seen the body.

None of us were sure if that made us more or less worried.

We knew searching the neighborhood wasn't going to do us any good, so we decided to wait. It was a dumb fucking idea, waiting, but we didn't really have a better one planned. So waiting it was. And the longer we waited, the more anxious and nervous we got. I was pacing around the room constantly, Dina was chewing at her fingernails and April, well, April kept drumming on the countertop with a pencil, until all three of us were basically climbing the walls when evening rolled around.

So, when there was a knock at the door, I think we all jumped into the air at least a foot, and tripped over each other bum rushing towards it, trying to get there first, fearing for the absolute worst, that there was going to be a cop on the other side, telling us you'd been abducted or killed or something.

Instead, on the other side we found this giant blonde Nordic princess who looked like she'd just walked off the set of a new version of 'American Gladiators.' We weren't sure what to make of her, but her eyes were all puffy, like she'd been crying, and she said she had news about you, and asked if she could come in, so, like, of course we told her fine.

"What's happened to him?" I asked her, as she sat down in your chair.

"We abducted him," she said nervously. I reached for the Louisville slugger I keep in the living room, but Dina's hand grabbed my shoulder. "We thought he was killing kids! But he claimed he wasn't, and said he had an alibi, so I went and looked into it, and he's telling the truth! There's camera footage of him *in the diner working* when the kids were killed! There's no way he could've done it! But my uncle Odin, he's the leader of our hunter troupe, he said I didn't see what I *thought* I saw, and that Will must've used a shapeshifter to impersonate him so he could commit the crimes, but it's total fucking bullshit! And I told Uncle Odin that! And then he slapped me! He said I was too young and stupid to be a hunter, that I didn't know what real monsters looked like!"

She was crying again when she told us all that, but at that moment, all I could see was red. "Where's my fucking boyfriend?" I asked her.

"I can take you to him. I can help you get him out! But you have to promise to let me make it up to Will, to help protect him from those hunters! And you have to promise not to kill my uncle or my cousin."

"They've *kidnapped* my boyfriend," I told her.

"And once we take him away, they'll stay clear! I'll leave them a note telling them not to come after Will again, and I'll protect him while the message gets to the Hunter Council that my Uncle Odin is hunting someone who hasn't done anything, which is strictly forbidden by the Hunter Council! If the Council finds out, they'll give him a warning, and if he tries again, they'll

hunt him down like he was one of the monsters he's spent so long hunting."

"Do you think he'll learn?" Dina asked her.

"He certainly will after he's been clubbed over the head a few times," Freya said. "He's been ogling my tits ever since I showed up for training, and my creepy cousin's the same way and I'm fucking sick of it."

"You're not going to be the only one clubbing him," I told her. "They've kidnapped *my* boyfriend, and I need to make it totally fucking clear that nobody fucks with what's *mine*."

So we loaded up for a hunt of our own. Despite how much I wanted to, Freya insisted we only bring non-lethal shit. You have no idea how angry I was, Will, how much I wanted to break these little fuckers in half. I suggested we wear ski masks, but then Freya pointed out that she'd be with us, and the whole *point* was for them to know who we were, so I felt a little stupid for my suggestion.

They had you held hostage in a cabin up in the hills a bit more, away from the general population, and I think they hoped that the distance would let them see us coming, but we rode up in Freya's car, the bunch of us ducked down, even though they weren't even looking.

In fact, Freya got her first swing in with the bat on her cousin before he could say a word, much less raise an alarm. We rushing in as a group and found her Uncle Odin watching porn on his laptop with his headphones on, so the fucker was jerking his pud right up until Freya's clocked him in the back of the head with my bat, although we all took turns kicking his unconscious body on the floor. I even stepped on his belly a few times.

When we got into the room you were being held in, we all sort of fell apart, sending Freya to go get the car ready and warm, because you looked like you'd been through the fucking wringer. The room was bitterly cold, and you were naked, and it looked like there'd been a fire on for some of it, but it had gone out and you were bordering on hypothermia.

That fucker Odin's so fucking lucky we just needed to get out of there, otherwise as soon as I saw you, I might've had trouble keeping my promise to Freya not to pop either of their balls with a corkscrew. So we hauled your ass out of there, and I wanted to wrap you up, but more than anything, we just wanted to get you the fuck away from these assholes, so we dragged you and tossed you into the car between us,

When we got you back to the house, we bandaged up the burn on your leg, and I wanted to change the bandage, but Freya said to let it heal, otherwise we'd just make it worse. I wanted to ask her about how she knew about brands, but something told me I didn't really want the answer.

We mostly just cuddled you up, but we also poured water into your mouth, getting you to drink it here and there, even in your dazed state. Nobody was quite sure why you weren't waking up, but we decided to just do our best to take care of you. We called you in sick from the diner, and the guy there demanded I send him a picture of my tits just to cover for you, so you're *welcome* for that, but I did it, and you're good to go, considering you aren't scheduled to work for another few days, back when classes start up again.

* * * * *

Will groaned a little bit. "You sent dirty pics to Billy? He's gonna leer at you any time you come in there now."

Lacey giggled a bit fiercely. "He already did that plenty before, dude. It's not going to be anything new."

He frowned, looking down at his leg, the bandage on his flesh still mocking him. “I know Freya said to let it heal, but it itches like a motherfucker. Maybe I should take it off and check on it anyway.”

“It’s your leg, Will,” Dina said. “Besides, I think you fucked any life out of Freya she might’ve had to argue with you.”

He nodded, shifting to lay his leg out as he reached to the side of the bandage and started pulling on the adhesive tape, which was clinging to his thighs. After a long moment, he pulled on it enough to lift it up... and gaze upon smooth unscarred flesh beneath.

“I thought Freya said you were branded, baby,” Lacey said.

“Yeah...” Will replied, a little confused himself. “I thought I was...”

Chapter Ten

The hardest thing Will had ever done was to have to go back to work after he'd been kidnapped by monster hunters, but he felt like it was imperative his life try and get back to some semblance of normal, even if there was no possible way that he could ignore the fact that he now had four women sharing his bed on the regular.

Each of the women was doing their best to get along with one another, but there had been a few stumbling blocks at the start, most notably between Lacey and Freya, both of whom seemed to want to out alpha the other, up until it started to get on Will's nerves, and he'd shouted at both to be quiet for just two goddamn minutes. That had startled all of them, and since then, the arguments had been far more reserved and self-contained, staying closer to fixated on a single point of discussion rather than one woman being placed higher or lower than the other.

He sort of liked having four different women all vying for his attention, all eager to spend time with him, to take care of him, to make sure he was happy and satisfied. And since he'd made a point to tell them to get along, they'd started working together, with each of them trading off who would take the lead in any given situation, although Lacey seemed to still be the self-elected spokesperson for the four of them.

Will had also been surprised by the fact that his thigh had completely healed up from whatever branding they'd attempted to inflict him with, and there wasn't so much as even a tiny scar on his flesh, although the region where they'd branded him was pinker, and the hair that had grown back seemed a little less dark than the rest of the hairs covering his flesh. It wasn't sore or even tender. He still could tell it had gone through some regeneration, but there was no remainder of the damage that had been there just a few short days earlier.

But, as it turned out, being a werewolf didn't come with a monthly stipend that meant he could quit his job at the diner, and while there were four other people in his house now with which to split the bills, it also meant that the consumption on a lot of things had gone up as well, like food, power and hot water.

That meant it was back to the diner during his downtime.

It was the first Friday in February, and the snow hadn't let up one bit in Colorado, still walls and sheets of it, and it meant that the diner was more popular than ever, simply because of how close to campus it was. The girls would often come in and keep him company during his breaks, but they also knew well enough not to bother him when the orders were frantic, or the crowd was packed, and for a Friday night, the diner was stuffed to the walls. As always, there seemed to be a majority of women, and despite the fact that it was practically Antarctica outside, the girls from campus basically stripped down into summer wear as soon as they got inside of the diner, which sort of made Will laugh, because each time the front door of the diner would open, a sudden gust of cold air would sweep through the room, and all the girls would shiver, their nipples perking up through whatever clothes they had on, like a forest of chicken thermometers blooming across the diner. He certainly wasn't the only man who'd noticed either, because every guy in the diner would look up whenever they heard that door opening, as if they just couldn't help themselves.

And it being Friday night, lots of people were stopping in either just before they went out for another round of drinking, or because they'd started drinking too early and needed to sober up before they ended up puking away their entire memory of the evening in question. Will didn't mind, because when it was busy, he could just focus on the work in front of him instead of considering anything else that might be going on with his life.

They were packed in six to a booth, every single seat at the breakfast bar with one person

on it, and the tables were limited by the number of chairs the diner could hold, because there wasn't a spare open space in the place. In fact, even the waiting area didn't have any excess space in it, and the guy running the counter was now just turning people away when they walked in the door, telling them it was going to be at least a half an hour wait, and they didn't even have space to sit in the waiting area, which meant people were starting to turn away. Will was starting to wonder if the guy who owned the diner would give Will a raise, because the place was never anywhere near as packed when he wasn't working there. Not that he figured the diner's owner would attribute the success to Will's cooking.

But it was on that Friday night (technically Saturday morning) when he noticed something odd happening, as at around 3:30, the population of the diner started to die down extremely quickly. It wasn't the typical end-of-night trickle, but almost like an orderly procession, each booth starting from the back, getting their check, paying their tab, and leaving. And each of them was leaving a 23% tip, the math of which they were doing ridiculously quickly, and in their heads, which might have been the strangest part of the entire exodus. It was turning into quite the profitable evening.

Odd, however, that *nobody* was coming in to replace them, though. Usually even on the shittiest winter nights, there were a few people milling about the diner through all the overnight shift into the morning shift. Yet, as people left, the diner simply became emptier and emptier, until Will and Billy were the only two people hanging around, and there weren't any customers at all to speak of.

"I don't like this, Will," Billy said to him, moving over to peer out one of the windows. "Sure, it's still snowing out there, but I can't remember a point since you started working here that the place has been *completely* without customers. Don't feel natural. Don't feel right."

"You're superstitious, Billy," Will laughed. "Besides, you can turn on the television now and watch whatever shitty thing you want to on Netflix, at least until a customer comes into the place. What's it going to be? The Circle?"

"They're between seasons. But a new season of Love Is Blind just dropped, so I'll probably put that on."

"Seriously? Again with that garbage?"

"Look, Will," Billy said, stretching his arms over his head. "I know you're literally turning away pussy with a pitchfork these days, but most of us, we don't get that sort of level of attention from even the Z-lister college coeds. We have to hope that someone can look past our flabby, doughy, slightly less than pretty exterior, and fall for the inner gem of a soul we hide beyond it."

"Billy, the last girl who showed some interest in you, you asked her if she'd, and I quote, 'show you her cans behind the dumpster.'"

"I said *please*."

"Yeah, not exactly romance and poetry, is it, Billy?"

Billy shrugged. "Not really my speed, though, is it, Will? I need a girl who's too upfront for her own good, too smart to get caught up in the subtle charades of masculine/feminine power struggles, able to see beyond the sort of petty squabbles about who promised what to whom and down to the core, inherent defining characteristics that make us... *us*."

"So, basically, someone who buys your bullshit hook, line and sinker, without pause or reservation?"

"The whole fucking package," Billy laughed, nodding. "If she sees through even a little bit of it, I'm totally fucked."

“Yeah, well, good luck with that, Billy,” Will said as he started to take advantage of the empty diner to clean the place up a little bit, Billy helping over near the entrance even as he put on the start of the new season of ‘Love Is Blind.’ Normally they had to wait until just before five in the morning to do a cleaning pass, right after the college kids had crashed and just before the morning surge of long-haul truckers passing through on their way from point A to point B. But all of the people who’d tipped a high amount, they’d *also* cleaned their own tables before they left. They’d basically done almost all the work of bussing their own tables, while they were at it. Everything was in neat, organized piles.

It was creepy.

Still, it made it very easy to get the tables all cleaned up, and have the diner back into perfect shape again, or as good as they could get it, before they started watching television, Will reluctantly drawn in by the lure of junk food television.

About twenty minutes later, they were hip deep in the middle of an episode when the little bell on the door rang, and a young woman in her early twenties with one of the biggest shelves of cleavage Will had ever seen walked into the place. She was dressed in all black, a black corset, a black leather jacket over it, black leather hot pants with black fishnet stockings jutting out from it. Her skin was the sort of pale white that almost looked like untouched paper. Her hair was one of only two contrasts, a sort of blood wine red, dark and crimson, a rose in winter, surrounded by snow of her flesh. The other were her painted lips, a vibrant shade of lustrous scarlet, the exact shade to evoke thoughts of love and lust in nearly any man or woman. Her eyes were lined with heavy dark makeup, coal coloring over her cheeks. It was a look Will had heard described as goth more than once.

“You want a table or...” Will trailed off, as he watched the icy-skinned girl start to wander around the diner, not stopping at any one table, mostly checking the windows, looking under the tables, and checking the entrances and exits.

“Just two ways in and out?” she asked him, her voice lilting with a hint of Irish brogue in it.

“Three,” Will said. “Front door, side fire exit, and there’s a door and loading bay out back. Why do you ask?”

“Doing my job, kid,” she said, as she peeked her head into the back, not actually going in but looking into the kitchen before she headed back to the front door, opening it, gesturing at someone outside to come on in.

The man who walked in next looked like he would’ve fit in at home on campus in any one of the professor’s chambers. He was a short man dressed in a brown tweed suit, tan fabric in various earth tones, with black loafers, and a black vest on beneath the tan sport jacket, with a crimson-colored tie tucked into it as the only real stripe of color on the man’s attire. His hair was jet black, but thinning on top, although it also looked like he was in need of a haircut. He had a pair of silver circular glasses over his eyes, and Will could see they were bifocals, one level for far distances and a second for reading, along the bottom portion of the glasses. The man wasn’t strong or muscular, but a little portly, swollen around the midsection, clearly the result of too much fine dining and repeated liquor evenings. And yet, there was something dangerous and menacing about the man, like if he wanted to, he could burn the entire diner down without so much as lifting a finger. The strangest part of the man’s entrance, however, was that the cold air hadn’t come rushing in when he had, and the door had opened and closed without so much as the slightest shift in temperature.

“Ah, Colorado,” the man said with amusement in his voice. “It’s been so long since I’ve

been back, I'm certain I've been entirely forgotten. You," he said, glancing at Billy, who was several years Will's senior. "Have you ever heard of a Professor Tom Osman?"

"Cannot say that I have, sir."

The man looked a touch crestfallen but shrugged it off within a moment or two. "No matter, I suppose. Time offers no favors for even the strongest and mightiest of us all. I'm not particularly concerned with such matters." He turned his attention over to Will, and suddenly Will felt as though whatever newfound confidence he'd recently gained was wilting away. "You are William Bowland, are you not?"

Will had never wanted to lie more in his entire life than in that moment, but he chose to tell the truth instead. "Yes, sir. Will, sir." He wasn't sure what to do, to stand, to sit, to offer the man a cup of coffee, and the nervousness must've shown on his face, because the man chuckled a little bit.

"Relax, Will," the man said, a coy smile upon his own lips. "If I'd have wanted you dead, Kelly here would've slit your throat before you'd ever laid eyes on either of us. No no, I'm here for something a great deal more complicated – an apology and a bit of an explanation. Perhaps we can sit and talk for a bit while your compatriot watches his television show and mine minds the doors?" He gestured towards the tables. "I assure you, there won't be anyone coming into the place while I'm here. I want our conversation to go undisturbed."

Will poured two cups of coffee and cut two slices of French Silk pie off the pie in the cooler counter, then stepped behind the counter, putting all four things on a tray, carrying it over to one of the booths, unloading them before taking the tray back over to the counter as the man took a seat at the booth, grabbing a cream container, pouring it into the coffee. "Don't like it black, huh?"

The man grinned, offering a little shrug. "I'm inconsistent. I try it different ways at different times and places. I'm glad to see you made yourself an offering matching mine. I'm already putting you out a bit by taking over the diner for an hour, but I figured our conversation was best had without prying eyes and ears."

"You still haven't even told me your name."

"Ah yes, let me start there. My name is Jonas Silversmith, although I am also known by the title of Red Joker, and sometimes less formally as the Dragonborn," he said, leaning back in his booth. "I am the one that people in our particular community call to, shall we say, *clean up messes*. And rather a doozy seems to have fallen into my lap out here in Colorado, through no fault of your own, I might add, which is part of the reason I told you that you did not need to worry."

"Oh, I'm guessing this is about the Halvorsens, that hunter family that kidnapped me and tortured me," Will said, taking a sip from his coffee. "Yeah, not exactly my finest day there. I'm guessing you know I didn't do the things they were accusing me of?"

"Will, a toddler with a My First Detective kit could've told them you didn't do it," Jonas sighed. "It wasn't like it was a massively complicated procedure. Hell, you were on *video* here at the *diner* during multiple instances of the crime in question. They might as well have been accusing you of assassinating John F. Kennedy."

"I didn't do that either," Will chuckled. "I think I've got an airtight alibi too, on account of me not having been born yet."

"Seems pretty watertight, so we'll concentrate our investigations on that one elsewhere," Jonas smirked. "No, it's been decided that since you weren't raised among your kin, someone from the Organization would need to step in and offer you a bit of personalized guidance, as well

as an apology for the behavior the Halvorsens, who were, as you can imagine, completely out of bounds with their attack on you, since you were innocent.”

“Wait, you mean if I *had* done anything...?”

“That’s what I’ve come to talk to you about, Will,” Jonas said. “It’s a lot of ground to cover in a short period of time, but you deserve to be on the same level playing field as everyone else. So I’m here to tell you a little bit about what you can and can’t do. Now, to start with, all of this is covered by something called the Predator Accords. According to the Predator Accords, as a werewolf, you are allowed to kill one criminal per season, should you wish, be they human or non. You may be asked to provide proof of the person’s criminal activity, or you may not, but it’s important to have it ready should your local Hunt Captain ask for it.”

“Hunt Captain?”

“We’ll get to him in a minute. Let me go over the broadstrokes first.”

“Sure, okay.”

“If you don’t want to go hunting, that’s okay! That’s perfectly fine. Many of your kind are happy to just live quiet little lives without anyone knowing what they are,” Jonas said, opening a sugar packet, pouring it into his coffee. “You wouldn’t be alone in that pursuit. And not just werewolves, but vampires, shades, changelings... Many of the supernatural just want to be left alone and not hunt, but at the end of the day, anything from our world that isn’t human is, at the end of the day, a predator, and is therefore ruled by the Accords.”

“So, wait, there are vampires who are allowed to hunt and kill humans right here in Colorado?”

“There are,” Jonas told him. “They mostly feed from prisons or from gang members. In fact, more than a few of them work in tandem with law enforcement, to solve particular problems that they just aren’t equipped to handle on their own. If a particular criminal is just too difficult or untouchable, sometimes they’ll even request someone from our side come in and hunt them. It can prove quite profitable, but they’re certainly the more challenging hunts. If you felt the need to kill raging high within you, I’d simply contact your Captain and go and kill a local drug dealer or pimp, something small and manageable, an easy enough death to cover up. I tell you this as a favor, Will. All of us are sometimes subject to the needs of our more primal sides, and there is no shame in that. Anyway, to speak to your earlier point, a vampire can’t help their nature any more than you or I can – they were born into this life and need to feed like anyone else.”

“Wait, that stuff about the only way to become a vampire is to be bitten by one isn’t true?”

Jonas sighed, shaking his head. “You know, if I’d have known Stoker was going to be such a pain in the ass, I’d have lopped his head off not long after Sir Henry Irving introduced me to him in the West End. No, vampirism can’t be transmitted by a vampire’s bite. They’re born, live and die like any other creature on this planet, and that means they breed like any other paranormal creature. Vampirism can be a recessive trait, however, much like lycanthropy, which is why we sometimes get cases like yours, where supernatural creatures grow up outside of their own kind. In your case, it’s more that your father’s a pain in the ass, but I suppose he’s done decent enough work in keeping the hunters from getting too far out of control. He and your mother were the Romeo & Juliet story that forced both the human hunters and the midwestern lycanthropes to the peace table, to agree to ratify the Predator Accords for the Central Northern American region, which had been a particularly difficult place to find common ground, until they spoke up.”

“So if I’d done whatever they’d claimed I’d done, the Halvorsens could’ve done whatever

they wanted to me?”

“They could’ve killed you, certainly,” Jonas said, taking a fragment of the pie away from the main piece with his fork. “The humans deserve to live in peace just as much as we do, don’t you agree?”

“Well, sure, but—”

“That’s why the Predator Accords exist. They establish who can hunt and who can be hunted and under what specific conditions those hunts can take place,” Jonas said before pushing the pie into his face. “This truly is marvelous. Anyway, what the Halvorsens did simply isn’t cricket, as the expression goes, and as such, they’re being handled.”

“Hang on,” Will said. “One of them, Freya Halvorsen, is with me now, so she shouldn’t be—”

Jonas chuckled, shaking his head a little. “Don’t insult me by thinking I haven’t done my homework, young man. I know she helped your fledgling pack rescue you. She’s also the one who reported the incident to the local human Hunt Captain, who elevated it up to me. Of course she’s not going to be punished. She’s been cleared of her involvement in their hunt of you, although I can’t say the same for the other two. Odin’s going to be held for full trial, and they’re still trying to determine what level of malice the younger one, Lief, is going to be held accountable for.”

“He didn’t seem to give much of a shit about my innocence,” Will said, “if that figures into it.”

“Mmm. It might. I’ll pass that on to the human tribunal before I leave the region,” Jonas said, finishing up his pie. “I’ll leave you with a sheet of paper including all the local Hunt Captains for this region, including their contact information. Do me the courtesy of reaching out via phone and introducing yourself to all of them, just so that they know we’ve spoken and that you’re not going to go stampeding for revenge for what happened to you, especially when it’s already been handled.”

“I can do that.”

“I also want to personally apologize for what you endured at the hands of these backwoods fuckwits. You shouldn’t have had to endure that, and for that, we’re incredibly sorry. I’m sure you probably have other questions, so you’ve got...” He reached into his vest and pulled out a pocket watch, glancing at the time. “Fifteen minutes left in our appointment, so ask whatever you like, and I’m happy to answer your questions.”

“How many supernatural creatures would you say live in Colorado?”

“Well, let’s see... there’s about 5.8 million humans in the state, so I think it’s safe to say there’s, call it fifty or sixty thousand supernatural creatures in the state, but that’s across all the stripes.”

“I’ve... well, I’ve felt the need to bite the neck of sexual partners the first time I’m fucking them. Is... is that normal for a werewolf?”

Jonas waved a hand in the air. “Totally normal behavior, and you’re never going to bite too deep so that it causes real harm, never you worry. I imagine it caused quite a bit of startle the first time it happened, yes?”

“Actually, *no*,” Will laughed. “We were both pretty caught up in the moment of it, so I think we both just wrote it off as a thing that happened.”

“Yes, well, nothing to worry about there.”

“How big does the average werewolf pack get?”

“You’re asking how many women it’ll take to keep your sexual appetite in check?”

“Uh, yeah.”

“Seven or eight, probably, although if you can get a werewolf woman into that mix, it’ll certainly ease up the pressure some, although some of your existing women might take issue to that, worried about losing their status or position in the pack,” Jonas said, finishing up his coffee. “That’ll be your job, however, keeping those personalities in line. And if it doesn’t work out, well, you can always pack up and move if you like, or just send the problem woman or women in question packing.”

“Am I really vulnerable to silver?”

“You can wear silver just fine and it won’t cause you any problems unless it gets beneath the skin, in which case it will start to toxify your body quickly and dangerously,” Jonas said. “Thus, silver bullets bad, silver necklaces... meh?”

“If I’ve got other questions...”

“You should talk to your Local Hunt Captain, or you could always swing by one of the seasonal supernatural galas that all the Captains of the Seven Houses throw. They’re open invite, but it might be a bit of a trip. They vary it between one of seven cities in North America every season. I think the Spring one is set for Chicago, where the Dragon’s Green House is located. I’ll make sure they send you an invite. You should go – it’s a chance to open your eyes to the world you never knew existed.”

“I’ll... I’ll consider it. Will I be safe?”

“As long as you don’t go out of your way to offend anyone, they generally give newcomers a pass for minor faux pas,” Jonas replied. “I’ll be there, so I can be your Virgil, give you the tour and make sure you don’t step on any toes, and that if you do, it’ll get smoothed over quickly.” The small man chuckled a bit. “No one really likes to get on my bad side at these sorts of events.”

“That makes it a bit more likely I’ll go then.”

“Excellent,” Jonas said, standing up from the table, reaching into his pocket, pulling out a hundred-dollar bill, laying it down on the table before placing four gold Spanish doubloon coins on top of it. “That should cover the coffee and pie and go away into making sure you’re a little more financially stable at the moment.”

Will picked one of the coins up and held it up to the light. “Been hanging onto these a while, have we?”

“Never hurts to have something small and valuable that you can use to pay some debts, Will. If you’re smart, you’ll keep one of those tucked away somewhere on your person as a get out of jail free card, should it come to it. Which reminds me... I had one more thing I’d agreed to do, in order to make restitution. Just a moment, if you will.”

The man moved to stand in the middle of the diner, extending his arms straight out in a T pose, as he closed his eyes. He then slowly began to spin, and as he turned, waves of particles of light appeared and started to swirl around him, like he was the center of some sort of galactic washing machine. The colors grew brighter, the streaks grew longer and suddenly the interior of the diner was drenched in disco light, then it disappeared once more, leaving the diner... the same?

No, Will realized, not *entirely* the same. On the wall next to the door, he could now see a thick copper plate plaque which read “Sanctuary ensured by Jonas Silversmith, est. 2016.” And when Will looked at it for too long, he was *certain* he could see a weird golden glow like an aura around the edges of it.

“What’s that?” Will said, pointing at the sign.

“This diner is now consecrated ground, meaning no force, supernatural or human, will be capable of spilling blood in combat here,” Jonas said. “No fighting, no hunting, nothing. It means this’ll be a meeting place for all sorts of our kind now to hold negotiations. We used to have a lot more consecrated grounds across the country, but it seems like a lot of them were torn down during my... absence. So, why not here? It’ll keep you safe, and it’ll let you meet a lot more of our kind, as they stop in from time to time.”

“And your spell will prevent *any* combat here?”

“Well, within *reason*,” Jonas admitted. “If Morgana La Fey and Merlin got into a domestic squabble in here, I don’t know that much of *anything* would make a dent in that, but barring something of that level, which I’d like to point out is the equivalent of saying you’re protected unless the nuclear bomb is your lap, you’re completely safe in here.”

Will looked at the man and apropos of nothing offered him a bow. “Thanks for this. I’m sure you’ve got more important things to be dealing with personally coming to sort this out.”

Jonas moved towards the doorway and smiled. “Yes, well, I do have a fondness for Colorado, and the early reports made it clear you got a very bad deal. So, sometimes overkill can work out in your favor. Now, you behave, and I’ll see you in a few months for the party.”

With that, he and the young woman moved out and into the night. Will looked back at Billy, who’d been fixated on the television the whole time. “Well, they were crazy, weren’t they, Billy?”

“Who was?”